

This is the email the convenor of the Government Department, George Philip, sent to me on Friday 24 March, 2006.

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Dear Erik,

I will come straight to the point.

I have heard complaints, that I have no reason to disbelieve, that your presentation at the Open Day departed from the prepared message. It raised the question of whether you really did want the potential students to come to the School. As a result, you embarrassed your colleagues and may have discouraged prospective undergraduate students from applying. We have had to apologise profusely to colleagues on your behalf, and you have without doubt made my own job -which involves maintaining good relations with the School authorities- much more difficult.

Following your presentation, the School authorities then brought to my attention the fact that you have been maintaining a personal Blog on the Department of Government's website. This blog makes statements that are enormously damaging to your own reputation (e.g. 'I know nothing about the undergrad programme' 'Last time I spoke to prospective students I cost the department thousands of pounds in lost revenue') and potentially damaging to the School. I would remind you that you get the Staff Handbook every year, which involves considerable discussion of the role of undergraduate teaching and tutoring, and that you have already passed Major Review and been promoted to Senior Lecturer. Teaching is taken into account in both of these procedures. The blog also indicated an intention to act as the complainants claim that you did at last Wednesday's meeting.

As Convenor, I am obliged to consider whether Disciplinary Procedures should be applied. It is my view that an informal oral warning (Academic Annex Part III- Disciplinary and Dismissals and Removal from Office, Disciplinary Procedures 13 (1) Byelaw 1 (i)) which will not be put on your personal file, is more appropriate at this stage than invoking a formal procedure.

I hope that such a warning together with your agreement to

1. destroy/cancel your blog entirely and shut the whole thing down until further notice.

2. when representing the School in the future, doing so in a positive way that does not risk bringing the School into disrepute

will mean full resolution of the issue. Please could you give me your response on

return.

This has been a painful incident from my point of view, and I am anxious to bring it to an end for your sake and that of the School. I am prepared to find a time to meet with you if you want, but I do want you to confirm by return that you have removed the blog

Finally, it would be a nice gesture if you could bring yourself to apologise to John Madeley, Simeon Underwood (as the administrator with overall responsibility here) and Nicole Boyce, who has had to do plenty of apologising on your behalf.

Yours truly

George Philip