



University of Sussex

Vice-Chancellor's Office

[REDACTED]

21 December 2006

Dear [REDACTED]

Student Occupation of the Library

I am writing to you regarding the events that took place in the University Library during the night of Tuesday 28 November 2006.

Widespread advance publicity had been given to a threatened occupation of the library by students. At or around 2130 when the Library was due to close, a group of students entered the building with the clear intention of occupation. In discussion with the students then and subsequently in discussion with the Students' Union, the University's position has been clear:

(a) that the University takes such action extremely seriously and regards it as threatening and stressful for the Library staff and other staff and students seeking to go about their work normally;

(b) that if occupations are threatened, the University would have to consider the option of closure of the Library, a step that it had already taken during the Summer 2006 when similar occupations took place. In so doing a small group of students would have caused significant disruption and stress to the large majority of students and other users of the Library who were trying to get on with their work;

(c) that the occupation was a breach of a court injunction which had been issued in Brighton County Court on 23 November in order to attempt to maintain the good running of the University and prevent disruption to students and staff and, under civil law, the University was entitled to pursue action against individuals being in contempt of court;

(d) that the University would seek to recover its costs – already amounting to several thousands of pounds – in the form of legal costs, overtime payments to Library staff, additional costs of Security. Needless to say, every pound spent on such measures is money not spent on Library or other resources that have been the subject of student criticism;

(e) that the list of complaints that comprised the students' grievance were either matters over which the University had no control or were issues that were being progressed via dialogue taking place between officers of the University and the Students' Union. The Students' Union had made clear that they did not support the occupation.

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Deputy Vice-Chancellor

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I have reason to believe that you entered the Library between 2100 and 2130 hrs on 28 November. You should be aware that the University is currently taking steps to identify individuals who were part of the unlawful occupation, following which it may instigate internal disciplinary proceedings and/or seek to action through the courts.

I should be grateful, therefore, if you would respond to this letter by confirming that you were not present in the Library after 2130 hrs on 28 November 2006 and that you were not party to the occupation.

We appreciate that you may have been using the library in the normal way, and taken no part in the occupation. If this is the case, I sincerely apologise that the actions of a small group of students have led us to need to contact you and ask for a response. I do hope you understand why we have had to do this.

The University is seeking to progress this matter with some urgency and your response by return would be appreciated. Please respond by completing and returning the slip below.

Yours sincerely



Professor Paul Layzell
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Return to: Registrar & Secretary, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, BN1 9RH or
email: registrar@sussex.ac.uk

I confirm that I was not present in the University Library after 2130 hrs on Tuesday 28 November 2006 and therefore not part of the student occupation of the building that took place.

Name (print).....

Subject/Course.....

Year of Study.....

Signature.....

Date.....