

## DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN TO BE CLOSED?

It appears that there is a proposal, now in its advanced stages, to close the Department of German, which is at present part of the School of Modern Languages.

Although the decision is due to be ratified by the Senate (ruling body of the university), it appears that closure is the preferred option of powerful figures in the university who feel that the Department is 'not sustainable'. This view is based in part on apparently falling demand in interest on the part of students (a national trend) and the inability of the Department which has only one full time lecturer to carry out a programme of research.

The local Committee of UCU (University and College Union) feels that this decision if carried out is misguided and short-term and will affect seriously the balance of subjects in the School of Modern Languages. As well as this, Germany plays an important part of the cultural life of Europe both historically and in the present day, and its language has been central to the development of science, art and philosophy.

To throw all this aside in the face of what could well be a short term trend would be a symptom of the blinkered approach to education

all too common today.

Furthermore, if the Department of German were to close, it would follow on the heels of other closures over the years (Philosophy, Music, and Religion for example).

This throws into doubt whether a 'University' which has abandoned a universal curriculum has any right to call itself a University. Already a correspondent to the Leicester Mercury has suggested that a more appropriate name would be 'Polyversity' that is, teaching many subjects, but not all.

The UCU would like to suggest that, faced with a Department that is alleged to be 'unsustainable' due to a lack of resources, the management at the university should do something to improve these resources. Staff in the Department of German have come up with a plan whereby research criteria could be fulfilled.

The management of the University has shown no interest in this plan, thus arousing suspicions that they want to close the Department come what may.

This is becoming an all too familiar story. They find a 'quick-fix' solution to a short term trend. In the process a cultural base which has taken years to build will be destroyed.

### ACTIONS FROM UCU MEMBERS AT LEICESTER

1. Write / email to the VC before Friday to oppose closure of the department
2. If you are present at Senate, vote against the proposal
3. Email Leicester UCU with your views at [UCU@le.ac.uk](mailto:UCU@le.ac.uk)

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## A VIEW FROM THE GERMAN DEPARTMENT AND REACTIONS

*Dr Ian Roberts, Director of German Studies says:*

**"What does the university hope to achieve by closing German down?"**

and 1.5 teaching fellows. We are not seeking 3 lecturers (as per Nottingham university for example) but just one more (or a post doc).

There are no great savings to be made and no great investment needed to make it 'viable'... "This is by no means a bloated department with lots of staff and just one or two students... We have one lecturer

How much investment would that involve? Even if it were to cost £0.5m no-one has explained why this figure is not worth meeting."

### **MEANWHILE.....**

- Support for the German department is growing with individuals outside and inside the University writing to the VC to oppose this proposal.
- The Modern Languages students are planning a protest outside Senate on Friday.
- Leicester UCU has written to the VC to oppose the proposal

### **THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO:**

1. Write / email to the VC before Friday to oppose closure of the department
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