



Chair of Council Cadeirydd y Cyngor

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Buffy Williams MS,
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee,
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CF99 1SN

Prifysgol Caerdydd

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16th June 2025

Dear Buffy Williams MS,

I am writing to thank you for the opportunity, along with our Vice Chancellor, Prof. Wendy Larnar, to address the committee last week, and to directly respond to your questions about Cardiff University. Public accountability of this kind is important, and I'd like to thank the committee for the thoughtful and considered conduct of the meeting.

The committee may be aware of a newspaper article, quoting an anonymous source, that claims I 'lied' in my evidence to the committee. Cardiff University doesn't usually respond to stories based on anonymous sources, but lying to and misleading a Senedd committee is a serious allegation; to my personal integrity, the university's reputation and the standards we all aspire to for the conduct of public affairs and therefore need to be addressed.

In these published comments, it was claimed that I told the CYPE Committee that "everyone bought into the vision [of 'Academic Futures'], but nobody likes cuts to their bit [of the university], it is natural."

A review of the remarks in question would show that I was explicitly giving my view on the preceding strategy development exercise, Y Sgwrs Fawr – The Big Conversation. I was also explicitly clear at the end of my remarks that I was offering no view on Academic Futures other than it was necessary. This is clear from the draft transcript:

Patrick Younge: Council's role in this is quite specific because council's job is to—. We are the internal regulator, we're not the management, we're not involved in the day to day. **We ask ourselves some basic questions. Does what's proposed align with the strategy? We spent a whole year doing the 'big conversation'—a massive participatory exercise across the university. One of the outcomes of that exercise, which I think everybody bought into, was that Cardiff University needs to be a slightly smaller, more focused university with better experiences for staff and students. And I think everybody buys the vision, but nobody wants their bit to be the bit that gets smaller, and that's natural and that's human.** Has the process been rigorous? What is the evidence that the process will deliver? Are we going to be compromising quality? How do we ensure that, having done this, we can secure continuous



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improvement? How would we build the culture, and will it let the university fly? Will it let the university really achieve what it can? Those are the questions we asked ourselves at council, and having been shared the—. **We weren't asked to approve Our Academic Future before it went out to the university. That's management's job, but we had an informational session with them, as did the unions, as did others, and we will now look at what's come back from that, and then we will take a decision. So, I won't give you a view on anything that's in Our Academic Future, apart the fact that it is necessary, because council doesn't meet until next week.** (Para 110, our emphasis)

In our oral and written evidence, we explained that our strategy is based on the outcomes of our Y Sgwrs Fawr – The Big Conversation, a year-long participatory exercise across the university and beyond. I would be happy to provide further information on Y Sgwrs Fawr – The Big Conversation if that would be helpful for the committee.

I would also note that, in response to a question from Cefin Campbell MS, the Vice-Chancellor informed the committee of the Senate debate, the outcome of the Senate vote and that Council would be informed of the advice provided by Senate.

I am sorry that I feel the need to write to the committee in these terms, but misleading a Senedd committee is a serious allegation, and I wanted to take the opportunity to rebut the allegation directly and promptly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Younge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Younge,
Chair of Council,
Cardiff University