

10 January 2011

Michael Harris
Libel Reform Campaign
Free Word Centre
60 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3GA

Dear Michael

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers and academic-related staff working in further and higher education throughout the UK. At our annual higher education conference we passed the following motion on research, academic freedom and reform of the libel laws:

Conference is extremely concerned at the way that UK libel laws can be used to stifle genuine enquiry and criticism, and gives the power to shut down valid comment to those who can outspend their critics. Conference notes that recent examples of this behaviour include the libel proceedings involving scientists giving expert opinion on the efficacy of specific treatments. Conference pledges support to the Libel Reform Campaign, endorses its petition statement, and urges the government to reform UK libel laws to restore the balance between free speech and the protection of reputation.

The UCU would like to support the campaign to reform the libel laws in England and to endorse your petition.

Yours sincerely


Sally Hunt
General Secretary