

Ms Molly Stewart  
Coroner's Office  
West London District Coroner's Court  
25 Bagleys Lane  
London  
SW6 2QA

Christine Yates

London

Email:

Tel:

8 December 2014

Dear Ms Stewart,

**Re: Professor Stefan Grimm – Coroner's Inquest Adjournment**

Please find attached whistle blows submitted to Imperial College in August and October 2012 (two enclosures). At the time Imperial College used a review of six closed cases, the review undertaken in February 2011, as reason to ignore my whistle blows and do nothing. However, Imperial College may attempt to claim that a Risk Assessment had been undertaken, albeit this brief document is undated, unsigned, and labelled "not yet disclosed" and ends with: *"Accordingly, it would not be a proportionate use of further resource to undertake another investigation of these issues under Ordinance D18"* (Enclosed).

I submit this is compelling evidence that the College failed to respond appropriately to an internal whistle blow submitted in accordance with their own Ordinances, i.e. lack of proper governance. With the sad, tragic and all too preventable consequences of the suicide of Professor Grimm. I maintain that the College had every opportunity to prevent this tragedy if it had undertaken a proper health and safety risk assessment and attempted to improve policy implementation and practices when these were brought to their attention – these being raised through the proper channels. For the record, the College President and Provost have my detailed response to this 'risk assessment' challenging and clarifying the inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and outright lies the document contains.

The Coroner's Office needs to be aware of the pattern of behaviour that ensues whenever bad practice is brought to the College's attention. In response to whistle blows and other complaints the College tries to discredit the complainant. When this fails they will invariably state that they will hold a 'review' usually undertaken by those responsible for the bad behaviour and thus with a vested interest in covering up any misconduct and impropriety. It is noted this pattern remains unchanged, and most concerning that Imperial's spokeswoman has replied thus:

"Contrary to claims appearing on the internet, Professor Grimm's work was not under formal review nor had he been given any notice of dismissal. It is standard practice at Imperial to conduct both informal and formal performance management. Professor Grimm's line manager met with him on a number of occasions to see how the College could help him to develop more competitive grant applications, for example through internal peer-review, collaborations and letters of support. Discussions included talking about the best place for him to do his science, both inside Imperial and outside, and, with Professor Grimm's permission, his line manager made

enquiries about opportunities on his behalf. **(A communications person would only be able to reply after a briefing from Human Resources)**

As with all serious and tragic events involving staff or students, the College conducts appropriate reviews in order to see whether wider lessons may be drawn. Last month, following Professor Grimm's death, Imperial's Provost tasked the Director of HR and one of the College's senior elected academic representatives to review relevant College policies, procedures and the support available to staff. Their report will be considered by a senior group led by the Provost and the College will move swiftly to implement any recommendations".

This is clearly at odds with Professor Grimm's testimony, email trail enclosed, and comes far too late in the day. Notwithstanding where this email originated, Imperial College need to be able to provide evidence of support, and informal and formal performance management practices. Imperial will need to provide such evidence including meetings 'to see how the College could help him to develop ...'. Additionally, the College should be asked for evidence of 'appropriate reviews' the Katherine Newton review to be excluded (Feb 2011). The Brown Review <http://brownreport.info/> is the only independent credible review of practices at Imperial and this found "*AWERB at Imperial was not fit for purpose..*" (animal welfare practices). It is therefore totally inappropriate for the HR director to be asked to participate in reviewing current practices, i.e. the person (along with senior management) responsible for gross breaches of procedural failings and non-compliance of employment law.

It is only too obvious that Imperial felt forced to make a more acceptable public statement, this coming some two months after the initial insensitive announcement of Professor Grimm's death in September 2014, and the College deleting any mention of him from their intranet. Any such public statements now can only be construed as being attempts to disguise and cover up the appalling harassment and bullying prevalent at Imperial College, and attempts to evade any negative consequences relating to their disgraceful behaviour.

I am willing to be a witness to answer any questions the Coroner may have and to give greater clarification to 'standard practice' at Imperial College based on my experience as the College's Equalities Consultant from 2002 to 2012, if this would be helpful and appropriate. Please be advised that I will be out of the country from 31 December to 16 January 2015. I can be contacted via email or telephone number above and would greatly appreciate being notified of the date of the reconvened Inquest in due course.

Yours sincerely

Christine Yates  
E&Q Consultant

Encls: 2012 Whistle blows  
3 page 'Risk Assessment'  
6 page email trail (Professor Grimm's disclosure)