

June 1, 2016

Professor Patrick Johnston
President and Vice-Chancellor
The Vice-Chancellor's Office
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland

Professor Adrienne Scullion
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 INN, Northern Ireland

Dear Professor Johnston and Professor Scullion,

As Secretary-General of the IUAES, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, I am writing in regards to the proposal to end the country's single honours degree in Anthropology at Queen's University Belfast.

The Queen's University at Belfast has been an exemplary institution that has nurtured many different branches of anthropology, and pioneered fields such as border studies, ethnomusicology and the anthropology of emotions. It has a long list of luminaries associated with it, like Declan Quigley, Donnan Hastings, Kay Milton, Jonathan Skinner, Elizabeth Tonkin, Harvey Whitehouse, John Blacking, to name just a few. For many years it also hosted the Charles Wallace Fellows in the field of social anthropology. The academic devotion of the alumni of this programme steered it through all the troubled years of political tumult in this part of the world. The department continued to teach and also inspire generations of students while maintaining its dignity and impeccable integrity, displaying the highest norms of academic excellence.

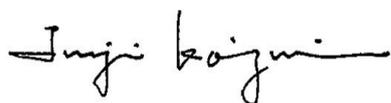
The specific areas that were nurtured by the Anthropology Programme at Queen's were in the field of Border Studies that has inspired many scholars to look upon it as a specialized branch of social anthropology. The anthropology of emotions and memory was also an area where important work was achieved, reaching far beyond the physical boundaries of this department to inspire scholars across the globe. Individual alumni of this honours programme are known for their publications and research globally and particularly in the south. The weekly seminars have always engaged with debates and issues, attracting global scholarship.

The importance of a discipline like anthropology becomes even more evident as the world is torn apart by conflicts over identity and ethnicity. The empathetic understanding and deep knowledge about the 'other' that anthropology provides helps greatly to enhance the capacity for tolerance of points of view held by others as well as to defend the rights and explain the needs of the oppressed and marginalized.

Anthropology as a discipline also integrates insights from various other social disciplines like economics, psychology and political science, helping to apply all these perspectives into a humanist perspective that supersedes mere statistics and sterile positivism.

On behalf of the IUAES, we urge the responsible authorities to reconsider their decision to shut down the highly productive and illustrious honours programme of the Anthropology Programme at Queen's University Belfast. To retain anthropology will mean that we retain a discipline wherein students learn to value a common humanism above all divisive identities that narrower perspectives on the human condition may inculcate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Junji Koizumi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Junji Koizumi, Ph.D.
Secretary-General
on behalf of the Executive Committee of
the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences