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Mr S Cummins  
College of Fine Arts

Dear Stephen,

I have read carefully your letter of 29th October and I recognise that you were "astonished and deeply upset". For my part, I am sorry if my attitude at the Thursday meeting was interpreted as an attack on those not deserving of some identification.

In defence of what you suggest as my "insinuations", "accusations" and "impugning of reputations", I must point out that as you heard from the students' mouths on the Tuesday, and read from their letters on Thursday, they regarded me as being personally responsible for their perceived plight. A plight which the staff of the School of Media Art itself identified from the letters as focussing on Media Art (99 complaints), Studio Art (24) and Arts Education and Theory (29).

I think you would acknowledge the students themselves were also "astonished and deeply upset", and certainly they directed accusations and insinuations at me and openly impugned my reputation, when I had been functioning on the advice from the School which assured me that it could reach the end of the year with the financial supplementation provided in September.

There is, as you say a need for more effective communication.

There is no question in my mind that the majority of the staff in the School work with "forbearance, goodwill and resourcefulness". This is as it should be and is greatly appreciated especially by me. However, the "fiscal restraint" is universal in the current National economic climate and any perceptions of understaffing are somewhat erroneous (except maybe at senior levels). The provisions for overall (including part-time) staff in the School of Media Art was on the same basis as before and the same basis as for Studio Art.

I am uncertain as to the "bureaucratic difficulty" and the "hierarchical protocol" which you identify, so must assume they are shortcomings of mine, but I am more concerned by your suggestion that this "hinders effective communication". All significant decisions in relation to equipment and staff funding are openly discussed and arrived at with the Heads of Schools, and I assume this is passed on individually or at school committees to all academic staff.

As the application of a school's resources are the responsibility of the individual school, the opportunity to place "effective ceilings" on student numbers rests with the

school. The decision to set our overall ceiling for the next five years at 960 -1,000 was a corporate decision involving all Heads of School.

I understand that at the end of 1990 some extra encouragement was given to first year students to choose sculpture, photography and 4D studies. If this was, or is done then staff must be aware of the consequences and plan for this "bulge" in load to take two years to level out in the system.

I am deeply concerned by the comments in your letter in regard to Financial Services. This area has a thankless task of trying to provide an effective and efficient "service" to the whole College, and tends to be both taken for granted and expected to make up for ineffective monitoring in many of the twelve or so budget units we have. I am sure as the systems develop their support will be greater, but we all must avoid "casting the first stone".

When the equipment budget for 1990 was determined and the concept of leasing was introduced (this enabled early access to expensive technology, paid for over an extended period) "long-term funding" was introduced. Once again this facility brings with it a "down side" which is the commitment of funding over the forthcoming three to four years, however, the equipment is "on deck" earlier.

Planning is everybody's responsibility not just mine, and I welcome advice and assistance in this now essential aspect in our educational environment.

I thank you for your letter despite its "slings and arrows" and hope that my side of the situation as I have tried to set it out here, may contribute to clearing the air.

Yours sincerely,



**K. B. REINHARD,**  
**Dean and Director**

