

Dear,



Hastings Borough Council and the University of Brighton sign a memorandum of collaboration

“This collaboration aims to open up a wide range of initiatives for information and knowledge sharing such as identifying how both physical and human resources can be best used to promote joint working; identifying and supporting sectors that will create jobs and provide sustainable economic growth; to improve the student experience and establish Hastings as a university town that can support and benefit from student population growth and to evaluate and secure funding for projects and new initiatives.”

Cllr Jeremy Birch (2015)

“The university's campus in Hastings is expanding and we and the Borough Council have enjoyed working together on projects of mutual interest for many years.”

“We both enjoy similar aims and beliefs when it comes to involvement in the community and this memorandum seals this excellent relationship.”

Vice-Chancellor Julian Crampton (2015)

### What happened?

**This document had been compiled by people who care about the University of Brighton's campus in Hastings, the students, the staff and the local community.**

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## Joint TUC letter

Dear Governor,

We are writing to you as the principal elected officers of the two trade unions which represent staff at the University of Brighton.

The Board of Governors has a very important decision to make that will shape the direction of the University in the coming period. The situation in which the University finds itself in relation to its deliberations on the future of the Hastings campus is unfortunate. The manner in which the matter was presented to the Board in March, together with the uncertainties and prevarications surrounding the public pronouncements by senior management, have done great damage to the institution's reputation and have served only to generate suspicion among people and organisations which had been, and should continue to be, the University's friends and allies.

The University's own lawyers have agreed that the decision taken on March 8<sup>th</sup> was taken improperly and cannot stand. It was rushed through on the basis of a paucity of information and a lack of consultation, either within the University or with our external partners. The case for the University Management Board's proposal was not adequately made, because the main document used to justify it, the BDO report, was, by its own admission, not of sufficient rigour or independence to support the argument. A document highlighting the main deficiencies of that report is included. Moreover, the proposal to close the Hastings campus, and to withdraw from the direct delivery of higher education in the town, summarily reversed the objectives of the University's existing Strategic Plan.

The trade unions believe that the decision over the future of the Hastings campus has implications which exceed the issues of the courses, staff and buildings directly affected and go to the heart of the direction and nature of this institution. The University of Brighton has staked out a position and carved out a reputation within higher education in Britain as a university with a particular understanding of its role and its relationship to the wider community. It has steadfastly refused to regard itself as an ivory tower but instead has tried to position itself at the heart of the public life in Brighton, Hove and Sussex, and sought to play an educationally and culturally developmental role in the area. The Hastings campus project was conceived explicitly to extend the benefits of the presence of a higher education institution to an area which is relatively deprived, not just educationally, but also economically and culturally. Thus a decision about its future cannot be isolated from wider questions about the ethos and direction of the University as a whole, and the implications that a major change in direction would have on every other part of the University.

The trade unions welcome the revised timetable for the taking of the decision. It is right that a decision of this magnitude, and with so many important ramifications, should be afforded an adequate period for information-gathering, discussion of alternatives, and full consultation with all those concerned. However, we are worried that the UMB's insistence that only *one* proposal – for the closure of the University of Brighton campus and the establishment of a 'University Centre' with Sussex Coast College – can be on the agenda for discussion will waste this opportunity to arrive at the best-informed policy. In addition, the fact that this decision is being made in the hiatus between two Strategic Plans runs the risk that it will not be taken with the overall objectives of the University in mind, or worse, will have the effect of dictating those wider objectives rather than being dictated by them.

Despite the way it has been pitched as merely a 'reconfiguration' of higher education in Hastings, the UMB's proposal would represent the ending of university degree provision in the town. It is generally recognised that higher education courses delivered by further education colleges, though they have their place within the spectrum of post-16 education, are no substitute for the provision that a university can offer in terms of range, level, resources or quality of teaching. No one should be in any doubt that this proposal would represent the degradation of higher education in the Hastings area, not its evolution.

It is our contention that alternative proposals must be considered. This is not an affirmation of the status quo or a refusal to countenance change. It has long been acknowledged, not least by the staff who work there, that despite its very real successes and strengths, the University's operation in Hastings could be improved in a number of ways. Groups of staff and other interested parties are working on proposals for enhancing higher education in Hastings which do not involve the withdrawal of direct provision by the University, some of which are included here; while the borough council has commissioned its own study of possibilities. In the interests of the long-term future of the University and everyone connected with it, the results of all this work should be on the table for consideration leading up to the Board of Governors' final decision in November.

Members of the Board bear a weighty responsibility. We trust that, now you have been afforded the time to do so, you will give due consideration to the interests of the institution, its staff, its students, present and future, and the community it serves by refusing to rule out in advance any reasonable option and insisting on a full examination of all the alternatives.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Abel, chair, UCU Coordination Committee

Ivan Bonsell, secretary, Unison

# Response to “Proposal for remodeling delivery of Higher Education in Hastings: Development of University Centre” AB16-52

This paper provides a review of the documents relating to Hastings which are to be put before Academic Board on the morning of June 17<sup>th</sup>. We discuss them in detail as we think it important that their inadequacies be named. We think it is impossible to conclude that the nature and quality of the information provided is sufficient to adequately inform Academic Board’s advice on the future of our HE provision in Hastings.

In particular appendices 1-3 provide us with the BDO report (February 2016) and the previous two internal review reports (September and November 2015). There is some commonality across these reports in terms of the range of options considered and the often reiterated consensus in all the documents that more work needs to be done to evaluate the merit of different options.

The September report concludes with the recommendation to develop a full business case for two of the options, growth as a specialist institute and consolidation as a local campus to serve Hastings. The November report develops these options further with both documents arguing that more work is required to progress the models. In relation to the option of a consolidation as a local campus, it is reported that the University had engaged an experienced policy and labour market analyst to undertake primary research on the local workforce and labour market skills gap, CPD needs, funding and EASE opportunities that may exist. There is no further reference to this work and by December BDO had been recruited to conduct a review of options.

It is concerning that none of the reports comprises the rigorous research, extensive modeling and wide ranging consultation necessary to adequately inform a decision of this significance. The November document details the work that needs to be done to properly evaluate the viability of the options (see AB 16-52 appendix 3 page 6 and 9) and yet this is not the work that was undertaken by BDO .

The BDO report which has formed the mainstay of the UMB’s justification for its plan to close the Hastings campus is striking in its scantiness. Running to only 25 pages, including appendices, it consists of a 3-page executive summary, four pages of general analysis, followed by roughly a page each on the five options considered. It does not provide the information such as fully-costed business case including audit of required facilities, or the labour market and skills gaps research or the extended market intelligence, outlined as necessary to inform decision making in the internal review document of November 2015.

The BDO report does have the virtue of modesty about its own scope, rigour and independence. We are told that it was primarily assembled ‘from information supplied by, and discussions with, senior staff at the University of Brighton’, and it includes the rather astonishing disclaimer, ‘We have not verified the accuracy, reliability of completeness of the information supplied and the procedures that we used to perform the work did not constitute an audit or review made under any generally accepted auditing standards’ (section 1.4).

The following outlines the information available in the BDO and other reports with a view to assessing its reliability, accuracy and comprehensiveness as the basis for decision making.

## Financial viability

In its own words, the BDO report is 'concerned primarily with academic viability and sustainability' (section 3.4). It is clear that it is guided by the assumption that academic viability can be equated to financial viability. And yet the report's authors also excuse themselves from having undertaken any financial modelling. There are no financial data, no tables, no graphs, no charts, no projections, that might be expected from a firm of accountants and business advisors.

AB16-52 Appendix 6 presents an estimate of Hastings income and total expenditure as producing a deficit of £1m but lack of explanation or contextual information (for example why over £0.5m of direct costs are "academic staff based elsewhere") renders this of limited value.

## Demographic arguments

There are essentially two demographic arguments made in the BDO report. The first is that the 'local market [for higher education] has become saturated' during the 12 years that the University of Brighton has been operating in Hastings (section 2.5). No evidence is offered to back up this assertion which is repeated at 4.2.3 and, amended to refer to 'the majority of the adult population' at 4.4.1. In the absence of any research, this must be considered purely speculative.

The second argument concerns a projected fall in the number of young adults from which the Hastings campus might draw for its students. Demographic data is referenced (4.4.1-3) showing a decline in the number of 18-24 year-olds in Hastings of 12.8% by 2021. The report, however, fails to mention two salient facts about this dataset: the decline of this age group is projected to be much higher in Eastbourne over the same period, and that in all districts the figures are predicted to rise again from 2023-24. Any decision based on the temporary trough in the figures would be unduly short-term.

This picture matches the national demographic data which is referred to at 4.4.5 where the only chart in the whole document is to be found. The report chooses to include the population pyramid comparing 2003 with 2013 without acknowledging that in the subsequent years the bulge representing young children will inevitably work its way through to student age. Since this is national data, it is not clear how it illuminates the situation of one campus of a single university, but in any case, population data alone is insufficient to determine the size of the pool of those seeking access to higher education.

## Recruitment

The report mentions the failure to meet recruitment targets, though again without any serious analysis or reference to any figures. Section 4.5.10 gives the impression that recruitment is falling year-on-year, but this is the opposite of the case. In fact, targets have increased fairly consistently since 2009 and trajectory of recruitment has been generally upwards since then,

with the highest figure achieved for this academic year. Although recruitment has generally missed its target, one way of understanding the data would be that actual recruitment has been lagging one year behind the targets. The decision to transfer nursing courses from Hastings to Eastbourne from 2015 is clearly a factor in the issue of overall student numbers on the campus.

The BDO report makes the assertion (first made at 2.14, but then repeated a further six times at 2.15, 4.4.13, 4.5.2, 4.7.4, 4.8.3, 4.11.9) that 'there is a limited 'draw' to Hastings as a university town when compared to other locations', including Brighton. No research to support this is cited, no countervailing tendencies are considered, and there is no recognition that if this is true of Hastings, it may also be true of Eastbourne.

## National Student Survey

The report makes a number of comparisons with the rest of the University. We are told that NSS scores for Hastings are lower than those for the University as a whole, which are already poor (4.3.1). It turns out that the score for Hastings is 82 compared the University's 83, hardly a difference with any statistical significance, which is presumably why the figure is not given. In addition, few applicants will be aware of the deviation between the Hastings score and that of the University as a whole. Nevertheless, the report asserts (at 2.3 and 4.1.5) without evidence that NSS is the decisive element in student choices about where to study and that Hastings's score will increasingly impact on its ability to recruit.

In contrast to the BDO report, the internal reviews have a more detailed perspective on the issues facing Hastings and how they might be addressed – for example in relation to student experience, "the academic and professional services staffing models at the campus are complex and challenging from a management perspective. The absence of a single line of management for academic staff working in Hastings does not lend itself to a consistent and joined up experience for students undermines the potential for a strong research narrative" (AB16-52 appendix 2 page 5)

## Drop-out rate

The withdrawal rate for Hastings sits squarely within the range of figures for the University by School. Hastings's poor withdrawal rate, referred to at 4.5.9, relates to clearing students only, which is exacerbated by the fact that Hastings takes a higher proportion of students from clearing than any School in the University.<sup>1</sup>

## Widening participation

Any discussion of clearing and drop-put rates is meaningless without addressing the profile of the target intake of the campus and the crucial question of the Widening Participation (WP) agenda. Strangely, there is very little in the report about this key factor beyond a reference at 4.2.2 to the rationale of the University's involvement in Hastings as 'regeneration through education'. The report goes on to concede that the Hastings operation has been 'reasonably successful' over the past 12 years at meeting this brief, before simply

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that comparisons between the Hastings campus and Schools are unsatisfactory since Hastings is not itself a School, but rather is an amalgam of the activities of a number of Schools.



asserting that this period is now over. There is no analysis of the campus's contribution to WP or any reference to WP data in the report.

Brighton's HESA returns on WP show the Hastings campus consistently leading the rest of the University in the three key categories of the proportion of students from state schools, the proportion from socio-economic classes 4-7, and the proportion from low participation neighbourhoods. The Hastings campus makes a decisive contribution to the last of these in particular to the benefit of the University as a whole. The Strategic Planning Office comments on the University's performance in relation to low participation neighbourhood targets (POLAR 3): 'At 10.4% we are 1% above our location adjusted benchmark and 0.7% higher than last year but below our Access Agreement target of 10.5%. We were below the sector by -1.1%, which was 11.5%.'

In the 2015/16 UoB Access Agreement with HEFCE, the Hastings campus is a central part of the university's widening participation strategy:

"The University of Brighton has made explicit commitments within its Strategic Plan 2012-15 to continuing to expand HE provision at our campus in Hastings, and in the Crawley/Gatwick Diamond Region, both areas of significant deprivation."

"...the university provides two members of the WP outreach team, based at the university's Hastings campus, who prioritise the needs of the schools and colleges in the region."

"A newly appointed member of staff based at our Hastings campus, has responsibility for developing new relationships with, and identifying WP cohorts within, schools and colleges in areas in Kent which are in areas with the lowest participation in higher education."

In the 2016/17 Access Agreement there is no mention of Hastings with the implication that Hastings will no longer contribute to the University's Widening Participation efforts. This would seem to pre-empt the outcome of consideration of the proposal for remodeling delivery of Higher Education in Hastings.

## Academic strength at Hastings

The BDO report suggests that limited research is currently undertaken at Hastings and it would take some time to establish a distinctive centre of excellence. This is in direct contradiction to the September internal review which stated "The research activity of most staff delivering teaching at Hastings is associated with the Schools to which they belong and therefore its contribution to the REF strategy is indirect. A research-active culture exists amongst the few academics based on the campus which the Campus Director believes would respond well to being nurtured...." (AB16-52 appendix 2 page 4)

The September internal review identifies journalism and digital media as an area of curriculum strength for the campus and the Hastings Biosciences update Dec 2015 illustrates another area of strength. It states "Despite the increasingly competitive climate for student recruitment and research funding the programmes delivered at Hastings continue to show annual increases in both recruitment and student satisfaction, whilst staff continue to



bid for and secure research funding, have brought postgraduate students to the campus and continue to publish in their respective fields. Staff on campus are very keen to explore how they are able to contribute to the future development of the campus". (Pernetta, 2015)

## What is a university for?

What is striking is that no one arguing for the closure of the Hastings campus, not the BDO report or senior managers of the University, have chosen to take on the important arguments about the social role of universities which underpinned the establishment of the campus (and which are addressed in the internal review documents). The Hastings project was initiated as an effort of social engagement, part of a regeneration project in a relatively depressed area of South-East England. It was premised on the notion that universities are able, and are under an obligation, to play a role which benefits the wider communities within which they exist. This rationale was restated, ten years on, in an [article](#) in the *Times Higher* featuring our former Vice Chancellor, and more recently in a [piece](#) by our ex-Deputy Vice Chancellor. The establishment of the Hastings campus was conceived as an education-led project to raise aspirations, lift skill levels, and open up opportunities where they did not exist before.

The BDO report does not address any of this directly. But the logic it uses is an implicit reversal of this thinking. For the authors of the report, the fact that Hastings is the most economically disadvantaged community in the South East (4.4.10) is no longer a very good reason for the siting of a campus there, but part of the justification for closing it and devolving any remaining higher education provision to an underfunded further education college.

The report claims that, as '86% of businesses in East Sussex employ fewer than 10 people, graduates are likely to have to leave the area after completing their courses in order to find employment' (4.4.12) Again, this data is misleading. On 2015 figures, Hastings has a *lower* proportion of businesses employing fewer than ten people than the national average (87.4% as opposed to 88.8%) and a similar employment profile to Eastbourne. Nevertheless, the report assumes that 'social investment', of the type that the Hastings campus represents, should not be measured by the extent to which it contributes to an improvement in indicators of social deprivation and under-development, but needs to demonstrate its ability to become a 'long-term commercial investment' generating a 'proportionate return' for the University (2.22-2.24). A university's relationship to the wider community is thus reduced to positioning itself in the best way it can in order to compete with other institutions for income and resources.

This is the central issue underlying the debate about the future of the Hastings campus. The University's last Strategic Plan retained the commitment to a socially engaged university. If this is no longer to be the case, and important decisions are to be taken according to a completely different rationale, this ought to be argued openly and the implications fully considered.

## Conclusion

The BDO report makes no convincing case for divestment from the Hastings campus. It simply assumes a rationale for universities which excludes socially motivated ventures like Hastings a priori. It is claimed that the report is independent, rigorous and authoritative. It is

none of these things, and it would do the University no credit to make a decision based on its minimal research and its poorly supported conclusions.

Internal reviews in September and November 2015 suggested the need for detailed analysis of the merits and business case for of at least two options. These detailed analyses have never been completed and scrutiny of other relevant evidence on which the Academic Board's credibility rests has not been possible. Given the university's commitment to a period of consultation prior to the Board of Governors meeting in November, it would be appropriate to use this consultation period to seek more systematic and thorough explorations of options for the campus.

N. Edmond

P. McManus

15<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## Further evidence to support the critique of the BDO Report

The BDO Report states:

- 4.4.12 In 2014, 86% of businesses in East Sussex employed fewer than 10 people, therefore graduates are likely to have to leave the area after completing their courses in order to find employment. Unemployment in Hastings is running at 9.8%, compared to a national average of 5.7%.

The reference given is East Sussex County Council Economic Update – July 2015. You can see from the referenced table that the businesses employing 0 – 9 members' of staff is recorded as being 87.4 % this is 1.4% below the average for England. The same graph identifies that small businesses having between 10 – 49 employees is identified as being 10.6% which is above the 9.2% of England. Medium sized businesses employing between 50 – 249 of staff is 1.7% as opposed to the 1.6% of England.

The very evidence used to identify why graduates are likely to leave the area, demonstrates the complete opposite, there is more reason to stay than leave.

### **Business enterprises by size of business, 2004-2015 - districts**

Filter variables

Year, 2015

Percentage

Business size (no of employees)	Total	Micro (0 to 9)	Small (10 to 49)	Medium-sized (50 to 249)	Large (250+)
Geography					
England	100	88.6	9.2	1.6	0.4
South East	100	89.4	8.7	1.5	0.4
East Sussex	100	90	8.5	1.3	0.2
Eastbourne	100	87.4	10.6	1.7	0.3
Hastings	100	87.4	10.6	1.7	0.2
Lewes	100	89.6	8.8	1.2	0.4
Rother	100	90.9	7.6	1.2	0.2
Wealden	100	91.4	7.4	1	0.1

There are a large businesses to entice graduate to settle in Hastings, this table highlights that the businesses are strong and able to survive beyond a five year period.

### Survival of businesses started in 2009

	Number of new businesses in 2009	Business survival rates				
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Eastbourne	315	92.1	71.4	52.4	42.9	36.5
Hastings	285	91.2	77.2	63.2	54.4	43.9
Lewes	425	89.4	67.1	52.9	43.5	38.8
Rother	300	93.3	76.7	66.7	53.3	45.0
Wealden	685	92.0	75.9	59.1	50.4	44.5
East Sussex	2,010	91.5	73.6	58.5	48.8	42.0
South East	36,320	91.6	75.7	61.9	51.2	43.8
England	209,035	90.9	73.9	59.7	48.9	41.8

Hastings		91.2	77.2	63.2	54.2	43.9
England		90.9	73.9	59.7	48.9	41.8

The survival rate of businesses in Hastings is consistently higher than England.

East Sussex County Council January 2016



Source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/regeneration-through-education-in-hastings/2011561.article>

## Regeneration through education in Hastings

A vision to revive a depressed Sussex town by building a university is succeeding

February 27, 2014

By Holly Else



Source: Alamy

**Sea change:** as the university has developed over the past decade, the community has been gradually regenerating and people in Hastings have raised their sights

The seaside town of Hastings is best known for the Norman invasion of 1066 that led to the famous battle. But over the past 10 years, Hastings has seen a rather different invasion: from higher education.

At the turn of the millennium, Hastings was down on its luck. It had high rates of unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, low wages and several of the town's schools were in special measures.

Peter Jones, then leader of East Sussex County Council, had the idea of building a university that would regenerate the town by providing local people with access to higher education, encouraging new businesses to invest in the area and helping existing ones to grow.

Thirteen years later, the higher education centre that developed out of the project is a fully fledged campus of the University of Brighton with 850 students, just over 100 staff and 40 courses.

Mr Jones, now the chairman of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, said that the project has had a "profound impact on the well-being of the whole community".

"Bringing higher education to Hastings has addressed one of the basic problems that Hastings had: low aspiration," he said. "[The] university's coming to town has had the profound effect of raising expectations, raising skills and opening up an opportunity that did not exist before."

The story of higher education in Hastings started in 2001 when East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and regeneration partners secured funding from the now-defunct South East England Development Agency to undertake an "education-led regeneration" of the town. The councils approached the University of Brighton to see if it wanted to get involved.

Brighton took on the challenge and worked with The Open University, plus Sussex, Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church universities to develop the project. In 2003, the University Centre Hastings opened its doors. It had 40 students, five staff and offered two courses in the first year.

Julian Crampton, vice-chancellor of Brighton, said: "The essence of it was that this would be part of an integrated plan working with businesses and councils to start the upward spiral for regeneration."

Gradually, the other partner universities became less involved with the project. In 2009, Brighton was providing 95 per cent of the courses and named Hastings its fifth campus, to sit alongside its three Brighton campuses and one in Eastbourne.

As the University of Brighton in Hastings campus developed, so did the town. New business premises helped to create new jobs. Professor Crampton said a "major success" for this part of the project was the arrival of Saga in 2011. The over-fifties insurance and holiday company bought a six-storey office block in the town's new business district and created 800 jobs.

John Shaw, chief executive of not-for-profit development company Sea Change Sussex, said that regeneration has not happened overnight. "We are now having a core of graduates starting to come through the pipeline," he added.

Over the past 10 years, the number of businesses in Hastings has grown, as have average wages for employees. According to East Sussex in Figures, the county council's web-based database, the mean average wage rose 17 per cent between 2008 and 2012, compared with a rise of less than 6 per cent across the South East. The number of businesses in the town grew by 130 between 2004 and 2009.

## **Bravery pays off**

Professor Crampton admitted that the project was a “brave approach” to regeneration. “A lot of others may think that one of the first things you have to do is create business space or a science park,” he said. “This was taking a rather radical view where education was at the heart of the whole initiative. That was quite innovative.”

The university did not stop at higher education. In 2011, two new academy secondary schools opened with the university as lead sponsor. Earlier this year, three local primary schools joined the Academy Trust and three more are expected to join by the end of the year.

Professor Crampton added that the university has always had good links with the local further education colleges. “Here is a town of about 100,000 where the university has really brought together education from primary school right through to secondary, sixth form and vocational or higher education.” This provides a “road map” for children to progress right the way through the education system, he argued.

Joanna MacDonald, a principal lecturer and course leader at Hastings, has been teaching at the campus since 2006 and has seen the changes that the university has helped it achieve. “I’ve seen Hastings become less scruffy,” she said. “The university has made a big difference. We are a big part of the town centre; people know who we are and what we are doing here.”

She added: “We have grown enormously. We are now getting staff who are based here on a regular basis instead of being Eastbourne- and Brighton-based and coming to Hastings one day a week.”

If Professor Crampton has his way, this growth will not slow down any time soon. “Our plan is to grow to 1,500-2,000 [students] gradually,” he said. He hopes to reach 1,500 in the next three years.

“The appetite is there – we started with one academic building, and now we have three. We are just about to begin building student residences in the town to really flesh this out as a properly viable campus.”

The University of Brighton has invested £30 million in the project over the past 10 years. Professor Crampton added that “significant” funding came from the now-defunct South East England Development Agency and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Growth has not been easy. “We are creating an environment that is a high-quality education environment for quite a small number of students,” Professor Crampton said. This brings challenges in creating the feel of a university, as well as in getting the courses to align with the town’s aspirations for growth and business, he added.

The past decade has also seen political changes that have affected the stability of finance, Professor Crampton said, with the closure of regional development agencies from 2010 and the rise of the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Brighton is not the first university to develop a presence in an underserved area. In 1994, the University of Greenwich began offering courses at a site in Chatham Maritime near Gillingham in Kent. Several universities in the region now run courses on the campus.

Mr Jones said that universities should get more involved in regeneration projects because they can “really raise the skills [level] within the community”. The broad benefits of this are a more qualified and confident population that can go on to have good careers, he argued.



Source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/community-engagement-what-universities-should-be>

## Community engagement is what universities should be for

Working in our local areas is much more than charity for higher education institutions, says Stuart Laing

March 30, 2016

By Stuart Laing



Why does university-community engagement matter? What is it for? And how could the late Sir David Watson plausibly claim that civic and community engagement constitutes a “new paradigm” in the development of the institutional mission of universities?

Probably not by looking at the current state of most English universities, facing up as they are to an increasingly competitive and self-interested climate. Let us instead shift our gaze, as Watson and his co-authors did in their 2012 book, *The Engaged University*, to a broader international perspective; especially to the universities of the Global South. Here, institutional missions are increasingly concerned primarily with compelling and immediate social issues: alleviating widespread poverty, improving public health, achieving universal primary and secondary education, and enabling locally controlled economic development.



### **Brighton project's template for community outreach**

The challenge, often also set directly by governments, is for these institutions to find new and effective ways of developing, transmitting and applying knowledge for the public good; ways that may not always look anything like received Western forms of teaching or research. Measuring a university's success here does not mean revelling in the relative failure of neighbouring institutions; rather it is often precisely through active collaboration with other universities that key widespread improvements can be effected.

This is not charity work; it is what universities should be for. As one South African voice cited in *The Engaged University* comments: "We need to change the perception among faculty and community partners from thinking of [university-community engagement] as philanthropic activity to one of reciprocity that respects that knowledge exists both in the university and the community."

So how can we bring this perspective back to universities in a relatively prosperous – although still profoundly unequal – society such as the UK?

In such societies, university-community engagement should have two broad purposes. First, it should absolutely aim to mobilise and combine university knowledge and community experience to address social disadvantage and exclusion, to promote the idea of a fair society.

Second, it should complement and collaborate with the university's service to business activities by focusing on all those areas of our daily lives that are of profound material and civic importance but which are typically seen as "non-economically productive activity", such as caring, sustainable development, self-management of health and well-being, voluntary activity and the development of citizenship. These are all massive areas of our real lives.

Vice-chancellors are often inclined to talk warmly of all the non-economic personal benefits that involvement with higher education can bring to its participants. If these comments hold water, then why should these benefits be restricted to the circa 50 per cent of the population who are destined for "graduate jobs"? To endorse this restriction would only compound the economic inequality that the much vaunted "graduate premium" is commonly agreed to underpin.

Rather, universities that develop serious and fully strategic programmes of community-university engagement can significantly extend the membership of their university communities and do so in ways that add greater colour and richness to their existing teaching and research programmes, as well as providing tangible benefits to their local communities.

National and international debates about the extent of and most effective methodologies for this kind of community-university engagement are only at an early stage; it may be some years yet before they reach full maturity. But they are developing – fast. This is what led Watson to speak of the emergence of a new paradigm, of which his own work is one of the most advanced descriptions to date.

It is for this reason, following his untimely death just over a year ago, that his colleagues and friends from across the globe together agreed to create a new annual award, the Professor Sir David Watson Awards for Community-University Partnerships, to promote the worldwide development of the idea and practice of university-community engagement. In hard times, UK universities and academics need to have the courage to look outward and learn, for that is where the future lies.

**Stuart Laing is former deputy vice-chancellor and emeritus professor at the [University of Brighton](#). To find out more about the awards set up in Sir David Watson's memory (including how to make a donation), contact [sam.davies@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:sam.davies@brighton.ac.uk).**

## The campaign

### The petition

<https://www.change.org/p/save-hastings-campus>

**Signatures: 7,924**

Petitioning Vice-Chancellor, University of Brighton Professor Debra Humphris

## STOP THE CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON SITES IN HASTINGS

 **Aran Macdermott** Hastings, United Kingdom



### Sign this petition

7,924 supporters

2,076 needed to reach 10,000

### Hastings campus solidarity Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/666824266793059/>

**Members: 1,204**



Discussion

Members

Events

Photos

Files

Search this group



ADD MEMBERS

+ Enter name or email address

MEMBERS

1,204 members

## In the news...

Both local and national press report on the review and resultant campaign, a selection of headlines illustrate the reputational damage that the University has been exposed to.



Students and locals protest in Hastings about campus 'closure plans'



**Brighton University protesters set to march over future of Hastings campus**  
Students' union insists campus will close within 2 years, while university says it will 'evolve'

103



**University of Brighton 'disguising' Hastings campus plan**

9 March 2016 Sussex

## The Argus

**"They'll never take our campus": Hastings students demonstrate in Brighton town centre**

Hundreds protest against plans to shut university campus

Unions, students, staff and council attack campus closure plan



University has 'moral obligation' to pay back £12m



Updated: Hastings campus 'to close in two years'



University of Brighton denies betraying Hastings



Seventeen university courses 'to close'



SLIDESHOW: Hundreds march to save Hastings uni campus



## A similar situation

The reporting of the closure of the Scarborough campus by Hull University highlights what difficulties are yet to be faced and the type of headlines that may still be experienced.



## Hull gives Scarborough campus the cold shoulder

Source: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/hull-gives-scarborough-campus-the-cold-shoulder/2012994.article>

University set to close seaside town's 'unsustainable' degree programmes

May 1, 2014

By [Paul Jump](#)



Source: Alamy

**Wave of change: David Willetts said he wanted new universities in 'cold spots'**

When universities and science minister David Willetts spoke last month about creating new universities in "obvious cold spots", he cited the examples of East Anglia and Yeovil.

But anyone who has dipped their toe in the sea at Scarborough knows there are few colder English spots than the North Yorkshire resort.

So at first glance, Mr Willetts might be disappointed to learn that the [University of Hull](#) plans to close enrolment in all of the degree programmes it currently offers at its Scarborough campus from next year.

A discussion paper submitted to Hull's senate last month says that increased competition within higher education and the university's own "strategic ambitions" to improve its reputational stature means it will become "unsustainable" to continue offering bachelor's or master's degrees on its Scarborough campus.

The paper says moving some of the courses offered back to Hull would permit greater economies of scale, better align teaching with research, facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and better cohere with the university's faculty-led management structure.

The Scarborough campus, which offers courses in subjects such as education, marine biology and digital arts, has about 1,500 students, accounting for 8 per cent of Hull's student body. It became affiliated to Hull in 2000, having previously been a teacher training college and then University College Scarborough.

However, despite the plans appearing to go against Mr Willetts' hopes for the country's cold spots, Hull insists that they could eventually see Scarborough end up with a fully fledged university of its own.

It is proposing that the seaside site, which has become "an important part of the town's culture and economy" be used to create a "Scarborough-centric higher education offer". Although it will not recruit any more bachelor's or master's students next year, the campus will continue to recruit foundation course students while the university consults Scarborough Borough Council and local businesses about what courses should be offered on a continuing basis, and who should run them.

Ian Pashby, Hull's pro vice-chancellor for engagement, said that in developing a "new institutional model" for the Scarborough campus, the university was fulfilling its role as an "anchor institution". The remodelled institution would have "strong local roots" and "might eventually support the town's aspiration to have its own university".

He added that the proposals had been "overwhelmingly endorsed" by the university's senate and council, and a decision on what would be offered in Scarborough would be taken in the coming months.



## Hull University students demand refund over campus closure

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/28/hull-university-students-demand-refund-over-scarborough-campus-closure>

Students say Scarborough campus has become a ghost town as its operation is wound down and moved 40 miles south



The closure of the Scarborough campus was announced in April 2014. Photograph: Gary Calton for the Guardian

[Josh Halliday](#) North of England correspondent

Monday 28 March 2016 12.32 BST Last modified on Tuesday 29 March 2016 00.25 BST

Students at the [University of Hull](#) are demanding a refund of their £9,000-a-year fees over the closure of a campus that has left staff “utterly demoralised” and hundreds of undergraduates in “open revolt”.

The university’s Scarborough campus is being wound down and its operations moved 40 miles south to Hull under plans by the vice-chancellor, Prof Calie Pistorius.

But the move has left students with limited access to their tutors, who are being moved to Hull, and turned the campus into what staff and undergraduates describe as a ghost town.

Sources said as few as 13 students live at Cayley Hall, the university's £3,998-a-year hall of residence, which is built to house 213.

"It's becoming clear that they're moving the staff to Hull and slowly our access to our academic staff – which is what the campus is sold to you on the back of – is being eroded," said one student. "Increasingly, there's empty offices that previously housed academics who were here to support us. Increasingly, people are disappearing."

An [online petition](#) started by students calling for a refund of their £9,000-a-year fees "to reflect the cuts in the level of service" has attracted nearly 400 signatures.

The closure of the Scarborough campus was announced in April 2014. Six hundred second-year and third-year students currently study at the seaside campus – down from 1,800 when it first opened in 2010 – and next year it will house only final-year undergraduates.

University bosses recently caved in to pressure from students to open the campus library around the clock after it reduced its opening hours. The canteen is shut over the weekend, students said.

"The place is like a ghost town," said one university employee contacted by the Guardian. "Many academics have been reposted to Hull but administrative staff still have no idea what will happen to their jobs."



'The campus and the town of Scarborough have been hung out to dry by a bungling vice-chancellor.' Photograph: Gary Calton for the Guardian

It is believed that around 30 university staff face redundancy because, unlike the academics, their jobs are not being transferred to Hull.

There is growing anger that Pistorius has not yet explained to students in person his decision to close down the campus, nor attended the past two graduations in the seaside town.

The South African professor – whose first cousin's son is Oscar Pistorius – was previously vice-chancellor at the University of Pretoria, where in August 2006 he had to be escorted off a campus by police amid student riots over plans to close it down.

“The campus and the town of Scarborough have been hung out to dry by a bungling vice-chancellor who hides behind his junior staff and hasn't got the guts to appear before his own students,” said one member of university staff.

“He's destroyed a successful education community in a town whose economy is already precarious. It's heart-wrenching for everyone associated with the campus.”

The results of this year's Student Experience Survey, [released last week](#), showed how the university had fallen rapidly down the league table since announcing the closure of its Scarborough campus in 2012. It currently sits 74th in the annual table of 117 universities, having dropped from 44th place two years ago.

“It's a nightmare from the students' point of view,” said one student, who asked not to be named over concerns that speaking publicly would affect her grades.

“We know that we're coming to a small campus and there's good aspects of that: you end up knowing everybody, it's very friendly, access to lecturers and tutors historically has been brilliant – or that's what it's sold to you as.”

She added: “People haven't got access to their personal tutors because they're in Hull three days out of five.

“It's depressing. We just want it to end now because it's hard enough doing your finals, let alone doing them in a depressing atmosphere where you feel like you're being hard done by. That is the consensus of how people feel: it's tough and they're taking the piss, frankly.”

A university spokeswoman said it was working with a “partner institution” on a sustainable model for the Scarborough campus. She said the university would continue to support education in the town by sponsoring its University Technical College, an engineering and design college for 14- to 18-year-olds.

She added: “We remain committed to providing a positive experience for students and will continue to work with our students to look for ways in which the experience can be enhanced as the campus evolves.

“We are working with our students on the Scarborough campus to address recent concerns raised by them and have already introduced improvements to enhance their experience and directly address the points raised. These include the introduction of 24-hour opening at the campus library, improved the availability of academic support and reviewed catering.”

# Students union update

Hands off Hastings update 20th June 2016

Source: <https://www.brightonsu.com/news/article/6013/Hands-off-Hastings-update-20th-June-2016/>

Cassie Thornton



Students, staff and community members in Hastings and across the university have challenged the decision to close the Hastings campus since the moment it was taken. Under pressure and legal action, University Management are setting aside the decision and revisiting what little discussion has been had on the future of the Hastings campus. The direct action and consistent lobbying of students from the campus- including demonstrations, and a sit-in- has undoubtedly added to public awareness of the issue too, and placed pressure on Senior Management.

This gives us a narrow opportunity to restate the case for the campus we've been making, against what seems to have been an executively taken and implemented mission to withdraw higher education from the town.

It's a welcome step, that the University Management Board (UMB) and Board of Governors' decision to close the Hastings Campus has been set aside; and that what little discussion and consultation has been had on the matter is to be revisited. However, the research and consultation necessary for a rigorous, informed and democratic process remain absent.

Since the only option to be considered is still the one already formulated- it is evident that these efforts are an empty bureaucratic gesture.

These, in brief, are the updates you need to know (taken from a joint statement by University & College Union and Unison, the staff Trade Unions):

## Summary:

- **the decision to terminate the University's operation in Hastings has been set aside;**
- **the flawed nature of the process followed means that the Vice Chancellor does not have the authority to proceed with the closure plan;**
- **a new process to consider the University's operation in Hastings will be put in place;**
- **the process will include consultation with the Academic Board and other stakeholders;**

- **the only proposal that will be offered for consideration, however, will be the closure of the University's operation, and the termination of higher education provision at Hastings, and its substitution with a 'University Centre' - a proposal identical to the original decision of the Board of Governors;**
- **the only evidence to be offered in support of this proposal will be the flawed BDO Report (now belatedly made public), and highly contentious figures about the cost of delivery;**
- **the process is to commence this Thursday with a consideration of the proposal by the members of the Academic Board.**

Last week, at the Academic Board made up of staff union representatives, your Students' Union President Hayley Wood and Vice President Academic Experience Bethany Wren, the future of the Hastings campus was discussed. The Academic Board was not consulted or involved in the decision previously, with Hastings being breached as only a 'verbal update'.

There was meant to be a presentation from Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chris Pole, on the 'University Centre'- which so far has consisted of proposals to move 3 of the 30+ courses existing at Hastings to Sussex Coast College Hastings, all foundation courses, and the closure or movement of the rest to other campuses. However, he was absent and little information about this plan was given.

We will continue to raise the many grievances we have with these processes, and the farcical 'University Centre' alongside our staff union colleagues- and hope that staff involved in the discussions going forward will seize the opportunity to defend higher education, widening participation and access to opportunity.

We would welcome working with the Vice Chancellor and University Board of Governors to find a satisfactory solution for the preservation of Higher Education in Hastings- if a new climate of openness and collaboration were to be made possible.

However, until that point we will continue to fight against any moves to close the Hastings campus without appropriate consultation.

The efforts of students, staff and community members in Hastings and across the university have forced the University Management Board (UMB) to recognise the illegitimacy of their conduct on the matter of closing the Hastings Campus. The dismantling of Higher Education in Hastings must be called to a halt, and the possibilities for the Hastings Campus future expanded radically, for this new turn of consideration to be taken seriously.

By Molly Maher, Vice President Welfare & Campaigns on behalf of Brighton Students' Union

20<sup>th</sup> June 2016

# Letter from Amber Rudd MP

1<sup>st</sup> July 2016

**AMBER RUDD MP**  
Member of Parliament for Hastings & Rye



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our ref: AR/LS/8800

1 July 2016

I am writing to reassure you of my total commitment to keeping the University of Brighton here in Hastings.

As you know, I met with senior officers of Hastings Borough Council as soon as the announcement was made back in February, and was one of the signatories to a letter sent by Hastings & St Leonards Strategic Partnership to Professor Humphris dated 19 February, which proposed the setting up of a Task Force for the University, College, councils, MPs, schools, businesses, and community to support the Board in a cooperative approach to help to retain the University of Brighton in Hastings. I then attended the first meeting of that Task Force on 19<sup>th</sup> March and I met with Professor Humphris in Westminster on 27 April,

I am determined to work with all of the above to do everything possible to keep the University here, including working collaboratively with all interested parties to achieve the above objective, including Brighton Students' Union, Hastings Borough Council, Michael Foster, Seachange Sussex, and Peter Jones CBE, Chairman of The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amber Rudd'.

Amber Rudd



# Letter from Cllr Peter chowney

4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Please quote:  
Your reference:  
Date: 04.07.16  
Please ask for: Cllr Peter Chowney  
Telephone direct: 01424 436032  
E-mail: [cllr.peter.chowney@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.peter.chowney@hastings.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.hastings.gov.uk](http://www.hastings.gov.uk)



**Councillor Peter Chowney**  
Aquila House  
Breeds Place  
Hastings,  
East Sussex TN34 1UY

Dear Governor,

## **University of Brighton Hastings Campus**

The announcement of the decision to close the Brighton University Hastings Campus came as a devastating blow to everyone in Hastings, and was greeted with widespread dismay from organisations across the town, including the council, other public bodies, the MP, voluntary sector groups, and business groups. So we are very pleased that the formal decision has now been postponed, pending a consultation on the future of the Hastings Campus.

We believe that Hastings holds considerable opportunity for the University that could be developed with local partners. You committed to Hastings over 10 years ago when the economic and social climate of the town was at its most bleak. Thanks to the work of the broad partnership in which the University was and is an acknowledged leader, a range of initiatives have been put together that will offer part of the base for sustainable improvement:-

- The creation of the University campus itself, involving over £12m of public investment to build these facilities, of which the University of Brighton remains the custodian;
- The creation of an academy chain with a real focus upon improving the performance and future of local young people;
- A new campus for Sussex Coast College;
- New employment space in the town centre attracting new employers including SAGA;
- A belt of new employment space running down the west side of Hastings into North Bexhill, an opportunity opened up by the construction and opening of the new Link Road, also creating over 2,000 new homes;
- The creation of a new and exciting cultural agenda including the arrival of the Jerwood Gallery, the revamped Stade, refurbished seafront, a world-class BMX and skateboard arena in the abandoned White Rock Baths, and of course the re-opened and regenerated Hastings Pier;
- A new future for the Fishing Industry developed through the Fisheries Local Action Group in which the University has been a leading member;





- Reduced crime levels and the fear of crime, which is beginning to be reflected in the image of the town;
- Intervention in the worst parts of the private rented sector to improve private rented housing;
- Dealing with abandoned and dilapidated properties through the council's CPO and 'Grotbuster' programmes;
- Major investment by the council and Arts Council England in a programme of cultural events and festivals, notably the ROOT1066 festival of creative arts over this summer, to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings.

All of these factors have helped to transform Hastings into a town with a growing reputation for creativity, innovation and forward-thinking, witnessed by the town repeatedly featuring in 'best of' league tables in the national and international press. In short, an ideal place for a university to flourish, and to attract students to.

We understand that the University cannot sustain low student numbers and that this market is increasingly competitive. But we believe that the absence of a Hall of Residence and poor student union facilities have been contributory factors to this - the lack of good quality student accommodation in particular. If a site could be identified for student accommodation, Hastings Council would be happy to facilitate a compulsory purchase of the site, subject to necessary approval by the Secretary of State.

The academic offer could potentially be changed too, to focus on a set of high-quality courses that would fit with the image of Hastings. Hastings could be promoted more as an 'academic destination' in its own right, focusing on the bohemian atmosphere, cultural and music scene, and local history, all of which combine to create a town that will appeal to potential students. In many ways Hastings resembles the Brighton of the 1970s before wealth 'rubbed the edges' off of it. It is certainly not the same as the current City of Brighton and should not be asked to compete as a kind of 'annexe' in which Brighton University students might unwillingly end up - Hastings should be promoted as an academic centre with its own special qualities. During the summer, the three councils with an interest in the Hastings campus (Hastings, Rother and East Sussex) will be carrying out a commissioned study into the future of higher education in Hastings, and how we can preserve a university here. We will include the results of that study in our formal submission to the consultation.

I am determined that Hastings will retain a university, with decent student accommodation and courses that can sustain sufficient student numbers - at least the 2,000 originally proposed by the former University of Brighton VC. This is an essential part of the future of Hastings, and is key to the town's continuing regeneration. And I would very much like Brighton University to be a part of that. Brighton University has been here for, and played its essential part in, the huge renaissance of our town over the last fifteen years. I believe I can speak for the vast majority of people and organisations in Hastings when I say that we want the University of Brighton to continue to be involved in that, to consolidate and grow the Hastings campus into a vibrant and viable university in an exciting and increasingly attractive town.

Yours sincerely,



Leader



# Letter from Michael foster DL

5<sup>th</sup> July 2016



From the High Sheriff of East Sussex  
Michael Foster DL

Dean Pateman, Registrar  
University of Brighton  
Mithras House, Lewes Road  
Brighton BN2 4AT  
By Hand

5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Dear Dean Pateman

**RE: Consultations concerning proposed closure of the Hastings Campus of the University of Brighton**

Following our earlier correspondence concerning the above, I am delighted to note that the University have now confirmed that no decision has been reached and that full consultation (which I hope will include the effect on the local community) will take place before a decision is reached.

Thank you.

There was set out in my original letter (signed by others) the basis of why a decision to close the University campus in Hastings would be such a bad idea. I know that those with greater expertise will be making full and comprehensive representations, and I would just wish to add my voice to the call that the University Governors will take very careful account of all that is said before imposing such a "body blow" on the town and community of Hastings.

In particular I would wish to say that if some of the courses moved from Hastings were moved back, the numbers you require would I think be quite close and achievable. I do hope the University will look wider than the initial narrow considerations, although of course, none of us can yet see the basis on which the initial proposals were made.

However I want to be positive in thanking the University for the consideration they have given to reviewing the original proposal.

Yours sincerely

**MICHAEL FOSTER**

Lacuna Place, Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1BG  
E: HS.eastsussex@hotmail.com  
T: 01424 203040

# Letter from A. Rudd, D. Scott, M. Foster, P. Jones & J. Shaw

4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**From Supporters of the Brighton University Campus Hastings:**

**The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP (Hastings and Rye)  
The Baroness Steadman-Scott OBE DL  
Michael Foster DL, High Sheriff of East Sussex (and former MP Hastings and Rye)  
Peter Jones CBE (former Leader ESCC)  
John Shaw, Director, Sea Change**

The Governors  
Brighton University  
Administrative Centre  
Mithras House  
Lewes Road  
Brighton BN2 4AT

4 May 2016

Dear Member

**Re: The threatened closure of the University campus at Hastings**

We, the undersigned, are very much 'friends' of the University of Brighton and particularly committed to the university maintaining its presence at the Hastings campus, which appears now to be under threat.

Our understanding is that at a meeting of the Board of Governors on 8th March a decision was taken which would allow the University management to pursue the closure of the campus at Hastings, providing in its place some form of university centre in conjunction with the Sussex Coast College of Further Education, using perhaps the current buildings.

It is fair to say that we are not aware of the actual resolution passed by your good selves, as it has not yet been published, but it has clearly been taken as sufficient authority for the University management to pursue the 'closure option'.

As you may be aware, the public protest against such a proposal is almost unanimous in the Hastings area, it is cross party, cross-section of society, indeed it is difficult to find anyone outside the University management who has a good word for the proposal.

More especially, these decisions appear to have been made certainly without proper consultation and probably without factual justification.

From meetings that have since been held, it would seem that the University management's 'case' is based broadly on two assertions:

- a) That the numbers recruited to the Hastings campus at about 650/700 (albeit below the 900 peak of the recent past) is far short of the 1,500 target that makes the campus "viable" with the implication that it is resource draining across the wider University (the financial argument).
- b) That the academic achievements of the university as a whole must be addressed and that somehow by implication the performance at Hastings (although this has not been

specifically said) is unhelpful in achieving the higher standards that are sought (the academic argument).

Both those assertions are strongly challenged and perhaps we can explain in outline why.

#### **The Financial Argument**

No figures have been published as to why it be thought that the current provision is financially unviable. We simply do not know as no figures have been published that would justify that assertion. Indeed the alternative proposal of a stand-alone organisation with around 600 students in higher education, would surely be more challenged financially than the current arrangements.

As to the 'plant' (the buildings), much of this was financed by the regeneration process in Hastings, which is continuing, and the support of the task force which was set up for that very purpose, to assist Brighton University in the provision. It would indeed be regrettable if the commitment Brighton University made to the regeneration project by the provision of the university support was withdrawn on unjustified financial grounds.

It is also a widely held concern that just recently there were across the town some 1300 students in higher education, and indeed around 900 within the university campus. The fact that there is a reduction in numbers in past few years, may suggest the lack of a compelling vision or plan that perhaps could be addressed. There is certainly goodwill within the local community to support such a proposal.

#### **The Academic Argument**

What is clearly the case is that the Academic Board has never been consulted on the closure of the Hastings campus and they are therefore unclear as to the academic worries that are now apparently of concern. Without an analysis of why this is a problem, it is difficult to accept the justification. Of course, striving for higher academic achievement is always important, but the fact that a large number of the students at Hastings are recruited through clearing may suggest that their grades for A level are not as high as perhaps others. It may even be suggested that the academic achievement at University level is therefore more challenging, but it does not justify the removal of that opportunity to students who will move on to more useful contributions to both the local and national economy.

There is also a widely held view that we have not been able to build on the success of the digital media degree, which is of such excellence.

#### **The Community Argument**

A third issue is the economic effect on the community of Hastings, which has learned to love and support the University in a wider field than the classrooms. Many jobs depend on the University and the local economy will undoubtedly be damaged by the University's decision to leave, if that be confirmed. One would have thought that consultation with the economic taskforce and the local authorities is therefore a prerequisite to such decisions, but not until after the initial decision.

#### **Conclusion**

The above is but a brief summary of the many concerns that we have as to the 'apparent decision' to close the Hastings campus. We are unaware as to what information in particular you as Governors were given in the 'in principle' decision that you made last March.

We have, however, taken some advice from lawyers, who say that there is a real prospect that a judicial review of the decision (if indeed it was to close) might well be successful, for the several reasons we have set out above. As you will know, a judicial review is essentially based on process and we have to say that the process has been abysmal, as we think you may agree, having considered what we have now set out.

Our purpose as 'friends' is not to embroil the university in legal action, but rather to impress upon you the seriousness of any decision to close the campus in Hastings and for that decision to be reviewed. We suspect there will be protests, maybe industrial action and much else, but our purpose is not to encourage difficulties but to co-operate and suggest a way forward.

We are therefore writing to you at this stage to ask that at your meeting in May you will consider a review of any decision you have already made and instruct the university management to take no further steps along the 'closure' line until all proper processes, including proper consultation with: a) The Academic Board, b) The Hastings and Bexhill Taskforce, and c) the local authorities (namely ESCC, Hastings and Rother) have taken place.

Clearly, your management group will need time to assemble the necessary information, to organise a wide consultation process, and to commission alternative plans for preserving your Hastings campus, including an address to such issues as appropriate responses to the demographic downturn, and any abnormally high 'drop-out' rate, etc. Given the impending difficulties of the summer season, we are sure that all parties would make themselves available so as to enable your review to be concluded at your November meeting.

There is clearly a need for you as Governors to have all the facts before pursuing this closure line, which we know you will regret when the opportunities for many young people (indeed their life chances and social mobility) are denied in consequence.

We do not want there to be any misunderstanding as to the strength of feeling in the eastern end of the county (and wider, we feel) across our society for the proposal made. Brighton University are the only show in town and have in consequence a special responsibility to an undertaking that was taken on.

Yours sincerely

**Amber Rudd, Debbie Scott, Michael Foster, Peter Jones, John Shaw**

**TO: Dean Pateman, Interim Registrar and Secretary (on behalf of the University Governors) [t.j.hampton@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:t.j.hampton@brighton.ac.uk)**

**John Harley, Chair of Governors [harleyj1952@gmail.com](mailto:harleyj1952@gmail.com)**

**Cheryl Miller, Deputy Chair of Governors [cherylmiller@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cherylmiller@hotmail.co.uk)**

**Debra Humphris, Vice-Chancellor [d.humphris@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:d.humphris@brighton.ac.uk)**

# Letter from Hastings & St. Leonards Strategic Partnership

19<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Please quote:  
Your reference:  
Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
Please ask for: Shabana Bayjou  
Telephone direct: 01424-451463  
E-mail: sbayjou@hastings.gov.uk  
Web: www.hastings.gov.uk

Hastings & St Leonards  
**strategic**  
partnership

Professor Debra Humphris  
Vice Chancellor  
University of Brighton  
Lewes Road  
Brighton  
BN2 4AT

c/o Aquila House  
Breeds Place  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 3UY

Dear Professor Humphris,

## University of Brighton Hastings Campus

As you know the recent announcement of the review being undertaken into the future of the Hastings campus has stimulated strong reactions of dismay from local people, business, students, staff and elected representatives. This is not reflective of any anti-university feeling, but demonstrates the affection in which it is held and how important its presence in Hastings is for the future of the town and the area around it.

We also believe that Hastings holds considerable opportunity for the University that could be developed collaboratively with local partners. The University committed to Hastings over 10 years ago when the economic and social climate of the town was at its bleakest. Thanks to the work of the broad partnership in which the University is an acknowledged leader, a whole range of initiatives have been delivered that offer part of the base for sustainable improvement:-

- The creation of the University campus itself.
- The creation of an Academy chain with a real focus upon improving the academic performance and future of local young people.
- A new campus for Sussex Coast College.
- New employment space in the town centre attracting new employers including SAGA
- A belt of new employment space running down the west side of Hastings into North Bexhill, an opportunity opened up by the construction and opening of the new Link Road. This will also create c1,300 new homes.
- The creation of a new and exciting cultural agenda including the arrival of the Jerwood Gallery (in the face of competition from places like Birmingham and Gloucester) and the revamped Stade. This progress is moving along the seafront, just last weekend one of the largest BMX Centres and its youth and sporting focus opened and the refurbished Pier will open this Spring. Both these projects were created and delivered in spite of the massive economic and physical barriers, essentially driven by a will and energy in the locality which is not often found elsewhere.
- A new future for the fishing industry developed through the Fisheries Local Action Group in which the University is a leading member.
- A transformation in crime levels and the fear of crime which is beginning to be reflected more properly in the image of the town.
- Hastings intervention in the worst parts of the private rented sector to help rebalance St Leonards as part of that area's long term regeneration.

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We understand that the University cannot sustain low student numbers and that this market is increasingly competitive. However, we also know that the public purse committed over £12m to create these facilities to deliver higher education in Hastings. The University is the moral custodian of this investment in the future of Hastings.

We believe that the lack of a hall of residence and a substantial Student Union are issues that may need to be addressed to create a successful future. It was clear that these issues were not the only or perhaps even the main ones. You spoke of the University's financial position and the attraction of Brighton to many potential students. You identified that the academic offer has not created sufficient demand for courses in Hastings. Clearly, there is an interlinked set of problems that cannot be resolved without addressing both the academic offer and the facilities available to students.

The bohemian atmosphere, cultural and music scene, the social and economic conditions and local history combine to create a town that will appeal to many potential students. In many ways Hastings resembles the Brighton of the 1970s before wealth rubbed the "edges" off much of it. It is certainly not the same as the current City and should not be asked to compete as an "annexe" in which Brighton University students might unwillingly or unwittingly end.

We would like to propose the setting up of a Task Force for the University, College, councils, schools, businesses, MPs and community to help develop a new approach to the future of the University. We would want to be as supportive as possible and work with the University to identify potential markets, how infrastructure might be provided and potentially work in partnership to pursue funding if this is appropriate or practicable action.

We do not believe this is a matter the Board should consider without the benefit of this co-operative approach. We hope your Board will agree to this and would like to facilitate early discussion after your meeting to take this forward. Even better would be the opportunity to present the Hastings case directly at your Board meeting and answer members' questions.

Yours sincerely,

Amber Rudd  
MP for Hastings and Rye

Huw Merriman  
MP for Bexhill and Battle

Carl Maynard  
Leader of Rother District Council

Peter Chowney  
Leader of Hastings Borough Council





# Hastings Borough Council Leader's report

9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

## University of Brighton in Hastings



The review proposed by Brighton University of its Hastings campus is very worrying. It's a purely internal review, carried out by accountants, with no opportunity for the local community, or any local interested groups, businesses, or others to have any realistic input. Hastings received over £12m in public funding to set up a university here. Originally, as the University Centre Hastings, several different universities were involved, including Brighton University, Sussex University, Kent University and Greenwich University. The purpose of this funding was to help Hastings' economic regeneration, to offer local people access to a university degree course, and to build links with local businesses and other groups, carrying out research and training to benefit the town. About a year ago, a 'Memorandum of Co-operation' was signed between Hastings Council and the university, which stated that the council and university would 'undertake to form a collaboration with the aim to positively affect economic and social regeneration within Hastings and St Leonards', and committed the university and council to 'maximise our shared role to transform the experience of those who live, work, study in and visit the town'.

When the review, and the possibility of closure, was shared with Hastings Council on 25th January by Debra Humphris, the new Vice-Chancellor, it came as a complete shock – until that moment, the university administration had been entirely committed to the Hastings facility, and are still completing recent refurbishment works to the Havelock Road building. A new film and media suite was recently opened, to considerable acclaim.

The Brighton University Centre in Hastings has had its problems – the number of students studying here has never been enough to give a true 'campus experience'. Adequate accommodation, especially for first year students, has never been provided, and student social facilities have not yet been properly established. So it has struggled. But that doesn't mean it can't succeed. If the original vision of a campus of up to 2,000 students were realised, if good-quality student accommodation were developed (on any of the still available sites that the university has considered), and decent student union facilities established (the boarded-up building in Priory Square was acquired by the university for this purpose), then numbers of students could be increased. And this would be good for Hastings, and continue to help our regeneration, in line with the original funded purpose of a university in Hastings.

So the news that the university might close has been met with universal dismay. The response from Hastings Council, East Sussex County Council, the Hastings & Rye MP, the Chamber of Commerce, the non-statutory sector, and pretty much anyone else who has commented has been expressed with one voice: the university in Hastings must remain. Hastings Council will be co-ordinating a formal response to the review, with contributions from different sectors and organisations across the town.

Hastings and Rye Labour Party has begun a campaign to save the university, with an online petition you can sign – you can find that [here](#). Hastings needs its university – it's at the heart of our town, and is a core part of our renaissance. It must be expanded and developed, not closed!

# Putting heads and hearts back into the review

## Expressions of support

**Fri 29/04/2016 15:38**

**Raf Salkie**

### **Concern about Hastings**

The Academic Programme English language and Linguistics met on Wednesday and agreed to endorse the messages sent by our colleagues in the Humanities Programme and the Literature team. We therefore join those colleagues in requesting that the decision about Hastings be reconsidered by the University's senior management.

Professor Raf Salkie, on behalf of Academic Programme English language and Linguistics

**Monday, 25 April 2016 17:15**

**Deborah Phillips**

### **Literature's Commitment to Hastings.**

As members of the Literature Team, we would like to express our concern over the threatened closure of many degrees - some of which include Literature - at Hastings. We wish to express our support for the staff and students involved in the delivery of HE at Hastings. We believe in the role of a University in widening participation and in ensuring that every area of national life is supported and enriched by the learning opportunities Universities offer.

We agree wholeheartedly with the words of our former Deputy VC, Stuart Laing, and politely request that our current management team take those words fully on board in debates and decisions about HE in Hastings.

" ... [U]niversities that develop serious and fully strategic programmes of community-university engagement can significantly extend the membership of their university communities and do so in ways that add greater colour and richness to their existing teaching and research programmes, as well as providing tangible benefits to their local communities"

(Stuart Laing (March 30th, 2016), Community Engagement is What Universities Should be for', Times Higher, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/community-engagement-what-universities-should-be>)

(Literature Team as present at Subject Group Meeting Wed 13th of April, 2016)

**Tuesday, 26 April 2016 13:45**

**Victoria Margree**

**Literature's Commitment to Hastings.**

Members of the Humanities Programme welcome and endorse the Literature Team's comments. We too express our support for students and colleagues at Hastings and our belief in this University's role in widening participation. As such we ask for our management team to reconsider the Hastings decision.

Dr Vicky Margree

Dr Mark Devenney

(Joint Academic Programmic Leaders on behalf of the Hums team)

**Mon 25/04/2016 20:29**

**Melita Dennett**

**Letter of Support from B'ton & M. Sussex NUJ**

Dear Hastings UBSU,

I am contacting you on behalf of the Brighton & Mid Sussex Branch of the National Union of Journalists to express our support for your campaign to oppose the proposed withdrawal of the University of Brighton from Hastings.

We believe any proposed withdrawal will have a seriously detrimental effect on education in Hastings and St Leonards. The greatest impact will be felt by students who are unable to travel further afield for a higher education by virtue of inability to afford the additional costs, existing parental or caring responsibilities, employment commitments or disabilities.

We are especially concerned that a new generation of potential journalists from Hastings and St Leonards will be lost if UoB withdraws from the town and we applaud your campaign to oppose such a move.

Best wishes,

Melita Dennett

On behalf of Brighton & Mid Sussex NUJ

## **An ideological commitment**

Source: <http://www.hastingsobserver.co.uk/news/letters/an-ideological-commitment-1-7233199>

16:11 Friday 26 February 2016

### **An open letter to the vice-chancellor of the University of Brighton:**

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

I came of age in and around Hastings in the mid-1990s.

I returned to the town in 2007 as part of my role as a lecturer in sociology at the University of Brighton, working half the week in what was then the fairly new University Centre Hastings.

In that time I have seen two particularly important ways in which our higher education provision has brought direct value to the town.

The first is the development of educated, critically-thinking professionals in health and social care and educational roles, of the kind so needed in Hastings.

The second, which is distinct from the first, is through providing a range of opportunities for local people to expand horizons of education otherwise foreclosed in the town.

To give an example, I found one student on our BA Applied Social Science course taking a particular interest in my own research into the sociology of outer space (looking at things such as satellite communications and surveillance, plans to explore, develop and settle other planets, and so on).

Initially I actually found myself frustrated by this.

The student had the kind of rich biography so common in Hastings – from care home to homelessness to prison – surely his work should be addressing these kinds of ‘close to home’ social problems instead?

But I realised I was falling into a trap that I have seen so many well-meaning people fall into – of thinking that higher education in Hastings must be ‘special’, inward-looking, tailored towards parochial needs, and therefore of reinforcing the educational ceiling in Hastings that the university aimed to remove.

Higher education should be about breaking down barriers to and within knowledge.

A Higher Education provision in the town that is ‘specialised’ undermines the promise of the university.

I want to voice this now because, as we all eagerly await the university’s response to the review of the campus it has commissioned, I think it is vital that the campus not only remain open, but that it remain dedicated to both these things – a breadth of provision that provides local people with the opportunity to explore knowledge without barriers, but which retains a

particular focus on educating those future public servants – social workers, youth workers, probation officers, public health professionals, teachers, and so on – who are able to give something back to the town more immediately.

Maintaining and reinvigorating these commitments does not have to run counter to the aim of attracting students from further afield.

In the last nine years I have seen the experience these students have of Hastings improve dramatically.

The quality of the teaching here and the help provided by support staff at the campus have never really been in question.

But over time what I have seen is a better matching of student expectations with what the town itself has to offer. It is my belief that this appeal can be broadened still further with appropriate support from the university.

It was easy to extol the virtues of widening participation when the University Centre was first conceived, as there were various national incentives for so doing.

The university enters a period now in which the strength of this commitment will be publicly put to the test.

Nobody expects the campus to become a money-spinner for the university, but it is something the university is ideologically committed to, and which the town can ill-afford to lose.

***Dr James S Ormrod***

***Principal Lecturer in Sociology***

***Society, Education and Health hub leader***

Dear Governors

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I wanted to contribute to the pack that has been produced by my colleagues to tell you about my views on the Hastings Review.

I am a product of education in the Hastings and Rother area. For many reasons I was not able to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher when I left school. This was not because I was not educationally able, but due to ill health and family commitments. So I have taken exception to the statements in this review that Hastings residents can only cope with vocational courses.

I have worked in this area for 42 years, raised a family, become a single parent, cared for parents and grandparents and still managed to improve my qualifications up to a Post Graduate Diploma.

I worked for Hastings College of Arts and Technology for 12 years and during those years we produced some outstanding students, many of whom went on to HEi's across the country and did very well. Unfortunately there were others who were not able to leave Hastings so could not continue past level 3. Others left to attend universities around the country and in Brighton, but couldn't continue past the first semester due to family and financial issues.

This led to many discussions about a university in Hastings and the college then started to run UoB validated courses. But students weren't getting the full university experience as they were studying with FE students. Then in 2003 as part of the regeneration of the town, Education became the leading agenda and University Centre Hastings was born. I was part of the discussion from the beginning and worked with colleagues from UoB and ESCC to arrange for the college library books to be housed in the local public library until the building work was finished in Havelock Road.

The setting up of UCH was very complex taking into account all the partners involved but through hard work and determination the doors opened in September 2003 to 40 students.

We knew from the very beginning that our position here was dependent on numbers and worked hard to increase them each year. It was unfortunate that the global financial issues caused partners to pull out but the university decided to make UCH the 5<sup>th</sup> Campus. We were the Widening Participation arm of the university as stated in the strategic plan at the time.

Those of us working here could see where we needed to make changes to keep the campus viable, however, despite many papers being written and suggestions made, there didn't seem a willingness to act upon these. So I was reassured that a review was going to take place.

I was, like so many other people, very sad to hear the outcome of the review. We started off as a place for local people to get a qualification without having to move away. As the media courses evolved we started to attract people from across the country and indeed Europe, but wherever the students came from, a large number would be classed as WP students.

There are countless stories about how we have given these students the space and encouragement to grow as people. There was the student who came here, as a single parent, living in a garage and her first assignment was written on the back of her children's



drawings. She completed her Degree and a Masters and now her children aspire to do the same. We have had many students over the years, who have transferred from other universities as they couldn't cope with being in a lecture with 300 other people. We had students on FdA's who were shy and nervous, but we were so proud of the people they became, especially when they had the confidence to move away to do their Top Ups at other universities.

In Hastings we work as a community, we all want the best for our students, we want them to succeed and go out into the world and do well. We spend as much time with them as they need during difficult times. We have been a safe haven for students trying to escape abusive relationships. We know that these small things are huge for our students. We also know had they gone to bigger campuses they would have been lost and failed.

I do know there is need for change here, but I don't think closure is the answer. We need to specialise, why not look at nursing being here, especially as all the nursing specialisms are moving from Eastbourne DGH to Hastings Conquest hospital. That wasn't mentioned in the report. We could specialise in Media. Has anyone considered the expense of setting up the media and journalism courses in Watts and then moving them to Edward Street when that is finished? All the time keeping Hastings up to scratch to see out the students here. Surely that can't be cost effective.

I would also add that staff here are very demoralised. We are saddened that all the hard work here is looked on with such disdain by the UMB. It has been made clear to us that the 'value added' is not regarded as important. However, we are committed to our students and many of us have committed to see this through to whatever the end may be. It is going to be hard as all respect has been lost for UMB and many of us are now ashamed to say we work for the University. I have never experienced this before and it is very, very sad.

I do hope that the consultation over the summer will take into account some of the things I have mentioned and I do hope that a wider selection of staff are consulted.

With best wishes

Sarah

Sarah Friend  
Information Service Manager  
Hastings Campus Library

## Student and graduate testimonies

### Beginning: My Hastings Campus Story #handsoffhastings

Source: <http://aaron-james.co.uk/blog/the-wrong-beginning-my-hastings-campus-story-handsoffhastings/>

I write this during a break from tackling a few assignments as part of my second year of BA Journalism at University of St Mark & St John in Plymouth. Although it's my third year of University.

I spent a year studying FdA Broadcast Media at University of Brighton's Hastings Campus between 2012-13, which it seems has now been slated for closure. Unambiguous rationale from a recently appointed Vice Chancellor and an accountant's report cite "falling student numbers". Which is bean-counter talk for "we don't want to spend any money on making it work".

Naturally, the students there now, and past have reacted to this with protest. Students past and present have made their feelings and stories clear- and while on paper I am not considered alumni, I thought I'd add my pennies worth too.

Firstly- the reason why I left after a year. 2012-3 was a bad, bad time for a number of reasons mostly unrelated to my university experience. I was unwell for most of the year, the nine months leading up to moving to Hastings had taken it's toll on me mentally, and I was not prepared for the sudden change of living hundreds of miles from the place and the people I call home. As a result, it all became too much. Homesickness combined with mental and physical health problems were too much to handle, and as a result I opted to leave after the first year and return home and take a year out to fix my health problems, gain some life skills and employment and take stock of what I really wanted to do next.

Looking back now from a position where I have found the answers to the problems of then, I'm amazed that I managed a full year at Hastings and had things been different, I'd be graduated and on a different path in life- but what will be will be.

The answer to how I managed? The support I got from other students, staff and the environment overall. Many of the things I learnt during that year I still apply now. Particular memories are the Dreamwriting sessions at the beginning of Gilly Smith's lecturers, visiting London to watch a recording of Alan Titchmarsh (incidentally, we were in the audience for the controversial episode where Patsy Kensit came on with the sole purpose of promoting Weight Watchers and earned a censure from OFCOM), and a session in Brighton with Gilly where we met several screenwriters- including one Jamie Mathieson, who at the event I asked whether he'd want to write on Doctor Who, only for a couple years later for him to do just that.

The Student Support I received was nothing short of magnificent, especially from Lorraine Roberts, who was widely known as the "Campus Mum"- and it wasn't hard to see why. As

the year wore on and things got worse, she was often my first point of call- bringing terror to Student Finance as they repeatedly bungled my finances (and assisting me in obtaining financial assistance when the bank account became empty), arranging for counselling sessions, guiding me through the process of registering with a doctor locally, and being an engaged and listening ear whenever I needed to vent. As the year went on and it became obvious that I needed to go home, she assisted me with that process.

So what about the university life itself? You could speak to some, and the first thing they think of is the night life. And yeah, it's not Brighton. Which suited me fine, I'm not the most fond of parties, though I did always enjoy myself when I went out- there was usually something going on in the various venues nearby and more often than not a few friendly faces to go with it. It's a small, relatively tight knit community. My own course was about the size of a secondary school tutor group, The tuition was on the whole excellent- even if my fondness for some of the software didn't match that. I quite liked the small, tight knit vibe to it- everyone knew who each other were within the two Media groups. You also made friends within the other year groups- indeed some of my closest friends during that year were in the third year of that course.

I also got the opportunity to be part of the then-university radio station, BURST Radio, which was my favourite distraction during that year. I had a lot of fun being involved with that. An opportunity or enjoyment I have not found since then.

While I didn't do a lot of exploring during that year, the community I had become part of was on the whole- a good one. I spent endless hours at Chat's Cafe up the road from where I lived, it was my second haunt.

2012-13 was also the year the Priory Square Building opened. I distinctly remember being told that this was the start of an exciting future for Hastings. How a few short years changes everything.

Nostalgia trip over, the question now what's the answer to the "problem"? Well, the first is a sentiment I know is echoed by a lot of students past and present. Hastings is treated as a poor relation to the other campuses by the higher ups, and to an extent the Students Union too. When it came to the election, we barely got to see any of the candidates. Weren't considered important enough, I guess.

Hastings Campus needs the same love shown by students protesting reciprocated by the management. Give it the same chances to develop as the other campuses, and it will grow.

As an aside- the course I was on in 2012-13 had about three to four times the student numbers my current course does (I think there was about sixty Broadcast Media students in that cohort, there's around fifteen-twenty (at most) on my current course). Yet I don't see my current course under threat, indeed the university are working hard on progressing it further, which is the same approach UOB should take.

If this goes ahead, a metaphorical bullet will have been shot into the heart of Hastings. I hope it isn't allowed to happen.



# CLIDUS.COM

## University of Brighton abandons Hastings campus

Source: <http://www.clidus.com/blog/university-of-brighton-abandons-hastings-campus/>

On Tuesday the University of Brighton released a statement about the future of its Hastings campus. In the vaguely worded message they spoke about how they would continue to “support the delivery of higher education in Hastings through an evolution of its current provision in the town”. In plain English, Brighton intend to back out of the project in the next two years, reverting the campus back to a University Centre run by the local college. This was finally clarified in an email to alumni today.

**Q: Is it true that the Hastings Campus is going to close?**

A: The current campus model is not sustainable. It will be phased out in favour of a new model that will continue to deliver higher and further education in Hastings in collaboration with Sussex Coast College Hastings with the longer term objective of establishing a University of Hastings.

I studied at University Centre Hastings, as it was previously called, many years ago and while I had a great experience it always felt like the long term goal was for Hastings to become equal with the other four campuses in Brighton and Eastbourne. This goal finally seemed to have been achieved in 2013 with the opening of the Priory Square building and the official adoption as a fifth campus of Brighton. This week's announcement is a complete step in the wrong direction and a sign that Brighton simply want a quick exit from the town.

The University has apparently made this decision on financial grounds, however in a meeting with Hastings students when Vice-Chancellor Professor Debra Humphris ridiculously generous salary was brought up, she made an immediate departure. The University also claims that the decision was made due to a forecasted decline in 16-17 year olds in the local area, completely ignoring the large population of mature students the campus attracts. Even if this is true and numbers will decline, an institution of this size should brave the storm and come out the other side, not return home at the first sign of rain.

The excuse that low student numbers are to blame is also complete nonsense when you consider the fact that the University controls how their student population is distributed. Instead they have moved many courses away from Hastings and failed to build student halls close by and then pointed at low numbers as the reason for the closure.

As someone who has studied at the campus, owes his job to it, and has friends who both work and study there, it deeply saddens me to see Brighton abandoning our town when things were just getting better. The Hastings campus is uniquely positioned to support single parents and mature students who simply can't travel two hours to Brighton due to other commitments in their life. Pulling support now is simply abandoning us.

It might not mean very much, but there is [a petition you can sign to show your support for the Hastings campus](#). The least we can do is let our voices be heard.

Published 11th March, 2016.

## Testimonies from graduates

Source:



Hastings Campus Solidarity Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/666824266793059/>



Twitter: #HandsOffHastings

I would attend the protest tomorrow but I'm at work, at ITV - one of the biggest TV companies in the UK that I got to with the degree I gained at HASTINGS university. Wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the support and great education I gained with them. Horrified that they even considered closing it. Best years of my life.

Some of you may have seen this already but some things are worth saying twice...

When I started at Hastings Uni, I was living in a homeless hostel. I wasn't working due to mental health issues.

In my 3 years at the campus, I turned my life around. The support of the lecturers and other students meant that not only did I achieve academically, but personally as well.

Since graduating, I am no longer in sheltered housing. My mental health is stable and I have 2 jobs.

There is no doubt that I wouldn't be where I am today without Hastings Uni. If it shut down, many people like me would no longer have the chance to get a degree and carve out a brighter future for themselves.

**SAVE HASTINGS UNIII**

*@umiofoughton shutting down #Hastings campus is a total farce. I went to 3 universities and my experience at 2 other major ones paled....  
....in comparison to my time in #Hastings absolute disgrace #handsoffhastings*

I graduated in 2013 after being given the opportunity to being able to do a degree whilst being told I would be unable to work for 3 years due to illness. While studying at Hastings I met some fantastic people, received support from the amazing staff, volunteered for an organisation for 2 years which gained me invaluable experience. 2 days after graduating I was offered a 5 year contract assisting individuals in housing but as part of that assisting with education and various other needs. I am still doing this role and have helped countless individuals access accommodation, employment or education and have also had students work alongside me for their research projects. Studying at the Hastings campus has given me a passion for study and I am now, alongside work almost finished my 2nd year of a full time law degree and I have the campus and staff at university of Hastings to thank for this. It will be a terrible shame should the campus close for future generations. 🙏🙏🙏🙏

Quote from a student at UoB in Hastings:

"Three years ago, I was homeless. Hastings Council offered me refuge, helped me secure a place to live and put me in touch with local support services in a time when I couldn't imagine what next week would be like, never mind surviving until next year (It was November and I didn't even own a coat.) I've since been to college and am now studying at degree level on the Hastings Campus. Hastings has given so much to me and never asked anything in return when I felt I least deserved it. I had never experienced such community kindness anywhere before. With tremendous support I have made a start on rebuilding my life. I have never had an opportunity to properly thank any one who helped me, but I made it my mission to become a positive contribution to society. The University may not have recruited enough students to the Hastings Campus...But I am one student who life has been changed, inspired and saved by Hastings town. It would be simply wrong to deny anyone of that same chance that I had."

I would also attend the protest tomorrow but I'm at work. At work because my degree I got from the Hastings campus got me a job before I had even graduated. I loved the campus and my course. My brother now studies at the campus (on my recommendation). It would be such a shame to lose the campus. I understand that it doesn't provide the traditional uni experience, but not all of us want that!

I took my GCSE maths English and science at Horizons Community Learning CIC and went on to study joint honours BSc Biology which I graduated from last summer. I would not have been able to attend uni if it wasn't in Hastings. All my lectures were within school hours and as a lone parent with limited support and without a driving license, it was possible to study locally at the campus. I am now studying for my PGCE science at UoB Falmer and use the Hastings uni library as a quiet place for my lesson planning and essays. I am eternally grateful for the chance to get out of the poverty trap which so many lone parents find themselves in, and that would not be possible without Horizons and UoB Hastings.



## Don't hate on Hastings

Source: <http://theverse.co.uk/features/dont-hate-hastings/>



Posted by Alice Hudson - 11/02/2015

I am sat in my best friend's living room sobbing. It's late August 2012 and Sussex University said they could not accept me through clearing because my UCAS points were too low. "Try Brighton" my friend says as she attempts to cajole me for the next half hour, through considerably dramatic sobs and declarations that I will end up working in McDonald's forever. Finally I caved and huffily rang up, completely expecting rejection. I spent the 4 months of summer since finishing my A levels insisting I didn't want to go to university but I was crushed to find that Sussex wouldn't take me and suddenly my future seemed bleak; "I can't keep working at the Pav Tav forever" I wailed. Miraculously I was accepted, leaving about 2 weeks to sort my life out, including student finance, but that is another story.

Overall, my beginnings with the University of Brighton seemed far from the norm and I definitely would not recommend spending the whole summer in denial and applying just 3 days before clearing closed. It was a stressful time indeed! So by time September arrived I was excited to get on and start my degree. I dreamt of the quirky and effortlessly cool people I would meet at Brighton. Images of brightly coloured dreadlocks, vegan shoes and people that overly enjoy incense filled my mind. So imagine my surprise when I received an email informing me that my lectures will begin promptly at 9am in HASTINGS?! Suddenly my dreams were shattered and replaced with memories of family trips to the drizzly, cold seafront at Hastings and the average sea life centre there.

Almost 3 years on I'm very glad to say that my perceptions of Hastings have changed. After the initial shock of being sent 28 miles in the opposite direction than expected; I found that there were some pleasant aspects to studying in Hastings. For example, the campus itself is only about 10 years old, the baby of the 5 campuses of the university; the second building of the campus was in the final stages of construction when I started. By September 2013 there were numerous teched out rooms available for study, as well as a large basement area with sports equipment and modern looking furniture, a perfect place to socialise on a rainy afternoon.

Unlike the Falmer campus, the Havelock and Priory Square buildings are slap bang in the centre of the town, meaning that when you get those student cravings for KFC, Subway or

the temptation to indulge in student loan funded frothy coffee at Costa, it's all within walking distance. The Priory Meadow shopping centre is also right on the campus's doorstep and has led a number of my friends well into their overdrafts as new outfits for nights out are always just too tempting. These nights out often always occur in either the Brass Monkey, located directly opposite the Havelock Road building, or West Exit nightclub which is next door to Yates and opposite Wetherspoons. Basically if you have the luxury of studying in Hastings then your drunk stumbling radius need not be further than about 5 minutes. It's wonderful!

Despite my initial misgivings about studying in Hastings, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else now. We are a small campus and because of this we are like family, everyone knows each other and if ever you have an issue the students union on site will be there, any time.

Overall Hastings students are content, even if like me the majority were greatly surprised to be sent to there, everyone I spoke to said that they didn't know the campus existed. So the real question why is such a successful, inclusive, modern campus kept as such a secret? A question I hope to find the answer to in my final months at the uni.

By Rosie Rutter





# For students, for staff and for the community

The information in this document is an appeal to consider all of the options.

