

Statement against redundancies and restructuring of Centre for Narrative Research

We write this open letter as a worldwide network of scientists, researchers and scholars to express, in the strongest terms, our concern about the threat of redundancy for Professor Molly Andrews and Professor Corinne Squire and the threatened closure of the Centre for Narrative Research as a part of the University of East London's re-structuring programme.

CNR, which was **established in 1999**, has over the last twenty years become a **vital beacon** for advances in narrative research. It is an innovator in qualitative research methods and collaborates with scholars across the world. It provides training, events, journal editorship and an on-going seminar series. Together these play a key role in the development of story-based multi-media methods. Many of the scholars signed below were once students or researchers at CNR who have since their training with CNR developed their narrative approaches within institutions across the world. Others have connections with Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire and CNR through teaching, research and publishing, and shared connections.

CNR was one of the first centres to consolidate our understanding of the extent to which human beings are storytellers, and indeed the power of **persuasive narratives**. It has gone on to work incisively with refugee narratives, the collective remembering of the Holocaust as well as key events such as the fall of the Berlin wall. It is this combination of traction informed by **sustained scholarship** that is part of the CNR story. At a time when powerful narratives can seek to overturn legitimate democratic elections and create lasting political legacies, it is vital to the scientific community, the health of democracy and for wider society that established centres of excellence such as CNR remain open and supported. Equally, the work being conducted within CNR is a powerful antidote to forces that seek to de-humanise ordinary people and develop the related technocratic management information methods.

Molly Andrews and Corinne Squire pioneered a **feminist co-leadership** approach to the running of CNR which had integrated into its pedagogy the central role played by critical independent reflexive scholarship by students. At the turn of the 21st century, they moved away from single discipline approaches in favour of a genuinely multi-disciplinary approach and sought to develop a curriculum which met the needs of the diversity of their students. Moreover, they were not content to operate at the margins and combined this pedagogy with the ability to attract major grants.

We support the #SaveUEL campaign and we ask that the re-structuring is reconsidered. We are concerned that the executive team at UEL does not fully appreciate the **cross-disciplinary** international significance of CNR and its two lead Professors within the scientific community.

The EU has established a joint co-ordinated action against disinformation and the spread of false news. Together, we the undersigned believe the decision to disband the very UK centre which could play a strong role shows a worrying lack of vision. To lose these two senior scholars at a time when governance is discursive and narrative is ascendant, when politics and communities worldwide are struggling with the absence of shared facts, makes little sense. To close the centre which has the longest track record in studying narratives could offer further evidence to the

international community of the United Kingdom's turn towards technocratic research and isolationism. Now is the time for UK science and innovation to build a clear narrative and CNR is vital to the advancement of internationalised cross-disciplinary advancement of narrative research.

This open letter is drafted by Kesi Mahendran (Public Dialogue Psychology Collaboratory) with the support of the Culture and Social Psychology Research Group (CuSP) within the Open University.

Title & Full Name	School, Department	Institution	State/ Country	Happy for name to be published Y/ N	Comments
Dr Kesi Mahendran	School of Psychology	Open University	United Kingdom	Y	
Professor. Luca Tateo	Dept. of Special Needs Education	Oslo University	Norway	Y	I have gone through a similar process myself and I received a large international solidarity. The scientific community shall rise against the stubborn and short-sighted economic policies of the universities. Science and education are not commodities, they are fundamental human rights.
Dr Floor van Alphen	Basic Psychology Department	Autonoma University Madrid	Spain	Y	
Professor Paul Stenner	School of Psychology	Open University	UK	Y	

Professor Hanna Meretoja	Comparative Literature & Research Centre SELMA	University of Turku	Finland	Y	CNR is hugely important internationally for the entire interdisciplinary field of narrative studies.
Professor Peter Hegarty	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Sarah Scuzzarello	School of Global Studies, Department of Geography	University of Sussex	UK	Y	
Sofia Stathi, Associate Professor of Social Psychology	School of Human Sciences	University of Greenwich	UK	Y	
Professor. David Fryer	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	University of Queensland	Australia	Y	CNR is doing work of international significance. Professors Andrews and Squire are international leaders in their fields.
Professor Darren Langdrige	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Professor Stephanie Taylor	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	

Emeritus Professor Colin Davis	School of Humanities	Royal Holloway, University of London	UK	Y	
Dr Alessandra Fasulo	Psychology	University of Portsmouth	UK	Y	I have attended and participated to events organised by the CNR; I have admired the work of its members, been grateful for the opportunity of meeting their guests and invitees, and for the outstanding level of contributions. Disbanding CNR is outrageous.
Professor Sarah Crafter	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
PhD student, Carina Hoerst	School of Psychology	University of Sussex	UK	Y	
Dr Johanna Motzkau	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Ashley Weinberg	Psychology	University of Salford	UK	Y	The way forward is not the way back
Dr Eleni Andreouli	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Professor Tutta Palin	School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, Department of Art History	University of Turku	Finland	Y	
Klara Jurstakova	School of Psychology and Life Sciences	Canterbury Christ Church University	United Kingdom	Y	

Dr David Kaposi	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Chris Cocking	School of Health Sciences	University of Brighton	UK	Y	
Professor John Dixon	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Anne Templeton	Department of Psychology	University of Edinburgh	Scotland	Y	
Professor Nick Hopkins	School of Social Sciences	University of Dundee	Scotland	Y	
Dr Laura McGrath	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr. Maria Fernandes-Jesus	School of Psychology	University of Sussex	UK	Y	
Anthony English – PhD Researcher	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Professor. Catherine Campbell - Emeritus Professor	Psychological and Behavioural Science	London School of Economics	UK	Yes	Corinne Squire is one of the leading international psychologists of our generation, with CNR long a world leader in narrative research.
Sue Nieland -PhD Researcher	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	

Professor Clifford Stott	School of Psychology	Keele University	U.K.	Y	
Emma Brice -PhD researcher	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Vivian L Vignoles	School of Psychology	University of Sussex	UK	Y	
Dr James Weinberg, Lecturer in Political Behaviour	Department of Politics and International Relations	University of Sheffield	United Kingdom	Y	
Adjunct Professor Sungju Park-Kang	Faculty of Social Sciences	University of Turku	Finland	Yes	
Professor Paul Nesbitt-Larking	Political Science	Huron University College	Canada	Yes	
Professor Eneken Laanes	School of Humanities	Tallinn University	Estonia	yes	
Steve Flatt	Honorary Researcher management school	University of Liverpool, also Psychological therapies unit CIC Liverpool	Merseyside UK	Yes	Education is key. Investigation and learning about what it is to be a human being is fundamental to reducing fear and ignorance. Judgements about worth are based upon value not cost.

Dr Sara Vestergren	Health & Society	University of Salford	Salford/UK	Y	
Dr Evangelos Ntontis	School of Psychology and Health Sciences	Canterbury Christ Church University	UK	Y	
Professor Catarina Kinnvall	Department of Political Science	Lund University	Sweden	Yes	
Professor Stephen Reicher	School of Psychology and Neuroscience	University of St. Andrews	UK	Y	
Professor John Drury	School of Psychology	University of Sussex	UK	Y	
Dr. Tereza Capelos	Government, POLSIS	University of Birmingham	UK	Y	

Dr Clare Coultas	School of Population Health and Environmental Sciences	King's College London	London, UK	Y	
Dr Alex Gillespie	Psychological & Behavioural Science	London School of Economics	London	Y	
Dr Flora Cornish	Department of Methodology	London School of Economics	London	Y	
Professor Sandra Jovchelovitch	Psychological and Behavioural Science	London School of Economics	London	Y	
Professor Erica Burman	Professor of Education, Manchester Institute of Education	University of Manchester	UK	Y	
Dr. Irene Strasser	HUSS, Psychology Department	The American University in Cairo	Egypt	Y	
Dr Martin Dege	Social Sciences & Cultural Studies	Pratt Institute	New York, USA	Y	

Professor Umut Korkut International politics	Glasgow School for Business & Society.	Glasgow Caledonian University	UK	Y	
Dr Mark Abel	School of Humanities,	University of Brighton,	UK	Y	
Dr Sharon Coen	Department of Psychology	University of Salford	UK	Y	
Dr David Jones	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Johanna Vollhardt	Program Director, Social Psychology Ph.D. program	Clark University	Massachusetts, USA	Y	
Professor. Wendy Hollway – Emeritus Professor	School of Psychology	Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Sandra Obradović	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	
Dr Jovan Byford	School of Psychology	The Open University	UK	Y	

In this first phase scientists who had a direct relationship with CNR and narrative studies were invited by direct invitation. If you would like to stay in touch with this campaign and support future actions in relation to #saveCNR please contact Dr Kesi Mahendran at the Open University.