

Thursday, 21 May 2026 21/05/2026 18:15:02

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Date: 21 May 2026

Subject: Request for Strategic Dialogue — Black Studies, Institutional Fragility, and Black Justice Infrastructure Initiatives

Dear Professor Andrews,

I write respectfully following the campaign to save Black Studies at Birmingham City University and the wider concerns now visible regarding the vulnerability of Black Studies, Black scholarship, Black institutional memory, and Black public-interest infrastructure in the United Kingdom.

For the avoidance of doubt, this letter is not written as an allegation, accusation, assertion, or assumption against you, Birmingham City University, any academic, any campaign organiser, or any Black organisation.

The purpose of this letter is different. It is to open a serious strategic dialogue about whether the present crisis exposes a wider and well-known pattern: Black initiatives are often forced into reactive defence after institutional damage has already begun, rather than being protected by permanent, independent, coordinated infrastructure capable of foresight, mobilisation, legal/policy monitoring, fundraising, public education, and institutional continuity.

The petition to save Black Studies is important. However, from the perspective of Black Justice, petitions by themselves appear to be an old and limited model. They may generate visibility, but they do not necessarily address the root structural problem. The deeper question is why Black Studies, Black scholarship, Black cultural memory, reparatory justice work, Windrush-related justice work, and other Black public-interest initiatives remain so vulnerable to removal, funding pressure, institutional reprioritisation, redundancy processes, and short-term decision-making by bodies that do not exist primarily to protect Black institutional continuity.

This is why I am writing to you.

Black Justice wishes to understand, respectfully and constructively, what lessons should be learned from the Birmingham City University situation. In particular, I ask:

1. What early warning signs existed before the present crisis became public?
2. Were there structural reasons why the threat to Black Studies could not be foreseen, prevented, or countered earlier?
3. What institutional safeguards existed, if any, to protect Black Studies from discontinuation, closure, restructuring, or effective marginalisation?
4. What practical barriers prevented earlier community mobilisation, wider Black organisational coordination, or national-level strategic intervention?
5. What does this situation reveal about the limits of relying on universities as the primary custodians of Black Studies and Black intellectual continuity?
6. What infrastructure would have been necessary to detect, challenge, publicise, fund, defend, or relocate Black Studies before the matter reached crisis stage?
7. How can Black academics, campaigners, organisations, communities, and institutions avoid repeating this pattern in future?

Black Justice's concern is not merely one course, one university, or one campaign. The concern is the repeated pattern. A Black initiative is created, celebrated, under-supported, made institutionally vulnerable, placed under pressure, then defended only when its existence is already at risk. This model leaves the community permanently reactive.

Black Justice is therefore developing the case for permanent Black institutional infrastructure. That includes the need for a central hub capable of supporting academia, reparatory justice, Windrush-related campaigns, public legal education, archives, research production, community inquiry work, evidence repositories, youth education, cultural continuity, and coordinated national mobilisation.

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In practical terms, Black Justice believes that support is needed for initiatives capable of acquiring or operating a major Black public-interest building, such as a Bernie Grant Arts Centre-type hub, as a centre for Black institutional resilience. The purpose would not be symbolic ownership alone. The purpose would be operational capacity: a physical and intellectual base for research, documentation, campaign coordination, public education, legal/policy monitoring, community hearings, fundraising, publishing, and strategic response.

There is likely to be misunderstanding because there is no clear precedent for what Black Justice is attempting to build. It is not simply a protest platform. It is not simply a petition platform. It is not simply a cultural project. It is an attempt to create long-term Black institutional infrastructure where recurring failures can be studied, documented, anticipated, and countered before damage becomes irreversible.

Accordingly, I ask whether you would be willing to engage with Black Justice on the following:

1. A written response or discussion explaining what the Birmingham City University situation teaches about the structural vulnerability of Black Studies.
2. Advice on how Black Justice can frame this issue responsibly without undermining existing campaigns.
3. Possible cooperation around a broader Black institutional resilience initiative.
4. Consideration of whether the existing petition campaign could be linked to a deeper long-term infrastructure demand.
5. Support, endorsement, dialogue, or strategic input regarding the development of a permanent Black Justice hub for academia, reparations, Windrush-related justice, archives, research, and community campaigns.

This letter is intended to be collaborative, not hostile. It asks difficult questions because the pattern itself is difficult. If the community continues to respond only after damage occurs, then each crisis becomes another isolated emergency. Black Justice wants to help build the machinery that makes future emergencies less likely.

I would therefore be grateful if you could respond, or alternatively indicate whether a meeting, online discussion, or written exchange would be the most appropriate way forward.

Yours sincerely,

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