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**AN UPDATE FROM
VICE CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR PETER SLEE**

Dear ,

I do hope this finds you well.

A year ago I shared the outcomes of a major research project conducted by LBU's Professor Leanne Norman from our Carnegie School of Sport.

Leanne's conclusions were that the culture of UK athletic coaching undermined and ignored the contribution that could be made by women. How could it be that, when 30% of all athletic coaches are female, there was no female representation among the 207 British Olympic coaching staff? The answer was stark. The prevailing culture and processes conspired against women. The result? A scandalous waste of talent, and an affront to any notion of fairness, equity or merit.

Joanna Coates, the incoming chief of UK Athletics, said Leanne's report would prompt change. So what has happened 12 months on?

At last month's World Indoor Championships, two of the six team coaches and the team leader were women. It was the first female representation Britain has ever had on the team coaching staff at a non-disabled global event. Before this, only eight percent of our top-ranking British athletes had been coached by a woman. And in response to Leanne's research identifying the physically and psychologically unsafe environment for many women coaches in high-performance athletics, UK Athletics has since overhauled its safeguarding process.

You can read a summary of the changes and the impact of Leanne's research [here](#).

There is much to digest here. 95% of the world's research is carried out in universities. Universities are often the only bodies with the intellectual wherewithal and independence to challenge unfairness and abuse, and to conduct inquiry which opens up new fields of endeavour. Social change is slow. Established habits are hard to break. But universities can provide the impetus to bring about a better and fairer world. Leanne's work is a tremendous example of the role universities play in a democratic society, and why our university is cited in the lists of the world's leading universities.

Please take good care.

Peter

Professor Peter Slee, Vice Chancellor

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