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30 October 2020

Dear Professor Thomson, Professor Cox,

**Proposed Closure of the Institutes of Latin American Studies and Commonwealth Studies**

As the Executive Committee of the Association of University Professors and Heads of French+, we are writing to express our grave concern at the proposed closure of the Institutes of Latin American Studies and Commonwealth Studies within the School of Advanced Study.

Renowned internationally as centres of excellence in Humanities research, these two Institutes are important hubs for the UK’s interdisciplinary research culture. As an integral part of the School of Advanced Studies, they foster scholarly initiatives through prestigious postgraduate programmes, visiting Fellowships, conferences and a rich series of events. **Founded in 1965, the Institute of Latin American Studies supports research around a wide range of fields in the Humanities and actively builds important ties** with **cultural, diplomatic and business organisations with interests in Latin America and the Caribbean. Hosting the longest running human rights MA programme in the UK, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies offers exceptional expertise in the field of Human Rights, Refugee Law, the history of decolonisation and the contemporary Commonwealth. At a time when the UK is interrogating its colonial history and seeking to reposition itself globally post-Brexit, the proposed closure of these Institutes is extremely short-sighted. Closing the ILS and ICWS would not only be detrimental to Higher Education, but highly damaging for the UK’s endeavour to form strong international links and partnerships.**

**We are dismayed by the proposed closure of two key centres for Humanities research in the UK and are calling for an immediate reversal of this decision.**

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Marion Schmid

President of the Association of University Professors and Heads of French+