

Dear ECU Students and Staff,

On Friday, 6th September, Interim Vice-Chancellor Professor Arshad Omari released a statement to all ECU staff. Unfortunately and unusually, it appears that I may have been omitted from the group the statement was shared with. I wish to clarify that I received a call from the University Secretary on Thursday evening, requesting a meeting with myself and Professor Omari, to which I readily agreed, as I was eager to have an open and constructive discussion. However, I am deeply disappointed that this statement was released the day after I had agreed to meet. In light of this, I have since declined the meeting request, as I believe the release of the statement undermines the intent of having a dialogue.

I am equally disheartened by the content of the statement, which appears to unfairly target students who were part of the council. I have not previously been approached for any "productive discussions" with Professor Omari, so I fail to understand the claim that such discussions have taken place when I was not given the opportunity for one. That said, I have had several discussions with the Deputy Chancellor and the University Secretary prior to the Chancellor's election, as I was committed to finding a resolution through those conversations. However, the consistent neglect of the student voice left me with no choice but to bring these matters to the public. Our students deserve to be informed, and I cannot allow our voices to be silenced in the name of so-called "productive discussions."

Furthermore, I find the reasons cited in the statement unconvincing. The former Chancellor's term was set to end in December, and there should have been no disruption to preparations for graduations or other strategic and operational work in the interim.

I want to reassure students that I will continue to advocate for your voice and keep fighting for your rights. I intend to resume these discussions with the University once Vice-Chancellor Designate Clare Pollock has officially commenced her role, as I am deeply disappointed with the manner in which the Interim Vice-Chancellor has handled this situation.

Best Regards,

Sarah Rizwan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rizwan' with a stylized flourish underneath.