

BY EMAIL

Lord Myners

Chancellor

Exeter University

27 February 2017

Dear Lord Myners,

Honorary Doctorate granted to Paula Vasco-Knight

Exeter University granted an honorary doctorate to Paula Vasco-Knight [1], who was subsequently criticised by an Employment Tribunal for reprisal against NHS whistleblowers, breach of the NHS Code of Conduct for Managers (nepotism and failing to declare a conflict of interest in giving her daughter's boyfriend) and for not being a reliable witness.

The University did not withdraw the doctorate after the critical ET findings, and Ms Paula Vasco-Knight continued to call herself 'Doctor Vasco-Knight'.

Ms Vasco-Knight has now pleaded guilty to a fraud and is being sentenced on 10th March.

Will the University now send the right message about values, and protecting public servants' right to speak up against wrongdoing, by withdrawing the doctorate?

Yours sincerely,

Dr Minh Alexander

cc Professor Sir Steve Smith Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Exeter University

[1] Information published by Exeter University:

Honorary graduates 2013-14

Paula Vasco-Knight (LLD)

Friday 19 July 3:00pm

Paula Vasco-Knight began her career as an enthusiastic nurse and still works clinically, committed to making a difference to patients, their families and communities, locally, nationally and internationally, over a 20 year period as a leader in the NHS. She is passionate about living the values set out in the NHS Constitution to create a Personal, Fair and Diverse NHS where everyone counts.

Paula has been CEO at South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (Torbay Hospital) for five years and has led the Trust to achieve the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Organisation of the Year Award. She held a variety of senior posts in a number of different organisations, including: Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer; Executive Director of Operations and Service Improvement; Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery; Deputy Director of Nursing and Governance; and Senior Nurse Manager.

Paula is employed by the NHS Commissioning Board as National Lead for Equality, and has been Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Equality Delivery System since 2011. She sits on the Future Forums Expert Advisory Group, currently reviewing the Constitution. Paula is a member of the ministerial review team the Public Sector Equality Duty.

She has led the Trust in establishing formal links with Nanyuki Hospital in Kenya and running an exchange programme to share best practice. Links have also been established with Clinica Girrasol in Luanda, Angola, to enable members of staff from the organisation to learn about the Trust in terms of Quality and Safety in the NHS.

Paula is the Patron for Greenwich Mencap, an organisation that runs a range of support services for adults and children with learning disabilities and their families in the borough of Greenwich, South-East London.

Since Paula has been in post the Trust has achieved the following:

HSJ Efficiency Award (Transport) 2012
HSJ Chief Executive of the Year 2012 (Highly Commended)
Patient Safety Award 2012 (Highly Commended)
NHS Leadership Recognition Awards 2012 – Inspirational Leader of the Year
NHS Leadership Recognition Awards 2012 Board of the Year (Finalist)
HSJ Acute Hospital of the Year 2011