Recently, I had a meeting with Aengus Ward regarding a complaint of victimization and bullying against a member of staff Daniele Rosina. I was a witness for the case, who had previously submitted the below document.

“After a conflict that took place between Daniele and Chris during a rehearsal last academic year, Daniele’s response was not exemplary. The argument between the two had clearly shaken up Chris quite a bit emotionally, and so I went to check up on him, as soon as I was comfortable I could leave I returned to rehearsal – notably a little late from the break – and continued the rehearsal. Once the rehearsal had finished, and everyone was packing up, I went up to Daniele to reassure him that Chris was okay, and that I believed that he would likely come back next rehearsal, everything all good. Daniele appeared to have little interest in this information, simply stating that Chris “alienates his section” and if he continues with his attitude he would never progress as a flautist in the real world. I would note that there was another person present during this conversation, who adamantly agreed with Daniele much to my frustration. Naturally, I then walked away from that conversation.

As a member of staff the wellbeing of your student body must supersede any personal conflict or frustrations you have with them, and so this came across very unprofessional to me. I had thought Daniele would say he was going to organise to meet or to talk to Chris, to check up on him etc., but I just recall walking out of it thinking, ‘Why are you slandering Chris to me (another student)?’.

I think an apology and a conversation is well overdue. I understood a situation in which Chris is an older student in his section, so is alienated rather than alienating. He is a fantastic flautist and a great contribution to the sound our orchestra makes. I also spend much time with professional orchestras due to my roles in arts organisation and orchestral management, and I am assured that the most hostile bigots still find jobs in the real world! Making these sorts of assertions are not productive. University orchestra is not striving to be like a youth copy of a real world orchestra, we are trying to be a high standard fun space for music making. We are not the CBSO YO or a conservatoire orchestra.”

During the meeting this incident was discussed at detail. However, when Chris showed me the final report at his discretion, it appeared to have been completely omitted, alongside any other contribution that I had made. This has rendered me not only in the uncomfortable position whereby a senior member of staff that I regularly work with is aware that I participated in the procedure, but that my contribution has nothing to show for it. The only topic from our conversation that I can see as a prevalent scheme in the report is a discussion regarding the threshold of bullying or victimization in our institution. Perhaps Daniele’s actions do not reflect traditional notions of what bullying is. Cases of bullying I witnessed growing up were far more severe… However, the offered definition that our institution offers for victimisation and bullying have been closely cross-examined with the incidents provided in the report, painting a very clear picture of Daniele’s wrongdoings. The omission of my witness statement, alongside other oversights seem to be evidence that the complaints procedure is designed to actively protect staff from consequence, not to resolve, in this case, a victimization/bullying case.