In addition to the comments below, I must stress the importance of the Rector to the student body and insist that the remit of this role is in no way diminished. They play a vital role in representing and supporting students, which would come to an end under these proposals. The quality of the ‘student experience’ would indeed suffer.

I would like to express my concern over the proposals included in the The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill currently going through parliament. I am a graduate of Scotland’s first University and the third oldest in the English speaking world, St Andrews. I have 10 years’ experience of working within a range of HEIs, including the University of Oxford, King’s College London and the University of Edinburgh.

Scotland’s universities are amongst its greatest economic assets, they are world-leading in their research and impact, and provide learning and teaching experiences of the highest quality. They may be centuries-old and steeped in tradition, but they embrace change where it is worthwhile and remain at the forefront of discovery, innovation and learning. Ministerial interference in the governance and management of these institutions will significantly undermine their ability to adequately maintain such high standards for the following reasons:

- Partisan influence of successive governments will hinder their autonomy
- Their academic reputations will be diminished
- A blanket policy will not be to the benefit of all institutions and will result in their being unable to compete both within the UK and internationally.
- This will have a negative impact which will reach far beyond Higher Education.

Moreover, the changes are completely unnecessary and demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of the nature of HEIs and how they function.

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