Submission from Dr Lewis N. Derrick

Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill

Dear Sirs

With respect to The Higher Education (Scotland) Bill:

1. This proposed legislation gives every appearance of a solution in need of a problem. There is no adequate evidence available to suggest that the higher education system in Scotland is in any way ‘broken’ or in need of substantial alteration or ‘repair’. The major Scottish higher education institutions, such as St Andrews, have a high reputation worldwide. This unnecessary interference risks both that reputation and the financial benefits that it reaps for the nation as a whole.

2. Standardisation of higher education is in no way desirable in a sector where freedom of choice, thought and process are essential ingredients in both teaching and research. External control of academic freedom will result in loss of autonomy, expertise and eventually reputation and resource.

3. Political influence, which by its very nature changes in an unpredictable way on a regular basis, is likely to lead to institutional instability and lack of forward planning in the long term. One only has to examine the constant party political tinkering within the English educational and health systems to observe the demoralising effects of that inconstant meddling on those working in the institutions concerned. Politicians are neither qualified nor suited to the job of running institutions of which they may not even have first-hand experience, for them to attempt to do so in such an unjustified way looks like nothing so much as Holyrood power grabbing for the sake of it.

This proposed legislation is bad from the outset, it is unjustified and it smacks of ‘Big Brother’. Drop it now!

Yours faithfully