Submission from Murray Grigor

I write as a graduate of the University of St Andrews, which over the last ten years has reached one of the highest academic and student satisfaction ratings in the UK.

To an already successful University came the present Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson, who was attracted to the position because St Andrews was the first university in Europe to instigate a course in Terrorism and Conflict Resolution, pioneered by the late Professor Wilkinson. Professor Richardson’s own specialism was also in this area, which was well known to the Senior Governor Sir Ewan Brown, who invited her to apply for her present position. Sir Ewan Brown, a graduate of the University of St Andrews, had already been recruited by his University peers for his outstanding business acumen. Together Richardson and Brown, and their accomplished colleagues, have worked tirelessly together to win outstanding results for students on an international scale. Principal Richardson has recently been invited to be the next Vice Chancellor of Oxford University, itself a telling endorsement on the recruitment procedures of St Andrews. Now that Sir Ewan has retired as the University’s Senior Governor, the Senatus Academicus of the University of St Andrews now requires the considered and essential opinions of its members to replace these two key positions for its continued success. Direct political influence, would only confuse, and no doubt greatly weaken recruitment of these two all important positions.

To end on a personal note, I have to thank the initiative of Professor Richardson, who invited Sir Sean Connery, who in turn invited me, to direct a film to mark the University’s 600 anniversary, as part of her main concern to increase the student Scholarship Fund. Our film, *Ever to Excel*, has since been a significant mover in raising funds for the Sir Sean Connery Scholarship Fund on an international basis. In its two year production I was struck on how well the University was run on its own governance. I would hate to see this diminished in anyway by unnecessary extra mural and less informed interference. This could only handicap the University, Scottish Higher education and the economy of the country. I can only appeal to the members of the Scottish Parliament to allow the University of St Andrews and all its younger siblings in Scotland to continue to flourish on their own initiatives. 'If it aint broke,' as they say in the USA, 'let’s not try to fix it.'

Murray Grigor,