For the attention of the Committee Clerk

I am writing to express my concerns, as a graduate of two Scottish universities, about the impact that the proposals set out in the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill. Given the current status of the Scottish Universities I fail to understand the need to impose the changes set out in the bill which have been so eloquently opposed by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

I have seen the impact of a centralisation of control through the Academies programme in England and have serious concerns about the effect that the changes proposed in the Bill will have on the autonomy of the universities’ independence. I strongly believe that a demonstrable independence from political control plays a significant part in maintaining the reputation of the universities which is key to attracting both research funding and the best students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A strong independent university system must surely be beneficial to the whole nation’s economic and reputational standing.

At a time when funding for all areas of government expenditure is under close scrutiny, unnecessary projects, such as this, are hard to understand.

I would be grateful if you could ensure my concerns are put before the committee.

Regards

Paul Holloway