I am writing to you out of concern about the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill.

It seems to me unclear what this bill is attempting to do. There does not seem to be an identified issue that the bill is addressing - governance and transparency at Scottish higher education institutions seems to be more than adequate. The laudatory (if unnecessary) goals of improving accountability and inclusivity seem to have been removed in favor of wording that encourages standardization (“embedding a level of consistency across the institutions”) which I find smacks worryingly of wanting to regulate institutions for the sake of regulation, rather than actually improving their state.

Surely Scotland’s government has better things to do with its time than increase the workload of already over-worked civil servants, whose competence at governing anything is usually suspect at the best of times? I also find the provisions to give ministers power to issue regulations governing how chairs are appointed to be designed to facilitate increased political control of Scottish institutions in the future without proper parliamentary control. Whilst admirably Orwellian in nature, it seems to me to constitute a threat to Scottish academic freedom, and above all it simply seems unnecessary.

I would therefore urge the parliament to withdraw the legislation immediately, so that Scottish universities can continue to thrive, be internationally competitive and continue the proud tradition of Scottish academic excellence.

Anonymous
August 2015