Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express serious concerns with the Higher Education Governance Bill, which I believe are substantive enough to require significant redrafting or wholesale rejection of this bill. The bill does not allow universities to find local strengths or solutions, and instead forces them to adopt a homogenised system which will curb innovation and reduce Scotland's university system to an assembly-line for flat-packed thinking and degrees. It reduces the independence and autonomy of universities and makes them vulnerable to politics in a way they have never been before. It limits their ability to be locally responsive and independent.

As we have seen with the NHS, this over-politicisation of a sector turns independence into box-ticking and means that the people making governing decisions have no on-the-ground experience and often utterly fail to grasp the implications of their actions or inactions. Furthermore, when homogenising the running of academic institutions, history shows us that this very rarely results in an increase in standards; usually such measures result in a dumbing-down of all institutions concerned. Students considering Scotland for their university degrees will be faced with a one-size-fits-all approach, and may well be tempted to look to England and Wales to provide more bespoke and innovative educational opportunities. Academics likewise may be tempted south by the promise of more autonomy and less governmental meddling.

As well as the risks above, the case against this bill is more damning: it is regulation for regulation's sake. It is confusing change with progress, and is pathognomonic of a government that values being seen to be doing something over one who wants to achieve real and meaningful change. There has been no successful case made demonstrating that this bill is necessary, and while any process of change is challenging, submitting to change that is imposed, that is not necessary and that is potentially dangerous is a disillusioning and disenfranchising process that will only serve to alienate staff and students who have already had to endure departmental and budget cuts while still trying to demonstrate Scotland's ability to be a world-leader in university education and research.

Kind Regards,