

Award of University Title to UHI Millennium Institute

November 2010

Introduction

The FSB is Scotland's largest direct-member business organisation, representing approximately 20,000 members. The FSB campaigns for an economic and social environment which allows small businesses to grow and prosper.

We welcome the opportunity to submit comments on this consultation and add our support to the proposal.

Benefits of University Status

The FSB believes that full university status would have positive benefits for the area.

In particular, we believe that:

- It would increase choice for indigenous highland students who wanted to remain in the highlands to continue their higher education, thus maintaining its population;
- The arrival of new people would add to the knowledge base of the local workforce and develop a new cultural influence;
- It would allow the region to grow in status through UK and international acclaim;
- It could enhance the local economy with a more educated and skilled workforce and greater support for local businesses.

The Model

The model that has been suggested of education provision over a wide area through academic partner campuses at Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde, has the potential to develop world leading practices. In our view, it is a positive arrangement which should help to validate the reputation of the new institution.

We also hope that this new institution will facilitate a through-route between further and higher education, thus creating additional opportunities in the Highlands.

Potential Drawbacks

The FSB does not anticipate any significant potential drawbacks to this proposal. However, it is important that HMIE and QAA work closely together to ensure quality is consistent in further and higher education.

The enhanced institution will also have to work hard to demonstrate quality to employers. While it will take time to establish its reputation, we hope that through the links with more established universities, this potential drawback can be overcome.

Conclusion

The FSB in Scotland fully supports this proposal. We hope that the project is successful and leads to new job opportunities in the Highlands, increased educational and training opportunities and greater economic prosperity.

For further information on any of the points raised in this submission, please contact Martyn McIntyre, Policy Officer, e: martyn.mcintyre@fsb.org.uk; t: **0141 221 0775**.
