

Reviews of Further and Higher Education Governance

BARGAINING BRIEFING

Introduction

The Scottish Government has published reports resulting from reviews it set up of Governance in Further and Higher Education. The Government has welcomed the reports and will soon indicate how they will move forward. Alongside the governance reviews, they have also indicated that they intend to regionalise Scotland's FE colleges.

Context

UNISON has not been alone in criticising the governance of Scotland's Further and Higher Education institutions. We believe that much more needs to be done to ensure that bodies who receive such large amounts of public money should be much more accountable to the communities they serve. The day-to-day running of institutions and the management of staff also need urgent improvement. UNISON submitted responses that outline our key issues to all reviews. (See further information section.)

Higher Education

The key points from the HE Review for UNISON members are:

- The jurisdiction of the privy council should transfer to a committee comprising the First Minister, the Lord Advocate and the Lord President of the Court of Session subject to parliamentary scrutiny
 - The Heads of HE institutions will be the chief officer with the job title of Principal. The report calls for reform of the appointments process for principals with the aim of widening participation in the process. There should be a remuneration committee including staff and students with a transparent process for deciding the remuneration of principals including publication of the way pay is calculated
 - Positions on governing bodies should be advertised externally. Lay and external members should make up the majority of the board.
 - There should be a minimum of at least two directly elected members of staff and two students on boards. **In addition**, one member nominated by academic unions and one member by administrative technical or support staff unions.
 - All universities should maintain a whistle-blowing policy
- UNISON welcomes the clearer line of accountability between HE institutions and the Scottish Government. The proposed expansion of staff (and student) representation on governing bodies will also improve accountability. Branches should start discussions with appropriate unions regarding the appointment of union reps and give consideration to likely candidates for the directly elected positions.

KEY POINTS:

- **The reports clearly substantiate our concerns about management in the sectors.**
- **We welcome return to national bargaining in FE**
- **We welcome union reps on boards HE boards but want same 2 members for FE**
- **FE is facing substantial cuts: regionalisation/shared services won't tackle this challenge**



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Further Education

The Griggs Review of FE governance has been linked to a wider review of FE structures and makes far-reaching recommendations. The government has indicated that it sees the regionalisation of the FE sector as the way forward and will tie changes to governance structures in with the regionalisation process.

Key recommendations include

- As soon as possible (2013/14 is the aim) move to a regional structure. Proposed regions are: Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Lanarkshire North East Tayside West Coast, Forth Valley, Borders Dumfries and Galloway, New Battle and Landbased.
- New boards would then be set up for each region as the sole governance and funding bodies.
- The Scottish government would provide leadership and strategic guidance through an FE Strategic Forum. .
- Return to national bargaining within the sector process to start April 2012 and final agreement on national harmonisation of pay and conditions by August 2014
- In terms of staff representation on regional boards the recommendation is for one of the twelve members to be a staff representative.
- The STUC to nominate one member to the FE strategic Forum

UNISON believes the proposals for HE boards offer better staff representation and at a minimum believe that there should be two staff representatives : one each for academic and non academic staff. We also believe that both sets of staff must have representatives on the Strategic Forum as they face different challenges. We welcome a return to national bargaining. We are seriously concerned though about substantial cuts in FE budgets and how this will impact on bargaining. Our concerns about regionalisation are outlined in our submission. The key issue for members is job cuts and the relocation of the posts that remain.

Action for branches

This is a period of substantial change in education. This is made more difficult by cuts in funding. The government has not made final decisions on the recommendations of the reviews and we have the opportunity to participate further before plans are finalised. We cannot wait for the final plans to start organising though. Branches must be pro-active as the government has indicated that they are happy with the recommendations in principle. Branches must:

- pass on the briefing to FE stewards
- Identify any key issues in their area as a result of these proposals
- communicate with members about the consequences of these proposals.
- seek opportunities to discuss the issues with non-members in appropriate ways. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit new members
- meet with other FE branches in the proposed region to coordinate action
- meet with student representatives locally to build links/support.
- Identify possible members (and seek out training if required) to ensure members are able to take up roles and represent staff on any new governance bodies

Further info

Griggs review FE governance

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/4912>

The review of HE Governance

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/3646/0>

UNISON response s: regionalisation of colleges

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/Response%20to%20college%20regionalisation%20proposals%20december%202011%85.pdf>

FE governance review

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/Evidence%20to%20review%20of%20FE%20governance%20October%202011.pdf>

HE governance review

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/higheredgovernanceSept11.pdf>



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