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Alyn Smith
Minister for Innovation, Technology and
Tertiary Education

MinisterforITTE@gov.scot

By Email Only

Dear Minister

We congratulate and welcome you to the new role of Minister of Technology, Innovation and Tertiary Education.

We understand you will be aware of the Colleges of the Future workstream, and we write as the joint trade unions and NUS Scotland, regarding our concerns around this workstream.

First, we share concerns at the lack of union input into the pillar 1 evidence base, and that we are now being asked to participate in pillar 2 with only extremely limited involvement or oversight of pillar 1, including its outcomes. Indeed, we have only been asked to provide "factual inaccuracies" to a paper on workforce and national bargaining, drafted by Scottish Government officials.

Second, we are concerned that no union places have been afforded on the work co-ordination group which we believe is akin to the steering group within the HE equivalent workstream: FFSSSU.

We would like the opportunity to offer an alternative 'evidence base' within the pillar 1 workstream and/or the ability to challenge the 'evidence base' already created. We cannot accept the papers from pillar 1 so far as fact. To have a well-designed sector for the future, it is important to receive competing narratives and provide some analysis around these. There are no union voices within the pillar 1 papers so far.

Between the joint unions and NUS Scotland, we represent hundreds of thousands of staff and students' interests. The joint trade unions are embedded in the system via national bargaining. As such, we believe that, if the system is to be "co-designed" then

staff and students, via their democratically elected representatives, should be represented on the work co-ordination group. Otherwise, we have staff and students' voices being weighted equivalently, via national and regional workshops, with organisations who do not have the same vested interests or numbers. We have attended one staff/learner reference group but have not agreed the terms of reference.

We hope to have the opportunity to meet you regarding our concerns and we look forward to hearing from you regarding our requests. If the response is not in the positive by start of October, then we will, jointly, be considering our position on the workstream.

Kind regards

Sarah Collins
National Officer
Further Education

Keir Greenaway
Senior Organiser

Alison MacLean
Regional Officer



Justine Pedussel
President

Janet Stewart
Regional Organiser

