



EIS-FELA Report on College Mergers

Background

A large number of college mergers took place around 2011-14 which led to the number of colleges in Scotland falling from 43 to 26.

Ostensibly all these mergers were “voluntary mergers” as the then First Minister proclaimed that the Government would not force any college or university to merge after the events at the Universities of Abertay and Dundee. This was reinforced by a Ministerial answer in Parliament by Angela Constance in 2013:

“Decisions to pursue college mergers, while ultimately requiring ministerial approval, are for the governing bodies of the institutions concerned. We have made clear that we will not force any colleges to merge.”

The Government at this time also implemented a policy of college regionalisation – as recommended by the Griggs Report. Whilst college regionalisation and college mergers have often become conflated, they should be regarded as two separate processes. College Regionalisation split the country into 13 Further Education (FE) Regions and set out a number of different ways in which a FE region could plan, fund and deliver FE for that region. College Regionalisation was underpinned by the Post-16 Education Act (Scotland). Some FE regions formed regional strategic bodies to oversee the planning and funding for multiple colleges to deliver – whilst all the colleges in some other regions simply merged. College Regionalisation did not require college mergers, but in reality the Government supported, pushed for and facilitated college mergers.

College Regionalisation and college mergers became intertwined over time, and the Government openly proclaimed the benefits of college mergers whilst saying that they were not going to force any college to merge. The exchange below in Parliament captures one such example by the then Minister for Youth Employment:

James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government what the objectives are of the on-going college merger process. (S40-01997).

The Minister for Youth Employment (Angela Constance):

The objectives are twofold: to better meet the needs of learners and employers in a region, and to do so more cost efficiently.

At the outset of the college merger programme, the Scottish Government estimated that the process would produce savings of approximately £50 million each year from 2015-16. This figure was reiterated in its written submission to

Parliament's Education & Culture Committee in advance of its oral evidence session on 24 June 2015¹.

A Parliamentary Spice Report ² (outlining the background to college regionalisation) cites the following joint rationale set out for college regionalisation by the Scottish Government and the SFC:

"The consultation noted a number of advantages associated with regional college provision. First, whereas in some places planning of college provision was fragmented, it was argued that colleges operating regionally have the advantage of scale, being able to plan regionally and deliver locally across a wider geography. This, it was argued, creates opportunities for greater cost-effectiveness through, for example, sharing of services. Second, regional college provision was thought to enhance the capability to plan and deliver part-time learning across the region, particularly for adults in employment. Third, regional colleges were thought to offer a stronger basis upon which to develop provision for employers. Alongside this, colleges role as important partners in regional networks was thought to have the potential to be strengthened, as would the potential for joint working between schools, colleges and universities, to ensure coherent provision and improve articulation between colleges and universities (SFC and Scottish Government, 2011)."

The EIS-FELA position on each college merger was driven by a policy of not supporting mergers unless the following three rules were met in the college merger document:

1. A sound educational rationale
2. No reduction in education provision
3. No compulsory redundancies

The EIS-FELA Executive Committee agreed to survey members at all colleges regarding recent college mergers on education provision, learner support, institutional flexibility, workload, management and morale – i.e. aspects of educational rationale.

The survey is the centrepiece of this report on college mergers, but this report also cites the recent Audit Scotland Report into College Mergers and also looks at some student data during the period of greatest college merger activity from the SFC Infact³ database.

¹ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/92656.aspx#a5>

² http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_13-73.pdf

³ http://www.sfc.ac.uk/statistics/further_education_statistics/infact_database/infact_database.aspx

The EIS-FELA Survey & Review of Other Data

The EIS-FELA survey into college mergers was an online survey and was open for two weeks. It had 950 responses, which corresponds to a 20% response rate. The 'Public Sector Employment for Scotland Statistics for the Second Quarter 2015⁴' gives the FE sector an employment of 13,900 (headcount). The EIS believes that approximately half of employed staff are academic teaching staff – this would mean that approximately 1 in 7 of all academic staff have responded to the EIS survey which provides statistically reliable information.

1. EIS Survey Data

Of the 950 respondents, around 816 responded that they had been involved in mergers. This is a high rate and probably reflects the topic of the survey. The gender split between respondents is almost equally shared between male and female. The age profile is high, with over 75% of all respondents being over 45 years of age.

The survey asked questions covering quality of teaching & learning, college management, college flexibility, staff support, staff morale, workload (in general), workload associated to the merger, college alignment with the local area and non-teaching support for students. All the questions on college mergers led to answers giving an opinion in the range between 80% and 94%. The overall response to each question is therefore clear and unequivocal.

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485296.pdf>

Table 1: Analysis of EIS Survey Data on College Mergers

	Yes (%)	No (%)
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?	11	89%
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the management of your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?	9	91
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the support that you receive in carrying out your role at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?	9	91
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improved staff morale at your merged college relative to the pre-merger college?	6	94
In your opinion, has your workload increased in recent years?	86	14
In your opinion, has the merger led an increase in your workload at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?	81	19
In your opinion, has the merger created a college that is more closely aligned to the local community and local learner needs relative to the pre-merger college?	14	86
In your opinion, has the merger created a college that is more able to respond flexibly (i.e. making decisions quickly) to learner needs relative to the pre-merger college?	10	90
In your opinion, has the merger improved non-teaching support for learners at your merged college relative to the pre-merger college?	15	85

2. Audit Scotland Report Colleges 2015

A report by Audit Scotland⁵ found that "mergers have contributed to significant efficiency savings" but it goes on to identify that college merger savings had actually come from a significant reduction in the number of teaching staff in colleges⁶:

"It is unclear what savings have been achieved in addition to reduced staffing costs and what the full costs of the merger process are as there are no systems in place either at individual colleges or centrally to collect this information."

College mergers were supposed to deliver benefits arising from regional planning leading to a more coherent provision, advantages of scale, shared services and greater alignment with local employer needs. However the Audit Scotland Report is unclear as to whether these aims have been met, and it makes the point that the SFC and the Government have no means of measuring whether these benefits are ever delivered.

"It is also unclear what progress there has been in achieving some of the wider benefits expected from the mergers."

"... the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) have not specified how they will measure some of the expected wider benefits. This makes it difficult to assess whether the reform programme is achieving all of its aims."

The same report also sets out the changes over the period of greatest merger activity:

"Scottish Government funding to colleges fell by 12.3 per cent in real terms between 2011/12 and 2013/14"

"There has been a reduction of 48 per cent in part-time students and a reduction of 41 per cent in the number of students aged 25 or older between 2008-09 and 2013-14."

"Staff numbers decreased by 9.3 per cent between 2011-12 and 2013-14."

3. Infact Data

To explore if college mergers had delivered more part-time places a number of queries were put through the SFC Infact database:

⁵ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2015/nr_150402_scotlands_colleges.pdf

⁶ Staff numbers decreased by 9.3 per cent between 2011-12 and 2013-14 according to the Audit Scotland Report.

- i. For the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14 the number of students for the entire college sector by mode of attendance "Part-Time, old f-t" fell from 2900 to 1853.
- ii. For the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14 the number of students for the entire college sector by mode of attendance "Part-Time, day release" fell from 33,349 to 24,628.
- iii. For the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14 the number of students for the entire college sector by mode of attendance "Other Part-Time, Day" fell from 82,208 to 77,154.
- iv. For the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14 the number of students for the entire college sector by mode of attendance "Work based learning" fell from 7,961 to 7,555.
- v. For the same period, the number of students for the entire college sector by mode of attendance "Full time" fell from 80,892 00 to 79,948.

To explore whether college regionalisation has delivered more adult learner places the query was put to the SFC Infact database.

For the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14 the number of students by "Age of Student = 25 or over" for the entire college sector fell from 120,864 to 108,281.

4. Redundancies

The Government, during the period of the cuts, made clear to colleges its "expectation" that no staff were to be made redundant. Technically, this statement is still in place. The statement is weaker than that understood for other central Government public sector employees and the NHS, where it is understood that a no compulsory redundancy policy is in place.

It should also be noted that it is normally unlawful to make someone redundant due to a TUPE merger. The City of Glasgow College made a 'no compulsory redundancies' agreement with the EIS shortly after the merger, which was honoured. However some other merged colleges argued that technically they could still make redundancies after a merger for "ETO" reasons. Fife College was one such college.

The Government's Ms Angela Constance (as Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning) wrote to all College Principals on 15 March 2011 (Appendix 3) to "reinforce that expectation" (i.e. that all publicly funded bodies should seek to avoid compulsory redundancies). Furthermore, Ms Constance asked "that your board of management adopt such policy; and to ask that you advise me of your response to my request."

The EIS wrote to all colleges on 21 March 2011 following Ms Constance's letter asking which colleges had confirmed to the Government a no compulsory redundancy policy. All colleges responded, and a number of them also copied to the EIS their responses to the Government in response to Ms Constance's letter.

Not a single college made a commitment to avoid compulsory redundancies in their responses to the EIS, and most colleges used a phrase that "ultimately there may be occasions when it is absolutely unavoidable." A number of letters to the Government (and EIS) made it clear that funding cuts were driving "job reductions".

Therefore, whilst Scottish colleges respected the Government's expectation, they made it clear to staff that compulsory redundancies were possible. This was no idle threat since a small number of colleges made staff redundant between 2011-14, including North Highland College and Fife College. The voluntary severance programme in the college sector was run in this context.

Merged colleges and indeed all colleges received cuts in funding between 2011-14 and needed fewer staff to deliver FE activity and they mainly relied on voluntary severances to reduce staff numbers – funded by specific monies from the SFC for this purpose.

5. Voluntary Severance Payments & Compulsory Redundancy Payments

Almost all college contracts of employment used for lecturing staff give the statutory redundancy compensation for redundancy – i.e. the legal minimum. In other words, there is no contractual redundancy pay enhancement, therefore contractually, staff have only the right to receive statutory redundancy payments. All employees with at least two years' continuous employment get a statutory redundancy pay entitlement of:

- 1 week's pay for each full year of service while they were 22 or older, but under 41
- 1.5 week's pay for each full year of service while they were 41 or older

Employees can only count a maximum of 20 years' service and the 'weekly pay' is subject to an upper limit, which is £475 per week in 2015. The maximum possible payment for 20 years service ending at the age of 41 is £9,500 and for 20 years service ending at the age of 61 or over is £14,250.

The college merger voluntary severance programme was mainly funded by £58m of additional funding⁷. Despite the common source of that public money, the

⁷ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2015/nr_150402_scotlands_colleges.pdf Section 21 "The SFC also provided over £52 million between 2011-12 and 2013-14 to support college mergers. It plans to provide a further £6 million in 2014-15."

voluntary severance deals offered by colleges varied from college to college although they were funded by the taxpayer and “overseen” by the Scottish Funding Council (the FE sector’s regulator) and OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator - since colleges have charitable status). As voluntary severance deals are non-contractual, staff have no automatic right to receive a voluntary severance deal, it is within the employers’ gift.

Qualifying periods of service varied for VS deals across colleges and within colleges for different periods of time – i.e. for different VS rounds. The norm for this period was that lecturing staff needed around 10 years⁸ continuous service to access a VS deal of a year’s salary, this was typically around £35,000 in the period 2011-14, with the first £30,000 usually being tax free. A lecturer of 10 years’ service for example who learnt that the college was looking to make voluntary severance deals or compulsory redundancies in the last resort would have faced a choice of between of a statutory redundancy payment of £4750 - £7125 (in 2015, dependant on age) and a voluntary severance payment of around £35,000. Large numbers of staff therefore left because they felt they had no real choice.

Whilst this may have been a windfall for some staff, it also pushed out large number of experienced staff and promoted staff that left gaps in teaching and management in colleges. The EIS believes that experienced promoted staff were targeted in the VS programmes so that management teams could be reduced in size. The EIS believes that this has had an adverse effect in colleges.

Senior leaders and college principals get to know Board members and this may have contributed to bespoke and some excessive, in the EIS’ view, voluntary severance packages for some senior leaders and some principals.

The Public Audit Committee produced a Section 22 Report⁹ on governance around the voluntary severances of three members of the senior management team at North Glasgow College. The Report noted that a significant part of the severance packages was funded from the college’s own funds and not from the SFC funding for VS. The Report outlined the breakdown of the principal’s total severance package – amounting to a total of around £330k. The package was made up of £130k of voluntary severance and other payments including 6 months gardening leave. There is anecdotal evidence from some Branch officials from other colleges that some college principals - that were not appointed to lead their newly merged college – may have been given gardening leave for even longer periods of time, such as a year on full pay.

⁸ 12 years’ service to obtain 12 months’ salary was also common in some colleges

⁹ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/76458.aspx>

Discussion of Results

EIS Survey Results

The Government's rationale for college regionalisation was twofold; greater financial efficiency to generate savings and improved educational provision. It is very clear that the merged colleges have, in the view of their staff, failed to deliver improvements in many of the educational areas that they were supposed to do so.

The positively framed question "*In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?*" is the key question and 89% respondents disagreed with this statement.

Larger colleges, created by mergers were supposed to deliver improved teaching and learning – but 89% of respondents disagreed that this has taken place. Whilst underlying causes for the adverse effect on learning and teaching need to be explored, it is possible that college mergers have given some new colleges the opportunity to significantly change teaching activity and working practices under the guise of merging operations.

It should also not be forgotten that college mergers led to large numbers of staff taking voluntary severance packages and that this resulted in the loss of thousands of experienced staff from the sector – many of whom held promoted posts. The loss of so many staff will have adversely affected the ability of any merged college to maintain teaching activity, contacts with local community etc.

The loss of so many promoted post-holders will have caused adverse effects in the management and administration of courses. The "churn" effect of mergers on staff and pressures on newly promoted staff should not be ignored or underestimated.

Likewise, non-teaching support has suffered in merged colleges according to 84.6% of respondents. Examples where student recruitment and enrolment processes have broken down in newly merged colleges have been reported in the media¹⁰. The adverse effect on support services for students across the college sector has been widely reported. Whilst underlying causes for such adverse effects need to be explored, it is possible that college mergers have given some new colleges the opportunity to fundamentally change student support services beyond simply merging operations – often driven by voluntary severance schemes for staff.

Larger colleges, created by mergers were supposed to deliver greater regional planning and be able to adapt flexibly to needs of learners and local employers,

¹⁰ http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/13290393.Students_in_blast_over_shambles_at_merged_college/

but 89.5% of respondents stated that their merged college was not more flexible than their pre-merged college. Furthermore, 86.9% of staff stated that their merged colleges were less aligned to their local community than their pre-merger college.

The finding that larger organisations are less nimble and flexible in their decision making is not a surprise. Most of the pre-merger colleges were single site colleges and they have now become larger multi-site entities. Larger bodies involve more bureaucracy and reliance on management structures populated by staff that may not personally know each other. Multi-site bodies will have a greater separation of operational staff and management staff.

For example, a lecturer in Site C of a merged College X may need to convince middle managers in Site C and then senior managers in Site A that she needs to run an additional course for a specific employer's need. These staff may not even know each other and rely on email and other means of communication since multi-site meetings are time consuming and thus rare. Compare this with a lecturer in a single site college that can meet and sort out additional courses without leaving the building – usually working with people face-to-face that they know.

The finding that larger organisations are less aligned with their local communities should not be a surprise either. Most college mergers involved replacing three management teams (i.e. decision making structures) with a single centralised management team – a single team covering a geographical area previously covered by three. It is not surprising that one management team is less aligned (i.e. knows less, fewer contacts) about a large area previously covered by 3 management teams. The greater separation of operational staff and management staff in larger entities such as multi-site merged colleges is also a barrier to close alignment to local communities.

The increase in workload experienced by staff in colleges confirms previous EIS surveys. Over 86% of respondents reported increased workloads; however 81% of respondents stated that the merger had led to increased workloads.

It is difficult to disaggregate the effect of sustained funding cuts over the last 5 years or so on workload increases directly arising from the mergers. It is however clear that college mergers were designed to deliver efficiencies and ultimately efficiencies are delivered by getting more work out of staff - as staff deliver all teaching activity. Whilst all mergers are likely to generate additional workload over the period of the merger and subsequent "bedding down" the strong belief that mergers have increased workload is a concern. Whilst the underlying causes need to be explored, larger college entities may lead to greater bureaucracy with greater use of quality assurance systems to feed management teams that are further away from operational staff. It is also possible that decision making processes are more complex and require more effort in larger colleges.

There is little doubt that the college sector's funding was hit harder than almost any other comparable sized area of Scottish Government funding. The Government's university sector funding rose in real terms during most of the same period. Whilst the EIS and others campaigned against college sector funding cuts and helped to persuade the Government to amend its original three year spending plan for college revenue spending - which was to fall to below £500m in 2015 - it is possible that this campaigning diverted attention away from the college merger programme.

It is not surprising given the effects of any college merger outlined above that morale in merged colleges has fallen. The level of morale in this EIS survey is lower than morale recorded in the EIS Survey for Workload that disaggregated the whole EIS-FELA results.

It is also worth noting that in recent years there have only been two industrial actions carried out in Scottish colleges and both were at merged colleges - Ayrshire College and Edinburgh College.

Audit Scotland Report

The Government promoted college mergers by claiming greater efficiency and improved learner benefits. The Audit Scotland Report on careful reading does undermine the notion that college mergers have led to inherently more efficient colleges. It points out that the only savings have been brought about by the reduction in staffing. The reduction in staffing has led to fewer students - both full time and part-time.

The Audit Scotland Report also undermines the notion that college mergers have delivered wider benefits to learners, it simply cannot find the evidence. Worryingly, the Audit Scotland Report puts forward the view that the SFC and Government have not put processes in place to be able to measure the promised college merger benefits.

The EIS found some areas of the Audit Scotland Report disappointing, especially as it correctly set out the effects of the cuts and mergers on staffing, part-time provision, over-25's provision etc and yet concluded that there had been "minimal negative impact on students."

Infact Data

The previously quoted SPICE Report quotes the rationale for college mergers in 2011, but Government policy changed shortly afterwards and refocused towards preparing young people for work. One of the original justifications for college mergers was to increase part-time provision and the figures consistently show a fall in the number of part-time students and older students. These probably reflect the Government's shift in college policy.

Surprisingly, Infact data also shows a drop in full time students over the period of time, during a period in which full time students were supposed to be the focus of the sector. However, when the funding cuts and cuts in staff are taken into consideration it is no surprise. Previous EIS FoIs have identified cuts in Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision, course cancellations, merged classes and greater online learning (aka blended learning). It should also be noted that the Government had promoted college mergers as a way of reducing "duplication", i.e. provision.

Findings

It is clear that a large majority of those EIS members who teach in recently merged colleges feel that their previous colleges were better at delivering teaching and learning. It is also clear that a large majority of those EIS members who teach in recently merged colleges believe that the benefits set out by the Government of merged colleges have not been realised.

The EIS survey shows evidence that a large majority of serving college staff believe that college mergers that have led to larger merged colleges have yet to deliver better teaching, better student support, better alignment with regional stakeholders, greater flexibility or improved management. There seems to be no evidence to support that merged colleges have delivered an overall positive educational benefit to learners. It is clear to the EIS that the educational rationale for merging colleges is weak.

It is difficult to disaggregate the effects of the sustained and savage Government funding cuts to the college sector in recent times from the effect of the college mergers. The Government always made clear that the mergers were driven by a wish to improve education and to make significant financial savings. The college mergers have disguised and masked the effects of the financial savings. In other words, it is probable that many of the concerns raised by staff regarding college mergers are actually caused in part by the financial cuts.

The EIS believes that the £58m additional funding for getting rid of experienced staff would have been better spent on maintaining and building the college sector. (It should also be noted that during this time colleges moved £99m out of the sector into Arms Length Foundations (ALFs)). The Government has repeatedly claimed that mergers should lead to £50m of annual savings by 2015-16. Audit Scotland found that there is no evidence that merged colleges have led to any financial savings or efficiencies other than voluntary severances leading to fewer staff.

It is worrying that the Government has promoted, encouraged and facilitated a number of college mergers with a clear rationale with predicted benefits that it is now – according to Audit Scotland – unable to measure subsequent to the

mergers. It would seem that the Government and SFC were not minded to meaningfully check whether their policy of college mergers actually delivered the promised benefits.

The EIS is clear however that many lecturing staff felt that they had no choice except to leave the sector, since their voluntary severance deals were worth much more than statutory redundancy payments arising from compulsory redundancy. This led to the loss of a large number of experienced skilled workers to the sector, many of whom did not want to leave.

It is also clear to the EIS that the deals offered to senior staff and principals were of a different magnitude to serving staff, and some bespoke deals included complex arrangements such as long term gardening leave on full pay. The EIS believes that some senior managers and some principals took advantage of the system.

Appendix 1

Background Questions

The online survey was completed between X and Y and sent out to over 4600 members, with a 950 members responding to one or more questions. The survey program blocked computers from making more than one survey.

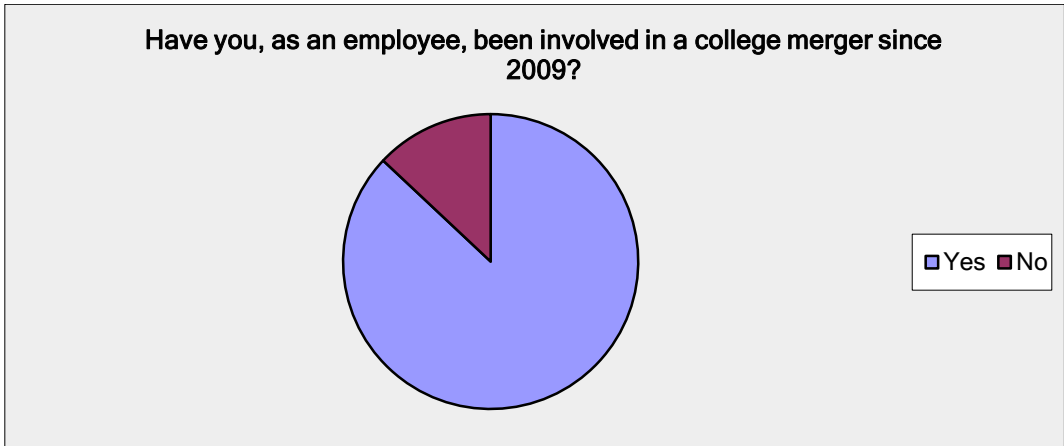
JobTitle		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Unpromoted Lecturer	72.2%	682
Promoted Lecturer or Equivalent (teaching)	20.5%	194
Curriculum Manager (non-teaching)	4.6%	43
Senior Management	2.0%	19
Instructor/Assessor	0.7%	7
answered question		945
skipped question		5

Gender		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	48.7%	461
Female	49.6%	469
Transgender	0.1%	1
Not disclosed	1.6%	15
answered question		946
skipped question		4

Please indicate your age range		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
24 or under	0.1%	1
25-34	5.0%	47
35-44	16.2%	154
45-54	40.8%	387
55-64	34.8%	330
65+	1.5%	14
Not disclosed	1.7%	16
answered question		949
skipped question		1

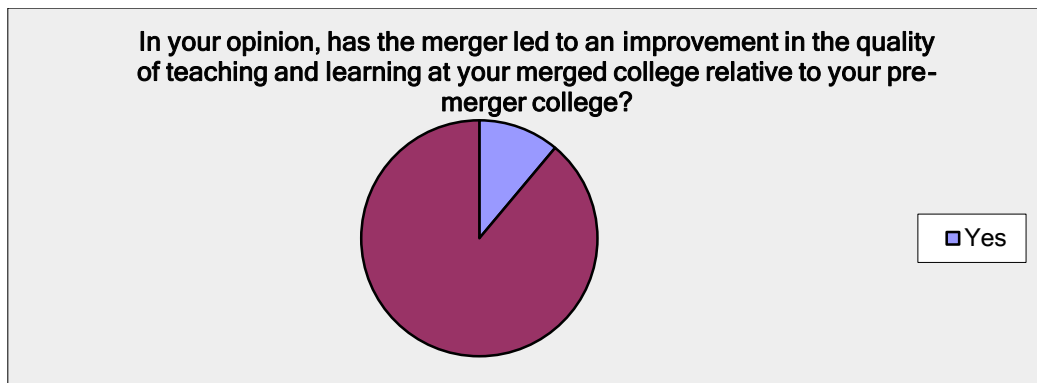
Appendix 2: Raw Data from EIS-FELA Survey on College Mergers

Have you, as an employee, been involved in a college merger since 2009?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.0%	816
No	13.0%	122
<i>answered question</i>		938



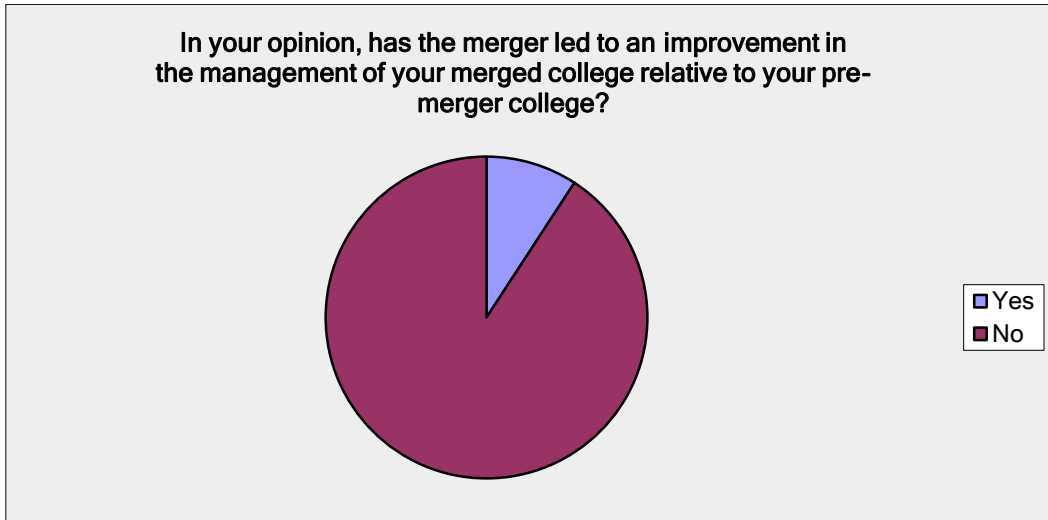
Note: Those members who responded that they had not been involved in a college merger were then passed to the final section of the survey that asked about EIS provision. This is why around 800 members answered the questions on mergers from the 950 or so members that completed the survey.

In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	11.1%	89
No	88.9%	716
<i>answered question</i>		805



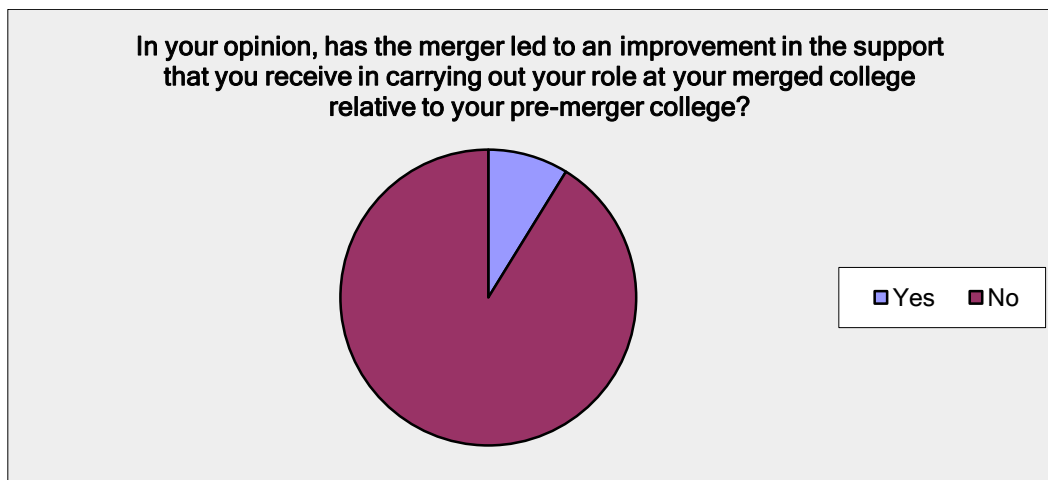
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the management of your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	9.2%	74
No	90.8%	731
answered question		805



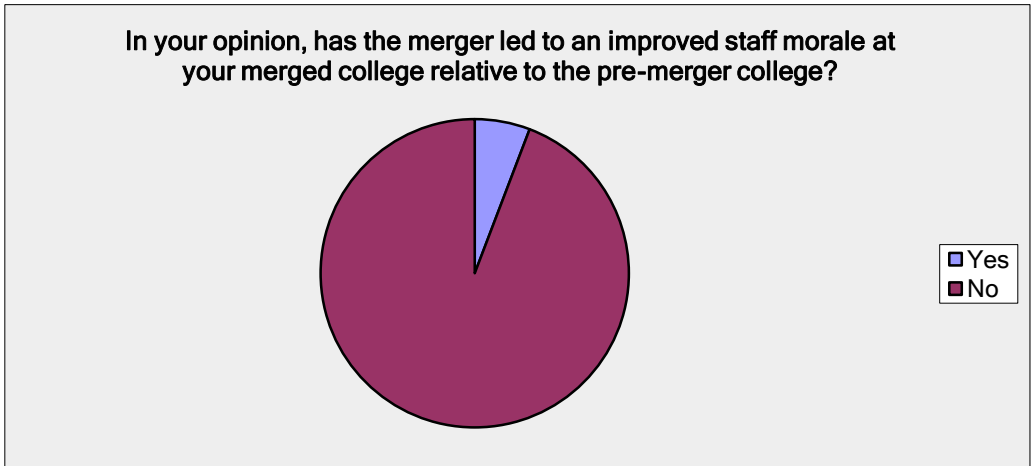
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improvement in the support that you receive in carrying out your role at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	8.8%	71
No	91.2%	735
answered question		806



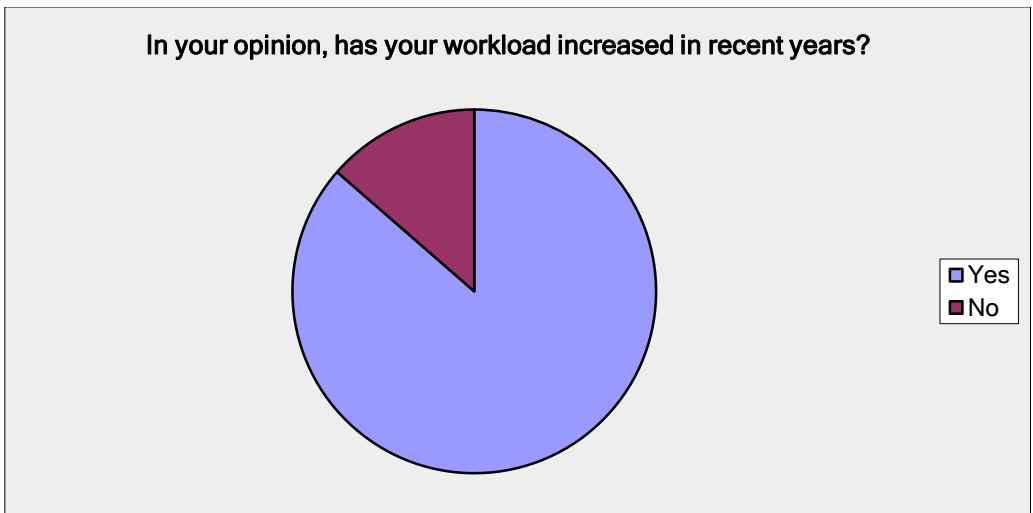
In your opinion, has the merger led to an improved staff morale at your merged college relative to the pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	5.8%	47
No	94.2%	761
<i>answered question</i>		808



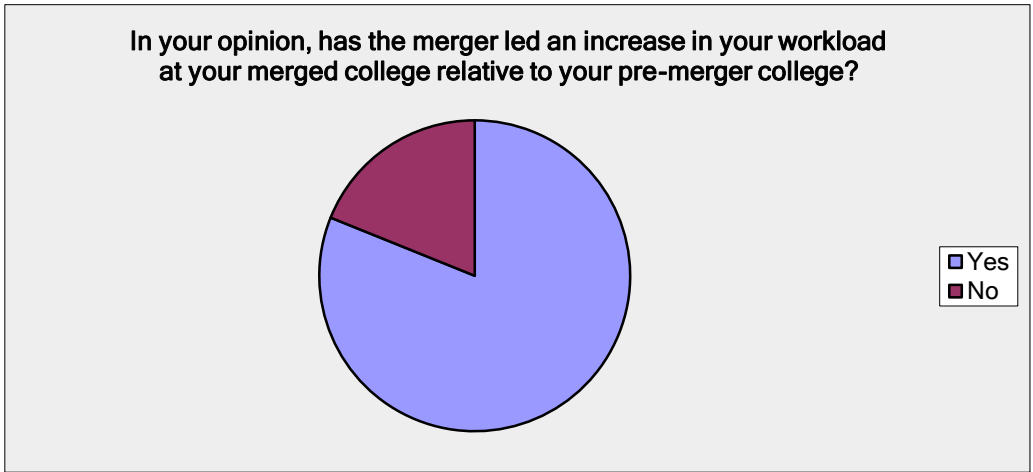
In your opinion, has your workload increased in recent years?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	86.4%	689
No	13.6%	108
If Yes, please indicate how		588
<i>answered question</i>		797



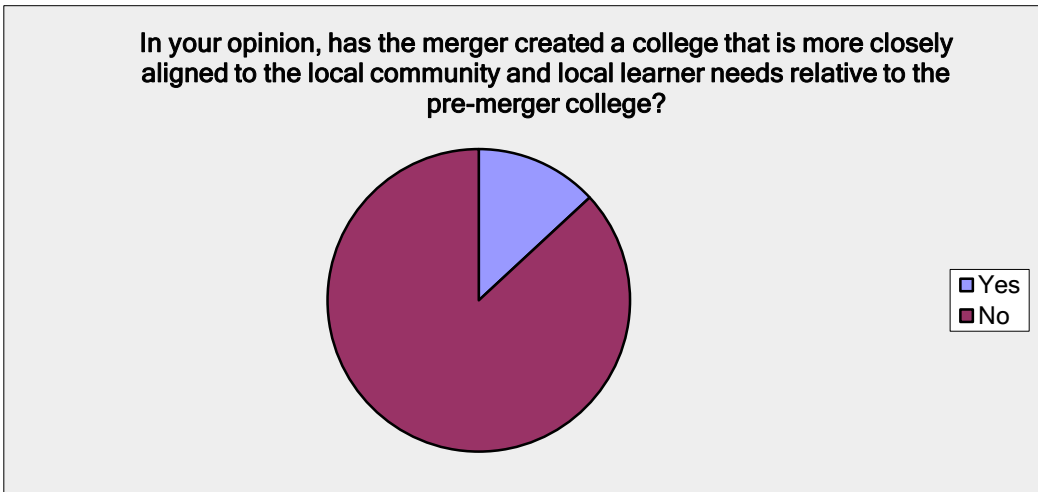
In your opinion, has the merger led an increase in your workload at your merged college relative to your pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.1%	640
No	18.9%	149
If Yes, please indicate how		492
<i>answered question</i>		789



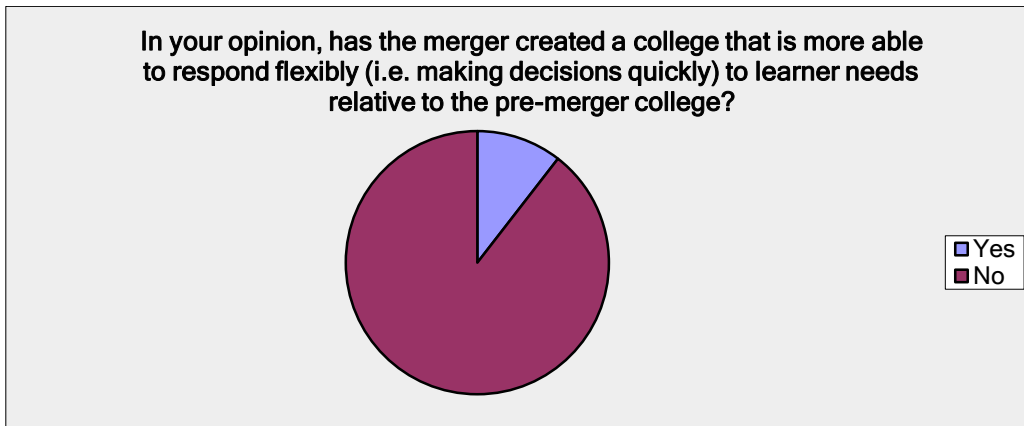
In your opinion, has the merger created a college that is more closely aligned to the local community and local learner needs relative to the pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	13.1%	102
No	86.9%	677
<i>answered question</i>		779



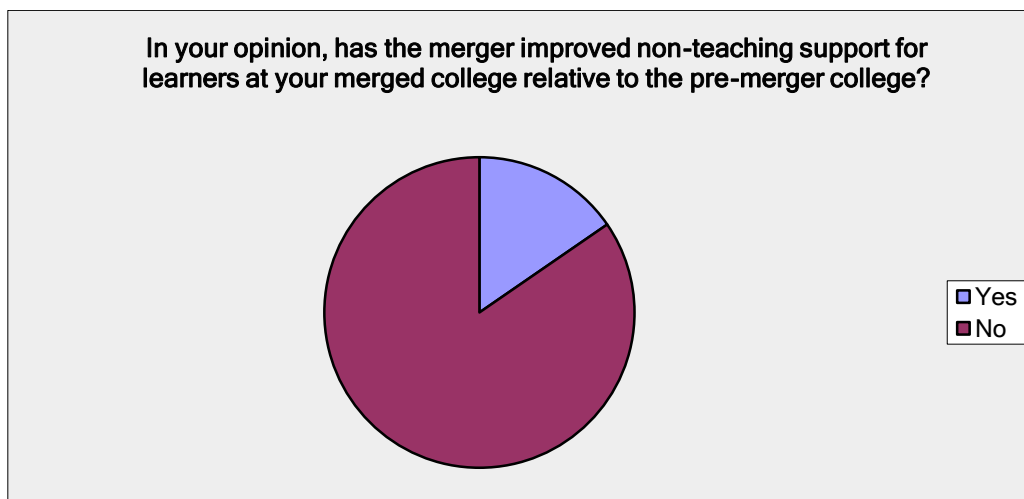
In your opinion, has the merger created a college that is more able to respond flexibly (i.e. making decisions quickly) to learner needs relative to the pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	10.5%	82
No	89.5%	699
<i>answered question</i>		781



In your opinion, has the merger improved non-teaching support for learners at your merged college relative to the pre-merger college?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	15.4%	120
No	84.6%	659
<i>answered question</i>		779



Ministear airson Sgilean agus Ionnsachadh Fad-bheatha
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TO: PRINCIPALS OF ALL COLLEGES FUNDED BY THE
SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL

cc: Chief Executive, Scottish Funding Council
Chief Executive, Scotland's Colleges

15 March 2011

Dear Principal

Ministers have made clear on a number of occasions their very strong wish that all publicly funded bodies should seek to avoid compulsory redundancies. I am writing to college Principals to reinforce that expectation; to ask that your board of management adopt a such policy; and to ask that you advise me of your response to my request.

In making this request I recognise immediately the scale of the challenge facing colleges as they plan the implementation of a reduced budget next year. I also recognise that many colleges will already have started to consult with staff on the issue of possible job losses, and that individual colleges may not yet know the precise level of demand for early severance where such a scheme is being offered. While employment matters within a college are ultimately for the board of management in consultation with the trade unions, it is my very strong wish that decisions should be clearly informed by the position of Ministers.

I hope therefore that I may rely on your board to do everything in its power to plan on the basis that the College will not make staff compulsorily redundant. It is my very firm hope that you will be able to provide me with an assurance on behalf of your board of management that it will seek to adopt a such a policy. Our expectations of colleges cannot be anything other than those which we have of other publicly-funded organisations. Should your board feel unable to provide such an assurance, it would be helpful if you could agree to meet with officials in order to provide them with a fuller understanding of the College's position.

Yours sincerely

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Appendix 4

Some individual comments made by members to Question 10; Please record any comments on any of the issues raised in the survey or anything else you wish to add for consideration by the EIS-FELA Executive Committee.

The mergers are the biggest joke ever! there are no savings, decisions made do not take into consideration that they are community colleges, student places have been cut drastically and Funding has decreased on an annual basis with still the same targets to be met re students. This Government should hang their heads in shame!

9/14/2015 12:27 PM

Class sizes (SVQ) have increased to almost unmanageable numbers.

9/10/2015 10:54 PM

Bigger is not necessarily better. Believe our college is too big.

9/10/2015 3:27 PM

College too big. Poorer communication. Staff feel isolated in their own department and therefore don't get involved. Quality of senior management exceptionally poor.

9/8/2015 1:28 PM

The level of stress being placed on individual lectures is having a deleterious effect on their health and is something that needs to be addressed urgently

9/7/2015 5:46 PM

Staff being stretched across numerous campuses is having a seriously detrimental effect on the quality of teaching available as well as the well being and health of staff, guarantee's made Pre- merger have been broken with no thought to the knock on effect to learning and teaching

9/6/2015 10:05 AM

The most frustrating part is that we have the applications, we have the ability to do the courses and we certainly have the teaching staff and support, but it is badly run because of poor planning, poor online systems for both applying and registration. The standard of management is poor albeit under supported and overall the Quality is in my opinion reduced by 50%. We need Government support to improve our colleges

9/5/2015 3:39 PM

Lecturers role expanded without consultation as well as new policies and procedures being implemented without consultation

9/4/2015 1:49 PM

The EIS should be doing more for its members in regards to terms & conditions and forced (voluntary) severance.

9/4/2015 8:27 AM

REDACTED college is closer to the community but that doesn't help me with my courses which used to attract students from all over the West of Scotland when the course was offered at REDACTED.

9/3/2015 4:26 PM

Merger has been a waste of time and resources

9/3/2015 3:51 PM

Staff morale has never been so low.

9/3/2015 3:42 PM

top heavy with 'new' management who seem to be making rash ill thought out changes to procedures without due consideration and awareness of the knock on effect to teaching staff and students

9/3/2015 3:19 PM

the college merger at the beginning at REDACTED seemed pretty good at start with management.....now it seems very top heavy...too many bosses making decisions which are very late being filtered down to the ground floor staff who do all the real work.....also there is not much consultation with us and decisions are made.....EQUALITY for staff??

9/2/2015 12:41 PM

Too little too late. Your questions seem loaded EIS was not vocal enough when mergers were taking place 2 or 3 years ago . You only seemed interested in getting a national pay agreement through, giving the EIS more clout in the FE sector.

9/2/2015 8:29 AM

Don't feel supported

9/2/2015 8:08 AM

There is a systemic dismantling of the previous culture of progression and attainment amidst a culture of bullying and intimidation. There is a drive to reduce the institution to a community college and a neglect of years of experience and excellence in the process.

9/1/2015 9:07 PM

If they cannot give us a decent pay rise, they should lessen the workload.

9/1/2015 7:35 PM

I think overall the merger has been better for the colleges. Three colleges work much better in partnership than 8 or more. When our departments merged we took the best

practice from each and now have a much better course/portfolio of additional extras for students to participate in.

9/1/2015 1:50 PM View respondent's answers Categorize as... œ

the merger of the college has led to "it's no ma job!" rather than a collaboration of teams

9/1/2015 1:21 PM

The EIS-FELA, with the support of the whole institute, should be doing much more to expose and challenge the huge increase in the proportion of expenditure that goes on things that have no bearing on frontline teaching or support staff and services

9/1/2015 11:48 AM

Bullying tactics are going on all the time - some managers are more subtle than others but it still happens

9/1/2015 11:28 AM

Constant restructuring (my department has changed names several times), moving of accommodation along with increased workload often results in a stressful work environment. Many senior lecturers are allocated to schools and departments in which they have no subject knowledge and these result in teaching staff taking on more responsibilities to help that line manager settle in. Whilst this is not a problem and all staff will, of course, assist their new Head etc, it does mean that often staff are becoming responsible for interviewing students, recruitment etc. This is now the norm. The expectation is that all students must pass and if they don't it is somehow the fault of the lecturer is another burden which has increased in recent years. The pressure to "get students through regardless" is almost the new mission statement of the new institution(s)

9/1/2015 11:20 AM

I feel the EIS is overwhelmed with the current situation and as such lots of bad policy or unacceptable managerial behaviour is slipping through the net, and let's be clear the management in my college are bullying staff daily and the there is an atmosphere of fear that I can only imagine was similar in 1930's Germany

9/1/2015 10:52 AM

Very difficult to work for managers who have zero experience or knowledge of the subject of the department they are running.

9/1/2015 10:35 AM

Terms and conditions deteriorating, new staff have poor contracts

9/1/2015 10:32 AM

The merger has happened at the same time as year on year cuts to FE. The cuts are really what has impacted the merger negatively and the new commercial/corporate outlook from above which has no place in public education.

9/1/2015 10:29 AM

The act of cutting college places has distanced the college from it's community. It is no longer a place for people to improve themselves (education for educations sake) It is now for career minded people only. We have less older people, less parents, more youngsters. Applications are done on a first come first served basis rather than ability, we say no to students with great grades and take someone with barely enough. This puts even more pressure on staff who are being given arbitrary targets for students to achieve. this devalues the award, dumbs down the award and increases pressure on lecturers.

9/1/2015 10:22 AM

In my opinion college mergers have not provided a better service to students and has created a great deal of unnecessary stress and unhappiness for staff.

9/1/2015 10:17 AM

Some staff have been demoted. With this and other factors, short and long term sickness seems at a record high. The health of lecturers is not a priority.

9/1/2015 10:09 AM

This merger has been a disaster for students and staff. Morale has never been lower. We are talked at and told very little. I used to be very proud to work for the college as it was before the merger but now I have sense of dread every day

8/31/2015 8:34 PM

We have moved back 10 years.

8/31/2015 3:57 PM