

Dear John,

Following our Board away day meeting last weekend when we had a session on your SFC Draft Corporate Plan.

I set out below my comments on behalf of Anniesland College where we were lucky enough to have the presence of Martin Fairbairn to help our deliberations:-

1. Length of document good but it may not be sharp or focussed enough;
2. When will we see operational plan as individual college plans will of necessity be based on the SFC plan;
3. The SFC Plan does not highlight the present recession which affects all our planning certainly over the period of the plan;
4. Greater emphasis on changing demography with the recession driving the needs for changed skills and the additional investment to allow for different access learning areas;
5. Any joint skills committee should include employers to ensure they buy in to joint activities also;
6. Having served on the Court of Glasgow Caledonian University and its predecessor institutions in the 1980's and 1990's where partnerships were in place with a number of FE Colleges like College of Building and Printing and James Watt can we review these collaboration projects to see if there are lessons to be learnt and not try to start with a blank sheet of paper as happens so often in the Public Sector and can lead to wasting of effort, time and money;
7. My own experience as an advisor to an SME merchant supplier of medical equipment and consumables who are a partner in a KTP knowledge exchange with Central College on marketing discloses that this is a route to follow although there is a learning curve on both sides which is gained through experience and a willingness on all sides to realise no one partner has all the wisdom.
8. The concerns being expressed by politicians and the SME sector about the lack of flexibility in the APUC tendering processes and the system which favours the "Big Battallions" against locally based businesses where the Colleges are being forced to purchase from the larger suppliers after years of dealing with local or Scots based companies at competitive prices and

service are detrimental to the Scottish economy as a whole and certainly makes life difficult for Colleges which are community based and which wish to support local business. My understanding is from discussions with Ken Waite of Central College who is at present undertaking a review on the impact of APUC that SME's were not represented on the initial planning of this "bundling" type methodology and hence the comment at 5 above to have all sides represented in any plans;

9. We agree with your vision to see greater autonomy of Colleges and Universities with less form filling and a wish to have outcome agreements with Colleges;

10. Your wishes to have less focus on statistical returns which will not be revised every year and more focus on active involvement, strategic dialogue, bespoke solutions, and outputs and outcomes are more than welcomed. My own memory includes the measurements used by Arnold Weinstock at GEC who had a handful of KPI's and provided these were met allowed the individual companies to carry on. This may have to be tempered by our recent experience in the Financial Sector when their regulators failed to bark and therefore share a large culpability for the present financial trauma which affects us all.

I hope this is helpful and I look forward to receiving your final Plan in due course

Kind regards

Ken Macaldowie

Chairman, Anniesland College