

# SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES **FORWARD TOGETHER** SCOTTISH ELECTION PROSPECTUS 2007

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FOR THE ECONOMY



SCOTLAND'S TOP PRIORITY ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH. DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL IN SCOTLAND WILL SUPPORT THE ECONOMY AND HELP RAISE PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY AND INTO MAINSTREAM SOCIETY. ONLY THROUGH PROVIDING FLEXIBLE, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WILL SCOTLAND ENSURE THE HIGHLY SKILLED AND ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN THE GLOBALISED ECONOMY, AND **SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES** HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN MAKING THIS A REALITY.

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Each of Scotland's 43 incorporated colleges deliver high quality learning and teaching to their local community and beyond. Across Scotland, 1 in 10 of the working age population attends a college, and over 50% of first time voters in this year's Scottish Parliament elections have experienced the benefits of college education<sup>1</sup>. Education is undoubtedly a key weapon in achieving economic strength and social justice.

The 21st century promises challenges and opportunities never before imagined and Scotland's Colleges can help position Scotland as a key player economically and socially, locally and internationally.

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## WORKING FOR SCOTLAND AT HOME...

Scotland's Colleges believe that Scotland, as a smaller nation, has strengths and experience that position it for success. Colleges capitalise on these strengths by bringing people together, developing a shared understanding and using opportunities to collaborate in a way that grows the economy efficiently and creates a better place to live, work and learn for the people of Scotland. We fully support the view of the Scottish Funding Council that education is central to promoting the social, cultural and economic regeneration of Scotland.

The college sector has always attested its key role in economic development and the Scottish Executive's own figures show that for every £1 invested in the college sector there is an economic yield of at least £3.20<sup>2</sup>. Scotland's Colleges have a unique relationship with Scottish industry, especially small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which are the hidden strength of our national economy. Through local partnerships with industry Scotland's Colleges ensure new ways of working, building efficiency and productivity.

Scotland has many communities, urban and rural, native and new Scots, and Scotland's Colleges work to ensure equality, social justice and inclusion are part of every student's experience. We work to build citizenship and strong communities from the individual up. We recognise that new technology will help reach remote and rural communities and support essential continuing professional development for many, including SMEs and large public sector bodies such as the NHS in Scotland. We recognise that how, where and when people learn is important and have invested wisely to provide a more flexible and adaptable learning environment for students.

In 2004-05 more than a quarter of college activity was attributable to students from the most seriously deprived areas of Scotland, with colleges making a real difference to people's lives. For many in these communities the most realistic option for improving skills and life chances comes through their local college, often working in partnership with local authorities and voluntary groups. Positive attitudes and transferable skills help keep people in work and out of poverty. Colleges help develop these skills. Those young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) are a potentially lost resource and Scotland's Colleges are the major vehicle for reclaiming these young people and working towards reducing the number who fall into this category in the future by ensuring appropriate support and courses and stronger schools-college links, offering meaningful alternatives to a school only experience.

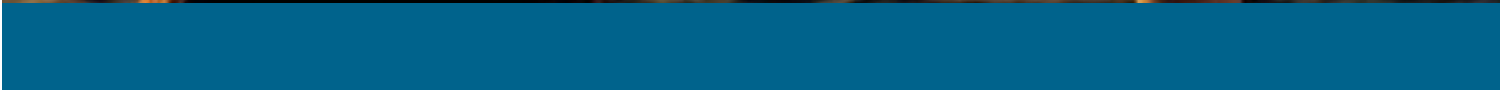
We also recognise that our population is changing with more older people returning to the work force after retirement or staying on in work for longer. Lifelong learning, retraining and upskilling are increasingly becoming the norm and Scotland's Colleges are the most appropriate destination for these valuable and experienced workers. They are also a source of experience, wisdom and support for young people and for those requiring support in the community, through volunteering programmes which again requires training to maximise the capacity of those involved.

## ...AND ABROAD

The excellence of Scotland's education system is recognised world-wide and Scotland's Colleges are working together to promote international education both in Scotland and with partners abroad. Through the development of Scotland's Colleges International, Scottish education and training will be available globally to support emerging and existing economies with new generations of students strengthening global and personal links for Scotland in the future.

Helping people exploit new technology and supporting the development of new businesses in the European Accession states brings benefits to Scotland and to our European neighbours. The experience gained by Scotland's Colleges through working with local companies supported by European Structural Funds is an exportable commodity enhancing business and individual links across Europe. Our expertise in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages complements our other expertise in developing our global reputation.





## QUALITY MATTERS

Scotland's Colleges are great places to learn and work, thanks in part to the major investment that has been made in college estates across Scotland. Colleges are adding value to funding provided by the Scottish Executive to extend the reach of investments – since 2003 £350 million invested through the Scottish Funding Council has resulted in £565 million of capital expenditure on new college buildings. Securing sufficient on-going capital investment to maintain the improvements made in college estates is essential.

The quality of the 22,000 employees working in the college sector, and their satisfaction with their employment, has just been researched jointly by the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) and the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) finding that staff are 'satisfied, motivated and unlikely to leave the sector. They are strong advocates for their institutions and the work they do.'<sup>3</sup>

Governance in Scotland's Colleges is recognised as among the best in the public sector, as detailed in a recent independent report commissioned by the Scottish Executive<sup>4</sup>. College boards are comprised of highly skilled and experienced volunteers who freely give of their time and professional expertise to the betterment of post-school education in Scotland.

However, above all else, Scotland's Colleges are about students and the student experience. The student experience is regularly evaluated and appraised by the colleges themselves and by external agents such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). More than 90% of our learners rate their experience in college as good or very good<sup>5</sup>. Scotland's Colleges endorse the National Union of Students Scotland's (NUS) education manifesto for the 2007 elections **Students' Lives Scotland's Future**.<sup>6</sup>



STUDY IN SCOTLAND AND OPEN UP  
A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES.

# IT IS ON THIS SOLID FOUNDATION THAT SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES PRESENT THEIR AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE. WE WANT TO:

Support Scotland's economy through learning and development by:

- raising college participation rates from 1 in 10 of the working population to 1 in 5 by 2012;
- working towards a reduction in the numbers of young people in the NEET group by 2012;
- building a competitively literate and numerate Scotland;
- creating a strong economy, capable of continuing growth and development, based on highly skilled, entrepreneurial, flexible and adaptable people;
- maximising the benefits of the Curriculum for Excellence;
- promoting the use of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework;
- working more closely with the University sector to exploit new technology and promote knowledge transfer;
- promoting knowledge transfer to support productivity, and,
- creating an international sector with global reach and influence.

Help build communities and develop citizenship by:

- creating a balanced and culturally diverse sector;
- promoting environmental welfare;
- working with strategic partners to maximise the available resources to support equality, social justice and inclusion;
- strengthening relationships with schools and parents to raise pupil expectations and support their participation as active and informed citizens, and.
- promoting local colleges as key community resources.

Build capacity and sustainability for Scotland's Colleges to become world class by:

- establishing high productivity matched by high rewards for staff;
- continuing major and ongoing investment in staff;
- continuing major capital investment in estates and equipment;
- supporting initial and continuing professional development to maintain flexibility;
- developing further partnerships with Scotland's local authorities, business and voluntary communities;
- working in partnership with national and local enterprise companies and,
- securing pension provision for all staff.



Achieve excellence  
in governance, leadership  
and management by:

- promoting stewardship with integrity;
- practising the highest standards of public sector governance;
- active representation and lobbying of key influencers including parity with the University Sector within the Scottish Funding Council;
- learning from other sectors and seeking best practice;
- working to ensure Public Value and,
- building strong cross-sector partnerships.

Provide a high quality experience  
for all our students, staff and  
customers by:

- continuously improving customer feedback;
- improving accountability and accessibility;
- securing further investment in college estates to maintain them as high quality public assets and,
- maximising the benefits of new learning technologies.



# CONCLUSION

Scotland needs strong and effective colleges to create and maintain competitive advantage.

To realise our ambitious agenda to 2012, Scotland's Colleges believe it is essential to continue working in partnership with all stakeholders, particularly with the Scottish Parliament and Executive, to deliver:

- an extra 200,000 Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUMs) of activity allocation across the sector (approx £26m) through the next spending review;
- year on year growth of 3% in funding to support college/schools partnerships;
- recognition that Scotland's Colleges are central to the reduction of those in the NEET group and additional funding to support this activity;
- an allocation of funding to the sector to reduce literacy and numeracy problems;
- strategic support for deeper coalitions between colleges and the private sector;
- parity of esteem and representation with other educational sectors;
- research and development funding to build capacity and generate new learning opportunities;
- continued financial support for initial teacher training, continuous professional development for all staff and in addition support for succession planning for college management and governing bodies;
- investment and support for the sector's ambitious international agenda led by Scotland's Colleges International (SCI).

1 Based on statistics from the Scottish Funding Council's Infact database. Available at <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/infact/>

2 Review of Scotland's Colleges: Unlocking Opportunity: The Difference Scotland's Colleges Make to Learners, the Economy and Wider Society (October 2006). Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/02110410/0>

3 Review of Scotland's Colleges: Profiling the Workforce in Scotland's Colleges (October 2006). Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/82254/0043889.pdf>

4 Review of Scotland's Colleges: Accountability and Governance (DTZ Consulting & Research, January 2007) Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/17135/RSC/Intro>

5 Scottish Funding Council News release SFCPR/20/06 (24 July 2006) Scottish education satisfies students. Available at: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/library/06854fc203db2fbd0000010ca0bdc601/>

6 <http://www.nusonline.co.uk/scotland/Campaigns/273203.aspx>

THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN GAELIC ON THE ASC WEB SITE: [www.ascol.org.uk](http://www.ascol.org.uk)

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THANKS TO CUMBERNAULD COLLEGE FOR THEIR HELP WITH PHOTOGRAPHY.

