

Press release

Date: 17 November 2006

Title: Universities encourage students to have their say

A new report exploring how universities and colleges in Wales encourage student participation has been published today.

The report, published by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), also looked at how student involvement helped safeguard the quality of courses by ensuring that students' views get fed back to, and acted on by, their university.

The findings showed that all of Wales's higher education institutions considered students to be key in improving quality. Systems for involving students were generally well-developed by institutions, with good formal and informal links between senior management and the President of the Students' Union.

Whilst students were reported to have affected change at various levels, the report also made recommendations about how student representation could be improved.

Professor Philip Gummatt, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "This report confirms that Welsh higher education takes very seriously the important matter of listening to student views, and we welcome this".

NUS Wales Deputy President Becky Church said: "We are delighted to have been able to take part in this study and it is rewarding to see it through to completion. NUS Wales works hard to ensure that students are represented at all levels within higher education and we look forward to working with HEFCW and Higher Education Wales to see that the recommendations of this report come to fruition."

Amanda Wilkinson, Director of Higher Education Wales, said: "We are delighted with the outcomes of this study, which reiterates those identified through the National Student Survey, that the quality of the student experience in Wales is extremely high. Welsh HEIs continue to value the role of students within institutional decision making processes. This is part of the sector's ongoing commitment to academic quality and standards. HEIs will continue to work together, sharing different experiences and practices, to ensure that the sector remains competitive in this area".

Ends

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The report *Study of the Extent and Effectiveness of Existing Student Representation Structures within Higher Education Institutions across Wales* is available at www.hefcw.ac.uk (Circulars pages).

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Sponsored Public Body, established in May 1992, which assumed responsibility for funding higher education in Wales on 1 April 1993.

Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Council is responsible for the administration of funds made available by the Assembly in support of the provision of education, the undertaking of research by higher education institutions, and the provision of prescribed courses of higher education at further education institutions.

Under the Education Act 1994, the Council is responsible for accrediting providers of initial teaching training for school teachers and commissioning research to improve the standards of teachers and teacher training.

In addition to its funding responsibilities, the Council provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of the higher education sector in Wales.