

Datganiad i'r wasg | Press release

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Appointment of the first chair of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol announced

Professor Merfyn Jones has been appointed the first Chair of the proposed Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. He will formally take up the appointment in time for the official launch of the Coleg on 1 April 2011.

The Coleg will work with and through all universities in Wales to deliver increased opportunities for students to study their courses through the medium of Welsh, and is a major component of *For our Future*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education.

Arrangements for the Coleg are already well-advanced, with a new scholarship scheme for undergraduate students already launched. The aim is for the Coleg to be up and running by April 2011, ready for the new academic year in September 2011.

HEFCW has been providing financial, strategic and administrative support to set up the Coleg, which included establishing an Implementation Board earlier this year.

Professor Jones said: "I am deeply honoured to be asked to take on this critical role in the evolution of Welsh medium higher education. Having taught courses through the medium of Welsh for almost twenty years the further growth and consolidation of Welsh language higher education is a matter which is very close to my heart and I look forward with confidence to significant and rewarding progress in the future."

Geraint Talfan Davies, Chair of the Implementation Board, said: "The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is a significant new development in Welsh medium higher

education. I am pleased to have been able to contribute to the work of setting up the Coleg, supported by the members of the Implementation Board. I am delighted that we have been able to appoint someone of such high standing in Welsh life as the first chair of the Coleg and I wish Professor Jones every success in leading the Coleg in the very important work ahead of it.”

Professor Noel Lloyd, Chair of Higher Education Wales said: “This appointment is a big step forward in making the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol a reality and I am sure that Professor Jones’s understanding of not just the cultural landscape and heritage of Wales but his experience of working in the higher education sector in Wales, will help us lead a further significant change in the development of Welsh medium higher education in the years to come.”

Notes

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Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

The Coleg will be a new and independent legal entity with its own constitution. It will not be a single geographical entity and will not be a degree awarding body, but will work with and through existing higher education institutions. It is to be set up as a company limited by guarantee, with universities in Wales and other stakeholder organisations as its members, and a 13-strong Board of Directors. It is anticipated that incorporation will be completed early in the new year, so that Coleg can formally begin its work in April 2011.

The process for appointing the first Chair was undertaken through open advertisement and candidates were interviewed by a panel comprising the chair of the Implementation Board, Geraint Talfan Davies, representatives from HEFCW and Higher Education Wales, and an external assessor. The appointment, which is unpaid, is for an initial three-year period.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly

Government Sponsored Body responsible for administering funds made available by the Welsh Assembly Government in support of:

- education in higher education institutions (HEIs);
- research undertaken by HEIs; and
- higher education courses at further education colleges.

HEFCW is also 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, HEFCW provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of the higher education sector in Wales.

Professor Merfyn Jones was, until earlier this year, Vice-Chancellor of Bangor University. He lectured at Swansea and Liverpool universities before becoming Professor of Welsh History at Bangor. He has published widely on Welsh history and politics in both Welsh and English and has for many years taught in Higher Education through the medium of Welsh. He has also been a regular broadcaster on Welsh television and radio. He served as the National BBC Governor for Wales and Chair of the Broadcasting Council for Wales. He led the major review of higher education in Wales for the Welsh Assembly Government which was completed in 2009 and is presently a Specialist Advisor on Higher Education to the Welsh Assembly Government. He will formally assume the Chair of the Coleg on the completion of his work for the Welsh Assembly Government.

Geraint Talfan Davies is Chairman of the Institute of Welsh Affairs and of Welsh National Opera. He was Controller of BBC Wales from 1990-2000. Following his retirement from the BBC he represented Wales on the Radio Authority. He is also a non-executive director of Glas Cymru Cyf. (Welsh Water), a Trustee of the Media Standards Trust and an honorary Fellow of UWIC and of the RIBA.

Higher Education Wales is the representative body for heads of higher education institutions in Wales, and is a part of Universities UK.

