

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-458  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00561/13

William Powell AM

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

12 March 2013

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your letter of 27 February regarding the petition received from the UCU Crosskeys branch outlining their concerns with the proposals outlined in the Further and Higher Education (Wales) Bill 2013.

The Deputy Minister and I met with the President and the Regional Official for UCU Cymru on 26 November where they shared their concerns about the impact of the FE Bill on the nationally agreed pay scales for lecturers; and the negotiations for nationally agreed terms and conditions.

To date, Welsh Ministers have refrained from direct involvement in the negotiations, believing that this is a matter for the trades unions and the FE sector to manage and resolve. It is important to note that Welsh Ministers do not have legislative powers to impose terms and conditions on FE colleges.

With regard to the National Pay Agreement, the Funding Conditions for FE colleges include a condition stating that institutions are required to honour the National Pay Agreement, or any successor agreement, to ensure that the pay parity achieved is maintained. Non compliance will result in the reclaim of 1.5 percent of the colleges' funding allocation.

The Welsh Government fully understands the concerns expressed by the unions on these matters, but much has been (and is being) achieved in partnership with the FE sector. I expect this to continue.

In relation to the removal of Welsh Ministers' power to dissolve a college, the ability of a college to dissolve itself and transfer its assets and liabilities to another body, the intention is for the Bill to provide the Welsh Ministers with power to make Regulations to protect the assets of colleges on dissolution, ensuring they continue to benefit learners in Wales. Consultation with key stakeholders on the draft regulations will take place in the next academic year.

I hope this gives committee members the information required.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Leighton Andrews*

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