

Press Release: 17.12.02

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR WALES (HEFCW)

MULTI-MILLION POUND INVESTMENT FOR MAJOR CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales has committed £5.3 million for major change in the structure of higher education in Wales. The funding, the full amount available to the Council for 2002-03, has been assigned to proposals prepared by higher education institutions within very demanding time constraints.

Welcoming the outcome, Jane Davidson, AM, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, said:

“Reconfiguration is the top priority of the Assembly Government’s 10 year strategy for higher education, *Reaching Higher*. We see it as key to a more successful and robust higher education sector in Wales. I have reinforced this message through personal visits to all 13 HEIs, where I have spoken to governors, senior management, staff, students and unions. I am delighted to see this evidence of the sector’s firm commitment to the Assembly’s strategy.”

Professor Roger Williams, chair of HEFCW, added:

“The Council’s decision to allocate the full sum available to it for reconfiguration and collaboration reflects the commitment of the sector to work in new ways to meet growing UK-wide and international competition, and the Council’s recognition of the progress which has been made towards genuine reconfiguration. Higher education is one of Wales’ success stories; this funding, and that which will need to follow in the next few years, will make possible an even more powerful contribution to the Welsh economy and society in the future”.

The Council set up the £5.3 million Fund for Reconfiguration and Collaboration following the publication earlier this year of *Reaching Higher*, the Welsh Assembly Government’s 10 year strategy for higher education, which declared reshaping the sector to be at its heart. [£3 million came directly from the Assembly as earmarked money and the Council provided the balance from its annual grant-in-aid.] The call for proposals for funding went out in August with a response deadline of the end of October.

In reviewing HEIs’ proposals, the Council has had to strike a balance between the sector’s willingness to go forward, and moving at a pace that allows for fully researched and sustainable developments. Recognising the limited time for preparation that has been available, the Council is looking for further development of a number of the proposals before finalising specific allocations.

The Council will be offering support to the proposals listed below, and will work with institutions to develop them. Funding will flow as soon as that work is complete. The Council expects that the outcomes of the proposals it supports will generate demand for further and very substantial amounts of funding, far in excess of the £5.3 million available for 2002-03.

PARTNERS	(no priority implied)	PROPOSAL
Cardiff University	University of Wales College of Medicine	Development of "Alliance Project", leading to potential merger
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education	University of Wales, Bangor	Appraisal of creation of a new University for North Wales
University of Glamorgan	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	Appraisal of merger and other options
University of Wales College, Newport	University of Glamorgan	Appraisal to identify options for strategic collaboration
University of Wales, Swansea	Swansea Institute of Higher Education	Options analysis: rationalisation of provision in law, nursing and initial teacher training
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	University of Wales College, Newport	Feasibility study: closer collaboration in teacher training
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	University of Wales, Bangor	Strategic analysis: collaboration in research and teaching
Trinity College, Carmarthen	University of Wales, Lampeter	Future options appraisal, including implications of extension to University of Wales, Aberystwyth
University of Wales, Bangor	Coleg Menai	Collaboration in administrative services
University of Wales College, Newport	Coleg Gwent	Analysis of models for HE/FE collaboration and integration

The Council received a number of other proposals, several for interesting and potentially worthwhile developments. Some of these have been deferred while policy issues are considered further. Others were either not considered to be the highest priority, or did not fully meet the criteria for funding. In a number of these cases the Council will be discussing other possible ways forward with the institutions concerned.