



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

The Petitions Committee

Completion Report

**Summary of the Petitions Committee's consideration of
P-03-157 Coleg Ffederal Cymraeg**

September 2009

Petition Received

1 July 2008

Ruled Admissible

1 July 2008

Initial Consideration

9 July 2008

The Committee considered the petition for the first time, and agreed to:

- Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask that she informs the Committee of her plans for a Welsh-language Federal College.
- Invite the petitioners to present their petition to the Committee at a future meeting.

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 9 July 2008, and Annex 2 for the letter sent by the Chair to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

Further Consideration

2 October 2008

The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, and agreed to offer the petitioners the opportunity to give evidence at a future meeting and to ask whether they are feeding into the work of Professor Williams' Coleg Ffederal Planning Board

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 2 October 2008, and Annex 2 for the response received from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

6 November 2008

The Committee took oral evidence from the petitioners, and agreed to write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills regarding the groups represented on the Coleg Ffederal Planning Board, and whether the One Wales Commitment will be met by May 2011

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 6 November 2008, and Annex 2 for the letter sent to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

13 January 2009

The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, and agreed to:

- Write to the Enterprise and Learning Committee to inform it of the Petitions Committee's consideration of this matter and to provide it with the information gathered to date
- Invite the petitioners to respond to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills' letter in writing

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 13 January 2009, and Annex 2 for the response received from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

22 September 2009

The Committee considered the petition, and agreed to conclude its consideration as it has taken it as far as it can in light of the petitioner's lack of response to the Committee's letter dated 21 January 2009

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 22 September 2009)

Petitions Clerk
October 2009

Annex 1

Extracts from Petitions Committee Transcripts

9 July 2008

Janice Gregory: We will move on to the third new petition, which is on the Welsh-language Federal College. The petition wording is,

'We call upon the Assembly Government to keep its 'One Wales' agreement promise of establishing a Welsh-language Federal College. A Federal College *must* include the following elements:

'Statutory status and an independent constitution

'An independent charter and terms of reference that includes responsibility for all Welsh-language higher education in Wales

'An independent funding stream—at least £20 million in the first instance

'An independent register of students, that will ensure that students register with the Federal College and with their geographic college, leading to a feeling of belonging and ownership of it

'Anything less than a full combination of the above will break the promise. We call upon the Government to reconsider its plans if the above are not part of them'.

This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. Are there any comments?

Bethan Jenkins: I agree with the sentiment behind the petition, because it is part of the 'One Wales' agreement, and before I was elected I was heavily involved in the campaign for a Welsh-language federal college. I know from another petition that we are discussing on Welsh-language education that the Minister is planning to go out to consultation in 2009, so I wonder whether we can clarify with the Minister whether she is taking into consideration the Welsh-language federal college in that respect, so that she can ensure that it is a fundamental part of any new strategy. The only problem that I have with the petition wording is '*must* include a, b and c'; there has to be flexibility in that regard, because we said in 'One Wales' that we would implement a federal college, but we have to discuss what is possible within our remit and with regard to the financial implications for the Government and the reality on the ground. That is where we are at and we should go back to the Minister in that regard, and then discuss whether we need to see the petitioners.

Janice Gregory: The word 'must' is emphasised in this particular petition.

Kirsty Williams: I agree with Bethan that, in the first instance, we should write to the Minister to try to gain a deeper understanding of where the Government is with the implementation of this policy. Given the concerns about the wording of the petition, it might be useful to hear at first hand from the petitioners why they think that the listed bullet points are

fundamental aspects of a federal college. I would like to see the Petitions Committee invite the petitioners to come in and give us further understanding of why the petition is worded in the way that it is, and why they believe that the bullet points are so fundamental to the fulfilment of the Government's commitment.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I think that that is pertinent. If it was a straight strapline at the top, we could seek the Government's assurance, because it is a Government promise, but the petitioners believe that the bullet points are integral to the delivery of that promise. As an individual, I would benefit from hearing what those points are, and the Petitions Committee is the ideal forum to do that. So, can we extend that invitation to them, Chair?

Janice Gregory: We will write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and we will also invite the petitioners to committee.

2 October 2008

Val Lloyd: Moving on to the Coleg Ffederal Cymraeg petition, again, I think that we have been overtaken by events. I mentioned earlier the fact that, originally, we were suggesting that we ask the petitioners to address us, but the Minister has now set up a group under the chairmanship of Professor Robin Williams, formerly of Swansea University. I am very mindful of what Andrew said about giving petitioners a full hearing, but I am also mindful of wasting petitioners' time.

Andrew R.T. Davies: There is nothing stopping petitioners from coming to see us, because that evidence, or whatever they submit to us, could be put into Professor Williams's review or whatever they have set up for this. In some respects, we would be offering them a platform to bring something to the table, would we not, which might not be afforded to them by Professor Williams's report? The petitioners could turn around and say, 'No; we are quite happy with what the Minister has done here; we do not want to exercise our options to come before you as a committee, and we would prefer to see what Professor Williams has to say on it.'. It could be a way for them to put their arguments out in the open. There is no compulsion on their coming before us, is there?

Val Lloyd: No. Perhaps we could make the point in our invitation that, if they feel that it is redundant because there is an inquiry—

Andrew R.T. Davies: I think that we should make that point because there is no point in our doing two things, is there?

Val Lloyd: No.

Michael German: We could also ask them whether they have been invited by Professor Williams to meet the review board. Jane Hutt states in her letter that they will consult with interested parties and a wide range of organisations.

Val Lloyd: I imagine that Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg would be one of those interested parties.

6 November 2008

Val Lloyd: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Petitions Committee. Perhaps you would like to introduce yourselves. The microphones work automatically.

Ms Machreth: Fy enw i yw Menna Machreth, a myfi yw cadeirydd Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. Yr wyf hefyd yn fyfyrwraig doethuriaeth ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Ms Machreth: My name is Menna Machreth and I am the chair of the Welsh Language Society. I am also studying for a doctorate at Bangor University.

Mr Llwyd: Fy enw yw Rhys Llwyd, ac yr wyf yn is-gadeirydd Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. Yr wyf hefyd yn fyfyrwr ymchwil ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Mr Llwyd: My name is Rhys Llwyd, and I am a deputy chair of the Welsh Language Society. I am also a research student at Bangor University.

Val Lloyd: Thank you. I am sure that you know the procedure, to some extent, but I will elaborate so that you are fully au fait with it. You will have 15 minutes in which to make your presentation. You can make it in any way you wish, but we adhere to the time limit. That will then be followed by up to 15 minutes of questioning by Members, and I will take it from there when we finish that section. Please start whenever you are ready.

Mr Llwyd: Cychwynnaf drwy roi cyd-destun y ddeiseb, ac esbonio pam y bu inni ei llunio a'i hanfon at y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau yn ystod yr haf. Y cyd-destun gwleidyddol i'r ddeiseb oedd bod y mudiad iaith wedi'i siomi nad oedd yr addewid o gael papur newydd dyddiol Cymraeg wedi'i wireddu gan y Llywodraeth. Yn yr hinsawdd honno, yr oeddem yn gofidio y byddai rhai o addewidion eraill 'Cymru'n Un' o ran yr iaith hefyd yn cael eu torri, neu y byddai'r Llywodraeth yn dweud ei bod wedi cadw'r addewid heb wneud dim ond symud y pyst.

Yng nghyd-destun coleg ffederal Cymraeg, yr oedd yn ofid gennym y byddai'r addewid gwreiddiol yn cael ei is-raddio i wneud dim mwy na sefydlu bwrdd i ddatblygu addysg Gymraeg. Mae gwahaniaeth, wrth gwrs, rhwng sefydliad statudol, fel coleg, a haen arall o fwrdd o fewn y fframwaith addysg presennol. O ganlyniad i'r gofid hwnnw, cawsom drafodaethau gydag Aelodau dwy

Mr Llwyd: I will start by placing the petition in context, and explaining why we drafted it and sent it to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills during the summer. The political context of the petition was that the Welsh-language movement was disappointed that the pledge to have a Welsh-language daily newspaper had not been delivered by the Government. In that climate, we were concerned that some of the other 'One Wales' promises regarding the language would also be broken, or that the Government would say that it had delivered a pledge when it had simply moved the goalposts.

In the context of a Welsh-medium federal college, it was a concern of ours that the original pledge would be downgraded to do no more than establish a development board for Welsh-medium education. There is, of course, a difference between a statutory organisation, such as a college, and some other layer of a board within the existing education framework. As a result of that

blaid y Llywodraeth, ond gwaethygu ein gofidiau yn unig wnaeth y cyfarfodydd hyn ac nid eu lleddfu.

Yn wyneb hynny, aethom ati i greu'r ddeiseb hon. Cyn imi drosglwyddo at Menna i egluro'r hyn y mae'r ddeiseb yn ei ddweud, efallai y dylwn nodi ein bod wedi casglu'r rhan fwyaf o'r llofnodion ar faes Eisteddfod yr Urdd, sef gŵyl ieuenctid fwyaf Ewrop, ac felly, mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r enwau sydd arni yn cynrychioli ieuenctid Cymru, sef yr union bobl a fyddai'n elwa fwyaf o ddatblygu coleg ffederal Cymraeg. Hwylwyrwyr y dyfodol na fyddant, o dan y drefn bresennol, efallai, yn cael yr hawl i addysg Gymraeg yn ein prifysgolion. Gobeithio, o gael coleg ffederal Cymraeg cyflawn yn ei le y bydd y bobl a lofnododd y ddeiseb yn cael addysg Gymraeg gyflawn. Fe'ch trosglwyddaf yn awr at Menna a fydd yn siarad am y ddeiseb yn ei manylder.

Ms Machreth: Af â chi drwy pedair egwyddor y ddeiseb, gan roi ychydig o gefndir i bob un. Credwn mai'r pedair egwyddor hon sy'n sylfaenol i goleg ffederal Cymraeg.

Yr egwyddor gyntaf yw bod y coleg ffederal Cymraeg yn cael statws statudol a chyfansoddiad annibynnol. Credwn ei bod yn bwysig bod gan y coleg y statws hwnnw, oherwydd bydd yn gorff a fydd yn ymroddedig i addysg Gymraeg, sy'n dangos pwysigrwydd cael corff a fydd yn datblygu addysg Gymraeg. Y nod yw cynyddu'r ddarpariaeth o fewn y prifysgolion presennol, a hoffwn bwysleisio nad coleg daearyddol fydd hwn a fyddai'n gwahanu myfyrwyr Cymraeg eu hiaith a myfyrwyr Saesneg eu hiaith, ond coleg Cymraeg a fyddai'n gweithio drwy'r prifysgolion a'r sefydliadau addysg uwch. Bydd yn gorff a fydd yn gyrru datblygu addysg Gymraeg, oherwydd, ar hyn o bryd, nid yw'r ewyllys gan

concern, we held discussions with Members of both Government parties, but those meetings heightened rather than alleviated our concerns.

It was in light of that that we started to draft this petition. Before I hand over to Menna to explain what the petition says, perhaps I should note that we got most of the signatures at the Urdd Eisteddfod, the largest youth festival in Europe, and so, most of the names on it represent the youth of Wales, who are the very people who will benefit most from the development of a Welsh-medium federal college. They are the students of the future, who will not, under the current system, perhaps, have the right to a Welsh-medium education in our universities. Hopefully, with a full Welsh-medium federal college in place, the signatories to the petition will be able to access a full Welsh-medium education. I will now transfer you to Menna who will talk you through the detail of the petition.

Ms Machreth: I will take you through the four principles of the petition, giving you some background to each of them. We believe that these four principles are fundamental to a Welsh-medium federal college.

The first principle is that the college should have statutory status and an independent constitution. We believe that it is important that the college has that status, as it would be a body dedicated to Welsh-medium education, which would demonstrate the importance of having a body that will develop Welsh-medium education. The aim is to increase provision within existing universities, and I want to emphasise that we are not talking about a geographical college that would separate Welsh-speaking and English-speaking students, but a Welsh-medium college that would work via the universities and higher education institutions. It would be a body to drive the development of Welsh-medium education, because, at

brifysgolion i yrru'r agenda honno, oherwydd dim ond un ystyriaeth ydyw ymysg nifer. Felly, teimlwn fod angen sefydliad a fydd yn rhoi'r pwyslais hwnnw ar ddatblygu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Yr ail egwyddor yr ydym yn teimlo ei bod yn hollbwysig yw bod gan y coleg lif ariannol annibynnol. Ar hyn o bryd, nid oes yr un pot ar gyfer addysg Gymraeg, ac mae'r arian ar ei chyfer yn cael ei rannu'n denau iawn rhwng llawer o gyllidebau gwahanol. Hefyd, mae systemau megis y ffioedd atodol a phremiymau i fodiwlau cyfrwng Cymraeg yn gwneud sefyllfa ariannol addysg Gymraeg yn annelwig. Byddai'n well pe bai gan goleg ffederal Cymraeg reolaeth i allu monitro'r arian sydd ar gael ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg ac wedyn yn gallu ei ddyrannu i amryw adrannau a darlithwyr yn y sefydliadau addysg uwch presennol er mwyn iddynt hwy ddatblygu addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Yr ydym wedi nodi bod angen £20 miliwn i ddatblygu'r coleg ffederal. Yr ydym wedi cyrraedd y ffigur hwnnw am fod y Llywodraeth wedi dweud ei bod am i 3 i 4 y cant o fyfyrwyr sy'n astudio yng Nghymru ddilyn rhywfaint o'u cyrsiau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, ac, o edrych ar incwm y sector yn gyfan, felly, gwelwn mai £20 miliwn yw 3 i 4 y cant ohoni.

Ers cytuno 'Cymru'n Un', byddai'r sawl sy'n ymchwilio i bwnc coleg ffederal yn gweld mai dau fodel yn unig sydd ar y bwrdd o ran ei strwythur. Daw'r un o Gylch yr Iaith a'r llall gan Gymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg ac undebau'r myfyrwyr ar y cyd. Byddai unrhyw un sydd wedi ymchwilio i hyn yn dweud wrthyh y bydd coleg ffederal Cymraeg yn costio £15 miliwn o leiaf i'w weithredu. Yr ydym yn wirioneddol yn meddwl bod angen swm sylweddol o arian ar unrhyw fodel os ydyw i lwyddo. Heb hynny, ni fydd

present, universities do not have the will to drive this agenda, as it is just one consideration among many. So, we feel that an institution is needed that will emphasise the development of Welsh-medium education.

The second principle that we feel is crucial is that the federal college must have an independent funding stream. Currently, there is no single pot for Welsh-medium education and what funding there is for it is spread very thinly, across many and varied budgets. In addition, such systems as top-up fees and premiums for Welsh-medium modules make the funding situation for Welsh-medium education obscure. It would be desirable for the Welsh-medium federal college to have control so that it can monitor Welsh-medium education funding and then distribute it among the various departments and lecturers in the current higher education institutions, so that they can develop Welsh-medium education.

We have noted that £20 million would be necessary to develop a federal college. We arrived at that figure because the Government has said that it wants 3 to 4 per cent of students who study in Wales to follow part of their courses through the medium of Welsh, and so, looking at the total income of the sector, we see that 3 to 4 per cent of it amounts to £20 million.

Since 'One Wales' was agreed, anyone who has researched the subject of a federal college will have seen that there are only two models on the table relating to its structure. One comes from Cylch yr Iaith and the other from the Welsh Language Society and students' unions jointly. Anyone who has researched this would tell you that a Welsh-medium federal college will cost at least £15 million to operate. We genuinely believe that a vast sum of money is required if any model is to succeed. Without that, higher education institutions will neither

sefydliadau addysg uwch yn cydnabod coleg ffederal Cymraeg nac yn gweld unrhyw werth mewn cydweithio ag ef.

Y drydedd egwyddor yw ei bod yn bwysig i'r coleg ffederal gael siartr benodol er mwyn gwneud nod y coleg yn hollol eglur. Dylai holl waith y coleg arwain at y nod hwnnw. Credwn mai datblygu darpariaeth ac ymchwil cyfrwng Cymraeg y dylai'r nod hwnnw fod.

Mae a wnelo pedwaredd egwyddor y ddeiseb â chofrestru annibynnol. Pan fydd myfyriwr yn cofrestru am gwrs a ariennir gan y coleg ffederal, bydd yn amlwg yn cofrestru gyda'r sefydliad addysg uwch pa le bynnag y bo, ond bydd hefyd yn cofrestru yn awtomatig gyda'r coleg ffederal. Mae hyn er mwyn i'r myfyrwyr deimlo perchnogaeth dros y sefydliad. Credwn fod hynny'n bwysig o'r cychwyn cyntaf.

Mr Llwyd: Yr ydym wedi nodi llythyr Jane Hutt yn ymateb i'r ddeiseb, a chroesawn sefydlu'r bwrdd dan arweiniad Robin Williams i edrych ar sut mae rhoi'r coleg ffederal ar waith. Fodd bynnag, mae dau beth yr hoffem eu nodi mewn ymateb. Yn gyntaf, erbyn i'r bwrdd adrodd yn ôl i'r Gweinidog addysg, bydd blwyddyn arall bron wedi mynd heibio, a byddwn yn bell i mewn i'r trydydd Cynulliad cyn i ddim byd gael ei wneud. Felly, rhaid inni, yr ymgyrchwyr yn y maes, holi'r Llywodraeth o ran ei blaenoriaethau ym myd addysg Gymraeg yn y sector addysg uwch os yw'n cymryd y ddwy flynedd gyntaf dim ond i gael ein traed ar y ddaear heb sôn am sefydlu'r peth.

Yn ail, cawsom addewidion gan y Gweinidog ac yna gan gadeirydd y bwrdd y byddai'r bwrdd yn eang ei gynrychiolaeth ac y byddai amrediad eang o randdeiliaid addysg Gymraeg yn cael eu cynrychioli arno. Fodd bynnag, nid yw undebau myfyrwyr

acknowledge a Welsh-medium federal college nor appreciate the value of collaborating with it.

The third principle is that it is important that the federal college has a specific charter to make the aim of the college crystal clear. All the work of the college should focus on that aim. We believe that that aim should be to develop Welsh-medium provision and research.

The fourth principle in the petition relates to independent registration. When a student registers for a course that is funded by the federal college, he or she will clearly register with the nearest higher education establishment, wherever that is, but that person will also register automatically at the federal college. That is for the student to feel a sense of ownership over the institution. We think that that is important from the off.

Mr Llwyd: We have noted Jane Hutt's letter of response to the petition, and we welcome the establishment of the board under the chairmanship of Robin Williams, to consider the implementation of a federal college. However, there are two things that we would like to note in response. First, by the time the board reports back to the Minister for education, almost a year will have passed, and we will be deep into the third Assembly before anything is done. So we, as campaigners in the field, must ask where the Government's priorities are on Welsh-medium education in the HE sector if it takes the first two years just to get our feet on the ground, never mind establishing the thing.

Secondly, we were promised by the Minister and then the chair of the board that representation on the board would be broad and that a wide variety of stakeholders in Welsh-medium education would be represented on it. However, the Welsh

Cymraeg yn cael eu cynrychioli, a byddai dyn yn meddwl bod y myfyrwyr ei hun yn rhanddeiliaid go bwysig. Nid yw mudiadau fel Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg wedi'u cynrychioli ar y bwrdd, ac yr wyf yn siŵr y byddech yn cytuno bod rhieni darpar myfyrwyr hefyd yn rhanddeiliaid. Yn ôl y disgwyl, mae'r holl brifysgolion presennol yn cael eu cynrychioli, ond byddwn yn awgrymu bod tuedd tuag at y prifysgolion traddodiadol, ac nid oes digon o gynrychiolaeth ar y bwrdd o randdeiliad mwy cyffredinol, fel y myfyrwyr a'r rhieni.

I gloi, gofynnwn ichi, y Pwyllgor Deisebau, i gyfleu'r neges i'r Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau ein bod yn gofidio y bydd yr addewid o sefydlu coleg ffederal yn cael ei wanhau. Yr ydym yn pwyso arnoch i fynd â'r neges i Jane Hutt ein bod am iddi gadw at yr addewid o sefydlu coleg ffederal Cymraeg ac i sicrhau nad yw'r addewid yn cael ei is-raddio fel ein bod yn cael rhyw fwrdd yn lle.

Val Lloyd: My reading of the Minister's recent written statement on this seems to indicate that you are a member of the planning committee. Could you confirm that?

Mr Llwyd: Yes. I said that students are not represented on the board, and I sit on the board as the author of one of the only two models, not as a student.

Val Lloyd: I have you down as representing the Welsh Language Society. That was in the Minister's statement.

Mr Llwyd: Yes.

Val Lloyd: That is just for the record. Thank you for your presentation, which did not take up the full time allocated. I will now open it up to Members.

Bethan Jenkins: Diolch am yr adroddiad ac am eich geiriau. Rhys, yr wyt newydd ddweud dy fod ar y pwyllgor newydd hwn. A fyddai unrhyw beth llai neu fwy yn dy blesio o ran yr hyn a drafodir ar y pwyllgor newydd, sef o ran y statws statudol, y siartr annibynnol, a'r arian yr ydych yn sôn amdano? Mae pobl eraill o gwmpas y bwrdd, a rhaid trafod y materion hyn yn agored. A fyddet yn

students' unions are not represented on the board, and one would imagine that the students themselves would be quite important stakeholders.

Organisations such as Parents for Welsh Medium Education are not represented on the board, and I am sure that you would agree that the parents of potential students are also stakeholders. As expected, all existing universities are represented, but I would suggest that there is a bias towards the traditional universities, and not enough representation on the board of more general stakeholders, such as students and parents.

To close, we ask you, the Petitions Committee, to take the message to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills that we are concerned that the pledge to establish a federal college will be diluted. We urge you to take the message to Jane Hutt that we want her to keep her promise to establish a Welsh-medium federal college and to ensure that that pledge is not dumbed down so that we get some board in its place.

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you for the report and for your words. Rhys, you just said that you are on this new committee. Is there anything less or anything more that would please you as regards what is discussed on the new committee, in relation to statutory status, an independent charter, and the funding that you mentioned? There are other people around the table, and these matters

derbyn llai na'r hyn yr wyt wedi sôn amdano yn y fan hon?

Dywedaist fod y Llywodraeth wedi bod yn eistedd ar hwn, ond mae'n ymrwymiad gan Lywodraeth Cymru'n Un i sefydlu coleg ffederal, ac mae'n dda ein bod yn trafod beth ydyw. Pe bai'r Llywodraeth wedi dweud mai hwn a hwn fyddai'r coleg ffederal, heb ymgynghori ar ei strwythur, byddai'r gymdeithas wedi cwyno am hynny. Felly, onid yw'n werth cael yr ymgynghoriad hwn? Yn amlwg, mae angen i myfyrwyr gael eu cynrychioli ar y bwrdd, a chredaf y byddai hynny'n sbarduno trafodaeth. Onid yw'n dda, felly, ein bod yn ymgynghori ar y peth yn y lle cyntaf?

Mr Llwyd: Ydy. Yr ydym yn agored iawn i drafod y manylion. Wedi dweud hynny, yr ydym yn credu y dylai'r pedair egwyddor fod yn sail i'r drafodaeth am y manylion. Pe baech wedi holi unrhyw un a oedd yn gweithio yn y maes ddwy flynedd yn ôl pan gytunwyd i addewid y Llywodraeth, byddent wedi gallu dweud pa bwyntiau oedd yn disgrifio'r coleg ffederal, oherwydd yr oedd y dogfennau ar y bwrdd, ac yr oedd y gwleidyddion yn gallu troi atynt os oeddent yn dymuno gwneud. Os yw'r Llywodraeth yn awr yn dweud, 'O na, nid dyna beth yw'r coleg ffederal', mae hynny bach yn gamarweiniol. Os nad oedd yn bwriadu cadw at yr egwyddorion, byddai wedi bod yn fwy onest iddi ymrwymo i ddatblygu addysg Gymraeg yn lle. Yr wyf yn eistedd ar fwrdd Robin Williams, a byddaf yn dadlau yn y cyfarfodydd cyntaf bod angen trafodaeth am y manylion, ond hefyd bod angen inni, yn weithgor, osod egwyddorion y coleg ffederal yn gyntaf. Mae'n sefydliad ac yn goleg ac nid yn ddim ond haen o fwrdd dros sefydliadau presennol.

Bethan Jenkins: Felly, o dy safbwynt di, ni fyddai newid o ran y pedwar peth

have to be discussed openly. Would you accept less than you have spoken about here?

You said that the Government has been sitting on this, but it is a commitment of the One Wales Government to establish a federal college, and it is good that we are discussing what it will be. If the Government had said that the federal college would be this or that without consulting on it, the society would probably have complained about that. So, is it not worth having this consultation? Clearly, students need to be represented on the board, and I believe that that will stimulate the discussion. Therefore, is it not a good thing that we are consulting on this in the first place?

Mr Llwyd: Yes. We are very open to discussing the details. Having said that, we believe that the four principles should be a basis for the discussion on the details. If you had asked anyone working in the field two years ago, when the Government pledge was agreed to, they would have been able to tell you what points described the federal college, as the documents were on the table, and the politicians could turn to them had they wanted to. If the Government is now saying, 'Oh no, that is not what a federal college is', that is slightly misleading. If it had no intention of keeping to the principles, it would have been more honest of the Government to make a commitment to develop Welsh-medium education instead. I sit on Robin Williams's board, and I will argue in the first meetings that we need to discuss the details, but also that we need, as a working group, to draw up the principles of the Welsh federal college first. It is an institution and a college and not only a layer of a board above the current institutions.

Bethan Jenkins: Therefore, from your point of view, there would be no

craidd hyn. Byddai egwyddorion y prifysgolion yn wahanol i dy egwyddorion. Mae'n bosibl na fyddant yn cytuno â dy fodel o goleg ffederal.

Mr Llwyd: Mae'r prifysgolion presennol wedi ei gwneud yn hysbys ers tro eu bod yn gwrthwynebu coleg ffederal. Am y rheswm hwn, hoffwn weld gwleidyddion yn cymryd y cam cyntaf a dweud wrth y prifysgolion bod yr ewyllys gwleidyddol wedi newid a'u bod am weld coleg ffederal, a bod angen iddynt ymateb i hynny. Yn y pen draw, y gwleidyddion sydd wedi eu hethol, nid arweinwyr y prifysgolion.

Andrew R.T. Davies: Thank you for your evidence and the papers that you have provided in support of the petition. To carry on with an element of what Bethan has said, the petition is quite clear as to what it asks for, with the four pledges. In particular, the bottom line is that it would be breaking a promise if those four pledges are not met. However, from the evidence that you have given, Rhys, you have clearly already put those four to the Labour-Plaid Government in the Assembly and you said that it had 'denied' them; it has said 'no'. That is my understanding of what you said. The difficulty that we have in determining this petition is that the Minister has set out her path and has set up the body. I cannot detract from that, because, if you are going to have such a fundamental change in higher education, then it is about bringing all of the partners together, with all of them then contributing to the pot. Then the politicians come out with the decision that they see as being the fairest for the interested parties. The higher education sector in Wales, as we all know, faces a severe funding crisis. You have a figure of £20 million; I am sure that all of the higher education institutions would love to go to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales's budget and work out their percentage pro-rata rate. There are many things to consider. It is about having confidence. Do you have confidence in the body that has been established to look into this and come out with recommendations?

Ms Machreth: Penodwyd Robin Williams fel cadeirydd ar y bwrdd newydd. Yr ydym yn hapus gyda'r ffordd y mae'n arwain y bwrdd ar hyn o bryd. Mae'r bobl sydd ar y bwrdd yn rhoi gwybodaeth iddo. Felly, ei gasgliad annibynnol ef fydd yn mynd at y Gweinidog fis Mai, a'r Gweinidog fydd yn dewis beth i wneud gyda'r adroddiad.

Credaf fod angen i ni beidio â meddwl am roi arian i'r Gymraeg fel rhywbeth ychwanegol. Mae unrhyw arian sy'n cael ei roi i'r Gymraeg yn cael ei weld

change with regard to these four core things. The principles of the universities would differ from yours. It is possible that they would not agree with your model of a federal college.

Mr Llwyd: The current universities have made it known for quite a while that they are opposed to the idea of a federal college. For this reason, I would like to see politicians taking the initiative and telling the universities that the political will has changed and that they want to see a federal college, and that they need to respond to that. In the end, it is politicians who are elected, not university leaders.

Ms Machreth: Robin Williams has been appointed to chair the new board. We are happy with the way in which he is leading the board at the moment. Those who sit on the board provide him with information. Therefore, it is his personal conclusion that will be presented in May to the Minister, who will then decide what to do with the report.

I do not think that we should see money given to the Welsh language as something additional. Any money that is given to the Welsh language is

fel rhywbeth ychwanegol ar ben yr hyn sydd yno'n barod. Pe bai Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru yn rhoi £5 miliwn, er enghraifft, i'r adran ffiseg yn Abertawe, nid ydym yn dweud, 'Dyma £5 miliwn ychwanegol i addysg Saesneg'. Felly, mae meddwl am y Gymraeg fel rhywbeth ychwanegol yn anghywir. Os yw'r Llywodraeth o ddifrif am roi blaenoriaeth i ddatblygu addysg Gymraeg, mae'n rhaid iddo wneud yr ymateb hwn yn flaenoriaeth. Felly, yr ydym yn falch bod Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg yn cael y cyfle i fod yn rhan o'r bwrdd a rhoi mewnbwn. Fel y dywedodd Rhys, dau bapur sydd ar y bwrdd pan gyfeiriwn at goleg ffederal. Mae'r ddau bapur yn eithaf tebyg o ran eu hegwyddorion. Pan gynhwyswyd y coleg ffederal yng nghytundeb 'Cymru'n Un', yr egwyddorion hyn oedd yng nghefn meddwl y gwleidyddion.

Mr Llwyd: Rhof enghraifft o sut mae'r *status quo* yn crocian ei ddylanwad ar y bwrdd. Pan sefydlodd y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau'r bwrdd hwn, ei geiriau oedd:

The board's sole purpose will be to look into and establish a Welsh federal college.

Yn dilyn cyfarfod cyntaf y bwrdd, cyhoeddwyd mai un o bwrpasau'r bwrdd oedd datblygu'r cynlluniau presennol. Mae hynny'n dangos sut mae dylanwad y *status quo* a'r prifysgolion yn cael effaith llawn tuedd ar safbwynt y bwrdd.

Bethan Jenkins: A fydddech wedi trafod hynny er mwyn newid cylch gwaith y drafodaeth ar ôl y cyfarfod cyntaf?

Mr Llwyd: Cytunwyd y byddem yn trafod pethau dadleuol yn yr ail gyfarfod, ond er gwaethaf hynny, rhyddhaodd ochr weinyddol y grŵp ddatganiad i'r wasg, gan anwybyddu cwestiynau a godais. Felly, yr ydym yn poeni bod gan y bwrdd duedd

seen as something that is additional to what is there already. If the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales gave £5 million, for example, to the physics department at Swansea, we would not be saying, 'Here is an additional £5 million for English-medium education'. Therefore, thinking about Welsh as being something additional is wrong. If the Government is serious about giving priority to developing Welsh-medium education, it has to make this response a priority. Therefore, we are pleased that the Welsh Language Society has a chance to be a part of the board and to have an input. As Rhys said, there are two papers on the table when we talk about a federal college. The principles of the two papers are fairly similar. When the federal college was included in the 'One Wales' agreement, these principles were in the minds of politicians.

Mr Llwyd: I will give an example of how the status quo is having an influence on this board. When the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills established this board, her exact words were:

Following the first meeting of the board, it was announced that one of its purposes was to develop the present plans. That shows how the influence of the status quo and the universities is having a biased effect on the board's position.

Bethan Jenkins: Would you have discussed that in order to change the remit of discussion after that first meeting?

Mr Llwyd: We agreed that we would discuss contentious issues in the second meeting, but despite that, the administrative side of the group released a press release, ignoring questions that I had raised. So, we are concerned that this board has a

naturiol tuag at y *status quo*, sydd yn mynd yn groes i'r hyn a ddywedodd y Gweinidog, sef

natural bias towards the status quo, which is contrary to what the Minister has said, that

its sole purpose will be to establish a Welsh federal college.

Val Lloyd: I need to clarify a point. I do not wish to be party to what went on in the meeting, because that would be for those who were at that meeting, but in the meeting that you attended, which included all the participants, are you saying that there was no consensus? The notice that we had from the Minister sets out the terms of reference. It was published on 3 November and is in the public domain. I always considered that to be factual and the Minister has published it as such.

Mr Llwyd: Byddem wedi dymuno i'r bwrdd hwn fod wedi dweud o'r dechrau nad oedd y *status quo* yn opsiwn ac mai pwrpas y bwrdd oedd sefydlu coleg ffederal Cymraeg er mwyn gwireddu addewid y Llywodraeth. Ond mae wedi gwrthod dweud nad yw'r *status quo* yn opsiwn. Fel ymgyrchwyr yn y maes—wrth gwrs, ni fydd pawb ar y bwrdd yn cytuno ar bob manylyn—byddem yn hoffi o leiaf dechrau ar y nodyn nad yw'r sefyllfa bresennol yn opsiwn.

Mr Llwyd: I would have liked this board to have said from the outset that the status quo is not an option and that the purpose of the board was to establish a Welsh federal college in order to realise the pledge made by the Government. However, it has refused to say that the status quo is not an option. As campaigners in this area—of course, not every board member will agree on every detail—we would like to at least have started on the note that the status quo would not be an option.

Val Lloyd: That will have to be discussed in the board's meetings; you are a member of that board.

Bethan Jenkins: Yr oeddwn yn mynd i ddweud yr un peth. Yr oedd pleidlais ar ganlyniad y cyfarfod ond nid oeddech wedi cytuno y dylai'r datganiad i'r wasg a ryddhawyd newid yr hyn a drafodwyd yn y cyfarfod.

Bethan Jenkins: I was going to say the same. There was a vote on the outcome of the meeting, but you had not agreed that the press release that was issued should change what was discussed in the meeting.

Mr Llwyd: Nid oedd pleidlais. Cytunwyd i'w drafod yn y cyfarfod nesaf, ond er gwaethaf hynny, rhyddhawyd datganiad i'r wasg heb bleidlais gan aelodau'r bwrdd.

Mr Llwyd: There was no vote. We agreed to discuss it at the next meeting, but despite that, a press release was issued without a vote by board members.

Y pryder yw bod tuedd sefydliadol yn hytrach na thuedd tuag at sefydlu rhywbeth ffres a newydd.

The concern is that there is an institutional leaning rather than a leaning towards establishing something new and fresh.

Michael German: I would like to get to grips with this issue. I thank you for your evidence so far, but I am slightly more confused than I was when I first read the evidence and when I heard your initial statements. To be absolutely clear, are you content or not with the terms of reference that the Minister laid out for this board?

Mr Llwyd: Yr wyf yn hapus â'r cylch gorchwyl a bennwyd gan y Gweinidog, ond mae papurau'r bwrdd

Mr Llwyd: I am happy with the terms of reference set out by the Minister, but the board's papers are different.

yn wahanol i hynny. Dywedodd y Gweinidog mai ei unig bwrpas oedd sefydlu coleg ffederal Cymraeg, ond mae papurau'r bwrdd yn nodi pethau fel datblygu ar y strwythur presennol ac yn y blaen, sy'n wahanol i sefydlu coleg ffederal Cymraeg.

The Minister said that its sole purpose was to establish a Welsh federal college, but the board's papers note things like developing the current structure and so on, which is different from establishing a Welsh federal college.

Michael German: Do you agree that there should be an independent board, chaired by Professor Robin Williams, to do the work set out in the terms of reference?

Mr Llwyd: Ydwyf, ond fel y dywedais, hoffem fod wedi gweld amrediad mwy eang o randdeiliaid ar y bwrdd ac nid dim ond cynrychiolaeth o'r sefydliadau presennol ac o un neu ddau gorff mwy cyffredinol.

Mr Llwyd: Yes, but as I said, I would have liked to have seen a wider range of stakeholders on the board and not only representation from the current institutions and from one or two more general bodies.

Michael German: So, you think that if others were on board, there would have been a different outcome?

Mr Llwyd: Most certainly.

Michael German: The deficits, which you have talked about, are in student and parent bodies. Have you had a discussion on the words that the Minister uses on school bodies? Are school bodies involved?

Mr Llwyd: Yes.

Michael German: On other interested parties, which are presumably down to the discretion of the chair, apart from yourselves, what other interested parties, apart from you, are on the board?

Mr Llwyd: Mae darpar gyflogwyr yn cael eu cynrychioli ar y bwrdd. Mae rhywun o Gyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru yn cynrychioli darpar gyflogwyr graddedigion a fyddai'n gallu trin eu gwaith yn ddwyieithog. Yr wyf i ac Ieuan Wyn yn eistedd ar y bwrdd, fel awduron y ddau fodel posibl. Heblaw am hynny, mae holl aelodau eraill y bwrdd yn cynrychioli'r prifysgolion presennol. Fel yr wyf wedi dweud, mae'r bobl sy'n pledio'r *status quo* wedi'u gorgynrychioli ar y bwrdd, o bosibl.

Mr Llwyd: Prospective employers are represented on the board. Someone from the Countryside Council for Wales represents prospective employers of graduates who could do their work bilingually. Ieuan Wyn and I sit on the board as the authors of the two possible models. Apart from that, all other members of the board represent the current universities. As I have said, the people who are pleading the case of the status quo may be overrepresented on the board.

Michael German: Did you raise—

Val Lloyd: Sorry, I know that you are undertaking questioning, but I just want to make the point that we really have strayed—I said 'we'—from the terms of this petition; it does not talk about the board and we are only able to consider the terms of the petition.

Michael German: Indeed, but I think that the relevant point here is that the argument being used to support the petition is that the board is not doing its job. That is what I am testing.

Val Lloyd: I will let that particular question go through and then I think that we must really firm up on the petition.

Mr Llwyd: Ni fyddwn yn mynd mor bell â dweud nad yw'r bwrdd yn gwneud ei waith, ond wrth i ni eich gadael heddiw, hoffwn pe baech, fel Aelodau'r Cynulliad, yn cadw'ch clustiau ar y cledrau ac yn edrych i weld bod y datblygiadau'n mynd rhagddynt yn iawn. Yr ydym wedi crybwyll pwyntiau heddiw sydd yn destun pryder ond yr ydym yn hapus i eistedd arnynt yn awr, am ychydig fisoedd, tra bo'r bwrdd hwn yn gweithredu. Yr wyf yn gofyn i chi, fel Aelodau'r Cynulliad, gadw'ch clustiau ar y cledrau i sicrhau bod y datblygiadau yn mynd ymlaen yn deg ac y cynrychiolir gwahanol rhanddeiliaid ac nid y prifysgolion presennol yn unig.

Val Lloyd: Thank you. We take on board and hear what you have said, but we are here as members of the Petitions Committee and we can only address what you have put into the petition that is before us. We will have to discount what you have said that is outside the remit of the words that you used in your petition. With that, I note that we are now out of time. Thank you, Miss Machreth and Mr Llwyd, for your presentation; if you would like to retire to the gallery, we will now consider our next moves. We will wait until you are settled and will discuss the first petition before we discuss yours.

Val Lloyd: Thank you very much. On the second part of our evidence-gathering session about the federal college, what are Members' wishes?

Bethan Jenkins: Nid wyf yn credu y byddem yn gall i ddiystyru'r dystiolaeth ynglŷn â'r bwrdd a'r ffaith nad oes myfyrwyr nag aelodau o RhAG ar y pwyllgor. Yr wyf yn nodi'r hyn y mae'r ddeiseb yn ofyn amdano, ond mae pethau wedi symud ymlaen ers hynny. Felly, byddai'n deg i ni ysgrifennu at y Gweinidog gyda'r pwyntiau hynny yn gofyn i'r bwrdd gynnwys y grwpiau hynny. Nid wyf yn siŵr am y pwynt arall ynglŷn â'r datganiad i'r wasg. Os nad yw rhai aelodau yn hapus â'r drefn bresennol, efallai fod angen i'r bwrdd drafod yn fewnol sut mae'n gweithredu. Fodd bynnag, credaf y dylid ystyried ei gynnwys yn rhan o'r drafodaeth.

Michael German: I would like to amplify that slightly. The whole basis for this petition was that the board was not operating as it was felt it should operate. Yet, when I asked whether the petitioners were happy with the terms of reference, they said that they were, which is important. So, it is about the

Mr Llwyd: I would not go so far as to say that the board is not doing its work, but as we leave you today, we would like it if you, as Assembly Members, were to keep your ears open to ensure that the developments are being taken forward properly. We have raised points today that are a cause of some concern, but we are happy to sit on them for now, for a few months, while this board does its work. I ask you, as Assembly Members, to keep your ears open to ensure that the developments are being taken forward fairly and that various stakeholders are represented, not only the current universities.

Bethan Jenkins: I do not think that it would be wise to dismiss the evidence about the board and the fact that no students or RhAG members sit on it. I acknowledge what the petition asks for, but events have moved on since then. So, it would be reasonable for us to write to the Minister with those points asking the board to include those groups. I am not sure about the other point regarding the press release. If some members are not happy with the current arrangements, perhaps the board should discuss internally how it operates. However, I believe that including it as part of the discussion should be considered.

internal operations of the board. Therefore, all that we can do is address the issues that are in the Minister's letter of 12 August, in which she states that the group of experts should include student bodies, which it does not. The Minister indicated that it should include student bodies, and perhaps she can tell us why it does not. She also stated that it should include other interested parties. It might be useful to ask her what she meant by 'other interested parties' and whether it includes parents and the other people that we have been talking about.

I absolutely agree that we cannot interfere in the internal workings of a panel, when there is agreement that the terms of reference are right. It is for those who are on the panel to make their views known and to try to convince it of them. Otherwise, any individual on an independent board set up for whatever purpose who felt that he or she could not get their point across in a meeting and felt aggrieved could draw up a petition about it. I do not think that that would be the appropriate way for members of boards or committees to behave. From what we have heard, it is clear that the Minister outlined the representation that she expected to see on the board, and it seems to have fallen short.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I agree with that. Events have overtaken us. The Minister has outlined her path—whether you like that path or not is another matter. It is the Government's prerogative to do what it wishes. We have heard evidence today that the representation is somewhat disappointing. I am surprised that the National Union of Students is not on the board, but it is for others to make that decision.

Val Lloyd: It is represented. Ben Gray of NUS Wales is a member of the board.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I thought that I had seen that on the list, but I do not have the list in front of me. He is the president of NUS Wales, I believe.

Bethan Jenkins: Credaf mai mudiadau prifysgolion eraill yr oedd yn sôn amdano, megis Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Aberystwyth ac Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Bangor—yr undebau Cymraeg.

Bethan Jenkins: I think that he was talking about other university organisations, such as Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Aberystwyth and Undeb Myfyrwyr Cymraeg Bangor—the Welsh unions.

Andrew R.T. Davies: The petitioners did refer to the National Union of Students. The Record of Proceedings will show what was said.

Michael German: Can we check the transcript?

Val Lloyd: We will take Mike's suggestion forward. That is the correct thing for the committee to do. Time moves on, inevitably. It says 'school and student bodies', and we can respond to the Minister along those lines.

Bethan Jenkins: Yr oedd y bobl a oedd wedi dod i siarad â ni yn dweud mai ym Mehefin yr oedd y pwyllgor yn dod â'r trafodaethau at ei gilydd. A allwn ofyn i Jane Hutt yn y llythyr ynglŷn â'r amserlen am gael y coleg ffederal yn weithredol?

Bethan Jenkins: The presenters said that the discussions were being collected together in June. Can we ask Jane Hutt in the letter about the timetable for getting the federal college operational?

Val Lloyd: That was not discussed today, was it? It is not part of our remit to ask that. You can ask it outside of the meeting, but not as a member of the Petitions Committee, because we can only deal with what we have had here today. If you wish to ask that, other ways of doing so are available to you as an Assembly Member.

Michael German: You could ask an oral question of the Minister.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I suppose that we should keep the petition open to ensure that we are observing what happens. Given that the petition refers explicitly to a 'One Wales' commitment, I do not think that it is unreasonable to ask the Minister what sort of timescale she envisages for responding to the report that the committee will create by the end of June 2009, and, following that response, how she sees herself being able to take this forward to meet the commitment.

Val Lloyd: I think that we are straying from what the petition is asking us to do.

Andrew R.T. Davies: The petition clearly asks, in the first line, that the 'One Wales' agreement pledge be kept.

Val Lloyd: However, it does not say by when it should be kept and the 'One Wales' agreement does not necessarily state that everything within it should be sorted by the end of the four-year term.

Andrew R.T. Davies: The Minister could come back to say that it could be resolved by the end of the four-year term.

Val Lloyd: Why are we asking the question if we know that that will be the answer?

Andrew R.T. Davies: Because we do not have it written down.

Val Lloyd: My point is that it is not directly in the petition. The petition states that

'A Federal College must include the following elements'.

They are not asking for that to be delivered to a timescale. If you want to know what that timescale is, you too have a way of asking the question. Petitions Committee members must be careful that we do not try to mind-read. You may be right in what you are saying in this instance, but we cannot do that for every petition. I think that we should stick with asking the Minister what Mike suggested on the school and student bodies—

Andrew R.T. Davies: I disagree with you on that, and we are not a committee that normally disagrees. Please correct me if I am wrong, but this is my reading of the first part of the petition. It states:

'We call upon the Assembly Government to keep its 'One Wales' agreement promise of establishing a Welsh-language Federal College.'

The petitioners then go on to say what they believe a federal college must include. So, the first sentence is almost seeking some form of time frame. As I understand it, the 'One Wales' agreement has a four-year time frame, but it might be that, because this review has been established, which will not report until June, the Minister feels that it is not possible for it to be fulfilled within the time that the 'One Wales' agreement has left to run.

Michael German: Perhaps we could compromise, Chair, and ask the Minister in a letter whether she still considers that this commitment will be met by May 2011?

Val Lloyd: I agree with that because that is in the 'One Wales' document, which we all know has that timescale.

13 January 2009

Val Lloyd: On the Coleg Ffederal Cymraeg petition, P-03-157, we wrote to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, and her letter stated that she notes Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg's concerns, but that she is content with Professor Williams's decisions on membership, and students at Aberystwyth and Bangor universities have been asked to lead focus groups on their campuses. Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg has been canvassed for its views, and will be invited to consult at a forum, and that the 'One Wales' commitment in relation to the federal college will be met by 2011. I thought that it was quite a comprehensive reply. I now open the petition for discussion.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I thought that it was a very comprehensive reply. I recall the evidence that we received, I think, at the Royal Welsh Show ground during the show—

Val Lloyd: No. It was here.

Andrew R.T. Davies: I am sorry; I stand corrected. However, I understand that the Enterprise and Learning Committee has a rapporteur group on bilingualism to consider the ability to make Wales a more bilingual country. It might be worth sending the evidence that has been gathered to date to the Enterprise and Learning Committee so that it can be passed on to the rapporteur group, which might be able to formulate a view in the education field as well as in other aspects of life in Wales.

Val Lloyd: I agree. Is everyone content? Would anyone like to comment?

Bethan Jenkins: I am happy with that, but with other petitions we have suggested that we should ask the petitioners for their response. If we do so, we will be able to see whether the petitioners are happy that RhAG will be consulted in this way and whether they feel that having the student groups is enough for them, because they specifically requested that they could sit on the steering group.

Val Lloyd: They have a representative on the steering group, do they not?

Bethan Jenkins: The students have a representative but they were asking for the Welsh language societies within students unions to sit on the group, if I recall from their evidence. Perhaps we could ask them whether they are happy with the Minister's response and then close it.

Val Lloyd: I would be willing to do that.

Bethan Jenkins: It would just give them a right of reply.

Val Lloyd: Is everyone content with that? I see that you are.

22 September 2009

Val Lloyd: The next update is on petition P-03-157, Coleg Ffederal Cymraeg, which was first raised with us in July 2008. We discussed it again in October and November of that year, and in January of this year. The Chair wrote to

Cymdeithas yr Iaith following our meeting on 13 January to seek its views on the Minister's letter, but we have not had a response as yet.

Bethan Jenkins: Knowing the members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith, I can only assume that they are happy with what is happening with the coleg ffederal, otherwise they would have responded by now. The concept of the coleg ffederal is progressing, and we should allow the group to continue its work with the Government. I think that we should close the petition.

Val Lloyd: Yes, I agree, especially as we have not had a response since January. We will close it.

Annex 2

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Children, Education,
Lifelong Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-157

31 July 2008

Dear Jane

PETITION - WELSH-LANGUAGE FEDERAL COLLEGE

The Petitions Committee is currently considering a petition submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith that calls for the establishment of a Welsh-language Federal College ('the Federal College'). The petition makes specific reference to the One Wales commitment regarding the establishment of the Federal College:

'We will establish a Welsh-medium Higher Education Network - the Federal College - in order to ensure Welsh-medium provision in our universities.'

The petitioners also cite a series of conditions that they consider essential to the establishment of the Federal College. I have attached a copy of the petition, for your reference.

At its meeting on 09 July 2008, the Committee agreed to write to you to ask that you provide it with details of the Welsh Assembly Government's implementation of this One Wales commitment and the extent to which this implementation will meet the petitioners' demands.

I thank you for your consideration of this matter, and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Val Lloyd
Chair, Petitions Committee

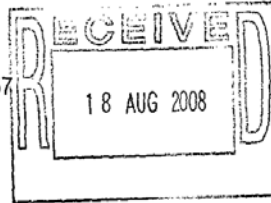
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Jane Hutt AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-157
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/01162/08



Val Lloyd AM
Welsh Assembly
Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

ASD

12 August 2008

Annwyl Val,

Thank you for your letter of 31 July, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, about Cymdeithas yr Iaith's petition for a Welsh Federal College.

In my statement of 16 July I announced that Professor Robin Williams, ex Vice Chancellor of Swansea University, had agreed to chair a Coleg Ffederal Planning Board. This Board will consider a number of models for a Welsh medium Federal College, including the model that Cymdeithas yr Iaith has put forward. Professor Williams will gather a group of experts from the HE sector, school and student bodies, employers and other interested parties to become core members of the Board. He may also see a need for smaller sub-groups to consider particular issues. Professor Williams will meet with a wide range of organisations to hear their views and discuss their proposals, or request written evidence. He is also considering holding a larger consultative meeting, although a date has not yet been set.

Professor Williams will prepare an independent report, based on his findings and the views of the Planning Board members, and report back to me by June 2009.

I can assure the Petitions Committee that every model will be fully scrutinised by the Board. Whatever form the Coleg takes, the Board will need to ensure that it enhances and encourages the delivery of Welsh medium provision, in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's One Wales commitment.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely,

Jane

c.c. Gareth David Thomas, APS Committee Services

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Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Children, Education,
Lifelong Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
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Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-157
20 November 2008

Dear Jane

PETITION - COLEG FFEDERAL

Thank you for your previous response to the Committee in relation to this petition. The Committee took evidence from Cymdeithas yr Iaith in relation to this petition at its meeting on 06 November 2008. Following receipt of this evidence, the Committee agreed to seek clarification from you on two points.

Firstly, Cymdeithas yr Iaith ('Cymdeithas') raised concerns over the membership of the Coleg Ffederal Planning Board. Your letter to the Committee on 12 August stated that 'school and student bodies' would be represented. Though it is clear that the NUS and Ystalyfera Comprehensive School are represented on the board, Cymdeithas are concerned that parent groups, such as Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG), and the independent Welsh-language student unions are not represented. They expressed further concerns that *'there is a bias towards the traditional universities, and not enough representation on the board of more general stakeholders, such as students and parents'*.

The Committee agreed to write to you to:

- Seek clarification on whether you are content with membership of the board
- Ask whether the Coleg Ffederal One Wales Commitment will be met by May 2011

Thank you for your continued consideration of this petition. I look forward to receiving a response.

Yours sincerely



Val Lloyd
Chair, Petitions Committee

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-157
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/01617/08

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

9th December 2008

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 20th November in relation to the membership of the Coleg Ffederal Planning Board (the Planning Board).

I note Cymdeithas yr Iaith's concerns about the constitution of the Planning Board. Professor Robin Williams chose his members both for their expertise and for their wide range of political views, and I am content with his decisions. I fully accept that there is a strong academic presence on the Planning Board, since the sector will have to deliver through whichever model is decided upon.

The needs of students are paramount. This is why Professor Williams has invited Aberystwyth and Bangor students to lead focus groups on their campuses, to determine how student demand for Welsh medium courses can be increased. I know that he is concerned that parents should also be able to contribute to the debate. He will be contacting Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg to canvas their views and will invite them to attend the Consultative Forum which takes place in early February 2009.

Finally, I can confirm that Coleg Ffederal *One Wales* commitment will be met by May 2011.

I would like to thank the Committee for its continued interest in the Coleg Ffederal.

Best wishes,

Jane

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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