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Dear Convener

UPDATE ON THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S WORK TO ADD TRADE UNIONS NOMINEES TO COLLEGE BOARDS

I write to provide you with an update on the Scottish Government's work to add trade union nominees to the boards of incorporated colleges and regional boards in Scotland.

In 2016, the then Education and Skills Secretary's Good Governance Task Group reported back on the lessons learned at Glasgow Clyde, North Glasgow and Coatbridge Colleges. The Task Group also made a series of recommendations to improve governance in Scotland's colleges. The Scottish Government consulted on the Good Governance Task Group recommendations in April and May 2017 and following this the former Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead MSP, outlined in a letter to the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament the actions that the Scottish Government intended to take in response to the consultation regarding college governance matters. As part of this response, the Scottish Government committed to introducing trade union nominees to the boards of the incorporated colleges, the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board and New College Lanarkshire (NCL) (also known as "the Lanarkshire Board").

The Scottish Government consulted on proposals to add trade union nominees to the boards of these college institutions, with the consultation running from 1 December 2022 until 27 January 2023. The consultation received 29 responses and the analysis document is currently being prepared for publication on the Scottish Government's online forum, Citizen Space.

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Following the consultation, the Scottish Government will bring forward a statutory instrument that will make the necessary amendments to legislation to give effect to the proposals. This is intended to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in the Autumn of Parliamentary year 2023/24, with the requirements for there to be trade union nominees on college boards coming into force in January 2024.

Although the origin of these governance changes date back to 2016, these improvements will sit within the context of our wider reform of the lifelong education and skills system and are consistent with the direction of travel that will be set out in the final Purpose and Principles for post-school education, skills and research.

The Scottish Government will continue work to improve the governance of the sector, to ensure Scotland has a college sector that rewards staff appropriately, meets the needs of students, promotes the Scottish Government's Fair Work agenda and supports economic growth and prosperity for Scotland.

GRAEME DEY

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