

# Enterprise and Learning Committee

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## University of Wales, Lampeter evidence to the 'Inquiry into the Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales'

This submission from University of Wales, Lampeter presents evidence for the Enterprise and Learning Committee to consider in the course of its Inquiry into the nature of the strategic engagement of HEIs with businesses in Wales and their impact on their local and regional economies - embracing the wider contributions of universities to their localities, such as community work and cultural contributions.

University of Wales, Lampeter has a wide range of engagement with the economy. It is grouped here as: (1) role within and contribution to the local community; (2) impact as an employer and purchaser of goods and services in support of its operations; (3) personal and professional development of people and their communities as a distributed learning organisation; (4) impact through the development of enterprise (5) direct responses to the terms of reference of the Inquiry Committee.

### 1. University of Wales, Lampeter

1.1 University of Wales, Lampeter is the oldest university institution in Wales. Founded in 1822, it is an academic institution created with a strong sense of mission that continues today. It is a small, unique institution that envisions itself to be recognised internationally as a leading liberal arts institution, with an engagement with research and commitment to community development.

1.2 University of Wales, Lampeter is an educational enterprise located on a campus in Lampeter in the heart of rural West Wales. The institution specialises in Arts & the Humanities, with a student population that comprise a head-count of 1365 full-time and 7780 part-time, in 2005-06

1.3 The town of Lampeter is in the county of [Ceredigion](#) in the heart of the rural West Wales countryside. Lying on the banks of the [River Teifi](#), it is sited on the county boundary with Carmarthenshire. It is on the edge of the mid Wales economic partnership and spatial planning area where it meets the west Wales planning area. The population of the town was recorded as 1,989 people in 1991, of which 1,410 were [Welsh](#) speaking. Lampeter is therefore the smallest university town in Wales and the United Kingdom. The university, in a normal year, adds a further 1,000 people to the town's population, which gives the rural town an international and cosmopolitan feel. Indeed, the town is best known as the location for the [University of Wales, Lampeter](#).

1.4 Lampeter and its surroundings have a rich cultural tradition and comprise a Welsh language heartland. It is home to many locally owned specialty businesses and retailers supplying, for example, organic foods that make it an attractive retail venue. The presence of the University helps to contribute to the range of services and facilities available in the town. The University contributes to the cultural life in multiple ways, for example in hosting the local orchestra, an open programme of public lectures, promoting town and gown activities and hosting Lampeter Food Festival - a successful venue for local food producers to showcase and sell their produce.

1.5 The University is an active partner and participates in local, spatial, community and also economic partnerships. The local unitary authority for Ceredigion convenes a local economic regeneration group concerned with rural planning as well as a community strategy Ceredigion 2020, which includes lifelong learning and economic regeneration plans. The formation of a local service board is in progress. A consultation during Autumn 2007 amongst public service stakeholders has highlighted access to public services as a key common concern, particularly in mid and south of the county area.

1.6 Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Local Authorities, together with the Welsh Assembly Government have commissioned Hyder Consulting to undertake a development study for Lampeter town and its environment. This report is currently out for consultation, but highlights the importance of the University for economic, cultural and developmental reasons.

1.7 The University engages in Arts & Humanities knowledge transfer activities involving Theology and Religious Studies, Archaeology and Welsh, for example. The pan-UK Research Council (AHRC) and European Programme (HERA) increasingly look at knowledge transfer outputs within the Arts & Humanities.

1.8 The University provides a platform for community actions in the town of Lampeter and its environs which are noteworthy as 'bottom-up' community and economic actions, as opposed to 'top-down' central or local government initiatives. The organic food movement, Lampeter Food Festival and the Cambrian Training Network are examples. More recently, Lampeter Transition Town is an initiative considering the future of the town and its surrounding catchment for sustainability in a low-oil economy.

### 2. Economic impact in support of its operations

2.1 The University is an educational enterprise, and with an overall annual turnover in excess of £14 m in 2007/08, University of Wales, Lampeter has a big impact on the economy of rural West Wales. The institution is a large, local employer supporting a total of 204 direct FTE staff as well as a number of indirect jobs and putting an estimated £21m into the local and Welsh economy (based on a 1.65 public multiplier for public administration). This does not take account of the revenue contributed to the area by the University's home and international students and conference visitors. At a conservative estimate this would amount to a further £5m annually.

2.2 The institution also is a large purchaser of goods and services. The University, as well as a direct employer, plays a key role in delivering economic, social and community development projects under its Third Mission work. The direct total value to the institution in the last financial year 2005/6, for example, was £1.5 million, or some 12% of turnover.

2.3 Ceredigion is a low waged area of Wales. The latest figures for earnings in Wales for the year 2007 (Table 1) show average gross weekly earnings of £472.10 for Wales as a whole. The weekly gross earnings for Ceredigion was £433.6, considerably less than Wales as a whole. Women in Ceredigion earned an average of £377.1, which is 79.8 per cent of the average for Wales as a whole and the lowest for any area reported in this account. The University is one of the few employers of higher paid staff in the area.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Area			
Wales	472.1	510.7	417.6
West Wales and the Valleys	459.6	500.7	404.7
Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire	465.8	508.0	405.6
Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire	458.5	489.8	419.0
Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend	465.6	522.9	396.3
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff and Merthyr Tydfil	454.5	484.7	408.7
Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen	446.2	479.5	399.5
East Wales	488.8	523.4	436.2
Flintshire and Wrexham	481.0	522.1	402.0
Powys and Monmouthshire	427.7	458.7	386.9
Cardiff, Newport and the Vale of Glamorgan	505.4	537.7	459.1
Carmarthenshire	470.8	494.5	439.8
Pembrokeshire	453.9	488.3	412.2
<b>Ceredigion</b>	<b>433.6</b>	<b>479.6</b>	<b>377.1</b>

**Table 1.2007: Average gross weekly earnings, full time employees (source [www.statswales.gov.uk](http://www.statswales.gov.uk)).**

2.4 The University continually reviews its impact as an employer as well as the impact of its operations on economic development. Third Mission activity that supports economic, social, cultural and linguistic development is a key aim of the University. It encompasses the knowledge application and capabilities of staff as well as the trading operations of the institution. HEFCWs Third Mission fund is particularly important in funding work that makes a sustainable long-term impact on business and economic development and interactions. This has enabled the University to attract other income, Structural Funding and partnership development.

### **3. Learning: the economic contribution**

3.1 The University has undergone major changes over the past decade in the delivery of teaching and learning and evolved a portfolio characterised by its flexibility. The institution is developing distributed learning provision to meet the needs and demands of today's learners. Learning provision is distributed between full-time and part-time as well as mode of delivery; open, distance, flexible, electronic, blended as well as traditional methods. This allows access for non-traditional students who would not otherwise study in a conventional way in the heart of rural West Wales. The University has been successful in recruiting increasing numbers of international students.

3.2 The University's aim is to provide learning that will help an individual and group to live, work and prosper in their own chosen community. Innovative educational development under this theme is recognised by awards such as the Queens' Anniversary Award for work in distance learning in volunteering, the British Gas Prize for Widening Access, the Nestlé Partnership award for innovation in teaching and learning, the IBM commendation for the application of IT. Services highlighted by these successes are designed to meet the needs of the people of the locality, Wales and further afield.

3.3 The University is committed to developing a range of academic and personal skills as part of the Higher Education experience. The institution aims for graduates to be equipped with transferable skills, knowledge and attitudes that employers are seeking. The Learning and Teaching and Assessment Committee of the University is actively involved in improving mechanisms for developing transferable skills through the curriculum and the whole higher education experience including through work placements and experience. The University actively participates in the Go Wales programme that provides placements and work experience. The institution is currently developing support for a Graduate Academy as part of the GO Wales programme that will develop commercial awareness and skills for graduates that will make a positive contribution business economic in Wales.

3.4 The University has a longstanding commitment to the principle of widening access and social inclusion in part through the promotion of a range of institutional links with schools, tertiary level colleges and other organisations. The new Widening Access Strategy is underpinned by four integrating strands for the medium term: raising aspirations; facilitating progression and retention; embedding the access agenda and reaching adult groups including the disadvantaged and Community First areas.

3.5 The University will be continuing to participate in the activities of the Mid Wales Partnership with HE and FE, in pursuit of Reaching Wider targets. The aims of this Partnership are explicitly tied to the aspirations and targets of the Welsh Assembly Governments agenda for widening participation amongst under-represented groups and people who would not otherwise consider or obtain access to further and higher education. Activities under this umbrella include after school clubs, a residential revision scheme for GCSE students, a taste of university life and a summer university for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.6 The University is committed to targeting adults from local low participation groups by a programme of non-award bearing lifelong learning with progression routes to further study. One of the development directions is an emphasis on citizens engaging with the Information Society through a range of learning opportunities from complete novices to seniors. Digital literacy is an important bridge for people in a rural community to access services and overcome isolation, as well as progression into higher learning.

3.7 Social and community learning is also supported through partnership working with a range of religious groups across Wales. A special unit, Open Learning Theology, provides specialist accredited and non-accredited programmes that facilitate access to higher education.

3.8 Following an investigation supported by the EU Equal Programme into disabilities and disadvantage in the workplace, the Department of Welsh is reviewing, testing and redesigning bi-lingual E-learning provision for people with visual and hard of hearing impairments.

3.9 Originating from our work in extending our lifelong learning opportunities, a distance learning programme operates to support people volunteering to work in community and voluntary organisations. The programme allows people to study at a time and place of their own choosing and attracts a 1000 people a year, typically. It has been extended to provide a full-degree programme in Voluntary Sector Studies and allows the University to have ongoing dialogue with people and organisations in this important sector. It is planned to extend this provision more widely through the not-for-profit sector.

#### **4. The Development of Enterprise**

4.1 The institution supports the aims and objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Economic Development Strategy and the EU Convergence Programme for the economic regeneration of West Wales and the Valleys. Over the past three years we have received £1.0m from the European Structural Funds.

4.2 The development of an online dictionary and grammar Welsh-English and English-Welsh together with supporting electronic learning programmes is noteworthy. There are three million user hits on these digital learning resources per annum. It is designed as a support for Welsh translators, and this project also complements the delivery of e-learning to thirty-two countries around the world.

4.3 The Research, Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise (RICE) project involved an holistic performance improvement programme for SMEs to enhance their competitive edge and the resurgence of small, local business. Supply chain referral provided access to companies and has led to recognition of partners, for example in an agricultural food supplier recognised as Ceredigion businessman of the year and another company trading as an indigenous food distributor growing into a large sized enterprise.

4.4 With financial support from the Knowledge Exploitation Fund, the Finance Wales Spinout Programme and HEFCW Third Mission Funding, we provide enterprise and entrepreneurship training, organise network events, promote enterprise and support and mentor graduates starting their own business. The University will be collaborating with other Welsh HEIs on enterprise initiatives under the forthcoming Convergence Programme.

4.5 Developing enterprise strand involves partnering on a sub-regional level through the KEF enterprise champions network. The Wales Spinout Programme is also a fruitful area of partnership and co-operation with a multi-party local management group for the Wales Spinout Programme, involving UW Aberystwyth, Trinity College Carmarthen, as well as the University of Wales, Lampeter and Finance Wales that meets at six monthly intervals and shares development practice and ideas.

4.6 The institution has a good track record in innovative skills development and new developments make extensive use of market and needs analysis and also Labour Market Information. This leads to our formulation of four cores to the Third Mission strategy: entrepreneurship, employability, adaptability (business support) and civic engagement.

4.7 **The University of Wales, Lampeter Archaeological Services (UWLAS)** draws on the knowledge and resources of the Department of Archaeology & Anthropology at Lampeter and a network of external organizations and specialists. It offers a range of professional consultancy services in environmental archaeology for clients in public, private and voluntary sector organisations. The range of services includes, for example, undertaking pollen analysis on the medieval Newport ship. The Department of Archaeology is working on a long-term research and development project at Strata Florida that engages people from the local community.

4.8 We look for opportunities by which knowledge transfer can be applied for the benefits of the University.

## **5. Response to the Terms of Reference for the Committee inquiry into the economic contribution of higher education**

the success of HEIs in accessing funding from a range of sources, including the use of European Structural Funds, which impacts on the local and regional economies;

The University of Wales, Lampeter has had significant success in attracting funding from European Structural Funds, EU Community Initiatives and Lifelong Learning Programmes as well as other sources. An indication of the value of the EU funds over the past three years is £1m. The institution is a leading institution in attracting EU Social Funds for HE in the UK, per capita. This funding has enabled the institution to develop new forms of delivery, reach new student groups and work on innovative developments of human performance technology.

the extent to which entrepreneurial education has been embedded in Welsh HEIs; how its success is measured and evaluated and what the levels and types of graduate start up are across Wales;

The University initiated Graduate into Enterprise in Wales in 1984 and entrepreneurial education continues to be a successful provision that contributes to the economic impact for the locality and Wales. The encouragement of graduate start-ups and micro business is of particular importance to the locality for driving the economy, in the absence of medium and larger sized enterprises. There are typically 5 graduate start-ups and 1 spin-out per annum. The institution operates Lampeter Enterprise Network with the aim of promoting enterprise and entrepreneurial education. The Network has grown since its formation six years ago and we now extend invitations as appropriate to our students, staff, local sixth formers, the business community and interested members of the public. The University has introduced an MBA with a number of pathways including a planned MBA for the not-for-profit sector.

the contribution that HEIs can make to the skills agenda and the collaboration with employers' organisations, Sector Skills Councils and trade unions, and whether they are meeting the needs of businesses;

The University is working on innovative work based learning strategies that will extend and improve the range and quality of opportunities currently available for employees to engage in accredited graduate level education at the workplace. This is undertaken through the support of HEFCWs strategic development fund in which the institution is collaborating with seven other HEIs in Wales, as well as through support from the Structural Funds. The institution is pursuing particular links involving action learning and e-portfolio with Skills for Justice and People 1<sup>st</sup>.

the scope for collaboration with the FE Sector following the Leitch and Webb reviews;

Both the Graham Review of part-time higher education in Wales (2006) and the Leitch Review of Skills (2007) identify the need for supply-side improvements in the provision of education and training to individuals. The Webb Review of FE (2007) encourages improved employer-provider relationships and challenges FEIs and HEIs to come together in partnership to become the 'recognised skills driver in their area'. Moreover, Webb indicates strongly that 'a consortia approach to the development of new awards should be adopted' in order to provide integrated and collaborative delivery. The University has a strong positive track record of collaboration with the FE sector arising from ongoing collaboration over HE provision in FE, access partnerships as well as the learndirect University for Industry initiative. The institution is involved in the development of the South West Wales Regional Learning Partnership bringing together FE, HE and Local Authorities in an effort to transform the accessibility of learning. One inhibitor of extending collaboration is the practice of requiring FEIs to enter exclusivity contracts from a single HE provider, out of the locality.

the drive towards mergers and collaboration between HEIs and its impact on their local and regional economies;

The institution is very positive towards the collaboration agenda. It engages in partnerships and collaborative work where it has the capability to engage. The University led the formation of the Ceredigion Procurement Initiative, was a founder member of UWICAH (the University of Wales Institute of Classics and Ancient History) which allows students to gain credits from partner institutions towards a postgraduate degree, and it has a wide range of partners within and beyond Wales. The University is in dialogue to extend its partnerships with other HE institutions, including the Open University in relation to teaching and the Universities of Aberystwyth and Bangor in relation to research. Regular meetings are held with the County Council to explore opportunities for working together to

mutual advantage. The University is a partner in a number of other planned collaborative projects involving other HE institutions across Wales. A key benefit to the local rural and regional economy is to have a prospering higher educational enterprise. The real benefit from an institutional perspective of collaboration and partnership is where the development is aligned with the institutional interests.

the wider contributions of universities to their localities, including community work, cultural contributions, student and graduate mobility and markets and improving access and participation.

The University has a long-standing aim of providing learning that will help individuals and groups to live, work and prosper in their own chosen community. The ongoing task is to match identified needs with expertise through solutions that make economic and financial sense. The University takes an holistic view of its contributions to the locality, with its rural location and low waged economy. The draft Lampeter regeneration plan recognises the central role of the University in achieving greater economic prosperity for Lampeter and its hinterland in rural Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. The responsibility to create a flourishing environment which is a better place in which to live, work and study is one which the University takes very seriously.