

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES: EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING
COMMITTEE – POLICY REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

UWCM BRIEFING STATEMENT

Mission

1. UWCM is required, under its Charter, to conduct teaching and research of high quality across the broad spectrum of healthcare disciplines and to provide, with its partners, first rate clinical services to the people of Wales. It is vital therefore that UWCM is internationally competitive but at the same time committed to its all-Wales role. UWCM values its current autonomy, in particular because it allows us to operate in the service of the whole of Wales rather than in one part of it.

Excellence

2. UWCM regards itself as a highly successful institution. It has:
 - expanded, at the request of the Welsh Office, to a student population of over 3,000 and currently with an annual turnover of £60m;
 - been awarded £13.5 million from the Joint Infrastructure Fund in 1999 to build the Wales Centre for Biomedical Research, by far the largest award made in Wales;
 - achieved "excellents" in Teaching Quality Assessments (TQAs) in medicine and dentistry;
 - been beaten only by Oxford and Cambridge in clinical medicine in the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise;
 - increased the number of female professors from 0 in 1994 to 8 in 2001. This work goes on.
 - been consistently in the top 12 UK universities (and first in 1995/96) for income earned from intellectual property rights, including patenting;
 - with Cardiff University won £3million from the University Challenge Fund to help develop spin out companies from our research;

Collaboration

1. UWCM's success is built upon collaboration and networking with others. We have a mutually dependent relationship with the NHS in Wales. There is an established and growing "Partnership" with Cardiff University and a developing co-operation with Swansea University in the expansion of medical education. The UWCM blueprint "Medical Education and Research in Wales" offers a way forward in involving HE and the NHS in a common purpose and doing so in a cost-effective way. Using the networking approach UWCM will utilise the new information technologies to enhance clinical placement training and involve more healthcare professionals in continuing professional development and lifelong learning. A Health University for Wales could develop from such collaboration.
2. As an institution separately governed but working in partnership with others UWCM believes it can better serve the needs of Wales and assist the Assembly in meeting its priorities as stated in *Better Health, Better Wales*. The relationship with Cardiff University will be strengthened and could result in a strategic alliance or even, in combination with the members of the Cardiff Quartet, into a Cardiff HE alliance.

Competition

3. Whether in teaching or research it is vital that HE in Wales recognises and confronts the strength of the competition from outside Wales. We can use partnerships and alliances to remain competitive. The danger is that Welsh HE may be weakened by unnecessary and distracting internal competition. UWCM is committed to protecting the excellence of its provision in order to attract students and staff from Wales and beyond. It is a fact that at current levels we could not meet our intake targets by recruiting from Wales alone. If we are to retain our competitiveness we must be funded appropriately. We also suggest that successful collaboration and institutional alliances deserve to be adequately rewarded.

UWCM and Wales

4. UWCM offers NAW an opportunity to **co-ordinate** and focus research and training across the range of healthcare disciplines. We are ready and able to act as a source of advice and information on such matters as health equalities and, through our network of partners, we can offer the means by which novel approaches to the many health-related problems of Wales can be taken forward.
5. Building on existing work we can provide a unique opportunity to develop inter-professional education amongst healthcare professionals in Wales in a way which has not been evident elsewhere in the UK. We can also offer a national focus for widening

access and participation in healthcare training generally.

Stability

6. UWCM welcomes the review of student funding – we have already pointed to the variation of treatment in the funding of healthcare students. Nevertheless, the uncertainties which surround a review of this kind, especially the prospect of a merger, which has the potential to undermine our mission as an all-Wales institution, may cause us to lose key staff and students to England. This would be damaging to UWCM and, more significantly, to Wales and the Welsh economy.

Key Objectives

7. .1 High level NHS/HE planning forum to co-ordinate health delivery, training and manpower;
 - .2 Achievement of genuine complementary of research planning and effort within Wales;
 - .3 A Wales approach to interprofessional education.

Coleg Meddygaeth Prifysgol Cymru

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