



Colleges Scotland – Parliamentary reception

Chairs, principals and staff members of colleges across Scotland gathered in the Scottish Parliament on Tuesday 5 March to celebrate the sector's achievements over the past year and update MSPs on the progress of mergers.

Hosted by Liz Smith MSP, the reception took place in the Member's Restaurant and attracted MSPs from across the political spectrum. Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education, gave a short speech that was supportive of the sector's efforts.

Edinburgh College students provided musical entertainment and contributed three exhibition stands to show MSPs and guests the talents and skills of our learners.

MSPs were given a pamphlet on the achievements of colleges and a reminder of the sector's importance, including facts such as:

- Scottish colleges deliver 83 million hours of FE and HE to 300,000 students each year
- Colleges will contribute £1.2bn to the Scottish economy by 2020
- Each year those qualifying from Scottish colleges see their collective income go up by £150m

Whatever challenges colleges face in terms of restructuring or finances, the priority for the sector must continue to be the learner. Students like those featured in our short film – available to view at <http://www.collegesscotland.ac.uk/colscot/latest-news/> – prove that our work is essential, life-changing and crucial for Scotland's people and its economy.

It is essential that we keep colleges at the forefront of the political agenda and work together to ensure the sector is promoted and protected.

Thank you to all who attended.

John Russell,

Chair, Colleges Scotland