The Economic Impact of Scotland’s Colleges
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THIS MEMORIAL IS AN EXPRESSION
OF THE GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION
OF HIS STUDENTS  1928.
Scotland’s colleges have been in existence for nearly 150 years – the first college was established in 1865 with others quick to follow. By the 1900s, Scotland had four large industrialised regions – Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire and Ayrshire. Industrial developments brought opportunities of work and wealth, but so did the need for training. Colleges became the first providers of training for school leavers and young apprentices employed by industry.

Throughout the decades, colleges have continued to adapt to meet the ever changing needs of the industries around them. Working closely with businesses, communities and local agencies, colleges are at the centre of economic development and regeneration in Scotland. They play a critical and valuable role in delivering the skills, competencies and learning that fuels the economy, and enables learners to train, retrain and contribute to the success of our nation.
Growing Scotland’s Economy

Colleges contribute significantly to the economy of Scotland in both monetary and employment terms. For every £1 invested in colleges, Scotland’s economy benefits by at least £3.20. During 2012/13, colleges enrolled over 235,000 students and employed more than 13,500 staff. By 2020, colleges will contribute £1.2bn to the Scottish economy, equivalent to 1% of gross domestic product.

Enrolling in college improves life chances for people and helps those furthest away from the labour market move towards employment. They are a critical part of an integrated system of learning which covers school, training, college, university and work. Every year, students qualifying from college see their collective income increase by £150m.

Colleges deliver a wide range of vocational qualifications at all levels for young and adult learners from access courses to degrees. Taking an HND course can boost pay by up to 80% – this increased productivity supports both exports and inward investment.
The college sector is the largest provider of lifelong learning and career development for adults in Scotland. For some learners, college courses are often the only possible way to improve their skills and earning potential; they offer a pathway into employment. Over 50% of students enter college with no qualifications.

Colleges provide a flexible learning approach through full-time, part-time, day/block release or evening and weekend courses, allowing learners to fit their study around work or caring responsibilities. Currently over 70% of students in colleges are studying part-time. This approach not only maximises human capital, but is also responsive to the needs of employers in Scotland.
Working with Employers

Businesses view education and training for their workforce as an investment, and above any other form of learning, employers value vocational competence as an integral part of their business development strategy. It is vital that the skills and knowledge of potential employees are matched against vocationally driven education, based on national standards of performance – usually developed by representatives from industry, commerce and education.

Colleges are Scotland’s key provider of skills; they work in partnership with employers to deliver skills and training in the key sectors that businesses demand and the economy needs and as a result, 39% of college enrolments are linked to industry. By working closely with industry, colleges develop programmes that are relevant, up-to-date and support the needs of businesses in Scotland.
The growth sectors identified in the Government Economic Strategy (published in 2011) include:

- Creative Industries (including digital)
- Energy (including renewables)
- Financial and Business Services
- Food and Drink (including agriculture and fisheries)
- Life Sciences
- Sustainable Tourism.

Colleges have established collaborative models in many fields over the years. Industrial sectors are not identical in their structures or needs nor are local authorities, where some regional colleges now have multiple local authorities within their region. A successful example of a collaboration model is through the work of the strategic group for Care delivery. This demonstrates how colleges, NHS boards and local authorities are working together to produce a comprehensive map of education and training aligned to workforce planning for Care provision. Another excellent model is the Energy Skills Partnership (ESP) – a collaboration of 25 colleges working with industry bodies to develop and deliver demand led skills programmes, build capability and capacity across Scotland’s colleges.

The case studies that follow provide examples of how colleges, working with partners, continue to play a vital role in growing Scotland’s key sectors.
Energy

Ayrshire College
Wind Turbine Technician Diploma Programme

In response to the growing number of wind turbines in Scotland, the Wind Turbine Technician Diploma programme was developed by Ayrshire College in conjunction with local employers, City & Guilds, Dumfries & Galloway College and Fife College. The course facilitates the training of the future maintenance workforce for wind turbines. In parallel to this, Energy Skills Scotland looked to include impetus to the development of a new learning hub in South West Scotland, to complement the two existing sites in the North and East of Scotland.

Comprising of a City & Guilds Diploma, the programme provided students like Andy Warner (pictured) the required theory supported by a SEMTA Performing Engineering Operations (PEO) which develops the required hand skills.

This collaborative approach brought together stakeholders and local employers who participated in regular forums hosted by Ayrshire College, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Ailsa Horizons, The Energy Agency, Vattenfall, Scottish & Southern Energy, Dumfries & Galloway Council as well as North, South and East Ayrshire Councils and Scottish Power Renewables who was the main company partner.

To offer this course, funding was secured from the Scottish Government through ‘Skills for Growth’ and Energy Skills Scotland, NSAP, South Ayrshire Council, Carrick Futures, Scottish Power Renewables and EU Skills.
Dundee and Angus College
Biomass Wood Fuel Transition Course

With rises in oil and gas prices, along with growing concern of global warming caused by carbon dioxide emissions, biofuels have been gaining popularity as it is a renewable energy where plants are reproduced to replace those used in the biomass process.

Biomass includes plant matter, vegetation, trees and forestry and agricultural residues.

Following a call from industry, the Biomass Wood Fuel Transition course was developed. Partners which supported the initiative included EU Skills, Angus Council, Energy Skills Partnership, Angus Council Towards Employment Team and Angus Biofuels.

The course was aimed at the unemployed, targeted through Job Centre Plus, primarily aged 16 to 24, although applications from candidates aged 24+ were also considered. This 10 week, part-time course equipped students (pictured) with the right skills to gain employment within the biofuels sector, wood fuel suppliers and estates within the Angus area.
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) recognise the importance of employment in tackling poverty and income inequality and have offered 50 young people Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) in a range of areas. These jobs include nursing assistants, clerical workers, receptionists, youth workers, technical officers and engineering. These will last two, three or four years depending on the type of role.

To help these young people access good quality training and get a much needed foothold on the employment ladder, the apprentices have signed up to a learning programme with Glasgow Clyde College in addition to the on-the-job training they will receive.

This is an exciting opportunity for NHSGGC, Glasgow Clyde College and for all of the young people involved. One of this year’s recruits is 16-year-old Dylan Taylor from Cumbernauld who said: ‘I have started my new job in the payroll department and have been really enjoying it. When I left school I wasn’t sure of what to do next but knew I was always interested in a career in finance. I feel very lucky to have been given this fantastic opportunity and I know I will really make the best of it’.
Edinburgh College
NHS NC in Health and Social Care

A new initiative to recruit healthcare professionals in Lothian is going from strength to strength. The National Certificate in Health and Social Care which offers successful students a guaranteed position as a healthcare support worker has been so successful that more training places were offered in January 2014.

The initiative, which began in September 2013, is a partnership between NHS Lothian and Edinburgh College. Students who successfully complete the course will take up a guaranteed position as a healthcare support worker within NHS Lothian Staff Bank. As well as academic studies and practical work placements, the course includes the NHS Lothian induction so that students are prepared for placement and ready to start work immediately after they complete the course.

Student Garry Dear (pictured) said: ‘I like the idea that successful completion of this course will mean that I can work for NHS Lothian. I think it is a fantastic opportunity. Once I have worked as a clinical support worker I would like to take my career forward and try and study to become a staff nurse’.
The Academy was set up in 2013 in a partnership between Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh College, Borders College and four local authorities (City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders). This is a pioneering model designed to inspire young people and widen their participation while supporting the development of Scotland’s growth industries.

The Academy programme runs for two years and provides a unique learning environment for young scientists in S5 and S6 in schools within the partner local authorities. The young people, who are enrolled as associate students in Queen Margaret University and one of the partner colleges, attend weekly classes in these institutions so that they gain experience of these different learning environments while they are still at school.

In addition to studying in school, the Academy students are furthering their qualifications by studying for the practical-based National Progression Award in Laboratory Science in year 1 and the HNC in Applied Sciences in year 2 through the partner colleges and university.

The students are also involved in awareness raising sessions on the wide ranging and diverse nature of the food and drink industry, its economic importance to Scotland and the career opportunities which exist within the industry for suitably qualified scientists through interaction with professionals working in the industry and visits to the workplace.
Food and drink manufacturing is one of the largest employers in Scotland and it is fundamental that there is a knowledgeable workforce with the right skills in place to meet this demand. Education providers and stakeholders have responded by taking a collaborative approach involving secondary schools, colleges, universities, sector specialists and employers to produce two key qualifications.

The first qualification, Skills for Work in The Food Manufacturing Industry (level 5), is designed to provide an introduction to the scope of opportunities for employment in food and drink manufacture and the qualities required in potential employees. This course is suitable for a range of individuals, from school pupils to adult returners as well as staff already employed in industry. For some, it provides a progression route into other courses related to the industry.

The second qualification is the National Progression Awards (NPA) in Food Manufacture (level 6). This is a hands-on course, reflecting the practical nature of food manufacturing. Individuals will gain knowledge and experience in the various areas allowing for progression into more specialised roles.

This collaborative approach brought together education providers, stakeholders and local employers including:

- Abertay University
- Bathgate Academy
- City of Glasgow College
- Food & Drink Skills Council
- Highland schools
- Kettle Produce
- Moray College UHI
- Scottish Food and Drink Federation
- Skills Development Scotland
- SRUC
- Walkers
Offering Unique Solutions

Colleges have a significant impact on the Scottish economy. They:

• Deliver skills at every level for every community
• Help those furthest from the labour market
• Start and build careers
• Up-skill and re-skill the workforce, allowing businesses to adapt and grow
• Provide opportunities for people to return to education
• Support those with no qualifications to achieve a higher education
• Directly partner with employers to meet their needs
• Deliver strong economic returns across the country.