



Minister Gives Green Light for Merger to Create Scotland's Largest New University

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06 March 2007, Scotland's largest new University will be created later this year following the announcement that the University of Paisley and Bell College have received Ministerial approval for merger.

The merger will see the creation of Scotland's largest new University in student number terms, with almost 17,000 students. It will be a four-campus regional institution, with campuses in Ayr, Dumfries, Hamilton and Paisley and will also have the country's largest School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery.

The announcement, which comes at a time when the HE sector is under financial pressure, will create an institution that will generate efficiencies to ensure long-term stability and sustainability. In addition, the merged institution, which will provide a local university for 30% of Scotland's population, will be ideally placed to respond to the demographic challenges currently facing the nation.

Professor Seamus McDaid, Principal & Vice Chancellor of the University of Paisley and Principal-designate of the merged institution, said: "This is great news for the University of Paisley, Bell College and people across the West of Scotland.

"Through merger we will create a new and unique, regional University that will work with communities and stakeholders across the West of Scotland to deliver internationally informed higher education. We aim to have a transformational influence on the economic, social and cultural development of the West of Scotland through the provision of high-quality, inclusive higher education and innovative applied research.

"The merger is good news for both the University of Paisley and Bell College as it will permit us to engage in developments of a scale that we could not have done as independent organisations.

Professor Alex MacLennan, Principal of Bell College and Vice Principal-designate of the merged institution, said: "We're delighted to have received Ministerial approval - it's very exciting news not only for staff and students across the West of Scotland, but particularly for the community we serve in Lanarkshire, who will now have their own local University.

"Having a university presence in Lanarkshire is hugely important for the area and this announcement brings us one step closer to making this a reality.

"Merger will reap tremendous benefits for us, opening up higher education opportunities for many more thousands of people across the West of Scotland. It will give us the opportunity to offer a wide choice of high-quality, career-focused programmes from a new and distinctive regional university with strong international links."

The merger of the University of Paisley and Bell College is scheduled for August 2007.

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