SUBMISSION FROM GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS ASSOCIATION – 23 NOVEMBER 2007

Graduate Endowment Abolition (Scotland) Bill

Glasgow University Scottish Nationalists Association (GUSNA) warmly welcomes this bill and agrees with the general principles behind it.

The members believe that the Graduate Endowment was well-intention though misguided and that students have suffered the consequences of this poor policy-making. We recognise that the bill seeks to amend these errors and increase the likelihood of the next crop of Scottish graduates hitting the ground running by starting a business or getting a foot on the property ladder.

A number of members, who currently received the maximum Young Students’ Bursary from the SAAS, recognise that the Graduate Endowment has become a disincentive for those from similar backgrounds to go into Higher Education. They believe that the knowledge that they are likely to graduate with a substantial amount of debt hinders the participation of deprived would-be students.

Given that many school leavers will never have had more than £2000 in the bank, GUSNA members believe that to expect graduates to pay £2,289 having not been able to work full-time for four out of the five years prior to liability is an unacceptable impediment to those who have had no family in Higher Education previously. Given the difficulties associated with entering university, especially for those who have no graduates in their family, GUSNA acknowledges from the experience of our members that the Graduate Endowment is seen as the rotten icing on the cake in terms of student debt.

GUSNA members believe that the rationale behind the Graduate Endowment Abolition Bill, as laid out in the policy memorandum is correct. We believe that the GE is fundamentally flawed and that abolition is the only realistic option worth considering. We share with the government their aspiration of a Higher Education system which is free for all, as mentioned in paragraph sixteen of the policy memorandum.

GUSNA members believe that the principles behind abolishing the Graduate Endowment are sound. This is true both for the problems the bill intends to solve and the increased opportunities it will create. We hope that this Bill is successfully and speedily implemented and thank the Government for taking it forward.

Glasgow University Scottish Nationalists Association is a body made up of matriculated students at the University of Glasgow. We are a branch of the Federation of Student Nationalists who are in turn affiliated to the Scottish National Party.