Written response to the recommendations from Scottish Agricultural College

Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee – ‘Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities’

Further to your letter of 13th September 2007 addressed to my colleague David McKenzie regarding the above Committee paper and a request for information on SAC’s implementation of the recommendations, I would respond accordingly:

- SAC has a long standing commitment to equality for all, specifically:
  - We are committed to ensuring equality in the delivery of learning and teaching, in the recruitment of students and in the employment of staff.
  - We are also committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between disabled and non-disabled people and do not tolerate unlawful disability discrimination and harassment.
  - The provision of equality training (including disability) is included in all core training available to all employees and managers.

- SAC’s Disability Equality Scheme and accompanying Action Plan for 2006-09 was published on 12th October 2006 and sets out our plans to improve disability access to employment, education and services.

- SAC will continue to aspire to the reduction and removal of barriers to learning, shared space and to the enrichment of the lives of all staff and students. We will know we have achieved this when disability and diversity are natural and unproblematic features of SAC life.

- SAC is in the final stages of achieving the Department for Work and Pensions two ticks symbol ‘Positive About Disabled People’ and will actively promote this in all our recruitment literature and publications, to further create an environment and opportunities which would allow disabled people to enter the workplace.

- Disability has been fully integrated into all our policies, procedures, initiatives and publicity material.

Areas where the Scottish Government could assist us as an organisation would include:

- Provision of a supported employment programme in Scotland.

- Access to funding to assist employers in attracting, recruiting and retaining disabled people.

- Provision of funding for further and higher education providers to allow disabled students the opportunity of familiarisation visits.
• Access to an improved centralised communication support network to assist employers in providing necessary communication to both employees and students.

• Creation of an on-line employer’s forum to facilitate the sharing of good practice in the sharing of good practice in service provision to disabled people.

Professor W A C McKelvey
Chief Executive & Principal
Scottish Agricultural College
25 September 2007