

# Research and Development Series

**A REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
COLLABORATIONS ACROSS WALES**

**Context and current picture**

**Dr. Alison Parken**

Lecturer at Cardiff University and  
Independent Research Consultant

**Leadership  
Foundation**

for Higher Education

Series 3: Publication 2



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**Dr Alison Parken**

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Registered and operational address:

Leadership Foundation for Higher Education  
First Floor, Holborn Gate  
330 High Holborn  
London, WC1V 7QT  
England

Tel: +44 (0)20 7849 6900  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7849 6901  
E-mail: [info@lfhe.ac.uk](mailto:info@lfhe.ac.uk)

**[www.lfhe.ac.uk](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk)**

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## Rhagair

Mae'r degawd diwethaf wedi gweld cynnydd sylweddol yn y cydweithredu rhwng sefydliadau addysg uwch yng Nghymru, a hyn mewn addysgu, ymchwilio, arloesi ac ymgysylltu ac mewn llywodraethu a gweinyddu hefyd. Mae hyn wedi digwydd er gwaethaf y pellter hir sydd rhwng llawer ohonyn nhw, y ddaearyddiaeth hardd ond ymestynnol a'r diffyg cysylltiadau cludiant effeithiol. Mae llawer o'r cydweithredu wedi cael ei hybu a'i gefnogi gan Gyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru drwy gyfrwng eu Cronfa Ad-drefnu a Chydweithredu. Gallech ddadlau bod newid meddylfryd wedi bod o ran manteision gweithio ar y cyd ar nodau cyffredin.

Mae tirlun a dosbarthiad poblogaeth Cymru'n golygu bod Cymru'n lle amhosibl i gyflwyno gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn effeithlon ac yn effeithiol o safbwynt logisteg. Mae'r ddadl wedi'i mynegi ers ugain mlynedd fod gan Gymru ormod o sefydliadau addysg uwch, a llawer o'r rheiny'n rhy fach. Mae'r blynyddoedd diwethaf wedi gweld mwy o gynghreirio rhwng sefydliadau ac yn wir mwy o uno hefyd. Hoffai Gweinidog Addysg Llywodraeth Cymru weld rhagor o uno, gan leihau'r 11 o sefydliadau cyfredol i chwech. Mae cydweithredu felly yn bwnc llosg ac yn fater anodd.

Ffocws yr adolygiad hwn yw cofnodi'r amrywiaeth a'r mathau o waith cydweithredol sydd wedi datblygu dros y degawd diwethaf. Mae'n canolbwyntio ar gydweithredu yng Nghymru (er bod yna lawer o gysylltiadau allanol wrth gwrs) gan gynnig trosolwg bras ei ddisgrifiad (does dim llawer o'r prosiectau wedi'u cloriannu'n llawn hyd yn hyn). Sefyllfa gymhleth yw hi, sy'n cyfuno partneriaethau strategol a chynghreiriau sy'n gweithio o'r gwaelod tuag i fyny. Ar y cyfan, er gwaethaf cost y buddsoddiadau ariannol a dynol sy'n angenrheidiol er mwyn iddo weithio, mae'n eglur bod addysg uwch a'i rhanddeiliaid ar eu hennill yn sgil cydweithredu.

**Yr Athro Teresa Rees CBE AcSS**

**Sefydliad Arweinyddiaeth Addysg Uwch, Cyfarwyddwr Cymru**

## Foreword

Over the last decade, there has been a considerable increase in collaborations between higher education institutions in Wales, in teaching, research, innovation and engagement and in governance and administration. This is despite the long distances between many of them, the beautiful but challenging geography and the absence of effective transport links. Much of the collaboration has been encouraged and supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales through its Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund. Arguably there has been a change in mindset on the advantages of working together on common goals.

The terrain and population distribution make Wales logistically an impossible place to deliver public services efficiently and economically. For 20 years, the case has been argued that there are too many HEIs in Wales, many of which are too small. Recent years have seen more alliances between and indeed mergers of institutions. The Minister for Education at the Welsh Government would like to see further mergers, reducing the current 11 institutions down to six. Hence, collaboration is both a hot topic and a wicked issue.

This review focuses on documenting the range and types of collaborative activities that have developed over the last decade. It focuses on collaborations within Wales (although there are of course many external linkages) and it provides a broad descriptive overview (not many of the projects have as yet been fully evaluated). It is a complex scene combining strategic partnerships and bottom-up alliances. Overall, it is clear that higher education and its stakeholders have benefited from collaboration, despite the cost of the investment required, both financial and human, to make it work.

**Professor Teresa Rees CBE AcSS**

**Director for Wales**

**Leadership Foundation for Higher Education**

## List of abbreviations

<b>CHEW</b>	Chairs of Higher Education Wales
<b>CU</b>	Cardiff University
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>HEFCW</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
<b>HEW</b>	Higher Education Wales
<b>LCRI</b>	Low Carbon Research Institute
<b>LFHE</b>	Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
<b>NAW</b>	National Assembly for Wales
<b>PE</b>	Public Engagement
<b>RAE</b>	Research Assessment Exercise
<b>RCF</b>	Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund
<b>REF</b>	Research Excellence Framework
<b>SDF</b>	Strategic Development Fund
<b>SMU</b>	Swansea Metropolitan University
<b>TSD</b>	Trinity St. David's
<b>UHOVI</b>	Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute
<b>UoW</b>	University of Wales
<b>UWIC</b>	University of Wales Institute Cardiff
<b>UWN</b>	University of Wales, Newport
<b>WAO</b>	Wales Audit Office
<b>WAG</b>	Welsh Assembly Government
<b>WG</b>	Welsh Government (changed from WAG May 2011)
<b>WISERD</b>	Wales Institute for Social & Economic Research Data & Methods

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## Introduction

Since devolution in 1998, Welsh Government policy has actively encouraged higher education institutions (HEIs) to collaborate, to merge and to work with industrial partners. Inter-HEI collaboration projects have been resourced by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) principally through its *Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund*. Collaboration between HEIs and industry has been resourced through the Welsh Government co-funded A4B (*Academic Expertise of Business*) programme, designed to facilitate industry in Wales to maximise its use of academics. There are many other examples of collaborative projects, such as the Beacon for Wales for public engagement, which involves a number of Welsh HEIs, museums and BBC Wales. Just like HEIs in the rest of the UK, those in Wales develop their own partnerships and collaborations, locally, regionally, nationally, with the rest of the UK and internationally. However, this report concentrates mainly on the activities that have been developed through the Welsh Government funded policies for change.

While there has been considerable investment in collaboration, given projects can take some years to develop, there has as yet been relatively little formal evaluation of outcomes. Within the next year, there will be an evaluation of many of the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF) projects, and of some of the other significant enablers of collaborations, such as the Beacon for Wales. This report therefore has concentrated on describing and categorising the types of collaboration.

### The context, drivers and challenges for collaboration in Wales

The context for the delivery of public services in Wales is both complex and challenging. Wales has a low wage economy and 'the historical productivity gap relative to the rest of the UK as a whole is widening'<sup>1</sup>. Parts of Wales are eligible for assistance from European Structural Funds, which support collaborative projects that can include HEIs. Geography creates severe logistical difficulties for collaboration; it takes five hours to travel between HEIs in the north and south. Wales is a bilingual society: the Welsh Language Act is designed to ensure that the Welsh language is encouraged and supported in public services and has therefore been a focus for Welsh Government supported collaboration in HE. There are very few major private sector employers (the public sector provides 30.8% of employment<sup>2</sup>) and little research and development outside of HEIs.

Considerable restructuring of public services followed devolution in 1998 and the founding of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) in 1999. *Delivering Better Services for Wales* (2004), *Delivering the Connections* (2005) and subsequent policy documents have been designed to improve standards and join-up service delivery. Efficiency gains have been sought from social inclusion and citizen engagement rather than competition, arguably signalling an ideological difference between Wales and England. The Welsh Government is keen for HEIs to direct their research to support those industrial sectors which have been identified as crucial to the future success of the Welsh economy. These include the digital economy, low carbon, biosciences and advanced engineering. In 2009, the NAW Enterprise and Learning Committee review of the economic contribution of HE estimated turnover at £1 billion per annum, or £5 billion when multiplier effects are considered<sup>3</sup>. Thus the HE sector is viewed as a conduit for realising the dual political aim of social justice and a buoyant economy.

There is consensus that Wales has too many HEIs for its size, many of which are too small to be cost effective. Collaboration and merger has therefore been a strong theme of successive Welsh Governments. Following a number of mergers the number of HEIs supported by HEFCW has reduced from 13 to 11<sup>4</sup>:

- Aberystwyth University
- Bangor University
- Cardiff University
- Glyndŵr University
- Open University in Wales
- Swansea Metropolitan University
- Swansea University
- University of Glamorgan
- University of Wales, Trinity Saint David
- University of Wales, Newport
- UWIC (University of Wales Institute Cardiff)

Higher Education Wales (HEW) (the 'Universities UK' in Wales) brings the Vice Chancellors together for strategic discussions and meetings with the Education Minister, HEFCW, Chairs of the Governing Bodies of Welsh HEIs (CHEW), and Assembly Members and MPs. Chaired by one of the Vice Chancellors, it provides a research and intelligence function for the VCs and issues statements on their joint behalf. HEW has created a space for common interests to be discussed. There is also collaboration among two groupings: Glyndŵr, Trinity St. David,

1 Davies *et al.* 2011:150

2 Source: Statistics Wales, *Employment in Public and Private Sector by Gender*, Table: [019360], Annual Population Survey dataset, ETES3, Welsh Assembly Government, accessed 15th August 2011

3 NAW 2009:7

4 Source: [http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about\\_he\\_in\\_wales/higher\\_education\\_institutions/he\\_institutions.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_he_in_wales/higher_education_institutions/he_institutions.aspx) accessed 22nd July 2011 (list amended from original to bring Trinity St David campuses together count as one).

Newport, Swansea Metropolitan and UWIC are members of the University of Wales Alliance, and Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glamorgan and Swansea Universities are members of the 'St David's Day Group'. The Open University has links with all HEIs.

The Welsh Government and the sector itself recognise that there are still too many institutions. Successive higher education strategies state that fewer, larger HEIs would result in a critical mass of expertise within subject areas, regional coherence in learning provision, increased learning through the medium of Welsh, increased research income, greater international competitiveness, and for some, gaining a world class reputation as research intensive universities<sup>5</sup>. HEIs were charged by HEFCW with the task of working collaboratively to develop regional plans to explore how the needs of the region would be met while assessing the potential for cost saving, through shared services for example. In 2010, HEFCW announced a target to reinforce sustainability through mergers and to increase the pace of change:

*At least 75% of the Welsh Higher Education institutions will have an annual income in excess of the UK median (36% in 2008/09) with no institution in the lower quartile by 2012/13 (4 in 2008/09)<sup>6</sup>.*

HEFCW's most recent advice to government<sup>7</sup> presents a plan for reducing the eleven institutions to six by 2013 (see Annex B for details).

## Collaborations funded by the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund

The changes in the Welsh HEI landscape so far have been facilitated by HEFCW's Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF). Set up in 2002, fund expenditure has been £131 million<sup>8</sup>. HEIs apply for resource to support work that may lead to alliances and mergers, as well as research and teaching collaborations or administrative and governance projects (see Annex C).

### Mergers and alliances

By 2008, three substantial merger projects had taken place, Cardiff University and the University of Wales College of Medicine (2004); University of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil College of Further Education (2005); and University of Glamorgan and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (2007)<sup>9</sup>. In 2010, University of Wales, Lampeter merged with Trinity University College Carmarthen to become University of Wales, Trinity St David. Some funds were also spent on other discussions that did not eventually lead to merger or formal alliances (see Annex C).

The interim evaluation of the RCF by the Wales Audit Office in 2009 is the most recent. It records that merged institutions were stronger, had increased research capacity and developed a broader teaching provision as a consequence<sup>10</sup>.

The research partnership between Aberystwyth and Bangor covering four research areas (catchments and coastal; advanced functional materials; rural environment; and medieval and early modern history), led to the establishment of a joint Strategy Board that has subsequently explored collaborations in the natural and physical sciences, Welsh medium education, and initial teacher training<sup>11</sup>.

The merger between Cardiff University and the University of Wales College of Medicine resulted in a significant increase in research funding and created an effective infrastructure to produce growth in the quantity and quality of research outputs<sup>12</sup>.

5 *Reaching Higher* (WAG 2002) and *For Our Future* (WAG 2009). A summary list of policy developments in HE is given in Annex A.

6 HEFCW Corporate Plan 2011-12, 2012-13; restated in the Council statement on the *Restructuring of Higher Education in Wales*, 22/12/2010.

7 *Future Structure of Universities in Wales* (HEFCW 2011a)

8 There have been 3 phases of the RCF: Phase 1, July 2002 - 2003/4 (HEFCW Circular W02/48HE), Phase 2, 2004/5 - 2007/8 (HEFCW Circular W04/48HE), Phase 3, 2009 - present (HEFCW Circular W09/32HE).

9 Wales Audit Commission 2009:7

10 Wales Audit Office 2009:16

11 Wales Audit Office 2009: 20

12 HW Corporate Finance 2007

A final evaluation against merger targets concluded that 'many of the strategic outcomes for the merger have been or are close to being achieved and that overall the process and outcome of merger may be judged a success'<sup>13</sup>.

### Research and Teaching

Besides reducing the number of institutions, Welsh Government policy intended that the RCF should support reduced costs and the achievement of a critical mass in research and capacity<sup>14</sup>. Applicants to the RCF have to provide evidence that they had already been working together before preparing their proposals. In research, the biggest investment has been in the Aberystwyth-Bangor collaboration, the Biosciences, Environment and Agriculture Alliance (BEAA), which incorporates the International Research Centre in Biological Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS), in Aberystwyth. The Centre employs 200 research scientists, and since capital funding was provided by the Welsh Government, with HEFCW acting as a conduit, it has attracted £25m from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Research Council<sup>15</sup>. This project is closely allied to the Welsh Government's business sector priorities.

Another major research project funded in the 3rd phase of the RCF is the Low Carbon Research Institute (LCRI), an interdisciplinary collaboration across four institutions which accords with the Welsh Government's business sector priorities and sustainability agenda. Dr Ewen Brierley, HEFCW's RCF manager, describes the LCRI as an exemplar of using the RCF as a 'pump prime' to lever funding from other sources towards a £34 million programme, which will in turn contribute to grants from European Research Development, Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes. The LCRI's website records that in 2010, the European Commission President, J. M. Barroso, said the LCRI was one of "the best examples in Europe of Research, Innovation and Sustainable Development" [www.lcri.org.uk/](http://www.lcri.org.uk/).

The Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS)<sup>16</sup> was set up to strengthen collaborative working and research capacity in Swansea, Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth (it now also includes the University of Glamorgan).

It has attracted research funding from the HEFCW Higher Education STEM research fund, the Royal Society, and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. As in other RCF awards, while the grant funded some new appointments in the participating institutions, the HEIs are committed to sustaining the positions at the end of the funding.

Social scientists in the HEIs in the St David's Day group attracted £4.8m (£3.4m from HEFCW and £1.4m from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)) to set up the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research Data and Methods (WISERD). The interdisciplinary WISERD team has strong connections with the Office for National Statistics, based in Newport and has been described as an exemplar of interdisciplinary research which will contribute to policy makers' effective use of evidence through improved research data and methods<sup>17</sup>. The ESRC has also funded four of the St David's Day institutions, Cardiff, Bangor, Swansea and Aberystwyth, for a Doctoral Training Centre.

The Wales Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience (WICN) hosts 250 academics in multidisciplinary teams from Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea Universities, who have combined to attain £11m of research income, building on the initial grant of £5m.

The Institute of Life Sciences in Swansea<sup>18</sup> and the National Research Centre for Visualisation are also exemplars of increasing research funding from a variety of sources and attaining a critical mass of world class researchers<sup>19</sup>.

The Aberystwyth and Bangor Research Enterprise Partnership, discussed above, now hosts five research centres<sup>20</sup>. In 2009, the Enterprise Partnership exceeded the HEFCW research income target by £2.25m, standing at £13.25m attained<sup>21</sup>. Future collaborations are planned.

Trinity College Carmarthen (now Trinity St David's) and the University of Wales led on a number of RCF funded teaching collaborations in Welsh (see Annex C). Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (National Welsh College) was established in March 2011 as a virtual college through which all HEIs and other stakeholders will work together to provide more opportunities for learning in the Welsh language.

13 HEFCW 2011b:3 [http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/policy\\_areas/strategic\\_change/CU-UWCM%20Merger%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report%20June%202010.pdf](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/policy_areas/strategic_change/CU-UWCM%20Merger%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report%20June%202010.pdf)

14 WAO 2009:6

15 WAG 2009:10

16 HEFCW 2011 HEFCW Website 'Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund' [http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/policy\\_areas/strategic\\_change/reconfig\\_collab.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/policy_areas/strategic_change/reconfig_collab.aspx), accessed 12/7/11.

17 WAG 2009:9

18 <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/ils/home/>

19 WAG 2009:10-11

20 The original four centres were Centre for Advanced Functional Materials and Devices ([www.CAFMaD.ac.uk](http://www.CAFMaD.ac.uk)); Centre for Integrated Research in the Rural Environment ([www.CIRRE.ac.uk](http://www.CIRRE.ac.uk)); Centre for Catchment and Coastal Research ([www.CCCR.ac.uk](http://www.CCCR.ac.uk)); Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies ([www.IMEMS.ac.uk](http://www.IMEMS.ac.uk)). The Centre for Knowledge and Innovation Transfer and Enterprise (CKITE) was added in 2009

21 <http://www.aberbangorpartnership.ac.uk/> website not updated since 2009. Last accessed 16th July 2011

To complement the RCF, HEFCW has also run a Strategic Development Fund (SDF) from its core grant since 2005 to support smaller strategic projects<sup>22</sup>. It has funded significant collaborations in teaching and learning such as rationalising the subject base, technological innovation, ‘third mission’ activities and joint UK national research bids to government, research institutions, charities and others<sup>23</sup>. The SDF supported the Welsh CRUCIBLE project, which, based upon the National Endowment for Science and Arts’ (NESTA) successful leadership and development programme, funds 30 selected highly promising mid career academics from the St David’s Day group to come together to ‘explore and expand their innovative potential through a series of three intensive, two-day residential workshops called “labs”’. [www.welshcrucible.org.uk/](http://www.welshcrucible.org.uk/).

### Administrative and governance projects

The SDF has also funded shared management capability building between institutions, often on an all Wales basis, for example in preparing for the National Framework for Pay Modernisation (see Annex C Table 3).

### Reflections

The WAO review highlighted a lack of significant collaborations between institutions in SE Wales (particularly amongst post-92 institutions), and called for more focus on administrative collaborations. It stated that the autonomy of HEIs in Wales and their lack of formal responsibility to the sector as a whole presented challenges to restructuring<sup>24</sup>. Whilst the review commended HEFCW’s operation of the RCF, it required more dissemination of lessons learned<sup>25</sup>.

Dr. Brierley (HEFCW RCF manager) observes that it took considerable time for institutions to develop significant numbers of strong bids for research collaboration that built upon existing regional excellence in research. He described strong bids for institutes as those that have clear and quickly communicable benefits to institutions, researchers and stakeholders. He commented that in-process learning had resulted in HEFCW now requiring formal sign up for support from senior HEI management early in the bidding process, without which the bid could not move beyond an ‘Expression of Interest’. He also noted there had been relatively fewer bids from post-92 institutions throughout Wales, such that, with the exception of University of Glamorgan, they had not taken full advantage of the RCF. The RCF is now closed and no new collaborations will be funded. University evaluations in the next six to twelve months will determine whether existing collaborations are sustainable.

## Other collaborations

Annex D provides a (non-exhaustive) list of some of the other types of collaborations. This section mentions a variety of them.

- The Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus hosts several multi-national corporations, attracting significant European Regional Development Funding.
- There are many long term collaborations with industry, such as the historic training link between Glyndŵr University and Airbus.
- The Welsh Government funded A4B (Academic Expertise of Business) programme has supported 35 collaborative industrial research projects with a £7.4m investment designed to ‘encourage companies and institutions to work together, boost the level of business investment in research and development and bring new or improved products, processes and services to the market’. One of the purposes is to facilitate leverage of further funds from other sources<sup>26</sup>. In its current phase, funding is targeted to areas eligible for European Structural Funds.
- The High Performance Computing Project is designed to ensure all HEIs in Wales benefit from economies in scale in accessing computing services.
- The Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (University of Glamorgan, including Merthyr Tydfil Further Education College, and the University of Wales, Newport), funded by the Welsh Government through HEFCW, has turned part of Merthyr Tydfil, where unemployment is high and rates of participation in post compulsory education low, into a ‘Learning Zone’, offering ‘bite size’ chunks of education, hopefully leading to progression to FE and HE courses (see Annex D).
- A second Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute hub, based in Blaenau Gwent, is a ‘Learning Campus’.
- The Beacon for Wales is one of six university and external partner collaborations in the UK. The Welsh Government required it to be all-Wales. It has funded 27 projects in six HEIs, with funding amounts ranging from £5k- £21k

22 HEFCW Circular W05/27HE 2005

23 HEFCW website, 2011 [http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/policy\\_areas/strategic\\_change/strat\\_dev\\_fund.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/policy_areas/strategic_change/strat_dev_fund.aspx), accessed 25th July 2011

24 WAO 2009

25 WAO 2009:11

26 According to a recent press release, a Swansea University led project to develop respiratory aids which mimic the performance of healthy lungs has as industrial partners Swansea-based companies Haemair Ltd, Haemaflow Ltd, DTR Medical Ltd, and Staffordshire-based EGS Technologies Ltd. The ‘Grassohol’ project at Aberystwyth University brings together farmers, technology companies, fuel companies and researchers to develop a new sustainable method of producing bio-fuel from perennial ryegrass.

(see Annex D). With regard to what he regards as its core activity, increasing academics' engagement with the public, project manager Bruce Etherington reports that there has been some culture change, especially in those universities where public engagement now forms part of academic appraisal. His estimation of the sustainability of such programmes (the Beacon is now at an end, with formal evaluation expected by October), will be whether universities regard public engagement as conferring competitive advantage. He notes there is now a larger number of staff within universities engaged in public engagement projects with communities. Further legacy work will result in modules such as 'Getting Started in Public Engagement' and 'Working with Social Media' being embedded in staff training programmes.

## Concluding Remarks

This report has focused on collaboration within Wales, but of course, each institution has working relationships with HEIs, industry and other partners in the rest of the UK and internationally. HEIs in the north and south near the border with England in particular have good relations with neighbouring institutions. For example, Glyndŵr University has close links with the University of Chester and Cardiff University has joint Medical Research Council funded translational medicine projects with Bristol University.

Collaboration has been vital in Wales, given the relatively large number of HEIs, many of which are small, and the challenges of the geography, the economy and funding. The political desire for consolidation of the sector as well as institutions' own visions for their future have already led to some reduction in the number of institutions through mergers. There are many examples of inter-HEI collaboration designed to create regional efficiencies and virtual critical mass, and this is likely to continue. Collaborative research projects have tended to be interdisciplinary and challenge focused. RCF funding may well have been critical in facilitating the leverage of further funding from other sources. However, the net effect of RCF funding on collaboration is difficult to assess critically despite evaluations of specific projects. As the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales has emphasised, Welsh HEIs need to be more strategic at a number of levels; his Science Strategy for Wales consultation document advocates the WG should pursue a 'strategy based on the long term economic success of the nation being inextricably linked to a strong base in STEM' (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)<sup>27</sup>. He draws on international examples of collaborations as the way forward, such as the Scottish research-pooling scheme, the Fraunhofer Institutes (on which the UK Technology Innovation Centres are modeled), the Irish 'research focus' scheme and Max Planck Institutes<sup>28</sup>.

Collaborative projects need to be evaluated from a number of dimensions, and within the next year, more evidence will be available that will allow a critical assessment of what has been achieved. They clearly require time, commitment and skills. The latter may need to be embedded into training, appraisal and promotion systems for academics and administrators. There may well be significant time and resource opportunity costs in collaboration, but it is also clear from experience in Wales that HEIs and their stakeholders can benefit from it.

27 Harries 2011

28 Harries 2011

## Annex A: HEFCW's Preferred Options for Reconfiguring the HE Sector in Wales, 2011<sup>29</sup>

**Cardiff University** – secure a position as a world class research intensive university; collaborate with Swansea University where this contributes on the UK stage (i.e. joint REF), collaborate strategically cross-border;

**Swansea University** – aim for a research intensive reputation with Group 1994 ambitions building on the new Innovation Campus; research and teaching partnerships with Cardiff; deepen regional co-ordination with the Trinity St. David's/ Swansea Metropolitan structure (planning merger);

**Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities** – deepen strategic partnership (integrated governance procedures), build sustainable scale in a range of subject areas, expand range of HE provision in North Wales;

**Glyndŵr University** – create structural relationships with a range of FE providers in a group structure lead by Aberystwyth and Bangor to expand range of HE provision in North Wales;

**University of Glamorgan, University of Wales, Newport (UWN) and University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC)** - to merge to create a post 92 institution, forming a 'true' metropolitan university for South East Wales;

**University Trinity St David and Swansea Metropolitan** – merge as planned to deepen regional coherence in cooperation with Swansea University. This merger may include the University of Wales, if governance procedures are improved (see McCormick Review and recent QAA reports) (HEFCW, 2011: 2-3).

<sup>29</sup> Source: HEFCW advice to Minister 29th June 2011, released by Mr Leighton Andrews, Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, on 13th July 2011 as part of a consultation exercise on the proposals. Original documents and consultation proforma available at: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/heinwales/jsessionid=yntyTdvWyhp87Qy0KQpWvygm6x4MqkpM83gy8jvkb6TQvJw2Qht!889719512?lang=en>  
The preferred options are summarised here but the Council offers alternatives in the statement should these not be feasible before the end of the current plan period in 2013. (HEFCW 2011:3/4).

## Annex B: Policy and history of reconfiguration in Wales

- 1993** Wales Office advice: 'too many HEIs which are too small'
- 1999** HEFCW Circular W99/101 HE – advice to new National Assembly, putting the case for 5/6 general multi-mission institutions in Wales
- 2001** Education and Learning Committee review – HEFCW to become proactive planning a functional (essentially geographical) 'cluster model', to address regional delivery, reduction of duplication and critical mass
- 2002** Reaching Higher, Welsh Assembly Government strategy for HE (2009): reconfiguration and collaboration essential for a competitive sector, function not form – based on networks of excellence
- 2002/3** Forms basis of HEFCW remit letters and new fund created to support collaboration
- 2002** UWIC and Glamorgan announce merger proposals/terminated 2003. ELWA reports a mutual breakdown of trust and confidence
- 2004** HEFCW fund re-launched as Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund (RCF)
- 2004** **Cardiff University and University of Wales College of Medicine merge**
- 2005** Professors Bull and Cook report on post-92 HE in SE Wales – cites missed opportunities of current arrangements and predicts a single, new institutional within 5 years
- 2005** UWIC and UWN announce merger talks, HEFCW offer £50k to support if a strategic planning framework with Glamorgan is incorporated. Decline money as the condition causes short term delay.
- 2005** **University of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil College of Further Education merge**
- 2007** **University of Glamorgan and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama merge**
- 2008** Strategic Collaboration Board for SE Wales created with VCs of Glamorgan, Newport and UWIC. Report that 'full scale merger' is unrealistic due to differences in mission, vision and business case is not made. Uncertainty over merger causing anxiety – staff, potential students but will explore collaborative website for subject navigation
- 2009** Wales Audit Office report on RCF – HEFCW generally managing fund well, some HEIs engaged in successful collaboration projects, room for improvement, barriers remain, lack of progress SE Wales
- 2009** DCELLS commission Professor Merfyn Jones to review HE, report highlights social, cultural, economic benefits of attachment to universities for staff, students, alumni and community; critical mass necessary but only where strategically beneficial, 'form to follow function'.
- 2009** Following Jones Report, *For Our Future* published (WAG). HEFCW adopts specific target on sustainability of HE in corporate plan
- 2010** HEFCW statement 22nd December 2010, reiterates specific target on sustainability; six institutions, reflecting regional needs, each region with on research intensive university
- 2010** (November) Merger of University of Wales, Lampeter and Trinity University College Carmarthen to form University of Wales, Trinity St David
- 2011** (March) Minister commissions Professor McCormick to report on governance in HE, review finds that a national policy on reconfiguration and collaboration does not conflict with institutional priorities, national need must be considered.
- 2011** (July) Ministerial statement on HEFCW's advice: *Future Structure of Universities*, which includes a plan for mergers to create six institutions. Minister publishes HEFCW's report and invites representations from stakeholders on its recommendations.
- Source:** Based on HEFCW (2011) *Future Structure of Universities in Wales Annex A*.
- Key –** items in blue are additional to the HEFCW summary (HEFCW 2011), Annex A.

## Annex C: HEFCW Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund Commitments (based on HEFCW 2011)

### 1. Merger Activities

Mergers	Funding	Discussions Towards Merger	Funding
Cardiff University and the University of Wales College of Medicine.	£15m <sup>30</sup>	North East Wales Institute - appraisal of creation of a new University for North Wales	£250k
Integration of Merthyr Tydfil College and University of Glamorgan	£242k	University of Glamorgan with University of Wales Institute Cardiff - appraisal of merger and other options.	£250k
Strategic Alliance between University of Glamorgan and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	£13m (includes element of repayable grant)	Cardiff University with Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Options appraisal for strategic alliance	£179k
Merger of Trinity University College, Carmarthen and the University of Wales, Lampeter	£14.3m	South West Wales HE Partnership: Swansea University, Swansea Metropolitan University and Trinity College Carmarthen <sup>31</sup>	£7.5m

### 2. Subject Collaborations

Partnership	Project	Funding
Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities	Research and Enterprise Partnership <a href="http://www.aberbangorpartnership.ac.uk/">www.aberbangorpartnership.ac.uk/</a>	£11m
Bangor University, Aberystwyth University, Cardiff University and Swansea University	Research Institute of Visual Computing <a href="http://www.rivic.org.uk/">www.rivic.org.uk/</a>	£5m
Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University and Swansea University.	Climate Change Consortium for Wales <a href="http://www.climatechangewales.ac.uk/">www.climatechangewales.ac.uk/</a>	£4.2m
Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glamorgan and Swansea Universities and the University of Wales	High Performance Computing Wales <a href="http://www.hpcwales.co.uk/">www.hpcwales.co.uk/</a>	£5m
University of Glamorgan; University of Wales, Newport; Cardiff University; Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama; Swansea Metropolitan University and Coleg Morgannwg	Skillset Screen Academy for Wales. <a href="http://www.mediaacademywales.org/">www.mediaacademywales.org/</a>	£620k
Bangor University Cardiff University and Swansea University	Wales Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience (WICG) <a href="http://www.wicn.ac.uk/">www.wicn.ac.uk/</a>	£5m
Aberystwyth University and Bangor University	Biosciences, Environment and Agriculture Alliance/ IBERS. (BEAA) ( <a href="http://www.beaa.ac.uk/">www.beaa.ac.uk/</a> )	£7m revenue, £16.5m capital
Swansea University, Cardiff University; Aberystwyth University and Bangor University	Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS) <a href="http://www.wimcs.ac.uk/">www.wimcs.ac.uk/</a>	£5m
Cardiff University, Bangor University, University of Glamorgan and Swansea University	Low Carbon Research Institute <a href="http://www.lcri.org.uk/">www.lcri.org.uk/</a>	£5.2m
Universities of Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea and Glamorgan	Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD). Interdisciplinary. <a href="http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/">www.wiserd.ac.uk/</a>	£3.4m

<sup>30</sup> Figures rounded to nearest thousand or million.

<sup>31</sup> Note these were partnership rather than merger discussions.

## 3. Administrative/governance and subject rationalisation, fund commitments

Administrative Lead	Partner Institutions	Purpose	Funding Commitment
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	University of Wales, Bangor	Strategic analysis: collaboration in research and teaching	£100k
University of Wales, Swansea	Swansea Institute of Higher Education	Rationalisation of provision in law and nursing; initial teacher training; assessment for further collaboration in support services	£150k
University of Wales, Bangor	Coleg Menai	Collaboration in administrative services	£38k
University of Wales, Lampeter	Trinity College Carmarthen	Rationalisation of Archaeology provision	£90k
Swansea University/ Swansea Metropolitan University	Swansea University and Swansea Metropolitan University	Subject Rationalisation between the Swansea University and Swansea Metropolitan University	£3.8m
Cardiff University/Swansea University	Cardiff University and Swansea University	Rationalisation of Chemistry Subject Provision in South Wales	£1.2
Aberystwyth University	Pan Wales	Pay Modernisation	£3m
Hosted by the University of Wales for the sector	Pan Wales	Development of Welsh Medium Provision - Fellowship and Scholarship Schemes	£3m
Hosted by the University of Wales for the sector	Pan Wales	Enhancement of the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre	£900k
Hosted by Trinity College Carmarthen for the sector	Pan Wales	Further Development of the Welsh Medium Teaching DC	£1.3m
<b>TOTAL All mergers and collaborations (Actual)</b>			<b>£131,465,584</b>

## Annex D: Examples of Non RCF Funded Collaboration Activities Welsh HEIs

Title	Acronym	Partners	Purpose	Dates	Funding
Access to Masters <a href="http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/ccs/business/initiatives/atm/">www.aber.ac.uk/en/ccs/business/initiatives/atm/</a>	ATM	Aberystwyth University and businesses	Masters students undertake dissertation research companies	Until 2013	Convergence EU/ESF
Aberystwyth Business Network	ABN	Aberystwyth University and businesses	Products, events, to support businesses	Until 2013	From KESS & KTP funds etc
Advanced Sustainable Manufacturing Technologies <a href="http://www.astutewales.com/en/">www.astutewales.com/en/</a>	ASTUTE	Led by Swansea University, in collaboration with the Universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glyndŵr, Swansea Metropolitan, UWIC, and the University of Wales, Newport	Collaborative R and D Projects. manufacturing industry in West Wales and the Valleys to grow by adopting more advanced technologies, and at the same time improve its sustainability by reducing its environmental impact etc. working with self employed, SMEs, and larger companies	Live	£27m Convergence EU/ESF
Beacon for Wales	BEACON	Cardiff University, University of Glamorgan, Amgueddfa Cymru/ National Museum of Wales, Techniquet, and BBC Cymru/ Wales	University based collaborative centres to involve universities in public engagement. Aim to create a culture in HEIs which values, and rewards public engagement.	Live	C £300k HEFCW, Research Councils and Wellcome Trust
Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability & Society. ESRC Centre <a href="http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk/">www.brass.cf.ac.uk/</a>	BRASS	Interdisciplinary within Cardiff University – Business School; Law; City and Regional Planning	Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility research with business and its relationship to customers, staff, local communities, investors ... e.g. building a well-being data index.	Live	ESRC
Cardiff University Innovation Network <a href="http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/racdv/networking/index.html">www.cardiff.ac.uk/racdv/networking/index.html</a>	CUIN	Links with government innovation programmes national and international, businesses (as clients and mentors), IP company formed (Fusion IP).	Bringing together people from business, industry and researchers in forums and one-to-one clinics. Several spin-outs (funded by FUSION IP and Finance Wales), lauded by National Assembly as an excellent example of its kind	Ongoing	HEFCW Innovation and Engage-ment

Title	Acronym	Partners	Purpose	Dates	Funding
Dragon Innovation Partnership <a href="http://www.dragonip.ac.uk/">www.dragonip.ac.uk/</a>	DRAGON IP	Swansea University, Swansea Metropolitan University and University of Wales, Trinity St David's	Knowledge transfer/exchange projects/networks. Consolidate links – HEIs, businesses and community organisations at a regional, national and international level.	Live	HEFCW Innovation and Engage-ment
Wales Social Science Doctoral Training Centre	Wales -DTC	Led by Cardiff, with Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea	To create a national centre for 30 ESRC funded PhD studentships per year in the social sciences, inc. social policy, psychology, economics, environmental planning and linguistics. 1 of 21 centres in the UK	Live	ESRC
Foundation Wales <a href="http://www.eadsfoundation.com/news?year=2010">www.eadsfoundation.com/news?year=2010</a>	Previously known as EADS	EADS Defence & Security Systems Ltd, the Welsh Assembly Government and the higher education community, represented by Cardiff University	Infrastructure for technology research funding such as intelligence fusion, cybersecurity, intelligent power and next-generation communications architectures.	Live	WG
The Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (Wales) One of 5 in UK <a href="http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=580">www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=580</a>	DECIPHer	Hosted by National Institute for Social Care and Health Clinical centre, with Cardiff, Bristol, Swansea universities, UKCRC (UK Clinical Research Collaboration), Wellcome Trust, ESRC, MRC, Welsh Government, Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation, Cymru	Research that will lead to measurable improvements in the health of individuals and the public, with a particular emphasis on children and young people e.g. anti-smoking spin out company IMPACT	From 2009	See partners list
Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships <a href="http://www.higherskillswales.co.uk/kess/">www.higherskillswales.co.uk/kess/</a>	KESS	Led by Bangor for HE sector.	Supporting support collaborative research projects (Research Masters and PhD) with external partners in (West Wales and the Valleys. 400+ Masters and PhD places aligned to WG sector priorities (as above)	2009 until 2014	Convergence Programme EU

Title	Acronym	Partners	Purpose	Dates	Funding
Techniums		The universities, two local councils, two private sector business partners	Established 2001 by Welsh Development Agency - start up space and knowledge/business support for commercialisation -hi tech industries. Some successes – the Digital, Optical, Cwmbran, and Swansea (1 and 2) Techniums will continue following Welsh Government evaluation (Nov 2010) but six will no longer be supported by the WG.	From 2001	WG and LAs
Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute	UHOVI	University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport.	Regional, strategic, - cultural change towards education, learning, training, skills, employment and economic regeneration for impoverished Welsh Valleys areas – bite size 'drop in' learning – leading to substantive courses/skills qualifications.	Ongoing	WG – funded across several portfolios
Universities' Police Science Institute <a href="http://www.upsi.org.uk/about-upsi/">www.upsi.org.uk/about-upsi/</a>	UPSIE	Cardiff University, South Wales Police and the University of Glamorgan	Founded on the principle that all SW police should be graduates. Research evidence-base for policing, executive education seminars etc.	Since 2007 but will be effected by public sector cuts	ESRC and others £1.5million
Welsh Research Centre for Crime, Community and Social Justice <a href="http://www.wccsj.ac.uk/">www.wccsj.ac.uk/</a>	WRCCSJ	Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glamorgan, Glyndŵr, Newport and Swansea	Research on crime and social justice, links to WISERD and UPSI	Ongoing	HEFCW SDF £355,495

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## Biography

### **Dr Alison Parken**

Alison works as a lecturer, researcher and policy analyst. Clients include the Welsh Government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

She lectures on equality and diversity at Cardiff University, where with colleagues she has also recently completed the research 'An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in Wales' (EHRC 2011), and a five year European Commission funded research programme on gender and emerging knowledge economies.

Other recent research projects include a review of policy initiatives to address gender pay gaps, supporting the development of a gender pay duty as part of suite of Welsh Specific Equality Duties (the duty on equal pay was approved by the National Assembly for Wales on the 29 March 2011).

A recurrent interest has been developing intersectional approaches to evidence gathering in order to support mainstreaming equality in education, employment and social policy.

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