



leading the
university agenda

THE UNIVERSITY THINK-TANK

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011





Professor
Les Ebdon CBE
Chair



Pam Tatlow
Chief Executive

“million+ should be the first port of call for anyone who wants cutting edge analysis of the role and impact of policies and funding regimes on the universities, students and graduates who are contributing to a fairer Britain and a more innovative economy.”

Introduction

In our role as a university think-tank, million+ has been at the forefront of the debate about the future funding of universities in England which arose following the 2010 General Election and the establishment of the first formal ‘coalition’ government at Westminster since 1945. Despite the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties going into the election with very different positions on higher education and student finance, it was as a Coalition that Ministers from both parties responded to the Browne Review into higher education funding.

The Coalition Government’s subsequent decisions have radically reshaped the higher education landscape in England. The majority of public funding for undergraduate teaching will be replaced by loans taken out by students and the cap on tuition fees will be raised to £9,000 a year for new entrants to university from 2012. As a result, the views of students and the funding of universities have dominated the headlines and news bulletins as never before.

Meanwhile clear differences between the political parties in Scotland on the future funding of universities emerged in the campaign which preceded the 2011 elections for the Scottish parliament. The SNP, who had campaigned for ‘fee-free’ higher education for full-time students, went on to win an outright majority.

The research and economic modelling undertaken by million+ over the last year, including on how a graduate tax might work, provided cutting-edge analysis of the changes proposed to the funding regimes in England on students, graduates, universities and the Exchequer. Our advocacy and campaigning played a key role in delivering some equity for part-time students who will be eligible for tuition fee loans from 2012. million+ has also led the field in demonstrating that improved social mobility will only be achieved when politicians, policy makers and employers recognise not only the opportunities provided by modern universities but also the talents and achievements of their graduates.

Introduction continued

In addition to providing alternative scenarios for the funding of universities in England, million+ has published influential reports, papers and policy briefings and given evidence to several parliamentary select and bill committee. This work has included reports on the international higher education activities of modern universities and the research that matters to the UK's economic recovery. However, million+ has also challenged policies emerging for a wide-range of government departments such as the implications of the Government's Teaching Quality White Paper for the future of the high quality teacher training and professional development provided by universities. Similarly, million+ has identified the risks to the future education and training of the NHS workforce posed by the reforms promoted in the NHS and Social Care Bill.

These reports and briefings together with appearances in the media have demonstrated that million+ should be the first port of call for anyone who wants cutting edge analysis of the role and impact of policies and funding regimes on the universities, students and graduates who are contributing to a fairer Britain and a more innovative economy.

Our success is in no small part due to the commitment of the Vice-Chancellors and staff of those universities which affiliate to million+, our many friends and supporters and the staff of million+. It is my great pleasure to take the opportunity provided by this 2010/2011 Annual Report to thank them all.

When it is finally published, the Coalition Government's long-awaited Higher Education White Paper for England and the new political landscape and priorities emerging in Scotland will pose new challenges. I am confident that as a university-think tank million+ will continue to provide an evidence base and a perspective which will be vital to all those genuinely interested in the future of the UK's universities and their students.



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Our mission

million+ uses rigorous research and evidence based policy to solve complex problems in higher education. We publish research reports and policy papers and we submit evidence to parliamentarians, government and other agencies.

Our mission

We aim to develop and shape public policy and university and student funding regimes, on a non-party basis, so that they enable:

- > people from every walk of life to benefit from access to universities that excel in teaching, research and knowledge transfer
- > business, the NHS, the 'not for profit' sectors and government to benefit from the full potential of all universities

Our supporters are universities who share a belief in our mission and have their own diversity and specialisms.

Together they form a network of institutions that provide courses and research programmes which promote aspirations and empower and equip students, employers and the 'not for profit' sectors in the UK and in countries throughout the world. As universities, they play a vital role in supporting and developing the businesses and public services of today and tomorrow.

Our aims are to:

- > promote general policy objectives and engage in advocacy
- > influence governmental decisions through evidence based policy
- > set the agenda, mobilise change and amplify unheard voices

Review of the year

In the last 12 months million+ has been at the forefront of the university fees and funding debate. As a think-tank we have provided expert analysis and insight into the issues that matter. We have launched policy and research reports, and have campaigned on a variety of issues affecting universities and students. Speeches, parliamentary briefings, external events, comment pieces, our website and social networking all form part of this work.

Throughout the year we have consistently challenged 'throw-away' presumptions – such as a graduate tax would never work. We have also set out alternative funding regimes and new ideas to ensure UK higher education encourages the social mobility and economic growth that all political parties are committed to. Our work has received widespread attention and accolade from government, parliamentarians and the media.



Review of the year Research reports and policy

So just what is a university?

This short guide answers many frequently asked questions about universities. Launched following the 2010 General Election, which saw an unprecedented number of new MPs elected to Westminster, it also sets out the development and role of modern universities and provides a brief analysis of the higher education issues for the new parliament.

Sections of the guide covered –

- > The idea of academic freedom associated with universities
- > How an institution becomes a university in the UK
- > How the expansion of universities and students has made a difference to social mobility
- > Why the combination of teaching and research in our universities is at the heart of the UK's reputation for world-leading higher education.

The guide was launched in the House of Commons in June 2010 at the *University Challenge* Summer Reception.

A Graduate Tax: Would it work?

This research report, developed with the international consultancy firm, London Economics, outlined how tuition fees could be abolished through the introduction of a graduate tax.

Launched ahead of the Browne Review, the report was also in response to comments made by Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, that the new government should consider a variable graduate tax.

The report set-outs and fully-costs how those who had participated in higher education could make a contribution purely on the basis of their earnings once they had left university. It concludes that a graduate tax offers a real alternative that would be more progressive than the current system and which would remove the need to pay tuition fees and significantly reduce student debt.

The report shows that a graduate tax of just 1% levied on earnings over £15,000 would mean that fees could be removed for both full-time and part-time students and the Exchequer and universities would be no worse off than at present.



The report identifies the following key benefits of a graduate tax:

- > Under a graduate tax, fees are not charged and the possibility of a market in fees is removed. Those who have participated in higher education pay a graduate tax according to their earnings, once they leave higher education. A graduate tax can be levied for a specified or unspecified period of time.
- > A graduate tax does have complexities but it is likely to be no more or less complicated than the current system. While there are theoretical risks around tax avoidance, a graduate tax (like the current system) would be collected by HMRC through the PAYE system and is no more likely to be the subject of tax non-compliance than the current graduate contribution system.
- > A graduate tax collected from graduates specifically to meet the costs of their higher education, may be 'hypothecated'. While hypothecated taxes are relatively rare, the idea that hypothecated taxes present enormous practical difficulties is a myth.
- > Unlike a more 'progressive' graduate contribution system, a graduate tax could not be paid upfront thereby removing the option of those from wealthier backgrounds/high earners avoiding higher contributions by paying upfront or making early repayments. It would be truly 'progressive'.
- > A graduate tax of 1% would deliver the same level of resources as currently available to universities, would make the Exchequer no worse off than under the current system and would have a small negative impact on graduates i.e. the total contribution made by all graduates would increase though some graduates – particularly low earners – would be better off.

Fair, Progressive and Good Value?

Fair, Progressive and Good Value? was the substantive million+ analysis of the Government's proposals for the reform of university funding in England which cut undergraduate funding by 80% (£2.9bn) per annum by 2014/15 and which will lead to much higher fees for students entering university from 2012. This report was published in November 2010 immediately prior to the parliamentary debate and votes on the new funding system.

The Report assesses Coalition Ministers' claims that their proposals will offer a more progressive system and better value for taxpayers and examines the likely impact of their proposals on social mobility – a key objective for higher education set out in the Coalition Agreement.

The Report concludes that in their current form, the Government's proposals –

- > Are likely to impact adversely on social mobility and participation
- > Will lead to 60-65% of graduates being worse-off than under the current system with the greatest impact on middle income earners
- > Are unlikely to provide good value for taxpayers.

The National Scholarship Programme: A national scheme or a postcode lottery?

In December 2010, at the height of the university fees and funding debate, Nick Clegg MP, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Vince Cable MP, the Business Secretary, set out their ideas for a new £150 million National Scholarship Programme (NSP) to improve access to university and increase social mobility. The suggestion was that 'children on free school meals and other disadvantaged groups could get up to two free years at university'.

- This million+ Policy Paper identifies the unanswered questions about the Government's flagship scheme to help the poorest students go to university from 2012 onwards. Published in January 2011, the paper also sets out the million+ proposals to deliver a truly national scheme, linked to household income and open to all students on equal terms. Such a scheme should –
- > Be based on national eligibility criteria linked to household income and available to full-time and part-time students
 - > Be linked with additional support for maintenance in the form of an additional maintenance grant provided on an annual basis
 - > Require contributions from universities to the central BIS NSP fund equivalent to a percentage of annual endowment funding as identified in the most recent HESA statistics or based on a formula which takes account of institutional endowment income
 - > Be administered and managed through Student Finance (the Student Loans Company)
 - > Be evaluated at the end of the three year NSP pilot.

International Higher Education: Missing an Opportunity?

This million+ report, researched by Professor Robin Middlehurst, Steve Woodfield and Anette Hjerde of Kingston University, concludes that the Government should set out a comprehensive strategy for international higher education in the forthcoming Higher Education White Paper.

The report was launched in March 2011, to coincide with the keynote speech by Universities Minister David Willetts at the 'Going Global' conference in Hong Kong.

The report highlights the international activities of UK universities which represent a hugely important success story. Export earnings from these activities were estimated at £5.3bn in 2009. At a time of economic difficulties this is a sector of the UK economy that has the potential to expand. However, rather than capitalising on this success, the report warns that the UK Government risks missing an opportunity. Government policy is at best fragmented and at worse, deeply damaging. This is especially true of the proposed changes to immigration policy and student and skilled migrant visa regulations which will significantly undermine the UK's global competitiveness in higher education.



The report also found that the partnerships and international activities of modern universities are wide-ranging and include collaborations with highly prestigious institutions. International activities include international students studying in the UK for a degree or studying for 1-2 years in the UK as part of a programme run jointly with an overseas institution; UK universities running overseas campuses and providing 'flying faculties' to teach on UK-accredited degree courses; partnerships and collaborations with overseas institutions and academics to improve and develop research, teaching and knowledge transfer; developing alliances that are subsequently used to support businesses or developments in areas such as governance, security, international development or climate change; UK students studying abroad.

In 2008-9 there were nearly 360,000 international students enrolled in UK universities: the UK had the second highest market share of all internationally mobile students enrolled in OECD countries after the United States. However, whilst the Government has a stated aim of doubling income from international student recruitment,

the report sets out how some UK universities are already reporting a significant decline in recruitment from international students as a result of the Government's proposed changes to student and skilled-migrant visas.

The report identifies how cross-border research activities allow countries to access vital teaching resources and technologies, diversify their income streams and gain access to international research expertise including in Europe. For example, in 2008/09, 27 modern universities won EU research grants and contracts worth £15m.

The report argues that the Westminster Government should have a formal, publicly-available and comprehensive strategy for internationalisation in higher education. Finland published a five-year strategy for the internationalisation of higher education institutions in 2009, Germany developed a strategy for the internationalisation of science and research in 2008 and Ireland published its 'International Education Strategy' in September 2010. In the US, there has been a call for 'a co-ordinated international education policy for US leadership, competitiveness and security'.

"The international activities of UK universities represent a hugely important success story. Export earnings from these activities were estimated at £5.3bn in 2009. At a time of economic difficulties this is a sector of the UK economy that has the potential to expand. Rather than capitalising on this success, the UK Government risks missing an opportunity. This is especially true of the proposed changes to immigration policy and student and skilled migrant visa regulations which could significantly undermine the UK's global competitiveness in higher education."

Professor Les Ebdon
 March 2011

Research that Matters

Launched at the House of Commons in May 2010, with a keynote speech given by David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, this report concludes that if Ministers concentrate even more research funding on just a small number of universities, it will hamstring the Government's own objectives of promoting innovation, as well as economic growth at the regional and national level.

Research that Matters, written jointly with Lorna Everall, Claire Edwards and Professor Neil Forbes from Coventry University, gives a full evaluation of university research funding in the UK. At the very time that the Government is seeking to open up undergraduate teaching to a 'market', the report warns there is a real risk that research funding may become a 'closed shop' with a further loss of the competition and dynamism that is a feature of other countries' research funding regimes.

The report's findings include –

- > That there is no clear relationship between the size of an academic research team and the excellence of the outputs they produce.
- > Removing funding from modern universities risks research that has been recognised as world-leading and internationally excellent. It is also likely to involve the transfer of research funding to the South and East of England – where the universities with larger research departments are based – at the very time that regional economies elsewhere require greater stimulus.
- > Proponents of greater concentration of research funding argue a 'critical mass' of researchers, funding and research activity result in research excellence. Yet evidence suggests that extreme concentration of research funding is not the best situation for the UK.
- > Research excellence is widely distributed across universities and not confined to the institutions that receive the greatest quantities of funding.

- > Maintaining public investment in a diverse array of institutions is important because proximity facilitates the development of research partnerships between universities, businesses, industry and public and third sector organisations.
- > A diverse research base enhances the ability of universities to respond to new challenges and develop research in emerging disciplines and markets. This could prove crucial at a time of economic recovery.
- > Pound-for-pound, modern university research departments provide better value for money from the very modest amounts of public funding they receive. For every £1 spent on university research by the higher education funding councils in 2008-09, modern universities leveraged £2.91 from other sources compared to £2.17 leveraged by Russell Group universities and £1.77 leveraged by 1994 Group universities. For every £1 of research council funding, modern universities leveraged £0.32 from UK industry, commerce and public corporations compared to £0.19 by other institutions.
- > Modern universities lead the way in entrepreneurship and enterprise amongst research students. In 2007-08 modern universities supported 67% of all graduate start-ups, 24% of total staff spin-outs and 27% all other spin-outs.



Advocacy

Over the past year million+ has identified and raised key issues affecting students and universities with government, parliamentarians, senior civil servants and policy-makers.

In addition to a change of government, the 2010 General Election saw over a third of new MPs elected. In the last year million+ has built new links and worked with MPs to become 'champions' of their local universities.

We produce regular parliamentary briefings and have ensured that written and oral parliamentary questions were asked of Government. We have also made several appearances at the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee and the Education Bill Committee and provided evidence to the Home Affairs, Science and Technology and Health Select Committee and the Health and Social Care Bill Committee.

We continue to speak out on issues of importance to universities and students in the media and have gained significant coverage throughout the year, helping to set the agenda on issues such as the shortage of funded university places.

Review of the year Advocacy

The reform of university funding and student finance

The Browne Review entered new territory in describing the public funding of university teaching activities as a 'subsidy' rather than an investment. This represents a step-change to the 'partnership approach' advocated in the Robbins and the Dearing Reports and the system introduced by the 2004 Higher Education Act which was based on the principle of 'additionality', whereby the extra income provided through tuition fees and graduate contributions was additional to the public funding provided by the Government.

million+ believes that state funding is an essential component of the globally recognised success of the UK higher education sector and should be regarded as an investment rather than a subsidy. There is a role for private and business investment too but state funding for higher education teaching and research enables the UK's universities to play multiple roles in social, economic and cultural life that produce significant benefits for the UK.

Throughout 2010 and 2011, million+ set out the principles that we believe should underpin the funding of universities in England. Following on from our *Fair Funding for All* reports, and ahead of the Browne Review's publication, we published *A Graduate Tax: Would it work?* Following the publication of the Browne Review and the Government's subsequent response, million+ published a substantive analysis of the Government's proposals *Fair, Progressive and Good Value?* and a policy paper on the Government's flagship National Scholarship Programme *The National Scholarship Programme: A national scheme or a postcode lottery?* We also produced a series of briefings for MPs and Peers on the funding reforms as they were debated

"The decision to extend fee loans to more part-time students could help avoid some of the negative impacts of much higher fees."

Pam Tatlow
December 2010

in parliament and in the press. During 2011 we have also provided oral and written evidence on the reforms to the Education Bill Committee and to the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee's inquiry into the Future of Higher Education.

million+ played a significant, if not the key role, in achieving some parity for part-time students in the new fees and funding regime. In reality this victory of principle has been clouded by a complex part-time repayments scheme.

The million+ comments on the draft OFFA guidance helped to amend the final guidance and with assistance from member universities, we managed to improve the worst shortcomings of the NSP.

However, million+ remains concerned by the direction of travel set out in the Browne Review and subsequently adopted by the Government. As the OECD have highlighted, state funding for higher education is a rational investment in the future of individuals, society and the economy because it yields significant and stable returns. Public funding for higher education should therefore be treated as an investment rather than a subsidy.

million+ has doubts about the efficiency and financial sustainability of the funding regime that will be in place from 2012 onwards and is concerned that the Government's plans have not been subject to sufficient scrutiny and will not provide taxpayers with value for money. Care must also be taken to ensure that neither the UK's strong reputation for higher education nor the quality of the student experience at UK universities are damaged by belated attempts to regulate tuition fees.

Above all, there is a real risk that the new funding system may impact adversely on social mobility and participation, undoing the progress that has been made over the past decade. million+ will continue to work with the Government to develop a clear and effective communications strategy that ensures that students from all walks of life continue to see higher education as a worthwhile investment with significant and long-lasting rewards.

Social Mobility and Widening Participation

Modern universities make a major contribution to social mobility but this relies on an expansion of university places and a widening participation in higher education.

million+ continues to campaign for government to commit to the funding required to ensure that universities can offer places to all those who are qualified and would benefit from studying at university. Our advocacy is also helping to change the terms of the social mobility debate so that there is less focus on ensuring a small number of poorer students secure places at Oxbridge and more focus on promoting the value of all universities.

Additional Student Places

Over the course of the last year million+ has consistently highlighted the mismatch between the funding of student places and the record demand from people applying to study at university for the first time. Our analysis shows that those most at risk of missing out on a university place are likely to be students from non-traditional backgrounds who often present with lower pre-entry qualifications and apply later but who, nonetheless, are likely to gain the most from being given the opportunity to study at university.

On the basis of the most recent UCAS (University and College Admissions Service) figures, million+ estimates that total applicants for 2011 entry will reach well over 700,000. This is in spite of there being fewer 18 year olds in the population.

million+ is campaigning for the Government to provide the best possible advice to students trying to secure a place at university in 2011 and to ensure that the 'Robbins Principle' – that all those who are qualified should be able to go to university – is not forgotten as the new fees and funding regime is introduced in 2012.

University Teacher Training and Professional Development and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

million+ has published several policy briefings on the implications of the Coalition Government's Teaching Quality White Paper for the future of the high quality teacher training and professional development provided by universities. We have expressed concern about the abolition of the TDA as an arms length body and the absorption of its functions within DfE. We have provided oral and written evidence to the Education Bill Committee on these issues.

The Teaching Quality White Paper presumes that Teaching Schools should replace ITT provision in universities or, at least, that such schools should take the lead in future ITT provision. This has profound implications not only for the teaching profession but also for universities which currently provide the overwhelming bulk of ITT for the nation's school teachers. Those universities which offer ITT have education departments which are experienced and long-standing centres of teaching as well as research. University ITT is provided in conjunction with schools and ITT providers are inspected by OFSTED. Universities also offer CPD and relevant, specialist postgraduate qualifications.

“There is no sound economic case for the wholesale withdrawal of direct taxpayer investment from higher education teaching... Being clever with the accounts is no substitute for taking an economic view of what counts and is unlikely to provide a sound basis on which to build the economy or the future long-term funding of higher education.”

Pam Tatlow
March 2011

OFSTED inspections of ITT providers rate universities much more highly than school-based providers. There is therefore no robust evidence base for the DfE proposals and the abolition of the TDA suggests that future developments in ITT and the allocation of student numbers will be the subject of Ministerial preference rather than being evidence-bases.

million+ will continue to put forward our analysis of the best way to secure the quality and quantity of teachers that our schools need.

NHS Re-organisation – implications for universities and MPET funding

million+ has produced a series of briefing on the NHS re-organisation proposed in the NHS and Social Care Bill. We have also provided evidence to both the Health Select Committee and the NHS and Social Care Bill Committee.

For universities, the abolition of the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) has significant implications for NHS workforce planning and for the future education, training and professional development of NHS non-medical staff.

Currently, nursing, midwifery and allied health profession education in England is provided via a contract between the SHAs and individual universities. Funding for nursing, midwifery and allied health professional education (NMET) is one component of the 'Multi-Professional Education and Training' (MPET) budget which is included in DoH funding of the SHAs. Universities have significant revenue (staff) and capital investments in NMET/MPET contracts and employ academic staff who are experienced practitioners in their field.

million+ has highlighted the uncertainty and risks for universities as a result of the Government's NHS proposals. Our briefings have been widely quoted by MPs and by the media and have ensured that this issue has received attention in the wider debate about NHS reform and ongoing discussions about university funding.

million+ has produced clear recommendations for BIS and DoH as the passage of the NHS and Social Care Bill continues –

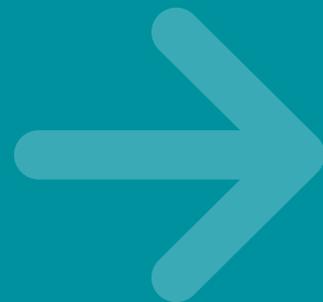
- > Health Education England (HEE) should be established without delay as a Special Health Authority with an independent Chair and a Board that includes expertise in the commissioning of NMET and allied health professions provision and not just medical education.
- > MPET/ NMET funding should continue to include pre-registration, post registration and continuous professional development funding. This is particularly important during a period of structural change and efficiency savings and would avoid the risk of post-registration and CPD training and education being 'lost' during the transition period.
- > HEE should be required to work with Hefce to introduce, from 2012-13, the same arrangements as currently apply in the allocation of medical education, pharmacy and dentistry, to the allocation of numbers associated with nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions.
- > At a time of significant reform in both health and higher education, continuity and transparency in NHS workforce planning, education and training and in the commissioning process are vital.

Events

million+ has contributed to a wide range of events and meetings and has organised a number of million+ events to promote our thinking, launch our reports and share best practice.

million+ has a strong presence during the Party Conference season in September and October, travelling to Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham Brighton to host fringe meetings and engage with decision makers.

We have also undertaken receptions and parliamentary briefings in the House of Commons and hosted two hugely successful 'showcase' events – the *University Challenge 2010 Summer Reception* and the *Research that Matters* report launch where universities and students exhibited their work and met with MPs and Peers.



Review of the year Events

Party Conferences 2010

Labour

Working in partnership with the National Union of Students, million+ held a successful fringe meeting *Funding on future: How do we fund universities and students to secure our future?*

David Lammy MP (the then Shadow Minister for Higher Education), Aaron Porter, President of the NUS, Paul Blomfield MP, Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group and Professor Les Ebdon, Chair of million+ were all panellists at this well-attended event.

Conservatives

At the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham, million+ co-hosted a fringe meeting and a breakfast meeting. The fringe was again in partnership with the NUS, and speakers included David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, Nicky Morgan MP, Aaron Porter, President of NUS and Professor Les Ebdon.

The breakfast meeting was a roundtable discussion with the Reform think-tank on whether a market in

higher education could deliver for universities and students. The discussion included input from Elizabeth Truss MP, the education journalist Mike Baker, Professor Les Ebdon and Pam Tatlow, Chief Executive of million+.

Liberal Democrats

In Liverpool for the Liberal Democrat Conference, million+ and the NUS hosted a joint fringe meeting entitled *Funding on future: How do we fund universities and students to secure our future?*

Following the formation of the Coalition Government and several months of speculation about the Browne Review and the Lib Dems' election pledge to abolish tuition fees, the meeting attracted huge numbers of delegates.

Speaking at the meeting was Simon Hughes MP, Professor Les Ebdon, Aaron Porter, NUS President and Martin Shapland, Chair of Liberal Youth.

million+ also held a roundtable discussion on *A Graduate Tax: Would it work?* This breakfast meeting was hosted by Simon Wright MP and was attended by a large number of young Liberal Democrat activists.



Review of the year Events continued

million+ University Challenge Summer Reception

million+ hosted a summer reception for MPs and Peers in the House of Commons on Tuesday 29 June 2010. Speakers included David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, Pat McFadden, then Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Tom Blenkinsop MP, Susan Nash, NUS Vice President and Professor Les Ebdon, Chair of million+.

Over 100 students and staff from universities across the UK showcased their work and challenged their local MPs to become 'university champions' by working to support their local university at a time when universities and students face difficult spending reductions.

million+ also used the reception to launch *So just what is a university?* This short guide provides the answers to many frequently asked questions about universities and provided a brief analysis of the then current higher education issues. It was particularly targeted at the many new MPs who had just been elected to parliament.

The Student Number Crunch Briefing

On Tuesday 20 July 2010, as many MPs were preparing to head off for the Parliamentary recess, million+ hosted a parliamentary briefing on the emerging crisis in funded university places. The briefing was hosted by Helen Jones MP and speakers included Dr George Holmes, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bolton and Usman Ali, NUS Vice-President. The briefing provides parliamentarians with the key facts and figures on student numbers and set out the urgent action needed to ensure that students did not miss out on the opportunity to go to university in 2010.



A Graduate Tax: Would it work? Briefing

On Tuesday 14 September 2010, a few days after million+ had launched the research report *A Graduate Tax: Would it work?* million+ held a parliamentary briefing hosted by Paul Blomfield MP. The event was an opportunity for million+ and London Economics to present the report's findings and allowed MPs to query our analysis.

The Browne Review – million+ and NUS Analysis and Briefing

On Tuesday 12 October 2010, a few days after the Browne Review has reported its findings and as the Government gave its initial response, million+ and NUS hosted a joint briefing for MPs. Dr Gavan Conlon from London Economics briefed MPs on the financial consequences for universities, students and the Exchequer if the Review's recommendations were to be implemented in full.



Research that Matters report launch

million+ launched *Research that Matters* on Tuesday 17 May 2011 in the House of Commons.

David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, gave the keynote speech. Other speakers included Gareth Thomas MP, Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Liam Burns, President-Elect of NUS, David Sweeney, Director of Research, Innovation and Skills at Hefce and Professor Les Ebdon. Research students and staff from many million+-affiliated universities attended the event and showcased their research work.

Press coverage million+ is regularly quoted in a range of broadsheets and invited to appear on national television and radio.

Over the last year, every report and policy paper published by million+ has been covered by the press. As a think-tank we are called on to brief journalists on emerging areas of concerns and provide comment on the latest Government announcements.

The Chair and Chief Executive have appeared on Newsnight, Today, BBC Breakfast, BBC News, Sky News, Channel 4 News, Radio 4, 5 Live and many local radio stations.



“In a difficult jobs market, with unemployment on the rise, a degree would vastly improve the life chances of young people who have struggled to find a job after leaving school or college.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on unemployment and student places
The Guardian
January 2011

“The debate should move on from the number of free-school-meal pupils studying at Oxbridge to a wider definition of social mobility.”

Pam Tatlow comments on social mobility
The Guardian
January 2011

“Ministers may be right to say that getting to university should not be easy but they are wrong to allow nearly one in three students to miss out on university.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the need for student places
The Daily Telegraph
January 2011

“It creates a two-tier university system, one set of universities for the rich, one set of universities for the poor – one set of university experiences for the rich and one set of university experiences for the poor.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the Government’s proposals for university funding and fees
The Observer
October 2010

“I suspect it is a smokescreen to hide the real crisis coming this summer with perhaps 200,000 university applicants unable to find a place at university.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the shortage of student places
BBC Newsnight
July 2010

“A graduate tax may satisfy the left hand of the coalition and proposals to introduce private providers may suit the right hand, but the real question is what happens to people of all ages who want to study at university if student numbers are cut?”

Professor Les Ebdon
The Independent
July 2010

“One door has been shut in the face of this year’s generation. We’ve opened another one. It’s a bit like getting in through the window. It’s not as easy as coming in through the frontdoor but if you’re committed enough you can get in.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the option of studying part-time for those who missed out on a full-time place
The Guardian
August 2010

“If you prevent growth in one direction, it bursts out in another. There is clear cause and effect.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the numbers cap on home students and the growth of international students
The Daily Telegraph
April 2011

“Just as other countries build up their research infrastructures, our government is taking a massive axe to ours.. For students, it means being taught in an environment that isn’t informed by research.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on research funding
The Observer
September 2010

“The idea that A-level grades achieved at 18 are the last word in intellectual prowess is a myth perpetuated by those who choose to focus on a very narrow range of universities which teach relatively few undergraduate students.”

Pam Tatlow comments the qualifications needed to secure a university place
The Guardian
February 2011

“Hitting the target number on the head is worse than landing a jumbo jet on a postage stamp – it’s like trying to land a fleet of learjets on a series of postage stamps”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the challenge for universities trying to avoid over or under recruitment of students
Channel 4 News
August 2010

“The National Scholarship Programme risks adding another layer of complexity, unless it is a national scheme, nationally administered with clear individual benefits identified for eligible students.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the National Scholarship Programme
The Guardian
January 2011

“There are far more dropouts in shopping centres among those who did not go to university than there are Richard Bransons.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the value of a university degree in the employment market
The Times
August 2010

“The removal of over 80% of teaching funding in the comprehensive spending review will hit postgraduates particularly hard as they are not eligible for fee loans.. Coupled with the greatly increased debts of future graduates, it looks bleaker than the Arctic in winter”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on prospects for postgraduates following fees and funding changes
The Guardian
January 2011

“Rather than tell applicants to lower their expectations, the Government must give serious thought to what more it could do for disappointed applicants.”

Professor Les Ebdon comments on the shortage of student places
The Independent
August 2010

The year ahead

It is clear that the year ahead will be dominated by the Higher Education White Paper and continuing debate about the new fees regime as students apply and make their plans for entering university in 2012.

As a university think-tank million+ intends to be at the heart of the debate. The UK's universities are held in the highest regard internationally and our students and graduates are vital to the economy and society of the future. There has never been a more important time to ensure that decision-makers at Westminster and in the devolved governments develop the strategies to enhance the UK's universities and opportunities they provide.



million+ in 2010/2011

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