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## Chapter 2

# First in Class: Crichton Student Profile 1999-2005

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### 1. Introduction

#### *1.1 Background to the establishment of the Crichton Campus*

In July 1997, the Dearing Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education outlined the following four aims and concomitant purposes for higher education in the United Kingdom;

- to inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout life, so that they grow intellectually, are well equipped for work, can contribute effectively to society and achieve personal fulfilment;
- to increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society;
- to serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels;
- to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society.<sup>1</sup>

It therefore made a number of recommendations, including the following three, in relation specifically to issues of widening access and increased participation in higher education generally:

- We recommend to the Government and the Funding Bodies that, when allocating funds for the expansion of higher education, they give priority to those institutions which can demonstrate a commitment to widening participation, and have in place a participation strategy, a mechanism for monitoring progress, and provision for review by the governing body of achievement.
- We recommend that, with immediate effect, the bodies responsible for funding further and higher education in each part of the UK collaborate and fund – possibly jointly – projects designed to address low expectations and achievement and to promote progression to higher education.
- We recommend that the Funding Bodies consider financing, over the next two to three years, pilot projects which allocate

additional funds to institutions which enrol students from particularly disadvantaged localities.<sup>2</sup>

These recommendations, reiterated in the same year by the associated Scottish Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, in the Garrick Report, were warmly welcomed by the then Scottish Minister for Education, Brian Wilson, who stated the Executive's aim 'that higher education should both flourish during the Government's term in office and become more accessible to all sections of our society'.<sup>3</sup> Wilson outlined the government's vision for the future of higher education in Scotland stating that it should, among other things, aspire to be:

a sector which encourages and achieves equal access for everyone who has the potential to benefit from higher education regardless of the individual's social or economic background; a sector that promotes lifelong learning, meeting the aspirations and needs of students and heeding the requirements of employers by offering various entry and exit points; and offers credit for students' relevant study, work and experience, so that they can stage their studies to meet their evolving needs across the years.<sup>4</sup>

### *1.2 research-based predictions re. student demand and profile*

Given this emphasis on widening access and increasing participation in higher education in disadvantaged areas with low educational expectations and achievements, it was little surprise, that just one year later, in 1998, the Universities of Glasgow and Paisley were successful in their joint bid to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) for financial support from the Strategic Change Fund. The bid stressed that the grant and the student numbers requested were,

to allow the development of a higher education campus in Dumfries consisting of a College of the University of Glasgow and a campus of the University of Paisley, which will complement further education activity on the part of Dumfries and Galloway College.<sup>5</sup>

The courses themselves were to be structured 'to allow seamless movement between full-time and part-time study with the provision of learning support for students allowing a liberal access policy'<sup>6</sup> and the whole development was designed generally 'to increase participation in higher education' as a 'means of providing support to local communities and a stimulus to the growth of the local economy'.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly the root of the bid lay in the recommendations made in both the Dearing and Garrick Reports.

A research report produced by DTZ Pieda Consulting in June 1998<sup>8</sup> provided clear evidence of demand for higher education in Dumfries and Galloway. This research, described by the authors as 'one of the most comprehensive regional HE reviews undertaken in Scotland'<sup>9</sup>, revealed the general characteristics of the potential students likely to be attracted to study at an institution of higher education in Dumfries. It did so by accessing pre-existing data for the region:

- The HEIST Year 5 school leaver survey;
- The HEIST postal questionnaire sent to all extra-mural and Open University students;
- The HEIST employer survey.

It also gathered new data in the region via;

- A random household telephone survey;
- A postal questionnaire of all year 1 Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/D) students at Dumfries and Galloway College.

From the Year 5 school leaver survey it emerged that the proposed campus was attractive to a small number of school leavers who were either intending to undertake or undecided about undertaking HE level study. The reasons most frequently cited included the perceived advantages of studying close to home, both financial and personal. To a much greater extent, it emerged from the telephone survey that the proposed campus was attractive to the following groups:

- People from socio-economic groups C1, C2 and D (83% of respondents), that is, high and low grade skilled manual workers and semi-skilled manual workers;
- Mature students over 25 years old (69%);
- More women than men (64%);
- People already in work (56%);
- People without the normal entrance qualifications for HE entry, i.e. Standard Grades or equivalent as their highest qualification (50%);
- People with caring responsibilities at home (36%).

The study, therefore, furnished support for the Strategic Change Fund bid, intimating 'a buoyant level of demand for HE and a significant

level of unmet demand'.<sup>10</sup> However, given the nature of that demand, as outlined above, provisos were also made regarding the need to 'offer a sufficiently wide range of subjects, levels and modes, with particular provision for part time and open learning students [...] together with facilities that are designed for convenient day and evening use, as well as for those pursuing conventional full time study.'<sup>11</sup>

By September 1999, in little under a year following the successful outcome of the Strategic Change Fund bid, the then Crichton College – now Crichton Campus – of the University of Glasgow welcomed its first students, with Professor Taylor openly acknowledging its position at the forefront of steps towards wider access and increased participation. Indeed this was still the case a full year later. *The Scotsman* on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2000 reported that,

Professor Rex Taylor, Director of Glasgow University at Crichton College, stressed the importance of the site in widening access to higher education and stated that "People may be single parents, they may have a job or family commitments which prevent them going away to university. Now there is no need for them to do that if they want to do one of our courses."

## 2. Changing Crichton Student Profile - what?

And yet, does this sound bite actually reflect the reality of the campus as it was then and as it has become since? The answer would appear to be a resounding yes. If we analyse various statistics relating to the profile of University of Glasgow Crichton Campus students in the first session of the campus's existence, 1999-2000, and in the five sessions thereafter, it is possible to identify several characteristics that clearly indicate positive results in terms of increasing participation in a form of higher educational learning that is accessible, flexible and lifelong.

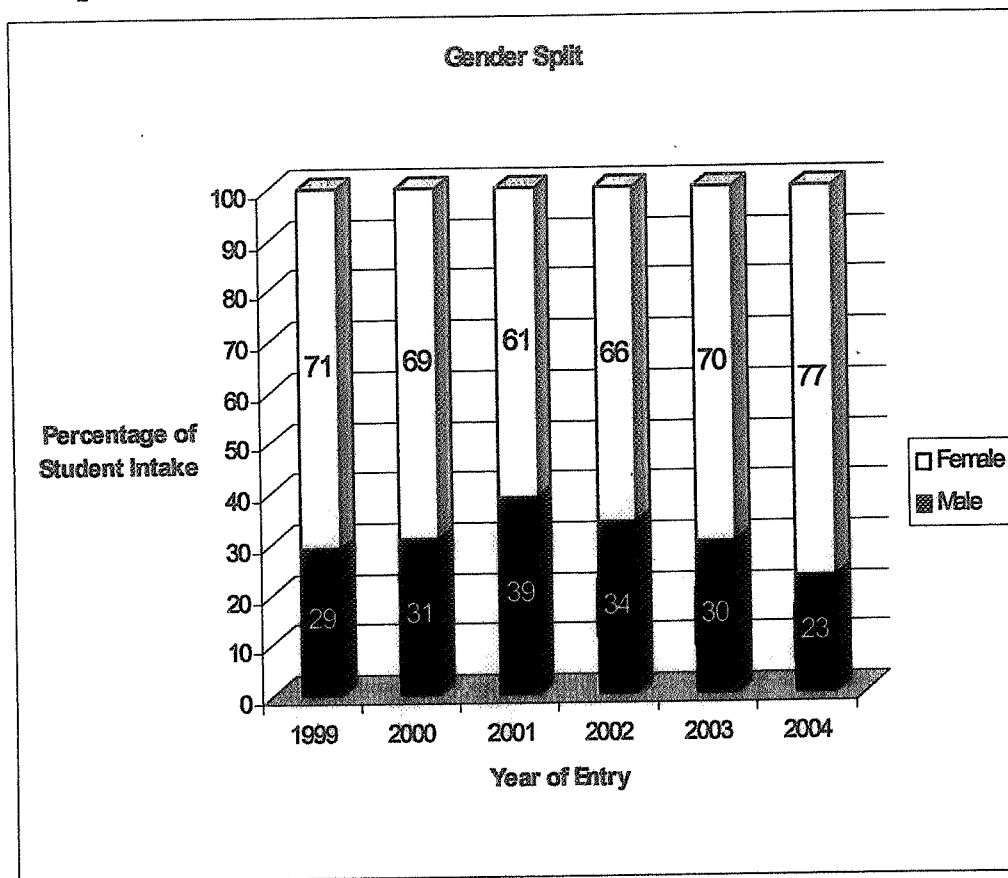
### 2.1 Access to learning

#### 2.1.1 Gender access

As is clear from *Graph 1* and *Charts 1, 2, 3 and 4* (below), initially, in 1999, the gender split was 71% female v. 29% male, close to the 64% female prediction of the research conducted prior to the opening of the campus. This gender split has remained more or less constant over the

first six sessions with some fluctuations varying between 61% and 77% female, the average being 69% female.

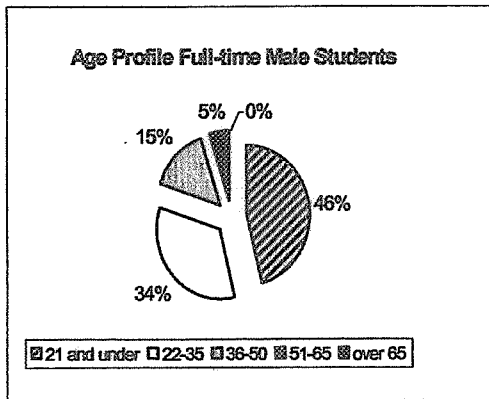
**Graph1: Percentage intake of male : female students at Crichton Campus, 1999 to 2004.**



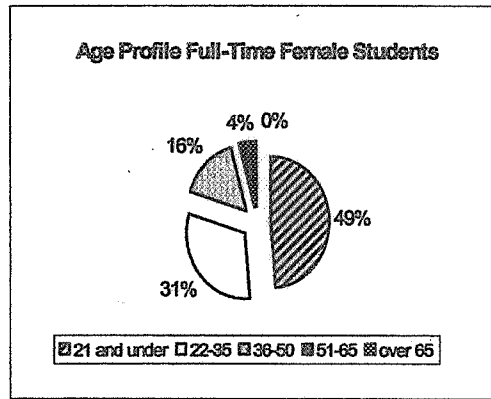
This figure is greater than that for the University of Glasgow as a whole, which, according to the UCAS UK Universities and Colleges Checklist for 2004 entry, is a 43:57 male to female split. However it is important to remember that the UCAS ratio includes only full-time and sandwich course students. Moreover, only Arts-based M.A. degree courses are delivered at the Crichton Campus, while none of those courses traditionally perceived as 'masculine' – pure science, engineering, computing etc. – are on offer there.

From the outset, therefore, there have been more female than male students for both full-time and part-time study at the Crichton Campus, but the difference is more marked among full-time students with a 72:27 female to male ratio. However the spread over the various age ranges for full-time students is remarkably similar between females and males as the charts below indicate.

**Chart 1: Age Profile f/t Male Students**

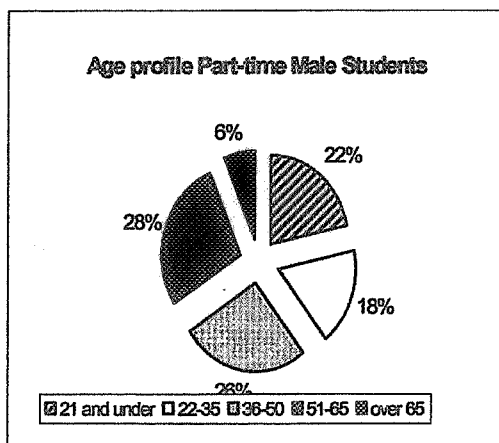


**Chart 2: Age Profile f/t Female Students**

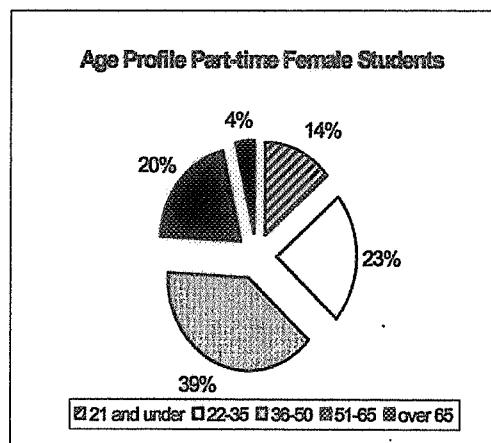


Students, both female and male, are, for the most part, aged 35 and under, with the largest group falling, as may be expected, into the under-21 category.

**Chart 3: Age Profile p/t Male Students**



**Chart 4: Age Profile p/t Female Students**



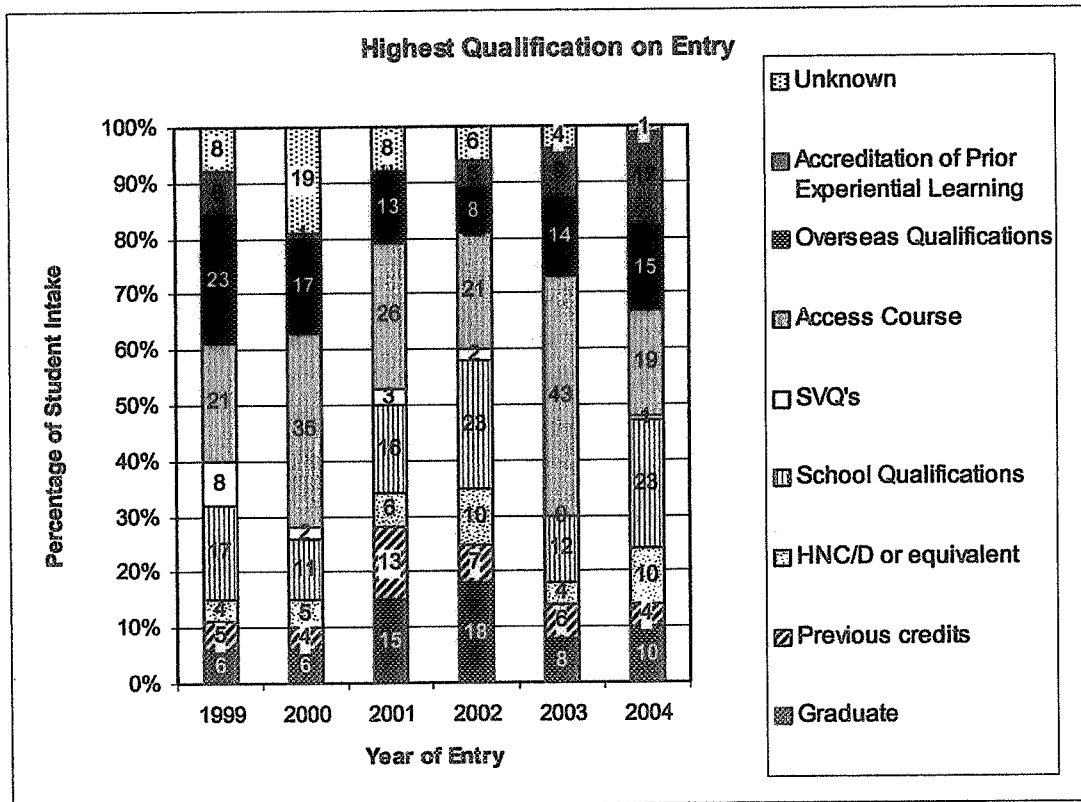
For part-time study the number of female students exceeds the number of male students by a slightly lower ratio than that for full-time study: 66:34. However, with regard to this method of study, it is interesting to note that there are proportionately more male than female students

in the under-21 and over-50 categories, with more part-time female students in the 22-50 age range, traditionally, it could be claimed, the prime age range for caring and employment responsibilities. Clearly, therefore, the Dearing Report's finding that 'women are finally taking their place as equal participants in the undergraduate experience of HE' and that 'this constitutes a major success story in the struggle against exclusion'<sup>12</sup> is manifest on the Crichton Campus.

2.1.2 Academic access

As is seen in *Graph2* (below), the number of students entering the University of Glasgow Crichton Campus via an Access course<sup>13</sup> has been greater than with any other type of Qualification on entry in three of the first six academic sessions.

**Graph 2: Entry Qualifications on Admission to the MA Liberal Arts, Crichton Campus**



On average, 26.7% of the student intake entered via this route over the entire period.<sup>14</sup> The first exception was in the initial session, 1999-2000, when an unusually high number of overseas students with overseas qualifications completed educational exchanges and gave an

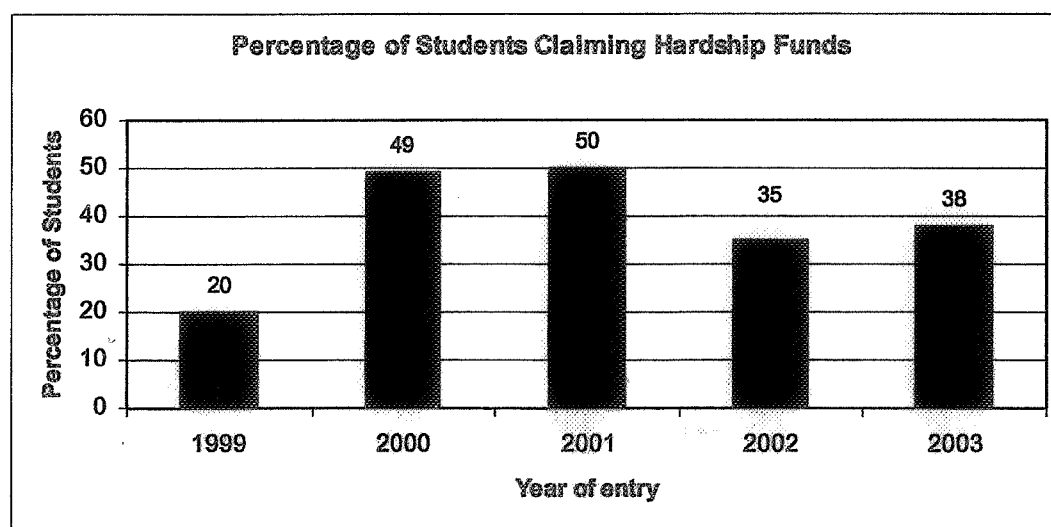


instant international dimension to the fledgling campus (below, see section 2.1.4). The two other exceptions were in 2002-2003 and in the latest session 2004-2005. The slight deviation in the figures here may be due, in the former case, to the fact that the Crichton University Scholarship Agreement (CUSA), (below, see section 3.1.1) was initiated in this session, and succeeded in attracting a slightly greater number of entrants with school qualifications (23%) than Access Course entrants (21%) in its first implementation session. In the latter case, the 2004-05 session has seen the successful initiation of the PASSport scheme aimed at school leavers, (below, see section 3.1.2). This has boosted the number of entrants with school qualifications to 23%, compared to 19% via Access routes. However, overall, the number of students entering higher education level study via Access routes has been greater than via any other qualification on entry. Crichton Campus is clearly providing educational opportunities to those who previously would have been excluded on the grounds of their school qualifications alone, rather than on their true level of academic potential.

### 2.1.3 Socio-economic Access

Whilst Dumfries and Galloway is not an area that, overall, could be described as deprived, there are both urban and rural pockets that score highly on recognised measures of social deprivation. Along with low participation rates, research for the Dearing Report suggested that those participating appeared to be from 'better off families' and that social class differences may be greatest for students in the west of Scotland.

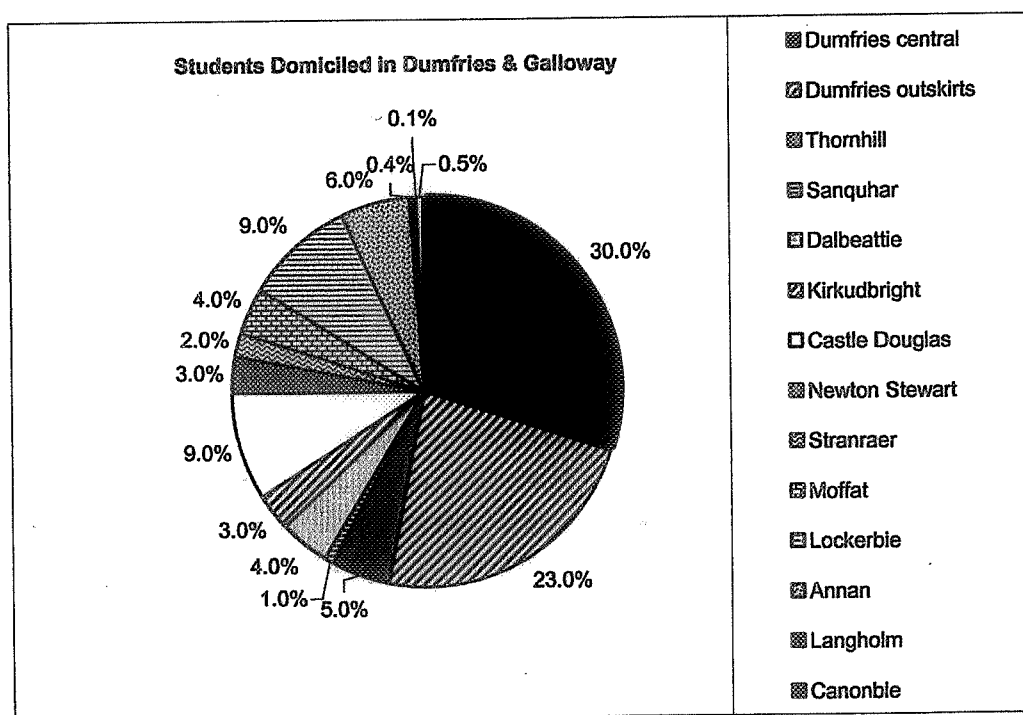
**Graph 3: Percentage of GU Crichton Campus Students Claiming Hardship Funds**



A key recommendation of the Dearing Report was that 'students from particularly disadvantaged localities'<sup>15</sup> should be targeted. It is therefore remarkable to note that, as shown in *Graph 3* an average, 38% of all Crichton Campus students are facing adverse financial conditions making them eligible to claim 'Hardship Funds' of various types.<sup>16</sup> In addition, as *Chart 5* (below) shows, a large number of Crichton Campus students have been attracted from the Dumfries area, with 11% of all students coming from North West Dumfries, which itself is recognised as one of Dumfries and Galloway's priority areas for economic regeneration. Research completed for the Area Regeneration Strategy highlighted a range of indicators for the area which clearly illustrate the problems it is facing. These include the need for recruitment to encourage larger numbers of local residents to participate in education with the region's HE/FE providers and to enrol for New Deal courses. Crichton Campus is clearly contributing to the achievement of this aim.

Finally it is to the credit of the institution that in the three years for which figures are available – 1999, 2000 and 2001 – an average of 70% of those recruited to the University of Glasgow via the Summer School have been the first in family to attend an institute of Higher Education. Clearly Crichton Campus has offered an opportunity to a number of students who, for social and economic reasons, would not ordinarily have had access to higher education.

**Chart 5: Students Domiciled in Dumfries and Galloway.**



### 2.1.4 Geographical Access

It is clear from *Table 1* (below) that the majority of Crichton Campus students are recruited from within the Dumfries and Galloway region.

**Table 1: Recruitment to Crichton Campus; Geographic Profile**

Area/Region	Year of Entry					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	87	125	138	181	87	128
SCOTLAND (exc D&G)	4	5	3	11	4	8
REST OF UK	1	0	1	1	12	10
EU	25	26	21	20	20	18
NORTH AMERICA	1	0	0	0	1	1
AFRICA	0	0	0	1	0	2

The nature of Dumfries and Galloway, where the population density is 60 people per square mile (compared with a Scottish average of 168 people per square mile) is likely to adversely affect the ability of students to access services including HE.

As a means of addressing this, the University piloted the outreach programme discussed later and is currently looking at opportunities provided to students through 'Moodle', a virtual learning environment, (below, see section 3.5). However, as *Chart 5* (above) shows, the fact that students have been attracted from all parts of the region demonstrates that when effective support systems are in place, many students can overcome other barriers to enable them to attend classes.

The Crichton Campus has thus sought to reflect the Dearing Report's evaluation of the diverse and invaluable contributions that individual institutions can make towards regions and localities:

Higher education is now a significant force in regional economies, as a source of income and employment, in contributing to cultural life, and in supporting regional and local economic development.<sup>17</sup>

However it should be noted that, despite this concentration of locally-recruited students, the numbers of students domiciled outwith the region, though small, has also increased steadily since 2001, with the domicile of students ranging from as far afield as Highland and Bedfordshire. Moreover the campus has, from the outset, cultivated an international dimension, characterised by the significant proportion of

overseas students from the European Union completing educational exchanges via the Socrates-Erasmus programme - hence the relatively high level of overseas qualifications of Crichton Campus students outlined above. Crichton Campus exchange agreements have been drawn up with universities in Alicante, Mainz, Montpellier and Prague whilst some European Union students have come, via Gilmorehill agreements, in search of an alternative experience to that afforded by a traditional large city university. The feedback has invariably been positive. Indeed, just last session, one student from France gave the following assessment of her year spent in Dumfries:

Studying here has been the best opportunity to improve my university skills. I had the chance to gain a wide range of knowledge about English and Scottish literature and I especially appreciated the support given to all the students in the University by the staff. The year I spent in Crichton has been the best in my life and I would recommend this University to any student.<sup>18</sup>

A small number of North American students have also come to study in Dumfries. Most recently, in the 2004-2005 session, a student from South Western College, Kansas spent his first semester in Dumfries studying politics and philosophy. He was attracted to the Campus as a direct result of the video-conference linked political philosophies course, 'Freedom, Power and the State', delivered simultaneously to his home institution during the previous academic session. It is hoped that this type of collaboration will not only continue, but will be extended.

## *2.2 Flexibility*

### *2.2.1 Method of Study*

At the beginning of campus developments the level of demand for part-time, daytime study was unanticipated; the expectation was that part-time demand would be for evening delivery. It became apparent that flexible provision was the key to widening access to people with varying commitments and it is only now, in the 2004-2005 academic session, that we see the demand for full-time places exceed that of part-time (*Graph 4*, below). There are several reasons for this:

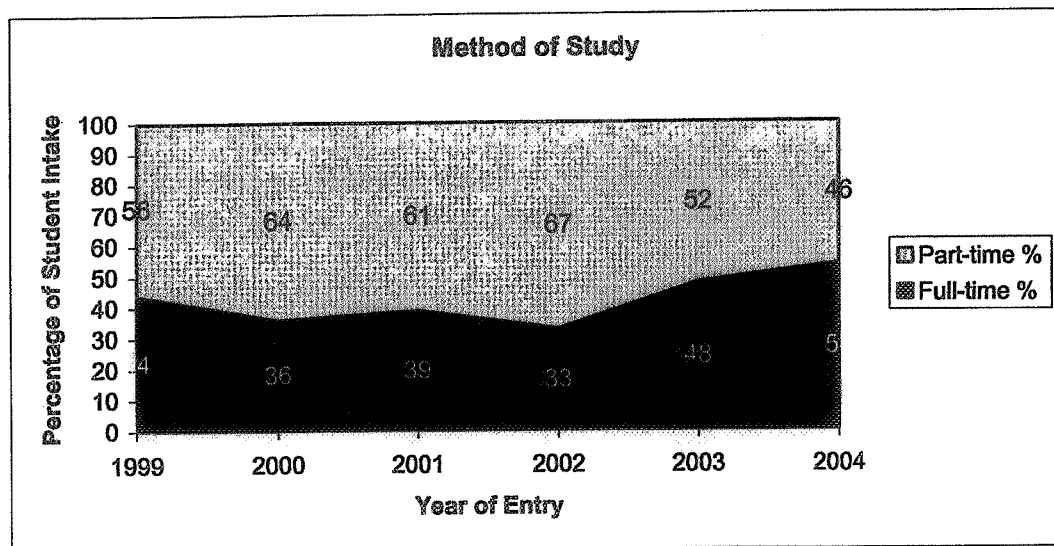
- The latent demand for part-time study within the local area has now been satisfied. Therefore, whilst it is anticipated that a residual demand will remain, numbers are expected to level off.
- The Pre-University Summer School was redesigned in 2003. This resulted in all students who successfully completed the course

being offered a full-time place. Prior to this students studied at Summer School on either a full or a part-time basis. It could also be suggested that an increased awareness of Summer School as an access route to a full-time place has resulted in fewer students being obliged to start part-time, having missed the Summer School, and then transferring to full-time study in the following session. The steady reduction of part-time students transferring to full-time over the years would appear to support this claim.

- The maturity of the CUSA scheme, which is explained in more detail in section 3.1.1 below, has resulted in a marginal increase in the number of full-time school-leavers accepting places.
- The introduction of a new degree in 2004, the Bachelor in Community Learning and Development, which is only available on a full-time basis.

However the Crichton Campus is still limited by the relatively small number of fully funded student places that it has available.

**Graph 4: Methods of Study at GU Crichton Campus**



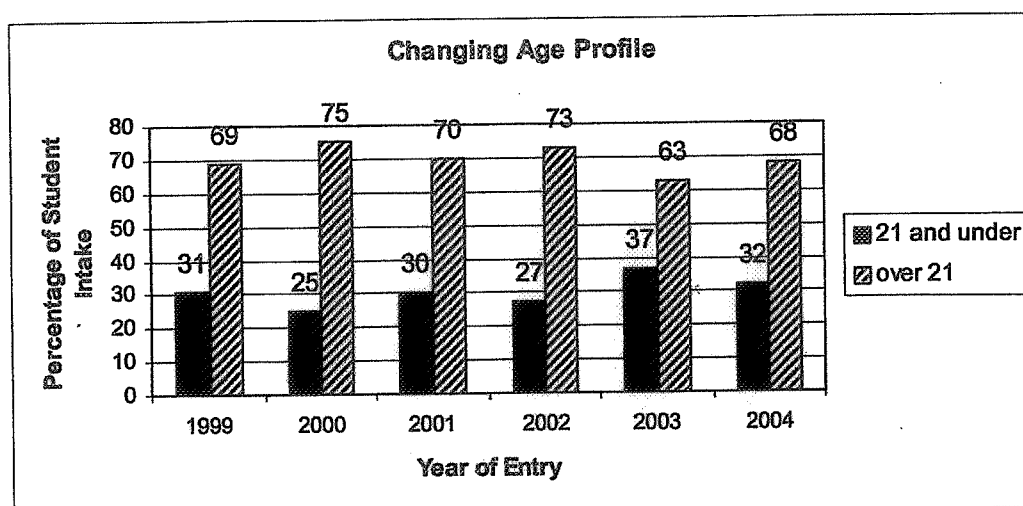
The flexibility which was built into the degree provision at the campus resulted in another unexpected consequence, namely the movement between methods of study. It was initially a frequent occurrence for students to commence their studies on a part-time basis and transfer to full-time study at a later stage. As well as offering students flexibility to continue with their studies, often at a faster pace, if their circumstances change, this also offers another access route for those who want to study on a full-time basis but are not, initially, academically qualified (the Open Access policy, established to boost recruitment in 1999, is explained in more detail in section 3.3 below).

However as awareness of alternative access routes to full-time study has grown, the numbers transferring have steadily decreased. Transfer from full-time to part-time is also possible, but this has been much less common.

## 2.3 Lifelong learning

### 2.3.1 Age Profile

**Graph 5: GU, Crichton Campus. The Changing Age Profile of Students**



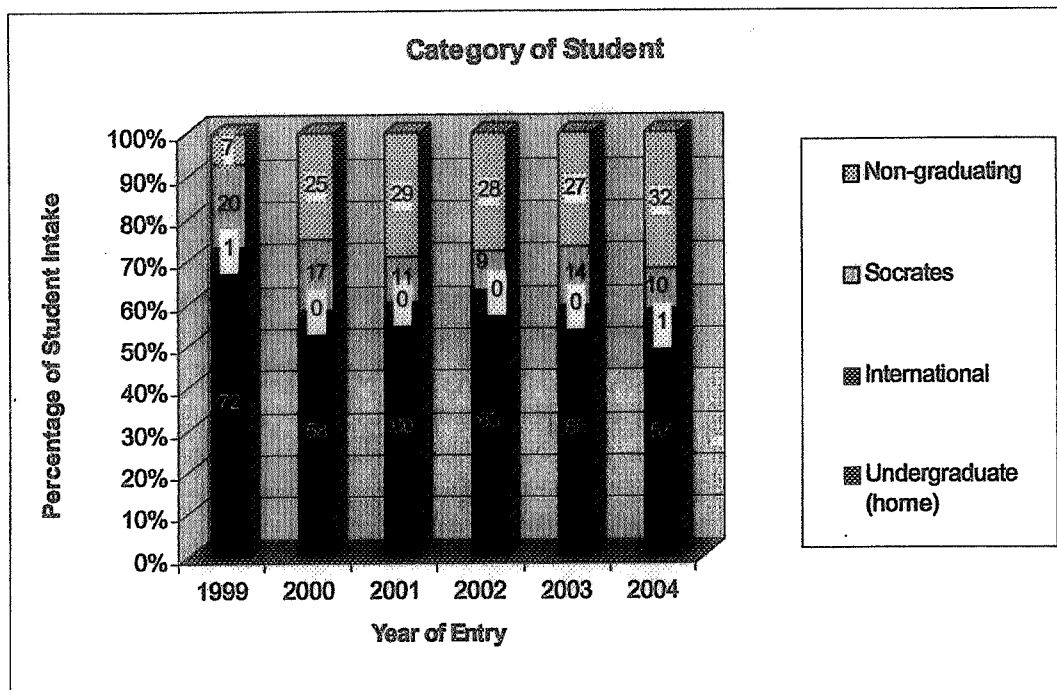
On average 70% of Crichton students are over 21, while 30% are 21 and under and it is noteworthy that in all academic sessions since 1999, there has been a remarkable spread of age ranges. In 2000-2001, for example, ages ranged from 17 to 75 with at least one student of every age between, with only seven exceptions: 30, 31, 65, 69, 70, 72, 74. Closer analysis of the over-21 group would suggest that the campus is giving access to higher education to mature entrants who may not have studied before; qualifications on entry figures indicate that the largest over-21 sub-group are students not in possession of traditional entry qualifications who enter via Access routes. Conversely, for those aged under 21, school qualifications represent the most common entry route in 51% of cases.

Clearly, therefore, the campus has been successful both in providing opportunities for lifelong learning, and in reversing the well-documented trend for mature students to be concentrated in post-1992 universities.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.3.3 Category of Student

As *Graph 6* (below) suggests, an interesting and somewhat unexpected development, was the number of students wishing to undertake non-graduating study. The gender divide in this category of students reflects the overall gender split for the campus shown in *Table 1* (above) i.e. 36% males : 63% females – although there are slightly more male students in the non-graduating category than in the overall figures.

**Graph 6: GU Crichton Campus: Categorisation of Undergraduate Students**



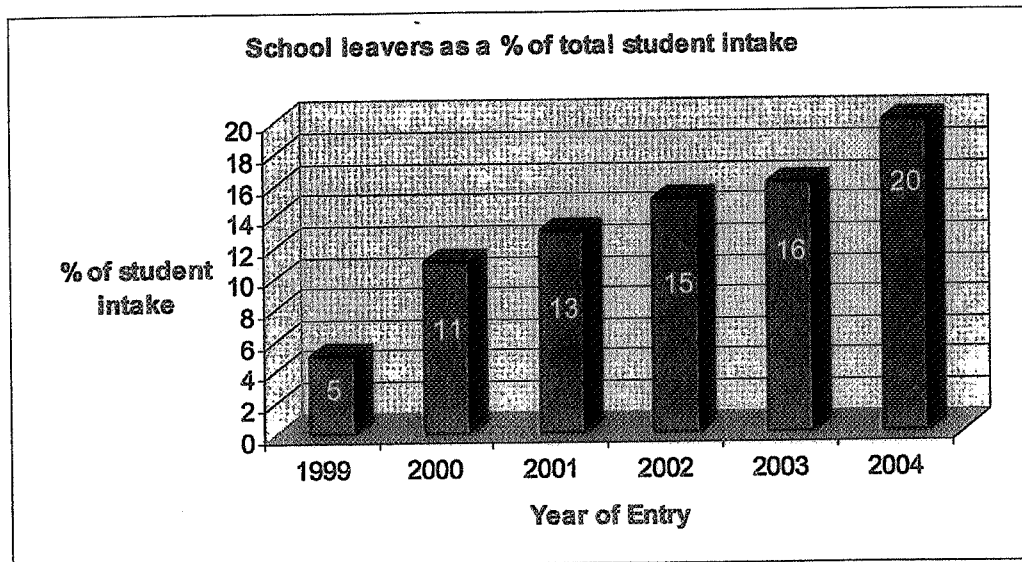
Many non-graduating students are mature entrants returning to education in their retirement – an average of 28% in the sessions since 2000<sup>20</sup> – with a high proportion already in possession of a third level qualification, as outlined in *Table 2* below. A small proportion (4%) of students have transferred from non-graduating to graduating study since 1999, suggesting that a small number may use it as a taster of degree level study prior to embarking on the degree programme.

**Table 2: Non-graduating Students; Educational Qualification on Entry**

Non-graduating Students - Highest Qualification on Entry		
Qualification	No of Students	% of student intake
Graduate	67	29
Previous credits	12	5
HNC/D or equivalent	21	9
School Qualifications	30	13
SVQ's	8	3
Access Course	3	1
Overseas Qualifications	4	2
APEL	22	10
No formal Quals	16	7
Unknown	48	21

### 2.3.3 Intake of School Leavers

**Graph 7: School Leavers as a Percentage of Total Student Intake.**



Whilst it may appear that the level of 'traditional' school leaver intake is low in comparison to other entrants, as *Graph 7* shows, the trend is consistently upwards. The increase in the figures for this latest session, 2004-2005, has been due, in small part, to the inception of the PASSport scheme outlined in Section 3.1.2 below. However, it is also significant that, in 2000-2001, Careers Service figures confirmed that



of the 596 school-leavers from Dumfries and Galloway who went into higher education, only 42 went into arts-based courses. This suggests that, in this particular session, Crichton Campus attracted 40% of school-leavers from the region who were interested in the courses on offer. However this also highlights the fact that the narrow range of courses offered in Dumfries is likely to restrict the number of school-leavers attracted to the campus. It is on the basis of this information that concentrated efforts have been made in recent years to increase awareness about the campus in schools in neighbouring regions.

### 3. Changing Crichton Student Profile -- how?

If we now ask how all of this has been achieved, then it is again possible to discern several routes that have been successful in terms of provoking an increase in the number of students participating in higher education, in particular in terms of widening access to those who would not traditionally have followed that route, but also in terms of recruiting students of school-leaving age. Focusing on five in particular:

#### 3.1 *School-leaver-focused schemes*

The Campus Marketing Unit has, in general, been instrumental in targeting the school leavers of Dumfries and Galloway via school visits and talks and the dissemination of promotional materials and press features. However this work has been further enhanced by the establishment and implementation of two schemes in particular:

##### 3.1.1 The Crichton University Scholarship Agreement (CUSA) Schools Programme and Scholarship

The CUSA Schools Programme is a scheme, loosely based on GOALS (Greater Opportunities of Access to Learning with Schools), which aims to encourage secondary school students throughout the region to aspire to higher education in general. Activities relating to degree study at the Crichton Campus and held on the campus are organised throughout the school year for secondary school pupils from S1 to S6. These are designed to introduce the pupils to university staff and buildings, familiarising them with the university environment.

The CUSA scholarship was designed to encourage Dumfries & Galloway school-leavers to choose degree level study on the Crichton Campus. It aims to do so by providing those students who sign a scholarship agreement with a guaranteed route to degree-level study on the campus subject to the fulfilment of specific course entry requirements, which may include summer school attendance and/or an

initial period of part-time study. When the student then becomes a full-time undergraduate he or she is eligible for an annual bursary of £200 for the duration of the course or a maximum of four years. Since its introduction in 2002, this scheme has been successful in attracting 21 full-time school leaver students to the Crichton Campus of the University of Glasgow.

### 3.1.2 The PASSport Scheme

The recently initiated piloting of the Part-time Associated Student Scheme (PASSport) on the campus has also made a promising start. This scheme aims to combat demotivation among 6<sup>th</sup> year students already in possession of the qualifications necessary to receive unconditional offers of university places by offering them the opportunity to study a university course alongside their sixth-year curriculum. The credits gained may then count towards the student's undergraduate studies, either at the University of Glasgow should the students decide to enter, or at another receiving institution under the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF). Six senior students from two Dumfries and Galloway secondary schools have become the first school students to sign up for this scheme at the Crichton Campus in the second semester of the academic session 2004-05.

### 3.2 Summer School

The pre-university summer school, again overseen by the Marketing Unit, has also been very successful in recruiting school leavers, as well as non-traditional students of the type identified initially by the DTZ Pleda Consulting Report (see above, section 1.2). Summer school activities began on the campus in the summer of 1999, prior to the building opening its doors to degree students in October 1999. Since then 213 of those students who have successfully completed the Summer School program have been offered a full-time or part-time place on the University of Glasgow's M.A. Liberal Arts program.

### 3.3 Access Routes

Similarly, in terms of recruiting non-traditional students, and mindful of the Scottish Education Minister's vision, expressed in his response to the Garrick Report, of 'equal access for everyone who has the potential to benefit from higher education' via 'various entry and exit points',<sup>21</sup> the Open Access route has been another success story. Students lacking the necessary entrance qualifications, who successfully complete one of the compulsory core courses, 'Text and Communication' or 'Science: History and Culture', with a grade of

'D' (Satisfactory) or above, are permitted to proceed to part-time study for that session, and thereafter to full-time study should they gather the requisite number of credits (20 credits for mature students; 40 credits for under 21's). As seen in *Graph 2* above, an average of 26.7% of students have entered the University of Glasgow, Crichton Campus via the Summer School and Open Access routes over the first six academic sessions.

### *3.4 Articulation Routes*

Another successful means of providing 'equal access to higher education for all' has been the articulation route developed from further education-level study at Dumfries and Galloway College. Students who successfully complete the HNC course in Health and Social Care taken alongside two University of Glasgow courses (one core and one in Health and Social Studies) are given direct admission to year 2 of the M.A degree course in Health and Social Studies. There has been some small measure of success with five students completing the course in its first year of implementation, 2002-03. Numbers since then have declined and attempts are being made to identify and address the issues faced by HNC students in order to facilitate their move into higher education from further education. It is a small beginning but extremely positive nonetheless and makes an explicit attempt to follow another of the recommendations of the Dearing Report:

We recommend to further education colleges and higher education institutions that they should actively collaborate to enhance and publicise access and articulation routes into degree programmes for students at further education colleges.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that this is a major area of development for the University of Glasgow, with Crichton Campus, in many respects, leading the way. Indeed a similar articulation agreement has now been drawn up for the new M.A. in Tourism and Heritage, articulating with the HNC in Tourism offered by Dumfries and Galloway College. Work is also underway to establish further agreements of this type with various further education institutions in neighbouring regions.

### *3.5 Distance Learning*

A number of the Crichton M.A. compulsory core courses have been offered in recent years to outlying areas of Dumfries and Galloway, in

an attempt to widen geographical access to higher educational study opportunities:

- Langholm Oct 2000 – intake of 9; 5 completed; 2 now completing degrees at the University of Glasgow, Crichton Campus
- Stranraer Feb 2001 – intake of 15; 11 completed, 3 then continued on to the next course offered in Newton Stewart
- Newton Stewart Oct 2001– intake of 7; 4 completed; 2 now completing degrees at the University of Glasgow, Crichton Campus

Again, like the development of articulation routes, outreach student numbers have been small, and the process has not been without its difficulties. Yet in relative terms these figures are not negligible. Moreover, this development again represents a step towards achieving the goal outlined in the Dearing Report, with regard to the ideal role of higher education within a regional context. It is hoped that developments within the University *vis-à-vis* the use of Virtual Learning Environment technology (Moodle), will enhance the distance learning opportunities the campus can offer students in the near future.

#### 4. Graduate Profile

The Crichton student profile does not cease to exist when graduation takes place. Crichton graduates are now continuing their lifelong learning experiences, whether in further study or in the workplace. This is clearly demonstrated by an examination of graduate destinations thus far.

##### *4.1 Postgraduate Study*

A number of Crichton graduates have gone on to postgraduate study following their Crichton M.A. A small number has remained on the campus and, together with graduates from elsewhere in the country, are now contributing to an embryonic postgraduate research culture emerging on the campus. Currently six research students are co-supervised by Crichton Campus staff, with half of them based on site. Indeed the first Crichton-based Ph.D. student passed her viva in February 2005 and the first M.Phil. by research is due to complete by the end of the 2004-2005 academic session. Once again the Crichton Campus is, as advocated in the Dearing Report, contributing to the region and its localities by, 'supporting lifelong learning, and

contributing to the quality of life as centres of culture'.<sup>23</sup> In addition other Crichton graduates have continued their postgraduate studies elsewhere, for example in teacher education or social work.

#### *4.2 Employment*

Employment destinations are also of great import in terms of the Crichton graduate profile. In the initial DTZ Pidea research, employers' views regarding the possible impact of a university campus in Dumfries were very clearly expressed. To a limited extent they hoped that it would lead to 'a better educated labour supply' (8% of respondents), although many more anticipated 'increased business and sales' (43%), or a 'trickle down effect on the Dumfries and Galloway economy' (20%). With no history of a graduate labour supply on the doorstep, concern was expressed by some, that local employers, many of them small businesses, would not value graduate skills and would need to be 'educated' about what they could bring to the workforce. Developments funded by Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway, in partnership with the Crichton Campus, have gone some way to address this through the introduction of the Graduate into Business scheme. Based at the Crichton Campus, the Graduate into Business Adviser liaises with employers to find paid work placements for graduates prior to finding their first job.

Limited though local employers' comments about a graduate labour supply may have been, the national survey of employers conducted in 1996 to inform the Dearing Report, stresses the positive views of employers towards employees with higher education qualifications. Indeed employers willingly outlined the skills they required. In the view of one company, 'graduates, as a proportion of total employees, will continue to grow. They will need stronger inter-personal skills as well as intellectual rigour, and they will need to be life-long learners.'<sup>24</sup>

It can perhaps justifiably be claimed that the Crichton Campus is helping to reverse the brain-drain experienced by Dumfries and Galloway. In the past, given the limited higher educational opportunities that were available in the region, the best quality school leavers, and the graduates they would become, were inevitably lost to the regional economy. Crichton graduates are now better-placed to go into a variety of graduate-level posts within the region, and have in fact done so, in particular in the spheres of health and social services, but also in education, tourism, banking, management, environment-related professions, journalism and even entrepreneurship.

This is perhaps due in part to the well-rounded education received by Liberal Arts graduates, via the combination of core and elective

courses, incorporating a significant component of group work and oral presentation. In the most recent report produced as part of an on-going, Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE)-led University of Glasgow research project into the Crichton Campus, a 2004 graduate had the following insight:

In the real world you have to be able to work in groups and... you have to be able to change jobs... For the youngsters starting, I think the liberal arts way of working and all the group work and being able to give all these different ways of presenting your work through oral presentations and papers... is really vital.<sup>25</sup>

Another not insignificant explanation may lie with the workplace learning experience garnered via the third-year 'Crichton Placement' course. The Dearing report recommended that 'all institutions should, over the medium term, identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them to reflect on such experience'.<sup>26</sup> According to one 2003 graduate, the placement was 'brilliant', adding 'I can't sing its value loud enough'.<sup>27</sup> The external examiner for the Placement course reiterated this view of the personal student-centred benefits of the placement, whilst also drawing out the wider, community-based benefits:

The outcomes of the course in the wider context of employment are met splendidly. The feedback from the agencies where the work placements were held was excellent, and the record of employment for students as a result of this course is impressive. The University at the Crichton Campus should congratulate themselves on such a high quality example of integration with the community and its needs, especially in an area with a low employment record.

Figures are small, but in 2002, 50% of Crichton Campus graduates were in employment compared to 41% of Gilmorehill graduates. Figures for 2003 are not yet published, however indications are that the results are better than in 2002. Thus, *Herald* journalist, Dick Loudon, was correct in his 1999 evaluation of the University of Glasgow's foresight, with regard to the Crichton Campus, when he wrote, 'Glasgow University's vision for the Dumfries campus is that it will become a centre for lifelong learning, while at the same time offering a suitable training for a first job'.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. Curricular Developments – recent and future

Several developments have taken place since the inception of the campus and have already started to impact on the Crichton Campus student profile. Doubtless these will continue to do so as they become more established.

### 5.1 Recent developments

In terms of the existing undergraduate degree, Honours-level study was introduced in the 2002-2003 session. Market research has generally suggested that study to Honours level was, and is, regarded by prospective students as an essential level of study within higher education, and that the lack of it may hinder recruitment. However this development was also a student-led addition, designed to meet the needs and demands of Crichton students. The Crichton student body has, from the start, been a group of pioneers, following a path laid down by the University of Glasgow, but they have also been powerful participants. As Professor Taylor told a journalist from *The Herald*, as early as September 1999, 'Though it has been up to us as a university to give the menu of courses its initial shape, our students will increasingly assume that role from now on. They will take us where they want to go.' Crichton students appear to concur with this assessment. In the latest Crichton Research Project Report, Crichton graduates were more willing than their Gilmorehill counterparts to make suggestions regarding future developments, perhaps because, as one graduate remarked, 'I think we are listened to'.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of new undergraduate degrees, two have already been introduced in the 2004-2005 session and one is due to start next session:

- The M.A. in Tourism and Heritage degree started in September 2004. It is hoped that this course will further promote Dearing's recommendation in support of articulation between further and higher educational institutions.
- The Bachelor of Community Learning and Development also started in September 2004. This work-based learning course is tailored to suit the needs of the local community, thus demonstrating the commitment of the Campus to implement Dearing's vision of a 'compact [...] between higher education and society', with each institution being 'clear about its mission in relation to local communities and regions'.<sup>30</sup>

- Similarly the M.A. with Honours in Social Work, developed by the joint University of Glasgow and University of Strathclyde School of Social Work, is due to commence in September 2005, with local delivery supported by the regional executive and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway.

### *5.2 Potential Future Developments*

In addition, two further undergraduate degree programmes may join this growing suite of degrees in the near future:

- A B.Sc. Renewable Energy: Power in the Environment – a joint initiative between Crichton Campus and the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering on Gilmorehill – is scheduled to start, should further funded student places be made available by SHEFC, in September 2006.
- Still at the planning stage, and again dependent on the allocation of further funded student places, a much requested course in Initial Teacher Education may finally come into being in the near future.

In terms of postgraduate developments, several students are already undertaking different forms of research-based study on the Crichton Campus as outlined above. Moreover, the future direction of the University points to an increase in the number of taught postgraduate courses offered. To address this the Crichton Campus is considering the introduction of new postgraduate courses in Scottish Cultural Heritage (September 2005) and Creative Writing (September 2006) and others may follow.

## 6. Conclusion

It is no exaggeration to claim that Crichton Campus students and graduates epitomise the changing face of the student body in Scotland. As outlined in the Garrick Report's vision of the future profile of the Scottish student,

A major strength of Scottish higher education is its tradition of access and participation. [...] By the end of the 20-year timeframe for the scope of the Inquiry, we envisage a student population which is even more diverse in terms of age, background, aspiration, ability and purpose. More people of all ages will wish to access higher education throughout their lives,



although the traditional cohort of school-leavers will still be a large and important single group. Lifelong learning will, therefore, be all pervasive and work-based learning more common. Higher education providers will be required to tailor courses and the pace of learning to meet the needs of the individual as an active and informed consumer. They must meet the needs of students for both advanced learning and skills for employment.<sup>31</sup>

It has certainly opened up a wealth of opportunities to students who may not otherwise have had access to higher education. A 2003 Crichton graduate stated in her initial orientation questionnaire at the beginning of her studies that she felt 'very honoured to have the opportunity to study here'<sup>32</sup>. Post-degree she then expanded on this initial impression, giving a description of what the Crichton Campus had offered her:

What this place offers is a dream – it offers a dream to people like myself that otherwise would never, ever ... have come in and done a degree – because it's here, it's accessible, it's everything that you could possibly want ...<sup>33</sup>

It is to be hoped that Crichton Campus will continue to meet student needs and dreams, to involve students in creating the future shape of the campus, and to hold the door open for them, always. These, indeed, were the sentiments expressed in 1999 by Professor Rex Taylor, in the promises he made as he unlocked the gates of the Rutherford-McCowan Building to admit the first undergraduate students: that the keys would never be used to keep out capable students, or educational partners, or the community at large.<sup>34</sup> Long may those sentiments continue.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 'Higher Education in the Learning Society', Report of the National Committee, Chapter 5, Section 11, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Annex A, List of Recommendations, Recommendations 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Office, 'Higher Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Response to the Garrick Report', Ministerial Foreword, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents1/grck00.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Introduction, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents1/grck01.htm>

<sup>5</sup> The Crichton Partnership for Higher Education, 'A joint Strategic Change bid by the universities of Glasgow and Paisley', Executive Summary, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Executive Summary, p.1

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Section 1, Background, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> 'Demand for Higher Education in Dumfries and Galloway: A Final Report'.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Executive Summary.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Executive Summary. It should be noted that the report stressed that the demand expressed was based on an ideal situation, 'without reference to limiting factors such as the cost of an HE course, the availability of maintenance support, the actual availability of providers to respond to their particular programme choice and the availability of facilities such as transport, crèches, or other caring provision which may facilitate attendance at a centre.'

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Executive Summary.

<sup>12</sup> Op.cit., Report 5, 'Widening participation in higher education by ethnic minorities, women and alternative students', Section 2.

<sup>13</sup> Defined as entry via Summer School or Open Access routes – see section 3.3.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that these figures should be treated with a certain amount of caution, since the allocation of qualifications to categories is relatively subjective. Thus inconsistencies and indeed omissions can occur at the point of data entry during the admissions process. This may explain the relatively high level of 'unknown' qualifications in certain sessions.

<sup>15</sup> Op.cit., Annex A, List of Recommendations, Recommendation 4.

<sup>16</sup> These are the University Hardship Fund, the Higher Educational Institution Hardship Fund, and the Mature Students Bursary Fund instituted in 2001/02.

<sup>17</sup> Op.cit., Summary Report, The local and regional role of higher education, Point 61.

<sup>18</sup> University of Glasgow, Crichton Campus undergraduate Prospectus for entry in 2005, p.4.

<sup>19</sup> National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 'Higher Education in the Learning Society', Report of the national Committee, Report 5, 'Widening participation in higher education by ethnic minorities, women and alternative students', Section 3, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/>

<sup>20</sup> The figure was only 7% in the first session, 1999-2000, when there was only limited awareness of the possibility of undertaking non-graduating study.

<sup>21</sup> Op.cit., Introduction, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents1/grck01.htm>

<sup>22</sup> Op.cit., Annex A, List of Recommendations. Recommendation 7.

<sup>23</sup> Op.cit., Summary Report, The local and regional role of higher education, Point 62.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Appendix 4, Consultation with employers, Section 2, Main findings about skills.

<sup>25</sup> Ann Karkalas and Alison Mackenzie (University of Glasgow, Department of Adult and Continuing Education), Crichton Research Project: Report on Year Five (2003-2004), February 2005, p.37.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., Annex A, List of Recommendations, Recommendation 18.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., p.20.

<sup>28</sup> *The Herald*, Special Supplement, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1999, p.2.

<sup>29</sup> Op.cit., p.55.

<sup>30</sup> Op.cit., Summary Report, The local and regional role of higher education, Point 63.

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<sup>31</sup> National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 'Higher Education in the Learning Society', Report of the Scottish Committee, Chapter 3.3, The future of Scottish higher education, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/>

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit., p.35.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.35.

<sup>34</sup> As reported in the *University of Glasgow Newsletter*, Issue 212, October 1999.