

20 October 2010

To the Committee Secretary  
Select Committee on the Scrutiny of New Taxes

I'm writing in opposition to the proposed revival of compulsory student unionism.

I have been at University long enough to remember when I had to pay a fee simply for being a student. Since 2006, when I began my medical degree, I have seen only an improvement in the quality of student services and clubs with no experience whatsoever of a degradation of services due to the VSU change.

This tax is unfair in several ways. Firstly, it does not support a service that is used by everybody. The vast majority of University students do not require the services of the union. This is due to the requirement for most students to work off campus during their spare time. It is really only the fortunate subset of the University population who do not need to work or have part-time courses who use those services.

Secondly, the tax is not levied by personal income. Poorer students will struggle as it is to meet the costs of getting and education. Hitting those vulnerable students with an expensive tax for a service they will seldom use (because of need to work off campus) would mean that the poor students will subsidise the wealthy who do not need to work and can enjoy campus life more fully.

Thirdly, the student union is working much more efficiently at present than ever it did before. In 2006, my experience was largely that thousands of dollars of students' money were spent subsidizing the political hobbies of minority interest groups instead of fulfilling requirements for student services. I spent the idea year being interrupted and bombarded on campus with arguments about political activities that I did not care about.

As a doctor and scientist, I have no interest in such matters and yet my money was being spent on these personal campaigns. Furthermore, most university students just want to get on with their lives without this political interference. We didn't ask for it and why should we pay for it?

Since the VSU legislation, student life has only gotten better. Those who want to enjoy a student club or activity are vastly able to. Those with a political

viewpoint to push are free and able to do so at their own expense. There is nobody stopping them. The only thing that was stopped was reckless waste.

In the face of no need to restore MSU, and such great provision of services by the University itself I do not see any logic or promise in resurrecting this wasteful, unfair and highly distractive policy. We're mature people and should have the right to fund ourselves as we please.

Regards

Grant Ross