

STUDENTS ATTENDING SENATE INQUIRY

Friday 6th March 2015

The Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE) invited students from our member institutions to give evidence to Senators to present the other side of the story when considering the higher education reforms before the Senate Education and Employment Committee inquiry on Friday March 6, 2015.

This is offered in the context of what is being considered is all about students.

The three COPHE students attending were:

Natasha Bridges - International College of Management, Sydney (ICMS). Studying Bachelor of Business Management majoring in Retail Marketing and is a current student and President of the SRC.

Natasha chose ICMS, because of its focus on quality teaching:

“Everyone is entitled to work hard to reach their full potential, but as I have a learning disability I knew I needed smaller classes and personal contact with my lecturers,” said Natasha. “Sitting in a lecture of two hundred students was just not an option for me.

“But I do not see why a student such as myself who has a disability should have to pay an extra 25% administration fee and not get any government support – it just doesn’t make any sense.

“Colleges such as mine are highly important for society. Throughout Australia there are many people who come from a low socio-economic background who are smart and hardworking, but don’t particularly excel at exams. My college offers pathway programs and allows students into the college based on an interview and not entirely on their ATAR results. The lack of government support and the administration fee is of a great disadvantage to student, as it makes it more expensive for them to get a degree from a private provider,” Natasha said.

Dean Warwick: Canberra resident, studying through distance education at Tabor Adelaide - Bachelor of Applied Social Science, majoring in Youth work. Also a mature age student.

As a father and husband, Dean needed a practical, respected degree that could help him achieve his career-change goal. He wants to empower young people to believe in themselves.

“I chose this degree, because it means I can help young people in both church and secular contexts,” Dean said. “As well as being more flexible, the course offered the hands-on experience I needed as I’m the kind of person who learns better by doing the task rather than just reading about it. Tabor Adelaide was just a better fit for me than anywhere else.”

“With the hands-on experience, I can put processes in place to help young people sooner than most university students who have studied mainly theory,” Dean said.

“When I complete my studies and graduate, I will leave with a similar degree that someone from a public university gains, and probably end up working with the same young people as that person and

get paid the same. So why should I be disadvantaged and have a larger debt, because I chose to study the degree that helped me do and be my best?" he said.

Dean's degree will cost him over \$44,000. He will need to pay an extra 25 per cent administration fee on top of this to the government for his FEE-Help loan – an extra \$11,000.

"I will be working with a number of young people who want to further themselves and to benefit their community. Why can't we have a higher education system that supports the kind of kids and adults who want to do that?" Dean said.

Nicolie Coleman: Bachelor of Theology student, Morling College;

Former Student University of Technology, Sydney – Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Public Communication)

"I began studying my Bachelor of Theology part-time in February 2008. I completed my BA Communication (Public Communication) at University of Technology Sydney in 2003, and had been working as an Event Manager since then. In 2007 I decided that I wanted to study Theology as a pathway into possible work in pastoral ministry.

The cost of private tertiary education was the reason I undertook to study this course on a part-time basis only, as I could not afford to support myself and study full time. The cost per subject (24) of a BTh. is \$1500, making the total cost of \$36,000. I had been studying part time for the past 7 years, and only this year decided to study full time due to my marriage and financial support from my husband.

FEE-Help is, of course, a great benefit, but with the additional 25% administration fee incurred by students at private providers, this is also deceptive as my total costs will be \$45,000 instead of the above mentioned \$36,000 (an extra \$9,000).

I have found the quality of education at Morling College to be of an excellent standard, easily comparable to UTS. In many ways it exceeds public tertiary education, as the class sizes are smaller, the lecturers are much more available to students, and the College itself feels more personal.

I feel I have learned much more in my BTh. than in my BA Communication, as the environment is much more student-friendly and conducive to true learning.

CONTACT DETAILS

Council of Private Higher Education Inc.
Level 5
47 Neridah Street
Chatswood NSW 2067

Adrian McComb
Chief Executive Officer
Phone (02) 8021 0841
Email – amccomb@cophe.edu.au