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Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate

SUBMISSION TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

This is my first year studying social sciences at university. I have found the constant liberal-bagging, jokes and Labor pushing agenda threatening and frustrating.

In class discussions I constantly feel like my opinions aren't welcome and quite often I do not say anything. In my first 'Power and Change Class' we had to introduce ourselves by name and our favourite politician. Each member of the class identified K Rudd and I was last to go, and I said my local liberal member, Kerry Bartlett. My Tutor then told us she was part of the K Rudd campaign and that she was there for the apology. She said that the air at parliament house had changed, it was clean, fresh and filled with hope with the new government. She went on to clearly proclaim how great the election was.

This clear political stance intimidated me as I don't know whether I can write through my experiences and opinions. The lecturer of this same subject is always making jokes about previous members of the Howard Government, every one in the lecture laughs, bar myself. In particular, during Aboriginal studies week the staff constantly highlighted that past and present Labor governments dealt with Aboriginal issues more effectively and that the Howard Government has 'gone backwards'. I thought University was about freedom of speech, I have not found that - It can't go on any longer I would really like it if lectures and tutors were neutral.

Sarah Barrott