

Secretary
Inquiry into Teacher Education
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

I live in the Greenway electorate and study at UWS. I am in my second year of a Bachelor of Education Primary degree. Since starting this degree UWS have made a number of changes all of which I consider detrimental not only to myself and fellow students but also to the children of greater Western Sydney. The most recent changes have seen mine and other education degrees retired from the courses offered by UWS. This has meant our four year teacher training degree has been replaced by a twelve month Bachelor of Teaching offered to anyone who has completed a degree from any school. UWS are suggesting that new students interested in becoming teachers complete a three year Bachelor of Arts then follow up with this twelve month Bachelor of teaching degree.

I have spoken with Principals and teachers in my area, they are shocked that UWS have this planned and have voiced the concerns that graduates with these qualifications would not have the necessary training to become good teachers. Indeed, I had been informed of one teacher with these same qualifications who had been thought of as a dreadful teacher as she had not had enough teachers training. The twelve month degree simply does not provide enough background knowledge and training in the subjects which need to be taught in our NSW schools. As well, students doing this degree simply do not gather enough training to be an effective teacher in the school system.

I can only but agree with those opinions. I am in my second year of my degree as mentioned earlier; I have also spent one year prior to this in a Bachelor of Arts degree. From this perspective I can inform you of the reliability of the above statements. During my year in the Bachelor of Arts I learnt nothing of value related to the teaching profession although I did manage to improve upon my general knowledge and broaden my own life viewpoints. Shortly after transferring into my current degree, I realised the depth of knowledge that was expected to be gained as a teaching student, within those first few weeks I learnt more than I had in my whole year previous to that. My knowledge has continued to grow, but even though I have spent a whole year in a teaching degree I realise that I have a lot more knowledge to gain if I hope to be any good at teaching when I finally graduate. Indeed I can reflect that even though I have studied a number of subjects across semesters my knowledge in those areas still is limited and needs further development. I am currently studying a curriculum subject PDHPE I will study this subject for a minimum of 16 weeks and will walk away with the basic knowledge needed to teach this subject, under the new changes recommended by UWS students will receive three or four lessons in this field, the comparisons should be obvious to anyone. These students will not have anywhere near enough knowledge to be able to teach this subject competently. Is this plan fair to the children of Western Sydney I wonder? Is it fair that these new future teachers in Western Sydney will be inadequately prepared and trained to teach these children? What hope does it give our children for the future, I know what it is like for a child to spend one year with a bad teacher, I have experienced that with my own children, the damage can take a good teacher some time to repair.

Is it fair that children from other areas will have the opportunity to be taught by fully and properly trained teachers from their local universities whilst the children from Western Sydney have a future with ill prepared University Graduates? I don't think so, something needs to be done urgently to stop this plan I am only a concerned student, but you hopefully can do something to help.

I also want to register my dismay that students hoping to study a teaching degree in Western Sydney should be asked to complete the path chosen by UWS. This path will leave them not only

inadequately prepared for a teaching career but also many will find it hard to find a school willing to employ them as their qualifications would not be respected in the school system.

I also wanted to add one further point in regards to this matter; this is affecting many of the current students including myself. Since UWS have decided to cut our degree, we have been forced to take on subjects which we would not have considered in the past, for instance I am a mother of three children a five, seven and eight year old I have not studied a four subject semester as I do not get a lot of time to devote to my studies. This semester I have been more or less forced into this predicament because if I don't complete the subjects now it will be impossible for me to pick them up at a later point making it extremely stressful and difficult situation. I have voiced my concerns that I am taking on a workload which is way to much for me at this given point, I worry consistently that I will fail one or more of these subjects simply because it is impossible to do the readings and assignments properly with the little time I get to spend on them. I have had numerous conversations with staff in the School of Education, whilst some have been very supportive others have remained aloof and uncaring. My current understanding, is of I had of dropped a subject by HECS cutoff, they would have had to offer me something to replace it, but no-one could tell me what that something would be. I decided the risk in the end was too much and have opted instead to try and somehow complete this four subject workload. Because of the changes students are not being able to study at a pace which suits family and work commitments. As I see it if I fail a unit because I have been forced to take on this extra work, I will be paying for a subject that I did not want to take on in the first place, this will in the end cause further problems down the track, because the subjects themselves have been cut. This is very worrisome, I pray that I can somehow pull off a miracle and pass all of these subjects, but I am not confident. Meanwhile my children suffer as I have less than no time to spend with them, as the pressure to try and complete these subjects is enormous. I am not the only student in this predicament.

As well as having this stress to contend with, timetabling has dealt the Education students with another severe blow, of our eight classes five have been timetabled after school hours. One unit has the choice of one class on a Tuesday evening at four to seven pm or another class on Tuesday evening at four to seven pm, this has been disastrous for the students whom are parents which a large percentage are. We have been forced to farm out our kids to whom ever we can get at the time, because if we don't complete this subject we cannot do it ever again. Some of these students have been forced into more than one evening class a disaster for their children.

As you will be able to tell, the changes UWS are making are not good for the current batch of education students but more importantly this is not good for the future of Education in schools in Western Sydney. As I am also a parent I have grave concerns about the academic future of our children. The changes as I see it are going to ultimately disadvantage our children in the future and create a large divide between the quality of education offered in the West compared to that of the East, North and Southern parts of Sydney. Please help these matters need your attention.

Regards

Vicki Goulding