

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for Higher Education

DEST Question No. E334_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

- a) Now the report goes on to say that [since 1996] FTE staff numbers have only increased marginally (4%) despite the revenue growth. But student numbers have grown by 33%. However, of these extra students, most are fee-paying students – growth in Commonwealth-supported students has only been 6.4% - is that right?
- b) Can you explain the reasons you believe underlie that set of numbers? Why have staff numbers hardly grown, but fee-paying student numbers have gone through the roof? What is the relationship between those two facts, and the modest growth in Commonwealth-funded places?

Answer:

Growth in staff and student numbers

- a) Growth in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) academic staff (includes full-time, fractional full-time and actual casual staff) was 6.4% between 1996 and 2003.

Note: The FTE staff numbers have been derived using the latest available data for actual casual staff, which is 2003.

Student numbers in terms of Estimated Full-Time Student Load (EFTSU) increased by 33% between 1996 and 2003.

The EFTSU for Commonwealth-supported students increased by 6.4% between 1996 and 2003.

- b) The reasons behind these numbers would need to be sourced from the universities as there will be a range of local factors contributing to them. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has recently released information on student/staff ratios, which shows that the ratio of students to staff has decreased in 2004.
http://www.avcc.edu.au/content.asp?page=/news/media_releases/2005/avcc_media_38_05.htm