

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the provisions of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005

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The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) was formally established in 1994 with the first students enrolled in 1996. USC is a small regional university with students from diverse backgrounds, ages and locations. There are 3862 students currently enrolled at the University.

The USC Student Guild was established within the University of the Sunshine Coast Act 1998. The Guild comprises thirteen Directors who are elected annually and employs five full-time staff who are very concerned about their future employment. Unlike other universities, the Guild has NO other form of income except the collection of the General Service Fee. The legislation in its current form will ensure its closure.

The Guild has a budget of \$485 000 for 2005. This amount will be spent on the services listed below, however, the introduction of VSU will mean that these services will no longer be provided.

USC Student Guild Services June 2005

- **Finance**
 - Strictly controlled internal financial regulation of the Guild which is overseen by Finance Director, Finance Officer and Manager
 - *Unqualified audited report received for 2004*

- **Environment**
 - An internal Environment Policy.
 - Environment collective
 - Distribution point for organic vegetables to staff and students
 - Student Chapter of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (National body for Environmental Professionals)
 - Regular meetings
 - Events – Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Plant Day, O-week activities
 - Raising environmental awareness in all students
 - Sponsorship (\$2 000) of 10 students to travel to annual Students of Sustainability Conference in 2004

- **Sports**
 - Projected sponsorship of \$30 000 for sporting clubs, events and equipment in 2005
 - Sponsorship, planning and organisation of sporting events
 - Australian University Games
 - Northern University Games
 - AUS Championships
 - Organisation of social activities on campus to promote healthy living and lifestyle
 - Organisation of Staff and Student activities to promote synergy between staff and students (eg. Touch Football Competition and Cinders Cricket Match)

- **The affiliation of Clubs and Societies to the Guild**
 - Seed money to assist their establishment
 - Provision of club formation guidelines and constitution
 - Sponsorship (\$4000 in 2004) and encouragement in holding events
 - A Guild Director and staff member to assist, encourage and oversee their activities

- **Events**
 - 'Live at Uni' held 10 times a year (social event)
 - 7 film nights a year run in conjunction with VAMP (Guild-affiliated club)
 - End of Year Ball
 - Semester 1 O'Week sponsorship, planning assistance, participation and advice – (2005 budget of \$68 000 including bag and diary)
 - Semester 2 O'Day sponsorship, planning assistance, participation and advice
 - Health Day
 - Running of International BBQ
 - Women's Day

- **Healthier Universities Program***
 - Advocacy to students
 - Ensuring that the The Healthier Universities Programme is promoted at all Guild events involving alcohol
 - To promote and educate safe drinking practices

- **Free 24/7 Accident Insurance for all Guild members**

- **24 Hr Room**
 - The only indoor leisure facility at USC
 - Snack, soft drink and coffee vending machines
 - Publications on health and social issues
 - 10c photocopying
 - Free daily newspapers
 - 24 hour ATM
 - Refrigerator for packed lunches
 - Microwave
 - Filtered water
 - Large screen cable TV
 - Lockers
 - Payphone

- **Food Services**
 - Sponsorship of affordable student lunches through Clubs
 - Subsidised pizza and BBQ lunches
 - Sponsorship of late afternoon/evening soups, snacks and BBQs for evening classes

- **Sponsorship of Mentor Programme for first year students**

- **Sponsorship of Academic Skills Advisor (\$20 000 in 2004) for assisting students in assignment preparation**
- **\$500 donation to the Buranga (Indigenous) Centre to assist them in the establishment of a T-shirt printing business**
- **\$400 per year sponsorship of a child in Ghana**
- **Donations to students facing economic hardship**
 - \$2 000 a year in book vouchers
- **Short term emergency student loans of \$20**
- **Free tenancy advice and advocacy**
- **Advocacy relating to personal and/or educational issues**
- **Services of a Justice of the Peace**
- **Referrals to solicitors for free legal advice**
- **Web site establishment and maintenance**
 - Provision of a self-help centre for students
 - Additional services such as being an intermediary for the sale of second hand textbooks
- **ISM – Student Magazine**

The Guild responds to any new requests for services from members and this list is continually updated.

STUDENT GUILD DIRECTORS

The following Directors' positions are established at the USC Student Guild. All Directors and staff are required to obtain 'Working with Children' Blue Cards. Directors receive no remuneration for their services.

- **President**
- **Vice President**
- **Finance Director**
- **Sports Director**
- **Events Director**
- **Education Director**
- **Media & Marketing Director**
- **Environment Director**
- **Welfare Director**
- **International Students' Director**
- **Clubs & Societies Director**
- **IT Director**

STUDENT GUILD STAFF

The Student Guild employs five full time staff including:

- **Manager**
- **Finance Officer**
- **Student Support Officer**
- **Sports & Events Coordinator**
- **Receptionist**

The Sunshine Coast is a high rental area. At present we have approximately ten homeless students and others who are potentially homeless due to these high rents. The Guild assists these students so that they can continue their studies. Without doubt, under the proposed legislation, these students would be unable to continue their study.

I submit that the above services are integral to student well-being and university culture of which USC, regrettably, has very little. Their loss will mean a significant deterioration in the quality of the university experience, especially for those who need additional assistance in achieving their goals.

The use of Guild funds for political purposes is prohibited under our Constitution. We have never, and will never, use our funds for anything other than services to students and student welfare. I would further like to point out that in providing these services, the Guild has no political or religious affiliations.

**Todd Winther
President
USC Student Guild**

Authorised by the Board of Directors of the USC Student Guild

14th June 2005