

To Whom It May Concern:

Being a beneficiary of Compulsory Student Unionism at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, I must advocate the benefits of Sporting and Cultural Clubs at universities, which encourage social interaction and fostering of campus spirit that goes far beyond the lecture theatre.

I also receive benefits through the provision of Student Services which provides assistance to disabled persons. Without these services, I would not be able to complete my degree as they provide support for my writing disability which allows me to use a laptop in class and desktop computer during exams under supervision. Without this support, the framework for gaining assistance and completing tasks through the various schools for courses would be a logistical nightmare and too difficult for students to handle individually.

Compulsory Student Union fees provide funding for student services which would not be able to operate if fees become optional, as a user-pay system would not be economically viable.

At Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, the number of Distance Education students is several times higher than full-time on-campus students. This means that the clubs which directly benefit on-campus students require larger levels of funding than those in metropolitan areas where sheer volume of on-campus participants means that there are lower costs per person.

This can be seen with 3,000 on-campus students at CSU Bathurst compared to the peak of 50,000 at most Sydney campuses. Members of the soccer club pay \$120 each for registration which is comparable to the rates for students in Sydney. With the introduction of VSU, however, the cost may be two or three times that.

The consequence of having 30,000 or so DE students that under VSU would most probably not pay their union fees would result in almost certain disbandment of sporting and arts based clubs, which contribute significantly to university life and the development of students in providing a well-rounded education, not just focus on academia.

Union fees provide students with a means to participate in sports, theatre, music and provides a positive image for the university that reflects on ALL students and is worth a significant amount in terms of reputation which prospective employers may value. Ultimately, the individual economic benefit of a few hundred dollars may destroy the cultural foundations of universities, which is priceless.

It is important that Australian students maintain their own cultural values and heritage which extends to awareness and embracing of indigenous culture which is fostered at CSU, founded in Wiradjuri country.

Yours Sincerely,

Nathan Booth  
Student  
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