

**MEDIA
RELEASE**

9 March 2009
Attention: Education and Political
reporters
For Immediate Release

Student allowances: The answer to a tight job market

Student leaders today expressed their concern about diminishing job figures released by Student Job Search and called on the Government to address the potential poverty that many students may now face by increasing student allowance eligibility.

Student Job Search revealed today that there has been an increase in students looking for part time work, but a marked decrease in job vacancies.

Currently only a third of students are eligible for student allowance while the rest are forced to borrow from the student loan scheme and then further supplement their income with part time jobs.

“The current system means that students rely heavily on part time jobs to pay their basic living costs. With the decrease in part time jobs confirmed today, we are extremely concerned at how students will be able to adequately support themselves while they further their education” said Sophia Blair, Co-President of New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations. (NZUSA).

The recession is likely to hit sectors of the economy first where students typically work in such as retail, hospitality and tourism.

“This is our worst fears confirmed. If students feel that they cannot continue to support themselves while they study, they may be forced to discontinue their studies and end up on the unemployment benefit,” added Blair. “This would be disastrous for both students, who will end up with a high debt, but no qualification, and the country, which will lose potential skilled graduates.

“Adequately supporting those in education with student allowances relieves both the tight job market, but also provides support for those furthering their education and up skilling. NZUSA calls on the government to recognise the clear link between employment and education and meet the needs of both sectors by introducing a universal student allowance”, concluded Blair.

ENDS

For further information, contact NZUSA Co-President:
Sophia Blair, Mobile 027 486 8673