

**MEDIA
RELEASE**

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Attention: Education and Political
reporters
For Immediate Release

Student Representative positions not safe despite Government's assurances

Student leaders are today writing to the Minister for Tertiary Education, Hon Anne Tolley, outlining their concerns over proposed amendments to the Education (Polytechnics) Amendment Bill that places highly regarded student representative positions on Polytechnic Councils in jeopardy.

"NZUSA was assured by the Minister at a meeting in July that she highly valued the position of student representatives on the governance boards of tertiary education institutions and that this was particularly important as part of effective and robust quality assurance mechanisms," said Sophia Blair, Co-President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations. "We were very pleased to hear of the Government's support and recognition of the vital contribution of student representatives to the direction and quality of polytechnics, which was in line with both research and sector views on the positive input of students," added Blair.

However, the report back from the Education and Science Select Committee late last week recommended that student and academic board positions, previously retained and protected in the Bill, are no longer safe guarded and are now placed in a position of significant risk and vulnerability.

"Students pay significant amounts for their education and as consumers of that education, should rightfully have a say in the quality of it. This move by the Select Committee will undermine the student voice and places the quality and responsiveness of polytechnics in jeopardy," said Blair. "It is difficult to understand why an amendment such as this would be proposed when one of the Government's clearly stated aims is to create a 'student demand driven' tertiary education system," said Blair.

"Students will be very unhappy and concerned at this backward step proposed by the Select Committee and are looking for strong leadership on this matter from the Minister," concluded Blair.

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