

NEW ZEALAND
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION (INC).

Annual Report
1990





NZUSA 1990 Federation Executive

Standing (left to right)

Neil Morris (MUSA), Ella Henry and Mia-Marama (AUSA), Suze Wilson (President), Charlotte Denny (Vice President), Chris Whelan (UCSA), Austen Sinclair (VUWSA), Don Jones (OUSA)

Kneeling (left to right)

Michael James (LUSA) and Chris Thornborough (WSU)

Absent: Ann Wearing (Treasurer)

Accountants: Curtis Maclean

Lawyers: Morrison Morpeth

Auditors: Spicer and Oppenheim

Bank: Bank of New Zealand

*The New Zealand University Students Association 59 Aurora Tce, Wellington, New Zealand
PO Box 10-191, The Terrace, Wellington; Tel (04) 712-559, Fax (04) 732-391*

President's Foreword

The aim of producing this Annual Report is to give readers - students, constituents, MP's, government officials, journalists, educationalists, academics - an overview of what NZUSA thought, did and hoped for in 1990. It seeks to record, for posterity if you like, the essence of *our* 1990 so that others can learn from our experience and perhaps even avoid some of our mistakes.

What this report doesn't capture, however, is how we felt about what we were doing and trying to achieve. The statistics and the facts are there, of course, but not the sense that we were trying to hold onto, for dear life, an education system which, warts and all, we value so very highly. The report does not include what we privately called our horror stories, stories about those who couldn't make it to university, stories about students crying in banks out of sheer desperation for money, students forced to drop out and go on the dole, stories about students studying all day and working in paid jobs all night to make ends meet.

It's true, of course, that in lots of ways NZUSA had a highly productive and effective year in 1990. Internally things ran smoothly, quite a few of our ideas and proposals were taken on board by government, government departments or universities, and we did provide a strong and coherent voice for students. In many ways we built on the strengths of previous years and even managed to eliminate some of the weaknesses. But insofar as 1990 was a tough year for students, so it was too for NZUSA.

My hope, then, is that this report will give you a sense of the depth and breadth of NZUSA's activities in 1990, and also a sense of why we acted as we did. 1990 marked my final year of involvement in that much maligned world of student politics. While I leave with few regrets and many good memories, following the December 19th announcements I also leave with the sense that the worst is yet to come. I have no doubt that NZUSA in 1991 and beyond will continue to be a strong and articulate advocate for students, however in a country and a world gone mad I fear for the future, and I pray for the day when those who value education more highly than the holy dollar are the ones who write the policy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Suze Wilson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the end.

Suze Wilson
NZUSA President 1990

Campaign 1990

1990 marked the first year of substantial tuition fees for New Zealand tertiary students. Fees rose by over 1,000% for most full-time university students, from \$129 in 1989 (including the Government's fees grant) to \$1250 in 1990. NZUSA resolved to continue its opposition to the fees policy even after its implementation. The Association's assessment was that the fees policy would be most vulnerable to challenge in its first year of operation. 1990 was also an election year, meaning all Government policies would be under close scrutiny. NZUSA therefore decided to sustain its high profile campaign against fees so as to ensure the issue would be publicly debated during the election campaign.

At the end of 1989 the NZUSA Executive resolved to organise a mass boycott of the final instalment of the fee. The boycott aimed to show the Government and the public that students were so opposed to fees that they were willing to endanger their enrolment. The boycott was deliberately timed to coincide with the election campaign, in order to focus, within the space of 1 month, the opposition expressed by students against fees over the previous 4 years.

Organisation of the boycott began before students arrived back on campus at the end of February. Over 40,000 letters were sent out to students in early February advising them to pay their fees by instalment, so that they would be able to participate in the boycott if they so chose. A training day for student activists was held by NZUSA at the end of January. And during enrolment week, students who chose to pay fees by instalment were given information packs on the boycott prepared by the Association.

Education Action Groups were established on each campus. Organisers reported that although there was some despondency over the imposition of fees, students still had the will to fight them.

At the same time that students on campus were preparing to protest against fees, NZUSA's lawyers were investigating their legality. Our lawyers believed that the fee increase breached an international covenant which New Zealand signed in 1979. Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 13(2)(c), signatory countries agree to make higher education equally accessible to all, "in particular by the progressive introduction of free education."

NZUSA believed that the actions of the Minister (Phil Goff) in raising the fee by over 1,000% absolutely contradicted the intention of the covenant. The Federation sought a ruling from the Human Rights Commission, the body charged with determining New Zealand's obligations under the covenant. NZUSA's lawyers also wrote to the Minister drawing to his attention the provisions of the covenant.

The second instalment payment at the start of the second term was the focus for some good humoured protests. Students paid their fees on a variety of unusual objects, including false arms and legs. The theme of the protest was "it

costs an arm and a leg to get an education”.

The first indication of university enrolment levels reinforced the importance of NZUSA's campaign. The April enrolment statistics collected by the Ministry of Education showed that part-time, mature and extra mural student numbers had dropped substantially in 1990. The April figures were provisional, as they did not include students enrolling in courses which started half-way through the academic year. However judging by the trend they revealed, NZUSA again predicted the final result would see a drop in student numbers in 1990, the first drop since the 1950s.

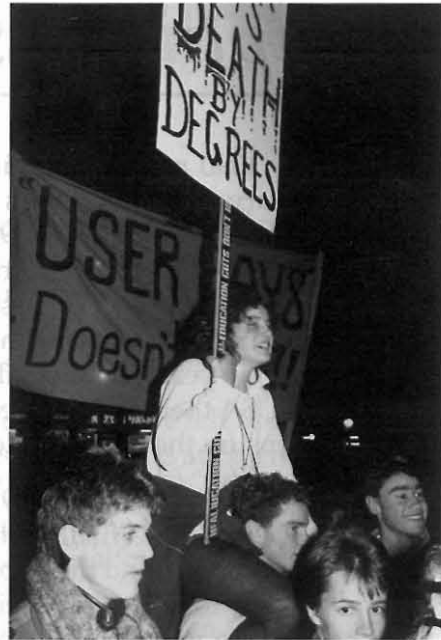
The campaign continued in Term Two with an extremely successful week of action in mid-July. Each campus organised marches which saw over 18,000 students participating throughout the country. This constituted nearly a third of the total university student population.

As the election campaign heated up, fees for tertiary education became one of the issues under wider public scrutiny. Opposition spokesperson Lockwood Smith put his political future on the line when he signed a pledge on a number of campuses promising to resign if he, as Minister, had not scrapped Labour's fee by 1992. The National Party took up his commitment and made the promise to scrap fees one of their three main election pledges, along with extra police and scrapping the Super surcharge. NZUSA welcomed National's commitment to remove the fee, but remained concerned about aspects of National's Studyright policy.

By October, NZUSA had received no satisfactory response from the Minister on the Government's obligations under the International Covenant. The Federation therefore resolved to test the legality of the fees in court. On the 14th of October, NZUSA filed a claim in the High Court calling for the fees to be struck down.

The Minister stated in his response to NZUSA's legal challenge that the fees scheme was designed with rebates to ensure no student was denied an education because of inability to pay. However the enrolment statistics would reveal that this was patently untrue. Unfortunately, NZUSA was obstructed by the Ministry of Education in our efforts to obtain these statistics under the Official Information Act. Despite an appeal to the Ombudsman, who directed the Ministry to immediately release the statistics, Ministry officials held onto them for a further week, releasing them only after the General Election on October 27th.

When the Association finally obtained the statistics they revealed a 0.4% drop in overall student numbers in 1990. The drop may seem small, but in the



Students at Otago show their opposition to higher fees.

context of increases of 7.2%, 6.8% and 11.3% in 1987, 1988 and 1989, and earlier predictions of similar growth in 1990, it is clear a large number of potential students were effectively denied the opportunity to study because of the fee.

Some groups were particularly hard hit. Part-time student numbers dropped by 6% and the number of extra-mural students declined by nearly 17%. Women as a group were more severely affected than men: the drop in women students was 0.7% compared to 0.1% for men.

The decline in student numbers confirmed what NZUSA had been arguing for some years; imposing high fees on university study results in students being unable to afford an education. In 1990 New Zealand, for the first time in several decades, had a university system which admitted students not by their ability to benefit from a university education but by their ability to pay.

The National Party's manifesto recognised the short sightedness of turning students away by imposing high fees at a time when New Zealand needs more people in higher education and training. The fact that the new National Government and Education Minister Lockwood Smith committed themselves to scrapping Labour's fees should have been a significant advance in NZUSA's campaign for an open and accessible university system.

However, the new National government appears to be wedded to the same set of economic textbooks that led Labour and the New Zealand economy into acute difficulties in the previous six years. In its December 19th Economic and Social Initiative, the new Government announced that due to the seriousness of the budget deficit it had inherited, it was forced to embark upon a programme of cutting state spending. Predictably this focused on the three biggest areas of state spending: Education, Social Welfare, and Health. Vote: Social Welfare was targeted for a series of benefit cuts, the first since the Depression days of the 1930s. In Education and Health a series of reviews were set up, with a scarcely hidden agenda of cutting costs. More ominously, the Prime Minister announced that ways of charging the top third of income earners for Health and Education were to be investigated.

Throughout 1990 NZUSA acknowledged the seriousness of the economic situation which New Zealand faces. However the Association questioned, and continues to question the wisdom of the particular economic prescription chosen by both the previous Labour Government and the new National Government. The narrow focus on inflation and the continuing erosion or outright cutting of state spending seems likely to tip New Zealand over into a full-blown recession. In the area of Education, the targeting of user charges, funding cuts, and corporatisation proposals are all likely to result in an increase in the fee students pay. It appears National may scrap Labour's fees only to replace them with fees of their own.

At the close of 1990, then, NZUSA's campaign has in some ways come full circle: user pays by any other name is still user-pays. However the effect of fees upon students in 1990 has, if anything, hardened our resolve and NZUSA will continue to oppose any proposal which sees wealth, not the ability and desire to learn, as the basic entry criteria to our university system.

The Education Amendment Act 1990

The culmination of the Government's 'Learning for Life' reforms set in train early in 1989 found legislative expression in the Education Amendment Bill 1990, which was introduced to the House in mid-March.

There is little doubt that the legislation constitutes the most fundamental reform to New Zealand's University system since the Hughes-Parry Report of 1959. Amongst its many provisions, the final version of the Act:

- ▲ seeks to secure academic freedom and institutional autonomy (S.161)
- ▲ abolishes the UGC (Schedule 6)
- ▲ requires councils to recognise the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (S.181)
- ▲ establishes the bulk funding by EFTS system (S.199)
- ▲ secures student representation on university Councils (S.171)
- ▲ sets limits to the number and type of persons that may sit on Councils (S. 171)
- ▲ secures a role for academic boards on matters of academic policy (S.182)
- ▲ guarantees the right of enrolment to all suitably qualified students (S.224)
- ▲ established the Vice Chancellor's Committee as a Crown Agency (S.240)
- ▲ establishes the Tertiary Research Board (S.286), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (S.248), the Education and Training Support Agency (S.270), and the Career Development and Transition Education Service (S.279)
- ▲ extends the role of the Ministry of Education into the university sector (eg S.184,186,192)
- ▲ requires tertiary institutions to have Charters (S.184), and annual statements of objectives (S.203)

The Bill was promoted by the then Minister of Education Phil Goff as putting all tertiary institutions on an equal footing, whether university, polytechnic or college of Education. It disestablished the University Grants Committee (UGC) which had negotiated the bulk funding for the university system and allocated it to individual universities for over 25 years. Instead all institutions were to be funded through the Ministry of Education on the basis of the equivalent full-time student formula.

Although the Bill gave polytechnics long overdue freedoms, in the university sector it was perceived as a step backwards. The Bill gave the Minister of Education and the Secretary of Education a statutory role in many areas the universities had regarded as their own prerogative.

The Bill was a source of conflict and controversy within hours of its first reading as education groups discovered that expected safeguards to academic freedom were either missing or weaker than considered acceptable and that much wider powers were proposed for the Ministry of Education and other Crown Agencies than previously suggested.

Both NZUSA and the AUT publicly raised concern about sections of the Bill which proposed that officials from the Education Review Office and the National Education Qualifications Authority should have the power to "inspect any books, records or documents of the institution (including written or other recorded work of students enrolled at the institution)." These sections were subsequently much amended prior to and during the Select Committee process.

The related issue of academic freedom generally proved to be the focus of much public commentary on the Bill, perhaps somewhat obscuring concerns about other important, but more technical issues raised by the legislation.

The public was given just over 1 month to respond to the Bill by way of written submission. Despite the fact that many of the issues covered in the Bill had been repeatedly debated over the previous 4-5 years, NZUSA and many others considered the time allowed for submissions to be grossly inadequate. Nonetheless, NZUSA managed to produce a 12,000 word submission which, we believe, did receive a reasonable hearing by the Select Committee and government officials. Certainly a number of our initial concerns were laid to rest in the final version of the Bill.

Due to the controversy surrounding the Bill, in the period between the closing of submissions and the Select Committee hearing oral submissions, the Minister announced that he had agreed with tertiary representatives to amend or delete some of the more controversial sections of the Bill. NZUSA had also met the Minister on some of these issues and welcomed these proposed changes which satisfied some, though not all, of our concerns. However, when the final wording of these changes became available, (the day before we were due to appear before the Select Committee), we were dismayed to discover a number of differences between the Minister's announcement and the subsequent legalistic interpretation of that announcement. The Association understands the Select Committee shared this concern and that the Chair of the Select Committee wrote to the Minister expressing this.

Subsequent to the Select Committee hearing submissions the Bill effectively dropped from public view for well over a month and during this time the Government was subject to intense behind the scenes lobbying in an attempt to secure further changes to the Bill. The final version of the legislation subsequently constitutes, in our view, a sterling example of the politics of compromise: it is at times contradictory, no one is completely satisfied, however most are willing to live with it. Whether or not such a piece of legislation will stand the test of time, irrespective of a change in Government, is another question altogether.

With the passing of the Act, the ad hoc involvement of the Ministry of Education in the university sector became formalised, and later fully implemented with the disestablishment of the University Grants Committee. While NZUSA accepted the validity of some of the criticisms levelled against the UGC, we remain unconvinced of the ability of the Ministry, given its diversity of functions, structure and organisational culture, to adequately co-ordinate the educational efforts of the tertiary sector as a whole. NZUSA continues to advocate the need for a body such as a Tertiary Education Commission to provide this co-ordination and therefore welcomes, in principle, National's policy in this area.

The Act also formally established the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and NZUSA wishes to record that we have been impressed with both the quality of output and the degree of community input sought by the Authority since its establishment. The extent to which the Authority proves to be an effective advocate of quality teaching and assessment is, of course, yet to be tested.

As mentioned earlier, the Education Amendment Act (1990) constitutes the most fundamental reform in tertiary education in over 30 years. The true test of the legislation's merit, however will occur when its effect in the lecture halls of our universities is such that students get a better education than previously: the jury is still considering its verdict.

Student Income & Expenditure Study

NZUSA's major research project for 1990 was a survey of student income and expenditure conducted for us by the Heylen Research Centre. The study is the third of its kind commissioned by NZUSA since 1984. Each time the surveys have asked students a range of questions about their income and expenditure, and have enabled the Association to build up an accurate picture of students' financial needs and limitations.

As in previous years, the 1990 survey was conducted by a self-completion questionnaire of a random sample of students. 1700 students from around the country responded.

The overall conclusion of the 1990 survey was that "the financial circumstances of students are characterised by pressure and stress." On average students had a deficit of nearly \$1,500 at the time of the survey (mid July). Nearly two thirds of the students surveyed had loans from banks or relatives. Over half of the students had part-time jobs during the university term in order to make ends meet.

The survey clearly showed that students tend to get further into debt as they go further on in their studies. By their fifth year of studying students have average loans of \$2,321. The tendency for 4th and 5th year students to have high levels of debt has worrying implications for National's Studyright policy. Under Studyright, it is proposed students in the fourth or fifth year of their undergraduate degree will be charged 25% of the average cost of a year of tertiary study, around \$2,500. This may put many students in an impossible financial situation and force them to defer or withdraw from study. NZUSA has informed the new Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith of this problem.

In 1990, full-time students received on average \$112.11 per week from Student Allowances. Their average weekly expenditure was \$161. In addition to their normal weekly spending, students also had occasional large bills for tuition fees, health care, clothes and travel, which added up to \$2,692 over the year. Overall, Student Allowances covered just over 50% of students total weekly expenditure. Students made up the difference from loans (average level \$1,021), savings, and part-time jobs (\$30 per week).

Indebtedness, and the burden of full-time study combined with part-time employment, places students under a high level of stress. Increasingly welfare services staff are dealing with students in crisis on an almost daily basis. The Association remains concerned about these unqualifiable effects of Government policy.

For the first time, the 1990 survey provided students with the opportunity to comment at length on their own situation. More than 700 students chose to do so. Their comments showed several common concerns:

- * The inadequacy of Student Allowances, particularly for students under 20.
- * The impact of the fees. Many final year students commented they were glad they were finishing as they did not believe they could have continued under the new fees regime.
- * The difficulty of finding holiday employment.

Some quotes:

"I find as a Domestic Purposes Beneficiary that I am better off to stay at home with my son than I am to try and further my education so that one day I can support us both."

"All my flatmates and friends are nearing their overdraft limits, some are well over \$3,000 in debt without wasting money. The major reason I can see for their poverty is the inability to find Christmas holiday work."

"I am really upset about the university fees - I feel that as a human being I have a right to free education. I also believe I am contributing to society in that I am willing to learn and therefore hopefully I will be a worthwhile part of the community."

Summer Employment

Holiday earnings are an important source of income for students and promoting summer work opportunities for students is one of NZUSA's major tasks each year.

The 1989-90 summer season saw the re-introduction of financial assistance for employers who take on temporary student workers in addition to their normal workforce. The withdrawal by the Government of the Student Employment Subsidy Scheme (SESS) the previous summer had resulted in a large increase in student unemployment.

In 1989 the Government conceded NZUSA's claim that a carefully targeted subsidy costs less than paying students to be unemployed, not to mention providing more students with the opportunity to earn and thus save for the next academic year. This saving to Government was recognised in the funding of the Tertiary Employment Assistance Scheme, which was by way of transfer from Vote:Social Welfare to Vote:Employment, rather than by appropriation.

The TEA Scheme was approved by Cabinet in mid-October 1989, just in time for the coming summer break. While the Scheme was less generous than previous subsidy schemes, and while its late announcement caused difficulties in advertising its existence to employers, Student Job Search was still able to obtain just over 1,300 jobs under TEAS in the 1989/90 summer. These jobs tended to be of longer duration than the majority of jobs placed through SJS.

Although the subsidy did create additional jobs for students, the continuing contraction of the labour market meant that an average of 10,500 students remained registered as unemployed with Student Job Search over the 1989/90 summer period. While the number of students placed in work by SJS increased by 12% to a record 20,530 (including TEAS jobs), the number of student clients seeking work through the Service increased by 18% and job offers from employers simply did not keep pace, increasing by only 13%.

The added burden the increase in tuition fees places upon student finances means that both summer and part-time, in-term, employment now plays a greater role in balancing students' budgets than previously. To some extent students are now paying twice for government policy, both in terms of increased tuition fees and in terms of high unemployment. Both factors leave students financially vulnerable.

Meetings & Conferences 1990

NZUSA holds three major meetings each year, February Workshops and May and August Conferences. February Workshops focus on providing student delegates with skills training and a background to education issues. May and August Conference are the main decision making forums for NZUSA. The members of NZUSA, the seven constituent students associations, send delegates who determine policy and formulate plans of action based on such policy.

May Conference 1990 was held at Waikato University. Issues discussed at the conference included the National Party's new education policy, the Education Amendment Bill, university corporate plans, student allowances, summer employment and the campaign against fees.

Guest speakers included AUT President Ruth Butterworth, the President of the Australian National Union of Students, Kate Deverall, (then) Opposition Science & Technology spokesperson Simon Upton, Waikato University Vice Chancellor Dr Wilf Malcolm, Centre for Maori Studies lecturer Dr Pare Hopa and electoral analyst, Dr Nigel Roberts.

August Conference 1990 was held at Otago University. There were workshops on issues such as the new education agencies set up under the Education Amendment Act, assessment methods, and the plans for the campaign in Term III. August Conference also dealt with NZUSA administrative matters. The Federation's 1991 budget and levy were set and Charlotte Denny and Emma Reid were elected as NZUSA's 1991 Officers.

In between these three major meetings, NZUSA is administered by the Federation Executive, made up of the seven campus Presidents, and the President, Vice President and Treasurer of NZUSA. The 1990 Executive met on eight occasions throughout the year. At its final meeting the Executive granted Treasurer, Ann Wearing, a life membership of the Association in recognition of her contribution to NZUSA over the last four years.

Research and Publications

In addition to NZUSA's major project for the year, the Heylen study of Student Income and Expenditure, the Association commissioned and produced a number of other research reports, publications and surveys.

The Scott Report on University Funding

NZUSA jointly commissioned with the Association of University Teachers a report from Wellington Economist Guy Scott on university funding over the 1980-1990 decade.

The report found that Government funding per student fell by 14.4% over the decade in real terms. Mr Scott developed an index for comparing university funding from year to year which reflects university costs more accurately than the Consumer Price Index. If CPI is used as an index for deflating university income, funding per student dropped by 19.3%.

Balancing the Books

In May 1990 NZUSA approached the Ministry of Education Student Allowances Division with a proposal to produce a plain English guide to the Student Allowances Scheme. The Association was concerned that the complexity of the Allowances Scheme might put some potential students off and that the Ministry of Education's 63 page guide was over-long.

The Ministry agreed to fund the project, which NZUSA wrote, produced and distributed. Over 110,000 copies of the 12 page A5 booklet entitled 'Balancing the Books' were produced and distributed to schools, tertiary institutions, Quest Rapuara offices, DSW offices, public libraries and other community centres. The feedback on the booklet was positive with over 5,000 extra copies ordered.

Hobson's Choice

The Association produced a 12 page tabloid newspaper for students on the General Election, called Hobson's Choice. The title reflected our assessment of the choice facing students and much of the electorate in the 1990 elections.

'Hobson's Choice' contained summaries of the education policies of the major parties, an assessment of Labour's record in education and National's education policy. There were shorter articles on the effects of the tuition fees on student finances, proportional representation and a guest article from Listener political columnist Denis Welch.

Fees and the mature student: The New Gatekeeper?

Victoria University honours student, Paul Stocks, was supported by NZUSA with costs associated with a research project he was undertaking on mature students and the new \$1,250 fee, which involved a postal survey of mature students at Victoria. The results of the survey and an analysis of enrolment trends amongst mature and non-mature students formed the basis of Paul's report "The New Gatekeeper? Mature students at Victoria in 1990 and the effects of increased fees."

In 1990 enrolments at Victoria dropped by 1%. Paul's research showed the drop in enrolment was more severe for students over 30 where there was a 3.5% drop, while the number of students under 30 declined by 0.3%.

Public Opinion Polls

NZUSA commissioned the Heylen Research Centre to conduct a public opinion poll of attitudes towards increased fees for tertiary students. The questions were asked as part of a larger political survey on a variety of issues regularly conducted by Heylen in association with One Network News.

The survey of attitudes towards higher fees was carried out twice, once in May and again in September. Public opinion remained firmly against user-pays on both occasions. 61.5% of those polled indicated they disapproved of user-pays in the May survey while 60.7% disapproved in the September survey. Women aged 18-24 and 40-54 were more likely to disapprove of user-pays.

Other Publications

In 1990 the Association published 9 issues of NZUSA Update its newsletter to students. Copies of Update are also sent to other education organisations and MPs.

NZUSA published a supplement in all the student newspapers prior to May and August Conferences outlining the topics of discussion at the conferences.

Southern Africa Scholarship Trust

The Southern Africa Scholarship Trust was set up by NZUSA in 1975 to provide a chance for exiled black South Africans to obtain a tertiary education in New Zealand.

The Trust Board is chaired by NZUSA Vice President and Board members are appointed by NZUSA Federation Executive. The Trust is administered by Federation office with the help of the Trust secretary. Each year NZUSA and its constituents donate nearly \$12,000 to the Trust.

In 1990 the Trust's fifth scholar Ms Nonhlanhla Mtshali had a successful second year at Canterbury University. As well as continuing her academic studies Nonhlanhla visited all the university campuses during the first term to speak about her own experience of apartheid.



*Ms Nonhlanhla Mtshali
The Southern African Scholarship
Trust's fifth scholar*

The Chairperson of the Trust participated in a number of public meetings organised by HART to discuss the changing political situation in South Africa. The announcement in 1990 by the South African government that major anti-apartheid groups including the P.A.C. and the A.N.C. were to be unbanned was of particular interest to the Trust. The Scholarship was originally set up to provide opportunities for young blacks in exile because of their political beliefs. The Trust Board has decided there is still a role for the Scholarship while young blacks still have unequal access to educational opportunities in their own country.



Higher Education Scholarship

NZUSA's first Higher Education Scholar Patricia Bolger took up her scholarship in 1990. The scholarship provides \$3,000 a year to a post-graduate student of any discipline doing research in higher education.

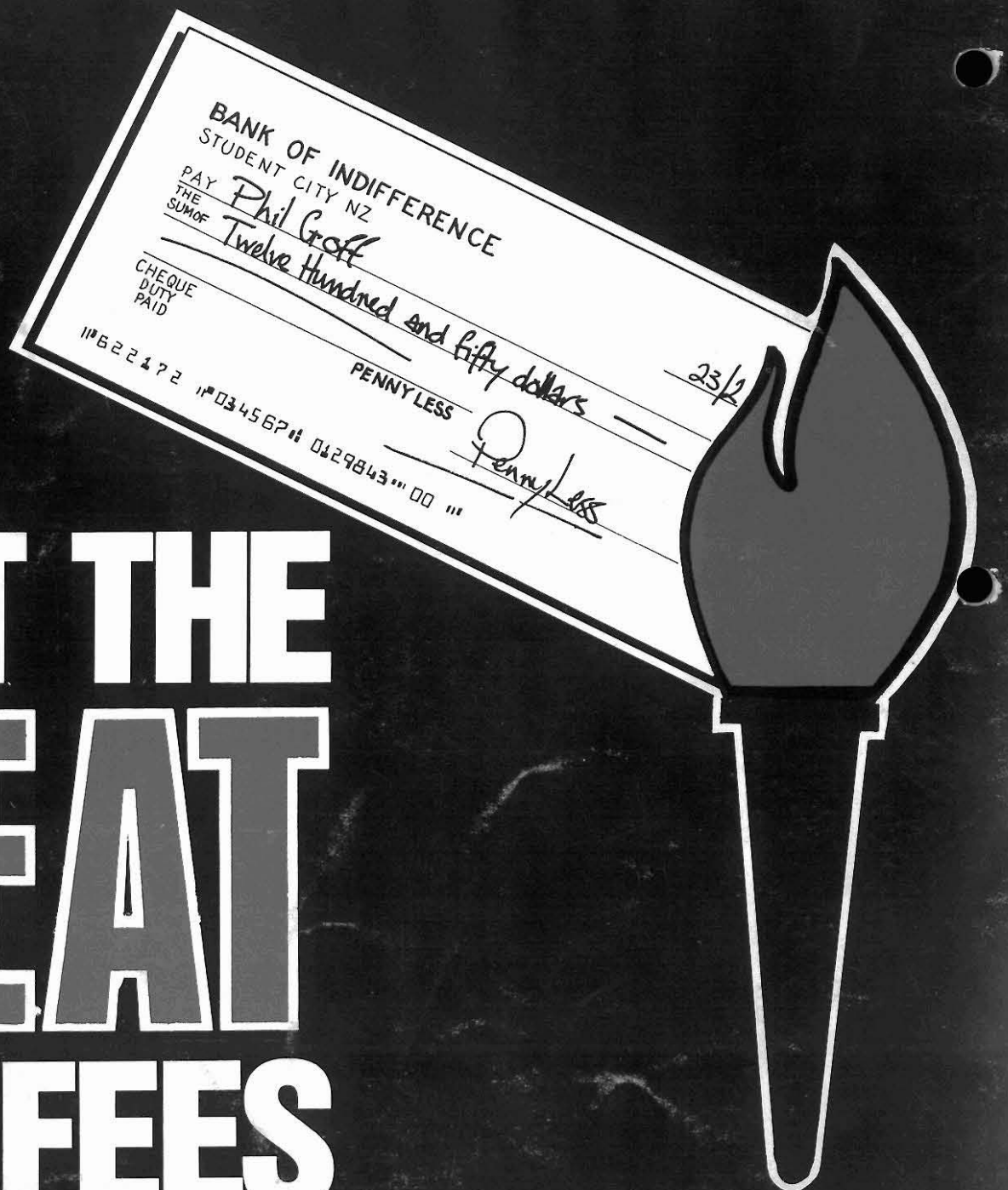
Ms Bolger, a Massey student, was researching and writing a thesis on postgraduate assessment (for a Master of Arts in Psychology).

Ms Bolger's research examined the final class of honours given to Bachelor with Honours and Masters students in New Zealand over the last thirty years in comparison with students in England and Wales. Her research uncovered some interesting facts. Although in England and Wales a lower percentage of women than men receive first class honours degrees, in New Zealand the reverse is true. In most subjects a higher percentage of women than men received 1st class honours degrees.

There were significant differences between subject areas in their allocation of first class honours. Nine per cent of Architecture students received a first while in Agriculture and Horticulture 36% of students received firsts. Overall New Zealand universities awarded 1st class honours to a higher percentage of students than their British counterparts. 27.2% of New Zealand honours or Masters students received a first while 8.2% of English students got a first.

Ms Bolger's thesis raises a number of areas for possible further research. It also contains some salutary reminders that academic assessment can be an inaccurate and arbitrary process. The Association is pleased to have been able to support her work.

CARRY THE TORCH...



PUT THE HEAT ON FEES