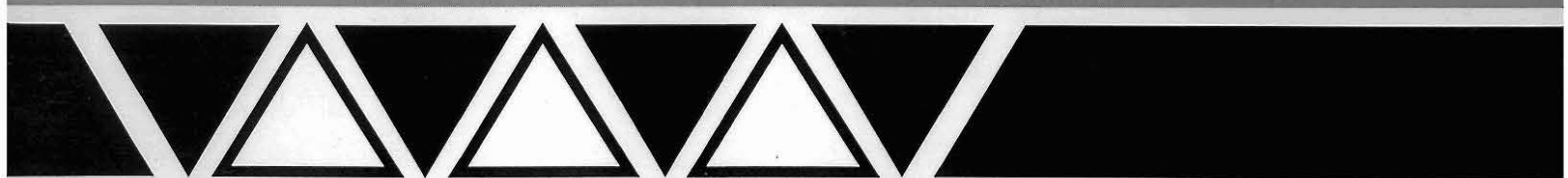


**NEWZEALAND
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION (INC.)**

ANNUAL REPORT

1996





NZUSA 1996 Federation Executive

Standing (left to right)

*Paula Bennett (MUSA-Albany), Chris Tozer (OUSA), Richie Shae (LUSA) Brendon Lane
(AUSA until October) Nicci Coffey (MUSA)*

Sitting (left to right)

*Philip Stevens (AUSA from October), Rebecca Johnson (UCSA), Alayna Ashby (Co President)
Grant Robertson (Co President), Michael Gibbs (VUWSA), Ben King (WSU)*

Absent

Sandra Murray (EXMSS)

Accountants: Curtis McLean

Lawyers: Russell McVeagh McKenzie Barlett & Co

Auditors: Horwath and Horwath

Bank: Bank of New Zealand

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*New Zealand University
Students' Association*

Annual Report

1996

Co-President's Report



1996 was a successful, busy and rewarding year for NZUSA. The Federation Office and Federation Executive built on the hard work and dedication of previous NZUSA office holders to fashion a high profile and an articulate voice for students.

The clear focus of the year was the general election, the first in New Zealand under MMP. Whilst not all students will be pleased with the ultimate outcome of the election, they can be well pleased with the active, well informed campaign undertaken by NZUSA and its constituent campuses. NZUSA set out to make the funding and quality of tertiary education a major issue in the election campaign. We were highly successful in achieving this primary goal.

The campaign, a joint effort with the Aotearoa Polytechnic Students Union, built upon the strategies developed in 1995. It was based around the theme, "Education is in Crisis-TIME for a change", and had three key aspects to it.

Action

The first was mass student action. This began with a week of action in March. The most successful event during this week was a boisterous march in Auckland attracting 3,500 students. Throughout the year students took to the streets and occupied registries - proving that such tactics still have a place in enabling students to publicly voice their frustrations with an unfair and illogical system of funding tertiary education, and to actively place tertiary education and student issues in all forms of media — and therefore on the public and political agendas.

Enthusiasm for the election campaign built through the year. A key event in this was the "Bus Trip", in late June and early July. Following from a similar event prior to the 1993 election, students from as far north as Whangerei and south as Invercargill converged on Wellington for three days of protests and activities. The highlight was a busy day of protest in and around Parliament, including an occupation of Parliament steps. This action was an important step in building enthusiasm and publicity for the campaign, and also linked together students from secondary schools, polytechnics, universities and colleges of education.

The undoubted highlight of the election campaign were the series of rolling registry occupations held in campuses through the campaign. This began at Lincoln in late July (3 days) and carried on to Otago, (7 days) Auckland, (7 days) Victoria (8 days), and culminated at Massey (4 days) a week before the election. Although each occupation was distinctive in character, they all served to raise the profile of the issue of tertiary funding in the mind of politicians and the electorate at large. Thousands of students around the country were involved in the occupations, showing huge dedication to the equitable funding of education, through nights of sleeping on hard floors, constant chanting and the occasional presence of the police.

The occupations became a highlight of the election campaign, and served to make education a key issue. At the height of attention surrounding the occupations, one senior Parliamentary journalist commented that NZUSA had run by far the highest profile and most successful

election campaign. This was reflected in the extremely high media profile that NZUSA retained throughout 1996.

There were numerous small scale actions that took place in the lead up to the election. A highlight of these was the activity of Physiotherapy students who face a fees bill of \$14 000 for their fourth year of study. Their continued action, led by President Colin Hancock, seems likely to lead to a significant reduction in fees in the near future.

Also on a smaller scale were campus based campaigns, supported by a national WECA poster and flyer campaign on the impact of user pays on women in tertiary education. It is an area which needs further development and integration into mainstream NZUSA work, with a continuation of a collaborative approach between NZUSA and WECA in advocating, researching and representing the needs and issues that affect women students. The fact remains, there are enormous inequities between the two halves of the university student population when it comes to the impact of user pays and equality of opportunity within tertiary education.

The role of Joss Debreceeny as Campaign Co-ordinator for 1996 needs to be acknowledged. Much of what happened during the campaign was due to the extraordinary dedication and commitment that Joss provided. His appointment was justified many times over, and 1996 represented the culmination of a long and highly successful involvement by Joss in the student movement.

Publications

The second key element in the 1996 campaign, were the publications produced by NZUSA, in association with APSU. The first of these publications was The NZUSA/APSU Student Debt Casebook. The importance of the release of a Casebook lay in the fact that it brought a human face to \$1.6 billion of student debt. It profiled the experiences of approximately 200 tertiary students struggling to survive under a massive debt burden. The casebook gained vast media and public interest, and was an extremely important tool in the campaign. The Casebook was sent MPs and political party researchers involved in education and gained valuable television coverage with Helen Clark waving it in Parliament at the government benches while speaking on student debt.

Fifty thousand copies of the NZUSA/APSU 1996 Election Guide, edited by Victoria Executive member Rob Salmond, were distributed around campuses prior to the election. The guide provided information on party policies, MMP, local electorates and party lists. It was well read by students, and remains a valuable part of NZUSA's election year strategies.

VOTE (Vision Of Tertiary Education), was NZUSA and APSU's manifesto for tertiary education. It was a fully costed alternative to current government policy. Its publication was an important mark for NZUSA, as it proved that we were capable of being positive in a highly negative environment for students. It was launched, live on TV1, in the "palatial" surroundings of a typical student flat, accompanied by two minute noodles and raro.

The final publication shortly before the election was the release of NZUSA and APSU's biennial Income and Expenditure Survey, produced in association with CM Research. The survey of 2300 students is the most comprehensive survey of students' financial position undertaken. It showed that students owed on average nearly \$10 000, that many were working in excess of 15 hours per week in part time jobs, and that the stress of debt is affecting their work.

These publications show that NZUSA has the capacity to approach both tertiary education issues and national elections with a variety of techniques and on many levels simultaneously.

Not only has NZUSA once again shown prowess in organising students in an activist manner, it is also fulfilling its role as a well informed and articulate pressure group for students. It is a sad reality that no other organisation in New Zealand, including central government, is producing this kind of quality material. It is a role that NZUSA must continue to perform.

PTEC (Public Tertiary Education Coalition)

The other major strand of the campaign was the launching and continued work of the Public Tertiary Education Coalition. Proposed on the initiative of NZUSA in 1995, the coalition of tertiary management, staff and students stood directly against the attempts of the National government to divide and rule tertiary education. The coalition held a high profile launch in March, attended by 200 supporters, with Bryan Gould, Moana Maniopoto-Jackson and NZUSA's Grant Robertson among the speakers. The coalition continued to provide information and comment throughout the year, including the delivery of a declaration on tertiary education to all MPs shortly before the election. The existence of PTEC led to a far greater degree of co-operation and information flow within the sector. It is hoped that it can grow, and perhaps even expand to include all levels of education.

Throughout the year NZUSA built its links with other organisations such as the PPTA, NZEI and the PSA, through sharing information, joint media releases and activities. One of the many outcomes of such continued networking included an NZUSA and APSU driven full page newspaper advertisement in Sunday papers the week before the election. Both advertisements were funded from contributions from throughout the tertiary, secondary and primary education sectors.

Quality Education

NZUSA's involvement in assuring the quality of education continued with the advantage of strong foundations built in this area by former office holders. NZUSA gave assistance to associations needing support in preparing their contributions to University audit portfolios and contributing to university audit panels. Federation Office provided training at conferences and during campus visits on getting the most out of the new quality assurance environment developing on campuses. At a national level, NZUSA succeeded in gaining student representative input into the training of university academic auditors.

Through vigilance on the Committee on University Academic Programmes students actively conveyed the message that nothing less than excellent would be acceptable in the development of new course and programmes or change in existing ones.

Court action taken by former Victoria University students and supported by NZUSA - over course quality - prompted much discussion at senior management levels. It was a popular topic at the universities administration conference and led to consideration of the practical effects of the consumer guarantees act and fair trading act within tertiary education. Legal action at this level is often a last resort on behalf of students. However, it can be a powerful tool for long term change and an option that deserves closer examination and forward planning with regards to NZUSA's long term service provision, effectiveness and profile.

Michael Laws VSM Bill

The bill died its deserved death in March 1996. Much of the work in killing this bill off was done in 1995, but it was satisfying to see it dismissed from Parliament. The judicious lobbying and submission writing of student associations were too much for this ill-conceived piece of legislation. It was disappointing for Federation Office to see the Waikato Students Union referendum on VSM pass (with narrow majority gained via a 13% turnout) late in 1996.

Queer Project Worker

The employment of Matt Soeberg as the Queer Project Worker marked another milestone in NZUSA. This kind of approach to short term project work, may well be the way to deal with the many and diverse needs of tertiary students. Matt's work included the production of two posters dealing with homophobia, and support services for queer students, and a comprehensive resource manual for student associations. The spin off effect of Matt's project has been the establishment, and enhancement of queer groups and association awareness of queer students advocacy and student service needs services on campus. It is great that NZUSA has been able to be part of such positive developments at a campus level.

Relations with Government and the Ministry of Education

Although NZUSA has spent much of its time in the roll of a critic of government policy, 1996 saw us develop our working relationship with government. In 1996 this manifested itself in assisting in the re-design of loan and allowance information booklets and Inland Revenue loan statement forms. Consultation continued with the Ministry of Education over adjustments to the loan scheme, and funding for students with disabilities, and through the Tertiary Consultative Committee pre-meetings and the Ministerial Reference group on tertiary governance. NZUSA needs to further develop its work within the system, as well as that which takes place outside the system. Such a balance of work provides NZUSA with a unique and pivotal pressure group role.

Te Mana Akonga

NZUSA attempted to further its relationship with its parallel Maori body Te Mana Akonga. While 1996 was a difficult year for the Te Mana Akonga/NZUSA relationship, there were some highpoints. Te Mana Akonga's role in PTEC was very positive, and direct campus resourcing of Te Mana Akonga has been established for 1997.

In addition to the existence and mission of Te Mana Akonga, NZUSA has an obligation and mandate to profile, lobby and work on particular issues of equity, access, and financial impact on Maori university students. Unfortunately, NZUSA has not had a particularly high profile or level of activity in this area. Preferably, such work should be done in conjunction with Te Mana Akonga. However if such a partnership can not be attained, NZUSA work in this area should not be delayed as a result.

Womens Education Coalition Aotearoa

NZUSA farewelled Jan Logie, our first national women's coordinator (from 1993 until June 1996) after spending the early 1990s without such a position. The groundwork and positive profile that Jan accomplished for the position was invaluable. Lennie Court took over the position immediately prior to the last conference of the year. She did not lose much time in immersing herself into the position. As a result, the end of the year saw a revitalised coalition and network of women's officers and, a revamped WECA newsletter, a WECA policy draft consultation process completed, and planning for 1997 women's rights officer training and women's conferences and gatherings well under way. During 1996, successful and varied events were staged to promote the impact of user pays in tertiary education on women. A popular poster and flyer campaign balanced a hard hitting message with some humour in its presentation. Such humour was an outward expression of a strong desire on the part of members of WECA to be as inclusive as possible with regards to women becoming involved in the organisation and in the general student and wider public hearing their message.

Internal Relations

Internally NZUSA remained strong throughout 1996. Three successful conferences were held at Victoria, Massey and Lincoln universities, with a range of interesting and informative

workshops and speakers. In addition in 1996 a mini-issues conference was held on quality education and was attended by Education Coordinators as well as student representatives involved in education portfolio work. This approach allowed concentration on one issue for a whole weekend, rather than just a couple of hours at a full conference and provided a medium to share information and perspectives between association employees and representatives. This was a successful concept that could be developed further in the future.

Massey University Extramural Students' Society (EXMSS)

In 1996 EXMSS became an associate member of NZUSA. The wide experience of EXMSS members and input from their varied membership base was a valuable contribution to the overall organisation. EXMSS' membership of NZUSA gave a wider audience than ever for NZUSA's publications. This is an important relationship that we hope will grow.

NZUSA Review

A review panel was established in 1996 to look at the structures and processes of NZUSA. The Federation executive considered that 1996 was a good time to undertake such a review with the organisation in a healthy state. The panel comprising former NZUSA President Suze Wilson, former Cabinet minister and UCSA President David Caygill, and former head of Nga Toki, Laurence Tukaki-Millanta have been reviewing submissions and will report in early 1997.

Students with Disabilities

Like any organisation NZUSA has had its disappointments on some issues. In 1996 the continued intransigence of the government on the issue of students with disabilities remains frustrating, and upsetting. Despite constant lobbying from NZUSA, and disabilities groups around the country, little has been achieved. The government has acknowledged many times that there is a problem with funding for students with disabilities, but they have not shown any commitment to putting in the resources required to solve such a problem.

Out of such adversity there have been some positives. A successful conference of representatives of students with disabilities was organised and funded by NZUSA in Auckland in September. From this it is hoped a strong network can be developed to put further pressure on government.

New Zealand Income Support Service and Loans as Income

The continued ignorance of the Minister of Social Welfare, Peter Gresham, and his department provided much hardship for students. Many students, mainly those with families, have been unable to access vital support from the Income Support Service because of the insistence that students will not be eligible for benefits. The students involved in these situations are facing extreme difficulties in completing their studies. This was further exacerbated by the withdrawal of the Training Incentive Allowance for students undertaking postgraduate study. It is ironic that it has been a stated aim of this government to assist people off benefits in to work, yet a key plank in doing this is educational opportunity which has been limited by government policy.

NZUSA's support of the court case to stop student loans being treated as income by NZISS reached the High Court in November. Although the result is not yet available, we are confident of success in this case. It remains an absurdity that debt, with interest, can be regarded as income when assessing eligibility for benefits. We are grateful to the work of lawyer Peter McKenzie, and the Wellington Community Law Centre in preparing this case.

Thanks and Farewell

1996 represented an excellent year for NZUSA. When one looks at the constitutional objectives of NZUSA, the Federation office and executive can say that they achieved almost

all of them. This was due in large part to the dedication of the office bearers and staff of NZUSA. The Federation Office was always a busy and productive place to be, and all who worked there in 1996 deserve high praise. Vanessa Moe, Rob Graham, Jan Logie, Lennie Court, Matt Soeberg, Joss Debreceeny, Garfield Toro, Rebecca Parata and Kia Houpapa can all take credit for their part in the year.

We would also like to thank all of the people who helped to make 1996 such a wonderful year. In particular our friends and families, and those who provided accommodation - Phil and Bec, (Auckland), Patrick, Ellen, Jenny, Tania, Austin (Palmerston North), the Clements family and Tiffany (Christchurch), Alex Gilks, Rachel and co (Dunedin).

Thanks must also go to association education coordinators, campaign coordinators, campaign teams and women's collectives for their work with Federation Office and NZUSA on the quality, equity and accessibility of tertiary education; Presidents, student executive members and student newspaper staff who contributed to effective communication between Federation Office and campuses; mainstream and education media who more often than not reported media statements correctly; and to students — whose participation through marching, occupying, letter writing, questionnaire filling out, enrolment on the electoral roll and generally high levels of political awareness of tertiary education issues helped keep NZUSA relevant, dynamic and ultimately successful at the end of the year.

In Wellington we would like to acknowledge the support of Norman Kingsbury, Kirsty Graham, Paul Williams, David Caygill, members of the PTEC committee, David Woodhouse, staff and representatives of the New Zealand University Sports Union and everyone else who contributed to NZUSA's work and success.

It has been an honour to work for NZUSA, and student associations over the last few years. They play a special and often unseen role in the lives of many students. They have the capacity to help with the smallest individual problem through to the largest policy issue. They are run on the principle of collective strength and responsibility. They are about students working for other students, and for the common good of society. It has been a truly rewarding experience to be part of. Long may student associations play such a positive role.

And long may NZUSA push for an accessible, equitable, quality tertiary education system. Education is the key investment that any government can make. In New Zealand in the last six years there has been a tragic neglect of education. There must be increased funding and resources to enable us to be proud of our education system. In 1996 NZUSA fought hard to carry on the battle for a barrier free, quality education for all. It is a battle still to be won, but we can all be proud of the efforts made to keep it alive.

Kia kaha.

Grant Robertson and Alayna Ashby
Co-Presidents NZUSA 1996.

Womens' Education Coalition Aotearoa

1996 was a year of both consolidation and change for WECA.

In July WECA said goodbye to Jan Logie who left NZUSA to co-ordinate a one-stop youth health centre. WECA expressed gratitude to Jan who put a lot of work into developing UWIN and then WECA. Helena (Lennie) Court took over as the Women's Co-ordinator in August. Prior to Lennie starting, however, the responsibility for coordinating WECA at a national level was taken up by Alayna Ashby, NZUSA co-President.

Under the guidance of Jan, Alayna and Lennie WECA undertook a number of worthwhile projects and campaigns.

The WECA handbook was written and formatted. Unfortunately due to difficulties in finding advertisers this project was put on hold till 1997 when it is planned to be distributed free to all women students. A gathering was also planned for April 1996 but due to a lack of registrations, had to be cancelled. WECA responded to this by identifying potential changes to the gathering format in order to make the event a success in 1997.

WECA also started work on the lengthy process of developing its own policy. The policy of our sister group, the women's arm of NUS (Australia), was used as a base document. WECA, at both campus and national level then worked on the policy to ensure that it reflected the concerns of women undertaking tertiary education in New Zealand. Work was also started on updating the Status of Young Women's report that was produced by WECA and the YWCA in 1995.

In what was election year, WECA ran a successful campaign on Suffrage Day encouraging women to think about education when they voted. WECA also expanded the Thursdays in Black safety campaign and it continued to gain strength. Funding was also secured for a continuation of WECA campaigns for 1997.

Following the development of a WECA scholarship in 1995, WECA awarded two \$1 500 scholarships, only one of which was taken up. This scholarship helped Nadine Metzger to produce "Reflecting our Realities? New Zealand Women and the Student Loan Scheme" (unpublished master's thesis in Women's and Gender Studies, Waikato Univeristy). WECA secured an increase in the scholarship for 1997 taking it to one scholarship of \$3 500 or two at \$1 750.

WECA also held three successful conferences during the year on the day proceeding the NZUSA conferences in February, July and August. The WECA mailout was distributed to WECA groups between the conferences.

As Women's Co-ordinator for the first part of the year, Jan Logie again provided training to Women's Rights Officers, Presidents and Executives in facilitation, sexism on campus issues and group dynamics. Lennie visited all campuses and met with WECA groups where possible as part of her induction to NZUSA and WECA.

It is hoped that in 1997 WECA will continue to grow in visibility and effectiveness at both at the local campus and the national levels and thereby improve the position and experience of women undertaking tertiary education.

Student Job Search

Since 1982, NZUSA has worked with APSU, first to set up Student Job Search and then to secure its annual Government funding and to manage the organisations national office. In 1996 the NZUSA President served as deputy chairperson of the national society - sharing with APSU in supervising the work of National Director, Lindsay Wright, liaising with the NZ Employment Service, approving papers for National Council meetings and dealing with a variety of day-to-day decisions.

Student Job Search is a \$2million a year practical welfare service to New Zealand tertiary students in which NZUSA and APSU are the key to continued Government support of the service.

During the 1996 in-term period Student Job Search achieved 20,963 placements of students into jobs. Over the 1996/97 summer season job placements totalled 31,215. Some 23,329 of the summer placements went to university students.

The NZUSA President met with Student Job Search managers twice and visited SJS offices when on other NZUSA business. These meetings, together with the National Council meetings, helped to ensure that the Student Job Search national office remained responsive to local needs.

The SJS service was expanded for the 1996/97 summer with offices in Invercargill, Timaru and New Plymouth to give services in a total of 15 cities.

Local university students associations provided valuable support for Student Job Search both through involvement in the Regional Management Committees, and through financial support for the in-term services.

The National Director, regional managers, year-round employment officers and some 75 students who staffed the summer service, each contributed to a lively and highly committed organisation that is a core and successful service for students, run by students. NZUSA and APSU would like to particularly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Lindsay Wright, with whom they had very regular contact throughout 1996.

In its present form, as the organisation that co-ordinates Student Job Search nationally, the so completed its tenth year in 1996. Its creation, survival and success owe much to the very considerable work done by successive NZUSA president over the years - a debt it is timely to acknowledge.



and you thought
Ruapehu was a
big **explosion!**

1996 - Tertiary students owe \$1.4 billion

2000 - Tertiary students owe \$4.0 billion

2005 - Student debt exceeds national debt

2024 - Total student debt is \$18-20 billion

EDUCATION IS IN CRISIS

it's **TIME** for a change
election '96

NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION • AOTEAROA POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS UNION
TE RŌPŪ ĀKONGA O NGĀ WHARE WĀNANGA O AOTEAROA