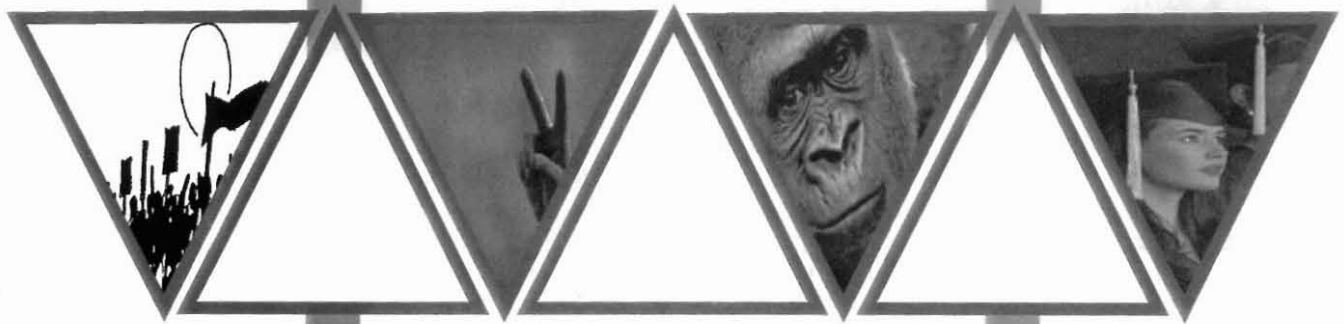


n z u s a



2000

**Annual
Report**



2000 Federation Executive

Top row, left to right:

Lisa Ducat (National Women's Rights Officer), Chris Hipkins (VUWSA President), Emma MacDonald (ASA President), Ayesha Verrall (Tertiary Women's Focus Group representative), Tanja Schutz (NZUSA Co-President)

Bottom row, left to right:

Kylie Martin (MUSA President), Andrew Campbell (OUSA President), Sam Huggard (NZUSA Co President), Kerry Armstrong (LUSA President)

Absent:

Kane Stanford (AUSA President), Eva Neizert (Tertiary Women's Focus Group representative), Liz Barker (EXMSS President)

Accountants: Curtis McLean

Lawyers: Russell McVeagh

Auditors: Horwath Wellington

Bank: Bank of New Zealand

New Zealand University Students Association
Level 3, 354 Lambton Quay, PO Box 10-191, The Terrace, Wellington
Tel (04) 498-2500, Fax (04) 473-2391

Introduction

2000 was a year of rebuilding for NZUSA, who had had a difficult year in 1999 due to financial pressures resulting from the impact of voluntary student membership. Despite this, NZUSA survived, and 2000 was a chance to consolidate. This report covers the work of NZUSA as it relates to NZUSA activities and relationships, government liaison, tertiary sector activity and Student Job Search.

NZUSA activity

Te Mana Akonga

Te Mana Akonga is the National Maori University Students Association, and is recognised as parallel to NZUSA. The main area of joint work between NZUSA and Te Mana Akonga in 2000 was on a joint research project into Maori retention rates at a university. We also worked together on the Student Debt Summit, with Laila Harre and ATSA (below), a joint poster campaign, and we lobbied jointly endorsing the continuation of the Tertiary Students with Disabilities Special Supplementary Grants, and lobbied for, and achieved, a Ministry of Education reference group for these grants. NZUSA also supported TMA's campaign for the Department of Work and Income's student material to be translated into Te Reo Maori.

TMA were successful in lobbying for extra money from government for equity initiatives. This came in two forms last year: money for scholarships, mentoring and bridging programs announced in the budget under the heading "Equity Initiatives in Tertiary Education" and the Maori and Pacific Island Special Supplementary Grants, announced later in the year. TMA lobbied hard for these over the last few years, and we supported them and acknowledge their efforts now.

Student Debt Summit

The first ever Student Debt Summit was held in 2000, a cooperative effort between the Minister of Youth Affairs Laila Harre and NZUSA, TMA and the Aotearoa Tertiary Students Association (ATSA). The concept behind the day was to shift the debate on student loans from being an individual borrowers issue to a societal issue. The one-day summit was well attended and received good media coverage on the TV news networks, radio and the newspapers. Speakers included national student body representatives, Laila Harre, University of Auckland lecturer and former Fedex member Ella Henry, economist Brian Easton and AVC Maori at Victoria University of Wellington Piri Sciascia.

Emergency Unemployment Benefit

Following the government's refusal to follow through on pre-election promises to reinstate the Emergency Unemployment Benefit (EUB) for all students unable to find work over summer, the Green party introduced a private members bill that, among other things, would have restored universal access to the EUB. NZUSA ran a strong media campaign around the issue for several weeks.

Membership

2000 saw the addition of the Christchurch College of Education Students Association (CCESA) as an associate member of NZUSA, the first college association to join. Federation Office enjoyed a good relationship with CCESA throughout 2000, and at the end of the year negotiated associate membership, which became effective from January 1 2001. On the downside, 2000 was the first year that the University of Canterbury Students Association was not a member of NZUSA, with the following through of the notice of withdrawal they gave NZUSA in 1998. 2000 was also the last year that AUSA was a member of NZUSA, before their membership lapsed at the end of 2000.

Conferences

NZUSA had another three conferences, in Wellington in February, in Palmerston North in July and in Dunedin in September. The latter was particularly successful, thanks largely to the excellent support the federation office received from OUSA in the organisation of it.

NZUSA also attended and spoke at other national student conferences, including Te Mana Akonga's annual Te Huinga Tauria, in Palmerston North in July, the Students with Disabilities hui in Hamilton in November and the 7th National Postgraduate Students conference in December in Dunedin. 2000 was the second year that the Pacific Island students Fono took place, this time in Dunedin in September. The annual Uni-Q conference did not happen in 2000.

Voluntary Student Membership reversed at Waikato

Waikato Students' Union, the prized possession of the Voluntary Student Membership campaign since membership had been voluntary from 1997, became once again a universal/compulsory student membership association in late 2000, following a university-conducted referendum of students. NZUSA assisted the campaign at Waikato, as did many other students associations in New Zealand.

The year was also a good one for the students' associations at Waiariki Institute of Technology, Waikato Polytechnic and Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, who all reverted back to universal membership.

Research

2000 was the first full year of a new government who was keen to change the competitive nature of tertiary education. For that reason, a lot of the research work from NZUSA was submissions and responses to government led reviews, in particular the Education and Science Select Committee's review of fees, loans, allowances and the overall resourcing of tertiary education, and the work of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (below). The Research Officer (Nicholas Green) also collated responses from constituents into the Department of Work and Income's handling of student loans, and wrote NZUSA's submission to the review (see below). He and federation officers worked with the government on the sections of the Education Amendment Bill relating to student association membership.

Submissions were also made on the Education Council, the Limiting the Number of Universities bill, the Employment Relations bill, the NZQA registering qualifications paper and the Student Loans Scheme Amendment bill, as well as research into student complaints, summaries of the Auditor-General's report for constituents and two briefing papers for the Student Debt Summit. The Research Officer also oversaw and helped with the original drafting of the major public opinion survey that ATSA and NZUSA commissioned through Colmar Brunton, on the public's perceptions of student fees, allowances and debt levels.

Changing relationship with ATSA

2000 started well for the NZUSA – ATSA cohabitation, with a strong working relationship between the federation officers and the ATSA President David Penney. This involved much more joint media work, lobbying and campaigns together. Joint Research Officer Nicholas Green and Office Administrator Rowena Tun also provided both organisations with excellent service.

The relationship began to experience difficulty following ATSA's September conference in Dunedin and the resignation of Penney and several ATSA member associations, due largely to disagreements over the AIM Research Foundation, a registered Private Training Establishment ATSA set up that was being run out of the shared NZUSA-ATSA offices in Wellington. When NZUSA requested that ATSA remove the PTE at the end of 2000, ATSA decided to move out, and shifted both organisations out of the office just prior to Christmas.

The new Government

A new relationship

After a successful pro-education campaign in 1999, which saw the end of 9 years of National party rule, NZUSA turned its attention to negotiating a new relationship with a more student friendly government consisting of the Labour and Alliance parties, with support from the Greens. NZUSA moved quickly to build a relationship with relevant ministers, in particular Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harre and Associate Education (Tertiary) Minister Steve Maharey.

The new government acted soon after the election to fulfil its promise to cut the costs of tertiary education. Key initiatives in the first few months of the new government were the reinstatement of the ability for students to pay their student association levies through the loan scheme, the halving of fees for dentistry students at the University of Otago and the removal of interest for full time and low income part time students. There were two other minor changes to student loan interest – increases to the threshold students could earn whilst still qualifying for an interest write off and a freeze on the interest rates charged (at 7%). NZUSA welcomed the moves to cut costs to students from the new government, but warned that unless there was a serious reinvestment into tertiary education then student debt would continue to grow.

Fees frozen

The Budget in June saw the announcement of the government's funding offer to tertiary institutions in return for a freeze on tuition fees, which amounted to a 2.3% funding increase (just over \$30 million). Despite protest from tertiary institutions that the offer was not enough, the University of Otago led the way on July 11 and all public institutions followed suit in accepting the deal, making 2001 the first year in many that fees did not rise for tertiary students in New Zealand.

Department of Work and Income's handling of student loans

In 2000 the Department of Work and Income (DWI) again came under intense public scrutiny for its delivery of student finance. Following problems the previous year with allowances, in 2000 DWI took on student loans. The department was ill prepared for the task, and the first months of the year were stressful for thousands of tertiary students in New Zealand. The main issue was one of late payment – both to students for the living component of their loans and their course related costs and the tuition fees component for the institutions. There were other problems, the most public of which was when 22,000 students were sent loan contracts with the wrong institution on it.

In response to this nightmare, the government commissioned an independent review of the Department's handling of student loans, carried out by Karen

Erenstrom. The government then set up a stakeholder reference group to oversee the Department's change program. Although not initially on this group, the national student unions argued for student representation, and the position was shared between NZUSA and ATSA. In October, Cabinet approved an additional \$6 Million increase to the Department to cover the costs of some of the new initiatives recommended by the Erenstrom report.

Education Amendment Act

Students were delivered fairer legislation to determine the membership status of their students' association with the passing of the government's first Education Amendment Act. Mostly dealing with the compulsory schooling sector, this omnibus act also repealed the Tertiary Students Association Voluntary Membership Act from 1998. The new legislation provided for fairer conduct of student's association membership referenda at institutions, removing some of the bias of the previous legislation.

Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC)

After several years of underfunding and excessive competition in tertiary education, NZUSA welcomed the government's announcement in February that they were setting up the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, to develop a long term strategic direction for the tertiary sector, that facilitated more collaboration and less duplication of course offerings. NZUSA made two submissions in 2000, initially to the terms of reference, and then a more detailed submission in June, outlining our broad priorities for tertiary education. NZUSA also made an oral presentation to the Commission to support this. At both the NZUSA conferences that followed the establishment of TEAC, we had speakers from the Commission come to update constituents. In July Emeritus Professor Ivan Snook came to the Palmerston North conference, and Professor Jonathan Boston attended the final conference in Dunedin.

Highest Student Loan - \$130,000

In late May NZUSA and ATSA revealed that the highest individual student loan on the Inland Revenue Department's records had reached between \$130,000 and \$140,000. This information was gained through an Official Information Act request to the Minister of Revenue. The figures also showed that the percentage of borrowers in higher debt brackets was increasing. In all the debt level brackets of over \$20,000, there were increases from the June 1999 figures.

Auditor General's report on the Student Loan Scheme

At the end of June, the government released a report by the Controller and Auditor-General into publicly available information about the Student Loan Scheme. One of the main findings of the report was that there was a complete

lack of information about the intended and unintended social and economic consequences of the scheme, such as the ability to raise other finance (e.g. mortgages), the effect on birth rates, and the passing on of loan debt to users of the services of professionals (e.g. health professionals). NZUSA felt vindicated by the report, as it supported what we had been saying for several years. We expressed hope that the government would now take the problems with the loan scheme seriously, and that the responsibility of research into the scheme would be shared by government as well as the student movement and some academics.

Youth Minimum Rates Increase

In mid December the Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harre announced that the youth minimum wage would increase to 80% of the adult minimum wage, and that the adult minimum wage would be applicable from the age of 18, down from 20. NZUSA welcomed the pre Christmas announcement, supporting the principle of a fair days pay for a fair days work for young people. Earlier in the year, NZUSA had made a submission on the review of the youth rates.

Other sector issues

The main non-governmental tertiary issue that NZUSA dealt with in 2000 was the staff cutting exercise at Massey University, labeled as a "repositioning" by Massey Vice-Chancellor James McWha. The first draft of this involved the shedding of over 100 staff. McWha claimed that the exercise was being done in response to student demand, but NZUSA rejected this, saying that students were ill served by understaffed or closed down departments, especially extramural students who may be part way through completing a degree over several years. NZUSA saw the exercise as being blunt, divisive and done with a complete lack of respect for staff at Massey University. Federation officers went up to Massey a number of times to support Massey staff and MUSA in their campaign against the repositioning.

The other university to be involved in major staff cuts was Victoria University of Wellington, under the guise of reducing a large deficit. This was a manufactured crisis, and the actual deficit was substantially smaller than the one originally put forward by management.

Despite the election of a new government with a clear agenda for more collaboration and less duplication, institutions were still very much set in the competitive mindset. At the start of the year, NZUSA and ATSA compared 1998 actual and 2000 projected expenditure on marketing and public relations at 3 universities and 3 polytechnics. The results confirmed our suspicion that institutions were spending increasing amounts of public and student money on public relations, at the expense of teaching and research. The survey showed

that at the 6 institutions, the PR budgets increased by an average of 58.5%, with a staggering 258% increase recorded at one institution.

NZUSA constituent members also continued to call into question the decision making processes at universities, in particular the increasing trend of institution councils making more of their decisions in Part 2 (closed to the public and the media). Universities are public institutions, and students and staff will continue to protect their accountability mechanisms as such.

Student Job Search

NZUSA plays a major part in the national management of Student Job Search, with Co-President Sam Huggard serving as Deputy National Chairperson for the year 2000. SJS was set up by NZUSA and the other two national student organisations in 1982, with ATSA and NZUSA now providing the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson each year. NZUSA and ATSA, in their own right, also undertake any direct lobbying to government in relation to overall funding for SJS.

2000 was the first year ever that SJS received an appropriation from government in the budget for more than one financial year. Social Services & Employment Minister Steve Maharey secured financial backing for SJS for 4 years in the 2000 budget, where previously funding had been on a year to year basis. The budget also saw a substantial increase to the organisation's grant in line with submissions made by NZUSA and ATSA, with a large part of it earmarked for the national computer networking of SJS's 6 regional societies. Earlier in the year, NZUSA and ATSA had managed to convince Minister Maharey that the Labour government's plans for job subsidies was not going to be money well spent, and that any extra funding should go to boosting SJS marketing efforts.

Thank You's

We would like to thank Danica Waiti from TMA, Nik Green, Rowena Tun and Lisa Ducat from the federation office and David Penney from ATSA. A big thanks to the 2000 Federation executive and constituents, and to the alumni who supported us in 2000 with their suggestions and advice. A special mihi to Norman Kingsbury, who has always been a constant source of support and guidance, with 2000 being no exception. Thank you also to Lindsay Wright from Student Job Search, Sacha Heskall and Darel Hall from University Sport New Zealand, and to Stephen Brokenshire and Lesley Boardman from Curtis McLean.

Tanja Schutz and Sam Huggard
NZUSA Co Presidents 2000.

National Women's Rights Officer Report For 2000

NWRO was a new position, created in 1999, when there was no longer enough funding for the Women's Coordinator. No one stood for this part time position in 1999 and it wasn't till April 2000 an election was finally held.

This was the first time since the 1980's there had been an elected rep on Federation Executive (Fedex) representing women. As with most new positions no one knew how it would work, and in 2000 there was the added difficulty of a federation officer being based at long distance from federation office.

I found the role very challenging and completely different from my expectations and I can't say I'm completely happy with what I achieved. I would liked to have done many more things and now, with hindsight, a lot of things differently. But one can't go back and I hope that some of the work I did was worthwhile. I learnt a lot and I thank NZUSA and Tertiary Women's Focus Group for the opportunity.

I would like to thank Sam and Tanja for the support they gave me. I am sorry I was not able to support you both in your roles. Also thanks to the women I worked with through TWFG I wish you luck and hope that TWFG and the NWRO strengthen and grow.

Communication at a distance.

The new role of NWRO placed many new challenges for NZUSA and TWFG. Due to it's part time position there was no guarantee that the position would be situated in Wellington in the Federation Office and in 2000 I fulfilled the role from my home in Auckland. This meant transporting equipment and resources and some delays in starting.

Communication was done via the mail, phone fax and e-mail. This was difficult with some campuses as e-mail worked for some and not as effectively for others. It was often difficult to catch people on the phone due to both my part-time hours and of course the part time hours of WROs. I never completely overcame the difficulties in staying in regular contact though I tried to utilise the e-group already set up by TWFG.

Part of the communications problems extended from my late appointment and not attending Presidents Training and February Conference or the Campus Tours, which would have meant face to face contact and relationship building, which is vital for this and any federation officer.

Communication with other women's groups and the continuation of representation and relationships with national women's groups such as the YWCA, WIN, MWA, and Rape Crisis was also hurt by the long distance and late start. I never meet most of the people involved or the key contacts, nor had time in my short trips to Wellington for Fedex to build the national networks important to the role of NWRO. The women working in these areas

are just as busy as our organisations and it was difficult to foster long term relationships or be involved in national campaigns without being able to attend the meetings.

I found the loss or lack of these contacts effected my ability to further campaigns such as Thursdays In Black.

Fedex Membership

This role was challenging, to be a member of the group while maintaining my role as Women's Representative. It was made easier by the fact Eva, Ayesha and Yadana attended as TWFG reps as well as the NWRO, so I knew that I had experienced Fedex members there as well representing TWFG. I think most members of committees struggle with the role of advocate for their constituents and the collective responsibility you hold as a committee member.

I also faced the challenge of entering a group that was already established, both as a new person and a new role. I can't say any of the Fedex meetings were easy or light, every meeting discussed difficult issues and Fedex worked hard to come up with solutions that would be best for NZUSA. I hope that the position of NWRO and the relationship with Fedex become clearer in the future.

Conferences

July Women's conference held in Palmerston North

After discussions with WRO's I decided to pick the theme of *women's networks* for the July conference, as many women had expressed their isolation and a lack of support in their roles on campus. I set an agenda that let other women's groups show how they worked and how they organised campaigns. We had speakers from UNIFEM, Rape Crisis, the Labour party Women's caucus, the CTU, Women's Equity Network, Palmerston North City Council, The Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Coordinator of WIN on Poverty, an APSU women's representative and the Women's Rights Officer from Victoria (Dayna Berghan, 2001 NWRO). There was a mix of organisational discussion and campaigns. For those who attended I believe it was a worthwhile, exciting and stimulating two days. I also managed to get sponsorship from *Her Business Magazine* (thank you).

What I didn't achieve though was a space for women to discuss the internal issues of TWFG. Unfortunately I had too full an agenda and let it run late on the second day, cutting short the internal discussion and TWFG meeting. From the brief discussion had at conference and talks afterwards it was clear that the next Conference needed to focus on internal issues.

I also didn't understand how difficult it was for some women to attend this conference and attendance was less than I expected. I also found the physical and emotional demands of the two days more taxing than I had expected.

August Conference held in Otago

Ayesha organised the majority of this conference, and I thank her for the work she did. My preparation involved two papers that went to conference on the Thursdays in Black campaign and the Future of TWFG.

I felt a little uneasy with what my role was in this discussion. What was my role within TWFG? I believed I was there to represent women and be directed by them, not to lead, but I was in the role and knew the difficulties experienced so far and had a role to play in helping shape processes. I also was fairly new to the group and could only read the historical difficulties and discussions. I tried to put forward suggestions for discussion and compile the herstory for the women, so that they could find the processes they wanted to use. In the end I was not at the discussion on TWFG and NWRO, as I was needed to pick up a conference member, whether a deliberate choice or not. I think that it was appropriate that TWFG discussed its processes and relationship with NWRO without the person present.

Much ground was covered and a lot of work was done in one day. I believe the positive feeling continued over to the main NZUSA conference, where we initiated (rather reinstated) women's caucus to discuss issues. This helped when I attended Fedex, as the women could give me and the TWFG reps very clear instructions.

Women's Studies

Both Massey and Victoria had "restructuring" during 2000 and both universities looked at disestablishing Women's Studies. I wrote submissions to both universities and ran a workshop during July Conference on the Massey situation. It looked like the work at Massey by the women on campus paid off to a small extent with some changes for the better but unfortunately not a full retraction of management's intent to disestablish this school. Unfortunately Victoria's proposal came at the end of my term and I do not know what the outcome is, although I do know Dayna will do a fine job fighting.

Herstory Web-Pages

I created a web site for TWFG so women could access articles and information easily. I had never created web pages before so they are somewhat clumsy and not at all pretty but the priority was to get information out to women. I hope that they at least are the beginning of an ever-growing amount of resources for women on campus. The information included is the 2000 women conference papers and minutes, the Status of Young Women Report, Herstory documents and Time-Line, the Thursdays in Black Campaign Kit and discussion documents and articles on women's issues.

Filing

I discovered many documents of use and herstorical importance while going through the records but often to late. So I spent a lot of my last month going through women's records and attempting to re-file them as logically as possible so that the next NWRO could find what she wanted, when she wanted. I do think a trained person would do a better job and it would be nice to see a proper herstory compiled.

General

I passed on information and acted as a contact for some national campaigns including the Human Rights Commission's anti-sexual harassment campaign, and the YWCA anti-violence campaign.

I also answered correspondence on the TWFG scholarship, and provided information to groups and individuals doing research on women's issues.

As well as Women's Conferences I attended NZUSA Conferences and ran workshops at both July and August. I prepared information for Presidents training and ran a workshop.

Lisa Ducat
National Women's Rights Officer 2000