

24th September, 2019.

Professor Stuart McCutcheon
Vice-Chancellor
University of Auckland

Tēnā Koe Professor McCutcheon,

On Friday 27th of September the country will be demonstrating their concern for climate change, the effects of which will be increasingly inevitable if we as global citizens do not take action seriously *now*. As representatives of the U35 network of the Tertiary Education Union, we commend the courage of the Organisers of the Schools Strike 4 Climate Change NZ, and we support the call to you from the Auckland University Students Association on the 28th of August.

While this is one of the most significant issues of our time, a response that may fractionally reduce the University's environmental impact is a commitment that is both insufficient and token. We require a response that leads by way of action and collaboration.

Right now, the University of Auckland is the only university in New Zealand that does not support the Schools Strike for Climate Change NZ. It would have been our desire, as representatives of young academics and professional staff who are integral to the University environment, that the University of Auckland be seen as a leader in this space.

Staff across the country are making a request to participate in actions without being disadvantaged. While providing essential services shall continue, the University has the ability, as do other Universities in New Zealand, to reschedule or record class rooms and make class materials available to support those students who are also wishing to participate in the actions on Friday 27th.

Kind regards,

Daniel Benson-Guiu
TEU Organiser for U35

Joshua James
U35 Representative on the TEU Council



Vice-Chancellor's Office

Professor Stuart N. McCutcheon PhD
Vice-Chancellor

25 September 2019

Daniel Benson-Guiu & Joshua James
Tertiary Education Union
178 Willis Street
Te Aro
Wellington 6011

By email: daniel.benson-guiu@teu.ac.nz

Dear Daniel and Joshua

Thank you for your letter of 24 September.

I have indicated that students are free to engage with the "climate strike" if they wish, and that staff wishing to do so may participate provided they get approval from their line managers (because we have an obligation to keep the University functioning). There is thus no sense in which we are impeding the rights of University of Auckland people to participate if they wish.

However, I do not believe that it is appropriate for the University to take a position on a matter such as this where there will be a diversity of views. Another recent example on which people have sought to have us take a position is the Hong Kong/China issue. We have been consistent in not doing so.

The reason for this is that we are a community of some 50,000 people who have a great diversity of views. Some will think that a "climate strike" is a good idea, others will be neutral and yet others will consider it to be a bad idea. Were that not the case (i.e. were there a unanimity of views), then all 50,000 members of our community would attend the strike, or none would. Neither scenario is plausible. I therefore believe it is appropriate to respect those diverse views and allow individuals to act as they see fit.

Yours sincerely

Stuart N. McCutcheon
Vice-Chancellor

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