

Making a submission on the Councils bill



The government recently tabled changes to education law to make sure the expert voice of students and staff should once again be heard on polytechnic, university and wānanga councils.

The changes will give students and staff at least one seat on councils as of right. This is a big step forward, but it's not enough. The new law passed its first reading in Parliament recently, now it's open to public submissions. If enough of us make a personal submissions we can persuade MPs that giving us more seats at the table will lead to decisions that better reflect the needs of students, staff, and the wider community.

Personal submissions are a powerful way of making MPs aware of your views. If you make a personal submission, you can ask to speak to it and address the select committee in person. This is an even more powerful way to make yourself heard.

You can make a personal submission as an individual, or organise a group of members in your workplace to write a personal submission together. This is a great thing to do, and you can appear as a team before the committee.

Writing your personal submission

Personal submissions are an opportunity to express your main points and concerns.

You might want to write about the benefits increasing elected student and staff representative on councils would have for your institution, and for your local community. You might like to provide examples of where better decisions could have been made with student and staff involvement.

In your submission, be sure to introduce yourself, your background and experience. This will give weight to what you say, because the Select Committee will understand where you're coming from.

If you are asked to appear before the select committee to speak to your submission, the TEU will support you through that process. Contact danny.stevens@teu.ac.nz at any time.

Specific things to say

Your submission can be as long or as short as you want, as long as it clearly states your argument. But two things you may specifically want to mention are:

Students and staff should have at least two places on polytechnic, university and wānanga councils. More staff places will ensure the voice of both academic and general staff is heard.

Polytechnic, university and wānanga councils must be representative of their local communities, and independent from government and business.

How to send your submission

The deadline for submissions is 13 April 2018.

You can post in a submission, but to ensure you get yours in before the deadline, you can submit it through the Parliament website:

https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/52SCEW_SCF_BILL_76301/education-amendment-bill

Either upload your submission as a Word document or PDF, or use the form on the website.



TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION
Te Hautū Kahurangi o Aotearoa

What we think about the government's proposals



Increase elected representatives on councils

There should be at least two student and two staff representatives on each council.

It is good to see the Government taking the expertise and voice of staff and students into consideration by reinstating legislation to ensure staff and student representation on TEI councils. We strongly support these representatives being directly elected by staff and students, respectively.

Just one student and one staff representative is not enough, however. There should be at least two of each to ensure diversity in terms of expertise, knowledge, and demographic characteristics which impact on strategic decisions and governance.

Furthermore, we know that elected staff and students allow for a more diverse council, including women, Māori, Pasifika, young people, and others who are not normally well represented when councils appoint their own councillors.

The two staff representatives should be made up of one academic staff representative and one general staff representative. This is consistent with the situation before the National Government changed the legislation in 2009. Adequate staff and student representation is a necessary part of a quality tertiary education system. It will ensure both that good decisions are made by councils and that staff and students have faith in the decisions that are made.

Increase diversity on councils

Councils must be representative of their local communities, and independent from government and business.

The Government's proposal implicitly acknowledges that diversity of representation on councils is important, but misses a valuable opportunity to make the most of this change in legislation by addressing broader issues around diversity.

Support for diversity of representation should include the representation of the local communities that institutions are based in. As part of this, iwi representation should be included on councils, in line with a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Our tertiary education system belongs to all of us, we all benefit from it, and we must all have a say in how institutions are run. Local communities should have stronger voice on council, to make this a reality.

It is important to recognise that good governance requires a wide range of skills – not just accounting, management, and law, but also an understanding of teaching, research and learning, te ao Māori, knowledge of local communities, and the ability and commitment to speak up for those in need.

Councils that hear fewer types of voices make less considered decisions and can be too easily dominated by one way of thinking, and research shows that councils that reflect local communities are better governed.

Councils also need to be visibly independent from all external influences, including government and business, so they can protect academic freedom, undertake their role as critic and conscience of society and, when needed, act as an independent voice speaking truth to power.

Increase the size of councils

Councils should be large enough to enable diverse representation of communities.

We support the move to increase the maximum size of ITP councils from eight to ten; however, once again, we do not think the Government has gone far enough.

We know that smaller councils tend to result in less diverse councils. That means less space for women, for Māori, for Pasifika.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that smaller councils make better decisions or faster decisions. There is not a single university in the world's top 200 that has a council as small as eight. Most of the world's top universities have larger councils than

New Zealand universities (Oxford 23, Cambridge 25, MIT 72, Harvard 32, Stanford 33), and all have guaranteed stakeholder representation.

Therefore we think councils should be at least 12 to 18 members. We thus propose an increase in council size to a minimum size of 12 members, and a maximum size of 18 members.

An 18-person council would allow for three staff and three student representatives, thus constituting a third of council membership. This would mean a diversity of representation, helping to ensure that councils have the range of skills they need to provide quality governance, contributing to a quality tertiary education system that acts as a real public good.

