

**Press Release****15 March 2010 - For Immediate Release  
Attention: Education and Political reporters****Government pushing tertiary education out of reach?**

Students are concerned at signs that tuition fees may again start spiralling out of control, following Tertiary Education Minister Steven Joyce's comments in the Dominion Post suggesting various options for changing current fee policies and indicating the government is seriously considering allowing universities and polytechnics to charge higher fees.

"Increasing fees without any corresponding increase in government investment will only increase the burden of debt on current and future students. These signals do not encourage graduates to stay when, in stark contrast, the Australian government has substantially boosted its investment into both universities and student support in its' last Budget," said NZUSA co-President Pene Delaney.

"Effectively, raising fees on New Zealand students penalises those who stay, and at worst, pushes many away in the first place," said Delaney.

Increasing the fees burden comes as another blow for students – high summer unemployment has meant many are starting the academic year with fewer savings than usual, and students are also facing threats from government to limit their eligibility for student loans.

Additionally, lifting maximum allowable fees for courses could mean that already expensive courses climb much higher. For example, medical and dentistry students currently face courses costing between \$10,000 and \$11,000 per year and graduates leave owing on average \$65,000.

"There is already huge community concern over high fees and the negative effects of student debt. New Zealand is short of doctors and dentists because high fees turn potential students away from such courses or drive them overseas once they finish," said NZUSA co-President David Do.

"Whilst no interest on student loans, voluntary repayment bonuses, and graduate bonding schemes have been positive steps in addressing the debt burden, the government needs to stop it accruing in the first place. And one of the key drivers is high fees," added Do.

"We acknowledge the historic under funding of tertiary institutions, however increasing costs to individual students is neither a fair nor appropriate solution to the problem. The increasing costs of tertiary tuition fees act as a barrier to accessing education for many people, and this must be remedied," says Do.

"The investment made by students provides long term benefits to our society and economy. Such investment should be supported by policies which encourage study at an affordable price for all New Zealanders," concluded Delaney.

ENDS

For more information contact:  
NZUSA Co-Presidents  
David Do 0274868677 and Pene Delaney 0274868673