

Press Release14 April 2010 - For Immediate Release
Attention: Education and Political reporters**Polytechnic councils – Where are the women?**

Women student leaders today are casting a critical eye over the Government's polytechnic council appointments, highlighting the significant lack of female appointees on polytechnic boards.

The Government today released its Ministerial appointments to polytechnic councils, with only 20 out of 78 appointees being women.

"Women make up a substantial majority of those studying in tertiary education and often face additional barriers to education – the diverse experiences of women in education need to be present at the highest forms of governance to ensure that all students are receiving a quality education," said Sophia Blair, National Women's Rights Officer at the New Zealand Union of Students Associations (NZUSA).

"The Government's own research echoes the findings of others, showing that having women on governance boards results in better company and organisation performance because they can bring a fresh perspective, provide effective leadership, serve as role models and encourage investor confidence,"¹ said Blair.

"Given that these are all important skills that the Government has implied are currently lacking in the polytechnic sector, it would be sensible and equitable to ensure that the governance boards of polytechnics reflected the gender characteristics of not only polytechnics, but society in general", says Blair.

Student leaders will be hoping that the yet to be announced community representative appointments to polytechnic boards demonstrate a greater commitment to equity and improved outcomes for the sector.

ENDS

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¹ *Business New Zealand, Institute of Directors and Ministry of Women's Affairs, 'Women on Boards: Why women on company boards are good for business' May 2009*