

WHY WE NEED STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

1. Are Student Associations political?

Students involved in student associations are a mixture of all political leanings; this makes for better representation.

Student associations support their special interest membership by lobbying politicians of all persuasions and so too, do business and farmer federations.

We should celebrate special interest groups as an integral part of our healthy, western democratic culture

2. What is Freedom of Choice?

Business and farmer federations / associations do not have universal membership.

Student Associations do have universal membership; some consider this as being inconsistent with “freedom of choice”.

There are many reasons why “freedom of choice” is a dishonest argument but briefly, there are three strong reasons:

I. Financial

Business and farmers federations / associations do not provide services and benefits to non-members and can easily distinguish between the two different groups.

Student Associations provide services and benefits to all students and not just members; many services are campus based and open to all students without any reasonable way of separating the areas for members and non-members – i.e. provision of refreshments; free food; utensils; fridges; microwaves; pool tables; free phones; computers; etc.

II. Collective Cooperation & Social Integrity

Western civilisation relies upon collective cooperation and social integrity of its system to support all its citizens, not necessarily because it cares about individuals but because this system is successful for all social echelons by providing a healthy workforce for businesses; economics has proven it works!

Collective cooperation, through laws and social persuasion, forces universal membership (citizenship) on each New Zealander. Within this universal membership as a New Zealander, we all have responsibilities to one another; i.e. to drive on the left side of the road; to behave in a manner that does not endanger others or their property; and please note - to pay taxes!

Citizenship is a beneficial universal membership system that is accountable through democratic process and regulations; this system, through taxes, provides the social integrity we need to properly conduct and control our economy, both within our country and abroad.

Without universal membership requiring each member to pay their taxes, the New Zealand economy would fail economically and we would have chaos; there would be no confidence or social integrity in our financial sector and people would riot.

Citizenship forces each of us to pay taxes – there is no “freedom of choice”; if those forcing such a voluntary and disastrous system of Student Associations were honest in their argument, they would remove the requirement to pay taxes and all other laws that make our country safe secure and financially viable.

III. Opting Out Clause

The fact is, those seeking to force a “freedom of choice” system on Student Associations live by a “NO freedom of choice” system themselves.

Student Associations are required to have an opting out of membership clause in their rules but there is no opting out clause for taxes as a citizen!

3. What is Universal Membership?

Universal membership is a cost effective way of delivering advocacy, representation and services to students, as students require.

Universal membership is democratic as each student is entitled to have a say in its running and even its existence.

Universal membership has provided the following benefits for students, the most important are unseen on a daily basis by students; this system acts like a good, positive insurance policy, there when you most need it, i.e.:

➤ Advocacy and Representation

Student Associations provide:

- ❖ Advocacy and representation of student issues at all levels to continue to fight for education that is affordable, equitable, accessible and enjoyable to and for all
- ❖ Independent advocacy for a student or group of students facing difficulties with their learning institutions and sometimes even in off campus matters as well; this service is completely confidential

➤ Support in accessing Student Welfare Funds; Budget Advice; Food Banks

Student Associations have people who can be with you and guide you through these processes

➤ Learning Institution Educational Improvements

Through effective student feedback, Student Associations take student issues directly to the learning institution and follow through to ensure students are receiving the education they expected from their chosen course

➤ Student Job Search

Student Associations have supported this New Zealand wide service to ensure students can access this service with no extra costs attached

➤ **Student Discounts**

Student Associations have been able to work with businesses to provide student discounts on presentation of the student ID cards; one of the many direct benefits of working as a group with the same interests

➤ **Great Campus Culture**

Student Associations act as a united group with students of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and political persuasions creating a great campus culture and atmosphere.

➤ **Strong Student Voice through Democratic Processes**

Student Associations encourage democratic participation of all students and by doing so, whether it is for governance or social reasons, students are exposed to a system that teaches positive social interactions and responsibilities, including fiscal responsibilities. This is something many younger people and as a result, our society sadly lacks.

➤ **Other Benefits Over Many Years**

- ❖ **Community Services Cards**
- ❖ **Studylink Improvements**
- ❖ **Interest Free Student Loans**
- ❖ **Maintaining the course related Costs of Student Loans**

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Students Association also provides general services for all students such as:

- Advocacy and support
- Confidential discussions on any issues
- Student Hardship Grants
- Individual targeted
- Curriculum Vitae
- 0800 487772 service so we are only a phone call away even for the most distant students

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Students Association targets its annual budgets to ensure smaller campuses or divisions do not miss out through providing a larger budget for them, and working closely with Tai Poutini Polytechnic staff; this ensures services such as:

- ✓ End of course functions
- ✓ Daily refreshments
- ✓ Buying of assets such as
 - ❖ Microwaves
 - ❖ BBQ's
 - ❖ Toasters
 - ❖ Sandwich makers

❖ Crockery & cutlery

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Students Association provides individual budgets for the three main campuses and it is up to their Student Reps and Executive Members through the democratic decision-making process, to determine how their budget is spent; services such as:

- ✓ Phone - local & limited toll calling
- ✓ Student ID photos
- ✓ Pool table
- ✓ Fridge
- ✓ Microwave
- ✓ BBQ
- ✓ Oven warmer
- ✓ Sandwich maker
- ✓ Toaster
- ✓ Free food days
- ✓ Daily Refreshments
- ✓ Sponsored group outings
- ✓ Sponsored functions
- ✓ Raffles
- ✓ Prizes

4. How much is the Student Association Fee?

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Students Association annual fee for a full-time student is \$90 or \$1.73 weekly; we have no hidden cost, that's it!

We do not believe our advocacy and services will be able to be replicated at this same fee by any learning institution.

Nor do we believe any learning institution with its own special interests and financial pressures and challenges will represent students as we do, independently of any other interests. Advocacy and representation is compromised without independence.

For less than \$1.73 per week, we provide insurance that learning institutions, government and its organisations such as Studylink, will hear directly from students what students' needs are.

5. Is there room for improvement?

Yes, unless we are dead.

Student Associations are already obliged to provide an Annual Independent Audit Report if they are to receive their fees collected by a learning institution.

Student Associations are happy to discuss ideas on how to improve any part of this existing system.