

Urgent need for union funds

“An ongoing funding structure is needed for student unions”

The National Union of Students has called for a major injection of funds from governments and universities starting next year to prop up struggling union activities on campus.

A recently released government report into the impact of voluntary student unions shows that student union fee revenue in Victoria was down \$51.5 million this year, forcing cuts to staff and services such as student media,

activities and welfare services.

The Union says an ongoing funding structure is needed for student unions, and more importantly emergency funding relief for unions that are really struggling.

Victorian NUS president Sarah Cole told *Utimes* that if the Federal Government doesn't change the laws around voluntary student unions and find ways to support student unions next year, “there will be a lot of services on different campuses shutting down because they can't be financially supported any more.”

She also said the national union faced cuts to different departments, as NUS is funded mainly by campus student organisations.

A post card campaign has been part of the effort of NUS to urge the government to take

further action.

“Students have been really behind this campaign, finding postcards and sending them off to (Federal Minister for Education) Julia Gillard,” Cole said.

“We also have a number of meetings with Julia Gillard and (Federal Minister for Youth) Kate Ellis's office.

“There have been political actions on different campuses, such as protest and various awareness raising stunts.

“We will just continue to demand the government support student unions, as they promised they would.

“They just need to come through with an actual financial change.”

Coco Ho

No boys allowed



Swinburne has been awarded a grant to develop and run a girls-only computer club called Digital Divas.

The primary aim of the initiative is to allow students from Brentwood Secondary College to have fun with IT in a club environment while attempting to promote careers for women in information and communication technology.

“The Digital Divas elective trial and ongoing research is trying to change the embedded and often incorrect stereotypes surrounding women in (the) industry,” club co-ordinator Dr Catherine Lang said.

“The girls are having fun while engaging in innovative IT curricula. Their

interaction with Swinburne's Faculty of Information and Communication Technology students provides an incidental form of role-modelling that we hope will help reduce stereotypical impressions of ICT courses and careers.

Lang sees the need for a club like Digital Divas in the 21st century.

“When ICT started as an independent discipline, it was suggested that the profession would be ideal for women who were thought to possess the qualities of problem solving, attention to detail, accuracy and patience to a greater degree than men.

“Today we are moving towards less than 20 per cent female representation in ICT courses and careers.”

Call to end overseas fees

Full fees for overseas students should be abolished, says Melbourne University Student Union.

In its submission to the Bradley Review of Higher Education, the Union also demanded that international students be given access to Centrelink benefits and student concession cards, to make studying in Australia more affordable.

“We want (the government) to understand the situation that international students find themselves in,” Union president Libby Buckingham said.

“They are struggling to pay for their transport and their rent just like any other Australian students.

“The government should make it easier for international students to study here, so things like the concession cards are really important.

“We want (international students) not just considered as cash cows to fund our education system, we want them considered as peers, as friends ... and getting the best quality education for everyone.”

The National Union of Students echoed Melbourne's call.

“International students are treated very badly by universities and the government as a source of funding the universities,” National Union of Students' Victorian president Sarah Cole said.

“They often don't get what they pay for and are unsupported while they are here.

“(International students) even have false expectations about language requirements, so they come here but struggle because they don't have enough English to get through their course.

“There aren't adequate facilities to help them with that. And of course international student fees are going up all the times.”

Coco Ho

Three PhD Scholarships in Wine Microbiology and Fermentation Technology



Applications are invited for up to **three** full-time industry postgraduate scholarships for support during study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Supervision will be within the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine in the Wine Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology Laboratory on the Waite Campus. The research group has excellent facilities including a Multi-function Fermentation Facility, extensive molecular biology and analytical capabilities, a number of collections of modified yeast libraries as well as collaborations with international groups specialising in metabolomics and genome analysis.

Areas of interest:

- 1) Identification and exploitation of genes conferring superior performance of wine yeast.
- 2) Analysis of the metabolome of wine: The contribution of microbial metabolism.
- 3) Evaluation of the use of High Power Ultrasound in wine fermentations and enhancement of colour and flavour extraction.

Enquiries and applications to: Associate Professor Vladimir Jiranek. Email: vladimir.jiranek@adelaide.edu.au. Ph (08) 8303 6651. Applicants must be Australian or New Zealand citizens or permanent residents of Australia who are acceptable as candidates for a PhD degree at the University of Adelaide. The scholarships will be for the period of 3 years and have a stipend of **\$25,000** (GWRDC) or **\$26,140** (in 2008, ARC) per annum and are likely to be tax exempt, subject to Taxation Office approval. Suitably qualified candidates will have a good honours degree or equivalent in science, or an associated field. Two scholarships (1 and 2) are expected to be supported by the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation (GWRDC) and will require a joint application to the GWRDC. The third scholarship (3) is available immediately and has been made possible through an Australian Research Council Linkage grant (jointly awarded to UniSA and Adelaide University).

