



**Submission for the
Parliament of Victoria
Inquiry into
enhancing Victorian
university
governance**

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To: Members of the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure
Committee (The Committee)

From: University of Melbourne Student Union Inc

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Executive Summary

This submission addresses how Victorian universities and their governing bodies can give meaningful and timely effect to the *Final Report and Principles of the Expert Council on University Governance*, and to the agreed reform priorities of Education Ministers, in accordance with the Terms of Reference of this inquiry.

It proceeds on the basis that declining trust in universities, recurring student and staff harm, and growing public concern about governance are not the result of isolated failures or individual misconduct. Rather, they are foreseeable outcomes of governance arrangements that concentrate authority, diffuse accountability, limit transparency, and provide affected stakeholders with voice but little influence at the highest decision-making level.

Trust in Victoria's higher education system depends on three critical areas of reform. Firstly, that university councils as governors of public institutions and that oversee outcomes that matter to the community are equipped and required to receive unfiltered information about:

- operational matters;
- conflicts of interest in operational as well as strategic decision-making;
- input from independent student organisations.

Also, that the University of Melbourne University Council is subject to independent scrutiny to ensure it makes decisions transparently, and in the public interest.

Secondly, it is critical that independent student organisations are properly protected from undue influence by universities as a precondition of ensuring that university council decision-making is inclusive of, and responsive to, students. The *raison d'être* of student unions is to keep universities accountable through unfettered advocacy that calls out the actions or inactions of universities, and to provide student voice via genuine, student-led participation in decision-making.

The current provisions of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) (HESA), and regulatory and enforceability mechanisms, are inadequate. Higher Education Providers currently have a fundamental and unmanaged conflict of interest in determining the level of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) for independent student organisations and the terms and conditions of its use.

A key requirement to ensure greater accountability is sustainable funding that is not tethered to terms and conditions set by Higher Education Providers, nor subject to an arbitrary interpretation of HESA in respect of either the funding or purposes of independent student organisations. This must include introducing a mechanism to investigate complaints about administration of SSAF. Further, to expand the oversight of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to include overseeing governance standards for SSAF administration and consultation with independent student organisations based on HESA guidelines.

Thirdly, that the University of Melbourne is required to have regard to the recommendations of the University of Melbourne Student Union Inc, as the peak body representing all enrolled students at the University, and key stakeholder, with respect to how it can meaningfully give effect to the Final Report of the Expert Council on University Governance. This will mitigate the risk of tokenistic actions that do not properly ensure university council decision-making is inclusive of students and responsive to students and independent student unions.

About the University of Melbourne Student Union Inc (UMSU)

The University of Melbourne Student Union Inc. (UMSU) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the quality of governance at Australian higher education providers.

UMSU is an incorporated association and registered charity and is recognised by the University of Melbourne as the representative body for all its enrolled students – postgraduate and undergraduate. UMSU is one of the largest independent student organisations in Australia. It is governed by an elected Students' Council of 54 students and 12 elected student committees. UMSU's elected student officers run student-led media, creative arts, activities and cover a wide-range of policy areas including education policy, welfare and the environment; as well as representing diverse cohorts such as its People of Colour, Indigenous, Queer, Disabilities, Women, and international student departments. UMSU has the longest running independent student publication in Australia, Farrago, and a long history of activism and advocacy, and well over 200 affiliated student clubs.

UMSU employs over 60 staff who run a free student legal service, student advocacy service that represents student rights impacted by the University of Melbourne regulations, rules, policies and administration, and gender-based violence prevention and response service. Staff also manage campus facilities such as a creative library, two professional theatre spaces, a gallery, a bar, and a food relief outlet, as well as run a huge array of activities and provide technical support for professional events.

In 2025, UMSU had approximately 65,000 student members.

Key Issues with Victorian University Governance

While Victorian universities have formally acknowledged the Expert Council's principles and Ministers' priorities, implementation appears focused on procedural compliance rather than holistic structural reform. As a result, significant deficits in accountability, representation, transparency and responsiveness persist.

Insufficient Accountability for Matters Affecting Students

Expert Council principles: accountability; stewardship
Committee interests: accountability; trust; performance outcomes
ToR: (a); (c)(i)

University councils are not consistently accountable for strategy, performance and outcomes on matters affecting students. While university councils are responsible for institutional strategy and risk, they do not reliably oversee or publicly report on outcomes that affect students and the communities in which they operate. This includes a lack of transparency about the response of university councils to student complaint resolution and appeals.

The University of Melbourne Council receives reports from the Vice-Chancellor and other senior leaders on strategy implementation and performance metrics at its formal meetings, however Council reporting on strategy and performance is high-level and opaque. High-level summaries do not generally explain how key strategy decisions *affect students*, or how performance against student-centred outcomes (e.g. complaints, appeals, equity outcomes, mental health impacts) are tracked and addressed over time. Consequently, meaningful, student-centred accountability is largely absent from public visibility.

Student Appeals

The current state of the student complaint and appeal process at the University of Melbourne is a compelling example of University Council's lack of oversight and this is explored further below at [Accountability Deficits in Academic Governance](#).

Student Safety Data and Educational Quality

University councils should provide clear and transparent communication regarding student safety data and the effects of workforce precarity on educational quality, particularly from the student perspective.

The University of Melbourne published a *Sexual Misconduct Annual Report* in 2023, which gives some insight into sexual harm prevention efforts and claims data. However, that is the only publicly available safety-related report. The report is focused on policy implementation and support services, but it does not show comprehensive statistics on how many incidents occurred, how they were resolved, or whether students felt the outcomes were safe and fair. Consequently, critical safety data such as campus crime rates, injury rates, or behavioural complaints, are not systematically reported in a way that's easy for students or the public to scrutinise, leading to a perception that reporting is more about process than accountability.

A lack of openness in these areas weakens institutional accountability and erodes student trust in governance. When university councils fail to demonstrate how they are addressing significant structural and strategic issues that affect students, it creates uncertainty about whether these concerns are being meaningfully considered or acted upon.

Council Composition

Council composition and appointment processes limit diversity of expertise and perspective. Opaque appointment processes and the predominance of corporate and managerial expertise on university councils hinder university councils' ability to exercise effective stewardship of *public* universities. Limited staff, student and community representation reduces internal challenge and impairs councils' capacity to identify emerging risks.

In 2026, the University of Melbourne has proposed adding another student member to University Council. While this is welcome, simply adding additional student representatives onto university councils will not address principle 6 of the *Final Report and Principles of the Expert Council on University Governance*. Student representatives on Council must be able to seek feedback from elected representatives and more broadly this should involve UMSU as the peak student body with a role in student representation recognised by the *Higher Education Support (Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy) Guidelines 2022* (SSARA guidelines).

Elected Student Representatives

UMSU has established, credible mechanisms for broad and structured consultation with undergraduate, graduate and international students, as well as a wide range of specific cohort representatives. Yet the University of Melbourne does not refer matters considered by University Council that pertain to students to UMSU's elected Students' Council, which has 54 student members annually elected by the student body.

Weak Mechanisms for Staff and Student Voice

<i>ToR (a); (c)(iv); Committee Interests: inclusivity; responsiveness</i>

Existing mechanisms for staff and student voice are insufficient to ensure inclusive and responsive governance by university councils. Consultation processes are frequently advisory, informal or mediated through professional management staff.

In recent years, the University of Melbourne has adopted its own mechanisms to consult with students, such as the 'Melbourne Student Forum' (MSF). The MSF has effectively displaced engagement with democratically elected student representatives in favour of a small number of hand-picked students which effectively form a closed focus group. Tokenistic consultation with students or relying on consultation mechanisms which exclude democratically elected student representatives undermines the role of independent student organisations representing broad constituencies.

[UMSU's position paper](#) on the introduction of the MSF in 2023, explored a number of limitations with meaningful participation of students in university governance. In the section entitled *Power Sharing or Tokenism?* the paper observes that students engaged in governance processes that span multiple years require structured support to participate on an equal footing. Without such support, students serving single-year terms are inherently disadvantaged relative to continuing staff members.

The University of Melbourne's current approach reflects a deficit model, presuming reduced student capacity due to limited tenure and institutional experience, rather than addressing structural inequities in student participation.

On the other side of the same coin, inductions for new members of University of Melbourne Council do not involve input from UMSU. This Inquiry should address the need for a component of student-led induction in senior decision-making bodies to ensure a proper understanding of student representation, the SSARA Guidelines and the critical role of independent student advocacy by student unions to ensure accountability from a student perspective.

Casework data from student advocacy services consistently indicates that many Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students in particular do not feel empowered to raise concerns about supervision quality, workload or wellbeing due to fear of reprisal or adverse academic consequences. These dynamics are exacerbated where councils lack direct access to unfiltered information from students and staff, or where representative mechanisms such as student organisations lack independence and protection. Meaningful governance requires more than the presence of 'student voice' - it requires structures that enable students' voices to influence decision-making.

Transparency Deficits Undermine Institutional Legitimacy

<i>ToR (a); (c)(ii); Committee Interests: transparency; trust</i>

A lack of Council transparency undermines universities' legitimacy as public institutions and erodes the trust of students. The absence of clear information about Council decision-making, its management of conflicts of interest, rationales for remuneration and performance oversight in respect of safety and complaint matters obscures how universities balance financial, educational and social objectives.

Distrust of University Complaint Handling

UMSU provides a free Student Advocacy Service, staffed by experienced tertiary advocates, including a specialist gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response team. In 2025 the team provided individual casework assistance to 39 students and provided the only GBV related primary prevention initiatives at the University of Melbourne: conducting 65 workshops with student leaders on *bystander intervention and responding to disclosures* to 733 students.

A lack of trust in the University's complaint system is a common theme arising in UMSU's work with students in this context. This aligns with findings in successive large-scale research including the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) [Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Harassment](#) in 2017, the Social Research Centre's [National Student Safety Survey](#) in 2021, and the recent landmark [Racism@Uni Survey](#) by the AHRC. Both the AHRC Racism@Uni Survey and UMSU's own [Racism@Unimelb Reports](#) confirm there is widespread distrust of university processes amongst students' experiencing racism.

Serious erosion of trust in university decision-making is also evidenced by student responses to the University of Melbourne's unauthorised use of Wi-Fi surveillance during student protests in 2024. Despite subsequent [findings](#) of the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner, that the University "failed to take reasonable steps to make individuals aware of the purposes for which their Wi-Fi location data was collected and may be used, in contravention of IPP 1.3", the University of Melbourne failed to implement a transparent and student-focused process to address concerns expressed by students or proactively attempt to rebuild trust with the university community.

Accountability Deficits in Academic Governance

*ToR (c)(i); (c)(iv);
Committee Interests: trustworthiness; performance*

Failures in the oversight of academic governance and student appeal processes illustrate broader accountability gaps in university governance. Barriers to fair and timely student appeals, including 6- to 12-month waits for outcomes and dismissal of appeals 'on the papers' without hearings, undermine procedural fairness and organisational accountability. While these matters fall under the purview of the Academic Board, these failures reflect insufficient Council oversight of academic governance as an integral component of overall institutional risk and performance.

Currently students engaging with the UMSU Advocacy Service at the University of Melbourne are experiencing unreasonably long appeal timeframes, well beyond indicative timelines set out in policy. Critically, in some cases the length of these timeframes effectively extinguishes the possibility of a successful resolution for the student. Complaints processes more generally at the University of Melbourne expose vulnerable students to harm by enmeshing them in a burdensome escalation process that lacks discretionary decision-making at the lower levels, and a lack of independence and objective rigour when reviewing and investigating decision making at the mid-tier levels of academic governance.

Case study 1 – Stacey Nguyen¹

For example, Stacey Nguyen is a student with diagnosed neurodiversity undertaking biological sciences at the undergraduate level. Stacey presented to the UMSU Advocacy Service seeking assistance with their special consideration application. Although Stacey's matter was found to be eligible for special consideration by Student Equity and Disability Services, the faculty refused to reweight Stacey's assessment. The faculty instead offered Stacey a late withdrawal without academic penalty.

This decision meant that Stacey would need to re-enrol in the subject (which was a compulsory unit) and complete assessment they had already passed with distinction. Not only would Stacey need to complete the subject again, but because it was only offered during one semester in the year, this decision extended their degree completion by 12 months.

Stacey appealed the decision in January and received an outcome that their appeal was denied 'on the papers' six months later in August. During that time, the faculty which had denied the Stacey's original request changed their decision and provided a different grade. Stacey informed the appeals secretary of this change of circumstances but did not receive a response until October. Ultimately the appeal was aborted, the arguments were never considered, and Stacey is in a worse situation than they were when they appealed.

This experience has had a marked impact on Stacey's health and wellbeing. They have required the support of mental health practitioners during this process and have been left emotionally exhausted by a process that remains obscure and burdensome to individual students. Engaging with their studies during this process has been near impossible. Stacey feels angry and abandoned by an institution that is meant to represent educational excellence.

¹ This case study has been de-identified to safeguard student privacy but is based on UMSU Advocacy's case records.

Governance Risks Relating to Funding Impacting Student-Led Organisations

*ToR (a); (c)(iv);
Committee Interests: trust; responsiveness*

Independent student-led organisations are critical to building institutional trust and as a means of early risk identification. That notwithstanding, dependence on funding from a frequently hostile source means student-led organisations remain structurally vulnerable.

Governance of SSAF Funding by Universities

Since the introduction of voluntary student unionism, the legislative provisions governing the collection, administration and use of SSAF have failed to ensure accountable, transparent, and fair allocation models are employed by Higher Education Providers consistently across the sector.

The current SSAF framework presents structural governance deficiencies. There is no internal or external mechanism to challenge the fairness of SSAF decision-making or the management of inherent conflicts of interest. This absence of oversight exposes student-led organisations to adverse or discretionary funding determinations that ultimately undermine broader institutional accountability.

The statutory minimum allocation of 40% of SSAF to student-led organisations is supported by limited regulatory guidance, enabling higher education providers to interpret its application unilaterally. A formal review of this reform, undertaken in consultation with student-led organisations, is necessary to assess whether the amendment has been implemented consistently with its objective of ensuring sustainable funding through genuine engagement with elected student representatives.

To safeguard the independence of student-led organisations, revised guidelines under s 19.39 of HESA should require that the minimum 40% allocation be directed to organisations representing the entire enrolled student body, irrespective of the existence of additional associations representing partial cohorts.

Enhanced oversight mechanisms are also required, including independent audit processes to ensure compliance with the consultation standards prescribed by the SSARA Guidelines and HESA. Further, where funding is calculated as a percentage of SSAF revenue, Higher Education Providers should be required to guarantee a minimum notional allocation in advance of the funded year that cannot be retrospectively reduced, thereby preserving financial stability and organisational sustainability.

Governance of SSAF Funding at the University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne provides UMSU with a rolling three-year funding agreement allocating the organisation 37.5% of SSAF revenue. The allocation is reviewed triennially through a non-transparent process that is not published, negotiated or audited. Consultation occurs with competing SSAF recipients without disclosed conflict-management measures, raising concerns regarding compliance with the student representative consultation requirements under the SSARA Guidelines.

Operationally, UMSU’s allocation is advised as a forecast late in the preceding year and paid quarterly, subject to adjustment against actual SSAF revenue. As allocations are determined by year-end collections, material variances may arise; in 2025, a negative variance was applied after actual revenue fell below forecast. Such retrospective reductions, while marginal for large institutions, pose significant financial risk to a not-for-profit student organisation and undermine the funding stability contemplated by s 19.39(2) of HESA.

The University’s governance around allocation has lacked transparency and rationale:

- 1. 2007–2011:** Funding distributed under a transitional model based on student load and service provision, but without transparency about data or modelling assumptions.
- 2. 2012:** A new SSAF allocation framework was introduced without a disclosed methodology.
- 3. 2017–2019 Review:** Again, no clear rationale was provided, and the review concluded, without explanation, that allocations would be determined solely as a proportion of total SSAF revenue.
- 4. 2022:** Despite detailed submissions, the University reaffirmed the same proportional model without explanation.

UMSU maintains that SSAF allocation models must ensure allocations are transparent, defensible, and clearly understood by students and recipients alike.

Issues with SSAF Allocation

Student advocacy and representation provide an essential early-warning function for university councils. However, as these organisations remain financially dependent on university discretion regarding the level of funding they receive, their independence and effectiveness can be compromised, weakening institutional responsiveness and trust.

It is a failure of governance that universities have no regulatory oversight to ensure their interests in allocating SSAF are properly managed. The need to address the vulnerability of student-led organisations to reductions in funding by Higher Education Providers was articulated in the Department of Education Budget 2024-2025.²

For example, in 2025 UMSU presented clear evidence that its Student Advocacy Service was experiencing unprecedented and unsustainable demand, largely driven by university referrals. The Service data showed that by August 2025, the Service had nearly matched the prior six months of activity in only eight weeks. The longitudinal data indicated this was a result of sustained demand pressure rather than a temporary spike. Despite this evidence provided to the SSAF consultation, the university refused to change its pre-determined funding allocation.

² “Currently, while higher education providers are required to consult with student representatives about SSAF revenue distribution, the revenue allocation is at the discretion of providers. This can leave student-led organisations vulnerable to reductions in funding. At present nearly 6 out of 10 higher education providers allocate less than 40% of SSAF revenue to student-led organisations.... This proposal will help to improve the services that student-led organisations are able to provide to students, which will support students to succeed at university.” See: Federal Department of Education, [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\) Revenue Allocation to Student-led Organisations](#).

The lack of accountability of Higher Education Providers to demonstrate a rational allocation model to determine how SSAF is distributed, generates a culture of insecure work for student organisation employees, characterised by under-resourcing and downward pressure to deliver more services with less. At the University of Melbourne, there is insufficient Council oversight and accountability of decision-making in this space. Currently in Chancellery, there is a single decision-maker who can effectively determine the viability of student-led organisations at the university, and in some cases exerts undue influence on the priorities and other operational aspects of independent organisations.

Recommendations

Fundamentally, UMSU recommends that Victorian university councils be required to strengthen accountability, transparency and inclusive decision-making in accordance with the *Expert Council on University Governance's Final Report and Principles*, including through governance arrangements that protect independent student representation and ensure councils are accountable for institutional performance and outcomes that matter to students, staff and the broader community.

The following recommendations are directed at strengthening Victorian university governance by enabling university councils to give practical effect to the *Expert Council on University Governance's Final Report and Principles*, and to meet the expectations of staff, students and the broader community as public institutions.

Accountability for strategy, performance and outcomes

Recommendation 1 - *Require university councils to formally define, oversee and publicly report on non-financial performance outcomes.*

This should include, at a minimum:

- student complaints and appeals timeliness and outcomes;
- student safety and wellbeing indicators;
- access to fair academic review and appeal processes; and
- the impacts of workforce precarity on educational quality.

University councils cannot be meaningfully accountable for outcomes they do not systematically oversee. Treating student experience, procedural fairness and safety as governance-level performance indicators aligns council oversight with public expectations and reduces institutional blind spots.

Expert Council principles: accountability; stewardship

Committee interests: accountability; trust; performance outcomes

ToR: (a); (c)(i)

Recommendation 2 - *Require university councils to explicitly oversee academic governance as a core component of institutional performance and risk.*

This should include regular reporting to councils on:

- access to and integrity of student appeals;
- compliance with procedural fairness obligations; and
- systemic barriers to grievance resolution.

Fragmentation between corporate and academic governance obscures serious institutional risks. Rather than being seen as operational matters, failures in academic governance should be treated as governance failures requiring council-level oversight and corrective action.

Expert Council principles: integrity; coherent governance; accountability

Committee interests: trustworthiness; risk management

ToR: (c)(i); (c)(iv)

Representation, capability and diversity of perspective

Recommendation 3 - Mandate minimum voting representation of staff and students on university councils

These would be supported by safeguards to ensure:

- independence from university management;
- protection from retaliation; and
- access to the same information as other Council members.

'Student Voice' without decision-making power does not constitute meaningful participation in governance. Diverse lived experience strengthens councils' capacity to identify emerging risks and assess the real-world impacts of institutional decisions.

Expert Council principles: inclusive governance; representation; capability
Committee interests: inclusivity; responsiveness; representative expertise
ToR: (a); (c)(iii); (c)(iv)

Recommendation 4 - Require transparent and publicly accessible council appointment processes.

This should include publication of:

- selection criteria and skills matrices;
- appointment processes and decision-makers;
- conflicts of interest declarations; and
- council composition against stated capability needs.

Opaque appointments undermine legitimacy, reduce internal challenge, and weaken public confidence in governance. Transparency supports diversity, capability and trust.

Expert Council principles: transparency; capability; integrity
Committee interests: transparency; trust; representative expertise
ToR: (c)(ii); (c)(iii)

Transparency and public accountability

Recommendation 5 - Require councils to publish accessible summaries of decisions on defined 'material matters'.

This should include decisions relating to:

- major policy changes affecting students or staff;
- decisions with human rights, safety or equity implications; and
- significant organisational restructures or cost-cutting measures.

As public institutions, universities must be transparent to the communities they serve. Decision transparency is a governance safeguard, not an administrative burden.

Expert Council principles: transparency; public interest
Committee interests: transparency; trust; public accountability
ToR: (a); (c)(ii)

Trust, responsiveness and risk management

Recommendation 6 - Establish protected escalation pathways enabling staff, students and their representatives to raise systemic concerns directly with university councils, independent of management.

Councils require access to unfiltered information to manage risk effectively. Independent escalation pathways function as an early-warning system and support timely, responsive governance.

This framework should also include:

- strengthened oversight and independent audit mechanisms to ensure Higher Education Providers comply with minimum consultation standards under the SSARA Guidelines, including the requirement for a “clearly defined and effective process” approved annually by the governing body pursuant to s 19(1), and consultation with students and elected student representatives under s 19(3); and
- formal reporting to councils on consultation quality, grievance trends, and systemic student concerns relating to SSAF allocation and student representation.

Governance oversight of consultation is essential to maintaining trust and ensuring compliance with statutory obligations.

Expert Council principles: risk oversight; responsiveness; integrity
Committee interests: trust; responsiveness; risk management
ToR: (a); (c)(iv)

Recommendation 7 - Recognise independent student-led organisations and advocacy services as critical governance accountability mechanisms

University councils should be required to:

- disclose funding arrangements and conditions;
- actively manage conflicts of interest in funding decisions;
- ensure funding stability sufficient to support independent student advocacy;
- guarantee a minimum notional SSAF allocation at least three months prior to the funded year that cannot subsequently be reduced due to forecast fluctuations, mitigating financial instability risks that impact service continuity, employment, workload and psychological health of staff; and
- ensure compliance with strengthened Higher Education Provider (HEP) guidelines supporting s 19.39 of HESA, requiring allocation of the minimum 40% SSAF to student-led organisations representing all enrolled students (such as UMSU), regardless of the existence of additional associations representing partial cohorts.

New HEP guidelines supporting s 19.39 of HESA should stipulate that Higher Education Providers must allocate the minimum 40% SSAF to student-led organisations that represent the entire enrolled student body, and not dilute this requirement by distributing funds to organisations that duplicate or partially replicate representation of a subset of students.

Independent student organisations provide essential feedback on governance performance and student harm. Their financial and political vulnerability represents a governance risk that councils must actively manage. Funding instability or manipulation of consultation processes undermines independence and weakens institutional accountability.

Expert Council principles: accountability; integrity; stewardship
Committee interests: trust; responsiveness; inclusivity
ToR: (a); (c)(iv)

Continuous improvement and trust restoration

Recommendation 8 - Mandate periodic independent evaluations of council effectiveness.

University councils should be required to publish summaries addressing:

- accountability and decision-making quality;
- diversity of expertise and perspective;
- responsiveness to staff, students and community concerns.

Effective governance requires formal evaluation and continuous improvement. Independent evaluation strengthens councils' capacity to improve, adapt and maintain public confidence.

Expert Council principles: capability; accountability; continuous improvement

Committee interests: trust; system confidence

ToR: (b); (c)(iii)

Appendix A: UMSU's Constitutional purposes

UMSU operates under the principles of Student Unionism, which is broadly defined as student control of student affairs. The UMSU Constitution establishes that UMSU will:

- advance the welfare and interests of students;
- represent students of the University within the University and to the community;
- provide amenities and services, principally for students and other members of the University community, and incidentally to the public.
- provide an independent framework for student social and political activity;
- develop, maintain and support student clubs, societies and associational life generally;
- promote and defend the rights of students to education on the basis of equality, without regard to race, colour, sex, sexuality, gender identity, age, physical disability, mental illness, economic circumstances, political religious or ideological conviction, or national or social origin;
- oppose violence and/or hatred through militarism, nationalism, or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexuality, gender identity, age, physical disability, mental illness, economic circumstances, religion, or national or social origin;
- provide a democratic and transparent forum in which students' affairs and interests can be governed in an effective and accountable manner; and
- promote free and accessible government-funded education.