



## UCSA Student Forum

Date: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Time: 11.45am

Venue: Undercroft

The UCSA President opened the forum and welcomed everyone for attending. Erin introduced herself and thanked Dr Rod Carr, Vice Chancellor for his participation at the forum. The forum was chaired by Andrew Ramsay, UCSA Vice President.

The UCSA President began with a discussion on the success of Orientation with 37,000 students attending across 26 events. There was a 100% ticket sale capacity with an increase in breadth of event offerings. Feedback from those that attended was very positive. The Macklemore concert was a highlight for many. Erin acknowledged the frustration experienced by those students under the age of 18 who could not attend the events where alcohol was served.

The 12 elected students that make up the UCSA Executive represent students on campus by attending academic committees, assisting with the class rep system, facilitating forums and discussions to help enrich the student experience. If more assistance is required please let the student Executive know by calling in the UCSA office or contacting them directly.

Erin acknowledged that it can be challenging to be a student in Canterbury at the moment. The UCSA can offer assistance for students in need; whether it be in the way of a hardship fund, food bank facility, academic or tenancy issues. If the UCSA Welfare and Advocacy team are not able to assist, they can steer students in the right direction.

The UCSA Emergency Dental Scheme established in 2011 in response to the student survey results which help to form recommendations for the Student Services Levy helped over 400 students last year. The student survey results in 2012 have helped the emergency scheme expand into subsidised dental

checkups. In partnership with the Canterbury District Health Board, the dental clinic opens in the two weeks and will operate out of Burnside Primary School Dental Clinic. Appointments can be purchased via Dash tickets.

The UCSA aims to provide immediate access to the UCSA whenever students want. There is a UCSA Facebook page [Facebook.com/TheUCSA](https://www.facebook.com/TheUCSA) and a blog is being created to chronicle what the Executive do, how they represent students and also for students to ask questions. The UCSA President can also be found on Twitter and Facebook.

Erin invited Dr Rod Carr, Vice Chancellor to speak to the student body.

Dr Carr recently thanked the students for attending the forum and welcomed questions shortly. Last year was a challenging year for the University and there has been recent media coverage with the recent financial results publicised of a substantial loss of \$67 million. Some of this loss is due to earthquake related activities. All of the buildings on campus have been revalued, which has seen their value increase resulting in costs being provided for the upgrade of the building if the earthquakes had not occurred. The difference between the increased valuation and upgrade cost is the trade off of \$40 million, which is not cash related.

The other part of the loss is due to the revaluation of James Hight library material. The resources had been valued incorrectly for the last decade by adding to the value of asset subscriptions that were paying for electronic journals. However when subscriptions are stopped, the journals cannot be kept. Adjustments were made and accounting practices going forward have been changed and this has resulted in the \$20 million loss. While the University is still not supporting itself, the loss is not as dramatic it would appear.

Research and teaching with positive learning outcomes continue to be the core business of the University, ensuring resources are used carefully. Student numbers have been recovering but we are still not at the budgeted numbers yet. There is still a need to attract more students next semester and next year.

The James Hight remediation has been completed. The project commenced with the first earthquake after September 2010. The building was remediated and opened for two days before the February 2011 earthquake struck. Since then each floor was subsequently closed and remediated. The building was also shut in the middle of November and further work was completed including double glazing, improved heating, insulation and lighting. The Law Library is now located on Level 6 and 7.

The process to remediate buildings on campus will take 5-7 years and most work will take place over the summer period. The Central Lecture Theatre's remediation is nearly completed after work on the summer. The Law building is currently underway and School of Business and Law is partially located in the History building. While there is disruption for students there is a

light at the end of the tunnel. The remediated spaces will be fit for purpose for the next 25 years.

The University has put forward a business case to the government for financial assistance towards the cost of remediation. Insurance will cover some of the costs however the Engineering and Science facilities require assistance in the vicinity of \$200 million. The University is working with the government through details to justify the costs of using taxpayer's money.

There are over 70 programs degrees/awards on offer, with over 1200 courses to be taught this year, to 13,000 students on campus.

The Chair opened the forum for any general questions

### **Question 1**

A student stated that in the past that he believed law student numbers were greater, with a poor calibre of law students who didn't connect well with the local community and showed a lack of respect for good citation which resulted in poor lawyers. There is concern that greater student numbers could lead to the same situation in Law and Engineering.

Vice Chancellor responded:

The number of students studying Law is the same as 5 years ago. The Law School is an essential part of the c and there have been changes in the teaching faculty and attitudes towards their material in recent years. Chris Gallavin, Dean and Head of Law School is interested in developing community law and engagement. Currently over 200 students take part. The Faculty of Engineering has increased the number of students and in some of the disciplines. There are somewhat fewer staff and some facilities are out dated. It was part of the Campus Masterplan to invest in engineering however one consequence of the earthquakes was that those reserves were used. This is one of the reasons for the financial assistance sought by the government.

UCSA President responded

As a Law school graduate the characterisation of the calibre of Law students can be said to be partly accurate. There are over 200 clubs on campus which pay a huge part to engage as many students as possible.

### **Question 2**

A student stated that he is a vegetarian and takes offense to the UC Coat of Arms with the dead sheep.

The Vice Chancellor responded that it is a fleece on the Royal Coat of Arms not a dead sheep.

### **Question 3**

A student asked if there was an opportunity for students to help with remediation on campus.

The Vice Chancellor responded that Hawkins are the primary contractors for all remediation work on campus. Students can apply for construction work through Hawkins.

#### **Question 4**

A student asked what has happened to the 500-600 student lockers that were located in the James Hight building. Now the lockers have been replaced with approximately 80 modern lockers and now cost \$100 a year. There are not enough lockers on campus now. Will the old lockers be moved to another location for student use? Who set the cost of the lockers?

The Vice Chancellor responded that the lockers cost \$50 for the year with a \$50 refundable bond. Dr Carr acknowledged more lockers are required and will investigate where the old lockers have been moved to. The UCSA have already raised this issue with the University and Dr Carr will find investigate

#### **Question 5**

A student asked who set the fee for the lockers and why?

The Vice Chancellor responded:

He assumes Facilities Management would have set the fee. He will investigate and let the UCSA know.

#### **Question 6**

A student asked how the term times are set and student holidays are allocated. As a student with a family no holiday time will coincide with school holiday breaks and the impact on family life and finances is great. What will happen to next year's timetable? Will it be able to fit in with school year to accommodate students with children?

The Vice Chancellor responded that the timetable clash was not a desirable outcome this year and he is aware of the impact for families. The University set the calendar before the Ministry of Education finalised the timetables for schools. Once the University publish the timetable it is set so international students are aware of it. The Ministry of Education were late finalising their timetable. Next year will also depend on the Ministry of Education's haste in confirming the school timetable.

#### **Question 6**

A student asked what is happening with the UCSA building in terms of remediation.

The UCSA President responded that the UCSA building is located on the other side of the river and are now currently located in the James Hight. The UCSA hold 65% ownership of the building while the University hold the remaining 35%. The University holds the insurance on the building and it is still in negotiations with their insurance company. The immediate focus for the UCSA was to provide as much support to students as possible after the earthquake. The UCSA are keen to remediate the building and are working with the University. Structural reports have recently been received. The

UCSA will look to survey students on their feedback regarding the options that will be available for the future of the UCSA building.

The Vice Chancellor responded:

The engineering report has been received by the University and a report was provided to the UCSA. Dr Carr has not read the report as yet but his understanding is that the building was built in three parts; Ngaio Marsh Theatre, central core and Ballroom. The central core was constructed in 1970s, the Ngaio Marsh appears to be solid and the Ballroom is under dispute as there has been lateral spreading being nearest to the river. The foundations of the three structures are not connected but the roof level is connected. The UCSA building currently meets 15% of the current building code. Structural work needs to be assessed, quantifying the nature of the damage, then the cost of remediation. Insurance will cover the cost of replacing the building back to its current building code standard.

### **Question 7**

A student asked what the UCSA were doing to provide cheaper food on campus.

The UCSA President responded:

The UCSA previously delivered food on campus and moved to outsourcing products. In 2011 the UCSA negotiated with the Compass group for them to deliver food on campus. Cheap food can be purchased for example \$2 rice can be purchased from Chiltons. The UCSA President asked that the UCSA need more information from students rather than feedback saying they want cheaper food. There are more food offerings on campus as well as the Heat and Eat area with 7 microwaves to heat your own food.

### **Question 8**

A student asked who sets the price of food and beverage on campus.

The UCSA President responded that Compass set the price and the UCSA have visibility. For example when Compass increased the price of chips in the Eng cafe and students complained, the UCSA intervened and helped to influence the price and size of the chip bags back to a more reasonable rate.

The meeting closed at 12:15pm.