

Tertiary Education Strategy

Discussion Paper

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Authors - Drs Sandra Grey and Charles Sedgwick

Introduction

The Tertiary Education Strategy must provide a clear understanding for all New Zealanders of what the tertiary sector exists to do, why it must do this and how it is able to do this.

The Strategy assigns responsibilities to government, tertiary institutions, iwi/hapū, staff, students, and communities to guarantee active acknowledgement of Te Tiriti o Waitangi rights and responsibilities. It will also ensure all goals of the sector are accomplished through processes that adhere to shared and accepted values.

TEU puts forward the following whaingā[1] as a jumping-off point for developing a shared vision. We have also used these to inform our advice to the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education and Tertiary Education Commission:

Tū kotahi, tū kaha: we are committed to actions which will leave no-one behind; and we create spaces where all people can fully participate.

Ngā piki, ngā heke: we work to minimise our impact on the environment; and we foster ahikā – the interrelationship of people and the land.

Awahi atu, awahi mai: we give and receive, acknowledging that reciprocity is fundamental to strong and equitable relationships.

Tātou, tātou e: we reach our goals through our collective strength and shared sense of purpose, which are supported through participatory democratic decision-making processes and structures.

The strategy provides us with a way to think about the tertiary education system, to understand the problems within it, and the processes and means required for issues in the sector to be debated by students, staff, communities, whānau, and government.

It must provide a framework for designing tertiary education provision that is focused on the system as a whole and its interrelationship with all parts of society, the environment, and the economy. In this way it will provide a viable system accountable to the common good and focused on the system as a whole with acknowledged relationships with the environment, society, and the economy.

The framework is the responsibility of the Tertiary Education Commission. It includes the administration of coordinated strategic and investment plans for each institution. These must recognise and enable the responsible autonomy and accountability of each institution. That includes recognising each institution's function as critic and conscience of society.

Investment plans guide the internal functions of institutions and set out the responsibility to community, regional and national needs of the citizenry.

1. About the TEU and this paper

The Tertiary Education Union is a movement of 10,000 people working to defend and promote quality public tertiary education that is accessible to all. We work to address a wide range of issues affecting students, staff, and communities. With members in polytechnics, wānanga, universities, and community education providers from Kaitia to Invercargill, in general and academic roles, the TEU has experience, expertise, and research which enable us to actively contribute to debates about the tertiary education system and to fully participate in decision-making at all levels.

This paper is based on a range of structured conversations with members over the last six months, as well as research and policy documentation from the TEU over the past five years.

The structured conversations held at national meetings and workshops at branches have involved (150 conference delegates; 56 council and national committee members; 30 members via zoom and teleconference meetings; and around 60 members at branches). We asked participants to imagine that they were able to write the Tertiary Education Strategy – setting out its goals, its functions, and the processes needed to achieve these. We are grateful to the Ministry of Education officials who joined us for some of the structured conversations.

The research documentation used includes: [The State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019](#); [Improving Working Lives, 2019](#); [Changing Lives, 2019](#); [Funding Our Future, 2018](#); [Education Under Pressure, 2017](#); [Project Whitestreaming Report, 2016](#); [Submission to the Productivity Commission 2016](#); and, [State of the Tertiary Education Sector, 2013](#). We have also drawn on a number of policy and legislative submissions made over the past decade on subjects such as PBRF; the last TES; and, various Education Amendment Bills all of which are publicly accessible if required.

Throughout this document we provide the values and concepts that must be part of the next Tertiary Education Strategy, as well as some key action points. There is much more to discuss but the framework of the TES needs to be collectively agreed before the detail of the system is established. We look forward as a union to contributing to the next round of discussions.

2. What is tertiary education for?

The Tertiary Education Strategy and all related documentation must include an agreed statement on the purpose of tertiary education.

The tertiary education system provides the conditions for people to develop a sense of individuality and collective responsibility preparing them for a citizenship role in the larger society. It must at an individual level create the capacity and confidence for agency, personality, and a lifelong interest in and commitment to learning. It also provides training and education for people to join professions, trades, and be engaged workers; as well as providing credentialing.

Tertiary education is a common good that we all benefit from which must be publicly, locally and equitably accessible to all. The system must be based on active Tiriti relationships that ensure the principle of mana motuhake is adhered to in the fullest sense.

The sector must produce transformative, lifelong experiences that develop the social, cultural, intellectual, and technical capabilities of individuals. All who engage in tertiary education will then be able to contribute to the common good as active citizens.

To meet the outcomes desired from tertiary education as set out above, the system must prioritise the wellbeing of both students and staff. It is an environment founded on the co-creation of learning and knowledge. Only when the well-being of all in the system and the teacher –student relationship are at the heart of institutional actions can the tertiary education sector make an unimpaired contribution to the creative, social, human, scientific, economic, cultural, and intellectual growth of all communities and regions, as well as that of Aotearoa as a whole.

The education system should bring out the best in everyone, providing all New Zealanders with learning opportunities so they can discover and develop their full potential, engage fully in society, and lead rewarding and fulfilling lives. ([Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education](#))

The primary objectives of the tertiary education system in Aotearoa are to:

- a) advance responsible Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationships by enacting the principles of tū kotahi, tū kaha; ngā piki, ngā heke; awhi atu, awhi mai; and tātou, tātou e;
- b) enhance cultural and intellectual life; develop a skilled and knowledgeable population; promote sustainable economic and social development (As per the Education Act 1989);

c) be focused on the full development of the human personality and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 26), and ensure social mobility and the reduction of inequality;

d) address, collectively, the pressing issues of our age as experienced by community, region or as a nation; and,

e) to fulfil the role of critic and conscience – this means being able to actively critique existing social, scientific, political, and economic norms, elites, and institutions.

It is the responsibility of all parts of governments (including MPs, The Tertiary Education Commission, The Ministry of Education, and NZQA) and all institutional leaders to protect the conditions which facilitate tertiary education fulfilling these functions. It is incumbent upon all institutions, staff and students to ensure this vision is realised to its fullest.

In summary any plans in the sector require active engagement by government with staff, students, and communities, adequate funding, and appropriate performance assurance measures based on responsible autonomy for institutions. This will allow the New Zealand tertiary education sector to provide true quality teaching, learning, and research that delivers the common good.

Actions

Produce an agreed definition of tertiary education reflecting the system's diverse parts and its role to reproduce the common good. This definition will be set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy and all investment plans, legislation, and institutional policies must actively reflect the agreed definition.

Ensure that the Tertiary Education Strategy includes recognition of the critic and conscience function of public tertiary education providers as set out in domestic and international norms and law. All investment plans, legislation, and institutional policies must actively reflect the importance of the role for all public tertiary education providers.

Ensure that the Tertiary Education Strategy includes a strong statement on academic freedom for all staff and students in the public tertiary education system, with a requirement that all investment plans, legislation, institutional policies, and auditing mechanisms do likewise.

3. What the tertiary education system should look like

The tertiary education system will be a nationwide network of provision where every learner can access transferrable learning opportunities appropriate to their needs. As a starting point learners need:

- Access in every community to Level 1-4
- Regional access to Level 5-7
- National access to Level 8 and above

Ensuring there is a network of provision with access to core educational provision in all communities, means people can follow their learning path at a time, place, and level suitable to them. This contributes to the common good by ensuring that at any age we can learn and grow, and actively contribute and respond as both workers and citizens to the issues we face collectively.

It is also important to ensure tertiary education is free and students are supported financially if we are to improve the accessibility to education and training.

Actions

Ensure mechanisms to provide for a network of provision with reasonable travel distances for early levels of study.

Adult and Community Education must have funding restored to pre 2009 levels which will require at least \$19m.

Ensure students, no matter their age, have access to student allowances and loans.

4. Resourcing tertiary education as a common good

Critical to the operation of the whole system is funding which must be allocated through an investment plan process which will cover: teaching and learning; research; academic support and pastoral care; administration; infrastructure; and, iwi community, and employer engagement.

The system must be publicly funded and affordable. This can be achieved by pooling our resources in an equitable way to address the common good which will be determined collectively (see Summits).

Our current funding situation

There is a lack of clarity as to the function, value and public interest in tertiary education, and a lack of commitment to funding it properly. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector 2017)

Under funding creates unhealthy learning environments. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2017)

Analysis shows that cumulative underfunding to the sector reached \$3.7 billion this year from 2009 levels. Based on current figures the funding hole will increase to more than \$6 billion over the next three years.

5. Future resource need of the tertiary education system

A tertiary education sector which will deliver broad social, scientific, human, and economic progress needs adequate funding and this funding must be available to satisfy the common good of communities, regions and the nation.

Funding must be at a level to meet the diverse teaching and learning approaches of all staff and students. Equitable allocations will be made through Education Summits, institutional investment plans, and organisational conversations involving representatives of all those affected by forthcoming decisions.

The overall strategic direction of the tertiary education system will be collectively determined by the Summits. The nominated direction must contribute to the common good, acknowledge the strengths and contribution of each institution and their varied teaching, learning, and research approaches. The Summits will provide the impetus for cooperation between institutions creating a systems approach to tertiary education, replacing market principles to allocate tertiary education resources.

The Education Summits (held at least every three years) will have available all Annual Reports and Investment Plans for each institution in order for informed decision-making.

The Education Summits must be informed by community and regional needs with regard to tertiary education provision. This input will be gathered at Regional Forums involving institutional leaders, staff and student representatives, local employers, iwi and hapū, local government, and local representatives of the community and voluntary sector.

6. The funding approach

“We know the funding systems in tertiary education aren’t fit for purpose any longer and we are absolutely committed to working

together to fix the problem” (Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education. (17 May 2019)

Funding must be provided to meet the real costs of running each tertiary institution over three years and that acknowledges a staff:student ratio that averages at 1:15 over those three years.

This baseline funding will be adjusted in line with decisions made collectively at the Summits. The adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- a) volume based calculations;
- b) meeting the needs for programmes with high running costs (to ensure safety, and appropriate staff and technology for effective delivery); and,
- c) meeting specific needs of communities, employers, and government with an overarching approach to meet the common good set out in debates at the Education Summits which are then refined and applied through investment plan conversations.

It is only this funding regime that will achieve a balance between: research; teaching; community service and credentialing (providing degrees).

Reducing real funding rates by the government simply means everything is being done cheaper than it was 10 years ago. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector 2017)

There is a lack of clarity as to the function, value and public interest in tertiary education, and a lack of commitment to funding it properly. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector 2017)

...the competitive model has forced us to focus on chasing dollars (and seeing students as cash cows) rather than on the learning experience. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector 2017)

Funding linked to “success and retention” is counterproductive to quality learning and teaching and fosters mediocrity. (Respondent – State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector 2017)

The need to address growing inequality in New Zealand is recognised by researchers, community leaders, and the government. Sadly our tertiary education sector currently replicates many of the inequalities seen in broader society. Redress of this must be built into the Tertiary Education Strategy.

We need to ensure that some initial changes are made to the funding regime.

Action

The pool of funding available therefore must be increased to 2.7% of GDP per annum by 2021.

The government must advance the current fees-free policy to ensure accessibility to tertiary education is improved.

The government and institutions must set aside funding for equity measures that will address social, education, and cultural inequalities as a priority.

7. Learning, research and the common good at heart

Work and study conditions must be the best conditions possible. Social relations for all staff and students must be supportive, constructive and geared to producing a situation where all can contribute to the upper limit of their capability. The health and wellbeing of staff and students are paramount priorities in this situation. If the conditions of working and learning are unsatisfactory then the contribution of the sector to community, regional and national needs are jeopardised.

Student support services for recruitment and retention (academic support and pastoral care) should be funded to meet the needs of students, including adequate provision of qualified counselors and other health professionals. This includes funding to eliminate and redress the 'whitestreaming' of services for Māori students.

Staff support services should be freely available in conditions which are free from judgement, labelling, threats, bullying or loss of jobs.

Further conversation and attention must be paid to the equity measures needed to ensure:

- the advancement of te reo Māori
- that we are meeting needs of Pasifika communities
- our tertiary education system is founded on inclusive education principles
- the provision of support and academic pathways for young people who have disengaged from education and have yet to find employment
- that decisions at all levels are learning-centred

Action

The Tertiary Education Strategy, Investment Plans, and all related policies must include well-being plans for both students and staff.

All Annual Reports must include evaluations of the well-being of students and staff are made publicly accessible.

8. Staff wages and conditions

All staff must be treated in accordance with state sector requirements for an exemplary employer and therefore must provide good and safe working conditions; an equal opportunities programme; impartial selection of suitably qualified people for appointment; and recognition of the aims and aspirations of Māori, and of the employment requirements of Māori, women and people with disabilities.

All staff must have access, as a minimum, to the Living Wage. Staff pay agreements and arrangements must remove gender pay imbalances, and limit the extension of casualisation, insecure and fixed term employment agreements (See auditing section for proposed monitoring of actions that ensuring staff and student wellbeing).

Action

The Tertiary Education Strategy must include the government's aspiration for the public sector employers to be exemplary employers.

Institutional investment plans and annual reports must reflect how institutions are advancing gender pay principles, the Living Wage, and the minimisation of the use of fixed term and casual employment.

9. Student and staff voice

There must be student and staff representation on all decision-making bodies in the tertiary education system.

All institutions, government agencies and Ministers acknowledge the right of the sector employees to be represented by their union and that the union is considered an acknowledged and contributing agency to the Summits and in ongoing discussions/decision-making.

Student voice is crucial in ensuring education that is learning-centred. The best mechanisms include universal student membership to associations which provide advocacy, advice, and support services adequately resourced from Vote Tertiary Education. Student leaders need mentoring, support, and training from their peers to ensure the best possible 'by student, for student' services and advocacy. Students must have the right to have trained peer advocates and mentors, and strong, independent students' associations

Actions

The Tertiary Education Strategy will include statements on the approaches to staff and student representation at all levels of the tertiary education system, including union representation, as democratic participation is crucial for the health of the sector.

There be funding for independent student associations to provide appropriate social services, advocacy, and advice. They must also be funded in a way that enables them to broaden and enhance the student experience, both culturally and intellectually.

That institutions begin a review of management layers which currently act as a barrier to staff and student involvement in the co-creation and co-production of healthy teaching, learning, research, student support, and administration.

10. Infrastructure to ensure a learning and research centred system

Infrastructure needs to meet the needs of staff, in terms of teaching and research, and contemporary technology, plant, and machinery. Wherever necessary adequate staffing or appropriate initial and ongoing professional development will be made available to augment the introduction and service of technology.

The structural environment must be designed to be accessible to all people irrespective of age, ability or disability. Staff must also have adequate, dedicated social and meeting spaces. The input of staff, general and academic, must be taken seriously when redesigning all utilised spaces.

As tertiary education spaces are publicly funded and owned, they must be made available free of charge to students and staff any time they are advancing the core role of the tertiary education sector.

Similarly, since tertiary education infrastructure is funded publicly, facilities should be made available and affordable for use by local communities when they are not being utilised for tertiary education purposes.

Adequate funding must be provided for infrastructure that enables institutions to meet the learning needs of their students, including equitable access to accommodation in high-cost centres.

11. Responsible autonomy

All tertiary institutions including universities, ITPs, wānanga, and community education providers and staff, will be accountable to their staff, students, iwi, local communities, regions and the nation. In this respect they will exercise 'responsible autonomy with a twofold accountability which extends outwards from the institution to the rest of society and inwards to the running of these institutions.

This will be actioned by institutions producing Annual Investment Plans and Annual Reports, mutually accessible to all and subject to refinement at an Education Summit to ensure that the needs, noted above, are met with minimal duplication, greatest accessibility and coverage with cooperation and fiscal responsibility.

There are four levels which contribute to the planning and reporting of a tertiary education system aimed at achieving the common good. The following process and results will be informed by an overarching description of the common good that tertiary education must fulfil in Aotearoa derived from the Education Summits:

- 1) Individual staff members – all staff will set out their future plans through career development conversations and plans. These will encompass individual goals, professional development and learning needs, and the planned contribution to iwi and hapū, community, regional, and national needs. The staff members will report their achievements through updating their CVs annually to present at the development conversation.
- 2) Department, School, or Faculty level – Each unit shall present a plan detailing overall goals and processes for realising them which meet the needs of staff, students, their specific institutional goals, those set by government (national tertiary education goals for the common good, and reflected needs of iwi, community, region and nation). Each unit will produce an annual report reflecting their achievements against their own plans in order to contribute to their institutions Annual Report to the institution.
- 3) The tertiary education institution. The institution investment plan must be drawn up through a process of student, staff and community engagement. It must recognise iwi and local community (including all relevant interested parties) and regional and national needs in consultation with other relevant tertiary institutions via Regional Forums. The institution will produce an Annual Report for Parliament on its delivery of the aspects of the common good they put forward in their investment plan. These annual plans must be made publicly available and show how institutions have met Tiriti, social, community, environmental, cultural, scientific, and economic wellbeing goals, as determined by local, regional and national conversations.

- 4) The reports to parliament by the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education will aggregate the achievements set out in the annual reports of institutions in order to show how the system as a whole is meeting the common good.

Actions

The Tertiary Education Strategy process will result in a new model of planning and auditing at all levels which support collaboration, a system-wide approach to tertiary education, advancement of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the meeting of the common good.

A project will be set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy that develops robust ways of evaluating the educational and skills achievements of learners, and their experience in the tertiary education system.

All reporting will include measures of student and staff well-being, and plans for addressing any shortfalls.

12. A network of tertiary education provision

Tertiary education must be publicly controlled and collegially governed recognising the responsibility that accompanies academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the creation of generations who can be critic and conscience of our economic, political and social context con-jointly with the national recognition of our Tiriti responsibilities.

The system must be based on and acknowledge four guiding principles. It is incumbent on all staff, institutions and government to be responsible for enacting these guiding principles:

1. Mana Tiriti

A tertiary education system that works for all people depends on active acknowledgement of this foundation and building from it to ensure all people can participate fully and achieve fully, wherever they are from (Te Kaupapa Whaioranga, TEU, 2013).

Key principle: Access

On one hand we are encouraged to develop courses that reflect current best practice models, but there isn't really support for this (time, money, tech support, developing new assessment models etc.). We are encouraged to look for innovative solutions, but then told that these can't be accounted for within a rigid timetable that prefers a one way model of transmission. Our teaching has

to happen within the very draconian rules and policies provided by the university, even if those very rules undermine or preclude best practice! The other knock on effect is that our workload models are hopelessly inaccurate, and cannot reflect the bare minimum level of work we do. These rules indicate that the 'best' teacher is an indifferent one. (Respondent, State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019)

The government must create a tertiary system to meet the needs of all New Zealanders in whatever current condition they find themselves. Equity of access and participation should be coordinated in such a way to allow informed and prepared admission, as well as the transferability of skills, learning and qualifications wherever these have been attained.

This will require all institutions and employer bodies to cooperate to ensure that the immediate needs of learners are met but also the needs of iwi, community, region and nation. And given institutional spaces are part of the common good they should be accessible to both the community and region when possible.

2. Mana atua, mana tangata

Decision-making must be based in respect for oneself and others; create spaces where all people can fully participate; and attitudes and processes that promote equity, equality, and democracy in order to foster good relationships between all people. We give and receive, acknowledging that reciprocity is fundamental to strong and equitable relationships; and we work to advance approaches that ensure quality public tertiary education for all (Te Kaupapa Whaioranga, TEU, 2013)..

Key Principle: Wellbeing

The wellbeing of all staff and students must be the overall focus and concern of the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission and all provider institutions. This requires genuine collegial environments driven by intrinsic and collective goals which have as their paramount aim safe and supportive working conditions.

This requires critical engagement and conversations with the varied teaching, learning, and research approaches found across the public tertiary education system. For example, kaupapa Māori, work-place and practice focused, social scientific, humanities, and scientific approaches must all be seen as equally valid and open to public debate on the ways of knowing.

An acknowledgment that a university is not a university without its academic staff, and that ensuring the wellbeing and job satisfaction of staff members

should be the top priority for every management team member. (Respondent, State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019)

The University of is very good at sounding committed to issues of inclusiveness, care and concern for diverse cultural groups, including international students, staff health and safety, etc. At the level of practice, however, the extent of bureaucratic interference, level of expectations of work in non-core areas, introduction of intranet "self-help" services, stress on student demand over pedagogical quality, etc., etc., etc., show the extent to which these claims are farcical. (Respondent, State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019)

3. Mana whenua

The tertiary education sector must be a place where we all belong, where we all matter, where we are all important, and where we can all contribute. It's only then that we can ensure tertiary education is connected fully to the land, the environment, the people, their needs and aspirations. The outcomes of decision-making must result in the creation of engaging study and work environments which in turn foster te taiao innovation and creativity.

Key Principle: Co-creation and co-production

I want to see all the tertiary institutions collaborating so that their offerings are complementary not competitive, so that each works to their strengths, so that students have diverse opportunities not the same opportunities from different institutions, and so that the constant threat to staff employment from the cut-throat competition for students is removed. This is not a healthy way to work. Competition between TEOs does not create the best outcomes for students, for staff, or for research. We are a small country. We need to work together. (Respondent, State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019)

This recognises that our tertiary education system is a product of both co-creation and co-production at all levels including learners, staff, iwi and local community, regional, and national interests, organised bodies including the students associations and unions within the sector. Co-creation means that all affected by a decision will be genuinely listened to and that their input will inform decisions. What's more, all involved will be given the time, space, and resources to be involved in producing the common good. This acknowledges that all are fully responsible and accountable partners in creating and running the sector and as such institutions must make workload allowances for participatory democracy in suitable forums (For example this would include but is not

limited to: student associations; councils; Education Summits; Regional Forums; professional bodies, the union, and faculty boards).

4. Mana motuhake

This principle demands that decisions being made by and for the sector foster a sense of tino rangatiratanga. In fostering this leadership, self-determination and responsible autonomy, it is crucial that all students and staff in the sector have the opportunity for whakamana in all aspects of their study and work – they must have authority, power, and influence over this study and work. Added to this, all decisions being made by and for the sector must foster whakahaere – the enactment of the role of critic and conscience in society, as set out in the Education Act 1989 (Te Kaupapa Whaioranga, TEU, 2013).

Key Principle: Autonomy

This acknowledges that all decisions must engender and foster responsible autonomy and the critic and conscience role both in respect of internal relations within each institution and all relations which connect the institution in a collective and cooperative way to iwi/hapū, community, region and nation in support of the common good. (Respondent, State of the Public Tertiary Education Sector, 2019)

Conclusion

The document set out here is the core of what staff in tertiary education sector would like to see in an aspirational and action oriented Tertiary Education Strategy.

We realise the conversation has only just begun, but our work shows the willingness of those who work daily in the currently individualised and fragmented tertiary education sector to improve the outcomes for all New Zealanders.

We look forward to the next round of conversations and to helping to co-create a strong Tertiary Education Strategy which ensures students, their families, communities, iwi and hapū, employers, and the nation get what they need out of a collaborative and connected network of tertiary education provision.

[1] These whaingā are TEU's active engagement in building strong Te Tiriti relationships and ensuring responsibilities to tangata whenua – as set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi – are woven into daily actions.