



2 August 2011

Lillian Loftus
Human Resources Manager
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington

Email: lillian.loftus@vuw.ac.nz

Re: Crime and Justice Research Centre Proposed Disestablishment

1. This submission is made on behalf of the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA).
2. VUWSA is the official representative body of students at Victoria University of Wellington and has been advocating on their behalf since 1899. This submission is based on consultation with students in courses offered by the Institute of Criminology. These students feel that they would be adversely affected by the proposed disestablishment of the Crime and Justice Research Centre (CJRC).
3. VUWSA strongly opposes the disestablishment of the CJRC.
4. VUWSA believes that the current change proposal affecting the CJRC threatens the education and research opportunities students currently enjoy and endangers the massive public contribution the research CJRC provides to New Zealand.
5. We are highly concerned that with the closure of this centre, Staff at the Institute of Criminology will be required to pick up this gap in research and, as such, will have less time to commit to the education of undergraduate students. This, in turn, will see educational standards within criminology fall below acceptable levels.
6. VUWSA also questions the rationale of this decision at a time where the Undergraduate Review is asking staff and students to reflect on the ways in which students should be inducted into the research culture/environment of Victoria University.
7. Students will be severely affected by the disestablishment of the CJRC. They will have access to less specialised research to and be faced with fewer job opportunities as the centre has been a key point of experience and support for postgraduate students.

8. The tone of the proposal towards the CJRC is of great concern and sends an adverse message to students, staff and the wider public that Victoria places no value whatsoever on the work of CJRC and the place of policy research in New Zealand. It does not acknowledge CJRC's reputation amongst undergrad and Postgrad students and it does not acknowledge the historical reasons for the establishment of the CJRC outside of the Institute of Criminology
9. The disestablishment of the CJRC creates great uncertainty for students majoring in criminology and many other disciplines that benefit from the CJRC existence. It leaves them with no reason to feel any sense of belonging or trust in Victoria University. The critical interdisciplinary nature of the CJRC's research and work strongly supports Victoria's graduate attribute and prepares students for roles within a variety of sectors – including, but not limited to: policy, law, media, research, health and education. This proposal puts this at risk. Furthermore, in the VUWSA submission to the Review of Undergraduate Education, students expressed a strong desire to be exposed to 'real' research that had 'real' implications for their personal development as researchers and for New Zealand society as a whole. VUWSA strongly believes that disestablishing this centre undermines the place of research at Victoria at a time where this very type of research is crucial not only for New Zealand but for the recruitment of students with an interest in universities that support research that leads to local policy change and future postgraduate supervision opportunities.
10. Figures provided by the CJRC show it is 100 per cent funded through external research revenue; the University has not run at a loss due to its existence. Its considerable contribution to the reputation of Victoria, the unique opportunities it provides to students and its huge public contribution come at no cost to the University. It actually generates income for the University. This should be commended and encouraged.
11. VUWSA urges the University immediately halt the proposed disestablishment of the CJRC and instead work to properly recognise the importance of its existence to the University and to New Zealand as a whole.

Yours sincerely



Seamus Brady

President

Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association