

Principal Muscatelli  
University of Glasgow  
University Avenue  
Glasgow  
G12 8QQ

18/10/16

Dear Principal Muscatelli,

**Re: Decision to increase Tuition Fees for rUK Students**

We are writing to you to express our serious concerns over the recent decision to increase tuition fees for students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland (rUK). It will not come as a surprise to you that we are extremely unhappy with the increase to £9250, our other significant concern being the lack of consultation and the speed at which this has been approved.

We understand that future consideration is being given to charging rUK students for four years' tuition instead of the current three, and hope that there will be an opportunity for full consultation before such a decision is made.

At a meeting between the SRC Executive and yourself on Monday 10th October, our Vice President for Education, Kate Powell, raised the question of University of Glasgow tuition fees with you, following the decision by Edinburgh to increase fees for rUK students. We also reaffirmed the SRC's absolute opposition to fee increases. Unfortunately, it appears that Court chose to ignore the student view and proceeded to agree the increase to £9250 on Wednesday 12th October. In the current climate, we think it important to reaffirm our belief, and we suspect yours, that education is a right and not a privilege.

To return to the matter of student consultation, we were extremely disappointed that we were made aware of the potential fee increase just two days before the meeting at which the decision was taken. This is not reflective of the atmosphere of mutual respect and meaningful consultation in which we usually operate and we wish to stress our discontent at the failure to engage with us earlier on the matter.

This decision to increase fees conveniently and openly followed Edinburgh's increase. If the University of Glasgow's philosophy is to act in line with other institutions regardless of independent judgement, does this mean that all such future decisions will be predicated on the

decisions of other institutions rather than our own? Interestingly, neither recruitment nor reputation were affected when the University took the decision to charge students for three years rather than the four years charged by many of our competitors. We've always strongly believed, and are sure you share this view, that Glasgow should be a world changer and not a follower.

Throughout its strategy, this University asserts the enormous value it places on the cultural diversity we gain from our Scottish, English, Welsh, Northern Irish, EU and international students. In times of uncertainty for our EU students, a further cultural gap created by the potential decrease in the proportion of rUK students at Scottish Universities is the last thing we need. We oppose fees for students and we want to reiterate that any further decisions should involve the student voice.

Perhaps equally pertinent are the considerations that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will allow Universities in England to raise their fees further if they meet a certain level of accreditation, and that Scottish Universities, ourselves included, are reluctant to join the TEF as they will be disadvantaged through the metrics used to determine accreditation. We therefore also posited that a decision from the University of Glasgow not to increase fees would constitute a strong political statement against the marketisation of universities.

We believe that the TEF will have a detrimental effect, not just on the University of Glasgow but on the entire Scottish Higher Education landscape. As other Scottish Universities are breaking ranks by going against the 'different but equivalent' plan and joining TEF Level 2 instead, we need reassurance that we will not be entering this level and that if any considerations are made, the student voice needs to be heard. We must be closely consulted by the University, a process which was clearly lacking from this decision on fees.

We realise that a fee increase at any institution will never have students' support, but the complete lack of transparency or involvement of students within your discussion, as well as the hastiness with which the increase was passed, leaves us deeply worried for future discussions with the University. We seek your reassurance that you are prepared to fully engage with us on any future discussions around fees. In the absence of such reassurance, your cavalier dismissal of the impact on your students looks to be a very slippery slope.

Yours sincerely,

The SRC Executive 2016/17



Ameer Ibrahim  
President



Mhairi Harris  
Vice-President  
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