

Plenary: **SAVE NURSING**

Speaker 1: Melissa De Silva

- Papers given at the University Senate meeting to close the undergraduate component of nursing at Mallett Street campus and the entire campus at Orange. All information meant to be in confidence, but no actual reason for that. That is, no commercial or privacy reasons.
- Places for nursing were to go to UTS and ACU. Orange to go to Charles Sturt Uni. Extra places to then be allocated to courses like International Studies and Liberal Studies.
- Students and staff learned about closures through a leak of those papers to the newspapers.
- Pro Vice Chancellor's office reacted to students' distress by calling a forum. Some idiot who sent out notice to all students did not use the blind-copy function of the email and sent out every nursing students email address out to every nursing student.
- Nursing students began using email list as a forum to air their concerns.
- Dean's office sent out email to all students addressing the questions raised on email list – eg, would I still be able to finish degree here; when will it all happen. The Dean was a bit naughty in stating that she thought the decision was a mistake.
- At the forum the representative of the pro vice chancellor's office answered very few questions. Rather he stated that this was just in it's proposal phase and all the concerns raised were just "what if" questions. The solid plans would be worked out after the department of education approved the proposal.
- Dept of Education, to nobody's surprise, rubber-stamped the proposal.
- NTEU and the CPSU lodged a dispute in the industrial relations commission about the potential change, which would cause over 160 jobs lost. The vice chancellor is alleged to have commented that he didn't want staff to be given a redundancy payment if they were just going to get another job at another uni. He is also alleged to have commented that it would not be too big a deal for staff members to have to relocate to another city to be able to have work at a university.
- UTS and ACU stated that they were interested in the extra nursing places. They failed to state that they actually did not have any room for these extra places. In fact, they were struggling with the numbers that they already have.

- Nelson announced that there would be more nursing places offered nationally. However, many of these places were going to private, Christian universities.
- The closure of the nursing u/g course and the orange campus is an overt move by the Liberals to make universities “more financially viable” and get rid of students that don’t draw funding grants and sponsorship from the commercial sector. That is, a move to squeeze working class students out of university.
- The university senate then voted overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the proposal. The nursing faculty is beginning its wind down of the course, with no first year students enrolled from now (2005) on.
- I think the NTEU are still in IRC, but are now fighting not to save the jobs, but to ensure fair redundancy conditions.