

MOTION FOR AGM – AARE 2017

University Governance, Restructures and Casualisation

AARE takes a stand against governance in universities that does not proceed from inclusive and participatory democratic decision-making, and that ignores the wisdom of broader bodies of academic and professional staff who do the core work of the university.

We have seen the destructive effects of simplistic, managerial decision-making, particularly in relation to restructures that have occurred in multiple universities across the country. These decision-making procedures have affected many of our members. We are aware that there is a range of research that documents the deleterious effects of casualisation on academic work (e.g. Kimber 2003, Harvey 2013, NTEU 2012, Larkins 2011).

In many contexts recent workplace restructures have resulted in redundancy and early retirement programs, and a flow-on effect has been increased workloads for academic staff, and in some contexts increased casualization across the sector particularly in level B and C academic positions. We believe that this has profound implications for educational research and teacher education.

We are concerned that one of the solutions being taken up in some university contexts is to reduce the number and range of people doing research, thereby threatening the teaching-research nexus and broad-based research cultures that are traditionally evident in teacher education.

As a research-oriented association, AARE is concerned about the educational research field, and the well-being of academics in this field. We believe that the future of educational research, and of teacher education, will not be served well by strategies aimed at destroying the future-oriented hopes of early-career academics who hope to develop and contribute in research as well as teaching. We also see this trend as likely to threaten the future of education as part of a viable university sector in Australia.

We, members who are in attendance at the 2017 AGM of AARE, support strategies that build broad participation in research and teaching for academics in the Australian tertiary sector. We support academic staff across all levels having access to time, support, and work conditions that enable them to reach their potentials across service and engagement, research, teaching, and leadership. We express our concern at the ongoing impact of policies that do not attend to these issues for the quality of educational research and teaching.

To that end, AARE membership ask that:

The AARE Executive places this issue on its agenda and reports back to the broader AARE membership on possible responses in relation to this important issue.

And that when restructures occur AARE will, where possible, release public statements in support of members and contest executive-managerial decisions that adversely affect the present and future of rich and viable teaching and research.

Harvey, M. (2013). Setting The Standards For Sessional Staff: Quality Learning And Teaching. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 10(3), 1–33.

Kimber, M. (2003). The Tenured “Core” and the Tenuous “Periphery”: The casualisation of academic work in Australian universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 25(1), 41–50.

Larkins, F. (2011). Academic Staffing Trends: At what cost to teaching and learning excellence?, LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management, University of Melbourne

NTEU (2012). Submission to Inquiry into Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work