EDUCATION

BLESSING OR BLOAT?

Non-academic staffing in New Zealand universities in comparative perspective

James Kierstead
with Michael Johnston

THE NEW ZEALAND INITIATIVE

www.nzinitiative.org.nz

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Published July 2023 by
The New Zealand Initiative
PO Box 10147
Wellington 6143
New Zealand
www.nzinitiative.org.nz

ISBN
978-1-99-115808-6 (print)
978-1-99-115809-3 (online)

RR74

Printing arranged by TBD Digital

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About the New Zealand Initiative

The New Zealand Initiative is an independent public policy think tank supported by chief executives of New Zealand businesses. We believe in evidence-based policy and are committed to developing policies that work for all New Zealanders.

Our mission is to help build a better, stronger New Zealand. We are taking the initiative to promote a prosperous, free and fair society with a competitive, open and dynamic economy. We are developing and contributing bold ideas that will have a profound, positive and long-term impact.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. James Kierstead is Senior Lecturer in Classics at Victoria University of Wellington and a Research Fellow at the Initiative. He holds a PhD in Classics from Stanford as well as MAs in Political Science (also from Stanford) and Ancient History (London). Besides his academic publications on ancient and modern democracy, he has published pieces in *The Dominion Post, The Spinoff, The New Zealand Herald, The Australian, The Spectator Australia, Quillette, Quadrant, Times Higher Education, Chronicle of Higher Education* and other outlets. He is also the co-host, with Michael Johnston, of the Free Kiwis! podcast, which focusses on free speech issues in New Zealand.

Dr Michael Johnston is a Senior Research Fellow at the New Zealand Initiative. He is a cognitive psychologist by training and completed his PhD at the University of Melbourne in 1997. He commenced his academic career as a lecturer in psychology and became interested in educational assessment and measurement during a six-year tenure as Senior Statistician at the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. In 2011 he took up an academic role in the Faculty of Education at Victoria University of Wellington, where, prior to his appointment at the New Zealand Initiative, he was Associate Dean (Academic).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Oliver Hartwich for encouraging us to research this topic, to Gaven Martin for contributing the foreword, and to Ben Macintyre for checking our figures and references. We also thank Ara Persson, Senior Data Analyst at the Ministry of Education, for responding quickly and helpfully to our queries about publicly available data and to our requests for further data. Finally, we are grateful to all those educational researchers from across the English-speaking world who helped make the comparative side of this report possible.

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Foreword

Having worked at universities across the world, I know how valuable administrators can be. Helping staff and students through the labyrinth of modern university bureaucracy. Working long hours setting up labs. Going out of their way to make sure researchers can do their work and students can develop the skills they need. Even holding the odd hand.

Talk to academics these days, though, and they'll invariably complain about the increasing burden of bureaucracy. Unnecessary and often scarcely comprehensible new policies are constantly introduced. Inboxes overflow with pointless emails. There seems to be an administrator for every conceivable form of activity.

All of this is said to reflect a drift towards managerialism, one that's been especially swift in Australia and New Zealand. Down here, it's increasingly common to see people with no teaching or research responsibilities heading up academic departments – something I haven't seen anywhere else in the world.

It's easy to see why this might be a problem. Runaway centralization breaks the bonds of collegiality that make a university a genuine community. Though it's supposed to increase efficiency, it often has the reverse effect by creating two parallel worlds – academics and administrators – which don't always trust each other. Besides this, too much paperwork distracts academics and students from their core purposes of teaching, learning, and researching.

It's possible, of course, that academics have always complained about too much paperwork, just as they have about declining standards (a phenomenon that goes back to Plato's times). It's my own impression that the disconnect between management and academics has never been greater. But what does the data tell us?

This report goes beyond impressions and anecdotes, providing concrete evidence about the size and composition of university bureaucracies in New Zealand. Even with the authors' almost excessively cautious way of presenting the evidence, the findings are sobering.

Relative to the number of academics, non-academic numbers in New Zealand universities are high compared to other university systems in the English-speaking world. According to Ministry of Education figures, New Zealand universities employed 1.5 non-academics for every academic staff member in 2021. If we take research staff into account as the authors do, the ratio is 1.4 to 1. And that's not even counting the blue-collar workers that universities have increasingly outsourced. New Zealand hires more non-academics per academic than any other country the authors looked at.

There has also been an interesting change in the kinds of non-academics that our universities employ. The proportion of non-academic roles filled by technicians fell by 13% between 2002 and 2015. (Does this suggest that unavoidable technical tasks have simply been shunted onto academic staff?) During the same period there was a 56% increase in executive staff (managers). Even in the five years between 2016 and 2021, when the total number of non-academics declined, executive staff numbers grew by 30% – the only area in which non-academic staffing grew. Meanwhile, technicians declined by a further 19%. It's clear where university senior managers have decided to spend their resources, and it's on each other.

Surprisingly, the report also shows that 'on the whole, *relative to the number of students* [my emphasis] the number of non-academics at New Zealand universities is quite modest by the standards of other English-speaking countries.' One interesting inference we can draw from this (and from the high number of non-academics per academic) is that New Zealand universities employ a very modest number of academics relative to the number of students they teach.

In their conclusion, the authors address the hot button issue of free speech. They are quite right to; though the Education Act makes upholding academic freedom a legal duty for universities, recent surveys by the Free Speech Union and Heterodox New Zealand (a group of academics) have shown that significant numbers of academics and students feel constrained in expressing their views.

Sadly, in our polarized society academics are under considerable pressure to say what the most vocal want to hear; anything else is either 'hate speech' or 'woke nonsense.' The authors of this report offer a perspective that is very much worth considering, not least because they support it with extensive data. Of course, their view can still be contested – and should be.

Universities (and students especially) have led social debate for generations. This is entirely appropriate for institutions which, the Education Act reminds us, have a role as the 'critic and conscience of society.' There is a danger, though (one the authors of this report hint at) of universities focusing on a narrow 'social justice' agenda at the expense of research and teaching.

Universities have shared staffing data through the UniForum programme for many years now, but these data are supposedly commercially sensitive. As the authors state, one of their key goals in producing this report was to gather evidence of a sort that is routinely available in other countries and to make it easily accessible to the public. They have done this in the hope of stimulating a more empirically grounded conversation about New Zealand universities.

Reasonable and empirically grounded debate seems to be a scarce resource these days, but I truly hope that this debate happens, and that even more data about New Zealand's universities emerges as a consequence. In the meantime, the data presented here already make it hard to escape the conclusion that New Zealand is not getting the best it might out of its current tertiary education system.

Prof. Gaven Martin
Distinguished Professor of Mathematics
Massey University

INTRODUCTION

The terms of the debate

Universities need administrators. This includes both career academics doing administrative jobs and non-academics employed by universities (see Box 1). New Zealand universities, like their counterparts in other Anglophone countries, employ a host of managers, support staff, librarians, technicians, advisors, accountants, IT workers, counsellors, and so on.

Our personal impressions as academics at Victoria University of Wellington has been that professional staff are generally agreeable, helpful, and hard-working. Our research on higher education in this country has benefited from prompt and courteous responses by non-academic staff to a number of queries and data-requests. This report could not have been written without data collected by non-academics employed at New Zealand universities.[1]

In view of how helpful administrators can be, it might be tempting to conclude that the more non-academics universities employ, the better they will function, with cost being the only constraint. Cost is obviously a consideration, especially when tax dollars are at stake. But there are other considerations too.

Before the 1960s, scholars tended to assume that bureaucrats were motivated mainly by a sense of public service.[2] Since then, economists have developed a different view,[3] in which bureaucrats are viewed as ordinary individuals with their own drives and desires. Bureaucrats may well have a sense of public service, but they also have other goals – providing for their families, say, or advancing their careers.

This means that bureaucracies may take on a life of their own, pursuing their own goals and agendas, sometimes at the expense of the organizations they serve. In private companies, competition provides a check on bureaucracies by giving organizations incentives not to employ more support staff than they need. In the public sector, on the other hand, these incentives may be weaker or non-existent. Public debate and government oversight may be necessary to keep the growth of bureaucracies within certain bounds.

The past few years have seen a lively debate on the number of non-academics employed at universities.

Box 1: Administrators and non-academics

The term 'administrators' is widely employed in research on universities. It can, though, refer to two different types of employee:

1. career academics who dedicate some part of their career (from a year or two to several decades) to university administration (deans and provosts, for example), and
2. non-academics employed in the university hierarchy (managers and advisors, for instance) or in some other capacity (librarians, counsellors, IT workers, and so on).

In the US, 'administrators' tends to include both categories, whereas elsewhere in the English-speaking world it tends not to. To avoid any ambiguity, we use the term 'non-academics' for this second category of university employee – the set of employees that will be our main focus in this report.

In the United States, especially, a number of reports have addressed 'administrative bloat' – runaway growth in the number of non-academic staff – which is seen as contributing variously to spiralling tuition fees, to a worsening environment for campus free speech, and to universities' ideological skew.[4] One recent study found that there was a liberal-to-conservative ratio of 12 to 1 among university administrators, with two-thirds identifying as liberal (i.e. left-leaning) and only 5% as right of centre.[5]

Some US commentators have defended the growth in non-academic employment at colleges. If administrative numbers have grown, they argue, so have the numbers of students and faculty (academic staff). Some types of support staff, such as mental health professionals, have been introduced in large part in response to student demand. Higher tuition fees may be mostly due to factors such as reduced state funding.[6]

The pay of top executives – college presidents and vice-chancellors – has also excited debate. The spectacular (and untypical) salaries of the best-paid university leaders have made headlines, but average pay for university leaders also seems to have grown substantially.

There is an argument that this simply reflects the growing value of good executives in an increasingly complex and competitive sector. Sceptics, on the other hand, question how strongly university executive pay is linked to good performance.[7]

One change that has elicited less comment is universities' increasing use of outsourcing. Over the past few decades universities in the North America, the UK, and Australasia have tended to take blue-collar workers off their books and employ contractors instead, either on an individual basis or as part of larger operations specializing in cleaning or groundskeeping services (for example).

Box 2: Our set of English-speaking countries

In this report we compare New Zealand's universities to universities in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia.

In many ways these other countries' university systems – especially America's – are very different to New Zealand's. They are all significantly larger. The US boasts almost 4,000 degree-granting post-secondary institutions. Australia has 40 universities. New Zealand has eight.

These other countries also offer a much greater range of institutions. The US has a dizzying variety of institutions of higher learning, from large public research universities to small private 'liberal arts' colleges. Even the UK, Canada, and Australia, whose universities are almost all public, also have a handful of private colleges. New Zealand's universities are all public.

On the other hand, most of our figures are proportional in a way that makes variations in the size and number of universities less important.

It also makes sense to compare New Zealand with countries with similar academic cultures. New Zealand university culture shares some features with the UK and Australia (titles such as Vice-Chancellor, for example) and some with North America (the modular nature of their degree courses). Universities cultures in Europe and elsewhere have much more significant differences.

There is also a good amount of readily available research on these countries' universities. Some of it employs different categories and definitions than are used in New Zealand. But here too it is much easier to compare our universities to those in these other English-speaking countries than to universities elsewhere.

At the same time as universities have outsourced blue-collar work, they have taken on skilled non-academic employees in greater numbers. This has led to a greater total number of non-academic workers on campus (contracted workers plus high-skilled employees), even beyond the growth in published figures of university employees (which usually exclude contractors). It has also meant that non-academics directly employed by universities are now overwhelmingly well-educated, white-collar professionals.[8]

Reliable data is crucial in tracking trends of this sort and in informing public debates about administrators at universities. The debate about non-academics in the US, UK, Canada and Australia regularly draws on high-quality data in a way that has been less common in New Zealand.

One of the main aims of this report is to bring more of the available data about administrators in New Zealand universities into public discussion. Another is to present this data in a context that will make it meaningful. Only by comparing New Zealand to other countries can we hope to get a good sense of how our universities are typical or distinctive in the size and composition of their administrative staff.

We will end with a number of recommendations designed to put the debate about administrators in New Zealand universities on a new footing.

CHAPTER 1

Non-academic numbers

How many non-academics do universities employ?

Non-academic numbers relative to academics

Any discussion of the role of administrators at New Zealand universities should start by getting some idea of their numbers. Absolute numbers will of course not be very helpful. What we need here is some idea of how many non-academics there are in proportion to the size of our universities, and compared to other, similar university systems.

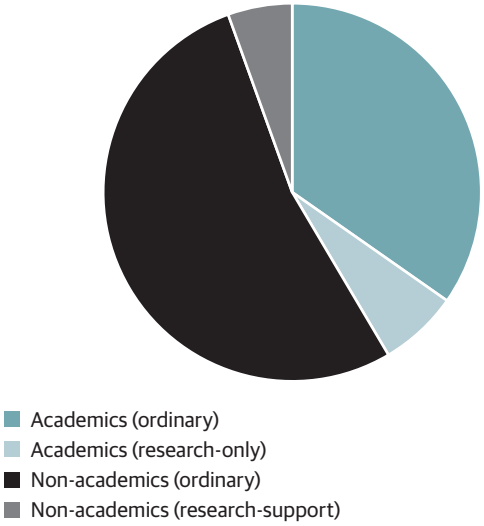
We can start with the number of non-academics relative to academics. The Ministry of Education reports 7,380 'academic staff' and 11,265 'other staff' at New Zealand universities in 2021.[9] That would give us a ratio of approximately 1.5 non-academics to every academic.

The Ministry, though, also lists 2,610 'research staff.' These are sub-divided into 1,440 'research-only staff' (comprising academics) and 1,170 'research support staff' (mainly comprising non-academics).[10]

If we add 'research-only staff' to our academic total, and 'research support staff' to our non-academic total, we get 8,820 total academics and 12,435 total non-academics, for a ratio of about 1.4 non-academics to every academic.

Since these new totals together account for all university employees, we can also express this ratio as a percentage. Non-academics made up 59% of total employees at New Zealand universities in 2021, with academics accounting for only 41% (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Academics and non-academics (FTEs) as a proportion of total university staff in New Zealand, 2021



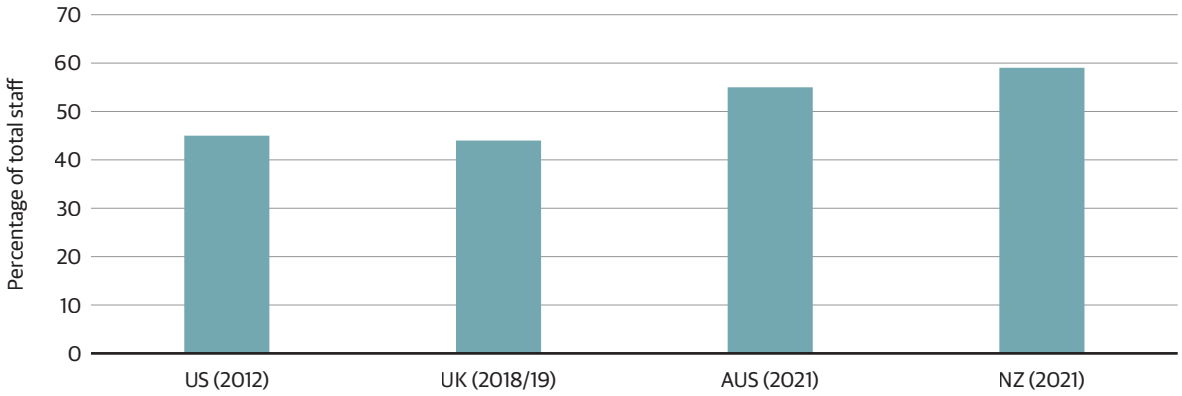
Source: Authors' calculations from Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website (see note 9 above).

The Australian Department of Education reports 54,457 academic and 66,907 'other' (non-academic) staff.[11] This means that non-academics make up 55% of total university staff in Australia, and that the ratio of non-academic to academic employees is about 1.2 to 1.

In the US, in contrast to Australasia, universities as a whole employ more academics than non-academics. Donna M. Desrochers and Rita Kirshstein report 1,748,907 academic 'faculty' and 1,440,633 non-academic 'staff' in 2012 across all types of degree-granting institutions in the US.[12] By these estimates, 45% of staff in American universities were non-academics in that year. The ratio of academic to non-academic staff was about 1.2 to 1 (or, to use our previous ratio of non-academic to academic staff, a little more than 0.8 to 1).

UK universities also employ more academics than non-academics, with the Higher Education Statistics Agency reporting 287,475 academics and 222,885 non-academics in 2018/19.[13] That would mean that non-academics accounted for 44% of UK university staff in that year, and that the ratio of academic to non-academic staff was 1.3 to 1 (with the reverse ratio of non-academics to academics at less than 0.8 to 1).

Figure 2: Non-academics as percentage of total staff in universities in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand (FTEs), most recent available data



Source: Authors' calculations from Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website; Australian Department of Education; Desrochers and Kirshstein 2014; UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (see notes 9–14).

Box 3: 'Research-only' and 'research-support' staff

While most 'research-support' staff are non-academics, some (post-graduates working as research assistants) may be better categorized as academics. We believe the number of academics of this sort in the 'research-support' category is small, but we have no way of knowing exactly how small.

If, for the sake of argument, we simply left this category out of our calculations entirely, that would still give us more non-academics (ordinary non-academics minus research-support staff) than academics (ordinary academics plus research-only staff). The ratio of non-academics to academics would then be 1.3 to 1.

In fact, even if we added the entire category of research-support staff to our count of academics alongside research-only staff (which would be completely unwarranted), there would still be more non-academics than academics, and still by a ratio of about 1.3 to 1.

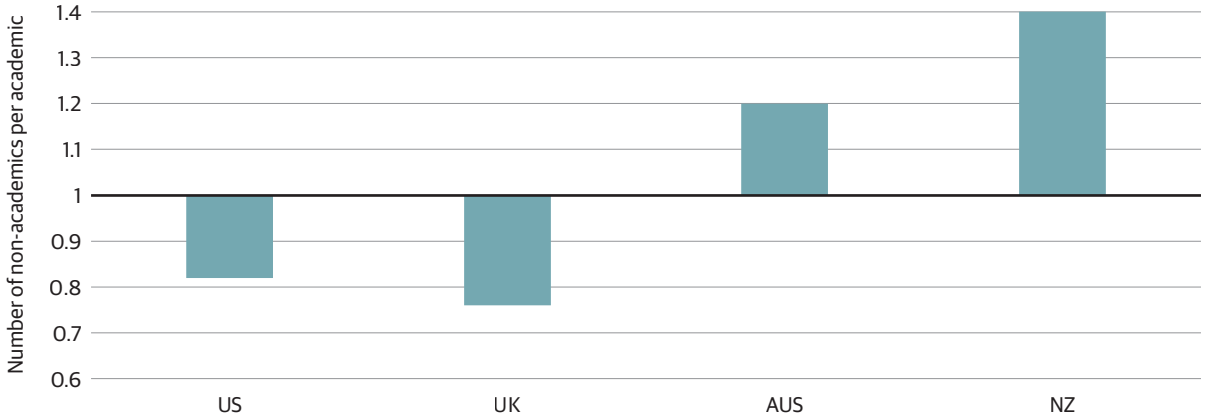
This reflects the relatively small number of staff in research-only and research-support roles compared to more mainstream academic and non-academic roles (which usually involve some interface with teaching as well as research).

Even if we bias the data as much as possible against the idea that New Zealand universities have more non-academics than academics, then, that hypothesis still ends up being confirmed.

We regard the figures that include research-only staff among academics and research-support staff among non-academics as the most accurate ones. This is because it includes staff associated exclusively with research in both the academic and non-academic counts, and probably only includes a tiny number of academics in the research-support category.

These, then, are the figures we will be using for New Zealand universities' non-academic to academic staff proportions in the rest of the report: 12,435 total non-academics and 8,820 total academics, for a ratio of about 1.4:1, and with non-academics and academics making up 59% and 41% of total university employees respectively. These proportions are also visible in Figure 1 (focus on the two different colours and not the different shades).

Figure 3: Number of non-academic employees for each academic at universities in the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand (FTEs), most recent available data



Source: Authors' calculations from Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website; Australian Department of Education; Desrochers and Kirshstein 2014; UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (see notes 9–14).

The first point that emerges from this is that a majority of university staff in Australia and New Zealand are non-academics. This contrasts with universities in the US and UK, where non-academic staff remain a minority of total staff.[14] To put this point another way, in Australian and New Zealand universities there are more non-academics. In the US and UK it is the other way round, with more academics than non-academics. The ratio of non-academics to academics in these four university systems is shown in Figure 3.

Non-academic numbers relative to students

What about the number of non-academics relative to students? In New Zealand, there was one non-academic member of staff for approximately every 18 students in 2021, down slightly from one non-academic for every 18–19 students in the previous five years.[15] In Australia, there was one non-academic staff member for every 24 students in 2021.[16]

In the UK the ratio of non-academic administrators to students was around 1 to 11 in 2021 across the whole higher education sector.[17] Alison Wolf and Andrew Jenkins provide ratios for 2017/18 that range from 1 to 13.5 in former polytechnics to 1 to 6.8 in research-intensive Russell Group universities.[18]

In the US, the National Center for Education Statistics reports 4.6 students per staff member at four-year degree-granting institutions in 2020.[19]

Table 1: Students per non-academic staff member (FTEs) at universities in New Zealand, Australia, the US and the UK, most recent available data

University system	Number	Range
New Zealand	18 (2021)	
Australia	24 (2021)	
UK	11 (2018/19)	6.8–13.5 (2017/18)
US	4.6 (2020)	

Table 1 shows the number of students per non-academic at universities in our set of countries. The first column provides the number of students per non-academic staff overall; the second gives the range of student per non-academic numbers at institutions of different kinds in the UK.

Table 1 suggests that the number of students per non-academic at New Zealand universities is relatively high, meaning that there are relatively few non-academics relative to student numbers.

Certainly, UK universities taken as a whole have fewer students per non-academic, both overall and in every sub-category of UK universities. US universities as a whole have far fewer students per non-academic (that is, more non-academics relative to student numbers).

On the other hand, New Zealand universities have fewer students per non-academic than at Australian universities, with each non-academic university employee in Australia serving six more students on average than their equivalent in New Zealand.

On the whole, relative to the number of students, the number of non-academics at New Zealand universities is quite modest by the standards of our other English-speaking countries.[20]

The rise of non-academics

The data so far shows that non-academics are relatively numerous on New Zealand university campuses in proportion to academic staff numbers. They are at the same time less numerous in proportion to students than non-academics in the US and UK, and more numerous than non-academics in Australia.

We might wonder how things have changed over time, both in New Zealand and in our other English-speaking countries.

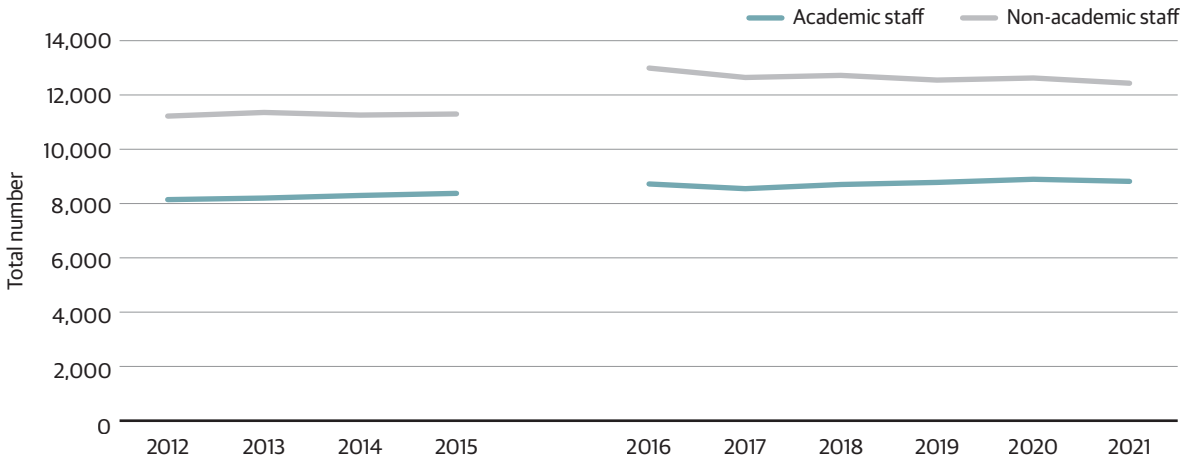
Numbers of academics and non-academics at New Zealand universities from 2012 to 2021 are available on the Ministry of Education website, and are displayed in Figure 4.[21]

The Ministry warns that its figures for 2012–15 'should not be compared with figures from 2016–2021' because staffing counts for the earlier period were from a single 'snapshot' conducted in August every year, whereas the later numbers 'are for the full calendar year.'[22] Hence the break in our graph.

As we can see, there was no great increase in the numbers of non-academics ('Other staff') in either the 2012–15 or the 2016–21 periods. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of non-academics did increase, but only by 1%. Between 2016 and 2021 it decreased by 4%.

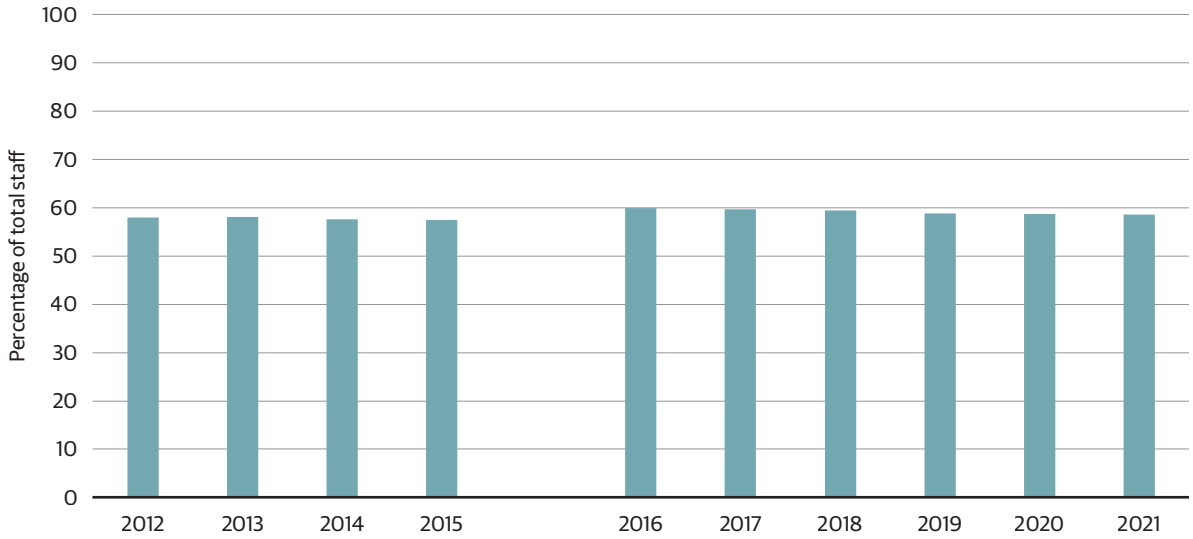
Nor was there any substantial change in the proportion of total university staff that was composed of non-academics. Non-academics comprised between 58% and 60% of total staff throughout the 2012–2021 period (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: Academics and non-academics in New Zealand universities (FTEs), 2012–15 and 2016–21



Source: Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website (see note 9 above).
Note: The break in the graph marks a change in data collection methods by the ministry (see the main text).

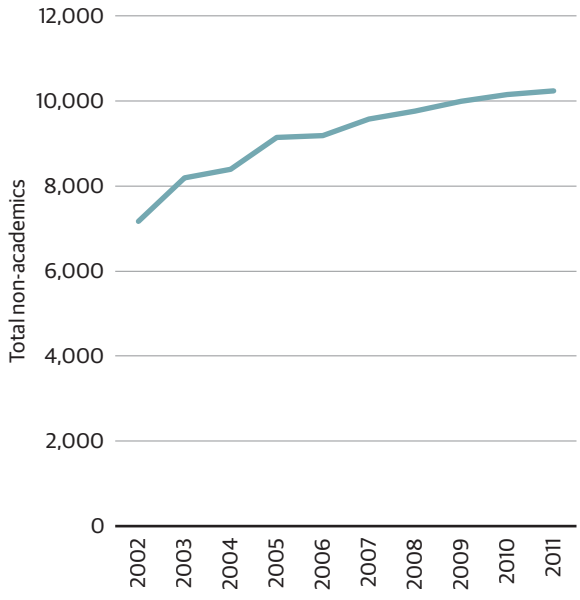
Figure 5: Non-academics as a percentage of total staff at New Zealand universities (FTEs), 2012–2021



Source: Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website (see note 9 above).
Note: The break in the graph marks a change in data collection methods by the ministry (see the main text).

Additional data provided to us by the Ministry of Education also allows us to trace the numbers of administrators from 2002 to 2011 (see Figure 6).[23]

Figure 6: Total non-academics employed in New Zealand universities (FTEs), 2002–2011



Source: 'University Non-academic Staff 2002 Forward' – spreadsheet provided by Ara Persson from the Ministry of Education.

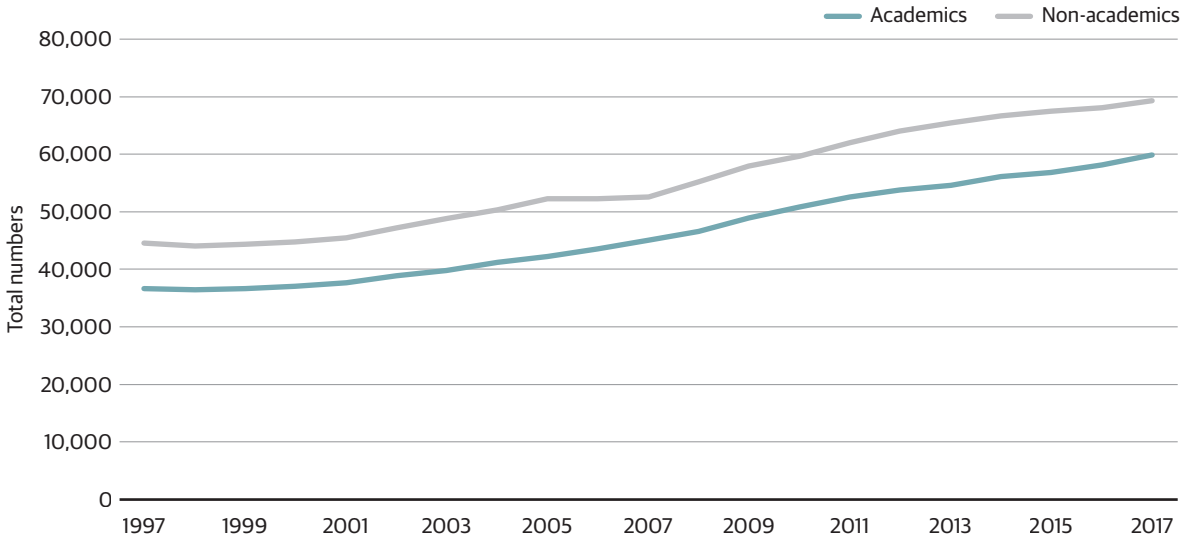
There was a substantial increase in the number of non-academics at New Zealand universities between 2002 and 2011 (see Figure 6). The number of non-academics increased from 7,170 in 2002 to 10,240 in 2015, a rise of 43%. Well more than half of that increase had taken place by 2005, with non-academic numbers increasing by 27% between 2002 and 2005.

The relatively slow growth in non-academic numbers in the 2012–15 period, then, is not typical of the past two decades. The norm over the whole of the 2002–21 period has been substantial growth, with the swiftest increases occurring at the beginning of this timeframe. The 8% decrease between 2016 and 2021 represents a reversal of the previous trend, albeit a modest one.

We might guess, in view of the relatively fast growth at the beginning of the period, that further growth occurred before 2002. Unfortunately, we do not have any data from before that year.

Gwilym Croucher and Peter Woelert do, however, provide figures for both non-academic and academics at Australian universities going back to 1997.[24] These are displayed in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Academic and non-academics at Australian universities (FTEs), 1997–2017



Source: Croucher and Woelert 2022 (see note 24).
Note: Figures for both academics and non-academics include casual staff.

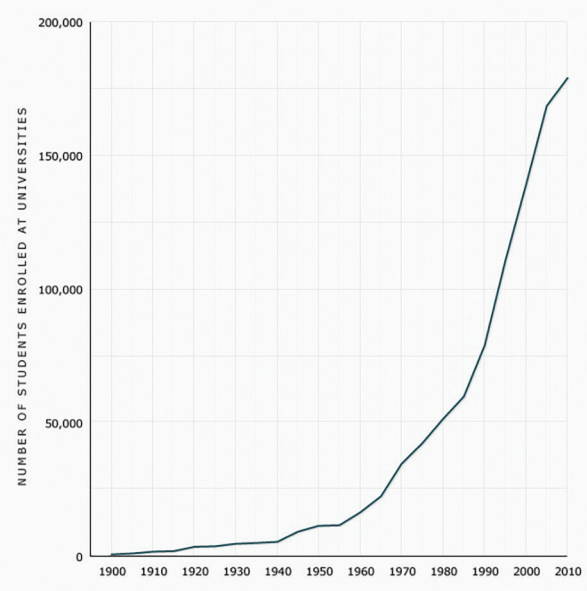
As Figure 7 illustrates, at least in the five years immediately prior to 2002, there was only very slow growth in non-academic numbers at Australian universities (at a rate of only 6% from 1997). There was, however, considerably faster growth thereafter, with the number of non-academics increasing by 58% between 2003 and 2017.

The period between 2002 and 2015 or so was, then, one of substantial growth in the numbers of non-administrators at both Australian and New Zealand universities.

Though we have no data for New Zealand before 2002 or for Australia before 1997, it also seems likely that there was a surge in non-academic numbers even before the turn of the millennium.

After all, universities in New Zealand exploded in size in the post-war period. Figure 8 shows the number of students enrolled at New Zealand universities from 1900 to 2010.[25]

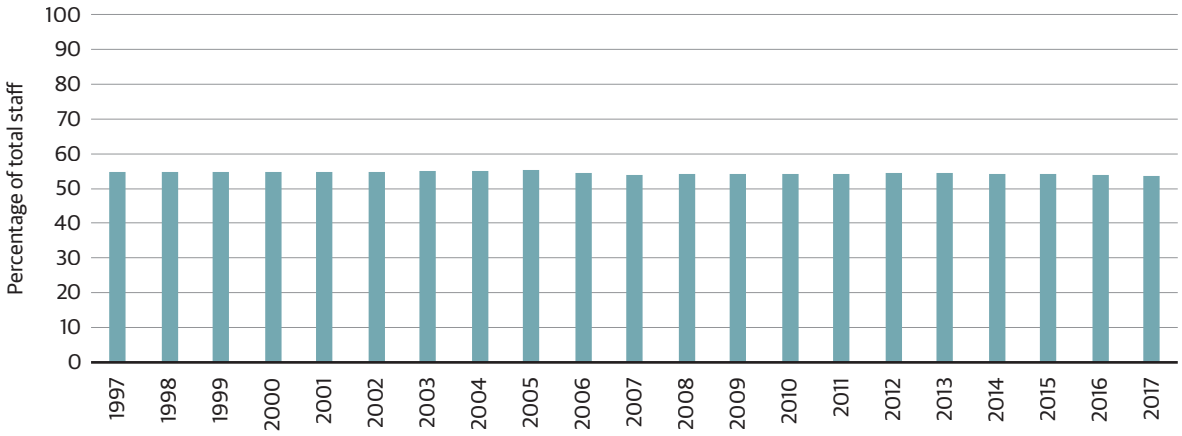
Figure 8: Number of enrolled students in New Zealand universities (1900–2010)



Source: Te Ara/The Encyclopedia of New Zealand.

Given the massive growth in student enrolments through the 20th century, it seems virtually certain that staff numbers (including both academics and non-academics) grew as well. What is less certain is whether the growth in non-academic numbers was proportional to the increase in the numbers of academics and students.

Figure 9: Non-academics as a percentage of total staff at Australian universities (FTEs), 1997–2017



Source: Croucher and Woelert 2022 (see note 24).

Figure 5 showed that the proportion of university employees who were non-academics remained quite stable between 2012 and 2021, with even the modest jump between 2015 and 2016 likely a result of a change in data-collection methods.[26]

Figure 9 above shows that the non-academic percentage of university staff at Australian universities was similarly constant between 1997 and 2017, remaining at 54% or 55% for the whole of that period.[27]

This brings us to the possibility that any rise in non-academic figures over the past few decades simply reflects the expansion of universities over the same period.

Non-academic growth relative to academic and non-academic growth over the past few decades

There is clearly some relationship between university size and non-academic numbers. We know, though, that the number of non-academic administrators per student has increased in many types of university. In the US, the number of non-academic professionals per thousand students grew at every type of university between 1990 and 2012. The size of the increase varied from 94% for Master's-granting public universities to 37% for public research universities (which also grant PhDs).[28]

What about the number of non-academics relative to academics? Have non-academic numbers grown more quickly than academic numbers?

Wolf and Jenkins state that 'most countries where data exist seem to have experienced higher growth in non-academic than in academic staff numbers' in recent decades.[29]

This is certainly the case at US colleges between 1975 and 2005, when according to Benjamin Ginsberg the number of professional staff grew by a whopping 240%, while the number of full-time faculty increased by only 51%.[30]

At UK universities, though, the number of teaching staff increased faster than the number of non-academics between 2005/6 and 2017/8, by 35% to 16%.[31] In Australian universities, too, academic staff numbers grew faster than non-academic numbers between 1997 and 2017, by 64% to 56%.[32] Even in the US the rate of increase for academics (77%) was substantially higher than for non-academics (29%) between 1990 and 2012, according to Desrochers and Kirshstein.[33]

As we have seen, the number of non-academics at New Zealand universities increased by 1% between 2012 and 2015, and then decreased by 4% between 2016 and 2021.[34] We can now add that the number of academics increased by 2.8% between 2012 and 2015, and by 1% between 2016 and 2021.[35] Between 2002 and 2015 the number of non-academics increased by 43%; but a lack of data means that we cannot compare the growth in academic numbers in the same period.

Of course, it is difficult to compare increases across different periods of time. Accordingly, in Figure 10 we show annualised rates of growth in academics and non-academics in our set of English-speaking countries.[36]

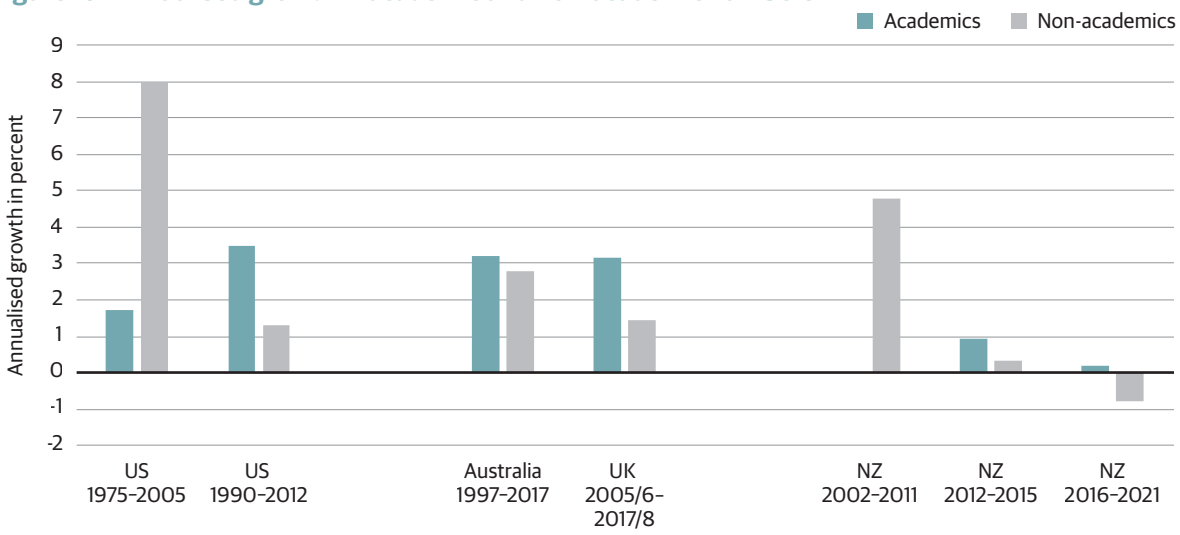
In the English-speaking countries surveyed here, then, Wolf and Jenkins' claim that non-academic numbers have generally grown faster than academic numbers is true only of the US between 1975 and 2000. But it is not true of the UK between 2005/6 and 2017/8, of Australia between 2002 and 2017, or of New Zealand between 2012 and 2015 or 2016 and 2021. We do not have enough information to tell whether it is true of New Zealand between 2002 and 2011 or at any earlier period.

All we can say with any certainty for New Zealand universities is that if non-academic numbers did increase more rapidly than academic numbers, this took place before 2012. We might speculate that there may have been a disproportionate increase in non-academic numbers between 2002 and 2011, since the rate of non-academic growth is especially high in that period.

Non-academics do not seem to have proliferated more quickly than academics on US campuses between 1990 and 2012. There was, though, a dramatic growth in non-academics from 1975, one that was clearly out of proportion to the growth of academics in the same period. It may be, then that the period 1975–1990 was when non-academic numbers most clearly outpaced academic numbers in the US.

To what extent something similar took place in Australian, UK, New Zealand or Canadian colleges at a similar period (the 1970s and 1980s) is a question that is certainly worthy of further research. Unfortunately, it is also beyond the scope of this report.

Figure 10: Annualised growth in academic and non-academic numbers



Source: Authors' calculations from Wolf and Jenkins 2021, Ginsberg 2011, Croucher and Woelert 2022, Desrochers and Kirshstein 2015, Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website (see notes 30–36 above).

CHAPTER 2

Non-academic expenditure

How much do universities spend on non-academic staff?

As Chapter 1 made clear, non-academic numbers at New Zealand universities are high relative to other university systems in the English-speaking world.

But what kind of financial outlay does this represent relative to the amount spent on academic staffing, and how does this compare to similar university systems?

In New Zealand we could find clear breakdowns of expenditure on academic and non-academic staff salaries for only three universities in 2021: Otago, Canterbury, and Auckland.[37] Their expenditures on academic and non-academic salaries are displayed in Figure 11.

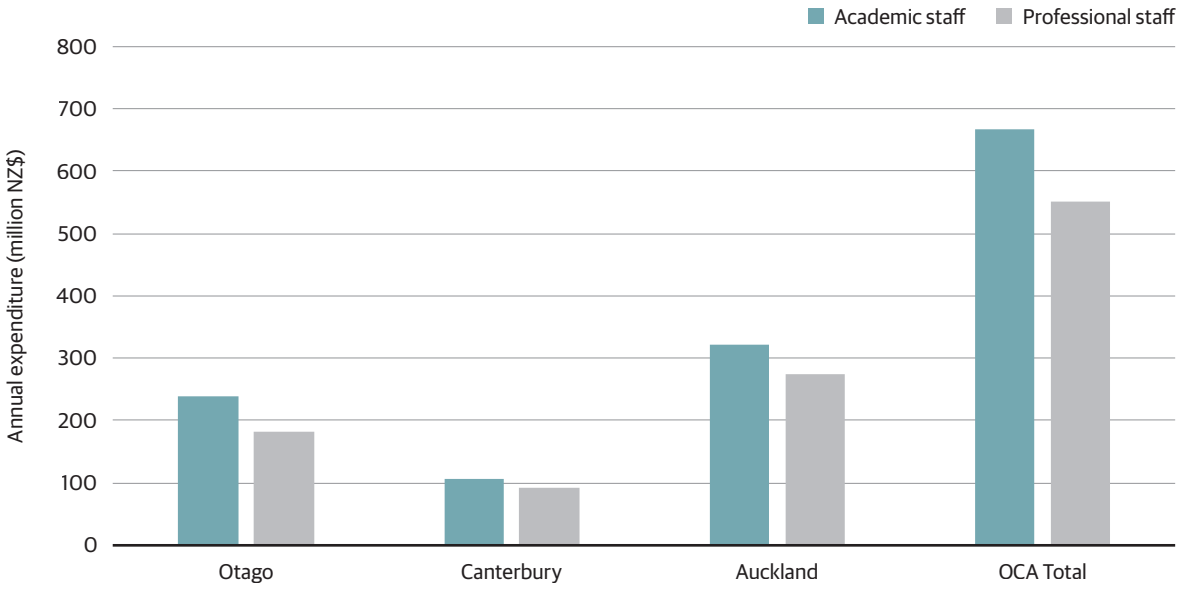
Figure 11 also shows the amount that these universities spent jointly ('OCA total'):

$668 million on academic staff salaries and $551 million on professional staff salaries. That represents a ratio of about 1.2 to 1 for academic salaries to professional staff salaries.

In 2020, Australian universities spent AU$8,985 million on 'academic staff expenses' and $9,866 million on 'non-academic staff,' according to Universities Australia – a very similar ratio of about 1.1 to 1.[38]

The UK Higher Education Statistics Agency says that UK universities spent £956 million on 'academic staff costs' and only £338 million on 'other staff costs' in 2020–21.[39] That would mean UK universities spent some £2.82 on academics for every pound they spent on other staff.

Figure 11: Expenditure on academic and non-academic salaries, 2021



Source: Authors' calculations from University of Otago 2022, University of Canterbury 2022, University of Auckland 2022.
Note: OCA = the Universities of Otago, Canterbury, and Auckland.

Here, though, it seems that some of the £366 million listed under 'other operating expenses' was spent on non-academic staff not directly employed by the university.[40] If we add that amount to UK universities' non-academic expenditure we get a combined total of £704 million. That would mean UK universities spent £1.40 on academics for every pound they spend on non-academics.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, degree-granting institutions in the US spent US$94,658 million on instruction and $75,144 million on a combination of academic support, student services and institutional support in 2019–20, an outlay of around $1.3 on teaching for every dollar spent on support services.[41]

Statistics Canada reports a CA$11 million expenditure on 'academic salaries' in 2019/20 and a $9 million outlay on 'other salaries and wages.'[42] That represents a ratio of academic to non-academic expenditure of about 1.2 to 1.[43]

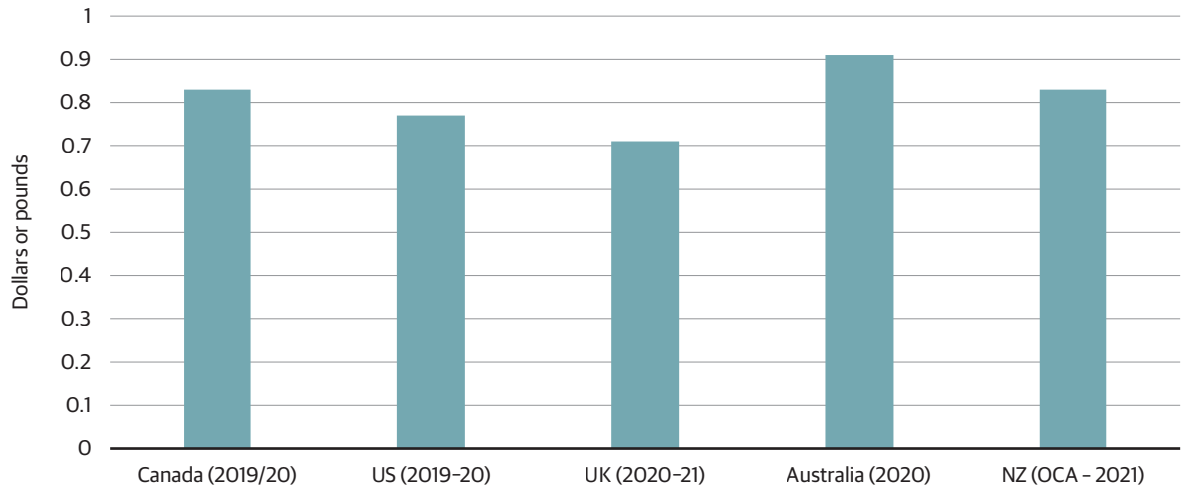
Since what interests us is how much universities spend on non-academics relative to academics, we should reverse the ratios mentioned above.

For the amount spent on non-academics per unit (1 dollar or pound) spent on academics in our set of English-speaking countries, see Figure 12.

A few caveats need to be borne in mind. The UK figures for non-academics included out-sourced workers. The US figure for academics included only 'instruction' but not research costs. Most obviously, the New Zealand figures we used were from only 3 of the 8 universities. Since these three are among the most research-intensive of New Zealand's universities, it may be that they have slightly more non-academics than average.[44]

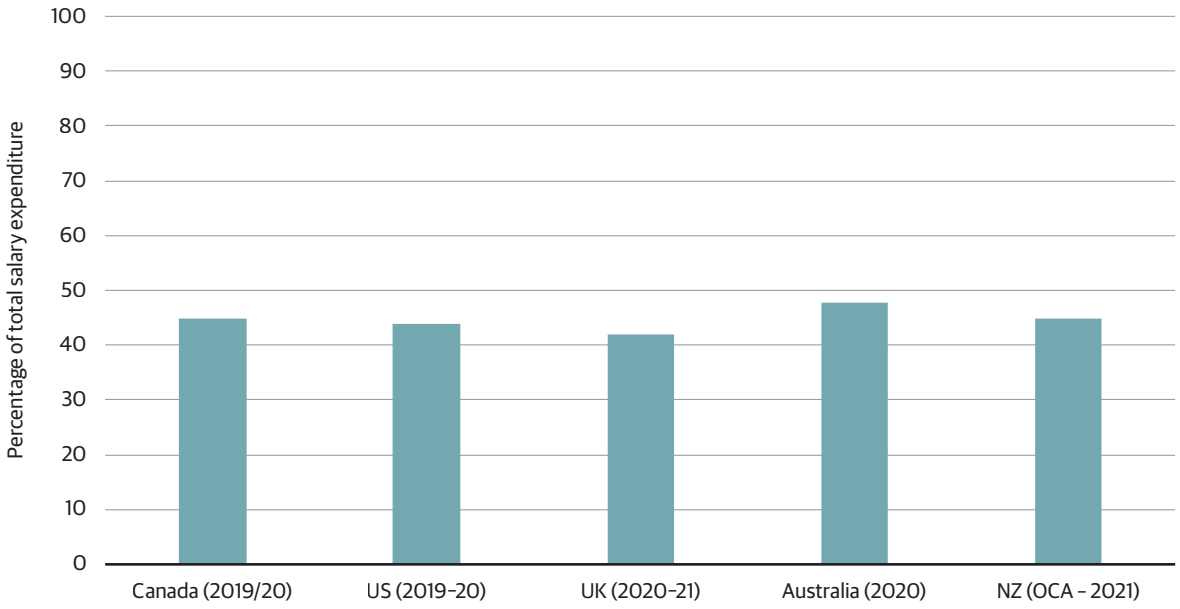
What we can say is that at three of New Zealand's more research-intensive universities, the proportion of salary expenditure that goes to non-academics is similar to Canadian universities, at around 83% of academic salaries. Australia spends somewhat more than other countries in our dataset on non-academics per dollar spent on academics, with its non-academic salaries spend at no less than 91% of its outlay for academic salaries. The UK, by contrast, spends somewhat less on non-academic salaries for every pound it spends on academic salaries, with the former spend no more than 71% of the latter.

Figure 12: Amount spent on non-academics for each dollar/pound spent on academics in Canada, the US, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand



Source: Statistics Canada, UK Higher Education Statistics Agency, US National Centre for Educational Statistics, Universities Australia, University of Otago 2022, University of Canterbury 2022, University of Auckland 2022, authors' calculations (see notes 37–43 above).

Figure 13: Non-academic salaries as a percentage of total salary outlay in Canada, the US, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand



Source: Statistics Canada, UK Higher Education Statistics Agency, US National Centre for Educational Statistics, Universities Australia, University of Otago 2022, University of Canterbury 2022, University of Auckland 2022, authors' calculations (see notes 37–43 above).

We can, finally, look at spending on non-academic salaries as a percentage of total salary expenditures in our set of English-speaking university systems (see Figure 13).

If New Zealand universities employ an especially large number of non-academics, then, their expenditure on non-academic salaries is not especially large. Moreover, the New Zealand university system spends more on academic than non-academic salaries despite employing more non-academics than academics. This is also true of all the other university systems we studied, and reflects higher average salaries for academics employed at universities than for non-academic university workers.

If the financial cost of non-academic staffing is not higher or even as high as the cost of academic salaries, though, it is still significant. In all the university systems we looked at expenditure on non-academic salaries amounts to more than 70% of what was spent on academic salaries; in all these countries, non-academic salaries accounted for more than 40 per cent of total salary spends. In Australia, this figure is close to a half, with universities spending almost as much on non-academic salaries as they do on academic salaries.

Moreover, this is beside other costs that large bureaucracies may levy on complex institutions like universities (alongside the considerable benefits they bring). We will return to these other costs in our Conclusion.

CHAPTER 3

The composition of university bureaucracies

What types of non-academics do universities employ?

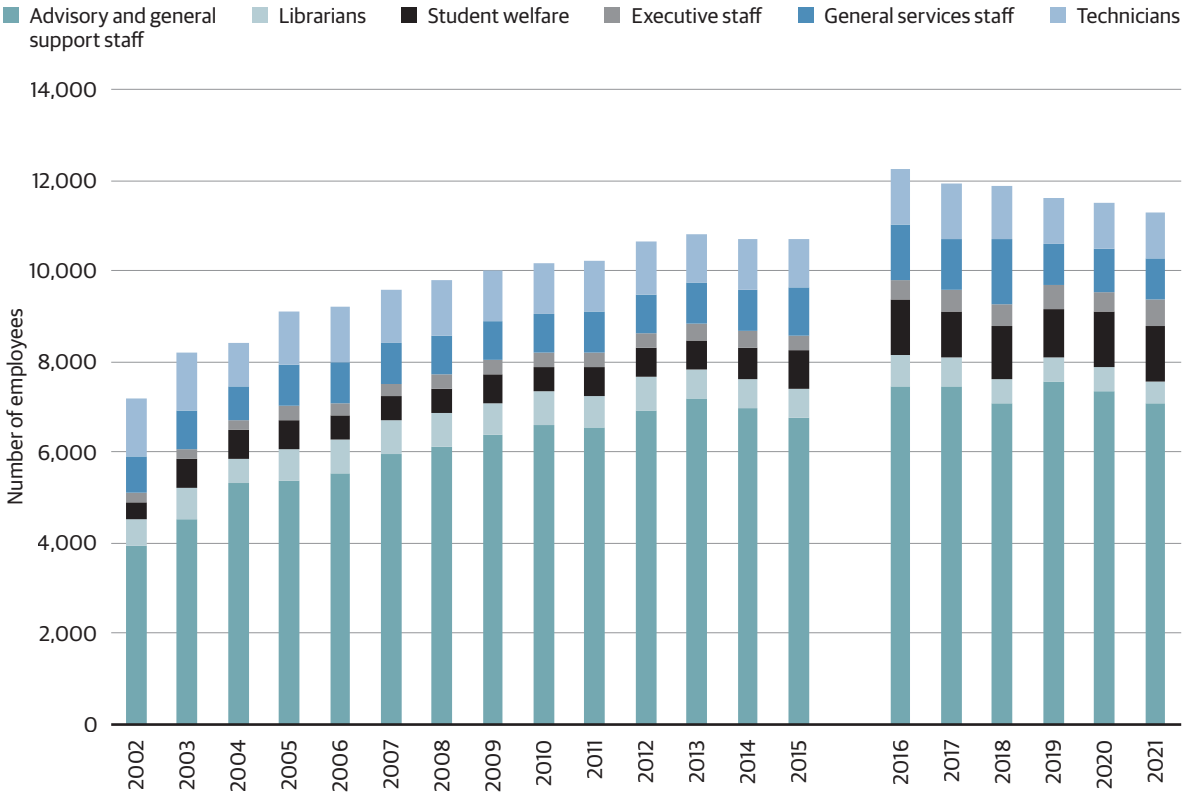
Changes in non-academic staff numbers by category in New Zealand

The rise in non-academic numbers between 2002 and 2015 – and probably earlier as well – has created an administrative bureaucracy in the New Zealand university system that is larger than the academic staff and that represents a nearly equivalent financial outlay.

As we saw in Box 1, though, terms like 'administrator' and 'non-academic' can refer to many different types of employees. So what is the composition of New Zealand universities' non-academic staffing, and how has it changed over time?

Figure 14 shows the number non-academic staff from 2002 to 2021 divided into the categories used by the Ministry of Education.[45]

Figure 14: Non-academic staff by category in New Zealand universities (FTEs), 2002–15 and 2016–21

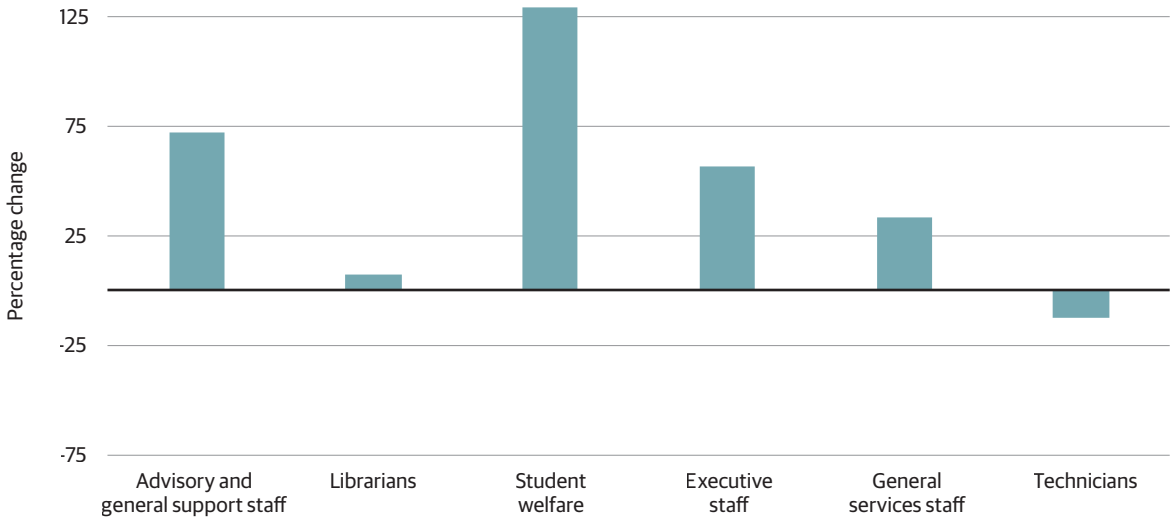


Source: 'University Non-academic Staff 2002 Forward' – spreadsheet provided by Ara Persson from the Ministry of Education.
Note: The break in the graph marks a change in data collection methods by the ministry (see p. 13 above).

The largest increase between 2002 and 2015 was in student welfare staff, which grew by 129%. The two categories of advisory and general support staff and executive staff also grew substantially, by 72% and 57% respectively. General services staff grew by a modest 33%, and the number of librarians also grew, if less impressively, by 7%. The only category to contract was technicians, whose numbers fell by 13%. These changes are displayed in Figure 15.

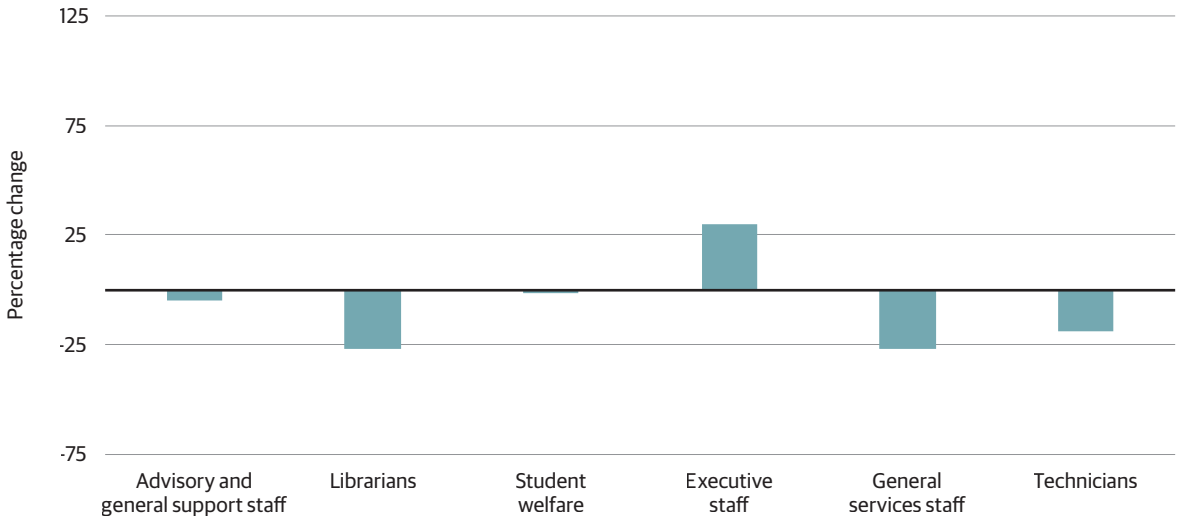
Even between 2016 and 2021, when the total number of non-academics declined, executive staff numbers grew by 30%. Student welfare contracted, but only by 2%, as did advisory and general support staff, though only by 5%. The numbers of both librarians and general support staff declined by a more substantial 27% in both cases. And technicians continued to decline in numbers, by a further 19%. These changes are displayed in Figure 16.

Figure 15: Percentage change in non-academic staff numbers by category in New Zealand universities (FTEs), 2002–15



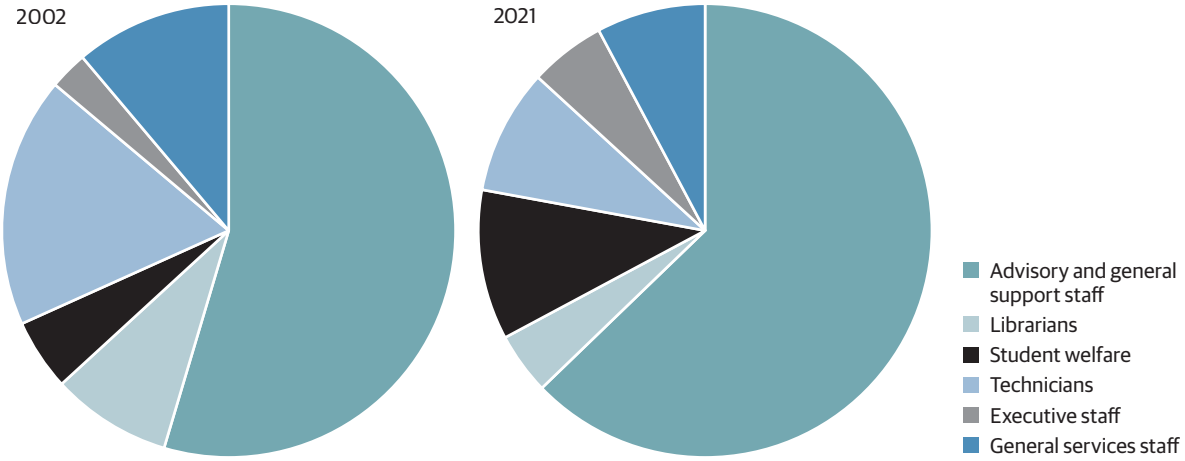
Source: 'University Non-academic Staff 2002 Forward' – spreadsheet provided by Ara Persson from the Ministry of Education.

Figure 16: Percentage change in non-academic staff numbers by category in New Zealand universities, 2016–21



Source: 'University Non-academic Staff 2002 Forward' – spreadsheet provided by Ara Persson from the Ministry of Education.

Figure 17: Categories of non-academic as a proportion of total non-academic staff in New Zealand universities in 2002 (left) and 2021 (right)



Source: 'University Non-academic Staff 2002 Forward' – spreadsheet provided by Ara Persson from the Ministry of Education.

We can see the results of these changes in Figure 17, which compares the breakdown of non-academics by category in 2002 and 2021. (Note that because these are proportions, the comparison is not affected by the change in the way the data were gathered in 2016).

As the pie charts illustrate, certain categories of non-academic have come to make up a substantially larger part of non-academic staff than they did two decades ago, while other types of non-academic have seen their share of the total contract.

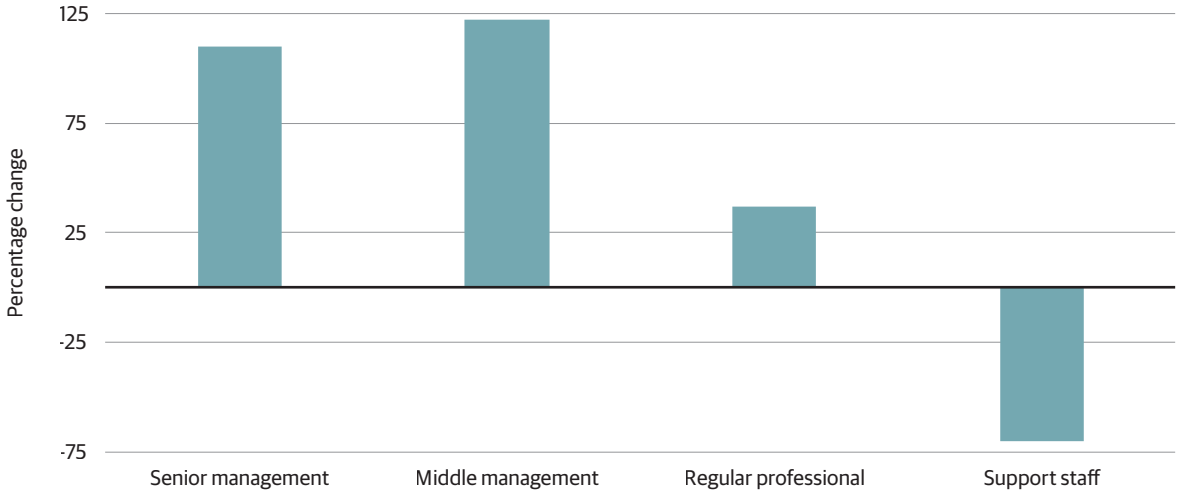
Student welfare staff made up 11% of the total in 2021, up from only 5% in 2002. Executive staff have also seen their share of the total grow substantially, from 2.7% in 2002 to 5% in 2021. Meanwhile, technicians' share of the total declined from 18% to 8.9% in the same period, and librarians went from 8.6% of total non-academics to only 4.4%.

Changes in non-academic staff numbers by category in our other English-speaking countries

To what extent are these changes paralleled in our other English-speaking countries?

In Australia, Croucher and Woelert found that three of their four types of non-academic roles increased in number from 1997 to 2017. 'Regular professional' roles went up 37%, 'senior management' roles by 110%, and 'middle management' roles by no less than 122%. In their final category, though, 'support staff,' roles declined by some 70% over the same period (see Figure 18).[46]

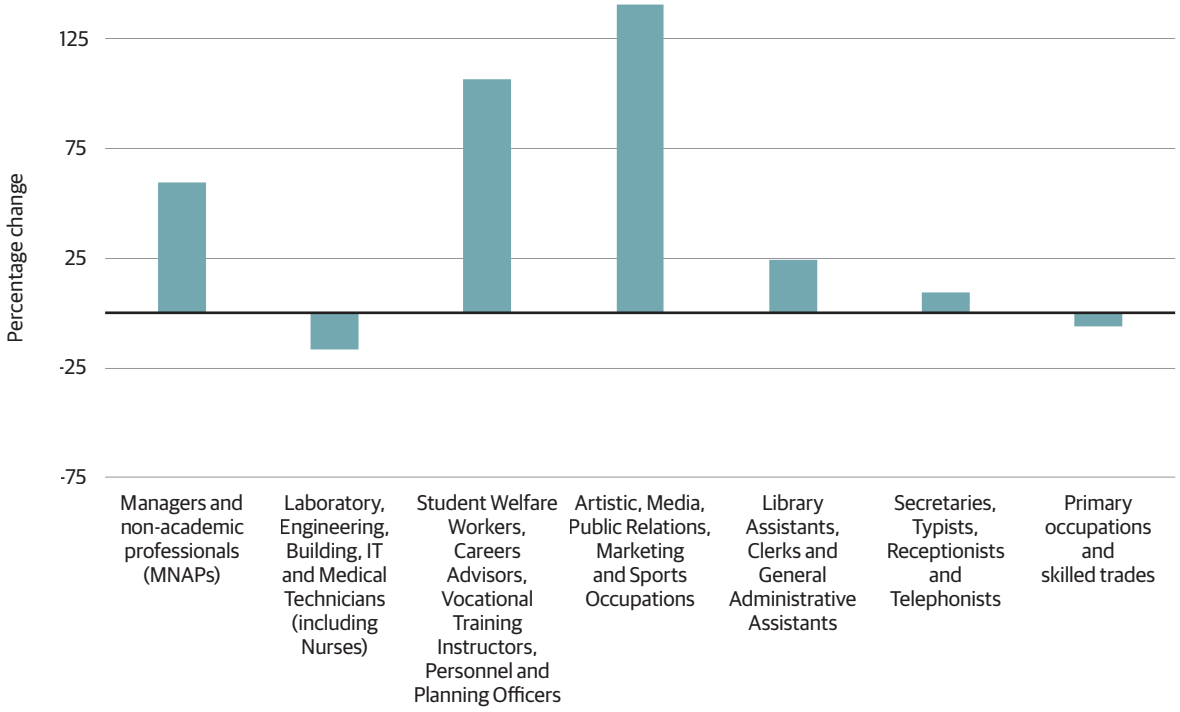
Figure 18: Percentage change in non-academic numbers by category in Australian universities, 1997–2017



Source: Croucher and Woelert 2020 (see note 46).

Figure 19 presents percentage change in various types of non-academic employee in UK universities between 2005/6 and 2017/18, using Wolf and Jenkins' figures and categories.[47] Five of the seven categories grew, with especially substantial increases in the categories based around managers (up 141%), PR consultants (up 107%), and student welfare workers (up 60%). At the same time, the categories that include technicians and tradesmen both contracted, by 16% and 6% respectively.

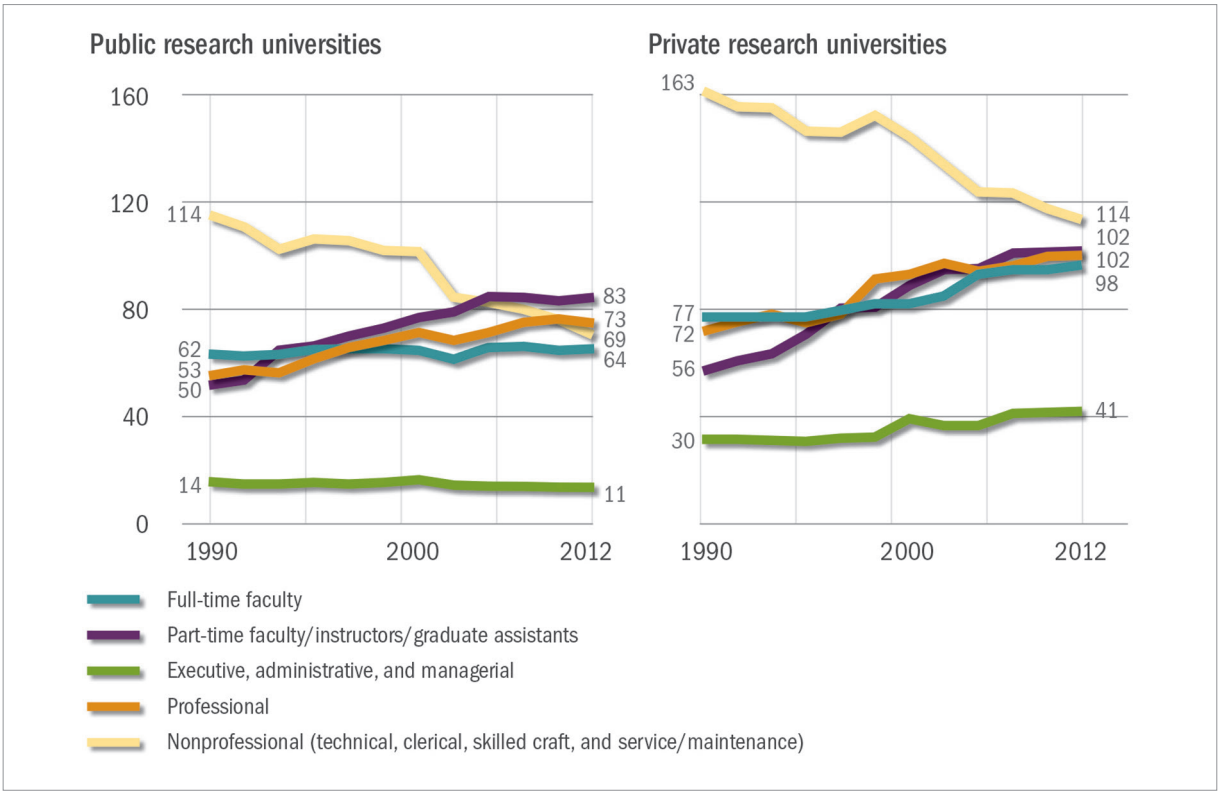
Figure 19: Percentage change in non-academic numbers by category in UK universities, 2005–06 to 2017–18



Source: Wolf and Jenkins 2021 (see note 47).

As Figure 20 shows, technicians and tradesmen also declined at US research universities between 1990 and 2012 relative to the number of students.[48] In the same period, professional non-academic posts expanded substantially relative to student numbers.

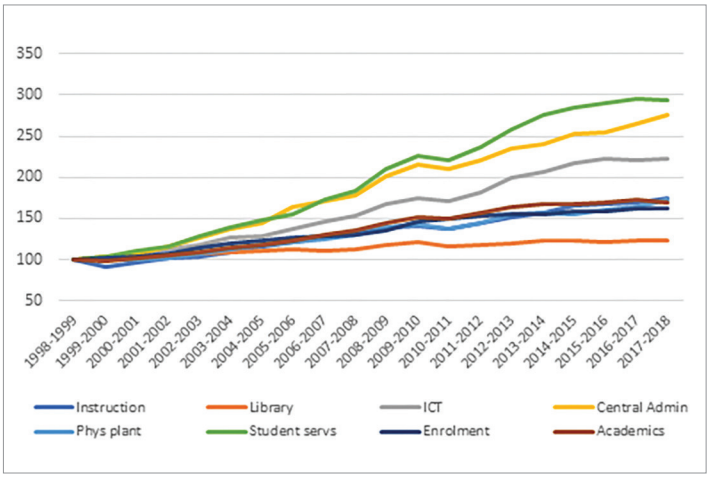
Figure 20: Employees by category per thousand FTE students at public and private research universities in the US, 1990–2012



Source: Reproduced from Desrochers and Kirshstein 2014 (see note 48).

We lack data on non-academics and non-academic numbers at Canadian universities. However, Figure 21 charts changes in university spending on different categories of non-academic staff between 1998–99 and 2017–18.[49] This suggests that all categories of non-academic staff grew substantially during this period, with the most dramatic growth occurring in student services and central administration (where expenditures nearly tripled) and information and communications technology (where they more than doubled). By contrast, library expenditure grew more sluggishly.

Figure 21: Changes in wage expenditures by category in Canadian universities, 1989–99–2017–18



Source: Reproduced from Usher 2020 (see note 49).

The outsourcing trend and its consequences

The above figures confirm a trend that has long been discussed in the specialist literature. Over the past few decades, universities across the English-speaking world have been employing increasing numbers of white-collar non-academic professionals while outsourcing blue-collar workers.[50]

More specifically, universities have hired more and more managers, strategists, counsellors, PR consultants, and so on over time. During the same period, they have increasingly moved IT workers, builders and repairmen, nurses (in medical schools) and receptionists off their books, increasingly preferring to hire workers of this sort on short-term contracts, often via third-party companies.

This is important for three reasons.

First, though blue-collar workers have increasingly been moved off universities' books, they usually still retain a presence on campus. This means that the reported numbers of non-academics in all the countries we have surveyed are likely to under-estimate the actual number of non-academics on campuses. In other words, if lower-prestige roles had not been moved off-book, the increase in the number of non-academics employed by universities would be even larger than the data reported here show.

Second, universities still spend money on lower-wage non-academics by paying third-party contractors (cleaning companies, for instance). This means that the amount of money spent on non-academics by universities in all of the countries we have surveyed is also probably greater than the data we have looked at suggests.

Third, the outsourcing trend has massively increased the proportional presence of relatively well-educated, white-collar non-academic employees among directly employed university workers. This has come about because of the two-part nature of the trend: not only has the number of blue-collar employees declined, but there has been a substantial, and sometimes dramatic, increase in professional employees in the same period. The result is a university staff that, both on its academic and non-academic sides, is drawn overwhelmingly from the ranks of university graduates.

CHAPTER 4

Vice-chancellor salaries

How much do university chief executives make?

The salaries of vice-chancellors and their equivalents (see Box 4) has been a subject of controversy in recent years across the English-speaking world. In 2017, Glynis Breakwell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bath, was forced to resign after her salary of £468,000 (some $907, 000 at current exchange rates) was revealed.[51] That would have placed her only 28th among the vice-chancellors of Australia's 38 public universities, with the top earner, former University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor Glyn Davis, receiving AU$1,589,999 ($2,540,000).[52] Even that amount pales in comparison to the US$2,578,609 ($4,161,101) paid to William H. McRaven, head of the University of Texas system, in 2018.[53]

As in many professions, Canadian college presidents tend to earn less than their counterparts south of the border, but University of Alberta President Indira Samarasekera was still paid some CA$1,200,000 (NZ$1,436,760) in 2013.[54]

By these very impressive standards of executive remuneration, New Zealand universities lag behind, with Stuart McCutcheon, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland, receiving $768,000 in 2019.[55] These headline-grabbing top salaries are displayed in Figure 22.

Box 4: Vice-chancellors and presidents

In Britain, a vice-chancellor is effectively a university's CEO. Vice-chancellors sit at the top of the university's administrative hierarchy, with only chancellors (whose role is largely ceremonial) above them.

Vice-chancellors set short- and medium-term goals for their university, often in the form of a formal strategic plan, in collaboration with other top brass. They also interact with donors, industry and government, and often speak for their universities (to the extent that this is possible and appropriate) in the public arena.

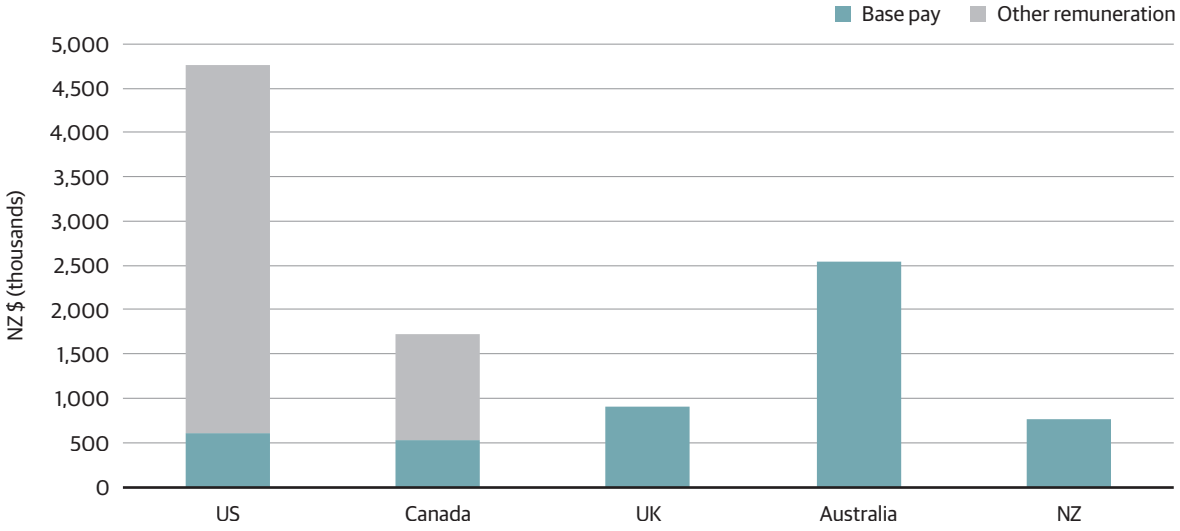
Australian and New Zealand universities follow UK convention in calling their universities' chief executives vice-chancellors. In Canada (as sometimes in Australia), the official title of university CEOs tends to be 'president and vice-chancellor.' Two exceptions are McGill and Queen's, who use the Scottish combination 'principal and vice-chancellor.'

In the United States the most common term for a college CEO is 'president.'

These roles are not identical across all these university systems, but they are very similar, with university executives often moving between institutions in different English-speaking countries, especially within the Commonwealth of Nations.

In what follows we refer to university chief executives in the UK, New Zealand, Australia and Canada as vice-chancellors (dropping the 'president' or 'principal' in the latter two cases) and to top executives at US colleges as presidents. When referring to vice-chancellors and presidents across our entire set of countries, we use the terms 'university chief executive' or 'CEO.'

Figure 22: Top chief executive salaries in recent years



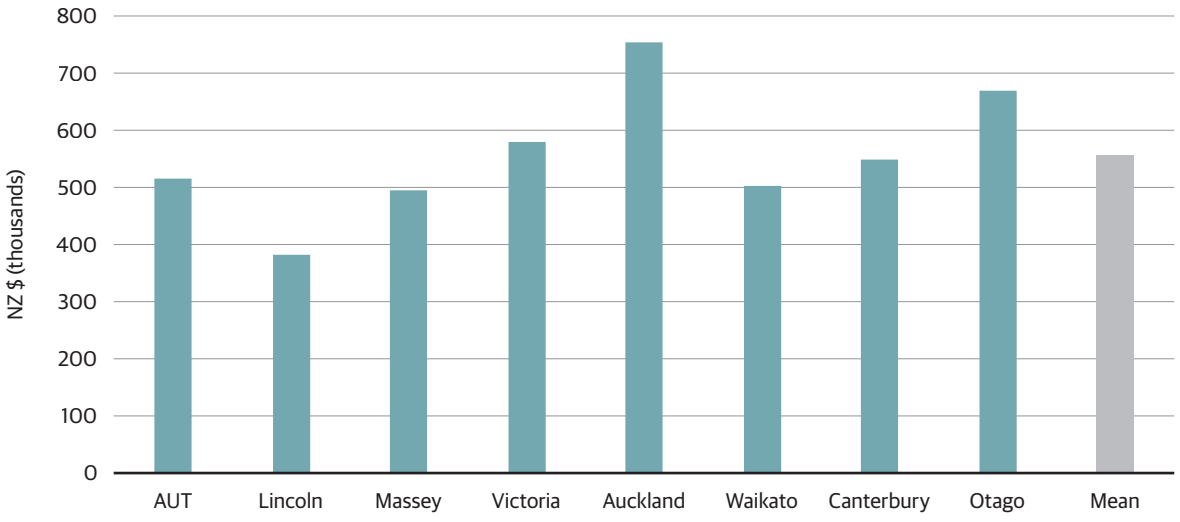
Sources: Adams 2017, Ross 2019, Somers and Moody 2019, Pratt 2014, NZ Public Service Commission (see notes 51–55).

Vice-chancellor salaries at New Zealand universities

Although top salaries may grab headlines, they hardly constitute a reliable guide to the realities of executive pay in the university systems in question. We can get a better idea of these realities as they pertain to New Zealand by looking at the salaries of New Zealand vice-chancellors in 2020/21. These are displayed in Figure 23, together with the mean salary.[56]

The best-paid university CEO that year was University of Auckland Vice-Chancellor Dawn Freshwater, who was paid $755,000. The lowest university chief executive salary was paid to Lincoln University's Acting Vice-Chancellor Bruce McKenzie, who received $381,000, less than half the amount paid to Freshwater. The mean vice-chancellor salary was $556,000 and the median salary was $531,000.

Figure 23: Vice-chancellor and mean salaries at New Zealand universities, 2020–21



Source: Public Service Commission (see note 55); authors' calculations.

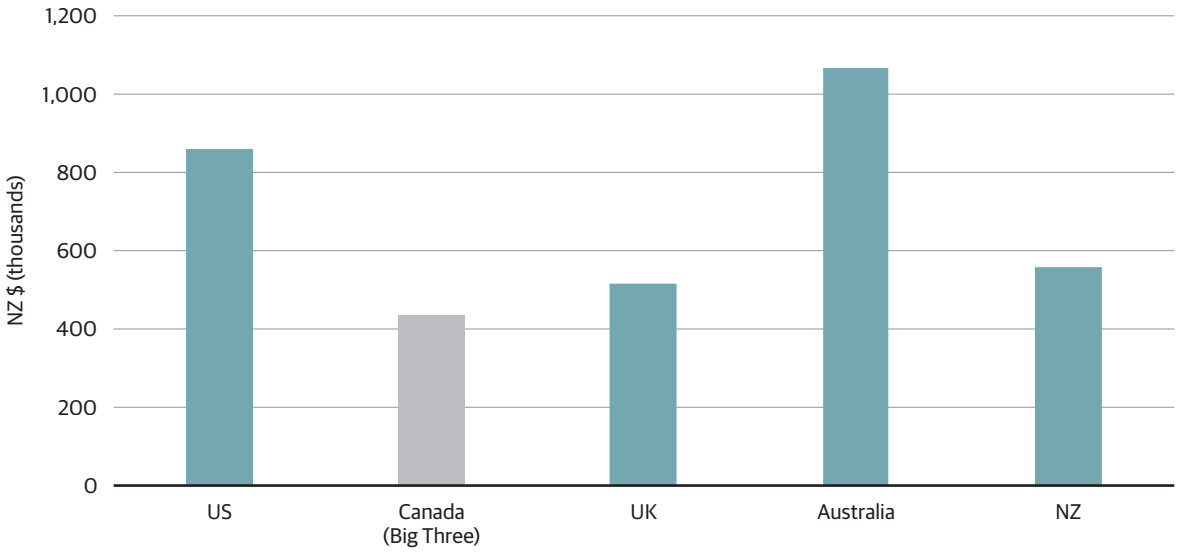
Average chief executive salaries in our set of English-speaking countries

How does the average vice-chancellor salary in New Zealand compare to the average pay for university chief executives in other English-speaking countries? Mean figures for chief executive pay in our five English-speaking countries are displayed in Figure 24 in New Zealand dollars.

Australia leads the pack in this area, with the average compensation paid out to vice-chancellors and its public universities passing the AU$1 million mark in 2019.[57] The US comes a close second, with the average public college president collecting more than half a million US dollars the same year.[58] In the UK the average remuneration paid to vice-chancellors fell just short of £270,000 in 2019–20, some distance below the US and Australian averages.[59] As for Canada, though we couldn't find any reliable figures for the average amount paid to college presidents, we did find an average salary for presidents at the University of British Columbia, the University of Toronto, and McGill University (sometimes called the 'Big Three' Canadian universities).[60]

In absolute terms, then, the average vice-chancellor at a New Zealand university is paid slightly more than the average salary of a vice-chancellor at UK universities or at one of Canada's big three universities. At the same time, the average vice-chancellor in this country is paid substantially less than the average college president in the US or the average vice-chancellor of an Australian university.

Figure 24: Average university chief executive pay in the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand



Sources: Ross 2020, Bauman and Elias 2020, Busby 2021, Howell 2015, NZ Public Service Commission, authors' calculations.

University chief executive salaries relative to academic salaries

Of course, university systems in these countries vary in the range, size, and wealth of their institutions. The countries themselves, for all their similarities, also differ to some extent in terms of their level of wealth and the openness of their labour markets. All these factors should lead us to expect that the average pay of a university vice-chancellor might well be different. With so many variables potentially at play here, though, it might be helpful to compare chief executive pay with the pay of academics working in the same system.

Unfortunately, we struggled to find directly comparable data about this. For some countries, comparisons of average vice-chancellor pay with average academic pay were all that was available; in other countries vice-chancellor pay was compared to the salaries of academics at the top or the bottom end of the pay scale. Starting at the top end of the academic pay scale, at *Forbes* top 25 public universities in the US in 2018, college presidents received around five times the pay of full professors, on average.[61]

This ratio has not been calculated for other countries (as far as we are aware). But Statistics Canada does list the 90th percentile of academic salaries for individual institutions; to choose just one, at McGill in 2020/2021, a professor in the 90th percentile made CA$201,900 in 2020–21.[62] McGill's President Suzanne Fortier was paid a salary of $860,971 in 2021, some four times more.[63]

We could not find national figures for the average pay of full professors in New Zealand, but individual universities' pay scales are accessible online.[64] The average salary for an academic on the bottom rung of the full professor range in this country is $151,143, almost four times less than the average vice-chancellor salary.[65]

Moving to the middle of the academic pay range, in the UK, the average academic was paid about a sixth of the average vice-chancellor salary.[66] At McGill, the average professor received $143,000 in 2020–21, again about a sixth of what the vice-chancellor was paid.[67]

Box 5: Academic ranks

In the US, the academic hierarchy for those seeking or holding tenure has long consisted of three broad ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, and (full) professor. Lecturers at US universities are non-tenure track academics who contribute teaching and research on short-term contracts. Canadian universities have long followed these US conventions.

The traditional academic hierarchy at UK universities consisted of lecturers, senior lecturers, and readers, with full professorships reserved for the heads of disciplinary areas. In the 21st century some UK universities have gradually shifted towards something resembling the US system, with assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors for senior academics even beyond the department chair.

Australasian public universities still follow the traditional British system, but with associate professors instead of readers and with an additional category of associate lecturers for entry-level academics in Australia.

Academic ranks in our set of English-speaking countries are displayed in the table below. Note that some titles are comparable but not equivalent. There are more full professors in North America than the UK and Australasia, for example, so some associate professors in these countries might be full professors in the US or Canada.

US	Canada	UK	Australia	New Zealand
(Full) professor	(Full) professor	(Full) professor	(Full) professor	(Full) professor
Associate professor	Associate professor	Associate professor/ reader	Associate professor	Associate professor
		Associate professor/ senior lecturer	Senior lecturer	Senior lecturer
Assistant professor	Assistant professor	Assistant professor	Lecturer Associate lecturer	Lecturer

In New Zealand, we could again find no figures for average academic pay, but academics at the top rung of the senior lecturer band (roughly half-way up the salary ladder) were paid $127,806 on average, over four times less than the average vice-chancellor.[68]

Turning finally to junior academics, we find that in Australia, the average vice-chancellor made about 16 times more than the average regular lecturer at elite research-intensive universities.[69] At McGill the vice-chancellor made nine times more than academics in the 10th percentile by pay, who made CA $91,225 in 2020–21.[70] In New Zealand, academics on the middle rung of the regular lecturer band were paid an average of $88,448 in 2021, over six times less than the average vice-chancellor's salary.[71]

Bringing together these disparate findings (as displayed in Table 2), the ratio of chief executive to senior academic pay in New Zealand (3.7 to 1) seems very similar to that at McGill (about 4 to 1), and not too far away from the ratio at elite US colleges (which is about 5 to 1).

The ratio of vice-chancellor pay to the salary of middle-of-the-range academics in New Zealand is 4.4 to 1. That compares to a ratio of 6 to 1 for the average academic at McGill or in the UK – though academics at the top rung of the senior lecturer band may be paid more than the average New Zealand academic.

Junior academics in New Zealand make a larger proportion of their vice-chancellors' salaries than junior academics at McGill (less than a sixth and about one ninth respectively), and a much larger proportion than Australian academics of a comparable rank (who only take home around one sixteenth what their vice-chancellors do).

None of these comparisons compare like to like. Because of this, our conclusions in this section should be taken with the utmost caution. However, the figures we have been able to obtain may suggest the following.

Vice-chancellor salaries in New Zealand are slightly more modest relative to senior academic pay than at top public universities in North America; and they are somewhat more modest relative to middling academic salaries than in the UK and at one of the Canadian Big Three universities. Relative to junior academic salaries, vice-chancellor pay in New Zealand looks to be significantly more modest than at elite Canadian universities and Australian universities.

Table 2: Ratio of academics of senior, middling, and junior rank to chief executive pay in Forbes Top 25 public universities (US); at McGill University (Canada); and in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand

	Forbes Top 25 public universities (US)	McGill University (Canada)	UK	Australia	New Zealand
(Full) professor	1:5	1:4			1:3.7
Average academic		1:6	1:6		1:4.4 (top rung of senior lecturer band)
Lecturer/assistant professor		1:9 (10th percentile by pay)		1:16	1:6.3 (middle rung of lecturer band)

CONCLUSION

The way forward

Key findings

This is, to the best of our knowledge, the only study of the number and nature of non-academic staffing at New Zealand universities in recent years. Our examination of ministry and university data for New Zealand universities, as well as of similar data for universities in four other English-speaking countries, has led to a number of findings, the most important of which are laid out below.

1. The number of non-academics at New Zealand universities is comparatively high. There is 50% more non-academic staff than teaching only staff, and 40% more non-academic staff than academic staff if we include research-only academics and research-support non-academic staffers.

2. Relative to academic numbers, New Zealand universities employ slightly more non-academics than Australian universities, and substantially more than American and UK universities. Relative to student numbers, New Zealand universities employ slightly more non-academics than Australian universities, and substantially fewer than the average UK or US university.

3. Non-academic staff numbers at New Zealand universities have declined slightly over the past 5 years, but grew by 43% between 2002 and 2015. It is not clear in any of our English-speaking countries exactly when growth in administrative numbers pulled ahead of growth in academic and student numbers. This most likely took place from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s, though, with New Zealand part of the trend.

4. The universities of Auckland, Otago, and Canterbury spend around 80% of what they spend on academic staff on non-academic staff. This compares to the 90% of academic expenditure that goes to non-academics in the US, Canada, and Australia, and the 70% of academic expenditure that goes to non-academics in the UK.

5. Over the past two decades, the share of total non-academic staff represented by student welfare and executive staff at New Zealand universities has approximately doubled, while the share represented by technicians has halved. This is part of a broader trend across the English-speaking world, in which universities have outsourced blue-collar workers and hired increasing numbers of white-collar employees.

6. Within our set of English-speaking countries, vice-chancellor pay in New Zealand is moderate. In absolute terms, the average Kiwi vice-chancellor is paid slightly more than their UK and Canadian peers and substantially less than their US and Australian peers. Academic salaries in New Zealand at all levels are closer to vice-chancellor pay than in the rest of our set of English-speaking countries.

Further thoughts

These findings might well prompt some further thoughts about the nature and composition of administrative bureaucracies at New Zealand universities. Here are a few of ours.

The managerial university

In this study we have been careful to distinguish between two sets of 'administrators': career academics in temporary administrative roles on the one hand; and non-academic professionals employed as full-time administrators on the other (see again Box 1).

In contrast to many US studies of the university workforce, but in line with Australian ones, we have focussed on the number of non-academics employed at New Zealand universities (that is, the second category of 'administrators').

Since academics-cum-administrators (the first category) also have a considerable presence, though, this study has likely underestimated the total size of the administrative apparatus in the contemporary university, as well as administrative burdens on academics and students.

Future studies might take their cue more from the US than the Australian approach and add some empirical detail to claims about the rise of 'the managerial university' in New Zealand.[72]

An Australasian model for universities?

New Zealand's universities currently employ more non-academics than academics. This is one of the things that makes them different from universities in the UK and the US. It is also one of the ways in which they are similar to universities across the Tasman Sea.

Australia and New Zealand also have the highest numbers of overseas students per head of population in the world, and by some distance (18 and 11 international students respectively for every 1,000 people in 2018, with the next highest country being the UK, with seven).[73] Australian and New Zealand universities have eagerly pursued the Chinese market in particular.

It may be that a higher ratio of non-academic to academic staff is only one aspect of what has become a distinctively Australasian model for universities, one that sets them apart from their Anglophone peers. We hope to further explore this possibility in future work.

Is there a problem?

We began this study by emphasizing that we have personally found most of the non-academics that we have come into contact with during our time as university lecturers to be courteous, helpful, and professional. We would like to re-emphasize this in our conclusion.

The fact that non-academics are generally helpful, though, does not mean that there are never too many administrators. We can have too much of a good thing.

The numbers of non-academics in English-speaking universities seem to have exploded sometime between the 1970s and the 2000s (see Chapter 1). Non-academic numbers seem to have grown faster than academic and student numbers during this period.

In the Introduction we cited Gordon Tullock's influential argument that bureaucracies can take on lives of their own, hindering an organization's attempts to fulfil its true goals, or subtly distorting them. And they can do so even while most individual bureaucrats are motivated by nothing more nefarious than a desire to do satisfying work, support their families, or further their idea of the good.

This is also a possibility in universities, whose central goal must be to further learning and

knowledge through teaching and research.[74] Non-academics are often a great help in furthering these goals.

At the same time, it seems to us that something of an invisible line has been crossed when universities employ more non-academics than academics. This is a line that university systems in the US and UK have come close to, but have not crossed. It is a line that we have long since crossed in Australia and New Zealand.

Free speech

We now have good evidence of chilled a climate for free expression in New Zealand universities. In a poll for the Free Speech Union last year, over a third of Kiwi academics felt more constrained than free to discuss most of the topics surveyed.[75] In a separate study conducted by Heterodox New Zealand (an association of academics concerned about viewpoint diversity in universities), about a third of undergraduates polled said they would feel uncomfortable discussing hot-button issues in the classroom.[76]

What role, if any, non-academics at New Zealand universities have played in creating this environment is unclear. Certainly, most non-academics at universities work in roles that cannot plausibly be tied to the worsening climate for speech.

Browse the Website of any New Zealand university, however, and you are likely to stumble across documents such as Otago's 'Inclusive language guidelines,'[77] as well as contact details for a number of managers in the field of 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.'

Auckland, for example, lists a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Equity; a Manager, Equity in the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's office; an Associate Director of Staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and a Manager, Student Equity, as well as numerous other roles that could be placed under the DEI umbrella.[78]

Moreover, the survey evidence suggests that there is some overlap between the topics academics and students feel most uncomfortable discussing and the areas mentioned in DEI guidelines.

In the Free Speech Union's survey, for example, half of the academics polled felt more constrained than free to discuss the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi also has a prominent place in New Zealand universities' DEI policies. The University of Otago's Equity and Diversity Policy, to cite just one of these policies, "is committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi."[79]

Policies of this sort tend to be duly enacted by equity committees that are mostly composed of academic staff. We would prefer such important policies to require a higher level of buy-in from ordinary academics, but to the extent that any university policy is legitimate, these policies are too.

The problem – or one problem – is that while DEI policies tend to have teams of non-academic administrators on hand to help enforce them, universities rarely employ an equivalent cadre of employees dedicated to other values that the university should hold dear.

The Education Act has a prominent place, for example, for academic freedom, which it defines as 'the freedom of academic staff and students, within the law, to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions."[80]

But though New Zealand universities tend to have policies on academic freedom, we have not been able to identify administrative roles (staffed either by academics or non-academics) dedicated to defending and promoting academic freedom in a way that would parallel the many roles dedicated to DEI principles.[81]

The idea that academic freedom should have non-academic representatives within the higher

education system is not a new one. The UK's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, currently in its final stages, will appoint a new Free Speech Champion to the government's higher education regulatory body. Quebec's Law 32, which recently came into force, requires universities to appoint internal ombudsmen dedicated to academic freedom.[82]

A lack of diversity?

In Chapter 4 we found that increasing numbers of white-collar employees and outsourcing of blue-collar workers over the past few decades had led to a university workforce that was overwhelmingly composed of graduates, both on the academic and the non-academic sides.

This suggests that the university workforce is also overwhelmingly middle-class. In New Zealand, higher-decile schools send far more students to university than lower-decile ones.[83] In the US, PhD students and faculty are also both more likely to have come from well-off families,[84] and the same is almost certainly the case in this country.

With social backgrounds linked to some extent with religious and political views,[85] a more socially homogenous workforce is also likely to be more homogenous on the level of ideas and viewpoints. Survey evidence suggests that New Zealand universities, like US ones, have strikingly low levels of viewpoint diversity. In a recent survey, only 6% of students at New Zealand universities identified themselves as 'right-leaning,' and only 13% subscribed to any religion;[86] this compares with the 33% of New Zealanders who voted for one of the two main centre-right parties in the 2020 election,[87] and the 44.7% who identified with some religion in the 2018 census. (Since we could not find any data on the political views of non-academics at New Zealand universities, it is not clear whether they are as homogenous in their views as administrators on US campuses.)[88]

'Outsourced' IT workers, tradesmen, and cleaners often still have a physical presence on campus. Not being directly employed by the university, though, gives them much less of a voice in discussions about the universities they work in and their future.

Outsourcing may well make sense economically, but its political consequences are not sufficiently discussed. That is surprising, not least because of the increasing salience of ideas to do with 'social justice' among current students and academics.

Executive pay

Within our set of English-speaking nations, New Zealand vice-chancellors salaries are middling, with vice-chancellors being paid around five times more than even senior academics.

There is an argument that vice-chancellor pay in New Zealand simply reflects the price for a skilled chief executive of a complex institution, and that artificially lowering the price would only lead to poorer outcomes for our universities. Indeed, it could be argued that, given the high sums paid to Australian vice-chancellors, New Zealand universities have to award relatively high salaries to be able to compete for talent within Australasia.

On the other hand, there is a body of empirical evidence suggesting that even in the private sector, executive pay tends not to be strongly linked to firms' financial performance. A number of reasons have been put forward for this; one is that executive labour markets do not share many of the typical features of efficient markets, such as many buyers and sellers, easily-exchangeable products, plentiful information about past performance, and so on.[89] From this perspective, we should not expect the pay of vice-chancellors in New Zealand universities to provide a reliable signal as to the real value or price of their labour.

If this is correct, we might instead want to debate the right level of compensation for university heads by weighing up other considerations. These might include the costs of high executive salaries to universities; the symbolic impact of paying executives several times what professors receive; and the fact that vice-chancellors' salaries in New Zealand are publicly funded.

In the end, one of our main goals throughout this report has been to gather evidence of a sort that is routinely available in other countries as a way of stimulating a more empirically grounded conversation about New Zealand universities. The pay of New Zealand vice-chancellors is just one more topic that we hope to have invited more discussion of in this way.

Recommendations

As we stated in our Introduction, one of our main goals in this report was to gather and present some reliable data on non-academics in universities in New Zealand and in similar countries. This focus is reflected in the recommendations that follow.

1. The Ministry of Education should monitor the number of non-academics employed at New Zealand universities to ensure that numbers do not grow out of proportion to academics and students. New Zealand currently has the highest number of non-academics per academic of any of the countries we looked at. It should not extend its lead without extensive and open debate.

2. The Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission, or Universities New Zealand should produce an annual report on the number, composition and pay of non-academics employed at New Zealand universities. This should include a number of figures that are not currently available, such as total annual expenditure on non-academics for all New Zealand's universities.

3. Universities should publish in their annual reports figures for the total number of administrative roles held by career academics as well as of non-academic employees. They should also report the number of staff members working in politically contentious areas such as 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' (DEI), and total expenditure in these areas.

   Counting the number of academics-cum-administrators would help inform arguments, from both the left and the right, about the total administrative burden at universities; academic career progression and workload; and 'the managerial university.'

   Regularly reporting DEI staff numbers and expenditure would similarly be helpful to both sides of the debate about contemporary universities. Proponents of DEI could point to gains in giving these values a presence on campuses; and sceptics could question excessive DEI spending.

4. To aid transparency, non-academics at universities should be invited to share more information about their socio-economic backgrounds and religious and political viewpoints, just as other members of the university community sometimes are for statistical purposes.

   Since university employees might find it intimidating to be asked these questions by the Ministry or directly by their employer, they might better be polled by civil society institutions like the Free Speech Union or Heterodox New Zealand, who could involve non-academics in future surveys of New Zealand universities.

   Getting more of a sense of the background and views of this large component of our university communities might be considered a good in and of itself. It would also help inform efforts to increase diversity (especially class, religious, and viewpoint diversity) in our universities.

5. The Ministry of Education should conduct an investigation of vice-chancellor pay to ensure that it reflects market rates rather than uncompetitive practices and market failure.

   Vice-chancellor salaries in New Zealand are only moderate compared to similar English-speaking university systems. At the same time, the amounts paid out add up to millions of dollars of taxpayer money. The government should periodically ask itself whether all of this represents taxpayer money well spent.

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Endnotes

1 This includes the annual reports issued by New Zealand universities and data published by the Ministry of Education, both of which are cited in this report.

2 For the "ethos of public service" in previously dominant Keynesian approaches to public administration, see Noel Thompson, "Hollowing Out the State: Public Choice Theory and the Critique of Keynesian Social Democracy," *Contemporary British History* 22:3 (2008), 355–382.

3 For the revolution in the study of modern bureaucracies, see especially Cyril N. Parkinson, *Parkinson's Law* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957) and Gordon Tullock, *The Politics of Bureaucracy* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965).

4 Todd J. Zywicki and Christopher Koopman, "The Changing of the Guard: The Political Economy of Administrative Bloat in American Higher Education," George Mason Law & Economics Research Paper 17–12 (2017); American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *The Cost of Excess: Why Colleges and Universities Must Control Runaway Spending* (Washington: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2021); Jay Greene and James Paul, *Diversity University: DEI Bloat in the Academy* (Washington: The Heritage Foundation, 2021).

5 Samuel Abrams, "One of the most liberal groups in America," *Inside Higher Ed* (8 November 2018).

6 Ivy Kaplan, "Breaking down 'administrative bloat'," *The College Post* (24 April 2019).

7 Richard K. Vedder, "Are college presidents paid too much?" *The James G. Martin Centre for Academic Renewal* (10 August 2016).

8 See, for example, Alison Wolf and Andrew Jenkins, "Managers and Academics in a Centralising Sector" (London: KCL Policy Institute, 2021); Alex Usher, "Administrative bloat, 2020 Edition," *Higher Education Strategy Associates* blog (18 February 2020); Gwilym Croucher and Peter Woelert, "Administrative Transformation and Managerial Growth: A Longitudinal Analysis of Changes in the Non-Academic Workforce at Australian Universities," *Higher Education* 84 (2022), 159–175; Donna M. Desrochers and Rita Kirschstein, *Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? Changing Staffing and Compensation Patterns in Higher Education*, Delta Cost Project (Washington: American Institutes for Research, 2014).

9 Education Counts (Ministry of Education) website, educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/resources > Human Resources 2021 > HNR.2A: Staff employed, or contracted, in tertiary education organisations, by sub-sector and designation, 2012-2021 > Full-time equivalent staff (FTE) > Universities.

10 In the questionnaire sent to universities from which this data was compiled, there are three categories labelled as follows: 'research-only staff (paid on academic salary scale – includes research officers)'; 'research fellows, post-doctoral research fellows,' and 'other research support staff.' 'The first category specifies "paid on academic salary scale", while the second is research fellows,' Ara Persson of the Ministry of Education wrote to me in an email response to my query, 'so it's probably reasonable to assume that non-academic staff will be in the third category, although not necessarily making up the entirety of that category.' In the published data, the first two categories have been combined into one, 'Research-only staff,' but the second category, 'Research support staff' is the same as in the questionnaire.

11 Australian Department of Education website, https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2021-staff-numbers> Table 2.3: Number of Full-time and Fractional Full-time Staff by Function, 2012-2021, 2021 totals: 6, 388 Teaching only + 19, 056 Research only + 29, 013 Teaching and research = 54, 457, about 0.8 of the 66, 907 Other staff also listed there.

12 Desrochers and Kirshstein, *Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? op. cit.* Appendix, Table 2, pp. 24-25. We counted their 'executive, administrative, and managerial' (EAM) staff as academics, and their 'professional staff' and 'nonprofessional staff' as non-academics, in accordance with their description of these terms on p. 6. Note in particular that their EAM category includes deans, provosts and so on, roles which are included in academic staff counts in New Zealand.

13 Higher Education Statistics Agency website, https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/table-24 > Table 2018/19: non-academic total: 222,885; academic total: 217,065; academic atypical total: 70,410. Combining the 'academic total' and 'academic atypical' (i.e. academics on short-term contracts) gives a true total of 287,475 academics and 222,885 non-academics.

14 As for Canada, Usher ("Administrative bloat, 2020 Edition," *op. cit.*) complains that 'there are no national statistics on *how many* A&S [administrative and support] staff there are' at Canadian universities as a whole, though there is some data available on how much is being spent on non-academic staff – data we will look at in Chapter 2.

15 Education Counts website, https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-participation > Provider-Based Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) > EFT.1: Domestic and international equivalent full-time student units (EFTS) in formal tertiary education 1994-2021 > Public providers, total figures: 228,355 total EFTS. There were 12,435 non-academics in 2021: see above, p. 10.

16 Australian Department of Education website, https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2021-section-2-all-students> Table 2.1: All Students by Age Group and Broad Level of Course, Full Year 2021, Grand total of students: 1, 602, 573. The number of non-academic staff the same year was 66, 907: see note 11.

17 Higher Education Statistics Agency website, https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2023/sb265-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers, Figure 3: HE student enrolments by level of study. The total for 2018-19 is 2,456,545. There were 222, 885 non-academic staff members the same year: see note 14.

18 Wolf and Jenkins, "Managers and Academics in a Centralising Sector," *op. cit.* 28, Table 2.

19 National Centre for Education Statistics website, nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_314.50.asp, Table 314.50: Full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff, FTE faculty, and ratios of FTE students to FTE staff and FTE faculty in public degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of institution and state or jurisdiction.

20 This contrasts strikingly with our conclusions in the previous section, as does the finding that Australasian universities employ comparatively fewer non-academics per student relative to the UK and the US. For thoughts about a possible 'Australasian model' of higher education, see our Conclusion.

21 For the source, see note 9. We again include 'research-only staff' in our count of academics and 'research-support staff' in our count of non-academics: see Box 3.

22 *Ibid.*, Technical Notes tab.

23 We are grateful to Ara Persson of the Ministry of Education for providing this additional data.

24 Croucher and Woelert, "Administrative Transformation and Managerial Growth" *op. cit.* 167, Table 1.

25 Te Ara/The Encyclopedia of New Zealand: https://teara.govt.nz/en/graph/34416/university-enrolments-1900-2010

26 See p. 13 above.

27 We use Croucher and Woelert's figures in their Table 1 (see n. 24), but arrive at different percentages than they present in the same table.

28 Desrochers and Kirshstein, *Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? op. cit*. 26, Table 3.

29 Wolf and Jenkins, "Managers and Academics in a Centralising Sector," *op. cit.* 19-20.

30 Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24–25, Table 2. We have not included Ginsberg's 'administrators' in our count as these refer to academics performing administrative roles: see Box 1 above. Total administrative staff grew more than academic staff by 66% to 56% in Norwegian universities over the two decades to 2004 (Åse Gornitzka and Ingvild M. Larsen, "Towards Professionalisation? Restructuring of Administrative Work Force in Universities," *Higher Education* 47 (2004), 455–471) and the non-academic percentage of total staff in German universities increased over the two decades to 2015 (Ton Kallenberg, "Interacting Spheres Revisited: Academics and Administrators Between Dualism and Cooperation," in R.M.O. Pritchard, A. Pausits and J. Williams (eds), *Positioning Higher Education Institutions* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016).

31 Wolf and Jenkins, "Managers and Academics in a Centralising Sector," *op. cit.* 27, Table 1 and 53, Table 5.

32 Croucher and Woelert, "Administrative Transformation and Managerial Growth," *op. cit.* 167, Table 1.

33 Desrochers and Kirshstein, *Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? op. cit.* 24–25, Table 2.

34 See p. 13 above.

35 For the source, see again note 9 above.

36 Minus Canada. For the lack of data on non-academic numbers in Canada, see note 14 above.

37 University of Auckland, "Annual Report 2021: Becoming Waipapa Taumata Rau" (2022), 91; University of Canterbury, "Te Pūrongo Ā-Tau Annual Report 2021" (2022), 79; University of Otago, "Financial Report 2021" (2022), 87. For all three universities, the 'consolidated' rather than 'university' figures (which were in any case very similar) were used. The financial reports of other New Zealand universities did not contain any comparable breakdowns: Victoria lists expenditures for 'Salaries' and 'Contractors'; Massey lists 'staff related costs'; Lincoln and AUT give a single figure for 'Personnel costs'; and Waikato reports 'Employee Benefit Expenses' for academics and non-academics.

38 Universities Australia website, https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/220207-HE-Facts-and-Figures-2022_2.0.pdf, p. 30, Figure 17.

39 UK Higher Education Statistics Agency, https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/expenditure, DT031 Table 8.

40 Other operating expenses includes 'costs in respect of payments to non-contracted staff or individuals': https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/finances.

41 National Center for Education Statistics website, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20 > Tables 334.10, 30, and 50. These tables also record figures for 'research' and 'public services,' but we followed e.g. Caroline Simon ("Bureaucrats and buildings: The case for why college is so expensive," *Forbes*, 5 September 2017) in comparing the total outlay on 'instruction' (described as 'expenses related to colleges, schools, departments, and other instructional divisions of the institution and expenses for departmental research and public service that are not separately budgeted') with combined expenditures on 'academic support, student services and institutional support.'

42 Statistics Canada website, www150.statcan.gc.ca, Table: 37-10-0097-01: University expenditures by type of expenditure> 2019-20.

43 Usher ("Administrative bloat, 2020 Edition," *op. cit.* Table 1) shows university spending on A&S (administrative and support) staff as slightly higher than spending on academic staff. Usher uses data from the Financial Information of Universities and Colleges (FIUC) report issued by the Canadian Association of University Business Officers, whose members include many but by no means all Canadian universities; see https://www.caubo.ca/discover-caubo/our-members/university-members. The FIUC website (www.caubo.ca/knowledge-centre/analytics-and-reports/fiuc-reports > FIUC 2019-20 > Table 2, Expenditures, total Canada, All universities - CAUBO members only, 2019-2020) reports expenditures of $9,118 427 on 'academic ranks' and $8,221,801 on 'other salaries and wages'; but besides the dataset being restricted to members the figure for 'academic ranks' does not include 'other instruction and research,' on which $2,696,570 was apparently spent. If this was added to academic salaries CAUBO members' expenditure on academics would be higher than on non-academics, which is in line with the Statistics Canada data.

44 University of Waikato spent $85,307 'employee benefit expenses – academic' and $63,895 on 'employee benefit expenses – general' in 2021, or $0.77 on non-academic expenses for every dollar spent on academic expenses. This might reflect slightly lower expenditure on non-academic salaries than in Otago, Canterbury and Auckland universities. University of Waikato, "Annual Report," Website, 72, Note 6: Employee Entitlements.

45 We are grateful to Ara Persson of the Ministry of Education for providing this additional data.

46 Croucher and Woelert, "Administrative Transformation and Managerial Growth," *op. cit.* 167–170.

47 Wolf and Jenkins, "Managers and Academics in a Centralising Sector," *op. cit.* 27, Table 1.

48 Desrochers and Kirshstein, *Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive? op. cit.* 9, Figure 3.

49 Usher, "Administrative bloat, 2020 Edition," *op. cit.*

50 See again note 8 above.

51 Richard Adams, "Bath University vice-chancellor quits after outcry over £468k pay," *The Guardian* (28 November 2017).

52 Kristen Lyons and Richard Hil, "Vice-chancellors' salaries are just a symptom of what's wrong with universities," *The Conversation* (5 February 2018); John Ross, "More Australian vice-chancellors earning A$1million," *Times Higher Education* (September 9 2019).

53 Darian Somers and Josh Moody ("10 public universities run by highest paid presidents," *US News*, 6 August 2019) list $600,413 as William H. McRaven's "base pay"; the figure used here is his "total compensation."

54 Pratt ("University of Alberta will have to 'recalibrate' salaries," *Edmonton Journal,* 18 September 2014) says Samarasekera's salary was $529, 000; the figure we use was her salary plus benefits.

55 Chief Executive Remuneration, NZ Public Service Commission website, publicservice.govt.nz/system/leaders/appointing-leaders/leader-pay/chief-executive-remuneration > Public Sector Chief Executive Remuneration.

56 *Ibid*.

57 We use the average figure of AU$1,002,500 provided by Jon Ross, "Average Australian V-C's pay smashes through A$1 million barrier," *Times Higher Education* (28 October 2020).

58 The US$544,136 figure used here for public colleges is from Dan Bauman and Jacquelyn Elias, "What presidents make," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (16 July 2020). According to Collin Binkley ("Survey: Pay for private university presidents climbs 10.5%," *Associated Press,* 15 January 2020) the average pay for private college presidents in the US was US$608,000 in 2019.

59 The figure of £269,000 in the graph is from Eleanor Busby, "Universities award vice-chancellors pay packets of £500,000 or more," *Evening Standard* (12 November 2021).

60 That figure is CA$373,000. It seems reasonable to assume that most Canadian college presidents receive less than presidents at the Big Three universities. At the same time, universities in Alberta have regularly paid their top executives more than this in recent years. See Trevor S. Howell, "Compensation of Alberta's top university and college execs reignites calls for review," *Calgary Herald* (13 January 2015).

61 Michael T. Nietzel, "Presidents' Pay Compared to Faculty Salaries at Top Public Universities," *Forbes* (17 July 2019).

62 Statistics Canada website, www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710010801 > Number and Salaries of Full-time Teaching Staff at Canadian Universities > Statistics: 90th percentile of salaries.

63 Thomas MacDonald, "Here's how much McGill University Principal Suzanne Fortier is making," *MTL blog* (10 December 2021).

64 We thank Ben Macintyre, a Research Assistant at the Initiative, for compiling and producing national averages from individual universities' academic staff collective agreements.

65 Many university collective agreements do not divide salaries in the full professor range into rungs, instead giving only a range, often with no upper bound. This made calculating average full professor pay impossible without further information.

66 Julie Rowlands and Rebecca Boden, "How Australian vice-chancellors' pay came to average $1 million and why it's a problem," *The Conversation* (2 December 2020).

67 See note 62 above and MacDonald, "Here's how much McGill University Principal Suzanne Fortier is making," *op. cit*.

68 See note 55.

69 Julie Rowlands and Rebecca Boden, "Paying the Piper: The Governance of Vice-Chancellors' Remuneration in Australian and UK Universities," *Higher Education Research and Development* 41:2 (2022), 254–268.

70 See note 62 and and MacDonald, "Here's how much McGill University Principal Suzanne Fortier is making," *op. cit*.

71 See note 62 and and Busby, "Universities award vice-chancellors pay packets of £500,000 or more," *op. cit*.

72 See, for example, Maureen Baker, "Gender, Academia and the Managerial University," *New Zealand Sociology* 24 (2009), 24–48.

73 Salvatore Babones, *Australia's Universities: Can They Reform?* (Brisbane: Ocean Reeve, 2021), 68.

74 For the idea that the university's main goal should be to further knowledge rather than truth (or social justice), see Oliver Traldi, "The truth is not enough," *Heterodox: The blog* (2 December 2020) responding to Jonathan Haidt, "Why universities must choose one telos: Truth or social justice," *Heterodox: The blog* (21 October 2016).

75 Jonathan Ayling, "Kiwi academics feel unfree to exercise academic freedom," *The Platform* (8 April 2022).

76 Jamin Halberstadt, Arindam Basu, Barry Hughes, Ruth Hughes, Michael Johnston, James Kierstead and David Rozado (2022) 'Perceived Freedom of Expression at New Zealand Universities,' *Social Sciences* 11, 502.

77 University of Otago website, www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/working-at-otago/otago700770.html.

78 University of Auckland website, www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/about-equity/what-is-equity.html.

79 University of Otago website, otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago666398.html

80 Education and Training Act 2020, 267 4(a).

81 See the University of Auckland website, cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/auckland/about-us/equity-at-the-university/on-academic-freedom-and-responsibility.pdf for some guidelines on academic freedom at Auckland. Though the document correctly quotes New Zealand law on academic freedom, it also insists – typically for a contemporary university – that 'we need to balance the rights accorded academic staff and students under the Education Act' against 'the obligation that we all have as members of a civilised society to treat each other with respect and do no unnecessary harm.' This obligation does not seem to be mentioned in the Education Act.

82 For these two bills, see James Kierstead, "Why Won't New Zealand Defend Academics' Right to Freedom of Speech," *The Australian* (12 October 2022).

83 Khyaati Acharya and Eric Crampton, "Decade of Debt: The Cost of Interest-Free Student Loans" (Wellington: The New Zealand Initiative, 2016), 19, Figure 4.

84 Musa Al-Gharbi, "How well do U.S. faculty reflect America? (Spoiler: Not well)," *The Heterodox: Blog* (24 January 2023).

85 Musa Al-Gharbi, "Why should we care about ideological diversity in the Academy?" *The Heterodox: The blog* (23 May 2018).

86 Jamin Halberstadt, et al. "Perceived Freedom of Expression at New Zealand Universities," *op. cit*.

87 Stats NZ website, www.stats.govt.nz/news/losing-our-religion; Electoral Commission website, electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2020. Note that the 2020 election results, a historic victory for Labour, might give a misleading impression of the number of New Zealanders who would normally describe themselves as right-leaning.

88 See Abrams, "One of the most liberal groups in America," *op. cit.*

89 Alexander Pepper, "The Market Failure Approach to Executive Pay," *LSE Business Review* (15 November 2022).

Universities need administrators. But how many? Bureaucracies can be helpful, but they can also subtly distort the purposes of the institutions they are supposed to serve.

This is the first report to date on non-academics at New Zealand universities. It presents and analyses all the relevant New Zealand data, while also putting these figures into international context.

It covers topics such as the emergence of the managerial university, the salaries of vice-chancellors, and the changing composition of university bureaucracy.

It also shows that non-academics currently make up the majority of employees at New Zealand universities. Indeed, of all the university systems we looked at, New Zealand employs the most non-academics for every academic member of staff.

Is this large bureaucracy a blessing for our universities, or another case of administrative bloat? It's a debate that we in New Zealand need to have, and one that this report will help inform.

THE NEW ZEALAND INITIATIVE

www.nzinitiative.org.nz

$25.00

ISBN
978-1-99-115808-6 (print)
978-1-99-115809-3 (online)

The New Zealand Initiative
PO Box 10147
Wellington 6143