To whom it may concern,

just what exactly is going on at ANU? Dismantling the School of Cultural Inquiry seems to be a decision made to dilute the intensity and variety of course offered. To limit the courses available in unprofitable areas, to do things for international prestige (explicitly mentioned in rationales) is against the nature of education. Education is about turning you into a workhorse, it is about crafting critical, rounded and informed human beings. The less variety on offer, the more quality diminishes, and the more we make economic decisions instead of human ones, the more we degrade our education. It is something the ANU administration consistently fails to understand. In the grand scheme of things education comes before money, and I know that dismantling the school of Cultural Inquiry, ending tutorials for arts, or restructuring the School Of Music are and were decisions that do not need to happen. There are other options, but eventually it seems the only option that is explored is the one that makes the undergraduate population suffer. I stress a longer consultation period, and a willingness, in deed, not in word, to take students and their concerns seriously. ANU is nothing without undergraduate students, and the current onslaught of changes is colouring ANU's reputation.

It seems naïve to move English over to languages. The soon to be defunct School of Cultural Inquiry brings together a broad range of subjects, all of which focus on a questions of humans and humanity. This seems wishy-washy, and in part it is, but English certainly is a subject about people, about humanity. Only superficially does it belong in a language school. The reading of texts, engagement with them, is a key way we gain access to the ideas and ideologies of the world. The motion to move English into the language department shows a clearly infantile understanding of the subject itself.

Again, I accuse those involved in the proposed restructuring of the RSHA of naivety. Suggestions like moving Gender Studies to Sociology show an a superficial and indifferent engagement with what these subjects actually consist of. It suggests to me that the engagement with these course is purely bureaucratic. The decisions are not made based on value or student enjoyment, but on which course are lacking enrolment and costing too much money. This economic approach to the humanities is dehumanising.

Finally I would like to address the proposal to remove tutorials from the arts. The whole point of tutorials is that lectures are large and not beneficial to everyone's learning. Thus we have tutorials, so everyone can get more out of the course, undergraduates can interact with academics, and learning can be facilitated in a group where we can be exposed to different and varied analysis of a single topic via small and intensive discussions. Tutorials are beneficial even in the more “loner” subjects, say physics or math, they are indispensable to arts. A university without tutorials is a cold and heartless monolith, that offers nothing but the illusion of an education. I am disturbed to hear this was an “executive decision” (this may be just idle chatter), such a significant change demands a lengthy, full on and well organised consultation period that doesn't just work for ANU administrators' timetables, but students' as well.

I am sickened by these changes. In two years I should graduate, and if these changes go through, I will no longer sing praises of ANU to friends and family, peers and workmates and I will be glad to finally turn my back on an institution driven mad with administrative power and self-interest.

Duncan Stuart