

EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

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NAME	Bridie Hood
POSITION	President
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 1 June 2012
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	22
HOURS WORKED	969 hours
BONUS APPLICATION	Not eligible

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 1. Education: Student Support

To secure and maintain adequate state income, welfare and employment support for students.

(a) Student Representative on the Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (ACSSL)

Like the three other Presidents before me, I am a student representative and co-chair of ACSSL.

Despite some challenges caused by the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Act 2011 and the Education Amendment Act 2011, No. 66 (EAA66), overall the partnership between VUWSA and VUW continues to work well on this committee.

It has been made clear to us that the Governance of ACSSL will be reviewed, once the Student Forum is functional. We will be advocating that VUWSA retain seats on the committee.

With the other VUWSA representatives on ACSSL, I have pushed the Committee to re-examine the justification given for why the services currently funded by the Levy should remain so. This is because VUWSA believes some services are more closely aligned to the University's strategic goals of equity, achievement, retention and completion and should be funded from it, not a universal Student Services Levy.

(b) Supported and contributed to the VUWSA 2012 Budget Day Campaign

The majority of work done in organising and running this campaign was done by Welfare Vice President Rory McCourt, however I also played an important organising role, as well as media advisory role.

The Campaign was themed 'Lock out of Education, Locked out of Aoteroa, New Zealand', due to the changes to Student Loans and Allowances proposed in the 2012 Budget (including a lifetime limit on Student Allowances and a 20% increase in the compulsory Student Loan Repayment rate).

I worked on promotion of the campaign and rally, meeting and discussing the logistics of the event with the relevant students and other stakeholders and dealt with a large number of media enquires about the Budget changes and VUWSA's action.

We plan to continue with this campaign during Trimester 2, with a big push during Re-orientation.

(c) Constituent member of New Zealand Union of Students' Associations

One of the most effective ways that VUWSA can achieve Goal 1 is through membership of NZUSA. There is no other group in the country lobbying for students and our interests at a national level.

Their work has seen some real gains for students including the introduction of interest free loans, introduction of fees maxima, they helped to prevent a privatised student loan scheme and having controls placed on Student Services Levies. A lot of this would not have been achieved without having NZUSA working for students, at a national level, every day.

VUWSA is a constituent member of NZUSA and I am the VUWSA Representative on the University Sector Council. I work with other representatives across the country to ensure that NZUSA is working effectively and meeting its objectives. This includes attending meetings, seminars/conferences, providing feedback and information sharing.

(d) Constituent member of Student Job Search

VUWSA is also a constituent member of Student Job Search and I am the VUWSA representative on their board.

I have received regular communications and updates from the Chief Executive and National Office and we regularly give feedback to SJS.

Up to the end of May, VUW students have earned over \$3.5 million from job placements through SJS. SJS continues to be one of the most important services provided by VUWSA to students.

One of the challenges for some students, however, has been that all SJS offices on University campus having now closed and their operations are all online and by phone. VUWSA are working on getting some computers and phones set up on campus so students can still access SJS easily.

2. Goal 2. Education: University

To ensure the university provides equity and quality is assessment, teaching, conditions and course accessed supported by sufficient resources

(a) Supported a highly effective student representative system across the University

I have worked alongside the Education team to ensure all student representatives at Victoria are informed, supported and effective in their roles.

Over the last few years, the Student Representative system at Victoria has gone from strength to strength and Trimester 1 has been no different.

- 97% of undergraduate courses have a Class Rep. This is compared with 73% and 94% in Trimester 1, 2010 and 2011, respectively
- It is worth noting that both the Commerce and Law Faculties have class reps in 100% of their undergraduate courses
- Of the 666 Class Reps, 77% have been trained. This is down 3% from the same time last year

This year we also had a huge interest in Class Reps applying to be Faculty Delegates. I worked with Josh and Fiona on strengthening our appointment process, something VUWSA has been working on for a number of years. So far this year we have had the most active group of Faculty Delegates yet.

(b) Submissions on Student Issues

VUWSA has been actively submitting on issues effecting students academically, both institutionally and nationally. Much of this work is done by the Education Team; however I was quite involved in writing the VUWSA submission on the CUAP 1 Year Masters Proposal and, to a lesser extent, the second submission on the Review of undergraduate Education. So far this year, VUWSA has submitted on the following academic issues:

- CUAP 1 Year Masters Proposal
- Masters Completion Times Proposal
- Review of Undergraduate Education – Phase Two
- Class Rep Submissions on Programme Reviews – supported and written by VUWSA, including Public Policy, History, Religious Studies and Information Management

(c) Continued work on a Student Charter between VUW and students

We are continuing to work closely with the Academic Office on getting the Student Charter completed. This is a document that has now spanned 3 VUWSA presidencies.

The document's has altered quite significantly since its first draft, from a document of rights and responsibilities to one of partnership and community.

The intention is to have this document finished by the end of the year.

(d) Strengthening the relationship between VUWSA and the VUW Academic Office

I have worked on continuing to strengthen the relationship that VUWSA has with the Academic Office.

Having a positive relationship allows issues to be dealt with quickly and appropriately and helps to assist in VUWSA's goals of quality education.

(e) Continued work on the Review of Undergraduate Education

I am the current student representative on the Review of Undergraduate Education Steering Committee.

I have been involved with gaining student feedback and ensuring students are considered in all aspects of this review.

During the second round of consultation on the review VUWSA collected 310 student submissions, which allowed us to put together another comprehensive student submission on the Review.

As at the time of writing this report, the 'The New Victoria Partnership' – the document that has come out of this Review - will be going to Academic Board for approval and changes will be implemented. Importantly for students, this will include a review of the current points structure that operates at VUW.

(f) Student Representative on the Disciplinary Appeals Committee

The Disciplinary Appeals Committee is a committee of Council and is responsible for reviewing any appeals students have made against a complaint of misconduct or serious misconduct.

I am the current student representative on this committee and so far the committee has resolved two appeals which have been lodged.

(g) Student Representative on numerous committees

I am a student representative on numerous committees within the University. A full list can be found towards the end of this report.

In my capacity, I provide a student and learner perspective of all issues that arise for discussion within these committees and aim to improve the current learning and teaching environment and student experience at Victoria.

3. Goal 3. Education: Equity

To promote equity for disadvantaged members in access to and within the university.

(a) Working in partnership with VUW Student Services

One of my focuses this year has been to work more closely with Student Services across campus to ensure the provision of effective and responsive student services. Examples of this include the partnership with Student Health and the Free Flu Shot campaign, working alongside SAS to promote the Student Experience Survey and the inclusion of VUWSA in the Student Service Wellbeing committee.

Many of these services are essential for ensuring equity at the University and I look forward to building stronger partnerships with these groups into the future. In particular I would like to focus on building a relationship with Vic International and work together to devise initiatives on how we can improve the student experience for International students at Victoria.

(b) Involved in the creation of 'Opening Doors' a resource for Refugee-Background Students

Alongside a group of students, Student Services staff and academics (lead by VUW lecturer Sara Kindon), I contributed to the creation of 'Opening Doors'. This is a resource for Refugee-Background Students about how to successfully navigate their way through their studies and VUW services (including VUWSA).

In particular I provided information about VUWSA services and support for students, alongside giving general information and feedback on the resource.

(c) VUWSA Budget Day Campaign

The changes announced to student loans and allowances will have harsh impacts on equity groups in our communities. VUWSA has argued that we need to keep tertiary education accessible to these groups and give them the appropriate support so that they can achieve in their studies.

(d) Help re-establish Can-Do

Over the last few weeks I have been working with a student who is interested in re-establishing Can-Do, which is the Representative Group for students with impairments and disabilities.

This is something I am very interested in working on and supporting over the next few months.

(e) VUW Equity and Diversity Committee

I am the student representative on the Equity and Diversity committee and work alongside other members of the committee and management to ensure that Victoria is inclusive and accessible.

(f) Ensure that VUWSA provides a range of support services for students

See Goal 4, Services.

4. Goal 4. Services

To control the Student Union Complex and provide quality cost-effective (consumer) services for members.

(a) Secured funding to ensure that VUWSA can continue to provide a diverse range of support services for students

The passing of the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Act late last year severely challenged VUWSA's ability to provide a range of services to students. The vast majority of VUWSA's revenue in 2011 was from membership levies and given a General Meeting decision to remove membership levies for 2012, this jeopardised the vast majority of our income.

Towards the end of last year I worked with the 2011 President Seamus Brady and a representative from the VUWSA Trust to secure funding for a range of VUWSA services, through several Service Level Agreements with the University.

A significant portion of my time in the first half of this year has been spent working alongside the VUWSA General Manger, Mark Maguire, getting these contracts for services confirmed and signed off.

VUWSA has been able to continue to provide the vast majority of services that we did in 2011, in 2012.

We are currently looking at ways in which VUWSA can diversify its revenue stream so that we can be less reliant on funding from the University in the future.

(b) Representation on the Joint Student Union Board (JSUB)

As the VUWSA Representative on JSUB, I have attended all meetings to date and have provided feedback on issues facing both JSUB and the Student Union Building.

To date this year, the biggest issue that JSUB has dealt with has been the review of the clubs services that is currently provided by VUWSA. Following an independent review of Clubs, a set of recommendations were put to JSUB. One of them included that the 'main work flow of clubs be within Recreation Services'.

Principally, I believe that clubs support should come from the Students' Association on campus. VUWSA has a long-running history of supporting clubs on campus. The reviewer however felt, given the new VSM framework, that there should be large suite of new services provided to clubs on campus (as per her recommendations), and that VUWSA did not have the current infrastructure to be able to support clubs as effectively as the Recreation Services would.

Since the recommendation was first put at JSUB it has been modified slightly to ensure that the Rec Center works in *close partnership* with VUWSA to deliver Clubs Support. I look forward to working closely with Recreation Services and the new Clubs Manager to see how this partnership will work.

(c) Member of the Publications Committee

I sit on the Publications Committee and help to ensure the financial supervision of Salient. The Committee works to ensure money from the Student Services Levy is going to a well-researched, well written magazine that is accessible to all students.

Apart from a minor hiccup at the start of the year, things are looking on track for 2012. VUWSA has recently hired a new Advertising Manager.

5. Goal 8. Accountability

To ensure that the structures and procedures of the Association result in effective and efficient communication, management and accountability.

(a) Amended VUWSA's Executive Reporting structure to ensure accountability and transparency

After witnessing some of the inefficiencies of the Work Report system, one of the first things I did as President was to amend the current Executive reporting structures.

This saw the implementation of an Executive Reporting Policy, which outlines specifically the processes around work reports and clearly outlines what the expectations are on the VUWSA Executive. The introduction of the policy also saw the creation of the Executive Reporting Committee (ERC). In the past,

Executive Work Reports had been passed at Executive meetings and sometimes with very little comment. Some previous Executive members had commented that they felt uncomfortable questioning another's work as they might have their work questioned unfairly.

The ERC is made up of 5 Executive members and they have the responsibility to closely scrutinise, approve for remuneration and approve to the Executive for acceptance all Executive work reports. Before the Work Reports go the ERC, they are sent to all Executive members to look over and if any Executive members have questions they can email them to a member of the ERC who will follow it up.

I believe that the introduction of the ERC has greatly improved the accountability of the Executive and by having a balance of Executive Officers and General Executive members, it is working well.

Another small introduction was the use of time sheets for the President and two Vice-Presidents.

(b) Fortnightly work reports

I have consistently submitted a fortnightly work report and timesheet to the Executive Reporting Committee, outlining my work for the most recent reporting period.

(c) VUWSA Governance Review

As per the VUWSA 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, and also a personal pledge made in my Presidential Election, VUWSA is undergoing a governance review this year. A Working Party, of which I am the Chair, has representatives from the current VUWSA Executive, alumni and current students on it and has been established to review of current governance structure and recommend any changes that would help our governance model achieve our constitution goals more effectively.

The Governance Review is currently in the second and final stage, of consultation before a final paper and set of recommendations are taken to the VUWSA AGM in August.

(d) Introduction of the Policy Committee

At the start of this year a Policy Committee was introduced by the Executive. The Committee, which consists of 5 Executive members currently and the VUWSA General Manager, is charged with creating and reviewing current internal and external policy. Any recommendations in a change to policy must be approved by the Executive before it is implemented.

Currently, the Policy Committee is undergoing a review of current VUWSA policy.

(e) Salient Columns

I have written a Presidential column in every issue of Salient to date. My columns have discussed important work that VUWSA is doing, raised awareness around issues that affect students (e.g. the changes to Student Loans and Allowances) and has also discussed activates and initiatives that may be of interest to students.

(f) 2011 VUWSA Annual Report

I oversaw and wrote the majority of the VUWSA 2011 Annual Report that was presented at the VUWSA IGM in March.

This year saw quite a change from previous years, moving to present an 'Impact Report' to students, which provides information of what specifically VUWSA has done in 2011 to impact the lives of students studying at VUW.

I think that we can still improve on this document; however the feedback I have received from it so far this year was very positive.

(g) Working with staff to create internal operating policies and guidelines

I have been working with staff, including the General Manager and Communications Coordinator to ensure there are operating procedures in place, which outlines the responsibilities of both staff and Executive members. These guidelines are essential for ensuring the smooth running of the Association.

(h) Communications

I have working alongside the General Manager and Communications Co-ordinator to ensure that we have relevant and informative communications going out to our members on a regular basis.

I have also worked with our Communications Co-ordinator of ensuring all VUWSA activities and events are well communicated to members and students. While we are improving, this is still something we need to work hard at getting right.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 5. Activities

To provide or assist sporting, social and cultural activities, for and by members; primarily through clubs.

(a) Oversee OWEEK 2012

OWEEK 2012 proved to be a successful two weeks and a great way to kick off Trimester 1. While not as big the year before, the feedback we received from students was generally positive about the events we held.

A lot of work goes into planning Orientation and work generally starts in July/August the year before, to ensure that we have enough preparation time to secure good performers and organise a diverse range of events.

This year however, things were a bit different as we entered into a contract with the University to provide Orientation, which slowed down our planning processes. This process was a learning experience for us both and I'm sure that in the future we will not face the same issues that we did this year.

I worked closely with the planning team to ensure that all events and activities were organising and running well, alongside providing input into the design, marketing and general oversight of the event.

Some particular activities I was involved in:

- a. Spoke at the Civic Welcome for new students
- b. Presented a talk at Mature Students Orientation about VUWSA
- c. Helped to organise and run the VUWSA activities at the Big Play Out
- d. Helped to organise and run the VUWSA Stalls over NSO and OWeek

(b) Support of Representative Groups on campus

I have always been a strong supporter of the work that Rep Groups have done at VUW and have continued to work alongside them this year to help them continue on their work.

I have continued to create a strong relationship with the PGSA and have maintained contact with both the Pasifika Students' Council and the Law Students Society. Other Rep Groups such as UniQ and the Women's Group, have close relationships with the Queer and Women's Rights Executive members.

I am currently working with a student who is interested in restarting CanDo to be up and running in Trimester 2.

(c) Support Clubs and Societies on campus

While from Trimester Two there will be a significant change to how clubs and societies are supported on campus (see Lumin Clubs Review and VUWSA Response), so far this year VUWSA has continued to provide a high level of support to clubs and societies on campus.

Alongside the Clubs and Events manager and the Clubs Officer, I have helped to provide on-going assistance, support and advocacy to Clubs where needed.

(d) Student Representative on the Sponsorship Panel

I am the current student representative on the VUW Sponsorship Panel and along with several other VUW staff members oversee the funding of grants to clubs and societies, individuals and representative groups.

I have worked to ensure that the levels of funding have been fair and reasonable amounts and that the Sports and Cultural Council's recommendations are considered when confirming funding amounts.

(e) Lumin Clubs Review & VUWSA response

Following a proposal from VUWSA regarding funding to provide Clubs support in 2012, a review was undertaken by JSUB to assess the current clubs system in operation at Victoria.

A final review document came back to JSUB with a lot of positive recommendations that will improve the current club experience at Victoria. However, one recommendation that VUWSA did not support was the recommendation to move the work stream of clubs from VUWSA to Recreation Services.

Working alongside JSUB an amendment was made to ensure that the Rec Centre works in close partnership with VUWSA to support clubs on campus. We are currently working through how this partnership will operate, but VUWSA will still continue to provide a range of support and services to clubs and societies on campus. I have worked to ensure that there is an on-going

review of the new clubs support system and hope there will be another large review in 5-7 years.

(f) University Sport New Zealand & Maister Report

As the VUWSA representative on University Sport New Zealand I have feed into the governance and operations of University Sport New Zealand. This year has seen a great change in USNZ, with the passing (in principle) of the Maister Report at the USNZ Half AGM and I am currently on the Transition Board to ensure systems and operations are in place for the document to be approved in November.

2. Goal 6. Public Issues

To promote discussion and action as appropriate, on issues concerning students as citizens.

(a) Student Representative Council meeting

As per the VUWSA Constitution I organised an SRC in the first Trimester on the 2012 Budget. While there was strong promotion of the meeting, it was not well attended. However, through other avenues we have been raising awareness of the changes that the 2012 Budget process for students and graduates, which many students have been engaging with.

(b) Iran Panel Talk

Following a successful talk last year on Human Rights with the Iranian Ambassador to New Zealand, this year I worked alongside a community member to organise a panel discussion on Nuclear Issues in Iran. The panel involved the Ambassador, MP and former diplomat Kennedy Graham and academic Bob Rigg. The panel was chaired by Adjunct Professor and former UN Mediator Andrew Ladley.

The talk was very well attended and there has been interest shown by students and those involved to hold other similar panels throughout the year.

(c) Weekly Meeting with the Salient News Editor

I had weekly (sometimes more frequent than this) meetings with the Salient News Editor Stella Blake-Kelly. At these meetings I would update her on issues concerning VUWSA and the University and provide comment on any stories that were being run.

(d) Provide comment to journalists on issues concerning students

I have talked to numerous media outlets including the Dominion Post, Sunday Star Times, Radio New Zealand, Radio Live, Newstalk ZB and many student journalists. Topics have included VSM, changes to student loans and allowances, insurance, interest free students loans etc.

(e) Greater Wellington Regional Council Bus Review

I lead the VUWSA submissions on the GWRC Bus Review through consultation with students.

At the beginning this year the GWRC proposed a series of new bus routes which would be to the detriment to the majority of students studying at Victoria. I attended a GWRC workshop on the proposed changes and worked

alongside the Welfare team to get student submissions on the issue. We will be meeting with the GWRC in the next few weeks to discuss our feedback.

(f) Greater Wellington Regional Council Fare Review

A lot of work was done by the VUWSA President and others last year regarding raising the issue of tertiary student fares for public transport and as the GWRC is currently undergoing a fare review, this is the opportune time to push the issue.

I have worked with getting Student Association Presidents on board with the campaign and talking to VUW staff members about the issue, along with helping to formulate a submission on the issue. This work is being done in partnership with the Welfare team and the Campaigns Officer.

3. Goal 7. Finance

To maximise the benefits to members by minimising fees or user charges through internal efficiency and non-member revenue.

(a) VUWSA Service Review

I have supported the Treasurer and Audit and Finance Committee in their work to review the current services that VUWSA provides.

We need to ensure that the services VUWSA provides are not only services that students want and need, but also that our services are cost effective.

Over the next few weeks the Executive will be looking through and discussing the feedback provided in the Service Provision Review and consulting further with students and members where appropriate.

(b) Member of the Audit and Finance Committee

I have worked alongside other members of the Committee to ensure that VUWSA is being managed in a financially sustainable and appropriate manner.

VUWSA is continuing to build on a range of sound account and reporting procedures which have seen our aged debtors and creditors significantly reduce and allowed us to respond to any problems very quickly.

Given the current climate the Committee has been closely scrutinising the budget and has suggested to the Executive several areas where savings can be made in the future.

The Committee is currently working on an Investment Plan for the next 7-10 years.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. NZUSA Representative on the Committee of University Academic Preparation
2. Attended numerous NZUSA meetings, conference and sector council meetings
3. Kept in regular contact with peers across the country for information sharing, advice, help and support
4. Coordination of a website information overhaul

5. Attended the VUW 'Ideas to Action' conference
6. Attend VUW all graduation ceremonies and one parade during May
7. Attended a Student Finance conference hosted by the VUW Institute of policy Studies
8. Supported the Welfare Team in the VUWSA-VUW Free Flu Shot initiative
9. Laid ANZAC Day wreath
10. Worked with the University regarding the Student Forum
11. Worked with University staff regarding the development and implementation of an Integrated Service Zone in the redeveloped library

Representation

1. Victoria University of Wellington Council
2. Academic Board
3. Academic Committee
4. University Council Governance Committee
5. University Council Audit and Risk Committee
6. Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (co-chair)
7. Disciplinary Appeals Committee
8. Joint Student Union Board (JSUB)
9. Equity and Diversity Committee
10. Teaching and Learning Committee
11. Review of Undergraduate Education Steering Group
12. University Entrance Committee
13. Campus Hub Project Control Group
14. Sponsorship Committee
15. Sports and Cultural Council
16. Integrated Service Zone Project Team
17. Integrated Service Zone Communications subgroup
18. Integrated Service Zone Implementation subgroup
19. Integrated Service Zone Review subgroup
20. Graduate Attributes Working Party
21. VUW Representation Working Party
22. VUW Student Wellbeing Committee
- 23.** VUWSA Executive
- 24.** VUWSA Publications Committee
- 25.** VUWSA Audit and Finance Committee

26. VUWSA Governance Review Working Party
27. VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee
28. VUWSA Policy Committee
29. VUWSA Trust
30. Committee on University Academic Preparation (CUAP)
31. NZUSA University Sector Council
32. Advisory role to the constituent member representatives on the University Sport New Zealand Board
33. Advisory role to the constituent member representatives on the Student Job Search Board
34. University Sport New Zealand transition board member
35. Regular meetings with the Vice Chancellor Professor Pat Walsh
36. Regular meetings with the Director Student Academic Services Pam Thorburn
37. Regular meetings with the Associate Director (Campus Operations) Rainsforth Dix
38. Regular meetings with the Manger of Student Finance Stephanie Hunter
39. Regular meetings with the Ngai Taurira Tumuaki Joanna Morgan
40. Regular meetings with the Postgraduate Students' Association President Rebecca Kocks/Mary Redmayne/Neal Barber
41. Meetings with the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic) Penny Boumelha
42. Meetings with Greater Wellington Regional Councillors Paul Bruce and Daran Ponter

Strengths

1. Institutional knowledge
2. Commitment to VUWSA as an organisation
3. Strong interpersonal skills
4. Reliability
5. Drive and motivation
6. Increasing bossy-ness

Weaknesses

1. I have been unable thus far to strike a fair work-life balance, which has been to the detriment of my heath
2. Delegation
3. Over-commitment
4. Due to pressures on my time I have been able to provide the General Executive with the close support I would have liked to

Overall Rating

This has been an incredibly full on start to 2012. With the introduction of Voluntary Student Membership in January this year, the Presidency and VUWSA has faced a series of new challenges that have kept us extremely busy during the first few months of 2012.

The workload has not really quietened down since the start of the year. There is always a mountain of work that needs to be completed; however there has been a huge amount of commitment and effort shown by all VUWSA Executive and staff members this year. Together we are working hard to ensure that students get a great education and have an outstanding student experience at VUW.

While VUWSA has continued to provide a range of services, events and activities for students, my focus for these last few months has been on ensuring that VUWSA is operating effectively and is well supported in this new environment. This has included consulting with the University regarding service level agreements, revising and rewriting VUWSA policy, strengthening current accountability mechanisms within the association, working with the Audit and Finance committee on streamlining the VUWSA budget and heading the VUWSA Governance Review. There is still a lot of work I plan to do in this area in the remainder of the year, but I hope this foundation will help VUWSA to become more active in the future.

This year there were a series of new initiatives that I would have liked to implement this year, unfortunately my time restrictions have not allowed me to do this. However, I have put a lot of effort into my role this year and I think so far things are going well. Of course there have been some decisions and outcomes that I have found frustrating, however I have tried to make the best of every situation that has come VUWSA's way.

I look forward to working with VUWSA Executive and staff for the remainder of the year to ensure that VUWSA remains a strong, responsive and vibrant students' association.