

EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Josh Wright
POSITION	Vice-President (Academic)
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 1 June 2012
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	22
HOURS WORKED	453
BONUS APPLICATION	Nil

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 1

Education – Student Support: To secure and maintain adequate state income, welfare and employment support for students.

Goal 1 comprises the more external aspects of my role.

(a) Advocacy for Education

This has mainly occurred through my involvement with Class Reps and students who have concerns regarding education-based advocacy issues. My involvement here arose from our Education Organiser Fiona Beals' extended absence resulting from a severe injury to her wrist. I have provided advice and support to students, especially Class Representatives, on matters of course content, grading, VUW policy, assessment and services.

(b) Memo to Students and Class Reps

I worked alongside our Communications Coordinator, Caroline Robertson, and Fiona Beals in producing a document outlining the Government Budget's changes to student support. This was utilised at the VUWSA Student Representative Council meeting in early June.

(c) Stress-Free Study Week

Including interacting directly with students, providing breakfasts, as well as packing study 'snack packs'.

(d) Co-ordination with Ngai Taurira

Have met and continued correspondence with new Ngai Taurira President Joanna Morgan re: Ngai Taurira's involvement in student representation at the University.

2. Goal 2

Education – University: To ensure the University provides equity and quality in assessment, teaching, conditions and course access, supported by sufficient resources.

(a) Class Representatives

My predecessor and current VUWSA President Bridie Hood facilitated excellent progress in the strengthening of the Class Representative system at Victoria, alongside Education Organiser Fiona Beals. Trimester 2 2011 saw 94% of classes represented by Class Reps; Trimester 1 2012 has seen an increase to a total of 97% representation across the university. This is unmatched at any University in New Zealand.

Fiona and I have worked alongside David Crabbe, the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on positioning the Class Rep's role as less of an issues-based one, instead promoting it as a community-building, facilitative position, and I believe this has contributed to their increasing pick-up.

(b) Class Representative Training

Class Representative training underwent an accidental refresh! Fiona's injury, occurring after the third of a total eighteen trainings, really threw me in at the deep end. As such, the first round of Class Rep trainings were a real test for my personal confidence as well as my organisation skills; it truly felt like a 'sink or swim' test. Luckily, things went off smoothly and the eighteen training sessions were well-attended, and our VUW staff relations worked superbly.

In heading the trainings myself, I sought to reduce run time to a maximum of one hour, without cutting content. I managed this through lessening wording on slides and encouraging a more 'collaborative', casual and discussion-based atmosphere. This garnered a positive reception from the Class Reps, who in giving feedback stated they enjoyed the casual atmosphere and felt that I was a relatable trainer. I will be seeking to keep the reduced the run time in Trimester

(c) Class Representative Booklets

This was one of my first roles in my new position. I worked with Fiona to transform the Class Rep booklet from a issues-based, problem-solving guide to a community-building, collaborative guidebook. We introduced a 'How To Use Facebook' section for Class Reps seeking to establish Facebook communities, as well as rephrasing sentiments in order to place a more constructive take on things. This involved a redesign of the booklet, introducing boxes with important facts, creating white space and allowing for more readability. It was important to me that if we were to spend money on producing booklets that we had to ensure it was being read.

The same treatment was given to our Faculty Delegate booklets.

(d) Faculty Delegate System

My first few days in the office were spent sorting through Faculty Delegate applications and conducting phone interviews with Fiona and Bridie. I have endeavoured, alongside Fiona, to keep in close communication with our Faculty Delegates, answering any questions they may have, as well as attending various Faculty of Science and Commerce Board meetings.

We selected a fantastic group of Faculty Delegates this year, from a superb pool of applicants, and feedback from the University has been exclusively positive regarding their contributions. It has been rewarding watching the delegates go strength to strength in the Faculty Boards and Committees from meeting to meeting.

(e) Programme Reviews and Surveys

Fiona's injury thrust me into the realm of the Programme Review Submission. Until recently, this has been typically the domain of the Education Organiser. I initially co-authored the Public Policy Submission with Fiona Beals as she was unable to type. The Religious Studies Programme Submission, authored by me and edited by Fiona, was strongly commended by the Programme Review Panel, who asked permission to quote it in their final report. The survey for the Politics and International Relations Programme Review (now postponed for a year) garnered 160 submissions in 3 days by virtue of my heavy promotion. Due to the success the Education Office has achieved with Executive involvement this year, myself and the Education Officer Sam Vincent will be continuing to contribute towards this aspect of our representative function.

Additionally, I have provided support in the maintenance and uploading of surveys to SurveyMonkey.

(f) Student Forum

The Student Forum Document meetings I had with Bridie, Fiona, and the University management were some of my first with University people. It was the forum in which I had my first interaction with University staff, and immensely helped to build my confidence. By the end of the meetings, I felt as though I was confident and making proper contributions.

When it came to March Academic Board, I wrote a speech questioning the Student Forum which I planned to deliver, as Bridie was too ill to manage something. She recovered and delivered my speech at Academic Board, which gained a positive response from multiple Board members and forced the Student Forum document backwards, and out for consultation with students. This remains one of my proudest achievements in my role so far.

(g) Building and maintaining relationships with VUW staff

Fiona was gracious enough to set up meetings with important and relevant figures in the University's management structure, so I spent much of my first couple of months attempting to remember peoples' names! I have built an excellent rapport with the many staff members I have made acquaintance with, many of whom have worked constructively and happily with the Education Office.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 3

Education — Equity: To promote equity for disadvantaged members in access to and within the university.

(a) Campus Safety Audit

Participated in the Campus Safety Audit, organised by Women's Rights Officer Sara Bishop, including campus tour and filling out the feedback sheet.

(b) Wellington Public Transport Review

Edited and helped the writing of the VUWSA submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council, specifically focusing on the proposed changes to the #18 'Campus Connection' line and the implications its alteration would have on students with disabilities or children.

(c) Promotion of VUWSA Services through Class Representative Training

Including access services such as Free Bus Tickets, Food Bank, Free Bread, our Student Advocate, and assistance offered by the Education Office.

2. Goal 5

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

(a) Orientation Week

Various manning responsibilities for OWEEK tables. Additionally, I aided at VUWSA's *Karorientation* events, *Sounds in the Sun* events, and manned the VUWSA stall at the University's *Big Play Out* event in Kelburn Park. This was all integral work to keeping VUWSA visible to students, as well as incentivising membership through the movement of VUWSA diaries and wall-planners.

3. Goal 6

Public Issues — to promote discussion and action as appropriate, on issues concerning students as citizens.

(b) Salient Column

I have had a column published in Salient once a month; I have used this as an avenue to promote what is happening in the Education Office as well as at VUWSA in general, to promote student engagement with us and the wider public sphere.

(c) Social networking

Have worked consistently to maintain the VUWSA twitter and Facebook as engaging, important social media streams.

4. Goal 8

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

(d) Secretary of the Organisation

The Academic Vice-President is the secretary of the organisation, tasked with taking and recording minutes of Executive Meetings, Committee Meetings, and General Meetings. I have kept a solid, accurate record of these meetings.

(e) Executive Reporting Committee

Took part in the establishment of the Executive Reporting Committee, which reviews the Executive's fortnightly work reports and signs off payment of honoraria and salary for these positions.

(f) Work Reports

I have consistently submitted (though late, in times of large University workload) all work reports formatted correctly.

(g) Feedback Systems

Initiated discussion and feedback on VUWSA's Newsletter communication in order to effect changes. I discussed feedback with the Executive before channelling this through to the appropriate staff in order to effect these changes. This process is ongoing.

(h) Education Office meetings

I have established weekly Education Office meetings that allow Fiona, Sam and I to co-ordinate our weeks and establish goals and tasks for the weeks ahead.

(i) Payment Scrutiny

As I am a signatory to the account, I scrutinise payments to ensure transparency and honesty whenever I am asked to authorise them by the VUWSA accountant.

(j) Maintained representation budget

The Education Office has been prudent in ensuring we operate within the confines of our budgeted expenditure.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Minute-keeping

Ensuring that the minutes of meetings are a true and accurate record, and maintaining the books as such.

2. Library AV Reference Review Group

Participating in ongoing discussions and meetings regarding the placement of AV content in the library's catalogue and facilities.

3. Echo360 Technology Group

Participating in the testing of new educational software.

4. Representation at NZSM

We have worked in a big push to get representation cross-campus at the NZSM, meeting with academic and management staff to coordinate it. This has been incredibly successful, contributing to our overall representation figures. These class reps have already achieved positive outcomes for the Faculty through their active work.

5. Flu Shot supervision and promotion

Poster up around satellite campuses, as well as administering flu shot forms and 'keeping order' at the clinics, alongside other Exec members.

6. OWEEK administration duties (highlighting membership lists)

Countless hours spent performing administrative tasks for OWEEK 2012 membership lists!

Representation

1. **Academic Board**
2. **Academic Committee**
3. **Faculty of Science Board**
4. **Faculty of Science Academic Committee**
5. **Faculty of Commerce Board**
6. **VUWSA Executive Meetings**
7. **VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee Meetings**
8. **VUWSA Policy Committee Meetings**
9. **VUWSA Publications Committee (as Student Representative)**
10. **VUWSA Inaugural General Meeting**
11. **Regular meetings with Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) David Crabbe**
12. **Student Representation and Services Working Party (re: Student Forum)**
13. **Library AV Review Reference Committee**
14. **NZUSA Conference**
15. **Various Faculty and School Staff-Student Liasion Meetings**
16. **Meeting with STUDI0 Executive re: plans for the year**

Strengths

1. Dedication

I have a real dedication to the cause, and a passion to the role—I have spent many a late night at VUWSA completing tasks!

2. Objectivity

Despite living with two former Presidents (!!), I had relatively little involvement with VUWSA before my election. This has allowed me to approach my role with a fresh perspective and understanding of how things work.

3. Communication skills

I have built an excellent rapport with all of the Executive, as well as with VUWSA and VUW staff. This has allowed for clear and effective channels of communication.

4. Approachable and co-operative

One of my goals for the year, from the outset was to ensure that as a leader of the Executive that I was approachable to both students and Executive members. To do so, I have remained approachable and co-operative, and believe I have achieved this nicely.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of institutional knowledge

I have found myself burdened, at times, by my inexperience and lack of institutional knowledge at VUWSA. However, this has never adversely affected anything in a significant way, as luckily I have Bridie (who was in my role for two years) and Fiona who provide excellent support to me. Over time, with lots of work, my understanding has improved greatly.

2. Sometimes disorganised

Tendency for disorganisation and bad time management at VUWSA when I am busy with University work (and vice-versa).

3. Education Organiser

I find myself sometimes relying on Fiona for too much, predominantly as she is so excellent at her job and knows exactly how things are run!

4. Hesitant

I often find myself not trusting of my instincts in putting across my opinions due to my relative inexperience. This has also resulted in the lack of any specific initiatives from my office this year. Of course, this can be partly attributed to the nature of the new funding structure we have with the University. Regardless, I will be working on ensuring that my opinions are better expressed in the second half of the year.

Overall Rating

Given all considerations, I am proud of the work VUWSA has achieved this year. We have a committed and intelligent Executive who have displayed passion and dedication when most needed, and have been supported by consistently excellent staff.

I am happy with the work I have completed in my portfolio. I feel as though I am beginning to gain real traction in the role and expect that my efficacy will only improve from here onwards in what is an incredibly important year for establishing VUWSA's position in a new environment.