



NAME	Jacinta Gulasekharam
POSITION	Academic Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 30 th June, 2016
HOURS WORKED	575.5
HOURS REQUIRED	508.5

Priority Goals:

1. Goal 1

Education Quality: To ensure that the University provides the best teaching and learning, research opportunities, assessment and training to students.

(a) New Projects

It was important for the Education team to take an innovative approach to meet student demands and global trends, which has resulted in project plans for the Education team which have not been pursued before.

Faculty Delegate Induction

2016 saw the first ever Faculty Delegate induction run by the Education Team. Thanks to Gemma Swan (VUWSA Student Representative Coordinator) and Annaliese Wilson (Education Officer) we managed to organise a comprehensive agenda to prepare delegates for their roles, and an induction pack increasing the professionalism of the students portrayed – a goal from last year's Education team. With over 80% attendance, Gemma and I conducted the training and received positive feedback with how prepared and confident the delegates felt going into their roles. The Education team will continue hold inductions each year.

Streamlining Faculty Delegate communication streamline

This year I have sought to improve communication levels across student representation. I have achieved this through regular communication and sharing of content with our class reps on their Facebook pages, VUWSA's blogs and e-newsletter. From this I have gathered ad hoc student feedback and issues that have helped empower me to represent student issues. Also this year I have started the practice of sharing notes from Faculty Delegate reports to Academic Board and Committee meetings regarding unresolved student concerns. This has resulted in better awareness and consideration of student perspectives in University proposals.

Information sharing between additional groups has also improved. Faculty Delegates now receive relevant reports from committee to board level. The Academic Committee minutes are now shared with Academic board members. And University progress and VUWSA initiatives is also provided to Faculty Delegates.

Creating an Online Student guide

This year I have diverted energy to bring the Alternative Student Guide back. VUWSA has done a student guide before but it was in hand written form and not produced after 2010.

This Guide will provide information about course learning and skills through the use of an online platform. The Guide will use class reps to compile a student perspective about courses completed in the trimester. This Guide will help to elevate the role of class reps and their opportunity to display leadership in the classroom through this tool. It will be linked on the VUWSA website for students to search out course codes, and gain a student perspective of prospective courses. It is intended for the Guide to be updated each trimester with new courses, new student perspectives and new content. The Guide will also direct students to course planning information and resources available at the University.

The Guide will be vetted with strict ethical and material consideration. In Trimester 1 I planned how the Guide would be promoted, collated, distributed, vetted and designed. At the end of Trimester 1 I conducted a survey and received around 37 responses from executive, class representatives and faculty delegates about their Trimester 1 courses. The survey is still open today. It is exciting to bring this to the

students in Trimester 2 and I am pleased with how the implementation of this idea has come about.

Creating a distance class rep course

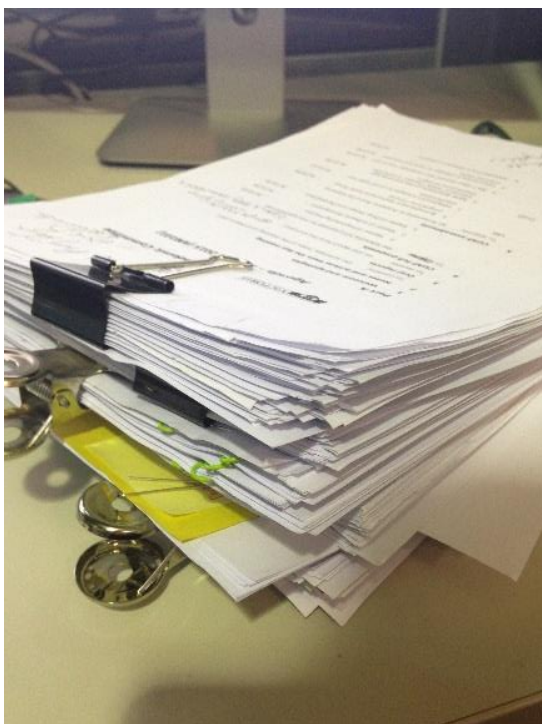
This year I shared the vision with our Student Representation Co-ordinator, Gemma Swan, to have an online training for distance reps or those who cannot make our trainings in person. This developed into a project where the Education team are working on the online module now to put on the website with key consideration of online barriers and challenges distance reps may face. This is to be implemented for Trimester 2 and shows that VUWSA is innovating to keep up with the digital space. To be able to have equipped and trained online class representatives is a huge win for a body that prides itself on being the voice for students.

(b) Academic Board and Academic Committee

As Academic Vice President, I sit on Academic Board and Academic Committee, which looks at incoming proposals for new qualifications, amendments to existing qualifications, and changes to academic-related policies. I have gone into more detail on this role below in Representation. I have attended 95% of these meetings.

(c) Class Representatives

The Education Team worked tirelessly for three weeks conducting 23 class rep trainings. During these trainings we engaged with students about volunteering and provided them with information about what VUWSA does. At the beginning of the year,



Annaliese, Gemma and I updated the Class Handbook giving it a professional feel, making it easier to read.. We were really proud with the outcome and was pleased to see the positive feedback about the quality of the new handbook.



(d) Relationships with student leaders and student groups

See Representation

(e) Programme Reviews

I have helped Gemma (SRC) edit, proofread and gauge Programme Review student consultation, which occur every seven years, a process in place ensuring educational quality.

(f) Student consultation

At times I am approached or contacted by students regarding student issues. Using the network I have I am happy to say these students were helped and referred to the correct person.



2. Goal 3

Equity and Access: To promote the equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the University.

(a) Academic Disciplinary Committee

I have sat in on three cases involving students and potential breaches in the Student Conduct Statute. My role on this Committee involved acting in the best interest of students and their wellbeing.

(b) Epigeum

I have met and regularly contacted the Epigeum project manager, and helped co-ordinate student UX and feedback for the modules. I have also promoted it to Academic Staff and made sure student consultation was effective.

(c) Early Course Alerts

I have continued regular contact with the Course Alerts System project manager, an initiative I've carried on from last year's Academic Vice President. This contact has ensured the signal is continued to be used as a measure of progress not grades.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 6

Public Issues: To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students

SUBMISSIONS

By the end of Trimester 1 I had led, consulted and submitted on a total of four submissions to various bodies. Each submission required extensive drafting, researching and planning; but I am proud to say each of them represents the best interests of students.

(a) Student Representation on Productivity Commission New Models of Tertiary

Prepaing to present at the TEU symposium

This year I have taken the lead on communicating VUWSA's perspective on the Productivity Commission's New Models of Tertiary Education. In consultation with the executive and faculty delegates I researched, drafted and edited our submission to the University on 30% of the 110 questions.

Our key points made were within the discourse that the funding model is producing an inefficient competition model; and this model is not necessarily leading to more equitable outcomes. I presented key points at the TEU Symposium regarding the New Models of Tertiary Education – a huge privilege. The submission was well thought out and helped out with the Education team. I have started the initial planning around student consultation for when the draft report is released in September; and will provide a submission in November. The process of leading this project has highlighted my key organisational strengths, as the planning for this has gone so smoothly.

(b) Education Amendment Bill

Early in February I wrote my first submission regarding the Submission to Parliamentary Select Committee on the Education Legislation Bill - Clause 23. The Submission proposed to remove the compulsory two-month consultation period for student fee setting. This was a minor amendment and it is still being processed through the Parliamentary process.

(c) Foundation Studies Change Proposal

V-ISA and VUWSA became aware of the University's plans to outsource Foundation Studies. I led our VUWSA submission, which included consultation with our Faculty Delegates and executive. I worked with V-ISA to come up with

a strategy on how to get the best outcome for students and keep in regular contact with the executive regarding this. For this submission I also met with our campaigns officer, the NZUSA director and the VUWSA advocate to ensure our submission was in the best interests of students. We were prepared for all outcomes, although we were disappointed with the university choosing to continue in the direction of outsourcing the programme. I am pleased with the quality of the submission and process we had.

(d) Foundation Studies Decision Proposal

The final decision proposal regarding Foundation Studies saw V-ISA and VUWSA collaborate with a submission. I worked long hours with our VUWSA advocate and the V-ISA Vice President writing a full list of recommendations to be passed on to the third party provider. This was a big undertaking, but worked extremely well with both Associations representing the students. Vaelyn and I presented our submission orally to the University, and I am pleased to say the majority of our recommendations will be passed on to the third party provider. It showed the power of working with other student groups and that I can make tangible differences to the student experience in my role.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. O-Week support, Stress Free Study Week and other events

As an executive member I have put my hand up helping at most of the evening events, such as OWeek and Stress Free Study Week. Other events include: PGSA afternoon tea, VUW Pink Ribbon Breakfast, Maori and Pasifika Student Services Expo, Vic Rescue introduction evening, attending the Volunteer expo, attending the Hunter Gathering, Student Leaders Meet and Greet, attending the Gearing up for First Year Symposium and assisting with set up for the IGM.



2. VUWSA and a National Student voice

This year I have reached out to other associations and have made regular contact with executive from UCSA, OUSA and MUWSA. I have found these connections invaluable to share information about how we can best serve students.

3. Communication

As part of my election promise I wanted to communicate to students more about what I am doing at VUWSA. This has been successful with the reach of my blogs found through the VUWSA newsletter and social media channels. I have also written columns and added comments to news articles regarding Academic issues in Saliend. It is important for VUWSA to engage with students and celebrate our wins, we have a long way to go in achieving this.



Representation

A lot of my role involves meeting with people including students, university staff and external parties. These meetings happen not just for the sake of it, but to also collaborate on student issues.

1. VUW Academic Board

I have organised the six student representatives with regular contact and pre-meetings prior to the University board meeting, which has helped strengthen the voice we have at the daunting Council Chambers. It was an honour to see our student representative, PGSA rep, NT rep, PSC rep, the President and I sit at the table among academics and senior leadership team, illustrating the partnership we have with VUW. As students we stood together and abstained our votes regarding the new Masters of International Marketing due to the lack of industry consultation. This has led to the University highlighting and seeking more industry consultation for their new proposals.

2. VUW Academic Committee

The use of student consultation leveraging off the new practise of using faculty delegate report notes to repeat common student concerns has helped improve the quality and student experience with new proposals and programme amendments.

3. VUWSA Weekly VPs Meeting

The purpose of these is to liaise and discuss how our teams are going and seek to crossover portfolios when feasible.

4. VUW Examination Working Group

I sat this working group as a student representative and expressed student concerns regarding how assessment methods are used at VUW. The group came to the consensus that assessments are used to facilitate learning and should include methods that mitigate any circumstance that may impede on this.

5. VUW Working Group on Student Transfer Policy

This concentrated on student's ability to transfer to VUW, the policy change was minor, but valuable to dispel common misconceptions about students.

6. University Council

As a student member on University Council I have the opportunity to build on relationships with the Senior Leadership Team and Council helping student issues from VUWSA to be solved and discussed. It has also allowed for further understanding of the operational and strategic direction of the University.

7. Relationship for Associate deans John Randal and Kathryn Sutherland

I have regularly corresponded with these two Deans and met with them inside and outside of university boards. These meetings have provided me with invaluable insight on how VUWSA can strengthen its presence as a consultation body that can aid programme changes and amendments from VUW schools.

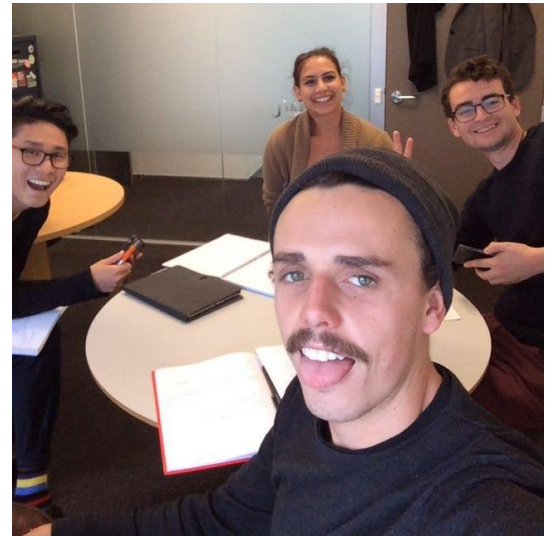
8. Regular contact with Academic Office

I have been in regular contact with Academic Office regarding Academic Board and met with new Director, Sue Walbran.

9. VUWSA Executive

Includes attending executive meetings, January induction and strategic planning workshops.

10. VUWSA Student Media Committee



Being on this Committee has allowed for continuity between my role as chair of the Committee last year (as Treasurer) to help with financial decision making and budget tracking. This Committee has benefitted from my historical knowledge and commerce background.

11. Meeting with Provost

The Vice President of V-ISA and I met with Wendy Lerner to discuss their new International Student Strategy. This allowed for a direct line to the SLT with our student interests, including more scholarships and affordable accommodation to be at the forefront of their decision making.

12. Regular meetings with Student Academic Services

This year the Vice Presidents and President have attended regular meetings with SAS regarding key student issues. These meetings have resulted in better collaboration and partnership that work in favour of students and the success of our new projects.

13. Bi-monthly meetings with the Student Wellbeing Network

These meetings have resulted in a better understanding of the extent of student support at VUW and places where co-production is possible such as with the SWAT and Bubble leaders.

14. VUWSA Student Equity and Diversity Committee

This meeting was a great opportunity to share what happens behind closed doors to student leaders and keep them up-to-date with student matters.

15. Catch ups with Te Pūtahi Atawhai

As a past mentor last year I have kept in regular contact with TPA to make sure we can promote and support them with their endeavours. The demand for this service is increasing and the proportion of Maori and Pasifika at VUW is rising, being a key contact has allowed for echos of support to be passed on from myself to students, University staff and VUWSA personal.

16. VUWSA Finance and Audit Committee

It was important for me to be on this Committee to track the budget I passed last year as Treasurer. To this Committee I bring my institutional knowledge, accounting expertise and a detailed eye on our finances to ensure our sustainability.

17. VUWSA REVCOM Committee

Discovering the first student business case to this Committee and being a member on the Committee to support the diversification of VUWSA's revenue.

18. VUWSA ERC

I have sat on this Committee occasionally to assist the Treasurer in safeguarding the accountability of the executive.

19. VUWSA General Manager Performance Review Committee

Yet to formally meet, I have liaised with the President regarding review matters.

20. Regular meetings with VUWSA Education Team

We try most weeks to have Education team meetings to be in the loop about what each other are working on. At times the Communication and Marketing Manager or VUWSA Advocate has attended and collaborated on projects.. These meetings have involved rigorous planning and asking the tough questions with each other, which has led to outstanding, professional work. Working with Annaliese has been very rewarding and it has been great supporting her to have her own projects, but to also connect her to key university staff that will support her year-long tutor project. The team has been the highlight of VUWSA this year.

21. Regular meetings with Student Representation Coordinator

Each Monday morning Gemma and I meet to discuss the plan for the week, this has allowed for effective communication.

22. Student Academic Committee

I chaired a successful SAC meeting that covered topics such as the New Models of Tertiary Education to the Examinations Working Group.. It was great to see Faculty Delegates and student leaders engaged in discussions regarding student issues, I look forward to the two more we have scheduled in Trimester 2.



23. Regular catch ups with Ngāi Tauira

Meeting with the NT reps has been great to help them with their leadership and thoughts about growing their group as a representative body. Despite the challenges they have had with resignations, I am really pleased with how we have found ways to support each other.

24. Regular catch ups with PSC

Grace has been amazing to work with and it has been a pleasure to share what each of us do in our roles. The catch ups have been vital for looking for ways to share information more effectively to all our students.

25. Regular catch ups with V-ISA

V-ISA and VUWSA have shown the strength in their partnership throughout the Foundation Studies outsourcing. Apart from this proposal I have met with the President and Vice President about Association structure, communication and supporting their endeavours with their student base.

26. Meetings with VicCom

The VICCOM President and I had regular meetings on how we can improve the student experience for Commerce students. I also take the initiative and talk with VICCOM executive when they are around campus and offer support where I can.

27. Regular meetings with the Centre for Academic Development

These regular meetings with CAD have helped us elevate the class rep role by improving the communication between the university, students and lecturers. A large project we worked on together was the implementation of Online Student Feedback. From the end of last year to this year we have collaborated on helping with the communication of the new system.

28. Meetings with Talis Aspire

I have helped with the continuity of communication regarding the new course resource software of Talis. This is in preparation for the University-wide roll out and I am confident that with open dialogue we can help the students be on board with this new software. I am really pleased with how open Peter has been to our suggestions and the appreciation of VUWSA.

Strengths

1. Leadership

The Education team this year has been successful with its projects and goals with my leadership skills that have developed at VUWSA and leadership training courses external to VUWSA. I believe the team could not have been as effective without my ability to exemplify and co-ordinate projects.

2. Organisation

My ability to plan and organize early in the year and each week has allowed for tasks to be completed on time. The organization of my calendar, files and team projects has allowed for more time to add more projects for students. Without the strength the Education team has had with organization, students would have missed out on the new initiatives of early contingency planning.

3. Friendly nature

My ability to be personal and friendly to students has allowed Faculty Delegates to my peers in class to bring up issues or questions that I can follow up. I feel this has been an attribute that has allowed me to be relatable to students and make a difference to the student experience at VUW.

Weaknesses

1. Work load

within 2016 I have studied full time, pursued my role as Academic Vice President and as student representative on University Council. At times I have found it hard to separate and concentrate on each of these three different roles in my life as a young person. It has been a steep learning curve creating boundaries between these distinct roles and it is something I will continue to work on in Trimester 2.



2. Passion for the students

At times my passion for the students turns into full-blown emotion such as the news of outsourcing Foundation Studies and when our submission recommendation was not acted upon. It can be difficult at times not to be upset when my care for students genuinely affects how I feel on a daily basis. This is something I am aware of and wish to work on not getting caught up in only the bad, but to remember the good that does go on at the University.

Overall Rating

In summary, it has been a full on six months delivering projects on time and providing careful, considered organisation within the Education team. We plan to step up our game by implementing our projects and looking for feedback as to how we can make them more student friendly. The second half of the year will be the grand finale to what has been a successfully achieving year.

The Education Team has made massive milestones in improving the strength and relevance of student representation that VUWSA stands for.



Thanks to my support from Annaliese and Gemma. I can feel really proud with the amount of progress I have made with representation, education quality and equity within VUW.