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| NAME | RAMON ANGELO "GEO" ROBRIGADO |
| POSITION | Campaigns Officer |
| REPORT PERIOD | 1 st January – 30 June, 2018 |
| HOURS WORKED | 451 (with a total of 97 hours devoted solely to campaigns) |
| HOURS REQ'D | 260 |

Priority Goals:

This year my priority goals are:

1. To ensure, through campaigns, that students' rights are realised; and
2. To ensure that the student voice is heard in discourses relating to public and university-related issues
3. To help increase student engagement in all aspects of university life

VUWSA Goals

My key focus in terms of VUWSA's goals, are:

1. **Goal 2** – Student Support: To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.
2. **Goal 6** – Public Issues: To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.

I. PRIORITY GOALS

- a. **To ensure, through campaigns, that students' rights are realised**

2017 saw the realisation of two huge student-led campaigns: The Fairer Fares Campaign and the We Have Power Campaign. Having these massive campaigns wrapped up allowed me to start anew with my own goals alongside VUWSA's goals. I have campaigned on a Student Rights and Welfare (STRAW) platform during the elections which I have injected into my role's priority goals. Fortunately, I am given a very supportive team that helps me realise this goal. I have spearheaded or at least have been involved in – the March on Midland, and the What the F*** are Letting Fees Campaign (which I shall talk about in the next section) – also ties in with VUWSA Goal No. 6 – Public Issues.

b. To ensure that the student voice is heard in discourses relating to public and university-related issues

This ties in directly with my first priority goal. Student rights cannot be realised when they do not have a voice in discourses that directly affect them. Whether it is providing a platform for students to voice out their concerns (e.g. the Letting Fees Activation) or even just a listening ear, the student voice is very important and I always take that into account in the campaigns that I undertake. This ties in to both VUWSA Goals No. 2 (Student Support) and No. 6 (Public Issues).

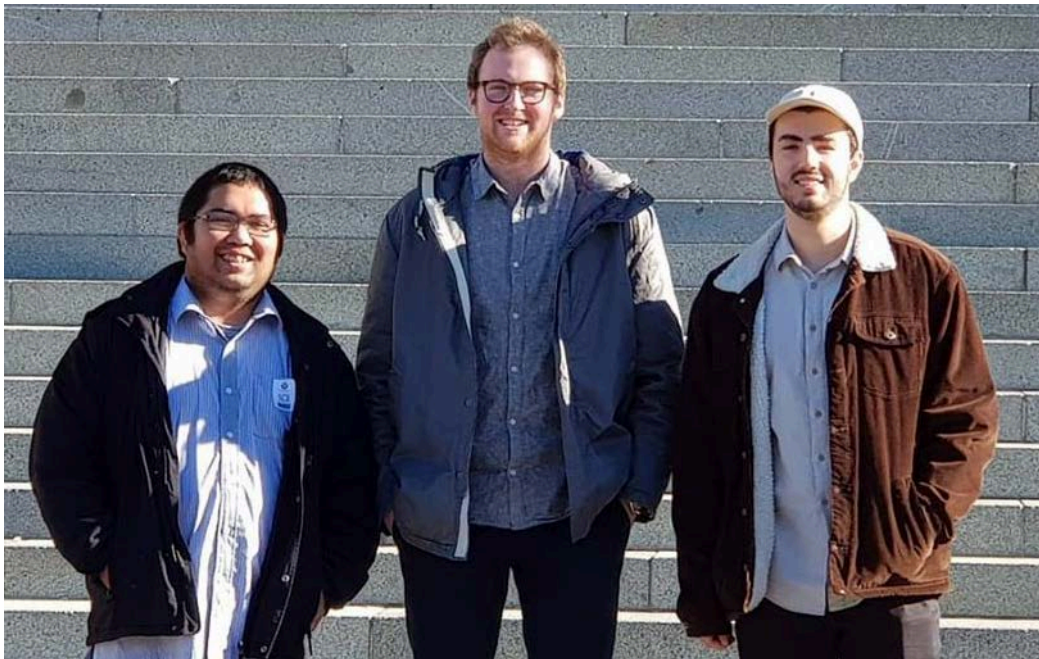
c. To help increase student engagement in all aspects of university life

I took this on as a priority item being part of the Engagement Team. I am in a fortunate position as campaigns officer being both a migrant and a mature student, as I am able to represent these student sectors into the discourse. Being the chairperson of a cultural club also helped me realise this goal, especially in giving cultural events in the university a VUWSA presence. This ties in quite nicely with VUWSA Goal No. 2 (Student Support).

II. KEY PROJECTS

a. **What the F*** are Letting Fees Campaign**

VUWSA immediately jumped on board when Government announced that it was planning to ban letting fees. I ran a successful submissions campaign called “Activation in the Hub” where we asked students to have their say on the issue. All students’ submissions went directly to Parliament through a submissions platform. At the same time, the case of student Finn Carroll, who was charged an exorbitant amount of fees just to change a name in their lease agreement, exploded in national media and VUWSA was the first one to help Finn out seek a platform to air his concerns. I came along with President Marlon Drake and Finn Carroll to make an oral submission to Parliament’s Social Services and Community Select Committee in behalf of VUWSA and the students of Victoria University of Wellington with regards to the bill to ban letting fees.



b. Plan to Fix Renting Campaign

Coming on the heels of the letting fees activation campaign, VUWSA teamed up with Renters United on the Plan to Fix Renting Campaign. The three policy points that VUWSA is forwarding – banning letting fees, setting-up mandatory rental warrant of fitness, and regulating property managers are also covered by Renters United's Plan to Fix Renting manifesto. I attended several meetings in relation to this campaign. The campaign is currently active with VUWSA attending the launch on 11 July. Several on-campus activities are also laid-out in relation to this campaign.



c. March on Midland

While this campaign is spearheaded by the Welfare Team as well as the VUW Law Students Society and the VUW Feminist Law Society, I provided logistical and engagement support on the day, including carrying the banner (see photo below) as well engaging the students to sign the manifesto of student demands.



d. Thursdays in Black

My involvement with Thursdays in Black is more towards the NZUSA side of things, including ensuring that orders for TiB merchandise are properly arranged and delivered, monitoring and listing an inventory of the merchandise, and making sure that other student associations and TiB movements in other campuses are properly supported by the national association. In the VUWSA side of things, I was able to help out in one of the TiB op-shops at the Law School.

III. OTHER INVOLVEMENT

a. O-Week

O-Week is VUWSA's very first event of the year, and I took upon the chance to help out while the academic requirements are still weeks away. During the new students' orientation week, I was able to attend to the VUWSA booth every day, making sure that volunteers are well supported in their role and are well-taken care of. I also put in volunteering shifts for four out of five evening events (I was not able to take the Toga Night as I had a previous commitment set that day). I was also given the opportunity to speak on behalf of VUWSA at one of the sessions of the International Students Orientation and at the Mature Students Orientation, being someone having an international background and a mature student, respectively. The following week, I was able to provide assistance during the Campus Expo and Clubs Week, as well as one of the bus persons during the Newtown Festival.

b. NZUSA Conference

The NZUSA Conference that was held at the Rutherford House on the 27th and 28th of January allowed VUWSA executives to meet executive members of other student associations and talk about pressing issues that students are facing. We particularly talked about student accommodation, mental health, and sexual violence in the conference sessions.



c. Stress Free Study Week

Having fortunate to have all my Trimester 1 papers internally assessed, I had more free time during stress free study week. I was able to handle all lunch shifts in Pipitea from Monday to Friday. In this role I was able to ensure that free lunches had a wide student reach in the Pipitea Campus and made sure that the volunteers were properly looked after. I was also fortunate to be able to chat to some of the students preparing for their exams and give friendly advice on how to approach their examinations.

d. Preliminary and Administrative Stuff

The first few weeks of my term in VUWSA was taken up by administrative matters, including securing my swipe card access to the VUWSA office, setting up my email and staff account, and handling IT issues (some computers could not recognise my staff account at the beginning). I also took my time to read some reports and documents pertinent to my portfolio. As the term progressed, I made it a practice to devote at least one hour a day to emails and administrative stuff, including trying my best to keep the office (and the kitchen) tidy and clean. I also take time to read documents pertinent to VUWSA executive meetings as I want to ensure that I understand everything before coming into the meeting (I treat VUWSA exec meetings as another lecture where I have to prepare before coming in).

e. Other VUWSA Events

VUWSA Retreat during the third weekend of January was a very helpful in introducing the newly elected members, particularly those who are coming into the executive for the first time, to the ways, means, people, and modes of operations of the Association.

I have only missed one executive meeting – it was an emergency one – because of a clash with a lecture. I have also provided logistical support during the VUWSA IGM, the hall visits when we were setting up the halls committee, and the flu shots at the Hub day. Furthermore, being the first Filipino student elected to the executive, I was able to bridge VUWSA with the Filipino community in VUW as well as the larger international community.

IV. SUMMARY

The first half of the year had been a very eventful one, and I saw student engagement with their student association increasing with the activities and projects that VUWSA has laid out for the students. I came into VUWSA armed with previous campaigning experience, which have helped me identify my strengths pertinent to the portfolio I am handling, a few of which I will highlight below:

- I am very passionate about my work in not only in advocating student issues, but in making sure that the students' university experience will be one of their best.
- Being a mature student with an international background, I am able to provide a different perspective to the issues that VUWSA is facing. Conversely, I am able to recognise, appreciate, absorb, and understand the perspectives that my colleagues are offering to the table.
- I have become more creative and critical in dealing with my issues compared to previous work experiences.
- I am an effective team player and ensured that I maintain good working relations with my peers.
- I was able to maintain good grades while serving in VUWSA, including obtaining an A+ in a 300-level INTP paper. My GPA for the first trimester of 2018 is maintained at the same level as my GPA for the first trimester of 2017.

However, I also have to recognise some of the weaknesses and flaws that I am trying to improve on.

- I have to learn how to work and manage my time more efficiently. 2-3 hours of reading three meeting documents does not indicate effective time management. One would also notice that I have already put up 451 hours but only 97 of them went to actual campaign work. I have to recognise though that a huge chunk of VUWSA work is taken by general stuff and that most campaigns that VUWSA is undertaking commenced towards the middle of the first trimester; however now with campaigns getting into full swing I have to improve that percentage.

- While I recognise that my work with VUWSA (and university work) is something that gives me purpose and satisfaction, I have to keep on reminding myself to give myself some “me-time”. Having said that, I need to learn how to congratulate myself and give myself a pat on the back for a job well done. I also need to learn how to give credit to myself.
- There are times that I still find myself holding back on comments and suggestions, fearing that they might be dismissed or questioned unfairly.
- I always find myself singing along to the music I play while working. I have to remind myself that I am not the only one using the VUWSA space.
- I have to keep my workspace tidy at all times.

Overall, my first experience as a VUWSA executive had been one of the most fulfilling experiences I've had. I can say that I was able to step out of my comfort zone and know myself even more with VUWSA. I cannot wait for the rest of the year especially with the RTA Campaign getting into full gear.