



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Declan Doherty-Ramsay
POSITION	Engagement Vice President
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2014
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	26
HOURS WORKED	538.5

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 5

Activities: To support sporting, social and cultural activities for and by students; primarily through Clubs and Representative Groups.

This year Clubs have continued to be run by the University; nevertheless myself and the Engagement team have worked on new ways to provide support and develop relationships with Clubs, Societies, and Representative Groups in an effort to keep VUWSA relevant in this area. I've particularly worked closely with Clubs and Activities Officer Toby Cooper in developing new events and opportunities for Clubs on campus to reach a wider student audience. Below are some of the larger projects I've worked on.

(a) One Orientation Wellington 2014



This year the VUWSA Executive decided to combine our Orientation with Massey Wellington, under the banner of One Orientation Wellington. I was very involved in the planning and development of VUWSA's side of Orientation, especially events happening during the day on campus in O Week. At Kelburn, along with the VUWSA stall and barbeque we had a carnival of groups and businesses filling the Tim Beaglehole Courtyard, added to by performances by students. We also had a strong presence at the other campuses with BBQs and giveaways, as well as a special orientation in January for Karori students.

Our night events were also very successful with both events – the Neon Toga Party and Baauer – hosted at The Hunter Lounge sold out, and an overall programme that featured 8 International Acts. Both of the events at The Hunter Lounge were made R17 to accommodate new students who hadn't yet turned 18 who would otherwise miss out on Orientation.



This Orientation represented a huge shift in direction from the prior two years where Orientation had decreased in size, and was very successful in creating a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere to start the year. I really look forward to working on Orientation 2015 to build on the success of this year.



(b) University Challenge

Early on in 2014 VUWSA was approached to select and train a team of students to take part in the re-launch of the television program *University Challenge*. I took the lead role in this project, from planning and preparing the trials, team selection, through to organising team training sessions, media training, and promotion. 22 students took part in the trials for 5 places on the team, and this number will hopefully increase next year once the first series airs and students become more aware of the program. The team are heading down to Invercargill for filming this week and will surely do both the University and VUWSA proud.

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.

(a) General Election



This year's National General Election is rapidly approaching and I've been working closely with Campaigns Officer Alasdair Keating and the Campaigns Committee to make sure that students not only enrol but vote in this election. It is a well-known statistic that those aged 18-24 are very unlikely to vote; in 2011 only 60% of people in this age group voted, and that is a statistic that I'm very keen to see reverse course.

We've already had a few early victories, with Early Voting happening on campus during the two weeks leading up to the election. We've also had the Electoral Commission on campus throughout

Trimester 1 assisting students with enrolling to vote and updating their details.

As a result of our work we have several events lined up in Trimester 2 including a Tertiary Education Debate with MPs, a Wellington Candidates Soapbox, a Student Issues Expo, and a People to the Polls event.

3. Goal 8

Accountability: To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

(a) VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee

I have regularly been a part of this committee, where I've been a bit of a stickler for detail and accuracy.

(b) Salient Columns

I've written 2 executive columns so far for Salient this year. Salient changed the structure of VUWSA's presence in the magazine this year and as a result of negotiations a new column has taken the place of the exec column in the print edition, with the executive columns being moved to online-only. This new column features a "What's On" guide for VUWSA events coming up, a Question for the Exec on a relevant topic to the issue, and a general information space. I have taken to writing these columns and will continue to for the foreseeable future.

(c) Updating the VUWSA Website with Executive Profiles

I collected from each member of the executive their contact details and a personal profile outlining their role and themselves, which now is on the official website.

(d) VUWSA Initial General Meeting and Special General Meeting

I worked in tandem with the Welfare Vice President Rick Zwaan on the day logistics of the Initial General Meeting, where VUWSA presented the 2013 Annual Report and outlined our priorities for 2014.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 3

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

As an executive member with a disability I have frequently offered that point of view at meetings and in discussions. During debate for a new voting system for VUWSA Elections I highlighted the need for testing for compatibility with screen-readers and other assistance technology so that all students can take part. I also supported the establishment of the VUWSA International Students' Representative Group and am in regular contact with its President.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Orientation Debrief

After Orientation, I compiled the perspectives of the Executive and Volunteers and drew up a document that made recommendations for improvements in how Orientation could be run in the future.

2. Stress Free Study Week

In addition to helping out with serving food, setting up and packing down with the rest of the executive, I took charge of organising the roster and volunteers throughout the week. We had nearly 20 volunteers helping out, including members of the Pasifika Students' Council.

3. Engagement and Communications Roles

I worked closely with General Manager Mark Maguire and President Sonya Clark in the creating of new staff positions, in particular the development of two positions relating to Communications – the student-focused Communications and Engagement Coordinator and the outward-focused External Communications Coordinator. These roles will hopefully be filled in the coming months.

4. Event Planning and Timeline

I drafted and presented an event plan for 2014 to the Executive in April, which included an ideal timeline for event preparation and promotion. This timeline was created in response to the overwhelming tendency for executive-run events to be done at the last minute. I've started implementing this timeline in

to the events I am running, and hope that it can become a standard practice of the executive in the future.

Representation

- 1. Weekly VUWSA Executive Officers Meetings**
- 2. Fortnightly VUWSA Executive Meetings**
- 3. Weekly VUWSA Engagement Team Meetings**
- 4. VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee**
- 5. VUWSA Policy Committee**
- 6. VUWSA Campaigns Committee**
- 7. Observer at University Council**
- 8. ACSSL Meeting (Observer)**
- 9. VUWSA Observer at Science Faculty Board**
- 10. Meetings with the Pasifika Students' Council**
- 11. NZUSA Conference**

I attended the 3-day NZUSA Conference in late January, with the VUWSA Executive

Strengths

1. Practical

As a person, I'm very practical in my approach to projects and jobs and like to think of myself as a bit of a "Doer". I'm very hands-on and would rather get busy and involved in a project than discussing the pros and cons of a particular approach. As a result I've been involved in a wide variety of projects across the spectrum of portfolios, from being a Marshall at Let Me Go Home, to taking a lead role in our General Election Campaign. Being practical has also been very helpful in this role where there hasn't been any staff equivalent to my role in the way there is for the other Vice Presidents until very recently.

2. Event Management

Before becoming the Engagement Vice President I had previously worked both voluntarily and professionally as an Events Manager, and this role has given me plenty of chance to use these skills. Events this year have been I feel a lot more efficiently run, with events like the IGM running to time (even the pizza) and I've developed internal resources for the executive to use when planning their own events. With the recent appointment of the Events Manager role I have been able to work closely with them to start developing the staff-executive working relationship so future executives will not have to work on the practicalities and be able to focus on the strategic direction.

Weaknesses

1. Institutional Knowledge

As a new executive member I've had to learn on the job about the institution, and build from the beginning relationships with key staff and student groups. This has been in quite stark contrast to my fellow VPs and the President who were all part of the 2013 Executive. I will make sure whoever takes my role next year will have great handover resources and I will do my very best to guide them in to the role.

2. Self-Confidence

I am definitely not the most confident person in the world, and it's something that I will continue to work on beyond my time in this role. I've definitely grown in this area and compared to the first executive meeting I've become a lot more confident in myself and in sharing my opinions in debates. I will continue to work on making myself heard and standing up for what I think is best for students.

3. Long-Term Vision

On the flip side of being very practical-focused, I lack at times the ability to think about long-term implications and strategy. Being too focused on the details and single-serve events rather than the bigger picture has meant at times my ideas for events and projects have lacked a link to the bigger vision of students being fully engaged with VUWSA and VUWSA being a central part of Student Life. This is something I've been challenged with recently with the beginning of development for the next VUWSA Strategic Plan and it's a skill I need to sharpen up on.

Overall Rating

Over the last 6 months I feel I've grown hugely as a person and as a member of the Executive. This role is still very new and as only the second EVP I have found it very exciting and enjoyable carving out what the role means and creating ongoing structures to support it. I feel that my work in this area will have a much bigger impact down the road to make VUWSA relevant, engaging, and sustainable.

I can't say I have had the easiest time at VUWSA. With the resignation of former Clubs and Activities Officer Elizabeth Bing very early on in the year and my own personal issues, I've struggled at times to make this position as strong as it should be, on an even keel with the other Vice Presidents. That being said, I have been incredibly proud of what I and the rest of the Engagement Team have managed to achieve in the past 6 months and the projects we have in the works for the remainder of the year. I'm particularly proud of the work we've done in the areas of Events and Clubs, and the upcoming projects in Campaigns with the General Election in September.

This is still, easily, the best job I have ever had. I am really looking forward to an amazing and busy second half of the year that will no doubt be the most intense and awesome part of my time at University.