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NAME	Paddy Miller
POSITION	Equity Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 30 June, 2018
HOURS WORKED	235.5
HOURS REQUIRED	260

Constitutional Goal

My specified constitutional goals are number 3; “Goal 3: Equity and Access: To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the University” and number 6; “Goal 6: Public Issues: To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.

Equity and Diversity Committee

As Equity Officer, I chair these committees with my faithful Welfare VP, Bethany Paterson, at my side. I must admit, having never chaired anything before, the first one was bloody nerve-racking; we are now four committees deep, and these meetings now feel like a yarn with close friends.

It has been an absolute privilege and honour to work alongside the amazing Representative Group leaders at these meetings. They are so passionate about equity issues and work tirelessly to promote their important messages.

The meetings enable Representative Groups to help each other out. In particular, when there are events or particular initiatives discussed at meetings, all groups can band together by sharing events on their Facebook pages and attending etc.

March on Midland

The march has got to be one of the most epic moments of the year for me. On Thursday 15th March 2018 students banded together to demand future workplaces free of sexual violence. The march was in protest of the sexual harassment and violence students, interns and graduates are subject to within the legal fraternity and professional services.



The Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) teamed up with Victoria University of Wellington Law Students' Society (VUWLSS) and the VUW Feminist Law Society (VUWFLS) to create the 'Not Above the Law' campaign. It was incredible to be around such passionate students, uniting behind a cause we all believe in so deeply. The toxic culture and power imbalance of law firms put students and graduates at risk, particularly in the professional services.

The rally itself was moving to say the least. The march brought together over 300 students, dressed in black marching from Law School to Midland Park. Students chanted and held banners and signs as we walked down Lampton Quay. It was wonderful to see lecturers and staff marching alongside us in support.



The rally and beyond!

After the rally, we wanted to ensure that the momentum continued. We split off into various sub-groups (outreach, law firms, Government and the Law Society).

I led the Government sub-group alongside my fellow law students, Amelia Vincent, Olivia Hyland, Jessica Sutton and Odette Fordbrierley. With the help of our VUWSA president's high up contacts, we put together a policy submission to CABINET!! (caps intended).

We campaigned the Government to change their procurement policy so that in order for companies to bid on contracts, they must have in place a sufficient sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policy. Such a policy will publicly affirm a commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture where employees are respected and valued. In addition, we suggested that a black asterisk could be used by companies to act as a confidence mark signaling presence of an appropriate sexual harassment policy.

Minister for Economic Development, Hon David Parker, responded to our proposal positively. Mr. Parker said that our proposal is in line with the Government's re-introduction of the 'four well-beings' to local government. Furthermore, Mr. Parker asked the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to undertake a programme of work to strengthen the Government's procurement policy. He thanked us for taking the time to write the submission and commended the 'Not Above the Law' campaign.

Representative Group Training

At the beginning of the year, I ran a training day for the representative group leaders. This gave me a chance to meet everyone and get to know the main issues that the groups face. We went over all the boring stuff like how to apply for funding and what VUWSA must constitutionally offer the groups. Overall, I was so happy with how the day went and it definitely started the year off on a good note.

‘Lifting the veil’ article in Salient

My position at VUWSA has given me the courage to speak out about my six-year struggle with an eating disorder in a piece I wrote for the mental health issue of Salient. This was extremely scary to write about, but now that I am recovered I felt it was important for me to speak about my experience and perhaps even help others that might be going through similar issues. I am so proud of myself and thankful to have such an amazing group of friends at VUWSA who are so encouraging and supportive.

Sexual violence article in Salient

Along with 5 others, I wrote about my experience of sexual assault in Salient. It is important for the student body to know that it is not just the extreme ends of the scale of sexual assault that are wrong, it is also the seemingly minor instances that need to be called out. My experience occurred when I was working at a restaurant. Too often in hospitality, instances of sexual assault and violence occur and are unfortunately brushed aside. It was important for me to write about my experience so that others are aware that no matter how trivial an experience might seem, if it makes you feel violated, it is not okay.



I was so proud to share my story alongside Kai, Ella, Beth, Rhianna and Simran. These peeps are incredibly brave and I am so proud of them all.

Sexual Violence Prevention Group

Beth, Ella, Erica and I have been attending the monthly Sexual Violence Prevention Group. These have been very interesting meetings in which we have worked alongside University staff to ensure that the University can take the lead on sexual violence prevention policies. I look forward to future meetings we have and the progress we can make!

As Equity officer, it is important for me that the Representative Groups are specifically consulted and considered regarding this issue. Sexual violence impacts minority groups disproportionately and it is crucial that they have a seat at the table.

O-Week

What a week. I helped out at the following events for O-week:

- VUWSA Stall at Kelburn & Te Aro – cool to give away free stuff to the first years and tell them about all the stuff that VUWSA can do for them
- Safe Room – the Hunter Lounge hosted a number of awesome events; I helped out at the safe room for three of the events (a place where intoxicated or overwhelmed students could go during the event). Peking Duk was a highlight!
- Comedy night – Guy Williams is hilarious
- Newtown Festival – helped at the stall, didn't get burnt woo!

Although this week had a lot going on, it was amazing for me to work with my VUWSA crew and just learn first hand what VUWSA can do for students.

Stress Free Study Week

This year we decided to carry out a new initiative of hiding cute notes of encouragement written by the VUWSA Executive around Kelburn, Te Aro and Pip campuses. It was something so small but we got such lovely feedback! Some of the notes even had free coffee vouchers attached.



'Thursdays in Black' Opshop

The Thursdays in Black movement is about promoting a student environment in which sexual violence and assault are eliminated. To further this campaign initiative, we decided to run an all black opshop. We had so many people prepared to donate their old threads!

The day was an extreme success. We raised so much money for Gender Minorities NZ and more importantly, promoted the message of Thursdays in Black. I have to credit much of the work for the opshop to my amazing welfare team, Ella and Beth. These two were absolute soldiers and worked tirelessly to get the event up and running.



As the opshop was on the same day as one of the clubs days, loads of politicians were there. I ushered many of them over to our stall to tell them about what we were doing. Ill admit it, I was fan-girling to the max.



Re-retreat

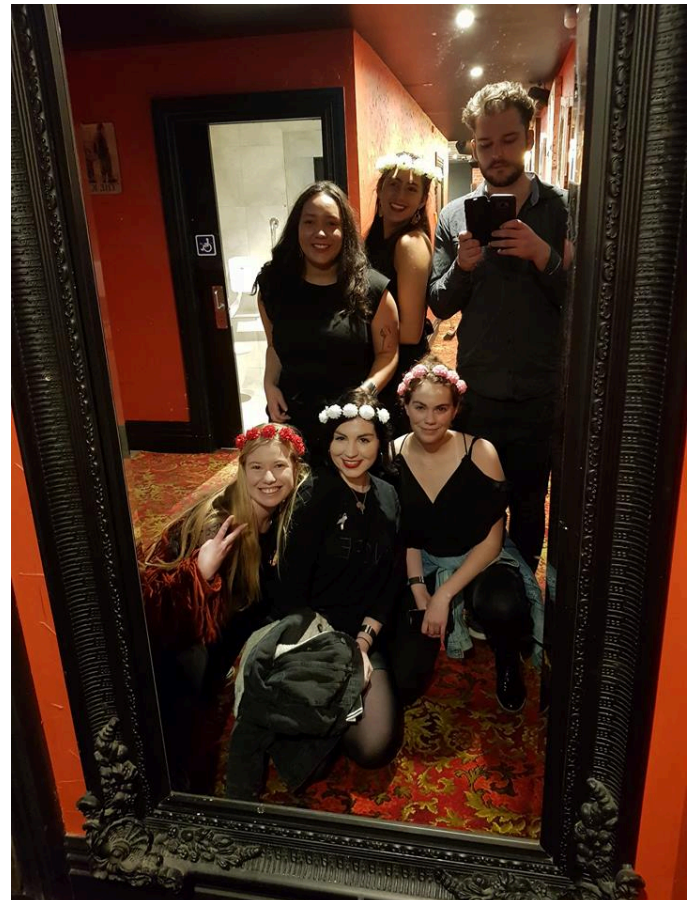
I unfortunately could not attend the first retreat as I was getting surgery was I was so excited for this one! All ten of us on the executive went to Waikanae for three days and two nights. This gave us a chance to re-group and reflect upon the last trimester, and look forward to the upcoming initiatives and events of trimester 2. I am looking forward to the stuff we have coming up next trimester so stay tuned!



Reclaim the night

During Re-set week of trimester 2, we held a reclaim the night pub-crawl. VUWSA hosted this night which brought together over 100 students all dressed in black to promote the Thursdays in Black campaign. The event sold out, raising over \$1000 for Sexual Violence Prevention Network!

The event was a fantastic way for students to meet new people, get to know wellington a bit better and most importantly, promote the message that we do not tolerate sexual assault and violence in the student community.



Rainbow Governance Meetings

The Rainbow Governance meetings are run by Connor McLeod, and attended by myself, Pam Thorburn, Annemarie de Castro and Karen Davis. The meetings stemmed from the LGBTQIA+ Research conducted in 2017 concerning the experiences of the Rainbow community at Victoria University. Focus groups concluded that Rainbow communities experience a disproportionate number of challenges in the tertiary environment such as verbal & physical harassment, disconnection, isolation and health issues. LGBTQIA+ students and staff that participated in the project described Victoria University as generally neutral but identified significant gaps in its inclusion of Rainbow communities. Positive experiences were as a result of voluntary action by students and staff (such as UniQ). However, these initiatives were described as inconsistent over time due to the lack of infrastructural support that Victoria provides for its Rainbow students and staff.

The meetings have concerned the running of Rainbow information seminars for staff of Victoria University. Connor MacLeod, who led the initiative has said that staff responded well to the information and were keen to implement the information in order to better support the Rainbow community.

Sexual violence breakfast

This breakfast, hosted by ANZ, was a chance for leaders in the business community and beyond to get together and share their thoughts on sexual harassment in the workplace. Beth, Ella and I heard from amazing speakers like Louise Nicholas (sexual assault survivor), Zoe Lawton (creator of the #metoo blog) and Jackie Blue (Commissioner for Equal Employment Opportunities).



Beth, me, Louise, Ella, Jackie and Zoe

The women in law Pink Breakfast

This event was hosted by Chapman Tripp and VUWLSS (Law Student's Association). It provided the opportunity to get together and discuss the state of women working in the legal profession. The quote of the day for me was:

“Don't concern yourself with whether or not you can do it, instead work out how you can do it”.

Overall, it was a fantastic morning and I left feeling very inspired.



Melissa & Helen from VUWFLS (Vic law students feminist society) & me!

Welfare team

Wholly moly I love these gals. Our catch-up sessions are always so great. Over eggs at milk and honey we discuss our upcoming projects, how we can assist each other and of course all our feelings. I have to pinch myself sometimes, because I genuinely don't know what I did to deserve these two angels in my life (soppy but its gotta be said <3).

BETH: Beth, our Welfare VP, has led our team with such conviction and passion. She speaks her mind, and her opinions are always so insightful. I learn from her everyday and I feel so lucky to get to work alongside her.

ELLA: Ella, our wellbeing and sustainability officer, is just a ray of sunshine. But do not let that unbelievable smile deceive you, this gal means business. She is incredibly determined and passionate about welfare issues. It is truly a privilege to work with her.

Summary

Trimester 1 has been such a jammed packed but enjoyable trimester. I have learnt so much about the equity issues facing students at Victoria University. I am determined to continue to work alongside our amazing Representative groups to ensure that Vic can be the most inclusive it can be.