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<b>NAME</b>	Tamatha Paul
<b>POSITION</b>	Equity Officer
<b>REPORT PERIOD</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January – 30 June, 2017
<b>HOURS WORKED</b>	232.5
<b>HOURS REQUIRED</b>	260

### Constitutional Goals:

- **Goal 3 – Equity and Access:** To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the university.
- **Goal 6 – Public Issues:** To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.
- **Goal 8 – Accountability:** To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

Above are three goals from the VUWSA Constitution that I have been working towards through my mahi as Equity Officer.

### Goal 3: Equity and Access

To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the university

- **Student Equity and Diversity Committee**
  - This year I re-established the Student Equity and Diversity Committee (also known as SEDC) which is a Constitutional Committee. The SEDC is made up of representatives from Ngāi Tauria, Pasifika Students Council, Victoria International Students' Association, UniQ at Victoria, Victoria University Feminist Organization and Can Do at Victoria, as well as representatives from VUWSA (Equity Officer, Welfare Vice President, Academic Vice President, President and the VUWSA Advocate). This committee was largely inactive through 2016 so I wanted to make sure that SEDC was used frequently this year as a platform for diverse communities within Victoria to come together

and form community, address equity issues and support one another – among other things!

- **Representative Group Training**

- Representative Groups at Victoria are absolutely key in ensuring that different communities of students who might otherwise not have as much voice are given that voice and representation. Through talking to members of 2017's Rep Group leaders, myself (and others) could clearly see a gap between VUWSA and rep groups which needed to be bridged. Anya (Welfare Vice President) and I organized a one-day training which was designed to communicate the relationship between VUWSA and the Representative Group structure. We wanted to ensure that this relationship was mutual in terms of understanding and support. We had Zamir (former president of V-ISA and current president of Vic Muslims Club) and Alex (current president of UniQ) share their experiences and knowledge of running a rep group. Anya and I went over Representative Group Constitutional requirements as well. This training pertains to **Goal 8** (Accountability) from the VUWSA Constitution as well because it ensures that our relationships with these groups are transparent, and that Rep Groups know what's going on and what they are entitled to.

- **Victoria University of Wellington Equity and Diversity Committee**

- Not to be confused with the **Student** Equity and Diversity Committee, this is a university committee chaired by Chris Eichbaum. I have been attending these meetings as both a VUWSA and student representative. The meetings are made up of representatives from different parts of the university, and the focus here is on how we can ensure that the university is catering to those who may face barriers in approaching and succeeding within tertiary education.

- **Māori & Pacific Island Interventions Governance Group**

- I was invited to join the Governance Group for this initiative which looks at the existing interventions in place which target Māori and Pasifika student academic retention. Through this group we are wanting to assess all the current interventions and see whether we should divert or change funding in order to strengthen successful initiatives and scrap others in favour of stronger or newer interventions. This is definitely one of the most personally important things I have contributed to in my role as equity officer because Māori academic success in tertiary spaces is something I have endless time to support!

- **Thursdays in Black Training**

- Thursdays in Black is a student-lead movement which works towards a world without rape and violence, especially within student communities! This year I accompanied Izzy O'Neill, national co-ordinator of Thursdays in Black, around the country to various tertiary institutions in order to provide a training about the kaupapa of Thursdays in Black (TIB), and to train student volunteers on how to run a TIB stall (e.g. equipping them with skills to deal with disclosures etc.). Izzy and I facilitated a training session at the VUWSA office which was

successful and allowed for student supporters of TIB to link up and learn together about TIB's effort against sexual violence in student communities. This training links back to **Goal 6** (Public Issues) as well.



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## Goal 6: Public Issues

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

- **Student Equity and Diversity Committee**

- Through this committee we've addressed issues important to not only us as tauira within Victoria, but also those issues which effect society and other tertiary students. An example of this is a working group that came out of SEDC that was made in order to address the surge in Pākehā nationalist, alt-right organizations springing up across New Zealand tertiary institutions.
- Through this group we are also able to have discussions that critique the decisions of the university as well as the existing structures. An example of this is that we are currently working towards allowing 'limited full-time' students be eligible for the annual Victoria University Dean's List. Limited full-time is a status ascribed to those who are unable to undertake full-time study due to personal circumstances but are in need of full-time support via student allowance or student living costs. Many students with disabilities, despite gaining a B+ overall grade average or higher (as is the requirement to be featured on the Dean's List), are not being put on this list because of their part-time status within the university. This is an example of equity-related issues within the university that we are working towards amending through being a part of the critic and conscience of this university.
- Furthermore, I take all the information that I'm allowed to share from my university meetings to this committee so that I can gather perspective and

comments from different representatives so that I am aware of the views of those who I am supposed to be representing.

- **Sexual Assault Prevention Network Meetings**

- Sexual Assault Prevention Network (SAPN) meetings are fortnightly and chaired by Pam Thorburn. In these meetings, key figures in identifying and preventing sexual violence around the university come together in order to discuss issues and solutions. Through this group, we (WVP Anya, Advocate Erica and myself) are able to hold the university's measures to combat sexual violence to account. We are currently in the process of creating events around the launch of Thursdays in Black's 2017 Report '*In Our Own Words*' in order to raise awareness around the information that will stem from the findings of this report.
- Through this group we also looked at relevant issues to students such as the attacks in and around Boyd Wilson Field. We also launched a poster campaign made up of students from around the university holding signs with their own words on it about sexual violence which links to Victoria's website page on Sexual Violence:



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## Goal 8: Accountability

To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members

- **VUWSA's Representative Group structure + Ngāi Tauira as Treaty Partner**

- Within the VUWSA Constitution there are fifteen recognized representative groups. Five of which are equity related in some way or form (Pasifika Students Council, UniQ at Victoria, Victoria International Students' Association, Victoria University Feminist Organization, and Can Do at Victoria), and Ngāi Tauira (the Māori Students' Association, who transcend the representative group structure and are recognized as our Treaty Partners as per Te Tiriti o Waitangi) all have places within the Student Equity and Diversity Committee. This is a

forum which VUWSA provides in order for all of these communities to have some form of representation and voice in not only VUWSA's actions, but also in order to critique the actions of the university. In the VUWSA Constitution we are expected to consult with these communities when our decisions could effect those cohorts and so SEDC acts as an accountability mechanism.

- Furthermore, because of the nature of some of these representative groups, all SEDC meetings are followed by extensive written minutes to ensure that everyone is fully informed of what is going on and so that those who may not be able to attend these meetings due to exceptional circumstances can still interact with the committee. It isn't good enough to just hold these meetings. An integral part of creating a strong relationship between VUWSA and representative groups where there is mutual trust is ensuring that we are accessible to all of our members.
  - **Rep Group Training + Rep Group Manual**
    - One important thing that I was aware of when beginning in this role was the lack of communication between VUWSA and representative groups. This includes lack of understanding between the two sides about what this relationship requires in order to be constitutional, as well as successful. In order to remedy this, Anya and I not only ran our rep group training, but we are also in the process of making a "Rep Group Manual" which is intended to be a resource that makes this relationship more transparent, as well as a resource to guide the smooth turnover of representative group executives (like the VUWSA Class Rep Manual) which was an issue this year for some representative groups in the face of external pressures.
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## Strategic Plan Goals:

- **Build Collective Strength with Student Groups**
  - **Grow Our Engagement with Students**
  - **A Strong Association**
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## Build Collective Strength with Student Groups

- My entire role is created and sustained around holistic support of representative groups in order for them to build collective strength within the Victoria community as well as in their own communities. Everything I have mentioned throughout this report so far are all initiatives designed to support the autonomy and growth of these representative groups.
- Aside from the more formal side of things, it has also been important for me to show up to, and support, events held by our student communities:



## Grow Our Engagement with Students

- Through supporting our existing representative groups, VUWSA is able to grow our engagement with a diverse range of students who may not otherwise interact with us. An example of this is our Communications Manager Hannah allowing for representative groups to utilize the VUWSA Facebook page in order to promote their club events and further their reach. This grows student involvement with the VUWSA structure in some way or another, and allows for more students to engage with VUWSA indirectly.
  - Our (VUWSA's) relationships with representative group leaders means that we are able to determine what appeals to *all* students and how we can engage these students, not just those that make up the majority.
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## A Strong Association

- Collective strengthening of our representative groups, as well as promotion of those groups' autonomy all contribute to the strength of VUWSA as an association representing *all* students.
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## Other Goals:

- **Goal 2 – Student Support:** To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.
    - The nature of my role as Equity Officer means identifying and attempting to remedy those equity-based barriers to education that many students at Victoria encounter through their time at tertiary. Advocating for adequate financial support, income and welfare are all actions that support the equitable outcome of all students, therefore supporting initiatives undertaken by fellow members of the VUWSA Executive is another way that I have been striving towards this goal.
    - Examples of advocating for Student Support this year is firstly being involved in the Fairer Fares campaign and talking to Māori Television about how Fairer Fares could benefit taurira Māori. Furthermore, I will be making an oral submission about the Tertiary Amendment Bill in order to advocate against the delegation of state funding to private tertiary institutions. Both of the aforementioned examples are in the best interests of students facing financial barriers, and I have approached these from an equity viewpoint.
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## General Tasks and Initiatives

- O-Week



- Newtown Festival
- Stress Free Study Week
- Māori Students Orientation Week



- **Salient columns**
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## Summary

This year has gone so fast and it seems like there is so little time to achieve the rest of my goals within VUWSA, however I'm determined to make the most of the rest of my tenure as Equity Officer! So far it has been such a privilege to get to meet and work with student leaders who are all interested in equitable outcomes for all students, as well as working on projects that empower our student body.

A strength that I believe I bring to the VUWSA Executive and have shown through this first half of the year is commitment and dedication to addressing equity-related issues within student communities. A weakness I need to work on for the rest of this year is committing to finishing long-term projects such as getting the Rep Group Manual finished. Additionally, it has definitely been tough for me getting used to having an extremely busy schedule but I've found more towards the end of this half of the year that I am becoming well-adjusted to having a busy schedule. It comes down to time management and prioritization, to which I would put VUWSA at the top of my priorities list!

I hope that the rest of the year is fruitful and that I can get heaps of productive mahi done before the end of the year which will benefit existing students and empower the next equity officer as well as VUWSA as a whole.

Tihei mauri ora!