



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

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NAME	Chrissy Brown
POSITION	Equity Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 30 June, 2015
HOURS WORKED	398.75
HOURS REQUIRED	254.25

Priority Goals:

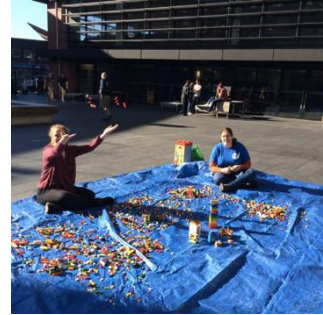
Goal 3: Equity and Access: To promote equity for disadvantaged students in access to and within the University.

a) Representative Groups

Representative groups differ from regular clubs within the university because they represent a certain minority group/disadvantaged group within the study body. There are four representative groups at Victoria that VUWSA supports. These groups are Can Do who advocate for students living with a disability (visible or not). The VUWSA Women's Group who advocate for all self-identified women and non-binary students on campus. Uni Q who advocate for LGBTQIA+ students. And V-ISA (VUWSA International Students Association) who advocate for all international students on campus. All these representative groups have their own executives who carry out activities and actions for their communities throughout the year. I have had the privilege to support these groups this year; be involved with events and other areas. It has also been great to see how these groups are collaborating and supporting each other with certain equity issues and events too.

Can Do

I have had the pleasure to get to know Beth Noble this year who is the president of Can Do. So far this year I was able to attend the Can Do AGM where executive members were elected. It was a lovely meeting with snacks and lollies, and plan a few more activities for the year. During VUWSA's Stress-Free Study Week I was also able to assist Can Do with a Lego session outside The Hub. It was such a great activity to have on offer for Stress-Free Study Week and something a range of students could get involved in. Working with Can Do this year has



been great so far and I am looking forward to collaborating with them during Mental Health Awareness coming up in Trimester 2.

Women's Group

During March this year I chaired the Women's Group AGM where we elected the new executive this year. Lily and Naomi are the co-presidents for the Women's Group this year and are both doing a good job. This year there is a bigger executive than last year. This shows the growing nature of the Women's Group and how it is becoming more public to the wider community. This year I met with Lily and Naomi and also attended executive meetings. The Women's Group have been organising regular social nights at The Hunter Lounge. This has been a great opportunity for people to feel a part of a community and discuss issues that affect them as women and non-binary students.



The Women's Group also organised a screening of the documentary 'The Hunting Ground' which explores the epidemic issue of sexual violence on campuses. It fostered a great discussion afterwards and we also got the chance to talk about the Thursdays in Black campaign. In Trimester 2 the Women's Group are hosting Women's Week comprised of different events on and off campus. I am excited to support them with Women's Week by volunteering and going along to events.

V-ISA (VUWSA International Student's Association)

Last year I assisted with Interviewing the new executive with Zamir (2015 president). The interviews went well and it was a pleasure to assist with V-ISA even before I was officially Equity Officer! This provided a great opportunity to get to know V-ISA a bit better and hear about issues international students face. This year I met with Deon, president of this year, to see how they are going. V-ISA have been going great and have organised a range of different events for students to engage in throughout the trimester including a Movie Night, Amazing Race, amongst supporting other cultural groups activities. Another initiative that V-ISA have put in place this year with the help of VUWSA is 'V-ISA Hour' where international students can come to a booked room at VUWSA once a week to meet with the executive – this could range from dealing with issues with study or just to hang out. V-ISA have also made progress with working on a submission against the University outsourcing education. I am looking forward to working with V-ISA over Trimester 2 and volunteering during International Week!

Uni Q

Uni Q had their AGM to elect the new executive in 2015 so they were all ready to go this year. I met with Alex who is the president this year (and is great). I am very impressed with her leadership, and how Uni Q have shaped itself to be more inclusive and understanding of different queer students. This year Uni Q have changed the way they conduct their Queer Lunch Spaces by having them in a weekly booked room in the Student Union Building compared to The Hub. Alex and Dany have noted this location is better, as The Hub was a very public space. The turn outs in the new space is better, as students feel safer. I have attended a lunch, and they foster a safe environment where queer students can come and eat, listen to music, study, play board games and meet other people.

Another initiative that Uni Q have been working on this year has been a poster campaign on 'Trans Etiquette' where they educate the larger student body on how to be respectful to trans students (as they should be!). I am excited for next trimester as Uni Q are hosting 'Pride Week' with a range of different events on and off campus for students to get involved in and embrace their queerness. This year, in particular, Uni Q have been highlighting to VUWSA and the University the need for a permanent Queer Space. I have been supporting Uni Q with this and other issues addressing the lack of support for to queer students.

b) Student Equity and Diversity Committee

The Student Equity and Diversity Committee was set up by VUWSA to ensure that leaders from all equity groups across campus can share a voice together on certain issues as well encourage collaboration between communities. The group comprised of leaders from Pacific Students Council, Ngai Taurira, Women's Group, Uni Q, Can Do, V-ISA, University Council Student Representative and other VUWSA executive members. So far this year, Rory and I have set up our first meeting, which went really well. It was a chance for everyone to get to know one another and find out a bit more about what the Committee was about. During the meeting we heard from each member about what their groups were up to for the year.

c) VUW Equity and Diversity Committee

The Equity and Diversity Committee was set up by the University Senior Leadership team and chaired by Allison Kirkman. At this Committee I sit on behalf of VUWSA and advocate for the four representative groups. At this meeting I also report on how the Student Equity and Diversity Committee is going and share concerns from representative groups. At these meetings I ensure representative groups are recognised and report on equity issues that VUWSA may be dealing with so the University are aware and can consider in strategic planning and future prospects.

d) Representative Group Consultation

This year VUWSA has been focusing on the strategic plan, which will look at the next five years of what VUWSA wants to achieve. During the first half of the year t VUWSA include met with representative group voices to consider our strategic plan. We met with Uni Q, Can Do and V-ISA about the strategic plan and all those meetings were highly useful for VUWSA to learn how to better support those groups and how we can incorporate this for future years.

e) Tertiary Women NZ Conference

I had the privilege of being flown up to Auckland for the Tertiary Women NZ's conference which was held at AUSA at the University of Auckland. At this conference we had a range of women from different student associations from around the country. There were two presentations and some group workshops run by Izzy O'Neill, the Women's Rights Officer of Tertiary Women NZ, and Ella Cartwright, Gender Equity Officer of Tertiary Women NZ. Izzy presented on Thursdays in Black and how trauma can be carried and the great need for reform of sexual violence issues within tertiary spaces. Ella presented on Gender Minorities to education us on trans, non-binary and gender fluid identities (just to name a few). Being able to attend this



conference up in Auckland was such a pleasure, broadened my knowledge of sexual violence within a university context and gave me insight on how to support people from a gender minority. By attending this conference, I was able to apply the knowledge directly to my role as Equity Officer and connect with other women from different student associations.

f) Student Mothers Network

This year I was approached by a student mother who wanted to hold Student Mother Support Network meetings at Victoria Campus. I liaised with them about having the Women's Room as an appropriate place for the meetings, and also liaised with The Bubble about using that space for potential babysitters and children to use while the support meetings were taking place. Being a caregiver and a student at the same time is not an easy thing so I was more than happy to help support these meetings to be carried out. The meetings ran every week for six weeks. These meetings supported the mothers to experience an equitable experience while studying and it was good to see the Women's Room used for the support meetings.

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) Thursdays in Black

Following from the Tertiary Women NZ Conference in Auckland at the beginning of the year, I was motivated to launch the Thursdays in Black campaign at Victoria University. Thursdays in Black is a student-led movement towards a world without rape and violence. In particular, Thursdays in Black focuses on sexual violence within tertiary communities and recognises students are most at risk because of supporting statistics indicating that women between the ages of 18-24 years of age are most likely to experience sexual violence. Izzy O'Neill and Ella Cartwright from Tertiary Women NZ are the national co-ordinations of the campaign. I had the pleasure of meeting with Ella and Izzy throughout the year and was impressed by the work they are accomplishing with this campaign.

Before Clubs Week, I helped organise Thursdays in Black training on campus for any keen volunteers or students wanting to learn more. During the training we learned information about TIB, in particular the concept of privilege and how sexual violence affects different people. It was important to receive that training before Clubs Week so everyone had a strong idea of what the campaign meant and what it stood for - especially for minority groups. Leading from Clubs Week, Rory and I official launched the campaign after the VUWSA IGM. At the launch we had speakers, Ella, Izzy, Tamantha, Rory and I, give two minute speeches on different topics within the campaign. It was a hyped up launch with a lot of students wearing black at the event too (even though it was on a Wednesday).



So far with Thursdays in Black this year I have organised a Facebook group for people to join in order to stay on track with how the campaign is going at Vic. I have set up meetings with members of the Victoria University community wanting to get involved and held a meeting down at Pipitea. I have distributed t-shirts, badges and posters to different halls and other members of the community. It has been really awesome seeing to see the campaign blossoming this half of the year and good to see people engaging with the campaign on social media as well as offline. I am an avid supporter of Thursdays in Black (taking selfies each week) and volunteer where I can. In August I will attend a Thursdays in Black Hui. I

am excited to take part in this event, and bring my experiences from the Hui back to VUWSA and the University.

b) Wellington Rape Crisis

Every year Wellington Rape Crisis holds an annual appeal to fundraise money for their organisation. WRC are deeply underfunded and rely on donations to continue their very important work at supporting survivors of sexual



violence. This year I supported the Women's Group with the Appeal at Victoria University in The Hub. They had a bake sale and raised over money towards Rape Crisis. I think it is awesome for students to volunteer their time and support such a valuable organisation like Wellington Rape Crisis.

c) Women's Refuge

At the beginning of the year I collected updated flyers from Women's Refuge for the Women's Room. I am also in the process of helping the Women's Group organise a collection day for Women's Refuge at the end of July.

d) Sexual Assault Working Group

This year I have been a member of the Sexual Assault Working Group on behalf of VUWSA with Welfare Vice President Rory. This working group comprises of people from the University ranging from the Senior Leadership team to Staff at Student Health and Counselling services. It is a chance for us all to discuss what initiatives the University are taking to prevent sexual violence on campus. So far this year the group have created a poster campaign, released a statement on sexual violence on the Victoria University website and hosted self-defense training by Wāhine Toa. Being on the Committee is important as I can push for increased support of the Thursdays in Black campaign and learn more about what the group are planning.

e) Stand Up for Women Protest



A part of being Equity Officer at VUWSA is having a commitment to public issues within the community such as safety for students. When organised Return of Kings meet ups were announced at Glover Park in Wellington, I was able to play an active part ensuring people would not be affected. I rang the police to provide information about the meet-ups and took part in helping to organise the protest. Being at the protest was an incredible experience and important part of my role. I think its important part of Equity Officer being engaged with protests within the wider community of Wellington. The protest wanted to push members of the community to stand up for sexual violence as the Return of Kings group have very misogynistic views. But, also acknowledge sexual violence is an everyday experience that we do not want to tolerate in our city and communities.

f) Pro-Choice Protest

VUWSA supports the motion for safe, free and legal abortion. I personally believe in being pro-choice as it gives individuals the choice to do whatever they want with their bodies and futures. Outside the hospital for Lent, anti-abortionists were protesting against abortion. I believe actions like this are harmful for people who may be going to the hospital for abortions as it shames them for their choice. In New Zealand, abortion is still under the Crimes Act and people who want to carry out an abortion can only do so under the grounds of mental health, physical health to the fetus or individual (to name a few). I went along to one of the protests at the hospital to show my support for being pro-choice.

g) Virgil for Orlando Shooting Victims

In June, I attended a Virgil for the 25 LBGTQIA+ victims affected in the Orlando Shooting. At the Virgil there were MPs present and a range of different members of the LBGTQIA+ community. It was a very special event to go along too and very moving to hear about peoples' stories. What particularly shocked me was hearing the ages of the victims' being read out as most were under the age of 25. Going along was an important thing for myself to do as it was a tragedy for all those lives lost and important to support the community.



h) NZUSA AGM + Conference

Along with attending the Tertiary Women NZ Conference up in Auckland, I was also able to attend the NZUSA AGM conference with Jono, Rory and Anya. Linsey Higgins was elected as president of NZUSA, and as members of NZUSA, we were given the opportunity to ask her questions about her vision for NZUSA in 2016. The rest of the weekend comprised of different workshops, including union discussions, student media and hearing from MPs. The conference was a chance for all the student associations to share and discussion issues regarding students together.

Other Goals:

Goal 9: Sustainability: To recognise the needs of current and future generations by promoting sustainable lifestyles and actions to members while ensuring the sustainable operation of the Association and University members.

a) Student Leaders Space

This year I have been working with Jono around encouraging the idea of the Student Leaders Space. Upstairs at VUWSA we have an area with five computers that student leaders from Representative Groups, Faculty Groups etc. can use for conducting work within their groups. The space demonstrates VUWSA wants to support these groups and is a tangible initiative as the library can be busy. I am glad that VUWSA has this service open to student leaders and next trimester we are going to hosting an official launch at the space. We plan to make the space more inviting by displaying Salient Magazines and adding posters.

b) Women's Room

The Women's Room is an important space on campus for women, trans and non-binary students to use. For the sustainability of this room, Lily from the Women's Group implemented a poster with guidelines for the room. In the future I will be working with the Women's Group about whether to change the Constitution and regulations for the Women's Room to make it better for users of the space and increasing visibility.

c) Working on achieving a permanent Queer Space

Uni Q have really expressed to us at VUWSA and myself personally of the need for a permanent queer space on campus. I have met with Alex and Jono about this project and been pushing for LGBTQIA+ issues to be pushed during VUW Equity and Diversity Committee meetings. In June I organised a meeting with members from VUWSA and other students from the LGBTQIA+ community, Uni Q and Women's Group to talk about what support Queer students need on campus. Following from this meeting, Alex and Jono had a meeting with Pam Thorton and have put queer issues on the agenda.

d) Safe Spaces at VUWSA events

Something I have been working on is ensuring VUWSA can conduct safer events for students free from harassment. I am looking forward to working closer with the events team for the Re-O Week coming up in Trimester two. This is to ensure that events at VUWSA can continue to be safe to survivors/victims of sexual violence and the wider community. It's important that our events can provide proper support for students.

e) Policy Committee

This year I have been participating on VUWSA's policy committee. In this committee I have played an active role by checking policies and making sure the future of VUWSA has adequate policies which will make things better for the future of the organisation.

Goal 5: Activities: To support sporting, social, and cultural activities for and by members and students, particularly through Clubs.

a) O-Week

During O-Week I helped with the VUWSA Stall, Toga Party, David Dallas, and Newtown festival. It was a great start to the year and an opportunity to engage with students.



b) Clubs week

For Clubs Week at the start of the year I organised the Women's Group and Thursdays in Black stall in the Hub. We had a range of support from volunteers during the week and I think both stalls ran smoothly and had a good number of sign-ups.



c) Attending Rep Group events

As mentioned above I have been regularly attending representative group events as often as I can. Coming up in Trimester Two we have Pride Week, Women's Week and International Week so I am looking forward to partake and support these activities as well as other groups/clubs throughout the year.

d) Feminist Law Society

During Clubs Week I helped support the Feminist Law Society with a stall issue at Pipitea Campus. The issue got sorted and I have had open engagement with the President this year about the Thursdays in Black campaign.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Sexual Abuse Prevention Network Training

At the beginning of the year VUWSA executive and staff completed Sexual Abuse Prevention training. This training was helpful at events and supporting survivors of sexual violence.

2. Suicide Prevention Training

I also attended Suicide Prevention training at the start of the year. This training was incredible useful for events and general support of students.

3. Psychological First Aid Training

This training was especially useful for O-Week events as it equipped us to deal with students who might be under a lot of mental stress. It also has been good for general support of students and staff.

4. Salient

This year I have been contributing to Salient. For the O-Week issue I wrote a piece on Consent and how to ask / recognise consent. It received a lot of positive feedback and I am looking forward to contributing more to salient on the topic of sexual violence.

5. Lokal Stories

At the start of the year I was approached by a curator who runs Lokal Stories. They are organising an event later in the year which addresses cyber-bullying. I have contributed by assisting on how the event can cater to students and other networks.

6. O-Week

Been volunteering and supporting with O-Week events.

7. Clubs Week

I have been supporting Representative groups and Thursdays in Black stalls this year.

8. Stress Free Study Week

In Trimester One I have been volunteering for SFSW. It went very smoothly and it was great being able to see so many students appreciating the service.

9. Flu Shots

This year I have been helping with the Flu Shots on campus. I even got a flu shot myself and have yet to catch a flu or a cold (fingers crossed).

10. Rape Crisis Collection

The Women's Group organised a collection for WRC on campus and I was there to assist and support them. We raised over \$800.

11. Chaired Women's Group IGM

I organised and chaired the Women's Group IGM at the start of the year. It was awesome seeing such an awesome and dynamic new executive of women leading the New Year.

12. Thursdays in Black Launch at VUWSA IGM

After the VUWSA IGM Rory and I organised for an official launch of the Thursdays in Black campaign. We had a range of speakers speak for 2-minutes each and had an incredible turn out from our members wearing black.

13. Carte Blanch Training

For our strategic planning initiative this year we received a workshop through Carte Blanch. It was incredible useful and changed the way we approached the planning.

14. Thursdays in Black Training

Before Clubs Week, I helped organise a training for students at Vic to receive training through Thursdays in Black. The training went really well and it was awesome to engage students with the campaign.

15. Meet with UoA Feminists of Colour at University of Auckland

When I was up in Auckland for the Tertiary Women's Conference I and Izzy met with UoA Feminists of Colour. It was awesome to meet them and hear about potential issues that Thursdays in Black could support them with for the year.

Representation

1. Executive meetings

I have attended the VUWSA executive meetings as much as I can this year and have been actively contributing to them too.

2. Policy Committee

I have attended policy committee meetings this year.

3. Strategic Plan Workshops

I have attended all strategic plan workshops this year and have been actively participating and sharing my view at all.

4. Executive Report Committee

I have attended pretty much all ERC meetings this year to ensure VUWSA is accountable for our hours' work.

5. Sexual Assault Working Group

I sit on this meeting with Rory and Kate from VUWSA. I have been contributing to the discussions and making sure the Thursdays in Black campaign has a focus and ensuring students from equity backgrounds are voiced too.

6. VUW Equity and Diversity Committee

I have attended the meetings of this committee where possible and have been actively contributing in order to ensure that students' interests are represented. I have also been actively pushing to make sure LGBTQIA+ interests are heard too.

7. Student Equity and Diversity Committee

I have helped set up this committee with Rory this year and that we can continue to build on the relationships of this group and develop the committee further.

8. Welfare Team Meetings

I have attended Welfare Team Meetings with Rory and Anya to hear about what projects they are working on and to support them where needed / vice versa.

9. Thursdays in Black Meetings

With the launch of the Thursdays in Black campaign at Vic this year I have organised a few meetings at VUWSA this year so far with students + university staff.

Strengths

1. Communication

Whether it is in person or on social media, I believe that communication is something that I can do well. This year I have been actively in contact with representative groups, VUWSA exec, staff and other members of the student community. I love talking to people and keeping in touch to ensure that people feel supported and understand how I can help.

2. Relationship maintaining / building

The nature of the Equity Office role is that I will meet with a range of different people throughout the year from representative groups to other members of the student community. As part of this I have had to maintain relationships with people and build on these relationships to ensure they feel comfortable and supported. This is a fun aspect of my role because I like meeting new people.

3. Informed on equity issues

I have identified as a feminist for many years now especially coming from a background being on the Women's Group in 2014 + 2015. I am also passionate about other issues that affect equity/ minority groups such as queer students, Maori students, students with disabilities, and other groups that are affected by violence such as survivors of sexual violence and mental health. I actively read articles online about these issues and like to stay engaged with issues not only at university but on a wider political and international level. I feel my passion for equity issues is a strength of mine as well as my previous experience being on the Women's Group.

4. Relatable / Empathic

I am a student just like any other member of VUWSA or student at Vic. I feel that one important way I can support students through my role is being relatable and empathic towards their

experiences and concerns. Especially towards students dealing with mental health problems. I think it's important I can be being genuine about how I care towards these issues for example.

5. Public Speaking

I have not done a ton of public speaking this year but it is a skill that I believe I have improved on this year through the Thursdays in Black launch as well as chairing various meetings throughout the year.

Weaknesses

1. Stress / mental health

I have been diagnosed with depression this year and while this may seem like a taboo subject to talk about I don't think it should be! During very low times I have been not competent with certain things at VUWSA, personal stuff and university work and it has been hard. However, the positive of this is that I am able to support those going through similar things and I am incredible supported by my fellow VUWSA executive and staff.

2. Time management

Trying to balance study with VUWSA and other commits is something that I find very difficult and I admire people who can handle a lot more than me. I find that one aspect tends to not be as strong whether it is completing my study work or getting a work report completed in time. I am going to try to not be like this but it might be something I am stuck with for my whole life.

3. I do not represent all Equity Groups (important to note within Equity Officer role)

While it is not my own fault I am a cis, white, straight woman, I think it's important to note that I am a very privileged person compared to the minority/disadvantaged groups that I advocate for on behalf of VUWSA. One weakness because of my privilege may be that I do not understand or see issues on a deeper level because of this but I am an active listener and always privileged to listen to others more deeply affected to learn about new perspectives.

Overall Rating

Even though I have had my ups and downs this year so far I am incredible fortunate to be on the VUWSA executive this year. I have been learning so much that you do not get to learn from a degree alone and this experience is something that I will keep for life. I get to meet with so many different students and engage with many different communities and that is the part of

my role that I love the most and received the most pleasure out of. I also have been so lucky to have such a fantastic and supportive VUWSA team who I get to work with every day. Some of the things that I have learnt this year have been governance, advocacy, student issues, event coordination, strategic planning and how to support people. Every day I have been at VUWSA has been a blessing and I am super happy to be here. While I always feel like I have not done enough, I think that what I have achieved on my own or collectively or supported someone to do has been really positive and strives me forward. I am looking forward to trimester 2 with a bunch of new projects to work on and supporting representative groups with their dedicated weeks. I am also excited to do more work with Thursdays in Black and carry out an awesome mental health awareness week too. I hope reading my work report has been good and if you are a student who has been thinking about running for VUWSA, I encourage you to do so!

