



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Jordan Lipski
POSITION	Treasurer-Secretary
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2013
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	26
HOURS WORKED	309

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 4

Services: To provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit of members, and, where appropriate, students

- (a) Many of VUWSA's services are free to use. However, most of VUWSA's funding comes from the Student Services Levy, which is ultimately current students' money, and donations from the VUWSA Trust, which is previous students' money. Thus making the most of that funding by ensuring that services are cost-effective is very important.
- (b) My role is unique on the VUWSA Executive, in that I do not have a portfolio area. As such, I have little day-to-day involvement in most of VUWSA's services. However, as an Executive Member I contribute to decisions regarding VUWSA's services and strategic direction, and as a member of the Audit and Finance Committee I work to scrutinise VUWSA expenditure. I also sit on the Publications Committee, which supports and oversees student media, particularly Salient. I believe I have helped to ensure VUWSA provides cost-effective services for members and other students.
- (c) Like other Executive Members, I have put many hours into major events that VUWSA runs, particularly Orientation and Stress Free Study Week. By in effect volunteering (as I already meet the maximum hours I can be paid for, I do not receive any further remuneration for extra work) to work on these events, I help maximise that bang for buck that VUWSA provides in running them.

2. Goal 7

Finance: To maximise the member benefits by minimising fees or user charges through internal efficiency and non-member revenue

- (a) VUWSA's membership fees this year are once again \$0. But, as above, most funding ultimately comes from students so this goal is very important.
- (b) As an Executive member, I contribute to strategic and operational decisions made by the Executive. VUWSA has passed a budget much earlier this year than in recent years, and has minimised its expected deficit at around \$42,000, while still providing excellent services and expanding some operations in line with strategic goals.
- (c) As a member of the Audit and Finance Committee, I have been involved in scrutinising VUWS spending, and no doubt will do much more when the Committee picks up its more strategic work later in the year.
- (d) I am an ex officio member of the VUWSA Trust, and therefore act as a link between the Trust and the VUWSA Executive. The Trust is extremely important to VUWSA, both for its financial support (in recent years it has given donations in excess of \$100,000) and its strategic support.
- (e) I am chair of the Executive Reporting Committee, which meets fortnightly to scrutinise Executive Members' work reports and authorise their pay. This helps to ensure that Executive Members are working productively and providing good value to the Association and its members. The Committee's work also means that Executive Members no longer need to present their work reports in Executive Meetings, thus increasing the efficiency of Executive Meetings and taking up fewer Executive Members' hours.
- (f) The Publications Committee provides support to Salient, and oversees student media finances. The Committee has been much more active this year than in previous years, and in particular had a number of highly productive meetings early in the year. I act as secretary to the Committee, so directly contribute to its smooth running and its effectiveness in supporting and overseeing student media. After a hiatus, the Committee will be picking up work again shortly.
- (g) I have taken time on a number of Wednesdays to operate VUWSA's Pipitea campus office. Using my time to do this, while being able to do my regular work when there are no students at the office, is considerably more cost-effective than hiring a staff member to run the office.
- (h) In summary, I think I have helped to ensure that VUWSA's benefits to members are maximised.

3. Goal 8

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

- (a) One of my campaign priorities was to ensure that key documents that improve transparency and accountability are made available on VUWSA's website. I have followed through on that goal, and am

pleased that Executive Members' work reports and Executive Meeting minutes are now on the Association's website, where members and others can view and scrutinise them. This is one important means of ensuring accountability to members.

- (b) As chair of the Executive Reporting Committee (ERC), as already discussed, I scrutinise Executive Members' work reports and ensure that they are accurately reporting on the work they are doing. I am also secretary of the Committee, so have a particularly important role in ensuring the quality and accuracy of work reports. I follow up with Executive Members when their work reports are not up to standard. I am pleased that work reports this year have generally been very good, providing solid accountability.
- (c) I have already mentioned that I sit on the Publications Committee. Besides the financial role the Committee fills, it also provides general support and acts as a link between the VUWSA Executive and student media. In the pipeline is a student media review, which will look at Saliens' strategic direction, as an important service to students. I am glad to be a part of this committee, and believe its work does help ensure that student media is relevant to students and is a valuable use of money.
- (d) More generally, as secretary of the Association, it is my job to take accurate and substantively valuable minutes of Executive Meetings. I put considerable time and effort into producing good minutes, which ensures members and others can accurately see what VUWSA is doing. The success of my efforts is evidenced by the very few corrections that have generally been made to minutes, and by the positive feedback I have had from other Executive Members regarding the minutes.

General Tasks and Initiatives

I have already touched on much of my work, as I think most of what I do has some degree of connection with priority goals. As such, the following will only be a very general summary.

1. Operating VUWSA's office at the Pipitea campus (OGB building)

I opened the office, so was able to provide information about VUWSA's services to students. I generally helped bring VUWSA's presence to Pipitea, which is an important satellite campus with many students.

2. Orientation

I helped extensively with Orientation at the beginning of the year, mainly facilitating sign-ups and handing out wall-planners and o-bags to members. I also helped with the BBQ, as well as general setup and packdown. Orientation was very good this year, and I am glad to have been a part of it. In January I helped with the Karori campus orientation (pictured over page).



3. Stress Free Study Week

I helped on each day of Stress Free Study Week, for a total of nearly 20 hours. Mainly this work involved giving breakfast and lunch to students, as well as setup and packdown.

4. Initial General Meeting

This was an important part of my role. I prepared the agenda, provided input on the annual report to be presented, took minutes of the meeting, and helped with setup and packup. In total I spent upwards of 12 hours on this.

5. General Tasks

My role involves a lot of regular tasks, which are crucial to VUWSA's smooth running but do not necessarily appear exciting on work reports. I spend a lot of time writing and perfecting Executive Meeting minutes and agendas, keeping track of executive reporting matters (such as Executive Members' hours), preparing work reports for uploading to the Associations' website, writing ERC reports for the Executive, and involvement with student media matters (including writing Publications Committee minutes).

Representation

1. Executive Reporting Committee

As chair and de facto secretary of the Committee, I take overall responsibility for its running. The Committee usually comprises 3-5 Executive Members and, as discussed above, its role is to scrutinise work reports and authorise payment to Executive Members. I also provide a regular written report to the Executive, and present the report in the following Executive Meeting.

2. Publications Committee

As chair (though I typically delegate that role to the President) and de facto secretary of this committee, I help bridge the gap between Salient and the VUWSA Executive, and help to support and oversee Salient and other student media. From time to time I also provide reports to the Executive, and recommendations of the Committee.

3. Audit and Finance Committee

As chair and de facto secretary of this committee, I scrutinise VUWSA finances and related issues.

4. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee has not yet met formally this year, but I have met with several members informally, and we made recommendations, subsequently approved by the Executive, on much-needed improvements to one of VUWSA's internal policies. As the Committee becomes more active in the second half of the year, I expect that many more improvements to other policies will be made.

5. VUWSA Trust

As an ex officio member of the VUWSA Trust, I provide a bridge between the Trust and the Executive, and also ensure that the Trust operates well and can operate in the interest of students over the long term.

Strengths

1. Organisational and administrative skills. I have a genuine interest in how to keep things running smoothly, and put a lot of effort into this aspect of my work. As my immediate predecessor put it, this role is very inwardly-focussed, and requires a lot of backroom work that at times seems tedious.
2. Minute and memorandum writing skills. I consistently produce high-quality minutes of Executive Meetings and, when it has met, Publications Committee meetings. I have also written many reports and memoranda. This is important, because other Executive Members rely on minutes and memoranda, and Executive Meeting minutes are also a key means of accountability to students. I put real effort into ensuring high quality minutes and memoranda, and have received positive feedback from other Executive Members.
3. Diligence. I routinely work extra hours over and above those required of the Treasurer-Secretary. So far this year I have amassed a surplus of roughly 50 hours (or 20%), despite being fairly conservative in reporting the hours that I work. My role requires a lot of work that cannot be postponed, nor performed poorly. I do my best to ensure that my responsibilities are fulfilled to a high standard, and have often made sacrifices in order to do so. Other Executive Members rely on me to do my job, so I do what it takes to do it well.

Weaknesses

1. Managing workload. Unlike some Executive Members, I am studying fulltime (and an honours law degree at that) and have other extra-curricular commitments on top. Despite working the long hours described above, I have still not always been able to help out with VUWSA matters outside my immediate role to the extent I would otherwise. Finding the right balance has been a challenge, and normally if I put in extra hours at VUWSA one week then I will need to reduce hours sometime later, in order to stay on top of everything that I do. I have also experienced worse fatigue this year than I have in the past.
2. Political experience. I have never been actively involved with any political party or organisation. While my role is less political than some others on the Executive, I have nonetheless been in situations where more political acumen would have enabled me to contribute more.
3. Broader strategic thinking. I had not previously been involved with VUWSA or student politics more generally, so have not always been able to provide high quality input when VUWSA is making important decisions.

Overall Rating

In general, I have performed my day to day work to the highest standard that I am reasonably able to, given the many demands of the role and my other commitments. I have worked extra hours when I can, but have not been able to do as much as I otherwise would have. I have found the role highly rewarding, and in a good way challenging. I am glad I ran for the position, and would strongly encourage other students to get involved.