



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Jordan McCluskey
POSITION	Treasurer-Secretary
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2013
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	26
HOURS WORKED	250

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. **Goal 4 - Services: To provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit**

The services provided by VUWSA in the past have largely operationalised, which means they are delivered by VUWSA's staff. This is in many ways a good thing, as the services will be delivered consistently by a staff member, assisted by the appropriate VUWSA executive member. Experience will be retained over the years and not leave when executives leave VUWSA every year. This will result in greater efficiencies and hopefully cost savings. Currently the Academic portfolio is operationalised with the Education Organiser, and the Engagement portfolio can rely on the Communications co-ordinator. The Welfare portfolio will now gain similar assistance with the creation of the Welfare Organiser position, which I support. In the short term operationalising costs money, but will create gains in efficiency and long term costs. It will also retain experience in providing services.

I am still deeply concerned about VUWSA's long term strategic direction. VUWSA is dependent on the income provided by university contracts, with the rest provided by donations by the VUWSA trust, which manages the wealth of previous students for the long term. We bear heavy costs and still make large contributions to Student Job Search and NZUSA. Our income from the pre voluntary student membership environment has more than halved, yet we still make full contributions to these bodies. The money could be better spent by VUWSA itself. In my opinion, these contributions are not cost effective, but my view is in the minority.

2. Goal 7: Finance: To maximise the member benefits by minimising fees or user charges through internal efficiency and non-member revenue.

Charging a zero membership fee continues to be problematic, and as previously mentioned makes VUWSA dependent on University Contracts, limiting independence. We provide all of our services and subsidies to students at cost to VUWSA.

The VUWSA membership card was launched with O-Week this year and was a success, with more than 3000 cards taken up. A promise of my predecessor William Guzzo, and a campaign promise of mine, it has now been implemented, expanding the VUWSA brand. The card was not monetised, meaning it generates no income for VUWSA. We do not charge retailers to be holders of VUWSA card discounts (as they are the ones providing them) and we do not charge students for the cards. Effectively the cards provide a benefit to students, but bring in no extra revenue for VUWSA. This may have to change in the future, with a small charge for the card as it grows in value. Comparable cards, like the Radio One card in Dunedin, do charge the student.

In terms of internal efficiency, the 2013 executive consists of ten members. The 2012 executive had 13. Many officer roles were merged to create new combined roles. I believe this has created a tighter, more effective executive. The negative side of this is if an executive member fails to complete a task, there are less people to pick up the work if someone falls behind.

3. Goal 8: Accountability: To ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

Following the Governance Review 2012 which merged several roles, the accountability functions which previously the preserve of the Vice President (Academic) became that of the Treasurer-Secretary.

I chair the Executive Reporting Committee, which scrutinises the fortnightly work reports of all members of the executive. Regular minutes are produced.

I also chair the Publications Committee, which monitors the student media provided by VUWSA (*Salient*, The VBC, VUWSA Publications)

The Treasurer-Secretary also takes the minutes of the fortnightly VUWSA Executive meetings, which are available to members.

General Tasks and Initiatives

I helped out extensively at orientation week at the beginning of the year, being a key helper all week long. The highlight for me was providing the BBQ for the many hungry first year at the toga party at The Hunter Lounge. It was the best orientation week in three years in my opinion.

I also helped with the set up and pack down of the fairer fares forum in the hub. I was absent for the event itself, having an assignment due the same day, but by all accounts the event was very well run. The University Management was impressed by the way the forum was run, as it was the first event of its kind run in the new hub, and showed off its full potential.

Counselling the President on political strategy and direction, offering my perspective which is unique on the VUWSA executive

Representation

1. Executive Reporting Committee – Chair

Work Reports are presented to a rotating committee of two or three executives, and myself. The reports are examined for accuracy and veracity. Meets once a fortnight. If corrections are needed, the corresponding portfolio Vice President or I follows up on any work report discrepancies. I regard this as my most important role.

2. Publications Committee - Chair

Regular updates from *Salient* magazine, ensuring that the magazine is being run well and financially. This committee has been enjoyable to chair, and I believe *Salient* is one of the best, if not *the* best service VUWSA provides. The Publications Committee has met twice this year so far.

3. Audit and Finance Committee - Chair

Constantly reviewing VUWSA's spending and costs.

Has met once this year so far, over the phone..

4. VUWSA Trust – Ex-officio member for the duration of my elected term.

Ensuring VUWSA's assets are maintained in a way that is in the interest of students.

I have attended one of the two face to face meetings this year,

5. NZUSA Conference

I attended parts of this conference around constraints of my weekend employment. The sessions I attended were good, but there were more Polytechnic Association executives in attendance than University Association Executives attending. I got the sense the Polytechnic Executives got more out of than the VUWSA team. I also believe in the new environment VUWSA finds itself in post-VSM, the focus of NZUSA should be the problems we have here at home, not the south pacific, and certainly not global issues.

Strengths

1. Political Acumen.

I came into VUWSA having been heavily involved in the youth wing of a political party. Of the ten executives on VUWSA, I can safely say I am in a minority of one holding right wing views. As such, I was able to warn the executives of the risks of pursuing some policies, and how to appeal to parts of the student body previously ignored. I also have a strong grasp of local and national political issues.

2. Organisational Skills

The Treasurer-Secretary is the most inwardly focussed member of the executive, charged with its internal management. As such I have chaired several committees, taken charge of work as directed by the president, and have offered my talents to other executives as required.

3. Economic and Policy Guidance.

I have tried to impress upon the executive that our resources are limited, and we should use them as effectively as possible. I would like to think given the scarcity that we face, this advice was sometimes taken.

Weaknesses

1. Initial Work With VUWSA

I began my role with no handover notes, no idea and no help. I had to find my way around my role, and learn what its limits were. My successor will be furnished with extensive handover notes as a result. I initially wanted to form strong relationships with people who are very different from me politically and said yes to things far too often. I wish I had said no to a lot of the initial spending proposals.

2. Dislike of Bureaucracy.

I despise bureaucracy, barriers and red tape. It is sometimes almost impossible to get a policy or idea implemented by VUWSA. Its byzantine structure makes getting good ideas in place quickly very, very hard if obstacles are thrown up. In retrospect, perhaps when wanting to implement policy I should have prepared extensive plans.

3. My Temper

I have an intense dislike of overly lengthy debate, long pointless meetings, and partisan debating. All these things I have had to endure this year. Occasionally I have lost my temper, which I regret. VUWSA has taught me to moderate my language and to build consensus.

Overall Rating

Unlike the President, or the Vice Presidents, my sole focus this year has not been VUWSA. I have been distracted by academic and personal crises through the year, VUWSA has sometimes not been my focus when it should have been. When I was doing what I was supposed to, I did it well and to the best of my ability. I would overall give myself a solid **B+**, or **7.5/10**.