



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Sonya Clark
POSITION	Vice President (Academic)
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2013
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	21 (5 weeks overseas in Jan/Feb)
HOURS WORKED	709.25

Reporting on Priority Goals:

1. Goal 1

Education Quality: To ensure that the University provides the best teaching and learning, research opportunities, assessment and training to students.

(a) Class Representation System

I am heavily involved with, and oversee the delivery of, an excellent Class Representation system. We have had 95% representation of Class Reps in trimester 1 this year. I co-ran the Basic and Advanced Class Rep trainings with Jay and Lorraine at Kelburn, Pipitea and Te Aro, organising the speakers for Advanced Trainings, and have written or contributed to the majority of Class Rep newsletters. I also made changes to the Class Rep handbook to clarify the structure, and produced a video called 'How to be a Class Rep' which, while not being as popular as I had hoped, was used in some classes. I am proud of the work the Education Team puts into our Class Representation System. I have also supported and met with individual Class Reps where I



have given with a range of advice on how to deal with issues.

We have had

95% Class Representation overall

100% representation in Architecture and Design

99% in Commerce and Science

(b) Student Representation and Consultation Review

My major priority for this year has been the Student Representation and Consultation Review, which was brought forward when the Executive withdrew from the Student Forum. I have spent the majority of my time in meetings with the Student Working Party, Oversight Group, university staff and with representatives from Ngai Taura, PGSA, PSC to work on a plan for a student representation system that works. I wrote the VUWSA submission on the Student Forum, provided feedback on Communications Plans and Terms of Reference, and have written or co-written with Rory many draft documents on a proposed VUWSA model for student representation.

While I have at times felt frustrated at the time that has gone into this at the expense of doing more in other areas, I believe that making sure we have a sustainable, effective student representation system at Victoria, that does not undermine VUWSA, but keeps VUWSA at the heart of it, is the best legacy that I can leave in my role.

(c) VUW Programme Reviews

This year, I have led the effort to greater promote the VUWSA surveys on Programme Reviews beyond just Class Reps. This has been very successful with Science Society, VicCom, and a variety of clubs getting on board with the Classics, Geography, Development Studies, Environmental Studies and Geology, and Maths, Operations Research and Statistics Programme Reviews. The amount of students taking part in the VUWSA submissions has been noted and commended by VUW staff. I also successfully argued at Academic Committee to enshrine VUWSA's role in Programme Reviews in the Assessment Handbook.

c) VUW Assessment Handbook

The revision of the Assessment Handbook started in 2012, and continued this this year. One of my proudest moments was when Academic Committee approved my suggested change that when students must be told at the time of assessment, any given letter grades and number grades, not just letter grades, keeping the grading system as fair as possible. I have read over many drafts of the Assessment Handbook, giving feedback at committees when needed, to promote fair and good assessment for students.

d) NZ Vice Chancellor's Committee on University Academic Programmes

This is not within the University, but I sat on this committee in my role as Vice-President (Academic). This committee is responsible for the approval of, and academic quality assurance of, every new qualification, major, of all New Zealand universities. This involved meeting with the NZ Social Work Board to raise concerns about student voice and safety during placements.

e) TEC Workshop

I worked with the university to organise a workshop of Class Reps and representative students for this TEC Workshop which was a chance for students to inform the government about the types of information they wish they had had before making decisions for study.

f) Language Learning Centre Review

I worked with language Class Reps to provide feedback on the use of the Language Learning Centre in the current Review, and organised the student reps for this committee.

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

(a) Student Representation and Consultation Review

A major part of my work for this review has been working with Pasifika and Maori student representatives on how to ensure these disadvantaged groups are heard within a student representation system.

(b) Representation on Academic Board and Academic Committee

At these committees, I have spoken up regularly on the equity implications of proposals, notably on Allowance access for MCom students, barriers to access for teaching students under the proposed shift from a GDip to Masters, high course costs and workload issues for Te Aro students amongst many others.

(c) Representative Group proposal

I supported Equity Officer Matthew Ellison on the development of the Representative Group proposal, and gave feedback on the development of an Equity Committee for VUWSA.

(d) Individual student advocacy cases

Especially in Rory's absence, I was the first contact and first listener for a variety of upset students who felt they had been unfairly treated or disadvantaged at university. I have referred the majority of these students to the VUWSA Advocate. .

(e) VUW Disciplinary Appeals Committee

I sat on this committee which reassessed a student appeal against a serious misconduct charge, resulting in a fair outcome for the student.

(f) Supporting Pasifika Students Council

I have had a supportive relationship with the PSC and the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Pasifika) Luamanavuo Winnie Laban, this year, including attending part of So'otaga, the Samoan students conference.

(g) Promotion of VUWSA Services through Class Representative Training

I have promoted Free Bus Tickets, Food Bank, Free Bread, the Student Advocate and VUW services through trainings.

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

a) Fortnightly Work Reports

I have handed in all work reports on the due date with the exception of one where my workload was particularly high. I make sure that these are accurate and that the hours reported were productive and a good use of time.

b) Salient Column

I have written 3 columns for Salient informing students about what is happening in the Education Team and at VUWSA including Class Reps, Stress Free Study Week, university policies that are of use to students e.g rules about Workload and Grading, and promoting the Student Representation Review.

c) VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee

I have regularly sat on this committee where I freely scrutinize the Work Reports of the executive.

d) Payments and Payroll

As a signatory to the accounts, I always carefully scrutinize any payments or reimbursements forms I am asked to sign..

e) Initial General Meeting

I put a lot of work into the promotion of the IGM, including editing the Annual Report, chalking, leafleting and staying at VUWSA late making poster boards. I also spoke up at the IGM when I felt that VUWSA members were not fully informed. While I supported the motion in principle, I questioned the financial and resource implications of the proposed motion about VUWSA's actions on climate change.

f) Communications

I have worked with the Communications Co-ordinator, presidents and Vice-Presidents in editing VUWSA newsletters, mail-outs and organizing Facebook posts to promote relevant events and services.

Reporting on Other Goals

2. Goal 4 - Services: To provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit of members, and, where appropriate, students.

a) Flu Shots

I helped out with Flu Shots.

b) Stress Free Study Week

I did many hours giving away free food during this week.

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

(a) VUWSA Autumn Market

I helped Mica with the Autumn Market at the Hunter Lounge, including setup the night before and helping out with smaller tasks on the day.

(b) Orientation 2013

I cooked sausages, setup events, and signed up many VUWSA members at the stalls during O-Week. I also helped with *Karorientation* in January.

c) Promotion of Rep Group Events

I have promoted the events of VicCom and STUDIO in the Class Rep newsletters.

1. f) 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) NZEI Education Forum for Education Students

I assisted Gemma in co-ordinating and organizing this forum.

b) Fairer Fares Forum

I helped with the promotion and setup of the Fairer Forum, leafleting, chalking and helping on the day.

b) Hordur Torfason Speaker Event

I leafleted, lecture bashed 100-level POLS lectures, and talked to students in the Hub about the Hordur talk.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Supporting VUWSA staff

I have tried my best this year to support VUWSA staff, and have spent extensive time on Reception when there has been staff illness.

2. Organising, clearing and sorting the VUWSA archives dating back to the 1970s

Representation

1. VUW Academic Committee

2. VUW Academic Board

3. VUW Grievance Appeals Committee

4. VUW Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy (from June)

I began on this in my role as Acting President, and have attended meetings since then.

5. VUW Language Learning Centre Review Group

6. VUWSA Observer on Faculty Boards (varies)

7. VUW Student Representation and Consultation Review Student Working Party

8. VUW Student Representation and Consultation Review Oversight Group

9. VUWSA Executive

10. VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee

11. VUWSA Education Team Weekly Meetings

Leading weekly meetings with Jay and Gemma about the direction and plan for the Education Team.

12. NZUSA Representative on the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee on University Academic Programmes

13. Regular meetings with Assistant Vice Chancellors (Academic) David Crabbe and Peter Thirkell

We have discussed a range of things, including the Class Rep Strategy, Student Forum withdrawal and the Student Representation Review,

14. Meetings with NZUSA Director Alistair Shaw

15. Meetings with University Council Student Representative David Alsop

16. Meetings with Kevin Fagalilo, Pasifika Students' Council President

17. Meetings with Neal Barber, PGSA President

18. Meetings with Ngāi Taura/Nga Taura Umanga representatives Anaru Toia, Joanna Morgan, Hine Parata-Walker

19. NZUSA Presidents Hui

Strengths

1. Relationships

I am pleased with the positive relationships I have built with University and VUWSA staff, Executive members, Representative Groups, Class Reps and students. I have done my best to support the President as much as I can.

2. Dedication

I am absolutely committed to my role and to VUWSA, and am passionate about the importance of excellent student representation. I like to learn and work hard at my job.

3. Clear Communicator

I like to think I am a good communicator, who is clear and keeps others informed.

Weaknesses

1. Stress

I get easily stressed, and have found it difficult to have a good work-life-study balance this year.

2. Self confidence

At times, I can struggle to believe fully in myself and my abilities. I gained a lot of confidence in the month I was Acting-President.

3. Saying Yes

There is a lot to be done, and I like to support others where I can. I can say yes to a lot of smaller tasks that others need help with, sometimes to the detriment of my own work/studies/life.

Overall Rating

Overall, I feel that I have proved myself to be a competent, contributing Executive member in VUWSA. While there have been times of self-doubt (mostly in the small hours!) I believe that the work I have done, especially on the Student Representation review, is of importance for students and for the long-term vision of VUWSA. I think I have worked well with Rep Groups to make sure they feel supported and valued also.

I really enjoy the variety of tasks at VUWSA, from listening to a student who is facing difficulties on a teaching placement, meeting and training Class Reps, speaking to Academic Board for students, right through to chalking for the Fairer Fares Forum or the IGM. I look forward to the second half of the year.