



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Toby Cooper
POSITION	Engagement Vice-President
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January – 28 th June 2015
HOURS WORKED	552 hours (471.4 required)

Reporting on Priority Goals:

Constitutional Goal 5

Activities: To support sporting, social and cultural activities for and by students; primarily through Clubs and Representative Groups.

(a) This year, my primary focus has been to provide students with a diverse programme of activities which is responsive to student needs and interests, integrating in promotion of VUWSA services where appropriate.

(b) My initial objective for the year was to work closely with the VUWSA Events staff to deliver OWeek, the orientation festival. In preparation meetings with VUWSA Events staff, I contributed detailed feedback on many of the OWeek outputs, including feedback on proposed wallplanner and diary designs, perceptions about the student interest in different musical tastes, and recommendations regarding website design and event logistics.

(c) My key role in OWeek was to take a lead on the promotion, preparation, and co-ordination of several events. I wanted to create events which would bring diversity to the OWeek festival, generate greater engagement by better incorporating student halls, and respond to the driving force which brings students to Wellington: the unique arty culture of our city. Accordingly, I brought Wellington's theatre scene up to Kelburn campus through Fringe Solo Snippets and PlayShop LIVE, while collaborating with halls in delivering the Fringe in Halls Dance Workshop and the massively successful Newtown Festival Bus Ride. These latter events helped VUWSA to develop positive relationships with university halls, as VUWSA contributed to the events calendar for halls and I maintained contact with hall staff in the lead up to and throughout these

events. To add a touch more diversity to the OWeek programme, I worked with the Victoria Engineering Club to deliver a 1v1 Gaming Day on campus.

As part of OWeek, I organised for VUWSA to take students on a double decker bus ride from their halls to the Newtown Festival, a highlight of Wellington's cultural identity.



I organised the Fringe Solo Snippets event at The Hunter Lounge in order to bring a slice of Wellington's unique arty culture up to Kelburn campus and to create a uniquely Wellington OWeek.

(d) I also undertook additional tasks in the running of OWeek. I collaborated with PGSA and Pasifika Students' Council to deliver OWeek events tailored to students of their respective communities. In my spare moments, I supported the running of many of the other events by being on the ground. While ensuring that things ran smoothly, I utilised these opportunities to get to know students at Victoria, build relationships between VUWSA and the student body, and to celebrate and support our ever-growing community of VUWSA Volunteers.

(e) My work with clubs this year has included a range of tasks. The Clubs and Activities Officer and I held a VUWSA Clubs Council Pub Quiz to foster a culture of clubs community on campus and to encourage clubs representatives to be a part of the Clubs Council. I have contributed to decisions on club funding applications through appearing at Clubs Council and Sponsorship Panel when needed. As a former Clubs and Activities Officer, I have spent much time guiding this year's Officer in how to best work effectively with clubs, and on responding to particular club inquiries. A key goal of mine within the clubs portfolio has been to improve the Blues Awards processes and ceremony, with the aim of a more accessible, straightforward application process and a more formal ceremony. I continue to work closely with VUW clubs staff on a regular basis, informing their decisions and contributing to discussions on the clubs community at Victoria.

(f) In between working on OWeek and RE-OWeek, I improved the social atmosphere at Victoria by bringing more activities to satellite campuses, particularly the often neglected Te Aro and Karori campuses. Over the first trimester, I ensured that VUWSA had a presence at Te Aro campus at least once every two teaching weeks, and a presence at Karori campus at least once every two months. I dedicated VUWSA's staffing and resources into delivering events such as Student Base at Te Aro and the Giveaway Days. These events gave students more opportunities to interact with VUWSA and its services and temporarily transformed our satellite campuses into buzzing spaces of student community.

A priority goal for me this year was to greatly improve VUWSA's visibility. Having a



VUWSA presence at Te Aro campus once every two weeks throughout trimester one has been an effective way to build relationships and deliver events and services for all students at Victoria, not just those at Kelburn campus.

(g) Another project on which I collaborated with events staff was the Graduation Giveaways. The vision for this project was to find a unique and relevant way to celebrate the graduation of Victoria students this May. We decided to run several giveaway competitions specifically for graduates, with prizes which were specifically tailored to enhancing the graduation experience, such as a dinner for four at *Southern Cross Garden Bar and Restaurant* and several hairstyling sessions.

(h) Over the first half of 2015, I have spent several weeks preparing events for RE-OWeek in July. Again, my driving objective in determining and shaping events for RE-OWeek was to establish a diverse range of events which will engage and entertain students. I will be ensuring that throughout RE-OWeek, VUWSA delivers a jazz music event, a self-defence demonstration, a clubs showcase, selection trials for Victoria's *University Challenge* team, and a *University Challenge* Quiz Night.

Constitutional 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) I ensured that VUWSA provided avenues for meaningful student input into the discussions surrounding structural changes to the University Council. By learning to use *Survey Monkey* and using this platform to build a Student Consultation Survey, I was able to create and distribute a survey to students which received over 1000 responses from students. In addition, I worked with the Campaigns Officer to run a Student Consultation Forum where students could discuss their perspectives on the proposed changes to University Council, and I set up a survey station in The Hub to encourage students to learn more about the University Council process and to engage with the Student Consultation Survey.

Constitutional Goal 8

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

(a) I organised the promotion and logistics for the VUWSA IGM, where the Executive presented audit reports to our members and responded to issues raised by our members. I collaborated with Student Job Search and Domino's Pizza to deliver incentives for member engagement at the IGM. As a result, the IGM achieved quorum faster than in previous years and connected with more members. This increase in member engagement means improved Executive accountability through the IGM.

(b) As a member of the VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee, I critically examine the work reports of the Executive members. I utilise these fortnightly Executive Reporting Committee meetings to call upon Executive members to justify the time they put into their tasks.

(c) By crafting communications, such as the newsletter email to members and a range of Facebook posts on behalf of VUWSA, I have kept members informed of the strategic projects and campaigns of the Association. I have usually produced several Facebook posts each week for VUWSA, reaching audiences of around 200-2000 per post. Additionally, hand-delivering event posters to university halls has helped to build a culture of accountability and engagement with these stakeholders.

Reporting on Other Goals:

Constitutional Goal 4

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

(a) As I brought up at the top of my Half Year Report, one of my primary goals for this year has been to promote VUWSA's services. I've worked toward this by running events such as the Student Base at Te Aro which focussed on delivering our services

at satellite campuses, and by spreading the word about our services to students generally as well as staff at university halls.

(b) I ran several welfare events for students, such as Free Flu Shots events at Kelburn, Te Aro, and Karori campuses, the Supporting Vanuata collection station at Karori campus, and Stress Free Study Week at Te Aro campus. While these events were organised by the Welfare Vice-President and others, I ran some of these event sites. It was a priority for me to ensure successful delivery of these events at satellite campuses, and to develop positive relationships with everyday students, so that students at these campuses feel better connected to the Association.

(c) I have been giving detailed feedback to website designers in order to improve our web presence. Our Association website is a key tool to connect students with our services, so it is important that the website is user-friendly and professional, to ensure maximum student engagement with our services.



Working with volunteers to serve Krishnafood to students at Stress Free Study Week at Te Aro campus.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Strategic Development of VUWSA

On several occasions this year, I have contributed to the shaping of the strategic direction of the Association. From the Executive planning sessions throughout the year, to the Budget Workshop where we determined the annual budget, to the Executive workshops relating to national student voice, I have been a vocal and valued contribution to these discussions.

2. Approving outgoing payments of the Association

In my role as a general Executive member, I have been involved in the weekly approval processes relating to the outgoing payments of the Association. This includes confirming the recipient bank accounts and ensuring the correct sums for payments to external organisations as well as for salaries to Association staff and honorariums for Executive officers.

Representation

1. VUWSA Executive

Chaired by the VUWSA President, the VUWSA Executive meets once per fortnight to discuss issues facing Victoria students and the Association and to pass motions calling for action by the Association, the Executive, the staff, or the VUWSA committees.

The VUWSA Executive on route to the Executive Retreat to go through induction and



training and to develop a strategic plan for 2015 (absent: Rory McNamara).

2. VUWSA President / Vice-Presidents Team

The President and three Vice-Presidents hold informal meetings at the start of each week to keep each other updated on the tasks facing the Association.

3. VUWSA Executive Reporting Committee

Chaired by the VUWSA Secretary-Treasurer, this Committee meets fortnightly to evaluate the Executive work reports and decide whether or not to approve payments to Executive members.

4. Policy Committee

Chaired by the VUWSA Secretary-Treasurer, this Committee meets monthly to assess internal policy of the Association. My work on this Committee thus far has been to look over and consolidate the employment policies as well as investigating the online media policy.

5. Blues Awards Team

Consisting of staff from Victoria's Events Team, Victoria Clubs, and VUWSA, as well as the Clubs and Activities Officer and myself, this Team meets fortnightly from May to September to organise the Blues Awards application and determination process, as well as the Blues Awards ceremony.

6. Regular meetings with Victoria Clubs staff

I have informal meetings with Raewyn Clarke (Clubs Manager) and Roselle Usherwood (Clubs Administrator) regularly to keep informed of updates to Victoria Clubs policy relating to the management of clubs and of any significant events held by clubs or issues which clubs are facing at Victoria. This relationship also ensures that events such as Clubs Week are collaborative efforts between VUWSA and Victoria Clubs.

7. VUWSA Events Team

I make sure to put time aside to check in with the events staff at VUWSA on a weekly basis to keep informed of their work progress and to contribute to events-related decisions made by VUWSA. From January to March, formal meetings were held at least fortnightly, primarily focussing on the delivery of OWeek. From April onwards, these meetings have usually been more informal check-ins, although are still an important priority for me as the year continues.

8. VUWSA Engagement Team

I have worked closely with the Clubs and Activities Officer and the Campaigns Officer to ensure that they feel supported within the Association and to assist them in developing goals for the year. I will be instituting formal weekly Engagement Team meetings in the second half of the year to build on this work.

Strengths

1. Visible

By organising and involving myself in many VUWSA events which bring the Association face-to-face with students, I feel that I have been highly visible as an Executive member, particularly at satellite campuses, where student engagement with VUWSA is more of an issue. In addition, I have utilised these opportunities to listen to everyday students and connect them with VUWSA services where relevant. This kind of meaningful visibility means that students at Victoria feel more connected to their student representatives.

2. Communication

Following on from my strength above, I am proud of my continual efforts of informing students about VUWSA services, in particular the Community Pantry and Student Advocate service. By building these dialogues, I have increased the number of students who have utilised these services, and hopefully increased the goodwill towards VUWSA amongst the student community.

3. Attitude

I am recognised amongst the Exec for my upbeat attitude and positive outlook. Combined with my results-focussed approach, my optimism hopefully stirs up similarly positive feelings on the Exec, unifying us as a team and motivating us to work hard and deliver successes for students.

Weaknesses

1. Task focused

A key weakness is my tendency to take a micro perspective rather than a macro perspective. Rather than seeing an annual events plan as a holistic vision, I saw it as a series of ad hoc events, most of which VUWSA is already expected to deliver. Consequently, I struggled to develop a fresh and innovative events plan early in the year, because most of my time in the first three months was invested in delivering specific events for OWeek.

2. Workload required

Even with a stronger Events Team than ever before, the Engagement Vice President role still requires more time investment than the weekly hours stipulated by the Constitution. This is particularly noticeable in the weeks leading up to and during OWeek. This year, I was able to handle this workload successfully. However, in the future, VUWSA will need to employ sufficient events staff to plan and run all OWeek events, so that the Engagement Team on the Executive can focus on developing an annual events plan.

Overall Rating

Ultimately, I feel satisfied with my work thus far as Engagement Vice-President. OWeek 2015 was the most successful orientation festival at Victoria since the commencement of VSM (voluntary student membership) in 2012, partially due to my effective delivery of the events detailed above. In addition, VUWSA has delivered many other successful events and campaigns in the first half of this year and I have played a leading role in many of these.