



NAME	George Grainger
POSITION	Treasurer-Secretary
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January 2016 – 30 th June, 2016
HOURS WORKED	446.75
HOURS REQUIRED	234.25

Priority Goals

My main goals, and as per the Treasurer-Secretary role description:

- **Goal 4: Services:** to provide quality, cost effective services for the benefit of members, and, where appropriate, students.
- **Goal 7: Finance:** to maximise the member benefits by minimizing fees or user charges through internal efficiency and non-member revenue.
- **Goal 9: Accountability:** to ensure accountability to, and representation of, members.

Goal 4: Services

The Treasurer role is largely an enabling one. The Education, Welfare and Engagement teams deliver VUWSA services from Course Reviews to Stress-Free Study Week. My role has been to build, improve and maintain VUWSA as an Association, which can deliver these services. More of a back-room desk-driver than one of the front-line executives. Although I have been involved in initiating and building new services myself.

A. Facilitating Services

VUWSA exists to serve the students of Victoria University of Wellington so services have been the paramount consideration in a number of activities so far this year, as will be detailed further under the heading 'Goal 7: Finance'.

My energy to improve VUWSA's financial position has constantly considered VUWSA's provision of service. It's been a reality that we have had to tighten our belts this year, but I'm proud to say there were no budget cuts to any of the services we provide, or the campaigns we run because those are the entire reason we are here. If we start losing our ability to do at least what we have done previously we would be in decline; and I just won't allow that.

I have also used my function as finance and administration chap to assist executive members to plan and instigate new projects. Earlier in the year the executive formed an Annual Plan, which included a lot of new ground for VUWSA, it was ambitious.

At the early stage of forming any campaign or initiative, it is important to put together a realistic budget and a sound plan. It has been a privilege to be able to work with other executives at early stages to assist them to put together budgets and work out how that project fits within the wider scope of VUWSA's financial, personnel and reputational capacity.

One project that comes to mind is the Thursdays in Black initiative, while I claim no responsibility for how well that campaign is run and how effective it has been, It was a nice moment to work with Equity Officer Chrissy Brown early in the year to fit it into VUWSA's operational plan and see it pay off as well as it has.

B. Initiating Services

While in the past the Treasurer role has been merely to collect reports, make reports, monitor budgets and other administrative kerfuffle, I have added a new aspect to the role through the new Revenue and Venture Committee.

During early scoping of VUWSA's environment, it occurred to me that VUWSA is well placed to provide a meaningful, dynamic, effective service to identify, mentor, build and support student entrepreneurs to start and run a wide variety of enterprises.

In this way much of my early work this year has been spent building the institutional framework for a new committee to oversee and administer this function. I met with

and worked with a number of experienced stakeholders to make sure that we got it right, and that VUWSA is able to provide the best start up services possible.

The Committee is now in place with myself chairing it, it has held meetings; and at our most recent meeting, our first student business applied for an investment. Negotiations and other due diligence are now underway and it is my intention to finish processing this application before the end of September.

Victoria University has an extremely high concentration of creative, brilliant, energetic, young minds. It is incredibly exciting to be able to work among them and help them start on their path.

Goal 7: Finance

It is a reality that VUWSA needs money to run. VUWSA exists solely to serve students of Victoria University of Wellington, and as such, is registered as a charity. The word 'charity' is very rarely synonymous with 'money is not a problem'.

A. Budget

When I came into office in January, I inherited the budget for 2016 which was passed by the 2015 executive. After some in-depth analysis it became clear that in real terms the budget showed a significant deficit and that VUWSA's financial situation was very far from comfortable. I identified looming financial trouble, which I communicated very clearly to the Executive, and started sorting it out.

Immediately I worked with the General Manager amending the 2016 budget by reducing the deficit by making reasonable, realistic cuts where possible, but without cutting funding for any services to protect the integrity and quality of those services.

The amended budget we ended up with still showed a deficit, but much less than it was, and provided the touchstone for the work to pursue growth which lay ahead.

In the latter half of this year I will be involved in the formation for the budget for 2017, which will be a crucial part of monitoring how VUWSA's financial state has changed over 2016 and setting it on a course for future growth.

B. Finance

I take my role as the executive member with responsibility for finance very seriously; and have been involved comprehensively in financial planning and advising at all levels of VUWSA's operations. This has included working very closely with the General Manager and the President to be strategic and effective with spending through our different departments, including Student Media, internal expenditure, campaigns, projects and service expenditures. Throughout this process I have become very familiar with existing incomes and constantly consider how we can optimize, grow and diversify them. In a more broad sense it has been crucial to be aware of where VUWSA is heading financially, and how to operate with the utmost efficiency along the way.

In my role of communicating our financial situation to the executive and giving general advice, I have also reiterated that while project funds have been budgeted for, every executive member is responsible for saving money.. In executive discussions I have always reemphasized this.

As chair of the Audit and Finance Committee I have been in a position to monitor budget tracking and spending compared to what has been expected. As our current budget expenditure is tracking well, my advice of financial mindfulness has clearly been followed.

The secondary function of the Revenue and Venture Committee and student enterprises is to provide VUWSA with an opportunity to diversify and build its revenue streams. VUWSA works for students, but in this, VUWSA works with students to grow as an Association while assisting student entrepreneurs to grow. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement, which is the only ethically acceptable arrangement to the Association.

Goal 9: Accountability

By nature, VUWSA is a democratic, open, accountable and transparent organisation. It is one of the primary roles of the Treasurer-Secretary to ensure, enhance and enforce these principles.

A. Executive Reporting

As chair of the Executive Reporting Committee one of my responsibilities is collecting fortnightly work reports from executive members, which details: how many hours they've worked in the past two weeks, what they've spent their hours doing, goals they've worked on towards achievement over the past fortnight, and what they intend to be working on in the next fortnight.

Let's not lie, everyone hates doing work reports. It's very clear that every executive member is doing, at the very least, their constitutionally required hours if not significantly more. No one wants to have to work that hard; and then write a regular report on it. It has been a constant challenge to keep everyone submitting up-to-standard reports by due dates. However, work reports are published online so members can check what we have been up to and hold us accountable. This is an important function; so I'm more than happy to uphold it.

At times pursuing work reports has made me feel like the executive views me as a relentless enforcer of paperwork generation. There have been incidents where asking for late work reports to be submitted by tired executive members have resulted in mild tension (more cold shoulder than Cold War so no real issues), which has identified an issue with the reporting system. Part of the issue with work reports is that the fortnightly reports are so detailed and prescriptive, but are not really effective at showing what the executive does.

Currently I am working on some options to overhaul the Executive Reporting System, which will improve the meaningfulness of the reports, reduce the administrative Executive workload, improve accessibility to members, eliminate the relationship risk for the Treasurer, all while maintaining our current excellent level of accountability and transparency. I expect a new system to be in place very soon.



A rare photo of the Treasurer-Secretary in its natural habitat.

B. Engagement

Many of our accountability mechanisms are very formulaic and policy based. The usual formula is: we follow policy, produce documents by a certain time, then documents are approved through the correct channels, published in the right place by the right person and are thereby made available to members.

Student Associations are supposed to be fun. Like students.

Our accountability is technically accessible to all student through our website, but our most accessible form of accountability, 'soft accountability,' where members can see what the executive is doing through media, in particular social media, to see broadly what we work on and achieve.

While not strictly within my portfolio, I have worked on a Media Policy this year with engagement Vice-President Nathaniel Manning to improve the reach and quality of VUWSA's social media. I have also been involved in general executive discussions around how to best use our social media and what content should be on it.

Additional Goals

The Additional Goals I have been working on so far this year are:

- Goal 2 – Student Support: To advocate for adequate financial support, income and welfare for students in order to remove barriers to education.
- 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.

Goal 2 – Student Support

A. \$15 Billion Dollar Debt Day

In March I was involved in the New Zealand Union of Student Associations (NZUSA) \$15 Billion Dollar Debt Day campaign. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness around the crushing levels of debt shouldered by students, generally, and to put a human face to that debt.

My role involved wandering around Kelburn Campus talking to students about their debt, and having photos taken of them holding a board with the value of their debt and how they felt about it. I have to admit discovering that tertiary students are starting their careers and their lives with debts as high as \$60,000 (or more) was a sobering shock to me. Possibly the most concerning thing about the campaign was the way students were so apathetic about their debts, simply accepting it as an unavoidable part of the university life. The entire view of student loans and the place of students in both society and the economy needs to change to one that values and meaningfully supports students.

Goal 9 – Sustainability:

VUWSA's strengths lie in its ability to work consistently across a number of years, despite the challenge of having a yearly executive turnover. In order to enhance the sustainability of the organization I have worked in two areas: Institutional Sustainability, focused on policy, procedure and finance; and Role Sustainability focused on developing and institutionalising role functions.

A. Institutional Sustainability

VUWSA already has comprehensive policy. Policy is the best source of institutional knowledge, it needs to be clear and accessible so new people to VUWSA can read and understand the organization and their function within it.

In my role as chair of the Policy Committee I have ensured existing policy is up to date to meet the needs of the Association. I have also helped identify new policies required; and have drafted them into workable documents.

Policy should outline statements of principle VUWSA follows broad concepts which make up the character of the Association.

Many of the policies included large amounts of procedure, which are simply steps for how to do something. Part of my policy work this year has been to extract procedure from policy. These procedures have been concentrated into a draft Operations Manual, and when completed, it will serve as a living document which will easily show anyone who reads it how to do tasks required at VUWSA from putting together meeting agendas to renting out the VUWSA Van.

Between a broad base of easy-to-read policy and an Operations Manual, VUWSA has a sound core of institutional knowledge. Together this helps future staff and executive get on board with the Association's long-term goals to continue to thrive as an organization, and to support and advocate for students into the future.

B. Treasurer-Secretary Role Stability

This year I have changed the role of the Treasurer-Secretary. Previously, it had been much more of an administrative role, chairing internal committees and ensuring reporting was done. As the only Executive Officer with a specific focus on finance and administration my approach has been a more active role.

I started the Revenue and Venture Committee this year. This Committee has taken on the responsibility of actively seeking new sources of income for the Association, ensuring that it can continue to grow alongside the University. If VUWSA doesn't grow parallel to student numbers, our work quality will be diluted.

The Revenue and Venture Committee has identified a number of ways to raise funds, but I believe the most promising are finding, investing in and growing student businesses.

There are several challenges around this and the sustainability of it. The main one has been that while I have the knowledge required to build such an initiative, much of that knowledge is very specific and technical and not something many others have.

I am acquainted with a fair bit about company law, corporate structure, investment principles and business operation; and it is a necessity that I form ways to share this knowledge. Already I condensed the over 300 sections of the Company Act into an 8-page summary and have given this to both a student entrepreneur, and the VUWSA executive.

I will produce more of these documents covering topics such as tax, employment, accounting and financial management. The Revenue and Venture Committee has the potential to strengthen VUWSA over the next decades. When I am no longer part of the VUWSA executive, there needs to be sufficient information for future executives to keep effectively using the tools I have created to grow VUWSA.

General Tasks and Initiatives

A. O-Week

At the start of the year the VUWSA trial-by-fire was running OWeek. I volunteered time at all the events to help the event to be a quality shin-dig all round. It was incredibly rewarding to see so many Victoria students enjoying themselves, getting into their university experience in a big way. The environment was incredibly positive.

Obviously there were a few incidents: a spot of medical distress, a trip to the hospital and a sea of vomit that means I can no longer look at Mi Goreng the same way, but nothing too serious. I was incredibly impressed with how together the vast majority of the students stayed.

During the event it was also a privilege to work on the VUWSA signup stall, talking to energetic new and wise returning students, giving them free stuff.

B. Welcome Festival

During OWeek I was offered the opportunity to MC the OWeek Welcome Festival with Clubs and Activities Officer, Tori Sellwood. It was a good opportunity to establish VUWSA's presence as being a student-run organization, which works for them. Also you can't help but love hostel-specific parodies of Top 40 songs.

C. Strategic Planning

This year is significant for VUWSA as VUWSA executive are developing a five year Strategic Plan. I have been part of executive workshops forming VUWSA's vision for the future and mapping the plan for how to get there.

D. Stress Free Study Week

During Study Week at the end of Trimester 1, VUWSA distributed breakfasts, lunches and the occasional dinner to students at all three campuses. Also puppies. I was happy to volunteer my time serving food and making sure that no puppy went un-patted.

E. Te Puni Heating Response

During one of the coldest nights of the year I heard rumours of broken heating in Te Puni Village through Academic Vice-President, Jacinta. I investigated the rumours and found them to be true, and contacted Campus Services to organise someone to go and restore heating. Throughout the night Rory (Welfare-Vice President), Alice (Campaigns Officer) and Nathaniel (Engagement Vice-President) joined and continued to work on getting heating restored.

In the interim, we communicated with Te Puni students, and the community to collect blankets so at least the students would be warm that night. Hostels are too expensive for students to be cold. Being able to respond to the needs of students in a tangible way, and to show first years in their first year away from home that someone cares for them, was one of the most rewarding things I've been part of this year.

F. Everything Else

It seems secretaries end up being a de facto dogsbody, often doing miscellaneous tasks. Throughout the year I've often done things like rearranging furniture, going out to buy things, helping reception with deliveries, picking up and dropping people off, dealing with general enquiries for the executive and whatever else needs to be done around VUWSA that does not fit



At Flu Shots with Nurse Helen Mirren[’s look alike].

into someone else's role. I quite enjoy this sort of work, it's never as boring as it sounds.

Representation

A. Executive Meetings

Being at executive meetings is incredibly important as it's the opportunity for the whole executive to make sure they are working together as a team in the interest of students like we were elected to do. In these meetings I represent my portfolio, advising on financial and policy matters. As well as generally supporting other executive members in their roles when I am able to.

B. Student Media Committee

The Treasurer-Secretary is the chair of the Student Media Committee and oversees student media, Salient magazine, Salient TV and Salient FM, all the while protecting their editorial independence. Student Media is an important part of VUWSA's accountability and assisting Student Media by providing it with funding and general support where possible helps this function. Student Media also helps students stay informed about and engaged with their education environment. By supporting Student Media through the Student Media Committee this year, I feel I have represented the interests of students.

C. Policy Committee

My role also chairs VUWSA's internal Policy Committee. As previously discussed in this position I work to make sure VUWSA has the most up-to-date, comprehensive policy base possible. This means students can easily see how VUWSA operates and ensure we are always acting in their interests.

D. VUWSA Trust

Alongside the President I am an *ex officio* trustee of the VUWSA Trust. The Trust manages VUWSA's financial assets, safeguarding its future. In sitting on the Trust I represent the interests of students and act to fulfil my fiduciary duty to them to maximize benefits for them through VUWSA.

Strengths

This is the part I don't want to talk about. Feels like a massive ego stroke, but let's give it a hoon anyway.

A. Financial and Investment Knowledge

In my personal capacity I have had experience in investment, enterprise and observing business management. As a fifth year law student with an interest in the area of commercial law my study has given me a solid base of knowledge around investment, company, intellectual property and commercial law which is crucial to many of the aspects of my role, especially the Revenue Committee.

As this sort of knowledge is not something most people have I am uniquely equipped to educate students and executive.

B. Strong Personal Relationships

While it's true that if you say "I'm good with people" that is strong evidence that you are not good with people, but I do think I'm fairly good at building relationships with people. I consider every member of the VUWSA executive a personal friend as well as a colleague. This has made it possible to easily interact and share information and ideas in a fluid, natural way helping my functions within VUWSA operate more efficiently and easily. People know I am always available to support them in any way I can, and I know they are there to support me also. This is a nice environment to be in.

C. Caring about VUWSA

Since gaining election to the VUWSA Executive I have come to genuinely care about the VUWSA organisation. The executive and staff all genuinely care about students and it's a privilege to work with them. Much of my motivation for working as hard as I do is the Association has so much potential to make a genuine difference in the lives of students and I want to do everything I can to realise that potential.

D. Motivated by Students

I'm not at VUWSA for any selfish reason. My personal view is that students are the middle of the road, and the middle of the road is neglected. Students are viewed as privileged because they have access to higher education, and that is true. But at the same time students have enormous debts, usually higher than their net worth. Students right now are expected to move into the workforce and grow the economy to support the lesser equipped members of society. If that is the responsibility of students then it makes no sense for us to start shackled to debts the size of a mortgage deposit. Students can have it so much better than they do now because they deserve it, and the world needs our students. That's what VUWSA is trying to accomplish, I am positioned to contribute to that effort and that is what I am doing.

Weaknesses

While not fatal, I do have a few things I could improve on in my work at VUWSA.

A. Lack of Tact

I am always frank and honest which is one of my strengths, but sometimes too much so to the point of brutal bluntness. When discussing VUWSA matters I can fall into the trap of

ignoring other people's feelings and needs, pushing on with the pursuit of the desired goals and outcomes. With certain types of people this approach is effective interaction, but with other types of people it can create unnecessary tension, slowing down progress. This is something I have been aware of all year.

B. Taking on Too Much

When there is work to be done I tend to take on everything possible and forget about my personal needs. I am a full-time law student (studying four papers each in both trimester 1 and 2) with a part time job as a lifeguard to pay my rent. On top of that I have been working an average of around 37 hours a fortnight at VUWSA, which is well above my constitutionally expected 20 hours a fortnight.

By the time anyone reads this report I will have already done the number of hours I was expected to do in the entirety of 2016. I consider myself extremely efficient with my time, and I do so many hours simply because there is work to be done and it's my job to do it – job description be damned. There is a lot in the Treasurer-Secretary role and I want to do the best job I can with absolutely all of it. I did struggle with exhaustion and related sickness in the first part of the year, which I will be more aware of in the second half of the year, but I will continue to do the work that needs to be done.

C. Lack of Experience

Prior to gaining position on VUWSA I had never been on a board before. Therefore I was completely inexperienced with meeting procedure (tabling stuff, motions, minutes and all that jazz) but I think I'm getting a firm grip on it by now.

I had also never been in a position with so much decision-making power where decisions have real consequences for the people who elected me; but it's been a good challenge. I'm slowly getting used to it.

Overall Rating

With all appropriate modesty and humbleness, I think I'm doing a pretty good job.

I'm meeting all the targets that have been previously been expected from the VUWSA Treasurer, as well as setting my own ambitious goals beyond expectation, and doing pretty well

with those too. The Treasurer job isn't sexy. It's a lot of administration and number work, which most people don't even want to think about, but it's crucial to VUWSA and I absolutely love it. As a general executive member I think I provide a different perspective to discussions and add benefit to the Association overall. The first half of the year I've spent much time setting up project infrastructure, and I'm looking forward to getting some results from those projects in the second half of the year.

