



EXECUTIVE HALF YEAR REPORT

NAME	Alasdair Keating
POSITION	Campaigns Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 January – 30 June 2014
TOTAL WEEKS WORKED	24
HOURS WORKED	297.5

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.

I have not worked particularly much towards this goal in the last 6 months, as issues in this area, both at the university and national level, have been covered very proficiently by the Education Team. I have supported VUWSA's efforts to retain student representation at University Councils and I was pleased to attend the inaugural meeting of the the Student Academic Committee, the new face of education representation at VUW. I note the drift of the Campaigns role away from education has become somewhat of a trend since the demise of the Education Action Group (EAG) in 2012. I will endeavour to cement a better relationship with the Education team and develop my role working with them on issues in education to reframe the role in this area. I intend to leave my successor with more of platform to push towards this goal than I was.

2. Goal 6

Public Issues: To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.

This has been the chief goal I have been working towards for the first part of the year. As an election year, in 2014 VUWSA has a much greater opportunity to promote discussion and action on important issues and I have been working towards a proactive campaign to achieve this. I have been working on VUWSA's campaign to mobilise students as active participants in the elections, encouraging them to vocalise the issues that matter to them and act

upon them. Outside of this I have helped out with the *Let me Go Home* march and seminar and drafted some press releases for the association on student related issues. At the mid point of the year most of the work I have done so far will see fruition in our election campaign through the second trimester. Looking back, however, I would have liked to have achieved more earlier on and I will emphasise the importance of starting work on campaigns early to my successor.

Reporting on Other Goals:

1. Goal 4

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

Alongside the other members of the executive and VUWSA volunteers I have worked to provide free breakfasts and lunches to students at Stress Free Study Week, a much appreciated service that provides a valued presence for VUWSA across Victoria's campuses. I have also had the opportunity to learn how to provide reception services which has enabled me to serve as, 'front of house', at the VUWSA office when required. In this position I have acted as the first point of call for many students coming to us with problems or enquiries or to provide some of our services such as our free bus passes. Finally I helped provide VUWSA's free flu shot service, helping run it for one of the days we were offering the vaccinations.

2. Goal 5

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

I've worked hard along with the rest of the Executive to provide a range of activities for students, including most important so far being New Student's Orientation Week and Orientation or Clubs Week. Events like these are hard work, but very rewarding as they're valued a lot by students and it's perhaps the best way to build our VUWSA's engagement with students. Another project I have been involved in has been supporting our University Challenge team, particularly in the selection process by running one of the trials, selecting the team but also in arranging for coaching and providing some support for the team. I have been planning for VUWSA arts events in the next semester and I look forward to working with a variety of students and clubs to make them happen.

General Tasks and Initiatives

1. Office Move

Over the summer break VUWSA moved offices from the second to the fourth floor of the Student Union Building. I assisted in this move, helping to clean the old office, transfer office contents and arrange things in the new location.

2. Student Job Search consultation

I took part in a consultation meeting organised for the purposes of providing feedback to SJS on its plans to reform its structure and operating model.

3. Communications

In the absence of a staff member specialising in communications, members of the executive have had to carry out external and internal communications activities. I have drafted a couple of press releases and am one of the executive members responsible for maintaining the VUWSA twitter account, providing coverage on various occasions. Finally, I have written a column for *Salient*, describing my role and VUWSA's campaigns for the year.

4. Let Me Go Home

I partook in this event aimed at combating rape culture and sexual violence and played a minor supporting role. This was chiefly in helping pack down after the Let Me Go Home forum in the Aro Valley Community Centre and providing social media coverage.

5. Women's Week

At the time of writing this has not eventuated into any outputs (Women's Week is in the second trimester) but I have been helping the VUWSA Women's Group in planning what is their keynote initiative for the year.

Representation

1. VUWSA Executive

The executive meets fortnightly, and I have attended all but one of the meetings. I have striven to contribute at executive meetings where appropriate.

2. Engagement Team Meetings

The Engagement team meets weekly to discuss what we are working on and plan ahead for team-related projects. I regularly attend and contribute at these.

3. Executive Reporting Committee

I have often sat on this fortnightly committee and provided scrutiny to fellow executive members' reports.

4. NZUSA Conference

I attended all days of the NZUSA conference early this year and provided robust contributions to debates on NZUSA's focus in an election year, and attended workshops relevant to my campaigns role.

5. Campaigns Committee

I have frequently convened, facilitated and contributed to this committee, which although meeting on a somewhat ad hoc basis, informs VUWSA's plans and strategy for the upcoming General Election.

6. Valuing our Vote – Electoral Commission Conference

I went to this conference on behalf of VUWSA, learning much about the state of the participation of young people in elections in New Zealand and enjoyed valuable networking opportunities with others working on a similar framework to VUWSA.

7. Meetings with NZUSA President Dan Haines

With the absence of a Campaigns Co-ordinator at NZUSA for the first half of this year, I have semi-frequently met with President Dan Haines to keep up to date with NZUSA's election campaign plans and relevant political information.

Strengths

1. Vision and Creativity. I am passionate about engaging with the issues that matter to students and I have had clear ideas on where take this in a campaign. I feel I have been always on the lookout for new and interesting ways to achieve my goals, developing an interesting and engaging plan of events for VUWSA's election campaign and Arts Week.
2. Relationships. I have been successful in seeking out potential partnerships for VUWSA's election campaign and as a result we are well set for the next half of the year, collaborating productively with groups like the Wireless, Ask Away, TEU, NZEI, Gen Zero and Rock Enrol.
3. Political Nous. I follow political developments closely and have experience coming from participating in various political groups and academic study over the past 3 years, leaving me with a rather detailed level of knowledge of politics in New Zealand. This has been particularly helpful in developing campaign strategy.

Weaknesses

1. Prioritisation and Organisation. Deciding which tasks are more important and need to be given higher priority in completion and vice versa has been a challenge for me these past 6 months. Learning to plan my workload effectively in advance is a key target for me for the rest of the year if I am to improve my productivity.
2. Work life balance. Following on from my previous point, my often poor organisation has impacted on the time spent towards my study and free time. Becoming more organised would enable me to free up more time for my academic studies and for myself.
3. Communication. Communicating with fellow executive members has sometimes fallen below par and has led to delays and inefficiencies in work being completed. This is another area I am to improve upon in the coming trimester.

Overall Rating

While my organisation and communication has sometimes let me down in the fulfilment of my work, when I have been on task I have done my work well and produced good outcomes. I am satisfied with what I have achieved and although I know I could have done more I look forward to remedying this, producing an invigorating election campaign on campus this coming trimester. I am proud to work with a passionate and talented executive and I look forward to seeing what VUWSA will achieve by year's end.