

VUWSA Submission on the Name Change Proposal

To the University Council,

VUWSA collected submissions from students on two main points. First, the issue of the name change itself. Second, the consultation process leading up to the proposed change.

Views on the name change itself:

We have 777 responses with 722 against the name change, 48 for the name change, and 7 who do not care.

From these responses we have recognized three common themes within the feedback that is against the name change:

- **First**, students who responded believe the name change project is too expensive especially when considering that some of our student services are falling behind financially.
- **Second**, students who responded feel more connected to the name Victoria University of Wellington than just University of Wellington, and they want to graduate with degrees under the former title.
- **Third**, students who responded feel the decision was rushed when the University Council decided to “agree in principle” with the name change without going through proper, extensive consultation.

Of the minority of respondents who were for the change, we recognized these three themes:

- **First**, students who responded felt the new name is a move away from colonialist notions
- **Second**, students who responded felt branding is a vital part of any institution/organisation and therefore we should rebrand as suggested.
- **Third**, students who responded felt that a change would mean that academics get the recognition they deserve.

Views on the consultation process:

714 of the respondents said that the University did not do enough consultation on the matter, 45 said that the University did, and 18 did not care.

A lot of students reported not receiving an email. A significant number of students felt that VUWSA should have run the consultation. The overwhelming feeling from respondents is that the university intentionally tried to rush this process.

Conclusion

Consultation was not done thoughtfully with students in mind, and the university needs to review its consultation process. While some work was done in partnership, ultimately VUWSA does not have direction over the university’s communications and there should have been more correspondence.

Furthermore, VUWSA is open to running consultation like this in the future. To do so we would need access to student emails, as currently the best we can do to get an even sample is on social media and even that is difficult.

Our recommendation for an effective consultation process for an issue as big and important as a name change is to include the wider student body in the conversation from the very beginning, and use VUWSA as a way to do that. We did provide advice on the importance of clear communication with students at the beginning of the year.

Finally, it's not a name 'simplification'. It is a name change.

Kind regards,

Marlon Drake

President

Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association

Te Rōpū Taura o te Kura Wānanga o te Upoko o te Ika a Māui

Level 4 Student Union Building, Victoria University of Wellington, Kelburn

PO Box 600, Wellington 6140

04 463 6986 | 021 0233 2471

www.vuwsa.org.nz