



EXECUTIVE HALF-YEAR REPORT

NAME	Sophie Dixon
POSITION	Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer
REPORT PERIOD	1 st January 2020 – July 12 th 2020
HOURS WORKED	316.5
HOURS REQUIRED	280

Introduction

It's been a hectic half – year to say the least.
I am beyond grateful for the VUWSA Executive
For their support, enthusiasm, and love.

Wellbeing and Sustainability Officer Constitutional Goals

Goal 6: Public Issues: To be the critic and conscience of the University and society, by promoting discussion and action on issues concerning students.

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.

Retreat and Re – Retreat

Retreat was a fantastic chance for us to plan events and work for the year, learn about how we worked as a team, and bond! Re – Retreat gave us an opportunity to reset after internal restructuring and a global pandemic.



OWeek 2020

During O Week I attended the Rainbow Students Welcome and the Pacifica Breakfast. I was able to talk about the work VUWSA does and connect with some of our incoming students. I also had a great time making and then handing out fairy bread right outside the drinks area during O – Week. I also worked on the Kelburn and Pipitea Campus Expos.

COVID – 19

COVID – 19 presented a variety of challenges for our Executive and the University. My work during COVID – 19 centered on supporting the General Executive, as well as initiating the Fast – Forward campaign with our Equity Officer Parminder. This campaign was an internal push to prioritise accessible and equitable lecture recordings and enhancing the online university experience. This campaign has been fairly successful, and will likely revive in 2021, as we shift back into more campus-based learning.

I also worked with NZUSA to develop a letter to Studylink about online signing of documents and accessibility to student loans and student allowances, which resulted in changes to their process. I worked with SWAT (the Student Wellbeing Awareness Team) to develop self – care templates and bingo, and discussed first year/hall specific engagement to deal with the specific issue of hall student isolation during online university.

Wellington Student Volunteer Army

I worked with the Wellington Student Volunteer Army as a coordinator for the Western Ward. I attended Co-Ordinator training and wider meetings, and then delivered health and safety training to the Western Ward volunteers. I completed support requests for our neighbours in need, as well as coordinating the 30+ team of volunteers in the Western Ward, completing over 50 different requests.

Sex Week

I was involved in the preparation for Sex Week to create an engaging and exciting week. I contacted stall holders and organisations to discuss promotion and giveaways, as well as approaching Rainbow organisations in Wellington. The Week was cancelled due to COVID – 19.

Sustainability Week

I am the primary Executive member in charge of Sustainability Week 2020. To organise this, I coordinated the Welfare Team to approach stall holders across Wellington for our Market Day and for general promotion and partnership. We began initial planning for this in the first half of 2020 – discussing the scope and theme of events and the week as a whole.

Stress – Free Study Week

I really enjoyed being able to connect with students and provide them with fruit, cereal and hot drinks during this week. It is a fantastic VUWSA initiative.



Hardship Fund

A major responsibility I have this year is sitting on the Hardship Fund. When COVID – 19 emerged as a significant barrier to student wellbeing, we worked with the Hardship Fund to increase access to technology and support during this time. With the support of our advocates, I get to be a strong voice in this space for supporting student welfare.

Climate Justice

During first lock-down, I attended Climate Justice training with major climate organisations in Aotearoa. These two sessions were fourteen hours in total and gave me a solid foundation to continue learning and educating about climate justice. This work was incredibly enlightening and gave me skills and understanding that I have been able to carry forward into my work with the Sustainability Committee, and as part of the initial planning for Sustainability Week.

Green Impact

A major Sustainability project I undertook was developing the Green Impact framework for students. Green Impact is a website tool that staff at Victoria University of Wellington use to embed sustainable practices within their work life. Along with the Sustainability Staff Team, I developed student- specific tasks and framing, and worked to promote this to students. We focused on making these inclusive, and affordable. This project will end in August, and we are looking to expand it to the Halls as part of the competition structure in 2021. I created a specific group of Resident Advisors in the Halls to discuss this.

I also developed a relationship with Champions 12.3 – a food waste collective.



Elections

During the first half of the year, I've worked with the Elections Planning Committee (*girl gang !!*) to discuss our Election Year policy demands, work to plan events and workshops and engage in Halls and on campus.



Overall, I feel so lucky and excited to be part of the VUWSA Executive for 2020. It's definitely not been the year I expected, but it's the year we've had, and I'm proud of the work we have been able to do for students, and what we will continue to do.