

VUSU PRESIDENT'S 2017 MID-YEAR REPORT

By Jillian Horman

In the late weeks of October and early weeks of November, I began to plan how 2017 would be shaped. I had a great team behind me, and was confident that this team would achieve great things, no matter the challenges that the year may bring.



On the 9th of November, I was nominated by VU Senior Staff to attend the TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency) Conference at Park Royal Hotel due to my role in the Union and my positive history within VU. I was on a panel of 5 students, being the only one from Victoria University and one of two people from Victoria. I prepared a presentation on my perspective of “The Student Experience” and of “What students want” which was well received by the audience. I was congratulated by Teresa Tjia, Vice President Planning, Registrar & University Secretary.

In early February, I prepared a presentation on the VUSU affiliated College Societies with information about funding, access to funds, roles/responsibilities and VUSU as an organisation, for the Clubs & Societies training day. This was to ensure there was a clear distinction between College Societies affiliated with VUSU, and Clubs who were under the financial jurisdiction of Student Life. In this presentation, I ensured that people were aware of and understood their obligations regarding the governments Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) categories, by which we are funded.



TEQSA Conference, ParkRoyal, Melbourne Airport

I began to conduct research on and drafted a potential VUSU Membership card, including paid membership benefits system draft. This was based on a set of high-level objectives I had created with the VUSU 2017 team, to increase engagement and to improve our outreach and service delivery. During the beginning of my term, VUSU were offered the opportunity to be one of the consultation leaders of a student space revitalisation project. This project is still rolling out, but has reached a number of the main campuses so far.

Major Campaigns

After liaising with the Respect and Responsibility department, we co-signed an application for a government grant to support a collective initiative to create awareness of the implications of violence against women, implement policy recommendations and develop preventative measures. VUSU launched a Sexual Consent Campaign in semester one, which the Prevention of Violence Against Women committee has been a key supporter of. I have been an active participant of this committee which convenes twice a month to work on this grant project. This May, we found out the we had been successful in receiving the entire \$50,000 grant which we had applied for which means we will have the ability to facilitate and implement a number of sustainable projects over semester two. These initiatives

will be a great response to the anticipated reports of sexual assault statistics on VU Campuses. James Sorensen and I have also been working on a Hyde article about the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) committee. This article serves the purpose of raising awareness of the committee and its objectives, as well as reflecting on the need to the committee at VU.

I have engaged with a group of VU Polytechnic students in the Sexual Consent Campaign, who has integrated their involvement into their course work objectives. With the initial guidance and collaboration of VUSU's Education department, I will be continuing to work with all associates to this campaign to implement a number of objectives in semester two, including a "Consent Awareness Video", with VU Poly, and a "Consent Module" with the support of PVAW. As part of my involvement on the PVAW committee, I participated in and completed Bystander Training 101, a workshop on the Prevention of Violence Against Women in life and at VU.

Operations

Due to the SSAF collection for VU being overall at an all-time low, the association experienced a consequentially lower allocation than proposed and thus, we had do endeavour to seek extra funds to continue to support our services. A grant avenue which I looked into for VUSU was the SSAF Major Grants which were available for application in semester one. I chose Hyde magazine – an associate publication team run by students as a suitable candidate for a grant application. I took the proposal to Hyde, who then worked collaboratively with VUSU to apply – eventually being successful in securing \$10,000. Applying for these grants will help VUSU regulate its expenditure, usage of student's money, and our SSAF compliance.

VUSU undertook a number of constructive induction sessions this semester, these focused mainly on role specific campaigns, team objectives, communication, events and strategic planning. Since then, VUSU have been involved in many other profile development activities. VUSU have also recently gained a new acting executive officer, Elisse Baitz who has hit the ground running by assisting me in policy development, standing orders and general management support.

Engagement

In terms of our representation on campus, during orientation VUSU got out to Werribee, City Queen, Footscray Nicholson, St Albans and Footscray Park. During this time, we engaged over 200 students, many who were interested in getting involved and volunteering with VUSU. This year so far, VUSU has had strong and positive engagement with the Student Leadership council, attending meetings and

using the council to assist in updating the student population of major updates, events and opportunities. On the 15th March, I had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Peter Dawkins. At this meeting, we discussed VUSU's high level objectives for 2017 (see below). I also provided feedback on the Student Welcome (orientation), and spoke about some of our up-coming campaigns. The Vice Chancellor stated his ongoing support for the Student Union at VU, and was excited to here of our planned endeavours.



VUSU, Semester 1 Student Welcome Festival, 2017

VUSU's High-level objectives included a focus on instatement of VUSU Loyalty Membership to strengthen the VUSU community, create incentive for VUSU involvement, and heightened communication between VUSU and the student population. Secondly, VUSU engagement in terms of collection of feedback from students, providing more tailored advocacy and promoting the union and what we can offer students. Thirdly, delivery of service – we want to get out to all campuses for events and stalls so we can be more accessible to students by providing consistent representation at VU campuses. I'm proud to say we have achieved this in many respects, thanks to the VUSU Activities department and the support of the team and our volunteers.

With the implementation of a improved "Eduroam" WIFI at VU, I was pleased to be asked to provide a short testimonial on the new system, where I was able to engage over 100 students and student representatives on their opinion with our recent development of a VUSU Mailing List. On the 15th of March, I provided this feedback to a number of senior staff involved in the initiative to ensure that any concerns raised are swiftly remedied for the benefit of students.

VUSU & VUHQ

Jasmine Birch, James Sorensen, Norbert Kindermann and I began attending VUHQ committee meeting with regard to the proposed building M level 1, restructure at Footscray Park campus. What we gathered from this meeting was that VUSU will be relocating for a few months during the construction period, and be re-established in a different part of building M. We noticed that our much used VUSU spaces such as the lounge and board room had not been duly considered in the proposed plans and therefore we decided to collect some feedback on the students' opinion on the ideas. The findings were very supportive of VUSU and we hoped that our feedback, which has been conveyed to the managers of this project, consider the needs of the 98 students who participated in the survey. After a lot of bargaining and negotiation, I was able to lead the Union's presence and services to be considered in the new VUHQ plans for 2018 using feedback and ensuring the services of VUSU were well-known by the committee members. At this point, VUSU looks to be temporarily moving to Building P along with the other key student services.

VUSU & VU Student Symposium

In May, VUSU ran a very successful symposium with a select panel of Victoria University's management. Some good information we got out of this was information on the First Year College. The discussion around this can be found in the minutes provisioned to you all by Holly Walker. VUSU will be working with Ian Solomonides, the Pro-Vice Chancellor in providing student representation for the First Year College roll out. VU staff will also be working with the VUSU LGBTQIA+ and VU Pride in getting all-gender bathrooms on all VU campuses. Many students were able to speak openly and directly to VU Senior Staff, and I have only received excellent feedback about the event since.



VUSU Symposium 2017, Graphic

VUSU VIP Loyalty Program

VUSU have piloted a VIP program, but have noticed that it is lacking desired student engagement. The VUSU Welfare officer Felix Mallon and I have been working on developing a new structure. This includes more face-to-face engagement methods such as offering cheaper printing, text books and food on campus, as well as many other developing incentives.

I have liaised with the campus food outlet management who have already expressed support for the idea which will include the promotion of this loyalty program. We have also begun arrangements regarding the printers/printing. VUSU are looking to develop contracts with campus food outlets to promote and support discounts included in the development of the re-envisaged VUSU VIP Loyalty program for semester two. I have been liaising with Adrian Wong who is the Director of Strategic Procurement in developing a plan for the improvement of campus café's including what is available and the pricing of these items as a long-term sustainability plan for university life affordability.

Although I have encountered many obstacles and challenges in my term so far, I am feeling positive about the semester ahead and excited to see VUSU continue to achieve greatness.

Jillian Horman

VUSU President 2017