



## **Report of the Annual General Meeting**

Monday 12 August 2019

## Presidents' Report

### Waikato University Law Students' Association

#### 2019 Annual General Meeting

##### Overview:

The following is a detailed report documenting the actions of the 2018/2019 Waikato University Law Students' Association since our last AGM.

Inclusive in this report is comments from the various portfolios as to the highlights and lowlights of their respective terms.

This section of the report will focus on my actions as President in relation to WULSA. These can be divided across three main sections: **Internal**, **external**, and **long term**.

##### Internal:

Communication has been a major stumbling block this year. Emails and Facebook allow for communication quickly between the President and various portfolios at critical stages. This however was counter intuitive to the "WULSA first – portfolio second" mentality that we have been trying to foster in recent years. The end result was silos of information and action. Whilst this is useful for ensuring that those elected to roles were able to fulfil them, this has a counterintuitive effect in that it causes the executive board to cease to end as a single unit. This should have been remedied much earlier and is a failure on my part to conduct effective management. Solutions to this are included in this report.

A sub issue branching under the communication issue was the difficulty we had holding meetings. The initial idea was to hold a meeting every second Wednesday at Cultural Hour – but this led to (legitimate) resistance. Due to the fact that these committees attract busy people it is *incredibly* hard to find a time where we can all meet. In fact, we struggled greatly to attain quorum at many meetings. It has become clear that the only feasible option is to meet outside of regular hours. Evenings pose difficulties as many people have work. Due to a unique set of personal circumstances, early mornings proved to be difficult too. If possible, I would recommend that future executives meet in the morning *at least* fortnightly to facilitate open communication as best possible.

Anything that was a pre-established concept worked quite well. We were able to continue to develop the formulae established by previous committees. However, newer initiatives were harder to get off the ground -in particular, Careers officer and the IPLS Breakfast Sessions. These are good ideas but will require executive commitment in to their expansion.

## **External**

A large part of the Presidency involves managing external stakeholder relationships, such as with our primary sponsors. Efforts have been made in the recent past to increase sponsorship so this year there was a focus on maintaining and strengthening the interpersonal nature of these relationships. As always, we are grateful for our sponsors – we simply could not exist without their support. The Faculty engagement has been better in this year – and I *strongly* encourage this to be continued especially with the upcoming changes.

Student relations have been one of the more important considerations over this year. A focus on engagement with our junior students as well as getting better engagement with the executive. We saw a downturn in applications for the committee last year, this was disappointing, and led to us starting off at a disadvantage.

The aim was to improve student confidence and engagement with WULSA. This has proved difficult with the impact of the Divisioning process. Regardless, this is something that I feel has been built on from previous years. Certainly, something that future committees would be best suited to keep in mind.

## **Long-Term**

Strategic and long-term movements for the future, having learnt from this year look, to my mind as the following:

- More frequent meetings
- Merging the “Careers portfolio” (one person) and the “education portfolio” (one person) in to a team of two “careers and education” officers. This will help spread the disproportionate workload across the individual portfolios.
- Improvement of the workload sharing between the President and the AVP (Administrative Vice President).
- Continued relationship building between the Faculty and WULSA – whilst assuring that we retain our independence.

## **Conclusion**

Having said these things, WULSA has operated well this year. A perpetual succession model works well as long term events continue to work between committees. Although I have addressed many of the issues we faced as these are important for future committees, it must also be considered that the day-to-day operations of WULSA have continued well.

Thank you to the committee for their hard work and dedication and thank you to the members for allowing me to lead this organisation for this elected term.

**Ben Wilkins – President**

## **Vice Presidents Report**

WULSA final Report.

Committee position – Deputy President.

Date – 31/07/2019.

This report will begin with an outline of the duties performed by the Deputy President followed by recommendations.

### **Log o'wood**

The major change this year for the Deputy President was the organisation and execution of the event Log 'O Wood (Log). Log has traditionally been a problematic event for WUSLA under previous administrations. Some of the key issues are: timing, people management, organisation and alcohol consumption on campus.

This year we approached Log from a damage control perspective, meaning that the event was structured deliberately to minimise potential risk rather than managing the consequences of the risk. There is no way to completely eradicate the risk given the structure and culture of the event. Auckland students arrive intoxicated from the beginning of the event and present numerous challenges that a committee of 12 cannot ever hope to handle given the budgets we work with.

This year a decision was made once the Auckland students arrived to permit them to consume alcohol outside the side entrance to the University Gym (Unirec) the decision was made by the Deputy President based on previous experience and judging the conditions. Refusing alcohol consumption would have caused (as it has in the past) for students to venture out of organised zones where they are monitored to more secluded parts of campus where they can consume alcohol. The decision was made to ensure that all people consuming alcohol were being watched by security, committee members and Unirec representatives thus, mitigating the potential for risk arising that cannot be immediately remedied by someone.

This measure was not initially agreed upon with the Unirec organisers and whilst it wasn't necessarily permitted, Unirec management agreed it was effective. No substantial injuries occurred, intoxicated people were fed and hydrated and venturing into unauthorised parts of campus was prevented. However, Unirec have decided that despite the obvious success from the gym-management by the Committee, that WULSA will no longer be able to host Log at the Gym itself due to the uncontrollable nature of students and the lack of solutions to remedy the inevitable risks.

This is a silver lining for WULSA as it potentially fixes numerous issues.

This first of which is timing. Log is a predominantly outdoor event, meaning that reliance on good weather is paramount. The current timing of log is problematic as it falls during

April/May, when the weather is unpredictable. The fact that the gym is no longer an option means that the event will have to take place solely on the field. Because of this, the event will have to be run in the warmer months (March) to minimise risk of a washout. By having the event earlier on in the year, the committee will be able to have more hands-on deck as the beginning of the year for the committee brings inevitable excitement and enthusiasm to attend and run events. This, almost always expires after March and makes running Log with 7 people, a nightmare.

The second issue this fix is people management. WUSLA are at risk to the University itself whilst Log runs as we are responsible for the students that come to campus to partake in the event. The gym is situated within close proximity to the village green which is a hub for students and vendors. It is also situated closely to the library which is an important area for students. Having intoxicated people within the vicinity is a recipe for disaster and a significant burden for WUSLA to manage. Naturally, removing Unirec from the equation means removing all of the risk.

The third issue this fixes is not having to shift the students from one location, across campus to another. This requires many hands-on deck, and as I've previously described, this is a luxury and never to be assumed due to committee members other commitments in a busy time of the year (particularly May). By having the students arrive on the field and remain there is a great failsafe should the committee be short-staffed for what was previously a crucial part of the event.

The last issue this fixes is the once 'grey-area' of alcohol consumption and smoking. Smoking areas will be created on the field with rubbish bins nearby to reduce littering. As for alcohol consumption, Unirec are agreeable to permitting students to drink on the field as it's out of the way of their members. Unirec are a business so they have to be treated like one. Eventually, the alcohol consumption being within close proximity of their members was going to have to stop, now future committees will be able to permit the Auckland students to consume alcohol for the entire day in a closed off area away from other students.

And as a bonus it means the Committee will save money on the event as renting the gym is considerably more costly than the fields.

In order to achieve this, a handover document will be produced for the next committee to use in planning the event as there are some important considerations the committee must take into account when executing this new plan.

### **General duties of the Deputy President.**

The role of the Deputy has been underutilised by previous administrations. With this in mind, a continual trend is noticeable – that the roles and responsibilities aside for Log are uncertain. They will differ from committee to committee. This is problematic as it renders the Deputy President in no-mans-land. In order to futureproof this issue, the role is having a face-lift.

From the date of the AGM onwards, the role will now be referred to as the Administrative Vice President. Administration and leading has become an insurmountable burden that all WUSLA presidents seem to be burdened with, and, it's not necessarily due to there being a lack of clarity around the Deputy President's role. Sometimes, Presidents may prefer to operate with multiple hands on the wheel. The problem here is that they don't have enough.

By changing the role, the workload of the Deputy President will increase, but it will decrease the workload of the President, which for this committee, has caused some of the challenges we've faced – often unnecessarily. A more detailed description of the revised roles of the Administrative Deputy President will be provided through a hand-over document but will loosely include: Scheduling, meeting arrangements, administration of WULSA committee documents and charitable trust status and the organisation of sponsorships.

Depending on the workload the new role creates, the new Deputy President will have to make ongoing assessments as to their availability. As deputy President this year, I've had the ability to help out with ticket sales, BBQ's and competitions more so than the previous year due to a lighter workload, it's important that the deputy appear at all events the President is unable to attend and in saying that, even those which the President is able to attend. The Deputy President is subject to the motto of committee first, portfolio second as is any member.

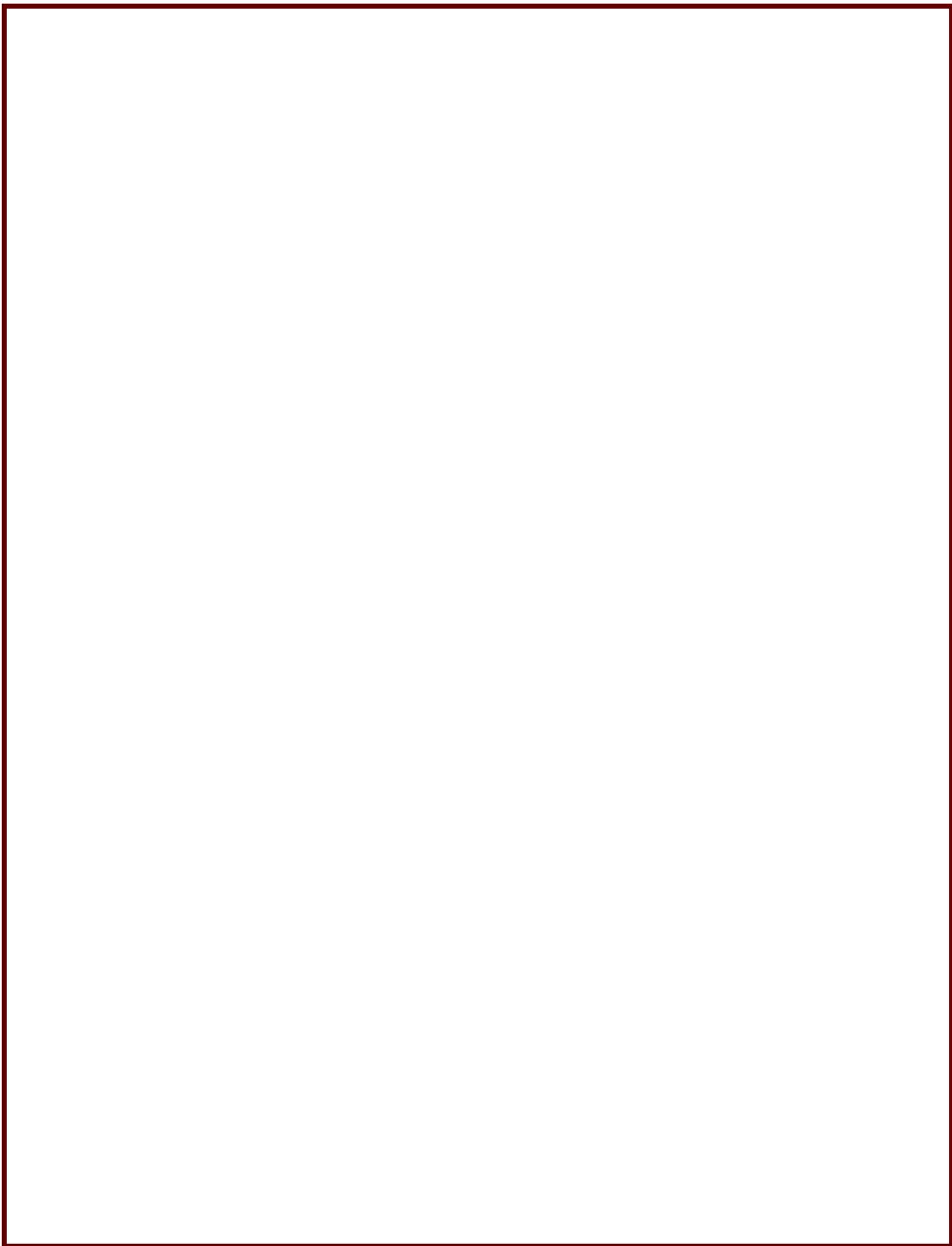
## **Minutes**

As it currently stands, WULSA has an inadequate minutes template, and one which is scarcely used due to its inadequacy. It is difficult to navigate and not properly construed to resemble the minutes of a charitable trust. Therefore, I propose that the following minutes template be adopted (see document). The reason for this is that it contains more relevant headings for WUSLA. Importantly it has space for more accurately documenting "Action Points" for individual members and the committee as a whole. The Actions points template will be beneficial for assessing whether action points have been completed or not, and by which date they are expected to be done.

### *Quorum*

Future committees will find scarce recordings of minutes for this administration. This is because we had several meetings where we were unable to obtain quorum and as such, minutes are not published unless quorum is reached. The main reason for this is that without quorum we cannot make action points, resolutions/motions or committee votes.

## **Deputy President - Myles Rollason**



## **Social Officers**

### **AGM report 2019 - Monika**

This report will detail the events run by the social portfolio in 2019 and discuss what went well, and what could be improved upon for the following years. Before that, I would like to make some general comments on how I feel WULSA has gone this year.

I think it is important to note that the issues we faced as a committee were not caused by any one person. I believe that the main issues we faced were a lack of communication and general disconnect between committee members. On the first issue, this could be solved by having more meetings, which we did attempt but failed for a number of reasons. In the future, this issue should be addressed early, and a set meeting time should be implemented from the very beginning. On the second issue, I believe that the disconnect between executive members was due to the committee being largely portfolio focused this year. We did not have the same “WULSA first, portfolio second” mantra drilled into us as we did last year. I think I am also correct in saying that this was because Ben expected us to know this without being told. I don't think he was wrong to assume this. However, it did mean that a few events and things which were not allocated to specific portfolios went ignored. Again, this is a problem that needs to be addressed from the beginning of the year, and can be easily fixed by ensuring a clear understanding from committee members that they are more than their portfolio, and that WULSA as a whole, comes first.

In terms of this year's successes, I believe we did very well with engaging with the first-year students and I believe we also reached older students who had previously not had a lot of contact with WULSA. It has become very clear that engagement must happen right at the very beginning of the year or else it becomes increasingly difficult. I also believe that this success will be hugely beneficial to future committees and that this will be a large part of the legacy left by the 2019 committee.

## **Events**

### **Mixer**

Now, to discuss our social events. Firstly, we held the mixer at House on Hood. This event was run in a similar fashion to how it was last year and this format worked incredibly well. Tania from the Lawrenson Group is an incredibly efficient contact point, and meeting with her alongside Tayla and Ben at the beginning of the year set up great communication between us which has continued throughout the year. I don't believe that this event needs any substantial changes and having such a successful first event set us up well for the rest of the year.

## **KS Mentoring**

Then, we ran the social side of the Kensington Swan Mentoring evening. We had a few minor bumps with this event, such as running out of drinks etc. These are small issues that can be easily fixed in years going forward.

## **Mid-Year Mixer**

The decision not to run a mid-year event was a decision we made this year and I believe that it was the right one. We did advertise the Waikato University Debating Society's mid-year event (the Powell Cup) and that was a success, with many WULSA members getting involved with that. I also enjoyed seeing more crossover between the two groups.

## **Ball**

The last event worth touching on is the ball. Planning the ball has been a year-long project and it is something which we are still working on. Coming into 2019, I did not realise just how much work planning the ball would be. But I have enjoyed every moment of it and I am sure that it will pay off on Saturday. There is quite a bit to cover in terms of ball planning, but I mainly want to discuss the committee's involvement.

Last year, we had a ball committee to plan the ball but this year, we decided against it. Overall, I believe that this approach worked better and this is what I would recommend to future committees. However, this approach only worked so well because Tayla and I were able to split the workload fairly evenly and had the help of Cat, our general officer, whenever we needed extra help.

We also understand that some of the committee felt as though they were being left out of the planning process, and this is where the problems that I outlined earlier come in. We do realise that we should have let the committee know what we were doing, even if we did not get their opinions and merely for transparency sake. This is another recommendation I would make for the 2020 social officers and this is another small problem that we are capable of fixing with better communication.

I would also recommend increased communication and transparency between the social officers and the treasurer. This is a relationship that I did not realise the importance of before planning the ball. I would have liked to see more of the numbers, as it often felt like walking in the dark. But again, this is not a failure of a singular person but merely something to be improved upon next year.

To quickly talk about location, we know that a lot of students hoped to see a change of venue this year, but we chose to go with the Atrium again for a few reasons. We know it works well for our purposes, is well organised and the aesthetic also suited our theme.

We also have made some changes to the layout which we believe will help it feel a bit different, though you will have to wait till Saturday to see those. We also had the option to use the Gallagher Centre on campus as an option for the ball, however this was not on offer until after Wintec was locked in. In the future, this could be a possible venue to look into, either for the ball or other events.

The other big aspect of the ball this year is the after-ball. Previously, after-balls have not been largely successful, but I believe this year will be different. We have obtained sponsorship from Redbull to cover 2 for \$12 vodka Redbulls, and that, alongside a bar tab will be enough to draw people in. This is another good thing about us starting the year on a good note, people remember that and are keen to attend our events. This just shows how important that initial engagement is.

As for the success of catering, photographers, and the DJ etc, these judgements will have to be made after Saturday. In terms of planning, these things were relatively easy to sort on our end, with the only issues arising from lack of communication from companies such as Kerr and Ladbrook. Again, the success in planning came from having a good relationship with Tayla, and an even split in workload between the two of us.

To conclude on the ball, I believe that the planning of it has been successful. Tayla and I work very well together and have maintained a fairly even split of the workload. The only shortfalls I can see are those relating to the issues of communication and committee disconnect, which again, I mentioned at the beginning of this report.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The final note I wanted to make in this report is that overall, I see this year as a success. I think that we, as a committee, have increased engagement with people of all year levels, ran incredibly successful events and put WULSA in a great position for the future. Having spoken to many students outside of the committee, the student body seem to have an overwhelmingly positive view of WULSA. This means that any issues we did have regarding communication and the likes, did not have a large detrimental impact to WULSA's image.

I would also like to include an official thank you to Ben in this report, not only for his work as President, but for everything he has done for WULSA over his four years on the committee. WULSA is lucky to have had someone as dedicated and capable as you.

### **AGM report 2019 – Tayla**

#### **What didn't work about Social:**

Split responsibilities resulted in inefficiencies throughout the committee. The delay between PR and Social especially, due to the importance of marketing to ensure the

success of such events. Infrequent meetings added to tensions due as well as entitlement of other committee members to micro-manage minimal details adding undue stress. To rectify this, weekly meetings should be held and while a committee first approach should be taken, trust should be placed in social officers to make decisions.

**What did work about Social:**

Monika and I have been a great team. We have great communication and an even split of workload as well as similar expectations and cohesive ideas. I think that going forward it is important to ensure that the portfolio work together. Cat, one of the general members was a great help to us, assisting with ideas, collection of objects and prep.

Our First mixer was great, had good participation, and the mixer after Log O'Wood was good. House on Hood remains a great place to hold the mixers. We decided not to run a mid-year which we think was the right idea due to the amount of assignments etc. Our ball is this weekend and we are holding an after-ball this year for the first time in a while which should be good, will have updates on that for the next social officers following the ball.

## **Education Officer**

### Kensington Swan Mentoring Programme

- Using the google forms document for people to sign up as mentor/mentee depending on which year level they are
  - Year 3/4 – Mentor
  - Year 1/2 – Mentee
- With help from the Careers Officer and President - Assign each Mentee with a Mentor (there will likely be more mentees than mentors, so each mentor will likely have 2-3 mentees)
- Let each person know who they are matched with before the night event (Social Officers look after the event details)
- There are name badges in the WULSA cupboard to use.

### IPLS Study Sessions

- This was a new initiative for 2019, could continue with funding from IPLS if the new Education officer had the capacity for it.
- Providing Breakfast for students to study collectively (funded for 8x sessions)

### Wellness Week

- The final week of Semester B – activities to promote wellness during the final week of the semester and beginning of final exams.

### Review from Education Officer – Cat Dwyer 2019

What worked: Once I knew what was going on with the role, I was able to manage it to my best ability, not having been given a handover from the 2018 Education Officer.

What didn't work: Communication throughout the committee has been horrendous, and a "team" environment has not been cultivated.

## **Careers Officer**

### **Objectives**

- The objectives I had for this role was to promote the job opportunities available for students and with the support of our leadership, encourage and empower students to put themselves forward for these opportunities.
- I set out to achieve this through regular networking events, sharing intern/graduate opportunities on the WULSA social media platforms, workshops with students to grow their application skills to provide support for students' career development and display the diverse career avenues of which an LLB can lead to after University.

### **Achieved Objectives**

- The Kensington Swan Mentoring evening was a successful careers/education event in terms of student engagement with industry professionals and was one of the strongest demonstrations of team work/leadership we had as a committee in 2019.
- Social media was an efficient tool of engagement to link students to job opportunities and capture their involvement in WULSA events. I think we maximised this tool to advertise and promote clerkships and other graduate job opportunities to students.

### **Developments for the future**

- This year we took the approach of developing the Careers portfolio as the year progressed, this did not work as efficiently as it could have, as there was not a specific/detailed enough outline for expectations and objectives of the role to be met.
- To develop this role further, this portfolio would benefit from a clear outline of events before the semester A commences. This gives a benchmark for objectives to be met while having a consistent goal in sight to work towards. Otherwise, the objectives are not met.
- In terms of support, this portfolio needs to be partnered with another position on the committee such as; President/ Vice President to assist with regular meetings and coaching.
- Regular meetings with the partnered portfolio, to ensure leadership expectations and deadlines are being met.

### **General comments**

- Communication across the board was sometimes inefficient, which prevented the committee working jointly as a team. However, when we did meet as a

committee our understanding of each portfolio's expectations and responsibilities was clearer and less conflict arose.

- For the incoming committee, to avoid conflict and miscommunication in the future this issue can be solved with regular team meetings and individual portfolio meetings to ensure transparency, effective communication and to ensure better accountability for leadership.

## **Public Relations**

### **Activities of portfolio**

- Keep WULSA members up to date of events, competitions and careers through Facebook and Instagram.
- Attend events to get photos and use for advertising in the future.
- Plan status updates thoughtfully in the leading weeks to an event.

### **What went well**

- Having good turn out to events for photographs
- Being told exactly what to post and when by competitions and social officers.
- Replies from other WULSA executive members when further information is needed.

### **What needs to be adjusted**

- Stronger communication would be ideal. This can be done in the form of fortnightly or monthly WULSA executive meetings. Having more meetings would allow the PR officer to be more 'in the loop' around events which would mean more accurate status' that don't need to be edited once post response rates are high. It would also allow the PR officer to have stronger response rates to questions that come in via Facebook and Instagram.
- To be included in final meetings between competition officer and President and social officers and President. This would make it more efficient to relay messages about the details of each event, rather than messaging back and forth when someone has a query online and making them wait a couple of hours for a simple answer.
- Preferably only the PR officer to have access to the Facebook and Instagram accounts. This is because the PR officer usually has a plan of how to post for events which gets disrupted when someone else posts without communicating they will be doing so. Definitely the only other person who should have access to these platforms would be the President to be an overseer, but having multiple

people posting and replying to queries made it difficult to plan advertising. It also led to messages and comments not being checked as there was a false sense of understanding created that the new people with access would do so. This in turn led to a decline in response rates.

- PR officer should be the one replying to all messages unless communicated differently with the President. This means that when the PR officer replies to a message, they continue with that person until the issue is resolved. When another person responds to a message that has already started to be dealt with by the PR officer, this leads to confusion in communication and confusion as to who now should be replying.

### **Recommendations for moving forward**

- Frequent meetings
- To be included in more meetings with social and competitions officer
- Only PR Officer to have access to Facebook and Instagram accounts
- Only PR Officer to be replying as WULSA unless otherwise agreed upon with President.