

**2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)  
 PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
 Jordan Anderson**

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**REPORT ON THE RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE PGSA**

**Membership**

PGSA membership stands at 1515 as at 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018. With the addition of many more social and membership events over the last year, the PGSA has been able to increase its reach and event attendance. As we continue to increase the effectiveness and value of our events, we aim to become a more effective and authentic representative association, and to strengthen our relationship with postgrads as their students' association.

**Academic Conference Grants**

Since the 2018 IGM, the PGSA awarded Academic Conference Grants applicants as listed below. These awards are generously sponsored by Vice-Provost (Research) Professor Margaret Hyland and provide funding for the conference fees of PGSA members who are attending an international conference. We are currently in the process of overhauling the process for applying for these grants, so keep an eye out for the new information early in 2019!

Soloman Opare	Accounting and Commercial Law	\$450	6.04.2018
Maja Zonjic	English, Film, Theatre, Media Studies	\$400	14.09.2018

**Student Representation**

The PGSA represents postgraduate students on key Boards and Committees at Victoria University from the Faculty level upwards. Representatives on these committees are drawn from the Executive Board and other postgraduate volunteers.

The PGSA thanks all those who have contributed to the postgraduate community through service on a University Board or Committee this year. Since the 2018 IGM, the PGSA hosted Committee Reps Morning

Tea events on the 17<sup>th</sup> April and the 17<sup>th</sup> July, and we have our final event for 2018 coming up this month on 16<sup>th</sup> October. We currently have representatives on the following committees:

○ Academic Board	Jordan Anderson
○ Academic Committee	Jordan Anderson
○ University Research Committee	Faka'iloatonga Taumoefolau
○ URC Intellectual Property Standing Committee (IPSC)	Vlad Samoylov
○ Human Ethics Committee	Schyana Sivanantham/Will Abbiss
○ Faculty of Graduate Research Board	Leo Mercer/Priyanka Roy
○ Faculty of Health Curriculum Committee	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ Faculty of Health Academic Committee	Tosin Popoola
○ Faculty of Health Research and Leave Committee	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ FHSS/Education Research Committee	Hayden Thorne
○ FHSS Teaching & Learning Committee	Elizabeth Olsen
○ FHSS Faculty Board	Corrina Connor/Eleonora Bello
○ FHSS Academic Committee	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ FHSS Postgrad Committee	Max Baddeley
○ Faculty of Science Animal Ethics Committee	Quenten Highgate
○ Faculty of Science Board	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ Faculty of Science Research Committee	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ Faculty of Engineering Board	Andrew Lensen
○ Faculty of Commerce Board	Solmaz Nazari Orakani
○ Commerce Graduate Research Degrees Committee	<b>Vacancy</b>
○ Pipitea Human Ethics Committee	René Versteegh
○ Faculty of Law Board	Nikita Melashchenko
○ Faculty of Education Board	Philippa Nicoll Antipas
○ Faculty of Education Academic Committee	Liana MacDonald
○ Faculty of Education Learning & Teaching Committee	Liwei Liu
○ Faculty of Architecture & Design Board	Hamish Beattie/Dan Scudder
○ Library and Information Services Committee	Caitriona Pearson
○ VUW Equity and Diversity Committee	<i>Not currently convening</i>

For any postgraduate students interested in taking up a representative position on a Board or Committee, please contact our Representation Coordinator Will Abbiss ([will.abbiss@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:will.abbiss@vuw.ac.nz)) to apply or register your interest.

## **SUBMISSIONS / ADVOCACY**

This year the University produced the **Tutors Policy** to govern the training and conduct of tutors. The PGSA produced a lengthy submission on this policy, which included suggestions around the de facto pastoral care role of tutors, the provision of cultural awareness and other training, and opportunities for professional development. We also requested that the University strengthen some of the policy statements and rearrange clauses to give the policy more teeth. Despite the wealth of experience of the tutors who contributed to this submission, the University turned down our suggestions. In conversation with the owner of this policy on the day it passed through Academic Board, I was told they simply want to get *something* down on record, and then they can start to finesse it to tackle some of the gnarly issues we highlighted.

The **Masters' Thesis Regulations** have been overhauled in a lengthy 18 month process. The PGSA submitted on these changes, congratulating the Faculty of Graduate Research for creating an easier to understand and more straightforward policy, and requesting that they add in more stringent guidelines specifically to govern research portfolios. The FGR heeded this request, and there are now clearer expectations included in the Regulations about the provision of information to portfolio students.

The PGSA boiled months of consultation and discussions around the provision of services to **Students With Families** into a submission to Student Academic Services in June. This submission outlined the central issues that the students we spoke to were grappling with, and some simple strategies that we suggested the University take to deal with them.

The University campuses are not family friendly spaces, and it can be very difficult for families with young children to be present on campus for any length of time. To change this, we have asked for the University to install more changing tables in bathrooms, and install a family room at each of the three campuses.

We also asked that the University build a section of the website for 'Students With Families at Victoria'. This would be a one-stop-shop for families both domestic and international.

The Director of Student Academic Services, Pam Thorburn, responded positively to these requests. By the time I handed our submission over, we had already successfully re-established the Orientation for Students with Families in partnership with Vic International, Student Finance, and Mauri Ora. This work is ongoing, and will continue throughout 2018.

The PGSA has also been doing informal consultation around **scholarships** this year with a view to getting the University to take action. We have targeted the Victoria Doctoral Scholarship because of the large number of our members reliant on this scholarship as their primary source of income. However, much of the content of the consultation document we produced applies across all scholarships.

I presented this information to the Manager of the Scholarships Office in September, and explained that the evidence we have shows two things: that the VDS needs to be increased to match the increased cost of living in Wellington (the stipend hasn't increased since 2011), and more urgently, that the scholarships need to cover the Student Services Levy.

There is widespread support from students and University departments for scholarships to cover the Student Services Levy. It is growing every year, and is now a very significant expense for postgraduate students to have to meet at the beginning of each year. In addition to this though, the stipend also needs to be increased, as it is not feasible for many postgraduates to live on \$23,500 per year.

## **EVENTS**

### **Quiz Night**

The 2018 Charity Quiz Night was held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May at The Hunter Lounge and was a well-attended and successful event, with 19 teams and approximately 100 people in attendance. The dedication of our EA Fran Denton, and the collaboration of the PGSA Executive ensured that the event ran smoothly. In total, we raised \$595 for the NZ Red Cross Pacific Disaster Fund's work in Tonga in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Gita.

### **3 Minute Thesis**

The 2018 3 Minute Thesis competition at VUW was very successful. With 44 registrations, the continuing popularity of the event among postgraduate students is clear. Engaging and entertaining presentations were demonstrative of the high quality of research being undertaken across the university. The 3-minute limit, along with the non-specialist audience provided a challenge to our participants which they took in their stride, making the task for our judges a difficult one.

Nine finalists (winners of the faculty heats) and the Honours winner presented at the 3MT Final on 17<sup>th</sup> August. The Masters winner, Saskia, went on to represent VUW at the National 3MT Masters final on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and our highest-ranking PhD finalist, Jasmine, represented VUW at the Asia-Pacific 3MT Final in Brisbane on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

#### Finalists:

Zak Murray – School of Biological Sciences

Kristopher Nielsen – School of Psychology

Sonja Hummel – School of Biological Sciences

Meera Muralidharan – School of History, Philosophy, Political Science, and International Relations

Rose Cole – School of Government  
 Jasmine Chan-Hyams – School of Biological Sciences  
 Pip Dean – School of Psychology  
 Saskia Ymker – School of Biological Sciences  
 Darryn Ooi – School of Law

#### Winners:

1<sup>st</sup> Place - Saskia Ymker – Masters, School of Biological Sciences  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Jasmine Chan-Hyams – PhD, School of Biological Sciences  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Zak Murray – PhD, School of Biological Sciences  
 People's Choice Award - Jasmine Chan-Hyams – PhD, School of Biological Sciences  
 International Prize - Sonja Hummel – Masters, School of Biological Sciences  
 Masters Award - Saskia Ymker – Masters, School of Biological Sciences  
 Honours Award - Darryn Ooi – Honours, School of Law  
 Resilience and Sustainability Prize - Zak Murray – PhD, School of Biological Sciences

### **Research Roundtables**

The PGSA has hosted four Research Roundtables so far this year: 20<sup>th</sup> March at Kelburn, 22<sup>nd</sup> May at Pipitea, 24<sup>th</sup> July at Kelburn, and 25<sup>th</sup> September at Te Aro. These events provide an opportunity for postgrads to present or discuss their research in a relaxed and friendly environment. Each speaker is given 20 minutes, and they are able to choose how to use that time – workshopping, formally presenting, or running a discussion. These events are a great way to get feedback on your presentation style, and a non-threatening start to a presenting career!

Any postgrad who is keen to develop their presentation skills and promote their research, can book in for a slot in an upcoming Research Roundtable through our Executive Administrator today!

### **Kickstart Your Thesis!**

We have run three Kickstart workshops since the IGM, on 26<sup>th</sup> April at Kelburn campus, 28<sup>th</sup> June at Pipitea campus, and 30<sup>th</sup> August again at Kelburn campus. Communal writing can be a powerful tool for getting concerted chunks of work done in a supportive and quiet environment. When there are 24 other people around you working hard on their research, you tend to jump on board and produce some great work too! The workshops run from 9am-5pm, with snacks, drinks and lunch provided by the PGSA. At the beginning of the day, each participant sets three ambitious goals for their time in the workshop, and as the goals are achieved, participants receive rewards.

### **First Fridays**

Held at Kelburn on the First Friday of every month, this casual breakfast event provides postgraduates with an opportunity to meet their colleagues and have a casual breakfast/coffee and chat.

### **Tuesday Chats**

Held at Pipitea campus on the first Tuesday of each month, Tuesday Chats provides an opportunity for postgraduates to meet their colleagues and have a casual coffee and chat.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Tuesday Chats**

2:30pm-3:30pm, VicBooks Pipitea, 2<sup>nd</sup> October

### **First Fridays**

9am, Milk & Honey, 5<sup>th</sup> October

### **Kickstart Your Thesis!**

9am-5pm, SU217/218, 1<sup>st</sup> November

A communal writing event for members at any postgraduate level. Keep an eye out for the opening of registrations, as the 25 places fill up fast!

### **Research Roundtable**

4pm, Student Union Building 217/218, Kelburn Campus, 20<sup>th</sup> November

### **Victorias Awards Night**

5pm, The Hunter Lounge, Kelburn Campus, 30<sup>th</sup> November

## **PGSA EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The PGSA Executive Board is the core leadership team of our Association. Below is a list of members and officers of the Executive Board:

**President:** Jordan Anderson

**Co-Vice-Presidents:** Will Abbiss, Priyanka Roy

**Treasurer:** Schyana Sivanantham

**Executive Members:** Taylor Cooney, Faka'iloatonga Taumoefolau, Leo Mercer, Pascarn Dickinson, Andrew Lensen, Roya Jabarouti, Elizabeth Olsen

**Executive Administrator:** Fran Denton

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The PGSA is always on the lookout for keen people to join us! In addition to being a member, you might be interested in joining the Executive, or contributing to the student representation the PGSA coordinates by taking a seat on one of the many boards and committees at the university. If you are interested, please contact [pgsa@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:pgsa@vuw.ac.nz) for more information!