**2019 INITIAL GENERAL MEETING (IGM)**

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

**Priyanka Roy**

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

**Membership**

PGSA membership stands at 1855 as at 12 March 2018. With the addition of many more social and membership events this 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 organization, and to strengthen our standing as a representative association for postgraduates.

**Academic Conference Grants**

Since the 2018 AGM, the PGSA awarded Academic Conference Grants to two applicants as listed below. These awards are generously sponsored by Vice-Provost (Research) Margaret Hyland and provide funding for the conference fees of PGSA members who are attending an international conference. If you are interested in applying for a conference grant, check out the terms and process on our website, or email pgsa@vuw.ac.nz for more details.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rodreck David  | School of Information Management | $719 | 5.10.2018 |
| Hamish Simmonds | School of Marketing and International Business | $960.57 | 19.11.2018 |

In 2018, the PGSA endeavoured to increase awareness of these grants, and to provide greater clarity to our members around the application process. As of 14 March 2019, the PGSA has restructured the PGSA Academic Conference Grants as untagged travel grants to provide successful candidates the freedom to utilise the funds to cover costs associated with international conference attendance. The untagged grant covers travel-related cost of ONE conference, for ONE paper presentation, with a value of $500NZD.

**Student Representation**

The PGSA represents postgraduate students on key Boards and Committees at Victoria University, at both the Faculty and University level. 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. Since the 2017 AGM, the PGSA has hosted a Committee Reps Morning Tea for the student representatives. In 2019, we are going to organise 4 Committee Reps Morning Tea to help, support and empower our committee reps.

For any postgraduate students interested in taking up a representative position on a Board or Committee, please contact our Co-Vice Presidents and Representation Coordinators Leo Mercer (leo.mercer@vuw.ac.nz) and Will Abbiss (will.abbiss@vuw.ac.nz) to apply or register your interest.

**SUBMISSIONS / REVIEWS**

1. University Council Fees Discussion – 24 September 2018.
2. University Council Scholarship Discussion – 26 November 2018 (through University Council Student Rep).
3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for Students 2018-2020.
4. Sexual Harassment Policy – 15 February 2019.

**CAMPAIGNS**

**Campaign to Increase Doctoral Scholarship Stipend**

As you are probably aware, the VDS has been a woefully low $23,500 per annum for many years now despite the significant increases in the cost of living in Wellington over the past decade. We are the university with the 2nd highest cost of living in the country, but despite this our scholarship is 6th out of the 8 New Zealand universities in the stipend paid. The scholarship stipend was last raised in 2011, so it is high time the stipend was raised to match the increasing living costs. The PGSA is working on a campaign to increase the scholarship stipend (currently $23,500pa) by 15% and for it to include the Student Services Levy.

**EVENTS**

**Orientation Week**

**Postgraduate Students’ Orientation Evening *25.02.2019***

This event was run in conjunction with the Student Recruitment and Orientation Office and was designed to welcome new postgraduate students at all levels into the university. We had around 100 students in attendance in HMLT205, and had a great programme including a panel of current postgrads talking about their experiences so far. Following the formal session, we had drinks and nibbles at Milk & Honey.

**Make and Mingle *26.02.2019***

During Orientation Week, we ran a new event called Make and Mingle at Pipitea campus. This is event is geared towards old and new students, mature students, and students with families as a fun and relaxed art therapy session. We did not receive the kind of enthusiasm from the student community as we’d hoped; also, more than two other orientation events took place on the same day at the same campus. We felt that might have had some effect on our event attendance.

**Hauora Chats *27.02.2019***

The inaugural Hauora Chats was successful, with around 40 students in attendance. We hosted it in the new science building, TTR104. Despite the hectic line-up of orientation events, it was a great success. We had a panel comprising staff from various Student Services who presented a broad overview of student wellbeing and the various facilities available on campus to help students on their postgraduate journey.

**Postgrad Treasure Run (Orientation Week Edition) *28.02.2019***

We planned a fun treasure run for postgraduate students and their families. The idea behind the treasure run was to make the students aware of the various services or “treasures” on campus, such as Student Health and Counselling, VUW Crèche and the Adam Art Gallery among others. It turned out to be great event and very popular with students with families despite being at the tail end of the day. We had around 13 people in attendance

**Orientation Breakfast Social *1.03.2019***

For the first time, the PGSA organised a breakfast for the postgraduate students. It was a great success. We had more than 90 people attend the breakfast social at Milk and Honey. We also a selfie challenge to keep things light and enjoyable. We had three winners for the Selfie Challenge. Each of the three winners was awarded a t-shirt, pen, a notepad and $5 Vicbooks coffee voucher. We received positive feedback from one and all.

**Victorias Awards 2018**

The Victoria Awards 2018 was held on 30 November at The Hunter Lounge. The event was attended by 120 postgraduate students and staff. Guests included the Provost Professor Wendy Larner*,* Vice-Provost (Research) Professor Margaret Hyland, and Dean (Faculty of Graduate Research) Professor Peter Whiteford. The event was a great success. It was heartening to see the great variety of student research that were awarded with research excellence awards. The event would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and support of the entire Executive and the Executive Assistant Fran Denton. The PGSA Executive were a wonderful help on the night. Some of them even co-presented awards. All the members of the Executive served as excellent representatives for our organisation.

**NEW AND UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2019**

**Make and Mingle**

This is also a new event. This is a great session for postgraduate students to de-stress with art and interact with fellow postgraduate friends. This is a kid friendly event.

**Writing to Finish (WTF) Workshop**

9am-3pm, AM103, 20 March

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

**Hauora Chats**

11am-12pm, SU218, 3 April

A well-being chat series featuring postgraduate students and staff from the University. Every session will have a prominent theme that will guide the discussion. The main idea is to provide a platform to postgraduate students to talk about issues that affect them such as general well-being, mental health, financial stress, accommodation among others, and find ways to manage these concerns effectively.

This is a recurring event that takes place on the first Wednesday of every month, 11-12pm. For more information, please visit our Facebook page: @vuw.pgsa.

**Postgrad Talks**

11am-1pm, VS204, TE Aro Campus, 10 April

PGSA will host five Postgrad Talks this year. This event replaces what was earlier known as Research Roundtables. This public speaking forum has run since 2010 and provides an opportunity for postgraduates to present their research and ideas in a friendly environment among their colleagues. We will be recording the event this year so that we can provide better support and feedback to our participants. Any postgrad who is keen to develop their presentation skills and promote their research, can book into a 2019 event through our Executive Administrator today.

**Quizzical**

11am-12pm, Milk and Honey, 12 April

This is a new event and will take place five times over the year at Kelburn campus. This is a casual meet and greet event for students where they can meet fellow postgraduates and bond over quiz and coffee.

**Diversity Fest**

2-4pm, The Hub, 9 May

The 2019 Diversity Fest will held on 9 May at The Hub. We will have a talent show and stalls for clubs and student groups to display their art and craft. There will be food, music and fun activities at the fest. If you are interested in participating, please get in touch with our Executive Administrator.

**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**: Priyanka Roy

**Co-Vice-Presidents**: Leo Mercer, Will Abbiss

**Treasurer**: **Schyana Sivanantham**

**Executive Members**: Taylor Cooney, Elizabeth Olsen, Andrew Lensen, Raiatea Barlow Kameta, Amy Lynch, Jahla Tran-Lawrence

**Executive Administrator**: Erella Sonnino

**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 for more information!