

Client Service Report

Spring Session 2009

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1. Scope of Report

The Wollongong University Postgraduate Association (WUPA) recorded all enquiries encountered and addressed by the *Client Service Representative WUPA employed during Spring Session 2009 for a total of 3 days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) for 7 hours a day; a 21 hour week. Enquiries were recorded between the 16th of June, 2009 and the 3rd of November, 2009.* The Client Service Representative's employment had to be terminated shortly after this date because WUPA's budget was insufficient to compensate further employment.

2. Enquiry Statistics

2.1 Terminology

When a client approaches WUPA with a request/query whether by phone, email or in person WUPA's Client Service Representative (or available Council members in the absence of the Client Service Representative) will often follow up on the inquiry by contacting other individuals who may be able to assist in resolving the matter. No matter how many people the Client Service Representative contacts for the purpose of this report the enquiry is still counted as one singular *enquiry chain*. An *enquiry chain* is initiated by the client approaching WUPA. Where email enquiries are concerned the Client Service Representative has attached printed copies of email exchanges to provide tangible evidence of the superior customer service WUPA is providing through extensive follow-up. Enquiry chains consider not just exchanges of correspondence between interested parties but additionally/or in place of may also include any underlying research conducted by WUPA representatives to successfully resolve the case.

2.2 Rate of Enquiries

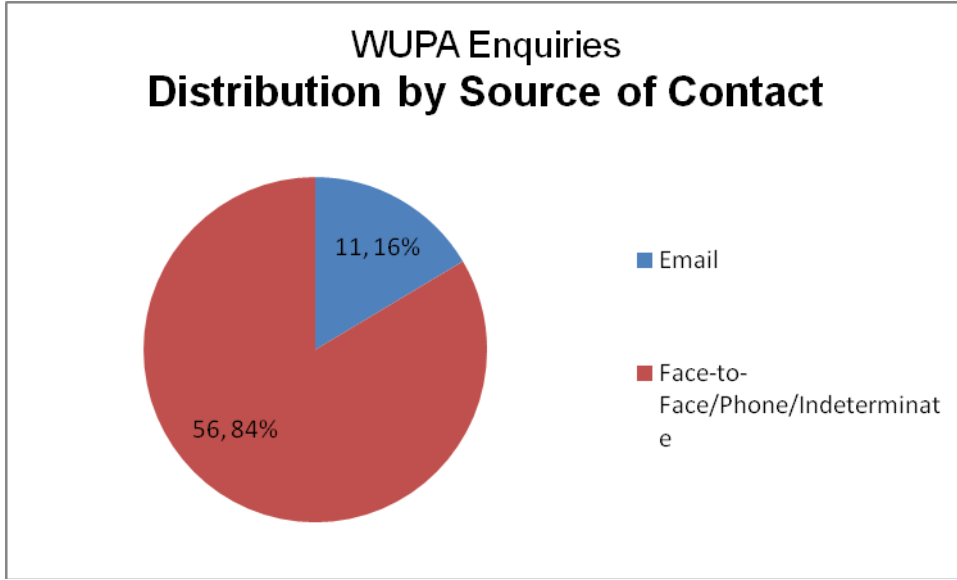
69 unique enquiry chains were recorded between the 16th of June, 2009 and the 3rd of November, 2009. This is a span of 101 days of which 60 days were manned by professional staff. The majority of enquiries were recorded by professional staff not volunteer council members.

Therefore we can calculate the no. of unique client cases addressed per day by dividing the number of unique enquiry chains by the number of days WUPA was manned by professional staff:

$$\begin{aligned} &69 \text{ enquiry chains} / 60 \text{ days of professional staff logging enquiries} \\ &= 1.05 \text{ client cases addressed per day} \end{aligned}$$

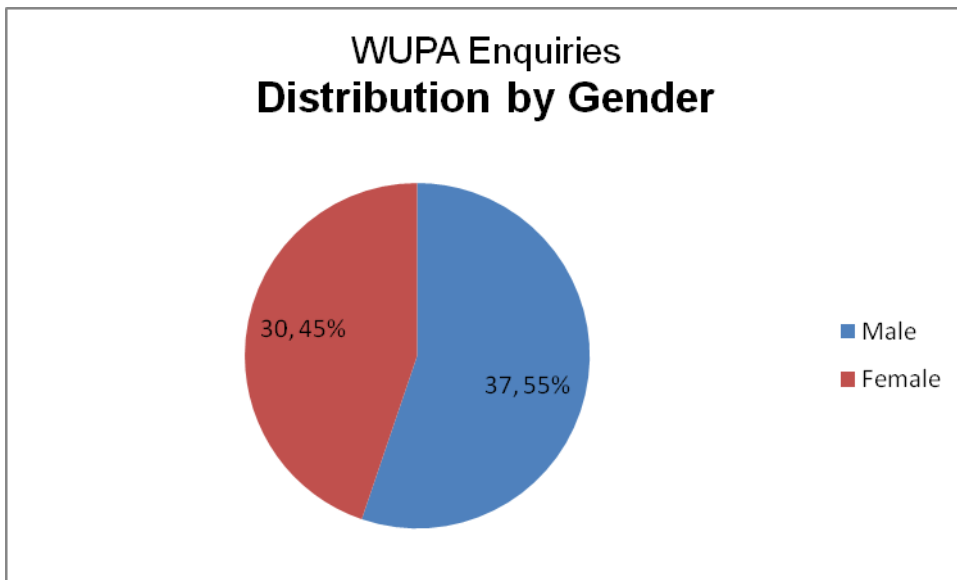
2.3 Source of Enquiries

Source of Enquiry	Enquiry Count
Email	11
Face-to-Face/Phone/Indeterminate	56



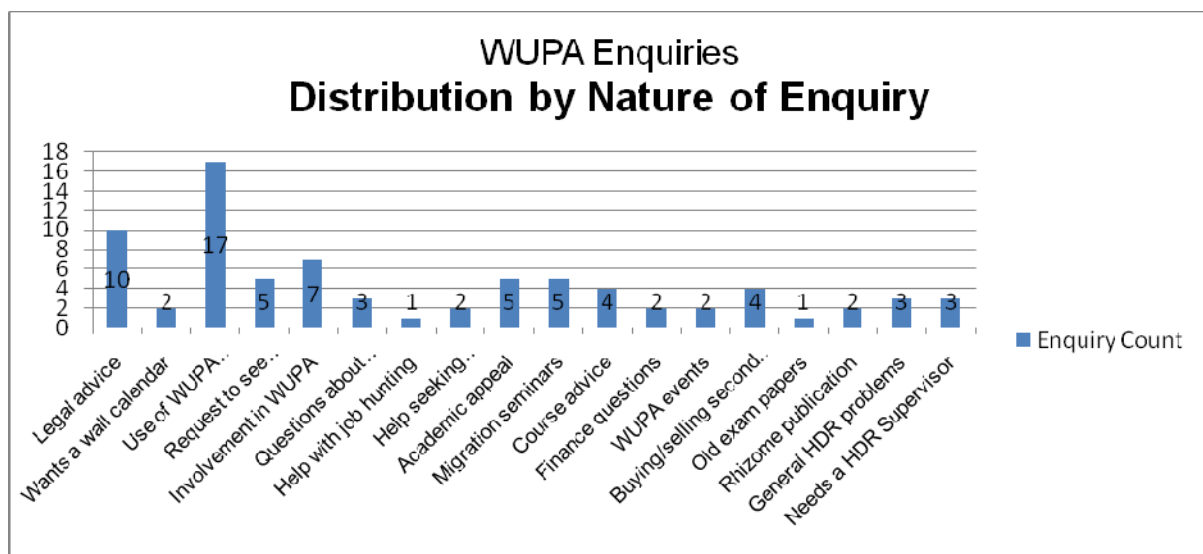
2.4 Gender of Enquirers

Gender	Enquiry Count
Male	37
Female	30



2.5 Nature of Enquiries

Nature of Enquiry	Enquiry Count
Legal advice	10
Wants a wall calendar	2
Use of WUPA Resource/Expertise	17
Request to see advocacy officer	5
Involvement in WUPA	7
Questions about volunteering in the area	3
Help with job hunting	1
Help seeking accommodation	2
Academic appeal	5
Migration seminars	5
Course advice	4
Finance questions	2
WUPA events	2
Buying/selling second hand textbooks	4
Old exam papers	1
Rhizome publication	2
General HDR problems	3
Needs a HDR Supervisor	3



3. Client Service History

Former WUPA councils enjoyed the employment of an on-premises Student Advocacy Officer and a General Manager; both well trained to address student concerns. However, the opportunities provided by the employment of such skilled employees were squandered by locating these employees in isolated offices where they were unapproachable by the uninformed student body. Further compounding the problem, former WUPA Councils had no form of accessible information desk which could redirect students to the General Manager and/or Student Advocacy Officer. Nor could the WUPA Council guarantee Council members would be available for any set hours a week to address student concerns.

The WUPA Council of 2008 proved too small and ineffective and was subsequently dissolved. This caused WUPA's brand to diminish as new students failed to learn of its existence, and existing students believed it was permanently dissolved.

4. 2009 Client Service Mission

The new WUPA Council elected in April 2009 decided to prioritise Client Service delivery recognising it as a key objective of WUPA. The Council's view was that postgraduate students could benefit in several ways from a strong client focus:

- Being managed by students allows WUPA representatives to better empathise with the needs of students.
- WUPA's status as a postgraduate student representative body makes it the default body for students to approach with problems and feedback on issues relating to University of Wollongong administration, policy and assessment.
- WUPA's independence offers a greater capacity to critique and make recommendations for changes to existing university services, assessment and policy.
- WUPA's social rapport with students courtesy of regular events and sociable premises offers a friendlier, more approachable body for students to raise concerns with.
- A strong focus on client service would add an air of professionalism to WUPA's operations that was absent during past council terms, as well as aid in involving students in WUPA's activities and its council to strengthen WUPA as a whole.

5. Improvements to client service delivery

The 2009 WUPA Council took decisive steps to improve WUPA's client service delivery, pledging to the Vice-Principal (Administration) that client service would be the new council's

priority. The costs of this service were approved in the 2009 budget presented to the Vice-Principal (Administration). The 2009 took the following actions to improve client service:

- Re-arrangement of Building 116 – to assemble a client service focused premises. Phones and networks were reconfigured. A counter style desk set up. Promotional material, pin boards and paintings were moved from Building 115 to 116 to redecorate and project an image of professionalism on a budget.
- A professional Client Service Representative was hired - at rate 2 casual pay (approx. \$24 p/hour) for 3 days a week (21 hrs p/week). The Council Executive trained the employee in client service and email enquiries.
- Uniform purchased – suit pants, and embroidered shirts were purchased to ensure the WUPA's Client Service Representative's role was clearly recognisable and a professional image maintained.
- Client Enquiries were logged – consistent with WUPA's commitment to the Vice-Principal (Administration) to improve transparency, reporting, service and feedback WUPA could offer the University of Wollongong. See *Section '10. Client Service Logs – Spring 2009' for the complete log of enquiries.*
- An annual Client Service Report published – This report shall detail to the University of Wollongong the progress WUPA has made in Client Service delivery in 2009.

6. Barriers to Exceptional Client Service Delivery

Several factors inhibited WUPA's client service delivery in 2009:

- WUPA's isolated location – Building 116 and Building 115 where WUPA has resided for the past few years is on the opposite side of Northfields Avenue, opposite all the central buildings of UOW campus. Students seldom have any reason to approach WUPA's area on campus. This dramatically reduces the quantity of foot traffic WUPA is exposed to; foot traffic being the most effective and cost-efficient form of promotion.
- WUPA's reduced premises – In November 2009 UniCentre revoked WUPA's permission to reside in Building 116, placing University Security in the building instead. Building 116 was a much more prominent, approachable building than Building 115. Building 115 is obscured by trees and other organisations residing downstairs. Building 115 also lacks an antechamber or similar large room at the doorway to assemble effective front counter style client service.

- WUPA's budget – WUPA's annual budget granted by the University of Wollongong was not sufficient to pay even one professional staff member at rate 2 casual pay (approx. \$24 p/hour) for 3 days a week (21 hrs p/week) for a year without being forced to cease all other operations of WUPA.
- WUPA's diminished brand – Internal and external factors such as ineffective past WUPA councils, the introduction of voluntary student unionism, the diminished availability of student welfare and a general decline of interest in student affairs had all colluded to demote WUPA to obscurity. The 2009 WUPA council has laboured with much success to restore WUPA's brand.

7. Future of Client Service Delivery

The University of Wollongong has since decided to move WUPA into Building 19 to share common space with the Wollongong University Student Association (WUSA). This relocation is expected to occur by March 2010.

The relocation offers new opportunities and new challenges for client service:

- Building 19 exposure - will provide WUPA and WUSA with a greater amount of foot traffic which will help make students more aware of their representative bodies.
- A commitment to a cooperative working relationship – made by the 2009 WUPA and WUSA Presidents was made. Both Presidents were in agreement that the relocation will not just require space sharing, but also sharing of staff and resources in order for both representatives to operate effectively and cost-efficiently.
- University of Wollongong – will benefit from increased student interaction with WUPA and WUSA through the annual feedback the two representative bodies can offer the University of Wollongong. This will enable the University of Wollongong to get a mass feeling of the student pulse on key issues.

With the above in mind, WUPA and WUSA have jointly decided that to best service their shared and increased clientele full-time employment of a Level 3/4 Client Service Representative is required. See Section '9. Proposed Client Service Representative Job Description' for details.

8. Key Recommendations

WUPA's quality and transparent (as evidenced by this report) delivery of client service is remarkable given the barriers which inhibit its professionalism. Through spring semester

2009 WUPA client service was managed solely by WUPA Council volunteers; Vice President (Coursework) Josh Parker and President Paul Stuckey. Actual client service was delivered by rate 2 casual Client Service Representative Troy Monagle. Following the cessation of the Client Service Representative's employment due to irreconcilable budgetary constraints WUPA now lacks a professional client service representative.

Over summer client service was delivered solely by the WUPA President; the sole Council member available. Yet the President too has had competing commitments (income, housing) infringe on his availability thus diminishing the quality and availability of service to WUPA's clients.

This may be acceptable over summer due to decreased student traffic but the situation will become unacceptable at the beginning of autumn session 2010. It is unrealistic and unfeasible to expect council volunteers alone to deliver quality client service for a full working week. Both WUPA and WUSA Council's strongly recommend the University of Wollongong consider their joint proposal for a shared Level 3/4 Client Service Representative detailed in *Section '9. Proposed Client Service Representative Job Description'*.

9. Proposed Client Service Representative Job Description

Level 3/4 Client Service Representative – WUPA/WUSA and associated student services

The WUPA/WUSA Councils are hoping to provide a Client Service Representative that is employed by the University of Wollongong full-time to service the needs of the *Wollongong University Student Association (WUSA), the Wollongong University Postgraduate Association (WUPA), the Student Advocacy Officer, the International Student Programs (ISP), the chaplaincy, Womyn's Space and the Queer Space.*

The Client Service Representative will be responsible for all these students' services and as a single point of contact for other students and staff in our new offices in building 19. This single full-time position will be more cost effective than the previous situation where two part-time staff members were employed by WUPA and WUSA. This new position will be able to offer additional receptionist duties to all associated student services in building 19 such as advocacy, the International Students Program (ISP) and chaplaincy.

A Level 3/4 employee is warranted due to the increased complexity and amount of enquiries expected with the sharing of resources and premises by WUSA and WUPA. A single full-time employee will avoid problems with institutional knowledge being divided between two employees who will not be working every day. Furthermore, this job vacancy will create job opportunities for University of Wollongong graduates whose greater

institutional knowledge will make them strong candidates for employment. This will further enhance the University's record for employment success after graduation. Finally, professional staff will be able to respond to enquiries with greater accuracy than volunteer staff which lack sufficient training, experience, reliability and motivation to provide quality client service.

It is anticipated that in time professional management of the book bank will create a profitable system that will go a significant way to subsidising the Client Service Representative's employment.

Duties:

- Flexible Client Service Representative capable of multi-tasking.
- Management of the Book Bank - including promoting the service, cataloguing stock, enrolling new consignees, selling existing stock, and handling money. Maintenance of the book bank database.
- Managing and acting as a point of contact for other WUSA/WUPA/Advocacy services including but not limited to faxing, photocopying and printing.
- Acting as a point of contact for student enquiries. Directing students to relevant WUSA/WUPA Council members and other relevant services.
- Acting as a point of distribution for WUSA/WUPA material and information.
- Monitoring stationary usage and requisition of new supplies as required for WUSA/WUPA/Advocacy in a timely and effective manner.
- Assisting interested students with the provision and collection of WUSA/WUPA membership forms.

This proposal is supported by:

Unit	Position	Name	Contact num.	Email
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WUPA	President	Paul Stuckey	0415270306	pstuckey@uow.edu.au

WUPA	Vice President (Coursework)	Josh Parker	0421411643	wupavp@gmail.com
International Student Programs (ISP)	International Student Coordinator	Dan Morgan	X3158	danial_morgan@uow.edu.au
WUPA/WUS A	Student Advocacy Officer	Siobhan Christian	X4203	siobhan_christian@uow.edu. au
Catholic Church		Daria Pincda	0402452342	
Uniting Church		Dave Williams on	0461058420	

Golden Key

10. Client Service Logs - Spring 2009

* See following page!