

ANNUAL REPORT

2010

Editor
Josh Parker
President



WUPARTY – Wednesday, 28th July

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PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

When I was first elected to the WUPA Council in 2009 as Vice President (Coursework) I had never been involved in the student union movement before, there had not been an active WUPA Council in a number of months and there was thus very little past experience to draw on for guidance. From the small amount of files I dug up on old PCs I found copies of old WUPA Annual Reports which have served as inspiration for aspects of the 2010 Council's agenda. Likewise, I hope this document will help future Councils in their strategic planning. The distinctive changes in WUPA's organisational culture have necessitated that this report no longer follow the format of preceding WUPA annual reports in order to document WUPA's activities in 2010 in a logical, comprehensive manner.

I hope this report will demonstrate to the University community that WUPA is very much alive and well, and continuing to provide valuable services, social networks, advice and information to postgraduate students.

Involvement

The post-VSU environment has not been an easy time for WUPA, but the long term lack of involvement in student associations such as WUPA is related to more factors than simply reduced funding. Postgraduate students have many commitments to juggle; study, work and often family, and struggle to see the value in involvement in student associations. Many postgraduate students complete their degrees within a year or two which makes it more difficult for student associations to build organisational culture and knowledge due to frequent turnover of Council members. Despite these obstacles, the 2010 Council has had great success in creating a social postgraduate community and has governed with the largest Council in six years. The University also has an interest in an active postgraduate student representative body which can convey the concerns and needs of postgraduate students. Furthermore, involvement in associations such as WUPA teaches students many valuable workforce skills that will enhance their employability and result in graduates who will contribute significantly to the public and private sector at home and abroad. The WUPA Council alumni will reflect well on the University in years to come.

Acknowledgements

I feel a need to acknowledge some of the individuals who have led to such a successful term. First, thanks to 2009 WUSA President Chris Monnox for his assistance with joint submissions to the

University on the draft Student Charter and Client Service Representative funding proposal. Chris been a cooperative and productive colleague and absolved my former concerns about WUPA and WUSA sharing the same space. Thanks also to UOW Corporate Governance employees Peter Randles and Paola Ciccarelli who have been of great support in reforming WUPA's constitutions and Electoral Regulations. I would like to express my thanks to my predecessor, 2009 WUPA President Paul Stuckey, who made sure that WUPA's relocation was complete before he left Wollongong at short notice for other opportunities. I would like to thank the 2010 WUPA Council who as well as being a well of ideas and support throughout the year are also a great bunch of fun people. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve the student community alongside such committed people all year. In particular, thanks to Vice President (Coursework) Elizabeth Limn without whom much of WUPA's 2010 agenda would not have been achievable. I wish Elizabeth all the best as President in 2011.



Josh Parker
President
WUPA 2010

REPRESENTATION

WUPA is the representative body for more than seven thousand postgraduate students at the University of Wollongong. WUPA continued its affiliation with the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) in 2010. CAPA is the national peak body for representing postgraduate student interests in Australia. WUPA is currently exploring options for affiliation with the newly established national representative body for international students, the Council of International Students Australia (CISA).

In 2010, WUPA has represented students on the following decision-making bodies: University Education Committee, Student Conduct Committee and the Student Representative Forum. Candidates from WUPA are standing for the 2011 Academic Senate as well.

WUPA consulted with the Academic Registrars Division concerning the draft *Student Charter* (a revised *Code of Practice – Students*). WUPA made a joint submission with WUSA successfully ensuring the *Student Charter* recognises that students can expect from their university:

- A university experience that is about more than simply academic achievement;
- Equitable access to all university facilities and resources;

- Access to administrative and academic materials through a variety of media;
- Provide a safe environment free from discrimination and bullying;
- Respect the legal rights of students in regards to privacy and intellectual property;
- Encourage student participation in university decision making to ensure student representation at all levels.

WUPA has also made submissions to the Environmental Sustainability Initiative unit regarding their *Environment Management Plan* and Central Timetabling unit regarding their proposed changes to the date for release of Spring Session timetables. WUPA also assisted Security and Buildings & Grounds with their annual lighting survey to check whether lighting coverage across campus is sufficient to ensure student safety.

The move into building 19 and associated necessary efforts to rebrand, re-equip and reform WUPA has reduced the available time of the Council to devote to representation in 2010. A renewed focus on representation is expected in 2011.

ADVOCACY

WUPA continues to receive frequent enquiries from students concerning academic, legal and administrative matters. WUPA Councillors can address most enquiries. More difficult cases are referred to the Student Advocacy Officer. Overall student enquiries have decreased in 2010 partly due to WUPA's new, more obscured premises and greater awareness of the Student Advocacy officer. WUPA is seeking to address this situation by installing new signage around Building 19, new branded clothing and a more frequent presence in populated areas of campus.

WUPA has continued its role of representing students on the Student Conduct Committee.

OPERATIONS

By June WUPA had finished moving into Building 19 and obtained necessary key access. The Council decided to lease three standard desktop PCs and a multifunction printer/copier/scanner from ITS and BMS respectively. The Council felt that this would ensure continuity in operations by ensuring quality, serviced information technology was always available to Councillors. This will reduce the need for in house technical support. *Adobe Design Premium CS5* was also

purchased for one pc to reduce the reliance on external support for website development and other design.

Additional corner desks and meeting tables were also purchased from UOW joinery to furnish the room in a space effective manner. A clock radio, dining and cleaning items, food, coffee, tea amenities were also purchased to make the office more habitable.

A WUPA/WUSA joint submission to the University to fund 70% of the cost of a level 3 Client Service Representative to be employed 16hrs per week was successful. The final 30% of the cost will be split between WUPA and WUSA at 10% and 20% of the cost respectively. The Client Service Representative will be employed on a trial basis for Spring 2010 and will staff the front counter and assist students with enquiries concerning all of the student hub organisations including but not limited to Golden Key Society, the Women's Space, Queer Space, the Faculty of Arts Student and Staff Association, and Chaplaincy services. The Vice Principal (Administration) is currently arranging the hiring of an appropriate person. Any disputes between student hub organisations concerning the Client Service Representative will be mediated by an independent University staff member.

WUPA has been maintaining office hours of 16hrs per week (all Wednesday, Thursday).

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The WUPA Council passed changes to their Electoral Regulations in the meeting of 8th July, 2010. These changes were approved by the University Council in the meeting of 6th August, 2010 in time for the 2010 WUPA elections. Reform to the Constitution and Electoral Regulations is ongoing. Details are currently being finalised of proposed changes to the Constitution and Electoral Regulations. The Constitution and Electoral Regulations in their proposed form, complete with changes, will be placed on the WUPA website for students who wish to make submissions to the Council about any concerns/amendments they may have. An open meeting will be held at least two weeks after the proposed Constitution and Electoral Regulations go live on the website. All postgraduate students will be invited by SOLS mail to this meeting and given an equal vote on the proposed changes. This will ensure a WUPA constitution that is representative of the whole postgraduate student body and given legitimacy through consensus and openness.

THE COUNCIL

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the 2010 WUPA administration has been rebuilding the strength and size of the WUPA Council. The WUPA Council now consists of 13 Councillors, only one Officer position has been left unfilled.

This is the largest WUPA Council in as far back as I can trace WUPA history (6 years: 2004). The 2010 Council Elections were also the most successful in at least four years with eight postgraduate students elected into office for 2011. This is an improvement on 2009 elections when the minimum amount of nominations necessary to form a Council was received. Ironically though WUPA has never had less space, and less resources, it now has the largest, most committed Council in years.

In 2010, the Council has been meeting fortnightly for an hour. Postgraduate students who are not members of the Council have been welcome to attend any Council meeting and given space in the agenda to raise their own issues/ideas. The 2010 Council believes this level of inclusiveness and openness has been beneficial to attracting interest in WUPA and gaining a broader understanding of student concerns.

POSITION	NAME
President	Paul Stuckey (till May 10 th), Josh Parker (from May 13 th)
Vice President (Coursework)	Elizabeth Limn
Vice President (Research)	Josip Matesic (till September 16 th), Hayn Nguyen (from September 16 th)
Secretary – Treasurer	Bernadette McCormack
International Student's Officer	Ayemana Khan
Activities Officer	Fadi Ramadan
Media Officer	Reginald Richardson
Women's Officer	Valentina Concato
Koori Officer	Shondelle Bolt
Honours Student Officer	Vacant
External Students Officer	Shubhank (Robin) Dadhich
General Representative	Alfredo Amor
General Representative	Nathanael Siagian
General Representative	Eliza Shreshtha

EVENTS

Postgraduate studies at the University of Wollongong can be very isolating, particularly for international students far from home. WUPA recognises the diversity of its student body and attempted to hold a variety of events throughout Autumn and Spring to cater to these varied interests.

In February and July WUPA held its bi-annual *WUPARTY*; a party for new and current postgraduate students to meet with catering and music. WUPA also attended Research Student, and Postgraduate Coursework Orientation events in Autumn and Spring, delivering a speech on the services and opportunities WUPA offers students. New postgraduate students attending received gifts and information packs, and were given the opportunity to sign up to the *WUPA eNews* mailing list.

WUPA has also experimented with more targeted events in 2010. A women's lunch in August provided an opportunity for women to socialise with other women between classes. This provided an opportunity for Councillors to offer guidance and advice to students and to gain an understanding of the concerns specific to women.

WUPA has also been targeting students from select faculties and disciplines. WUPA provided food for a meet 'n' greet for

Mathematics HDR students. This proved a fertile opportunity for Councillors to promote the services and role of WUPA to these students and to listen to their concerns. WUPA also held a dinner for International Studies students in July. These targeted efforts are the foundation of a larger effort planned for 2011 to build a larger, more integrated postgraduate community. The aim is to grow a larger UOW wide/macro level postgraduate community through building up from a micro/faculty level.

On October 15, WUPA is planning to hold a cultural awareness event. *Food Fusion* asks all attendees to bring a national dish to share with fellow students from other nations. A comedy film will be showed on the theme also.

WUPA has also been holding regular, ongoing events. These include weekly volleyball and fortnightly meet ups at the UniBar. These events aim to provide predictability to event occurrence, and to build and maintain momentum between larger events and activities. They promote social and physical wellbeing of students. Through encouraging teamwork and group socialising, they provide an opportunity for Council members to identify prospective students for Council membership. It also gives Councillors a regular opportunity to hear the concerns of different postgraduate students which contributes to our agenda.

PUBLICATIONS

The *WUPA eNews* email newsletter continued as WUPA's primary form of communication with postgraduate students. The newsletter has focused on informing students of social and academic events and services hosted by WUPA itself and other bodies around campus. Such services include the free migration seminars and free legal advice offered by the International Students Program. Students were also informed of opportunities to nominate for membership on the Council.

The proposed *Rhizome Ezine* electronic magazine approved by the 2009 WUPA Council unfortunately had to be terminated. In late 2009, the proposed *Rhizome Ezine* became economically unfeasible as the Council had exhausted funds. A misunderstanding between the 2009 Council and the University meant that the Client Service Representative employed for that year was funded directly from WUPA rather than from the University as expected. Consequently, the 2009 budget could no longer afford to fund the proposed *Rhizome Ezine*. As the project evolved it became apparent that the costs of publication were far greater than initially expected and was no longer feasible in its current form. The 2010 Council decided to terminate the project. New funding, personnel, a tighter scope and simpler format may make the project viable

again. The 2010 Council remains supportive of a publication for postgraduate students to publish their works in. Current student publications across campus do not adequately fulfil this need.

WEBSITE

The WUPA website underwent a makeover more consistent with its branding and with improved aesthetics in 2009. In 2010, continual revision of the content of the WUPA website has made it more accurately reflect the changed location and associated changes in service offerings. WUPA's Constitution, Electoral Regulations, Nomination form, Code of Conduct and meeting minutes have all been placed on the WUPA website to ensure transparency, accountability and a reduced need for freedom of information requests.

OUTREACH

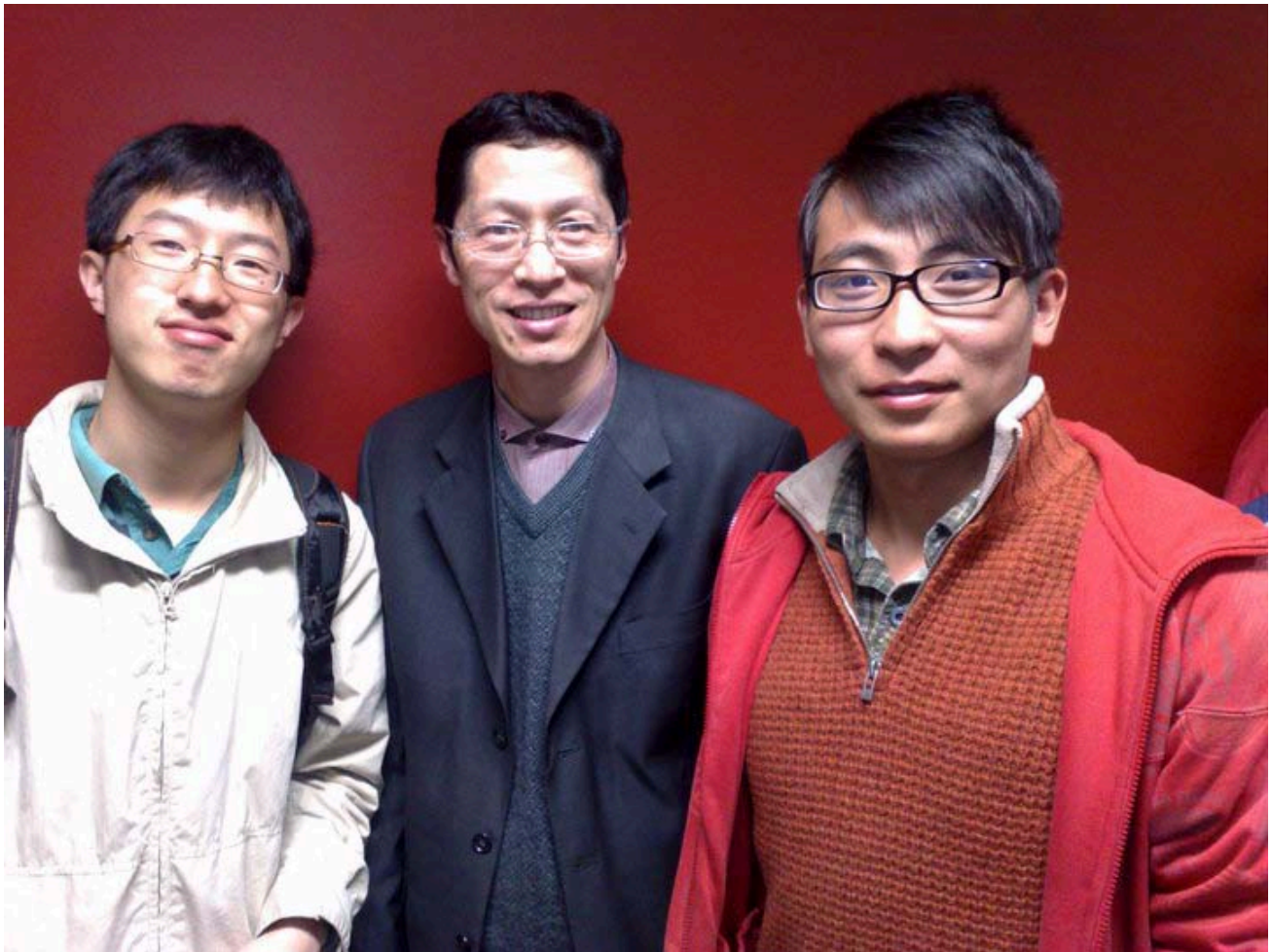
At the beginning of 2010 WUPA prioritised the enlargement of its postgraduate mailing list. All new postgraduate students in Spring 2010 were offered the opportunity to sign up to the mailing list, and all other postgraduate mailing lists around the university consolidated within the WUPA mailing list. This ensured WUPA could effectively contact as many postgraduate students as possible.

WUPA also published a new information flyer promoting its new location, contact details and services. This flyer was distributed at orientation, the student hub front desk and throughout campus in the *Tertangala* stands. WUPA is also beginning to take advantage of

the Research Student Centre eLearning site to reach out to students through the discussion pages, and to submit useful resources.

A bid has been submitted for advertising on the annual student wall planner for 2011. If our bid is successful, the 10,000 wall planner copies will provide wide exposure for WUPA.

WUPA's External Students' Officer has been investigating many issues the Council has become aware of at the Innovation Campus (IC). Many students feel isolated and poorly serviced at this campus, so much so that it has become common to refer the campus as 'isolation campus'. Some of the issues the Council is currently investigating are the lack of outside seating, lack of food outlets and limited hours of availability. Discrepancies in gym pricing have also been identified between IC Health and URAC (despite both being the same company). Membership is unique to each gym also, requiring gym users of both campuses to buy 2 memberships. Many IC students are not aware of WUPA's existence, which is unfortunate since those who do have found our social community helpful in alleviating their sense of isolation. Due to our limited resources, setting up a permanent or even regular presence at IC is unfeasible, but we are currently consulting with IC faculties and ITS to ensure IC students are each on faculty mailing lists that WUPA can then contact. Currently only IPRI and ISEM have mailing lists at IC.



WUPARTY – Wednesday, 28th July

APPENDIX A: Vice President (Research) Annual Report

I filled the vacancy for the position of WUPA Vice President (Research) in August 2010, effectively as an interim Vice President until the WUPA elections in October 2010. Despite this short time however, a few tasks were able to be accomplished.

There were no specific events that were organised in this time, specific to the position. I as the Vice President (Research) helped to organise events in general. One example of this was the *WUPARTY* in August. However, organising events in my short time was not the major focus of my efforts.

The major focus of my efforts as Vice-President (Research) concerned contributing to the new WUPA office space. In this area, perhaps the most important and lasting contribution was compiling two folders for postgraduate students, to do with information for their degrees. These two folders were: *Supervising Higher Degree Research Students* and the *HDR Supervisors' Handbook*. Both folders contain information beneficial to postgraduate students and their supervisors on a variety of issues to do with the degrees in question. A copy of these folders each now resides in the WUPA office, to be used by any postgraduate students at any time. Additionally, a number of small office items and equipment was bought in order to make the WUPA office functional.

Issues observed during the two months include the in general uncertainty about how many postgraduate students know where the office is, but also what services WUPA provides. One example of this is whether the postgraduate community knows that the aforementioned folders exist and could be beneficial to them and their studies. One way in which this could be addressed is in the beginning of 2011, all new postgraduate students receive an automatic email from WUPA, stating the necessary information and encouraging them to visit the office and acquaint themselves with the representatives and services which WUPA provides.

As an interim Vice President (Research), there is nothing officially that I will do before the end of the year. However I will continue to help unofficially in a number of small ways. Due to technicalities, the new Vice President (Research) will be able to address these issues in an official way.

Josip Matesic

Vice President (Research)

WUPA 2010

APPENDIX B: Vice President (Coursework) Annual Report

At the very beginning of the year, it was clear that our greatest task was to move WUPA from its former residence at building 116 and re-establish offices at its current location on the ground floor of the Arts building. After 9 years in its former residence, the tasks included clearing out and culling stock, and acquiring supplies congruent with WUPA's changing needs. In April, WUPA sent two representatives, myself and the previous President Paul Stuckey, to the bi annual Student Representative Forum, involving representatives from the University, the student associations and other elected representative such as the Senate, Council and faculty student representatives.

In addition to this, WUPA had annual obligations to maintain such as the post graduate information sessions at the beginning of the year, and again in July and the bi annual *WUPARTY*. In conjunction to this, WUPA council members were actively recruiting new council members to create an effective and visually prominent WUPA presence amongst the postgraduate community. In June WUPA sponsored a dinner for the Masters of International Studies students and in August a women's lunch was held.

Elizabeth Limn

Vice President (Coursework)

WUPA 2010

APPENDIX C: Annual Balance Sheet



ACTUALS as at 31 AUGUST 2010

ITEM	YTD
INCOME	
UOW Council Funding	30,000.00
WUPA Bi-Annual Membership Fees	
TOTAL INCOME	30,000.00
EXPENDITURE	
Staffing	
Salaries and On-costs	8,464.52
President's Honorarium	
	Staffing Total Expenses 8,464.52
Operating Expenses (WUPA Offices)	
Website Development	1,724.86
Telephone / Fax - Line Charges	335.41
Telephone / Fax - Call & Voicemail Costs	530.09
Office Expenses - Postage, Stationery, Printing, Internet	561.82
Other Materials & Miscellaneous Expenses	504.26
Key-cutting & Supply	104.74
Bin Rental	409.09
	Total Core Operating Expenses 4,170.27
Activities	
International Student Social Events Catering	828.26
	Total Activities Expenses 828.26
Publications and Promotions	
Gifts	761.13
A5 Flyers	526.00
	Publications Total Expenses 1,287.13
Resource Centre	
Furniture Moving	515.45
	Total Resource Centre Expenses 515.45
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	15,265.63
SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-)	14,734.37
Balance Brought Forward	- 726.72
CUMULATIVE SURPLUS / DEFICIT (-)	14,007.65