



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

*UNSW submission to the Employment,
Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee on the provisions
of the Higher Education Support
Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory
Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005*

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-
CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

DIVISION OF THE DEPUTY VICE-
CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

17 June 2005

Submission to the Senate Employment Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee on the Effects of the Provisions of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005 (VSU Bill) at the University of New South Wales

Introduction

UNSW is opposed to the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism in the Australian Higher Education Sector. It will place in significant jeopardy a large range of social, cultural, welfare, advocacy and dispute resolution, legal casework, sports and recreation, leadership development, international student orientation and support activities, research and publication support for postgraduate students. It will have a deleterious effect on the social and cultural heart of the University: an active, engaged and well rounded student body.

It also will have the effect of severely limiting the capacity of the student community to play a role in the intellectual, disciplinary and policy discourses within the University. It will inevitably place great strain on the UNSW Budget where the University is required to fund essential programs and services currently run by the student associations. Given the already significant pressure on the University's budget (including inadequate indexation) an additional impost will severely limit UNSW's capacity to deliver quality services to all students. In the view of UNSW, this will place Australian universities at a significant disadvantage internationally in a very competitive marketplace to the detriment of the Universities, the national economy and the national reputation.

The UNSW Position on the Proposed VSU Legislation

There is broad high-level agreement across all sectors of the UNSW community. The University Council, Senior Management and staff have all expressed the strong view that this proposed legislation will have a dire effect on the student organisations at UNSW, and as a result, campus life at UNSW. The University's Governing Body has made two resolutions on this matter. They are as follows:

Resolved CL98/61 (1998)

Recognising the immense contribution of student organisations to the well-being of the University, that Council endorses the current arrangement at the University of New South Wales which provides for universal membership of student organisations and notes that this is broadly consistent with the policy of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

Resolved CL03/86 (2003)

- i. That Council re-affirms resolution CL98/61.***
- ii. That Council give its in principle support to the UNSW Student Organisations in their campaign to oppose the introduction of Optional Membership of Student Organisations.***

The Academic Board at its April 2005 took the following position:

the Board agreed that the introduction of VSU would have a substantial deleterious impact on a range of non-academic student amenities and services that would affect community life at UNSW, and lessen the opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.

UNSW strongly recommends a compromise on the proposed legislation which will allow the Federal Government to proscribe compulsory membership of student unions and associations and the specific funding of political campaigns and affiliation, but which will permit the compulsory acquisition of student activity fees for a wide range of essential student services.

It fully endorses the current position of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee on VSU specifically:

that the current legislation be amended to enable universities to charge a compulsory student services and amenities fee. This would allow universities to continue to provide the following student services and amenities:

- ***health and dental services***
- ***computing, photocopying and library services***
- ***welfare services and child care facilities***
- ***sporting facilities and clubs***
- ***non-political student societies***
- ***international student services***

“Parliament has been given the opportunity to make a decision on one of the most important issues for universities – a decision that will shape the structure and nature of university campuses in the years to come, particularly in outer-metropolitan and regional areas.”¹

It also strongly endorses the position taken in the foreshadowed amendment of Federal Independent Member Tony Windsor which specifically recommends that:

- (1) A higher education provider must not:***
- (a) require a person to be or to become a member of an organisation of students, or of students and other persons; or***
 - (b) require a person enrolled with, or seeking to enrol with, the provider to pay to the provider or any other entity an amount in respect of an organisation of students, or of students and other persons; unless the higher education provider has:***
 - (c) established a fund to be applied by or on behalf of the university towards student welfare, cultural, sporting, health, and artistic purposes; and***
 - (d) provided that amounts from the fund may be applied:***
 - (i) only to organisations and groups to which membership is voluntary; and***

¹ AVCC Media Release 24/05 *Rethink Required* 25 May 2005

(ii) only for purposes related to student welfare, culture, sport, health or art.²

Programs Affected by the Proposed VSU Legislation at UNSW

UNSW has five student associations which will be dramatically affected by the proposed legislation. Their 2005 income from student activity fees totalled approximately \$10M. Based on the outcomes of similar legislation in Western Australia, it is probable that membership of student associations will stabilise at 30-40% but with heavily reduced fees of 50% or more. Thus, there is a high likelihood that income will be reduced to between 10% and 20% of 2005 levels. The effect will be dramatic and lead to the closure and severe curtailment of most student association programs and services at UNSW.

The affected services provided by the student associations, and totally funded by compulsory student activity fees, include:

The UNSW Union

- runs 13 volunteering programs coordinated by 400 volunteers
- provides 29 childcare spots with a total Union subsidy of \$40,000, along with management responsibility for the Childcare Centre
- runs 22 leadership, employability and professional development skills programs saving members \$491,000 if these programs were accessed privately
- provides Union events and entertainment functions annually which are attended by over 20,000 members
- provides Union facilities as a communal social/study space annually for over 20,000 members
- delivers \$500,000 in direct food and retail subsidies annually, with an additional \$1m in indirect subsidies for long opening hours and diverse, culturally-sensitive food offerings and a further \$500,000 for capital works.

The Student Guild

- provides research and policy support for elected student representatives to formal UNSW committees and boards
- employs a full time advocacy officer who provides critical dispute resolution services for students with grievances and contributes to improvements in university policy
- employs a full time solicitor provides a no-cost legal casework service to students in relation to academic and non-academic matters
- provides a resource centre and grant administration for clubs and societies at an annual cost of approximately \$250,000. There are 175 clubs offering an extraordinary diverse range of cultural, social, religious, political and special interest affiliations. They also provide academic support, a sense of community especially for international, rural and isolated students, and underpin many of the academic programs through

² Text of draft amendment by Tony Windsor released 27 May 2005

the provision of scholarships, mentoring programs and other activities such as orientation camps.

- provides a range of publications including specialised handbooks for special interest groups such as student representatives on UNSW Committees and a tri-weekly student-run newspaper

The Sports Association

- facilitates the participation of 13,000 students in clubs, courses, competitions or programs (i.e. 1/3 of all UNSW students)
- provides administrative and infrastructure support for 40 clubs, 11 social sport competitions, 72 programs and courses
- employs 11 full time staff, and up to 150 coaches to support UNSW sport
- provides \$310,000 net contribution to coaching and high performance sport
- provides \$130,000 net contribution to scholarships
- \$200,000 net contribution to students competing at University games and championships
- \$625,000 net to clubs for registration, facility hire, playing and training equipment etc
- \$70,000 net contribution to capital equipment
- provides a \$450,000 contribution to club support staff
- makes a significant contribution to the University community and campus life
- provides a pathway to elite sport – allowing elite sports people to excel both academically and in sport
- supports the local community via infrastructure, clubs and subsidised participation

The Postgraduate Board

- represents PG students' interests on UNSW and national committees
- employs a full time advocacy officer to represent individual students in disputes and contribute to research and policy formulation on PG issues
- provides a 24 hour PG lounge with computer and other amenities;
- provides a laptop hire service for postgraduate students
- has made a significant contribution to the set up and running costs of a PG Computer Laboratory in the UNSW Library
- facilitates PG Research seminars presented by enrolled students
- produces a number of publications including a newsletter, the ***Postgraduate Guide*** and ***Practical Aspects of Producing a Thesis at UNSW***

The College of Fine Arts (CoFA) Students Association

The College is on a separate campus from the main Kensington Campus of UNSW and so generates particular problems in respect of the integration of its students into the main UNSW community. The CoFA Students Association:

- provides support for student representatives on university committees and boards
- providing advice, support, advocacy and referral for students with academic and non-academic problems

- co-ordinates a program of social, cultural and arts based activities for the student community at CoFA
- provides an academic support network for CoFA postgraduate students
- provides a common room and access to computers
- produces a student diary, an e-newsletter and a magazine featuring the work of CoFA students
- provides transport for students mounting exhibitions or attending meetings or conferences
- leases and manages an exhibition space, the Kudos Gallery, which allows students to mount exhibitions of their work in solo or group art exhibitions and provides the venue for CoFA Students Association's annual Emerging Artists competition
- runs the Campus Art Store which provides low cost arts materials to students, puts together student art packs for specific academic courses, and arranges low cost framing.

All the above programs and activities are funded solely from the approximately \$10M collected in student activity fees and are **all** at risk under VSU.

Additional Concerns with the Proposed Legislation

The need for certainty well in advance of the Implementation date

The UNSW student organisations generally manage their own staff, payroll, accounts and contracts. They are significant businesses in their own right (the Union has a \$20M annual turnover) and all but one run under separate enterprise bargaining awards. Additionally, they fund and participate in the management of a range of joint programs with other UNSW agencies, all of which are also at risk from VSU. To ensure that there is sufficient notice for program or service closures and organizational restructures and redundancy payments. A minimum of six months notice of the final version of the legislation and its practical effects will need to be given.

The need for clarification of 'non-academic' services

The Bill proscribes the compulsory payment of any money by a student for ***an amenity, facility or service that is not of an academic nature unless the person has chosen to use the amenity, facility or service***³

One reading of this clause is that compulsory tuition fees may not be used to fund services of a non-academic nature i.e. counselling, career advice, housing support, campus and building maintenance. In other words, tuition fees could not fund anything other that can be directly related to teaching and research, narrowly defined. This would mean the collapse of all non-academic infrastructure at universities, which will reduce the capacity of the University to meet its duty of care to students. Furthermore, the legislation in its current form will bring an end to a broad 'University experience' that has been an essential element of higher education for previous generations of students.

³ ***Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill*** cl 19-37 (2)

A related question of whether these compulsory tuition fees might be used to directly or indirectly fund activities and services run by student associations will also need clarification. It is crucial that a clear and more detailed explanation of how this clause might work in practice is urgently needed.

The need for further definition of which students are captured by the Bill

The Bill appears to capture all students, actual and potential, local and international, DEST funded and fee paying. It is unclear whether it is intended to also capture non-award students (which under the Higher Education Act are not ordinarily included in the category of 'enrolled students') and 'study abroad' students. These other categories remain to be tested as to whether they are affected by the Bill and universities will need clarification of this.

The collection of fees and associated activities

It is not clear from the proposed legislation what might constitute prohibited activities in respect of the role universities may or not play in supporting the student organizations to acquire new ***voluntary*** members. For example there is doubt as to whether universities will be able to collect fees through the ordinary university tuition fee collection system and pass these fees directly to the student organisations as is currently the case. Additionally, it is not clear whether universities might be able to provide extensive links on their enrolment web sites and through other documentation to support the maximum new student association membership capture.

These are only some examples of the lack of clarity in how the legislation might work in practice. Universities will require answers to these practical questions many months ahead of the implementation of the legislation to allow sufficient time for new organisational systems to be tested and verified.

Following are a number of attachments, being submissions by each of the UNSW Student Associations to the recently conducted review of the impact of the VSU legislation on UNSW and its Student Associations.

Professor Robert King
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

On behalf of the University of New South Wales

Appendices 1-5

The Student Organisation Submissions to the DV-C(A)

Appendix 1: The UNSW Union

The University Union as established by University Council

The Union was established in 1961 by the University Council as the primary non-academic service provider on campus. The Union continues to provide the vast majority of programs, facilities and events on campus which:

- Improve student engagement in the university, which itself underpins academic achievement;
- Strengthen student and graduate satisfaction;
- Maximise student retention, particularly amongst disadvantaged students;
- Enhance student's graduate attributes;
- Provide essential community facilities for research and part-time students;
- Increase the attractiveness of the University for potential students; and
- Generally, create the student experience outside the classroom.

The constitutional mission of the University Union is "to be the community centre of the University: Through its programs, services and facilities the Union seeks to cultivate and nurture the community life of the University."

The constitutional objects of the Union are:

- (a) "to create opportunities for the development of social, educational and intellectual interests of its members;
- (b) to provide premises with facilities and amenities such as to establish common meeting grounds and social centres for its members;
- (c) to manage and control any property, not being the property of the Union, for whose management and control the Board of the Union has accepted responsibility;
- (d) to provide facilities for the refreshment, entertainment, recreation and convenience of its members;
- (e) to secure the cooperation of its members in furthering the interests of the University;
- (f) generally, to organise and direct such activities as may be appropriate for the educational and other interests of its members or for carrying out any of the aforesaid objects."

The Union Board, its peak governance body, is comprised of a voting majority of seven student Directors. This student control ensures that:

- Student interests in non-academic services are given paramount concern;

- The Union has a vibrant culture of volunteering, driven by students who feel a strong connection to the Union as a student-run organisation;
- The Union focuses on creating a community of scholars between, rather than within, established groups on campus such as faculties and cultural groups.

Executive Summary – The Union in Brief

- The Union is a sizable organisation. It has a turnover of \$19m with 300 employees. Approximately \$6m of this \$19m is comprised of fees.
- Under VSU, it is projected that fee revenue will drop by at least \$5m or 80%. There will be a consequent significant reduction in service levels, unless that gap can be made up by the University.
- The vast majority of Union services are not commercially sustainable. Even food outlets, because of the hours opened and the diversity offered are not commercially sustainable in their current form. Any Union services which are commercially sustainable have their proceeds directed towards other programs to create campus community.
- The Union runs 13 volunteering programs coordinated by 400 volunteers
- The Union provides 29 childcare spots with a total Union subsidy of \$40,000, along with management responsibility for the Childcare Centre.
- The Union runs 22 leadership, employability and professional development skills programs saving members \$491,000 if these programs were accessed privately.
- Over 20,000 members attend Union events and entertainment functions annually.
- Over 20,000 members use Union facilities as a communal social/study space annually.
- The Union delivers \$500,000 in direct food and retail subsidies annually, with an additional \$1m in indirect subsidies for long opening hours and diverse, culturally-sensitive food offerings and a further \$500,000 for capital works.
- The Union is professionally-run by an experienced senior management team and a Board with seven non-student Directors, including three Directors appointed directly by the University. Though currently unincorporated, it complies with all corporate governance standards including financial reporting and auditing.
- The Union ensures the efficiency of its operations through benchmarking, performance indicators and rigorous internal financial assessment.
- Many of the University's famous alumni have been heavily involved in the Union. For instance, across the years, Union Board members have included: former Vice-chancellor John Niland AO (1961-3), Greens

Senator Kerry Nettle (1995-7) and, more recently, Rhodes Scholar, David Winterton (2003-04).

Union Services, Costs and Benefits

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	<i>Benefits to Members</i>
Food and Retail outlets	<p>The Union operates the following food outlets: Java@Java, The Pavillions, Matthews Food Hall, Esmes, Badabagan, CLB Nexus, Quad Coffee Kart, Collonade, Quad Food Court, Eats @ The Round, Coffee Republic, Blockhouse Nexus.</p> <p>These outlets provide a diversity of food types: Asian, bagels, Italian caf, Thai, fruit juice, smoothies, charcoal chicken, kebabs, sushi, burgers, fresh bread, fish and chips, noodle bars and more.</p> <p>Students may sit in food outlets without purchasing meals.</p> <p>The Union operates the following mixed food/retail outlets: Matthew's Zippy's C-Store, CLB Zippy's, Blockhouse Zippy's.</p> <p>The Union operates the following retail outlets: Arcade Store, Graduation and Gift, Quad Store.</p> <p>The retail outlets include stationery and copy centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500,000/yr in direct member subsidies. • \$1m/yr in indirect subsidies for extended, non-commercial operating hours and diverse, culturally-sensitive food offerings • \$500,000/yr expenditure on capital works to university-owned buildings. • Extended opening hours are particularly attractive for postgraduate (particularly postgraduate research) and part-time students. For instance, Zippy's Convenience Stores are open till 8pm during session and provide microwave facilities. • Diverse, culturally-sensitive food offerings are particularly attractive for international students and students with a country of origin other than Australia. • The diversity of food outlet locations provides convenience for members and particularly members who study outside the most central campus areas. • Food outlets are attractive communal student spaces. 50% of students using outlets are not purchasers. This is particularly useful during inclement weather. • The Union regularly surveys students to ensure food and retail offerings are attractive to the membership base.
Tenancies	<p>The Union administers the following food and retail tenants on campus: Tropical Green, Library Lawn Coffee Cart, Southern Wok, Five</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancies are carefully selected to complement the food and services offered through either authentic food providers or specific, major, well-recognised

	Loaves No Barramundi, Clem's Bistro, Ivan's Fernery, STA Travel, MBF and Noddy's on Kampus.	<p>organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Union regularly surveys members to ensure that the selected tenancies are responsive to student needs.
Communal Social Facilities	The Union administers the following communal social facilities: all food outlets, the Roundhouse (including Unibar and club bar) and rooms available for general bookings by members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to Union to provide and maintain communal social facilities: \$1.5m. • 20,000 students using communal social facilities annually. • Communal social facilities are used for both student social interaction and as atmospheric study locations. • \$100,000/yr delivered in discounts off liquor prices. Bar prices are weighted to be lower than local bar prices. • The Unibar is the only local bar which students can attend and know that they will be mixing with other students. • Annual use by students from booking general-purpose rooms (excluding exam hires): 2,500 hours. • Market value of general-booking room hire: \$150,000.
Communal Specific-purpose Facilities	The Union administers the following specific-purpose facilities: dance studio, photography dark room, women's room, music rooms, religious facilities, training rooms and pottery studio.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides services which develop community on campus and student satisfaction within the context of developing a particular skill. • Annual cost to Union to provide and maintain facilities: \$100,000. • 3,500 students use specific-purpose facilities annually.
Free Computers	The Union provides free computers for use by students in the following locations: Java@Java, library, Eats@The Round, Coffee Republic and Blockhouse computer laboratories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of student computers provided by the Union on campus: 73. • Cost/computer: \$2,000 (computers have a useful life of 2 years).
Orientation	The Union's Orientation Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,000 new and continuing

Week	<p>program includes the yellowshirt program, campus tours and general-purpose information, on-campus entertainment. The program aims to orientate students to campus socially, academically and geographically.</p>	<p>students serviced annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases retention rates and student satisfaction. • Develops graduate attributes amongst yellowshirt volunteers. • Cost to Union to provide program: \$130,000. • 140 yellowshirt volunteers. Volunteers claim to be willing to volunteer because of the loyalty they feel to the Union as a student organisation. • 28,000 volunteer hours [on average, 200 volunteer hours per participant.] • \$504,000 for labour costs if volunteers were paid the standard \$18/hr university rate. • \$35,000 worth of training provided to YS.
Campus Volunteering Programs	<p>Beyond Orientation Week, the Union runs the following on-campus volunteering programs: Oral Blitz, Hypesmiths, Artsweek, Smartarts, Mooncake, Lens Life, CONTACT, International Cookbook, and Learning the Lingo. Learning the Lingo program is a mentoring program encouraging international students to mix with local students. See the attached Student Development brochure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the graduate attributes of involved students. • Learning the Lingo is an essential social support mechanism for international students. • Provides essential community support for students on campus. For instance, CONTACT is the university's only general purpose information and referral service. • Creates a sense of community and student satisfaction on campus and, particularly, a sense of community between rather than within the university's diverse cultures. • Members touched by these programs: 15,000. • Cost to Union to provide programs: \$200,000. • 250 volunteers. Volunteers are willing to volunteer because of the loyalty to the Union as a student organisation. • 20,000 volunteer hours

		provided by on-campus volunteers in these activities.
Community Volunteering Programs	The Union runs the following community volunteering programs: Shack Tutoring, Mosaic Fusion Forum and Outback Assist. Shack Tutoring involves volunteers tutoring local disadvantaged high school students in HSC subjects. Mosaic involves volunteers coordinating cultural diversity seminars for local school student. Outback Assist involves volunteers traveling to and performing community work for an indigenous community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the community responsibility and social justice aspirations of the university and Union. • Raises the profile of the University amongst high school students feeding into admissions policy. • Develop the graduate attributes of involved students. • Cost to Union to provide programs: \$50,000. • 120 volunteers. Volunteers are willing to volunteer because of the loyalty to the Union as a student organisation. • 9,600 Volunteer hours.
Arts Programs	The Union runs the following arts programs: Smartarts, Artsweek, Literary Program, Visual Blitz and Lens Life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to Union to provide programs: \$100,000. • Members touched by these programs: 6,000. • Creates a community feeling on campus. • Provides an artistic outlet for Kensington campus students thereby developing student satisfaction.
Leadership and Academic Support Programs	The Union runs the following leadership and academic support programs: U-Lead and Students Training Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to Union to provide: \$70,000. • Annual value to members from Union leadership programs (i.e. cost to students to access these courses privately off-campus minus cost to participate in Union programs): \$470,000. • Develops graduate attributes amongst involved students.
Employability Skills Programs	The Union provides a diverse range of subsidised employability skills course in areas including Responsible Service of Alcohol and Barista Training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to Union to provide: \$25,000. • Annual value to members from Union employability skills programs (i.e. cost to access these courses privately off-campus minus cost to participate in Union programs):

		\$12,000.
Publications	The Union provides the following publications: Blitz, the Student Diary, the Student Wallplanner, the International Cookbook, Unsweetened Literary Journal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Diary provides essential student information facilitating academic excellence. • Publications create community on campus, developing student satisfaction and engagement. • Contributors to publications develop graduate attributes. • Cost to Union to provide publications annually: \$400,000. • Market value of student diary and Blitz Magazine annually: \$400,000.
Events	The Union runs the following major events annually: Mooncake Yum Cha, Union Week, Magic Monkey Festival, Oktoberfest and Heaven and Hell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops student satisfaction and engagement. • Creates a sense of community. • Members involved in these events: 15,000. • Cost to Union to provide: \$100,000.
Entertainment	The Union runs the following entertainment services: weekly band performances, dance parties, trivia nights, movies, snooker, table tennis and video games, comedy nights, rock concerts, boxing tournaments and more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops student satisfaction and engagement. • Creates a sense of community and, in particular, brings vibrancy to campus life. • Cost to the Union to provide: \$700,000. • Members attending at least one entertainment function/year: 15,000.
Student Employment	The Union has a policy of employing students where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of student employees: 182. • Student on-campus employment is particularly essential for rural and regional students. • Student employment costs the Union through the costs associated with higher staff turnover (e.g. training and uniform costs)
Clubs and Societies	The Union provides in-kind and monetary grants to clubs and societies, administrative assistance and free or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops student satisfaction and engagement as well as a sense of campus community. • Develops graduate attributes of

	subsidised access to Union facilities and catering.	<p>students involved in co-ordination of events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual direct grants to clubs and societies: \$70,000. • 40 programs/events funded annually. • Annual value of subsidised catering and administrative assistance provided to clubs and societies: \$100,000. • Events funded include: the Australian Debating Championships; Med, Law and CSE Revues; Australian Indigenous Games; SOAP (University Orchestra); Sunswift Solar Racing Program.
Mentoring Programs	The Union provides in-kind and monetary grants to mentoring programs to coordinate social events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages student retention and engagement, particularly for disadvantaged students. • Strongly aligns with the University's strategic focus on mentoring. • Grant budget for 2005: \$5,000. • This program was commenced in 2005 and has been very successful. Currently, funding has been delivered to mentoring programs involving 700 students.
Childcare	The Union is responsible for the management of Honeypot Childcare Centre and contributes half the Centre's subsidy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual direct grants to childcare: \$40,000. • Number of childcare spots: 29. • Value to members of cost of childcare relative to cost of private providers: \$20/hour. • Offers student-specific packages, particularly sessional care. • Strongly aligns with the University's strategic focus on childcare.
Member Discount Card	The Union provides a discount card delivering off-campus discounts for restaurants, travel, accommodation, movies and diverse retail services (including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual cost to Union to provide member discount card: \$70,000. • Total member discount cards delivered: 35,000.

	Coles).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of 'tear-away' discounts per card: \$600.
Campus Catering	The Union provides subsidised student and faculty-focused catering through Roundtable catering services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual subsidy to student and staff catering on campus: \$500,000. • Facilitates members to coordinate their own events on campus.
Board and Committees	The Union is governed by a Board of Directors with several Committees reporting directly to Board. The Board includes seven student directors and each Committee includes representatives from the student body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops graduate attributes of Board and Committee members. • Ensures student control of student non-academic services ensuring responsiveness to student needs and student loyalty to the organisation.
Life Member services	The Union provides the following services targeted particularly at life members: biannual newsletters, discounts on Roundtable catering, member discount card and involvement in governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains alumni engagement in the university. • Cost to Union to provide life member services annually: \$40,000.
University Staff Member Services	The Union provides associate membership for all staff of the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University staff have expressed particular interest in the member discount card for off-campus benefits.

Appendix 2: The Student Guild

The Student Guild (hereinafter “Guild”) and its staff provide representation, advocacy, activities, and other services independent of the University. The services provided by the Guild are designed to provide support for student rights and to maintain and promote student welfare at the University. The Guild’s services are unique due to the fact that they are driven by, and primarily provided for by students.

organisational context⁴

The Student Guild (“Guild”) is the peak representative body for all students at the University of New South Wales. The Guild employs seven staff, and is governed by the Guild Council, a body elected by and from the student body of the University. The primary focus of the Guild is providing representative and advocacy services to students, and enriching the experience of students on campus.

The Guild is comprised of a number of departments of varying scope: including, Education/Welfare, Womens, International Students, Ethnic Affairs, Gay and Lesbian, Environment and Indigenous. Each department of the Guild also has an elected student office bearer to assist and direct the work undertaken by each department. The Guild is a not-for-profit organisation, and relies heavily on student volunteers to ensure that the aims of the Guild are met.

representation and research

Representation is made by the Guild on behalf of its members to the University at all levels; the Guild provides representation and research to external university bodies including, but not limited to, the Commonwealth and State governments.

The representation and research often arise as a result of student inquiries and as a result of the trends within student advocacy. This representation may take many forms, including the formal responses to proposed policy changes within the University, monitoring student resource issues across the University. In addition to this, the Guild is an affiliate of the National Union of Students (NUS), which provides an amplification to the representations made by the Guild, especially on matters in the Commonwealth jurisdiction.

The primary responsibility of research and representation falls to the President, Advocacy Officer, and Executive Officer. The President attends many university committees and working-groups to provide an independent student voice. The Executive Officer is employed to provide strategic direction for the Guild, and work closely with the Advocacy Officer to provide official Guild responses on issues within the higher education sector. These responses generally take the form of written submissions, and the Guild has recently provided submissions to the NSW Ombudsman and the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References

⁴ Although the Postgraduate Board is a constituent board of the Student Guild, this document only deals with the services offered by the Guild ***excluding*** the Postgraduate Board.

Committee.

vsu Implication

vsu will mean that the capacity for the Guild to provide representative services will be lost, especially as staff and student office bearers concentrating on revenue raising services in order to ensure the viability of the Guild would subsume representation.

advocacy

The Guild employs two full-time staff members to provide direct one-on-one advocacy services to the student body. The two staff members, the Advocacy Officer and Solicitor, aim to provide a no-fault resolution to academic and general grievances for students. The Advocacy Officer not only deals with individual grievances, but also provides written research papers on the effect of internal University policies, and changes in legislation that may affect grievance procedures.

The primary areas in which the Advocacy Officer provides advice are in enrolment, assessment, administrative, or other general problems. The Advocacy Officer assists students at all levels of a grievance, and will assist students in making representations to the University administration regarding their grievances. The Advocacy Officer ensures that students are resourced with an understanding of the correct procedures for advancing a grievance, and will provide independent advice on the likelihood of success in a particular case.

Further, the Advocacy Officer provides advice and assistance in applying for, and undertaking grievances with, government bodies, such as Centrelink and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Where the complaint or grievance is beyond the scope of the Advocacy Officer, they will provide a referral to an appropriate body to assist in their complaint.

In addition to the employment of the Advocacy Officer, the Guild employs a full-time Solicitor. The Solicitor provides a no-cost service to students, and primarily advises in minor cases. The majority of casework is conduct in higher end academic grievances, tenancy, industrial relations, and traffic infringements.

vsu Implication

vsu will mean that the Guild may not be able to continue to employ the two full-time staff members to provide independent and free advocacy services. The cost of employing the Advocate and Solicitor to the Guild is approximately \$120 000 in yearly salaries. The impact of this upon the student community would be great; the independence of this service provides students with a no-fault dispute resolution process that would disappear without the service provided by the Guild. Without this service, the escalation rate of grievances would increase, and the University's student services would be clogged with complaints. This would increase the length of time required to resolve problems, and decrease the ability of the University to respond promptly to grievances. The university would be unable to provide these services because of a perception of bias and lack of independence.

student welfare services

The Guild currently provides small emergency loans for students in dire need of assistance. These loans would not be able to be offered.

clubs and societies on campus

The Guild currently expends approximately \$250,000 per annum on clubs and societies. This money is used to fund a full-time staff member, whose primary function is to administer the grants available to clubs, in conjunction with the elected student CASOC Director. The Guild currently has approximately 175 affiliated clubs, the highest number of any university in Australia. This is achieved on a budget that is small relative to other student organisations.

The Guild also provides the CASOC Resource Centre, which provides computers, guillotine, laminator and subsidised photocopying for affiliated clubs.

Due to the diversity of affiliated clubs, students at the University are able to become members of clubs that encompass virtually all religious, ethno-cultural, social, and political interests. The service provided by CASOC is invaluable to the university community. The affiliated clubs provide support networks, social activities, and an extremely vibrant campus culture for a relatively low outlay.

vsu Implication

vsu would likely mean that the Guild could no longer fund the clubs and societies to the same level that they currently are funded. This would cause a dramatic decline in the vibrancy of campus culture at the University, and in the long term may make the University a less attractive place in the eyes of prospective students. These effects would be particularly acute for international students, who depend very heavily upon the support networks engendered by the ethno-cultural clubs on campus.

publications

The Guild currently publishes *Tharunka*, an independent, entirely student produced publication. Produced tri-weekly, *Tharunka* provides students with a voice and forum for debate. The cost of producing *Tharunka*, including wages for the Editors and cost of printing, is approximately \$80 000 per year. In addition to *Tharunka*, the Guild provides many other occasional publications, including handbooks for women, queer students, international students, student representatives, plus handbooks for assisting student through the grievance process.

The Guild also provides its website as a service to members.

vsu Implication

The Guild would not be able to afford to continue to publish *Tharunka* in its current form under vsu. The Guild would be forced to seek greater commercial contributions

to support the costs of producing such a publication, and this would impinge on the ability of the editorial team to provide the paper in its current form. VSU would also affect the feasibility of producing the other publications which cost approximately \$15 000 per year to produce.

Appendix 3: The Postgraduate Board



Services, Activities and Facilities Provided by the Postgraduate Board and the Implications of VSU upon their Function

The Postgraduate Board and its staff provide ***independent*** advice, advocacy and other services in support of student rights and student welfare. Postgraduate Board services are unique as they come from a purely student focused position with valuable organisational memories and experiences. These services are invaluable to students and generally cannot be replaced by the University.

It is vital to students that student association staff are independent of the University, Centrelink and government departments. While university staff may have the welfare of students in mind, they are not able to act independently of their employer. Student association staff have no conflict of interest in providing services to students. They are employed by students specifically to help protect members student rights and welfare.

Representation

Representation is made by the Postgraduate Board to the University at all levels —Academic Board, University working parties and committees, faculties, schools, departments, and various administrative units — on behalf of postgraduate students. The PGB represents postgraduate students to other bodies within the University, such as the University Union and the Sports Association, as well as to external bodies including Federal, State, and Local governments.

Collective representation refers to the task of advocating generally on behalf of postgraduate students to schools, faculties, and at the University level. This includes participating in a wide range of University committees and working parties, lobbying the University on behalf of postgraduate students, monitoring the study and research conditions of postgraduate students across the University and responding appropriately, and making submissions to the University on important policy issues. Through its affiliation to the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), the peak national representative body for postgraduate students, the PGB is able to achieve broad and effective advocacy at the national level for UNSW postgraduates.

The Postgraduate Board also employs a Manager who maintains the administration of the Board as well as undertaking research on issues in higher education and particularly issues that affect postgraduates. The Manager monitors all changes in the way policy and conditions are maintained by

UNSW management and works to ensure that the rights of postgraduates are not undermined. Often research is a result of student inquiries or complaints.

Recent issues on which the Postgraduate Board has submitted papers to organisations external to the University include Review of Transport Concession Policy, Student Income Support Inquiry and Response to the NSW Ombudsman Inquiry into Complaint Handling in NSW Universities.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

VSU would spell the end of students providing representation with postgraduate students' needs as their highest priority. It would not effect the election of students to the governing bodies of University Council and Academic Board, but it should be remembered that the students on these bodies are required to act in a manner that benefits the University over the body which elected them.

Many postgraduate students give generously of their time to attend committee meetings, participate in submission preparation and generally provide the excellent level of representation needed and appreciated by postgraduate students at UNSW. However, informed representation cannot be achieved without research, organisational memory and communication networks that are achieved through the staffing of the Postgraduate Board, and the small honorarium paid to the PGB Convenor which enables them to take leave from their studies to better pursue the representation of postgraduate students.

Advocacy

The PGB employs a full-time advocate, who is available to provide advice about academic and general grievances to all postgraduate students. The role of the Postgraduate Advocacy Officer is to act on behalf of postgraduate students both generally and individually in a number of fora that have the potential to affect their welfare and their ability to complete their studies. The Officer's main role, however, is to advise individual postgraduate students on matters of academic and administrative concern and, where appropriate, attempt to resolve a grievance on their behalf. The types of issues the Postgraduate Advocacy Officer helps to resolve include enrolment, thesis supervision, assessment and any administrative or academic issue where a student requires advice or support in resolving their difficulties.

One key area of advocacy is with respect to academic complaints. The Advocacy Officer assists students with a wide range of issues in this area, such as supervision issues. The Advocacy Officer assists students to negotiate resolutions with supervisors and, if required, assists students to negotiate alternative supervision arrangements.

The Advocacy Officer assists students with submissions to the University regarding assessment decisions all the way through to appeal stage, including representation to Higher Degree Committees.

The Advocacy Officer also assists students to lodge complaints if a matter becomes intractable, and drafts submissions on behalf of students in relation to these complaints. These complaints range from resources on campus to submissions regarding the termination of a scholarship and/or candidacy.

The Advocacy Officer also provides advice, and, if necessary referral, in a range of other matters relating to Centrelink, tenancy and also immigration matters.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

VSU would prevent the Postgraduate Board from continuing to employ this vital staff member.

While this role is performed by the Postgraduate Board it is carried out with an appropriate level of independence. The University is required by legislation to provide students with independent advice with respect to complaints, a role currently performed by the Advocacy Officer.

The initial aim of the Advocacy Officer is to reach a no-fault resolution to a dispute through mediation with both parties and preventing escalation. Without the independent mechanism of the Postgraduate Advocacy Officer in place, many more cases of student grievances would spiral into intractable complaints which would clog the administrative avenues of the University and may even translate into a sharp rise in litigation.

Another characteristic is that the Advocacy Officer provides a supportive means for students to rectify their problems. Without this independent support and advice, many students may choose to simply discontinue their studies rather than continue in a perceived intolerable situation.

24-hour Postgraduate Computer Lab

The 24-hour Postgraduate Computer Lab is available for all postgraduate students to use. The computer lab is located on the first floor of the rear of the Library, with an outside entrance near Australia Post. Swipe card access is placed on all postgraduate student cards at enrolment. Within the lab are a number of computers, a scanner and printer. The Lab also has comfortable seating, desks set up in study pods and a postgraduate noticeboard.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

This Lab is in constant use with students often waiting considerable amounts of time to use the computers. It was established entirely with student money. Under VSU the current facility would hopefully still exist, until the technology and furniture became outdated and unusable and was not replaced. Under VSU there would not be any student voice protecting this space at University

committees and with the shortage of space on campus, it may well be quickly reallocated.

24-hour Postgraduate Lounge

The Postgraduate Board maintains the Postgraduate Lounge in Room 1017 of the East wing, First floor, Quadrangle Building. The room has 24 hour access for all postgraduate students and includes computers, comfortable lounges, occasional tables and a kitchenette with a refrigerator and microwave. There is also a supply of bottled water. The room has recently been painted as part of the Student Guild refurbishment, and air conditioning has recently been installed to make this high usage facility more appropriate to student use.

The Lounge is extremely popular with students and is in constant use 24 hours a day, throughout session and through the University breaks. 77.7% of postgraduate students who responded to the Postgraduate Board survey of students conducted in 2004 rated the facility in the ranges from important to extremely important to them.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

This facility has been entirely funded with student money. Under VSU it would not be possible to update any of the facilities in the Lounge, maintain the resources within it, or even to keep up the supply of newspapers. Internet connections would be closed down.

Under VSU there would not be any student voice protecting this space at University committees and with the shortage of space on campus, it may well be quickly reallocated.

The Postgraduate Board employs a part time IT Consultant (also a postgraduate student) to maintain the computing facilities of the PGB. Under VSU this employment would cease and the computing facilities would rapidly fall into disrepair.

Laptop Hire

The Postgraduate Board has supplied laptop computers for rental to postgraduate students for several years. This is a valuable resource for postgraduate students in a variety of circumstances. Short term loans assist students who either have a problem with break down of their own computers, who need mobile computer support for specific projects, or who are undertaking short fieldwork assignments. Long term loans cover a far wider spectrum of needs with some students hiring laptops for over six months as it is a cost efficient alternative to purchasing a laptop outright.

While the UNSW Student IT Requirement Policy states that

While UNSW students are expected to have off-campus access to appropriate information technology resources, the University's commitment to equity will see it continue to provide on-campus computer facilities to those students unable to access these off-campus⁵

unfortunately not all students can access University provided computer facilities, nor do the desktop facilities always meet students' needs in completing the requirements of their studies.

The Postgraduate Board hires the laptop computers to students at a minimal rate, respecting the limited financial means of many students.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

The laptops themselves and the staff who administer the hiring scheme and maintain the computers are all paid for with student money. Under VSU this service would no longer exist.

Postgraduate Email List

Postgraduate study can often result in isolation from postgraduate students in other disciplines. Subscribing to the postgraduate group email list provides a way for students to keep in touch with the postgraduate community at UNSW. It is run by postgraduates for the postgraduate community. Once subscribed, students automatically receive any email posted to the list, such as scholarship notices, library information, accommodation notices and humour. The list provides a forum for postgraduates to discuss research issues, problems with thesis formatting and binding, activities, BBQs and dinners.

The list has become a valuable means for sourcing the opinions of the postgraduate community for the benefit of students themselves, and to the advantage of the University. It provides an easy means of communication to attract students to participate in focus groups and surveys, as well as providing insight into how institutional changes directly affect postgraduates and their opinions of such changes.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

The list is administered by staff employed by the Postgraduate Board using only student money. It is specifically valued for its independence and its role of providing a 'safe' forum where postgraduates can be honest in their opinions. The List is run on the Postgraduate Board server, maintained with student money.

Under VSU this service would not exist.

Postgraduate Seminars

⁵ UNSW Policy, IT Requirements for UNSW Students, April 6, 2004, p 2.

Once a month postgraduate students from disciplines across the University meet and listen to two or three seminars presented by other postgraduate students. The aim of the seminars is to provide a relaxed setting in which postgraduate students can meet each other and practise their presentation skills, while giving a basic introduction to their area of research. Occasionally speakers who have obtained a PhD or Masters by research are invited to talk to the group on how they have applied the skills they obtained while undertaking their postgraduate degree to jobs/positions other than those in academic settings.

This is a great way to meet other postgraduates in an informal yet academic environment. It allows the opportunity to expand students' thinking beyond their own discipline and to appreciate different modes of undertaking research. Details of upcoming seminars and their locations are disseminated via the Postgraduate Email List, the PGB website and the Office of Research and Training.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

Seminars are organised by Postgraduate Board members for the postgraduate community. The PGB provides a small subsidy for refreshments. Part of the attraction of the seminar series for students, is that it is run cross disciplinarily and independent of organised University seminars. Under VSU it may be possible to still run the seminars, but the attraction to students may be lost if run under the auspices of the University.

Publications

The PGB produces a number of publications on a regular or occasional basis, including:

- * Our newsletter, the ***Whipping Post***, which is going online in 2005.
- * The ***Postgraduate Guide***, which is produced annually.
- * ***Practical Aspects of Producing A Thesis at UNSW***, which is currently being updated.

All our publications are available electronically on the PGB website.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

Under VSU postgraduate students would lose the independent voice of the student publication. Documents such as the Postgraduate Guide and Thesis Guide could be funded and produced by the University, adding to the already stretched Student Publications workload, but they would be very different documents from that produced independently with student money.

The PGB website is maintained by PGB staff and is accessible on the PGB server which is also maintained by PGB staff. These facilities would not be available under VSU.

Joint Postgraduate Board/ Student Guild Activities

Through PGB contributions to the Student Guild, postgraduates are also able to access:

- * Free legal advice provided by a qualified solicitor
- * Advice and advocacy on income support and other welfare issues
- * Funding of clubs and societies and provision of a resource centre
- * International students department
- * Indigenous students department
- * Lesbian students' and gay students' departments
- * Environment department

Implications of VSU for this Activity

To my knowledge the Guild will be unable to maintain these services under VSU. The value of the independence of these services, particularly the Solicitor, is unquantifiable.

Childcare

The Postgraduate Board is a primary sponsor of the two student based childcare centres on campus – House at Pooh Corner and The Honeypot. PGB representatives sit on, and are active within, the Boards of Management of each centre.

Waiting lists at UNSW childcare centres hover around 700 children. Many parents don't even bother to put their children in the waiting lists. These excessive waiting lists pose a serious barrier to students wishing to take up postgraduate positions at UNSW. The waiting list is so extensive at the Honeypot that they recently decided to close the list rather than falsely raise parents' hopes by listing them.

If a student is lucky enough to get a place for their child they must face the burden of high fees. Only the student organisations such as the Postgraduate Board subsidise campus childcare centres. The University does not contribute to operational costs.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

The proposed introduction of VSU will only place a greater financial burden on postgraduate students with children. Currently the UNSW Postgraduate Board makes donations of around \$25,000 (or 9% of the Board's budget) to of the student childcare centres on campus. With VSU this donation will be eliminated and the cost of childcare will rise accordingly for students.

International postgraduate students are a key component to UNSW developing a respected reputation as a leading tertiary institution beyond Australia. This will particularly affect International students as they are not eligible for federal

government childcare subsidies (unless AUSAID sponsored). That means that they end up paying anything up to three times more for the same childcare place as local students.

Under VSU there will be no independent student voice lobbying for changes to the legislation, or to fight to keep the costs manageable.

This lack of available and affordable childcare means a lack of access to education.

Social Events

The Postgraduate Board organises, advertises and funds a number of social events for postgraduates during the year. This provides a vital opportunity for students to meet others, thus decreasing the increasing isolation of the postgraduate student. It also enables a chance to relax and enjoy the life of the University student that exists outside of the lecture room or laboratory.

Implications of VSU for this Activity

Under VSU the Postgraduate Board would no longer be able to fund these events, or provide the organisational infrastructure to facilitate them.

Level of Resourcing Required to Maintain the Activity

Whilst some of the activities and facilities detailed above can be independently costed, many are provided through a combination of staffing, resources and MSAF. It is therefore more appropriate to discuss the overall costing of these activities.

At 2005 levels, these activities in their entirety can be maintained, and even enhanced to a small extent, for only \$350,000 p.a.

Appendix 4: The UNSW Sports Association:

The Sports Association is the student body on campus responsible for encouraging, establishing, fostering, promoting, developing, extending and controlling sport and recreation within the University. To fulfil this charter the Sports Association aims to:

- Provide a wide range of affordable sporting opportunities to UNSW students, whereby student participation is maximised
- Provide equally for high performance, competitive and recreational sports
- Be recognised as an outstanding sporting university within Australia and enhance the UNSW brand through High Performance/Elite Sport
- Pursue innovation in sport and sports management using quality principles, education and training as foundations for the delivery of sporting excellence
- Seek, recognise and implement opportunities to promote the UNSW Sports Association & UNSW Sport and to establish and maintain positive relationships with the University community

This translates into a number of agreed objectives. Principal amongst these are aims:

- To increase student participation to 15,000 in UNSW Sports Association clubs, programs and events by 2005
- To be ranked as one of the top 5 universities in Australia in sports results and delivery within both Australian University Sport and the wider community by 2005

The role of sport in the university community is acknowledged in a number of ways. The ***University of New South Wales Act 1989*** encourages the University to

6(3)(b) ...develop and provide cultural, sporting, professional, technical and vocational services to the community.

Further, Council has acknowledged the contribution sport makes to the University community, resolving in 2002 (CL002/54):

That this Council recognises the important role of sport and sporting activities in the life of the University and the student experience on Campus, and therefore endorses sport as a core activity of the University.

There is a direct correlation between the affordability of sport and recreation activities and levels of participation in these activities. Further, there is a direct correlation between the resources allocated to sport and recreation and the resulting quality of performance of participants. Most critically, there are direct, if less easy to quantify, correlations between higher levels of participation, skill development and performance and the quality of the student experience, the richness and vibrancy of the University community, and the perception of the University brand in the greater community. This extends to the University's engagement with its alumni with links to the sporting clubs, both directly in terms of playing and spectating, and indirectly through attending functions and keeping in touch with results, one of the most powerful and most utilised connections graduates have with UNSW.

The major activities and programs of the UNSW Sports Association include the following:

Club sport and recreation

The Sports Association supports forty sporting and recreational clubs that range very broadly in size, purpose, nature and cost. Clubs may be as small as twenty members for specialist pursuits such as taiko, athletics and windsurfing, through to over four hundred members for the waterski and outdoors clubs. Clubs may be competitive, competing at the highest level in sports such as water polo, cricket, judo and badminton, or may be established purely for participatory purposes, such as with underwater and boardriders. Clubs may be team based or individual, and may have few costs or require significant capital and operational funding. The common thread is that the Sports Association believes strongly in maximising opportunities for students to participate in sport and recreational activities, and supports clubs equally regardless of the cache of their sport or the cost to participate.

For the purposes of completeness, the sports supported by the Sports Association via a club structure include aikido, archery, athletics, australian rules, badminton, baseball/softball, basketball, boardriders, cricket, cycling, fencing, golf, hockey, jitsu, judo, karate, kendo, netball, outdoors, rowing, rugby league and oztag, rugby union, sailing, ski and board, soccer, squash, swimming, table tennis, taiko, tennis, taekwondo, touch, triathlon, ultimate frisbee, underwater, volleyball, waterpolo, waterski and windsurfing. There are almost 5,000 members of these clubs, with approximately 75% of all club members students at UNSW.

The Sports Association supports clubs and the club structure because these clubs provide inestimable value to students, the student experience, the University community and the University itself. Benefits include:

- the development of rounded, community aware graduates. The skills and expertise that students gain from their involvement in university sport and other extra-curricular activities include teamwork, co-operation, communication skills, leadership and initiative.
- the development of community leaders. University sport in its present form is a training ground for community leaders and sporting administrators whose expertise benefits the whole community. UNSW Medallists Lisa Israel (Archery) and Kristy Owen (Water Polo), and Rhodes Scholars Elizabeth Stone (Judo) and Selena Griffiths (Cross Country Ski), were all UNSW Sports Association Club Presidents and athletes.
- the opportunity for students to participate and/or compete in their chosen sporting or recreational pursuit, or to try something new in a non-threatening and accessible environment.
- the opportunity for students to mix with other students across different faculties, schools and areas of study, developing a University-wide community and culture.
- the development life-long friends and networks.
- capturing young people at the time they are most likely to drop out of sport and physical activity, in this way developing healthy habits for life.
- a support network for students whilst at University, especially those from outside Sydney or Australia, allowing them to more easily transition into University life and continue the interests they have developed throughout their school years.
- an exposure to networks of professionals within a student's field of study which provides role models and mentors whilst studying and assists the transition to work.

- the opportunity to compete in clubs with a unique spirit and attitude to their sport, where the sport is important but not the defining part of players' lives.
- the multiplier effect of sporting clubs – a relatively small funding base produces considerable further funding and an incredible number of volunteer administration and coaching hours that the University could not afford to pay for.
- the opportunity for students to participate in club and financial administration, including running and participating in meetings, creating and working to budgets and dealing with governance procedures and the like.
- a unique and unrivalled connection with the University that extends well beyond graduation and personal participation.
- links with the local community through participating in the same teams or clubs, coaching junior and school teams, and attracting school students to UNSW
- the unique marketing angle of sport and fitness facilities to the international education market, especially in competing with the US and UK university systems

VSU in its purest form would likely be devastating to sporting clubs at UNSW. The experience in Western Australia was that whilst the sporting and fitness facilities on campus often survived VSU until its rollback, the sporting clubs emerged, if still in existence, as skeletons of their previous existence.

A similar outcome could be expected at UNSW, with three significant pressures already making sport inaccessible to some students. Sport is becoming increasingly expensive to play, there are more students wanting to participate, which dilutes the subsidy available per student, and the Sports Association has limited alternative revenue streams (a report to Student Affairs Committee in August 2004 outlining these pressures is attached). In conjunction with the Sports Association being one of only two student sports bodies in Australia not able to benefit from the revenue and management possibilities of the University's sporting and recreation facilities, it is clear that the pressure to sustain the financial operations of sport at UNSW already falls heavily on its students, and VSU could terminally threaten some of the more vulnerable sporting clubs.

To continue to support the basic level of club operations at their present standard, which in most cases is sufficient but in some cases inadequate, additional revenue (or a reduction in costs) of \$625,000 will need to be found. This money goes towards club and player registrations, facility hire, playing and training equipment, repairs and maintenance to equipment, and umpires and referees, and would cover approximately 57% of club expenditure on these items, and 24% of total club expenditure. In addition, the club structure is directly supported by a full-time club development officer (level 5) and a full-time finance officer (level 4), along with the indirect support of other Sports Association staff. A greater involvement in the operations of Unigym, benefiting from the many available revenue streams, rationalising costs and providing more flexible access for clubs, would go a considerable way to cushioning this burden.

Social sports

The Sports Association conducts eleven social and lunchtime sports competitions, usually at Unigym or on the Village Green. Sports played include indoor soccer, oztag,

basketball, volleyball and table tennis, with up to 150 teams competing each year. These competitions are a fantastic way of allowing students to participate in a regular organised sport competition without the commitment of midweek training and weekend travelling and playing, and also allow players new to a sport or intimidated by the club structure an entry to the game. Students can form teams from within their faculty or school, or from a number of different schools, strengthening their ties to existing friends and meeting new ones.

The costs of this program are limited to one full-time staff member (shared with the Recreation Courses program), facility hire and a basic level of playing equipment. Provided Unigym does not continue to raise its court prices by 20% per year, and does not further erode lunchtime access to the University's facilities, this program should be able to remain self-funding and sustainable in a worst case VSU environment.

Recreation courses

The success story of the Sports Association in recent years has been the burgeoning Recreation Courses program. Up to seventy separate courses are conducted each session, covering activities as diverse as ball and racquet sports, dance and movement, extreme adventure, martial arts and combat and water sports. Recreation courses serve a variety of purposes including introducing students to the sport or activity, allowing for a short-term commitment to an activity rather than a full season, enabling students to participate in a variety of different activities throughout the year and enabling clubs to reach new markets, as well as providing all of the cross-faculty and broader educational benefits detailed above.

The Recreation Course program is presently, in conjunction with the Social Sports program, self-funding, making just enough money to cover a full-time staff member, instructor and equipment costs and facility hire. In many cases the courses are run by Sports Association clubs, usually via the volunteer efforts of club members, providing not only access to potential new members but additional revenue also. This program should be able to remain self-funding and sustainable in a worst case VSU environment.

Coaching

The Sports Association shares the University's commitment to providing an excellent educational experience, and values highly the input and contribution of its coaches and instructors. At the same time, expectations of coaches in terms of the standard of care they provide whilst teaching has escalated. Considered together, it has become imperative to engage only qualified and National Sport Organisation accredited coaches and instructors, and to provide a support structure within the Sports Association to administer this. Up to 150 accredited coaches and instructors will be engaged by the Sports Association for constituent clubs in 2005, and whilst many will coach on a voluntary basis an increasing number are paid.

Worst case VSU will have a strong impact in two areas of coaching. At the elite end of competition coaches are employed to guide high performance programs in sports such as rowing, Grade cricket, National League water polo and Sydney AFL, and paid accordingly. For other clubs accredited coaches are required to not only enhance the experience of playing the sport for club members, but to cover risk management

liabilities that increasingly arise. A loss of ability to pay these coaches may in endanger the ability of the Sports Association to conduct certain sports, and certainly to offer sports at the level they are currently played.

The coaching program will cost Sports Association clubs almost \$330,000 in 2005, almost half of which will come from the Sports Association from the Student Activity Fee. In addition, one full-time level 5 staff member is resourced to administer the coaching program (in conjunction with the High Performance program), and all Human Resource and payroll issues are processed centrally by the University.

Facilities

The Sports Association and clubs utilise all of the University's sport and recreation facilities, including swimming pool, indoor sports courts, martial arts rooms, tennis courts and squash courts, as well as the University grounds at Little Bay, David Phillips fields and the Village Green. The Sports Association pays commercial rates for the use of these facilities, and the facilities the Sports Association use subsidise the operations of other Unigym facilities. The situation with grounds is rather different, in that a Service Level Agreement between Facilities Management and the Sports Association enables subsidised use of the grounds by Sports Association clubs.

The Sports Association has traditionally subsidised the operations of the facilities and, whilst the focus has drifted away from students in recent years, students have contributed almost \$2.5m in recent years to capital upgrades of Unigym via Sports Association sponsored MSAF contributions. However, three main weaknesses exist with the current structure:

- the unique management system (UNSW is one of only two universities in Australia where the sports association/union/guild does not operate the University's sport and recreation facilities), which affects the Sports Association's revenue streams and programming and usage flexibility;
- Unigym's current programming and facility provision focus, which affects the ability of the Sports Association to access facilities; and
- Unigym's inability to operate to breakeven or return a surplus from the University's resources, which affects the hiring rates the Sports Association and clubs have to pay to use UNSW facilities

A Service Level Agreement and subsidy for use of all of the University's facilities, as flagged by Dr Alec Cameron late in 2004, would be beneficial to the Sports Association in a VSU environment. Alternatively, the Sports Association would be keen to pursue greater management control of the facilities, and would provide better opportunities for students and a decreasing financial burden on the University if this model were implemented.

Capital equipment

The Sports Association and clubs contribute annually to provisions for the upgrade and replacement of capital equipment such as rowing, dive, sailing and ski boats, trailers, martial arts mats and the like. These contributions enable students to participate in sports and acquire new skills that may otherwise be financially inaccessible due to the sports' high capital costs, and underpin several of our most popular clubs.

VSU will most likely hit hardest the capital intensive clubs, although not necessarily in the short term. Recreational clubs such as underwater, outdoors and water ski attract very high levels of patronage and are very cheap to operate once the capital equipment has been purchased. The equipment and reserves clubs have on hand at present could sustain operations for a time, potentially up to a few years, but without constant topping up of the reserves fund the clubs would need a significant capital injection once their equipment becomes exhausted and unsafe to use.

Total provisions put aside in 2005 for capital equipment will reach approximately \$130,000, with the Sports Association directly contributing \$70,000 of these provisions. Continued capital funding of \$70,000 to \$80,000 per annum would enable these activities to survive.

High performance sport

Reflecting the status of UNSW as a leader amongst Australian universities, and UNSW's reputation as a university of outstanding quality, Sports Association clubs enters teams into some of the highest level competitions available, including National League Water Polo, the Sydney AFL competition, Sydney Grade Cricket, the Sydney Winter Baseball League, State League Soccer and State Cup Touch Football, and clubs such as badminton, judo and rowing regularly enter individual and team competitors into national and international tournaments. High performance sport enhances the reputation and brand of the University locally and internationally, attracts better athletes to study at UNSW, encourages other students to participate in sports and club activities, provides pathways to excellence for students in both their studies and their sport, lifts the standards of performance and coaching at the University, and provides outstanding networking opportunities for students and the Sports Association.

Worst-case VSU would have a devastating effect on high performance sport at UNSW. Entering teams and individuals in elite level competition requires considerable resources for coaching, facility hire, equipment, travel expenses and community involvement, and only rarely attracts sponsorship to support these resources. Already the clubs competing at a high performance level for the University are under the greatest financial strain, even accounting for additional funding provided to the small number of clubs competing at this level.

Defining the level of resources required to maintain high performance sport is problematic. Whilst the Sports Association allocates \$100,000 to nine clubs to assist with high performance expenditure, this is over and above the other funding provided to these clubs for facilities, equipment, coaching, capital and the like. The Sports Association funds high performance clubs to the tune of \$400,000 annually.

Scholarships

The Sports Association coordinates and funds a tiered scholarship program for outstanding student athletes at UNSW. Founded in 1988, UNSW developed the first Australian university sports scholarship scheme. The fund has since provided for over 150 high achieving athletes. Scholars are assessed on the basis of their sporting ability, leadership qualities, potential to contribute to the wider life of the University, and

circumstances which might otherwise hinder a successful transition to UNSW. The development of a comprehensive mentoring system adds immense value to the scholarship, aligning scholars to mentors for their sport, study and career. An academic mentor has been established within every faculty to assist the scholars combine their sporting schedules with their academic requirements, and by providing flexibility for study the scholarship enables students to balance an elite sporting and academic life. Up to twenty Ben Lexcen Scholarships and forty Sports Scholarships are awarded each year, with the 2005 group comprising four Olympians, a World Cup winning cricketer and numerous other national and state title holders.

The Ben Lexcen Scholarship program will not be financially affected under VSU as scholarships are paid from an endowed fund in the UNSW Foundation with a current balance of \$1.5m. However, the sports scholarships are paid from annual contributions of the clubs and Sports Association which would most likely dry up in a VSU environment. Further, the most beneficial part of the scholarships for most students is the assistance provided through academic mentors and networking opportunities, which is administered, along with the marketing of the scheme to schools and sporting associations throughout NSW, by half of one full-time staff member within the Sports Association.

For the scholarships program to continue unaffected the Sports Association will need to find approximately \$20,000 for sports scholarships, an equivalent amount for clubs to contribute to the program, and funding for half of one level 5 staff member to administer the program, along with the continued support of the scholarships unit of UNSW to process payments and the like. For the outcomes of the scholarships to be maximized it is also important that the University continue to provide membership passes to Unigym, which were provided to Ben Lexcen scholars this year but for the first time ever denied to Sports Scholarship holders.

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY GAMES AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Australian University Games (AUG) is Australia's largest annual multi-sport event. AUG provides a unique opportunity for university athletes, many of whom are of Olympic standard, to compete against each other in a national event, and attracts close to 7,000 participants each year in 26 sports. AUG is complemented by a series of Australian University Championships as well as the qualifying Eastern University Games. UNSW sends approximately 600 students to EUG, AUG and the various championships.

The consensus amongst sports associations/unions across Australia is that under worst case VSU the support universities provide to Australian University Games and Championships would be the first withdrawn. The centralised structure of Australian University Sport, which coordinates the Games and Championships, is quite expensive and funded predominantly by member universities. No doubt a level of informal competition will continue to exist, but with much lower levels of organization and at considerable cost to participants.

The Sports Association funds University Games and Championship participation, including membership and participation fees, travel subsidies, subsidies for coaches and managers, and support staff, with \$200,000 annually. Resourcing for continued participation in these events, however, will depend largely upon the support of other universities across Australia, as well as the willingness of the Australian Sports Commission to fund the centralised AUS structure.

Support staff and administration

To support the programs, activities and functions that allow 13,000 students to participate in sport and recreation each year the Sports Association maintains office facilities and staff on campus, as well as a governance framework required of a semi-autonomous body of UNSW. As noted above, the Sports Association provides staff in the following areas:

- Manager
- Club Development
- High Performance: Athletes and Coaches
- Marketing Communications
- Finance (x 1.4)
- Administration and Events (0.6 plus trainee)
- Recreation Programs
- Judo Programs

Services provided to Sports Association members, in addition to those above,

include:

- office facilities, computers, printers, a photocopier, telephones, stationery etc
- IT and web hosting services
- centralised administration of club finances including banking, payroll, GST reporting, accounts payable and receivable and monthly reporting
- marketing of clubs, courses and UNSW
- insurance coverage (through UNSW)
- auditing of clubs and the Sports Association
- a Sports Association ute for towing trailers and boats
- the Sam Cracknell Pavilion for functions and meetings
- centralised coordination of dealings with the University for areas such as collection and disbursement of the Student Activity Fee, booking and paying for facilities, access to the Foundation, insurance inquiries and the like, as well as representation on committees of the University
- running events such as the Blues Dinner and Lexcen launch
- advice on how to access sport and recreation opportunities both at the University and in the community

Administration of the Sports Association and provision of these services will cost the Sports Association approximately \$600,000 in 2005, of which \$450,000 is spent on staff salaries and on-costs.

Gary Jones

MANAGER

UNSW Sports Association

Appendix 5: The College of Fine Arts Students Association

University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts Students' Association and the effects of Voluntary Students Union Legislation

Foreword

The purpose of this study is to provide a considered appraisal of the effects that Voluntary Student Unionism will have on the Students' Association at UNSW College of Fine Arts.

The aim is to avoid the well-worn arguments and political sloganeering in the hope that the cold facts will suffice to impress the seriousness of the situation on the reader.

With a target audience of Coalition Senators, NSW state government and senior UNSW and COFA staff and academics I am attempting to combine two objectives. Firstly, in seeking to educate people as to the catastrophic effect that VSU will have on our organisation, and COFA as a whole, I hope that the Senate will vote against the legislation. Failing this, I am hoping to appeal to people who are in a position to help COFA Students' Association should the legislation reach the statute book.

I make no apologies for the parochiality of concentrating solely on the potential plight of COFA Students' Association. Larger and better-resourced organisations are campaigning over VSU at a national level; I am simply attempting to save something I know to be worth saving.

I have endeavoured to keep this report as succinct as possible. Please take the time to read this booklet. If you do I am sure you will agree that COFA SA is worth keeping.

Kudos Gallery

The Service

The Kudos Gallery is provided as a service to members. The philosophy behind the gallery is the provision of an off-campus space where students can learn how to exhibit their work. The Kudos Gallery represents the first step for student artists towards exhibiting in the 'real world.' As exhibitors they learn how to present their work, design invitations, host an opening, price their work for sale, devise press releases and the many other skills required in running their own exhibition.

A wide variety of exhibitions are held throughout the year. Exhibitions last one or two weeks and consist of solo and group shows as well as the Students' Association's annual Emerging Artists competition. Last year's competition attracted two hundred entries from COFA students and was judged by very respected figures from the arts world – Reg Mombassa, ?, ? ? (please add others Penelope)

The SA employs a part-time gallery supervisor who helps the artists through the exhibiting process. The supervisor also ensures that health and safety legislation is complied with and tends to the general upkeep of the gallery.

In the past few years the Students' Association has invested heavily in upgrading the gallery and the service provided. An important improvement was the purchase of four mobile partitions at the beginning of 2004.

The gallery is very well regarded in the wider arts community and received twelve mentions in the Sydney Morning Herald during 2004.

The gallery also provides students with the opportunity to develop gallery management skills. Each year seven students are elected to the Kudos Management Committee. This committee meets regularly and its duties include: assessing exhibition proposals, devising strategies to improve the gallery and the services provided, actively promoting the gallery.

Also, we offer students the opportunity to work as interns in the gallery. This affords students the chance to gain in-depth, hands on experience of running a gallery. This position is particularly valuable to Arts Administration students.

Post-VSU

The Students' Association would no longer be able to run the Kudos Gallery. The current lease expires in July 2006 and the SA would need to meet this responsibility as part of the winding-up process.

I would envisage this service ceasing before the start of the 2006 academic year.

Effect on COFA

COFA would lose its only off-campus exhibition space and its only student run gallery. Kudos Gallery hosts around thirty exhibitions a year that involve hundreds of COFA students. Amongst the many student shows that are held annually a number are one-week shows by MFA students who exhibit primarily for the purpose of having their work assessed.

The Kudos Gallery is rapidly developing a high profile amongst the Sydney arts community and giving COFA students excellent exposure outside the college.

The Students' Association Committee

The Service

COFA Students' Association is run by its members for its members. Annual elections are held and a committee of eleven students is elected by their peers to govern the SA. These positions are purely voluntary, attracting no remuneration.

This committee meets regularly and decides on the day-to-day running of the SA as

well as on longer-term objectives.

The committee members are obviously inexperienced in running an organisation of this size and are reliant on the advice and structure provided by the permanent staff. This arrangement is comparable with the elected representative and civil servant relationship that is the norm throughout the democratic world.

At COFA SA staff interference in the democratic process is kept to a minimum. Unlike many of its larger contemporaries meetings of the SA Committee are not 'babysat' by members of staff. Through this system of mutual respect and trust the SA functions efficiently and responsively. As a small organisation the SA is able to act quickly to meet the ever changing needs of its members. With few levels of government and a low-bureaucracy administration the delay between decision making and implementation is mercifully short.

As well as providing an efficient form of government the committee system also provides invaluable experience to its student members. Elected representatives learn how to present their ideas, work with colleagues and consider the greater good as well as to master the intricacies of committee work. Through their work on the SA Committee its member learn skills that will prove invaluable in later life.

Post-VSU

The proposed VSU legislation does not threaten the existence of the SA Committee directly. However, its implementation will destroy its relevance and its ability to function. As mentioned above the running of the SA is comprised of a fine balance between the ideas and energies of the elected representatives and the experience and skills of the permanent staff. Without the staff the committee members would not have the abilities to successfully implement their policies and strategies. Also, without compulsory fees they would be presiding over nothing, with no finances they would be powerless. An SA Committee lacking in finances and staff support would simply wither away. No students would be motivated to stand for election to an eviscerated post-VSU organisation, and no students would be inclined to vote in any such elections for a pointless committee.

In a very short time a self-perpetuating cycle of declining income and lessening services would lead to the disappearance of the COFA Students' Association.

Effect on COFA

The loss of the SA Committee and the accompanying loss of services would leave a gaping void at COFA. Students would no longer have their stake in the College. With the demise of their own organisation students would lose a valuable and integral part of their university experience. Campus life would resemble that of a school with students relegated to little more than school children. Without the ability to organise and represent themselves students will become adults with no more rights than a fourteen year old. Students would lose any effective input into and control over their destinies and the campus would become moribund, with students merely popping in for lectures.

Representation

The Service

In theory students at COFA have a variety of forums within the College and the University through which they can represent the views and concerns of their peers. They have seats on important committees such as Coursework Review, Faculty Board, Student Affairs, Student Facilities and Planning and various School committees.

In practice it is extremely difficult for students to successfully avail themselves of these representative opportunities. Any student entering the University committee environment does so as an amateur and quickly realises that they are thrown in amongst professionals. Whilst University academics and staff are discussing matters that they are well versed in as part of their jobs, the student representative is entering the arena armed only with scant knowledge and good intentions. The student representatives are also at a great disadvantage because they are there in a purely voluntary capacity. University meetings are time-consuming and often clash with lectures meaning that attendance for student representatives can involve missing valuable lectures. So, whilst University staff and academics attend meetings as part of their normal working life, student representatives attend unpaid and often at the cost of missing lectures.

In order to try and redress the balance for students involved in University committee work COFA Students' Association offers practical support. A member of staff is responsible for coordinating and organising students involved with University Committees. This service involves reading agendas and briefing student representatives on their content, ensuring that representatives actually attend meetings and helping the representative write a report of the meeting for circulation to all interested parties. The staff member also maintains a library of minutes, agendas and reports for future reference.

Post-VSU

As can be construed from the above, the student representatives on College and University committees are already at a considerable disadvantage. Under VSU the support they currently receive from the Students' Association will be lost. Without this support student representation on University committees would cease. Students would be largely unaware of these committees and of their importance and functions. In the unlikely event that a student would actively seek to attend these committees, their hopes of understanding the proceedings and making a meaningful contribution would be slight.

VSU would mean an end to any real student representation within COFA and the University.

Effect on COFA

It is hard to believe that anyone would find the prospect of an end to student representation on campus an acceptable proposition.

For students at COFA to lose any real means of being able to make a useful contribution to the College and their own education is, quite simply, a shameful prospect.

Campus Art Store

The Service

The Campus Art Store is the imaginatively named, Students' Association run on-campus shop providing arts materials and supplies to students.

The philosophy behind the Campus Art Store is simple; to provide the arts materials that our members, COFA students, require at the lowest possible price. The store is run as a non-profit making concern with the Students' Association of the view that it should not seek to benefit financially from its members. COFA SA is of the opinion that, having received an annual fee from members, it would then be morally wrong to profit from a service provision to those very same members.

Although the Campus Art Store is open to the public its trade derives overwhelmingly from COFA students. To ensure that it is members that benefit from the non-profit making philosophy all COFA students are given a 15% discount on marked prices.

The store stocks a wide range of materials that is tailored to meet the requirements of COFA students. The store manager works closely with COFA's academic staff to ascertain which particular items students will require in the coming months.

As a further benefit to members the Campus Art Store has a policy of providing casual employment to COFA students. By combining these casual staff with the Store's experienced and knowledgeable permanent staff a high level of customer service is maintained whilst providing greatly needed income for students.

Post-VSU.

It is possible that the Campus Art Store could continue to function post-VSU. The Campus Art Store operates on a break-even basis and, therefore, exists without any resort to a subsidy from student fees.

However, this post-VSU scenario would also entail the loss of the current administrative support that the Store receives. Currently all payroll, HR and accounting functions are performed by the Students' Association's administrative staff. Also lost would be all marketing and publicity support which are again provided by SA staff.

The greatest danger of this 'Doomsday Scenario' is that if the Campus Art Store were to be the sole surviving service of the SA it would be forced to radically change its operating philosophy. Instead of being run as a non-profit making concern it would need to try and make money in order to generate income to fund whatever limited services that the SA would try to provide.

This would be extremely difficult for the Campus Art Store. With a client base of just two thousand students and long slow periods during the holidays making even a token profit would require draconian changes. These changes would include abandoning the non-profit making service philosophy and charging students the 'going-rate.' The current 15% discount would obviously have to go. The Store would need to concentrate on the fastest moving lines and cease to stock less popular specialist items.

Effect on COFA.

Under VSU COFA would lose the Campus Art Store in its current guise. Should it continue to operate, a drastic increase in prices would be inevitable. Also, it would be highly likely that it would be necessary to close during holiday periods. The new 'profit-making' Store would not sustain opening during quieter periods. Thus the current year round service that is provided to cater for COFA staff, Summer Schools and others would be lost.

This change in operating would, of course, mean the Campus Art Store losing its long-serving and dedicated permanent staff who would obviously seek alternative work in the face of the necessary term-time only employment offered by the SA.

Welfare and Advice

The Service.

COFA Students' Association is a small organisation and has neither the resources nor the demand to run dedicated advice and welfare department. However, the SA does receive considerable demand for help from students in many areas covered by this specialised field.

To meet this demand the SA operates a referral service. A member of SA staff is available to talk to students about their problems and to guide them to the appropriate department or person within COFA or the University. Many students simply require an informal and friendly person to come to, and a little guidance towards finding a solution to their problem.

A large percentage of these enquiries are related to academic matters. Many students are loathe to even approach authority figures within COFA for fear of seeming difficult and of suffering future difficulties. In more extreme cases students come to us after having already raised their concerns with the relevant person within the College but feel that their concerns have not been properly resolved. This can often be very distressing for a student and they see the Students' Association as a friendly and independent organisation where they can speak freely about their problems. In return we seek to provide a non-judgemental service through which we guide and support the student through the correct procedures in search of a successful resolution.

Post-VSU

This is yet another important service that will be lost with the implementation of the VSU legislation. As the SA and its staff disappears from the campus so will this vital last resort for students with problems.

Effect on COFA

It is with considerable trepidation that I contemplate the loss of this service at COFA. Whilst recognising that COFA and the University offers efficient and comprehensive dispute resolution procedures, there has to be a place for an independent and alternative advice service.

Often all that is required is a friendly environment where a student can pour out their troubles to someone outside of the College itself. In the vast majority of cases a few words of reassurance and a telephone call to the appropriate person within the University is all that is needed.

Sadly, during my many years in higher education, I have witnessed too many avoidable tragedies that could have been prevented if only students knew who and where to go with their problems. We often make the mistake of viewing young adults as brash, confident and easily able to cope with life. There are many though who need a little informal help in a non-authoritative environment from time-to-time.

Activities

The Service

COFA SA provides a diverse range of activities for students. These are free and are usually developed in response to need or interest. In the absence of a bar or eat-in café, these activities provide an opportunity for students to get together outside of their class environment.

Activities are developed through direct discussion with students and through the input of their representatives, the SA Committee. It is a constant logistical challenge to provide activities that are compatible with our limited space and facilities. It is only with considerable ingenuity that the SA manages to provide such a wide range of successful activities.

The benefits of SA activities are varied. Some activities are developed to directly benefit students' well-being; yoga classes, meditation sessions and self-defence classes have all been developed to have some physical benefits. With the total lack of any physical recreational facilities on the campus we feel that it is important that students are provided with these opportunities. For the same reason we also run COFA teams in the social sport leagues at Kensington.

COFA SA has also introduced activities that assist extra-curricular skills development whilst providing a social activity. Sketch club provides drawing with classical music and a life model to allow theory students and arts students alike an opportunity to practice drawing without the need for assessment, it also provides students with a chance to gain paid life-modelling experience. Sketch club is held in the evening and has developed a devoted following, especially among mature and postgraduate students. We also hold regular dj nights and band nights at hotels in the area. Both provide students with an opportunity to gain playing experience, exposure and the chance to create a following among their fellow students. COFA SA has supported many dj's and bands on their way to professional gigs and recording contracts.

In the aforementioned absence of sporting facilities COFA SA has to be more creative in the development of competitive sports. Both pool and ping-pong competitions are held annually at COFA, providing students with a chance to gain sporting glory among their peers.

Possibly the best example of the SA's creativity in entertaining its members in difficult circumstances is COFA Bingo. Lunchtime sessions are held fortnightly in the Common Room and are amazingly popular with students. This is in a large part attributable to the work of the SA staff in squeezing wonderful prizes out of local businesses.

COFA SA works hard to establish strong and enduring relationships with the arts industry. Sydney's major arts institutions are involved in O-Week and our excellent Handy Hints Day. O-Week at COFA provides students with orientation around both the University and the arts industry in Sydney. The attendance of representatives from major galleries and bodies ensures that students feel these organizations are approachable and accessible, benefiting their academic studies immensely. Handy Hints Day is tailored to offer even more information and discussion about being a student of the arts, and about the arts in general. Industry representatives attend a day of stalls and a lunch to talk to students openly about opportunities and services. The SA also organises and hosts events where representatives of organisations and former students discuss the reality of working in the arts, both as an artist and as an arts worker. There are obvious benefits for students that participate in these events but there are also additional benefits that result from a well-established relationship between COFA SA and these arts bodies: an increase in profile for COFA students and a greater responsiveness to their work and projects. Our work in this area has paid off and we see students more engaged in festivals and events as well as gaining employment.

Research students and postgraduate students are well represented by COFA SA. To ensure that Research students do not feel isolated we have established a monthly get together for no reason other than to chat and thereby create both an academic and social network. A monthly newsletter is sent out with information, events and activities designed specifically to cater to the needs of Post Graduates. The SA is delighted to be launching a retreat for Research students this year. It is hoped that this will give Research students the chance to get to know each other and to work together on theses.

Post VSU

With financial and staff support gone activities will, like everything else, simply cease to be.

Effect on COFA

Activities are an essential part of any student organisation. They are the keystone on which any such successful organisation relies to draw together its members. Only my pathological fear of appearing trite prevents me from using the word ‘bonding.’ A university campus devoid of recreational and social activities for its members is surely unthinkable. Yet this is the effect the proposed legislation will have at COFA and it will happen in less than a year from now.

Communications

The Service.

COFA Students’ Association is justly proud of its communications service. There is little point in COFA Students’ Association offering the wide range of excellent services mentioned elsewhere in this booklet if our members are unaware of them.

In our quest to keep our members fully informed of our activities and services we utilise the following mediums:

- E-Newsletter: Over the past two years the SA has worked hard to establish and build a fortnightly email newsletter to our members. Due to various University regulations we have had to actively recruit students to this service with our members needing to ‘opt-in.’ We now have fifteen hundred students (75% of COFA students) receiving this fortnightly service. The E-Newsletter contains a multitude of information for our members covering what’s happening at the SA plus items of interest from COFA, UNSW and the wider world.
- Website (www.cofasa.unsw.edu.au): The SA’s website is an amazingly comprehensive and topical resource. It contains information on everything that our members need to know and is constantly updated to maintain its relevance. Students can access information on our services, forthcoming events and the latest developments in the world of higher education. Application forms can be downloaded and a comprehensive archive of exhibitions from the Kudos Gallery perused. This only scratches the surface of what is on offer at the website. I would urge the reader to look at our site, as I am sure you will be impressed with its breadth of content. Although not quite able to boast the BBC’s two million pages and ‘updated every minute of every day’, we feel it compares more than favourably with websites operated by far larger organisations than ours
- The SA also produces an annual diary that has become an essential for COFA students and staff alike. The diary contains a plethora of essential information as well as looking good and performing the normal functions of a diary. To accompany the diary the SA also produces a yearly wall planner.
- An annual COFA SA magazine is also produced by the SA and distributed in our annual mail shot to members. The magazine contains features on the SA’s services and also news of important new initiatives.

Post-VSU

The above services are all brought to fruition by SA staff, again meaning that they would be lost under VSU.

Effect on COFA

The SA does not just publicise services, events, initiatives and news exclusive to itself. Through our many publicity services we cover everything at the College that is of relevance and interest to our members. Obviously the SA will suffer the most, as the inability to communicate with our membership will only serve to hasten our demise. However, COFA in general will be the poorer for the lack of this valuable and vibrant service.

Miscellaneous

This section covers those services that COFA Students' Association provides that perhaps would not fill to a section of this booklet each.

The Services

- Grants and Sponsorship Scheme: Throughout the year the SA invites members to submit applications for funding. This funding is specifically to assist students with extra-curricular artistic projects. It can cover exhibitions, documentation, attendance of conferences, travel and much more
- Transport: The SA maintains two vehicles; a nine-seater van and a ute. These are provided for use by COFA students free of charge. This service is designed to assist students who need to move exhibits, transport art materials and to attend conferences and meetings.
- Free Lunch: The SA provides free food for approximately three hundred students on a fortnightly basis. The Students' Association purchases the food from a local Krishna group and distributes it on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Zine: The SA publishes a regular zine that features works by COFA students
- The SA Kitchen: The Students' Association operates a kitchen area that contains a microwave, water boiler, toaster, fridge and filtered water supply. The kitchen is kept stocked with tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits that are all free to students.
- Games: The SA offers a wide range of board games for students to borrow and use in the common room area.
- Post Graduate Scholarship: The SA offers a \$2,000 annual scholarship to COFA Post Graduate students. This is awarded under the criteria of service to the SA, COFA and the wider community.
- Equipment Loans: The SA has a number of items that students can borrow free of charge. These include data projectors, digital cameras, DVD and video players.
- COFA SA Drama society
- COFA SA Film Society

Post-VSU

The above-mentioned is but a selection of the many services that the Students' Association offers. Sadly, they would all be lost under VSU.

Effect on COFA

A good Students' Association is the heart of any university. It is the extra element that makes the difference between a university being simply a sterile and lifeless place of study and a vibrant, thriving community. I am sure that readers who are familiar with

the College will readily agree that the loss of the Students' Association will leave a huge and unfillable void at COFA.

More importantly than any of the services mentioned in this booklet, the SA is a community and a friend. It is the place students go to for help, advice, a chat and to see a friendly face. The Students' Association is the part of the College where students feel the most comfortable. It's the place where they can meet friends, play, work and even sleep.

For those readers familiar with neither COFA SA, or student organisations in general, I would beg your indulgence while I relate an experience of my own that I hope illustrates the essence of good student organisation.

Having worked in student organisations in the UK for many years I have encountered many of the great and good taking their early steps to prominence. I can say of several politicians that I knew them when they were only just setting out on the road to becoming the self-satisfied, pompous oafs that the public sees today. I can remember a few leaders of industry when they did not have the financial acumen to make their student grants last half a term. All of these, and many others, developed their personal skills and attributes as members of student organisations. But far more important than this I remember people who, although not destined for fame, illustrate why student organisations are important.

I am thinking of a young woman who arrived later at university than her peers. During her final year at school she had the misfortune to be in a car passing the Remembrance Day service in Enniskillen in Northern Ireland at the same time as an IRA bomb went off. Not only did she suffer appalling injuries herself she also witnessed the dreadful carnage of the aftermath of the explosion. A year later than planned this girl arrived at university, scarred both physically and mentally from the explosion (she was quite literally held together with steel rods). Although extremely withdrawn at first, and crippled by a fear of public places, she gradually began to come out of herself as she joined various clubs and societies, frequented social events and generally threw herself into the life of the Students' Union. At the end of her time at university she had been a full-time sabbatical officer for two years, ran three societies, was (non-playing) captain of the hockey club, and had served on a host of university committees. After her graduation ceremony her parents took the trouble to come to the Students' Union to thank us. Oblivious as to what we had done to earn their gratitude they explained that the SU had changed their daughter's life immeasurably. They had never dreamed it possible that she would ever become the bright, lively and extrovert woman that she had. Until her parents came to see us we had been totally unaware of what had happened to her before she reached university. She received no special attention or help because of her circumstances.

I have many such, though less dramatic, stories of students who have thrived through their involvement with student organisations. I hope that by relating just this one that I have impressed on the reader how important student organisations are to so many people.

Conclusion

Three conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the effects of VSU on COFA

Students' Association and on the College itself.

The first, and the obvious one, is that COFA SA would be devastated by VSU. With the loss of income from compulsory student fees nearly everything currently provided by the SA would be lost. Even the possible exception to this, the Campus Art Store, would be forced to make such changes as to make it untenable if not unviable.

The second conclusion that can be drawn is that it would not be feasible to cherry-pick one or two services that can survive in isolation. Hopefully the reader will have ascertained that everything that COFA SA presently does for its members is inter-related and inter-dependent. None of our services operate in a vacuum and none of them could continue to operate viably or successfully without the support system that the whole organisation provides.

Thirdly, the effects on the College itself will be grave and great. Whilst the physical losses are obvious; closure of the Kudos Gallery, loss of the Campus Art Store in any recognisable form, the end of activities, advice, representation and everything else mentioned; there are greater, unquantifiable potential losses.

Whilst I and others can decry the change in the *raison d'etre* of universities from exclusive seats of learning to degree factories and glorified technical colleges, this is what we have. The student is no longer the student but the consumer, the paying customer, and like any consumer the student wants their monies worth. As the cost of attending university gets ever higher then the consumer will demand a better quality of product and, also, a better quality of service. Should COFA lose the many excellent services provided by the Students' Association it will be weakened immeasurably and the consumers will vote with their feet. International students will soon realise they are no longer buying the complete university experience, and when they do they will turn their attentions elsewhere. Thousands of Asian students currently study in the UK, for instance, and it is certain that those deciding where to study will soon learn from their predecessors where they can get the complete package. The domestic student will look to the far cheaper TAFE system as universities begin to offer little more than they do.

Cynics will say that I am harking back to the halcyon days of university life that existed only in the pages of an Amis novel, but as we all know cynics 'know the value of nothing.' Going to university has to be about more than the pursuit of a formal qualification. Academic achievement should be matched in equal part by the opportunity for personal development. Outside of the lecture theatre the student should be developing their personal and social skills, interacting with their peers and organising their own affairs. At graduation a student should be as proficient in life skills as they are in their given subject. Without a thriving and vibrant Students' Association these opportunities will not exist. Students will have no organisation that they can call their own; an organisation that they can direct and govern and where their input and ideas can garner tangible results.

With the best will in the world COFA will not be able to replace or sustain the services that the SA provide. COFA SA's services are popular because they are relevant and this relevance only comes about because students have control over their provision. From O Week to the end of year party, from exhibiting in the Kudos

Gallery to buying a canvas from the Campus Art Store, from borrowing the SA van to playing lunchtime bingo, from advice on an academic problem to free lunches - the SA works.