

Final Report of the VSU Mediation Group of UNSW Student Organisations

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Part One: Process Followed By the Mediation Group	
Background.....	5
Guiding Principles.....	5
Discussion Process	
1. Identification of Key Service Areas.....	6
2. Consideration of Structural Alternatives.....	7
3. Modelling and Model Development.....	9
4. Development of Preliminary Areas for University Support.....	10
5. Business Consultation.....	10
Part Two: New Organisational Model	
Background.....	11
Note on Membership of the New Organisation.....	11
Introduction to the New Organisational Model.....	12
Diagrammatic Representation of the New Organisational Model.....	12
Explanation of the New Student Organisation Model	
Representation Body.....	13
Clubs and Activities Body.....	16
Central Services Body.....	18
Governing Body.....	20
Conclusion	22
Appendix	
Appendix A: Attendees to the VSU Mediation Group.....	23
Appendix B: Guiding Principles for the Mediated Discussions.....	24
Appendix C: Further Information on Key Service Areas.....	25
Appendix D: Service Delivery Options Table.....	27
Appendix E: Agreements on New Structure.....	34
Appendix F: Potential Areas for University Support.....	36
Appendix G: VSU Mediation Group's Consultant Brief.....	42
Appendix H: Responses to the O'Halloran Report.....	44
Appendix I: University SMG Response to VSU – April 2006.....	82

Attachment: The O'Halloran Report

Executive Summary

This Paper presents the findings of the VSU Mediation Group, made up of representatives from the five UNSW student organisations. The group was established in October 2005, with a goal of analysing areas for collaboration/structural change necessary to ensure the survival of student services under Voluntary Student Unionism.

Part One: Process followed by the VSU Mediation Group

- The discussion was conducted over four key phases:
 - *Identification of Key Service Areas*: Identified as student welfare; Social and Cultural Services; Representation; Personal and Professional Development; Information Services; Student Facilities.
 - *Consideration of Structural Alternatives*: Using predetermined criteria to analyse structural options, the VSU Mediation Group determined that a federated structure involving several “semi-autonomous bodies” was the favoured model for future operations.
 - *Modelling and Model Development*: The favoured model was developed over a series of weekly meetings of smaller working groups. A preliminary report was presented to the existing student organisations, who provided in-principle support to the process.
 - *Development of Preliminary Areas for University Support*: At this point in time a conclusion outlining the amount of University support to be provided has not been reached. The business consultation process needs to help determine the requirements of the new student organisation.
- A fifth phase (Business Consultation) will commence in May 2006. Three Business Consultants have been appointed from PriceWaterhouse Coopers, and will test the financial viability of the model proposed in Part Two.

Part Two: New Organisational Model

- This section presents the new student organisation model that was prepared over the six month mediation process by the VSU Mediation Group.
- Although in-principle support was given to an earlier model, this final model has not been considered by the governing bodies of the existing student organisations. It will be presented to them for feedback during May 2006.
- The organisational structure preferred by the mediation group is that of a single structure combining the services of the Union, the COFASA, the PGB and the Guild within three “semi-autonomous bodies”, with an overarching governing body.
- The three “semi-autonomous bodies” of the new organisation are:
 - *Representation Body*: Aims to represent the interests of students, and facilitate access between students, the University and the wider community.
 - *Clubs and Activities Body*: aims to provide social and cultural services necessary for the development of “student life” at UNSW.
 - *Centralised Services Body*: is responsible for the provision of the administrative and other “back end” services and staff management.
- The overarching Governing Body is responsible for the governance of the organisation as a whole.
- Many fine structural details, including constitutional safeguards and the final composition of the Governing Body, will be developed during the business consultation process.

Introduction:

This paper presents the findings of the VSU Mediation Group, made up of representatives from the Union (trading as the Source), the Student Guild, the Postgraduate Board, the College of Fine Arts Students' Association, and the Sports Association, mediated by independent external facilitators Jane Elix and Nina Harding. The mediation has been funded by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and a representative of the University has participated in the mediation process throughout. The VSU Mediation Group has been meeting approximately once per fortnight for a period of six months, from October 2005 until May 2006. These meetings, involving up to three representatives from each organisation for a period of four hours, have required significant commitment of time and resources from each of the student organisations and the University. A full list of attendees to the VSU Mediation Group has been included in Appendix A.

This report on the VSU Mediation Group is presented in two parts: Part One provides an overview of the process of the VSU Mediation Group in reaching its conclusions, including information pertaining to preliminary discussions. Part Two provides a detailed explanation of the favoured model of operations for the UNSW student organisations under Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU). In addition, the Appendix section of this report contains further information on many of the discussions undertaken by the VSU Mediation Group throughout this six month period.

This report has been prepared for presentation to members of the University Council on 15 May 2006. Whilst the governing bodies of the student organisations have provided in-principle support to an earlier concise version of the operating model presented in this report, none of these organisations have had the opportunity to provide final approval at the time of writing. This paper and supporting documents will be presented to the governing bodies for comment, input and hopefully endorsement prior to the May meeting of University Council, with updates to be provided to the Council and the Business Consultants (PriceWaterhouseCoopers) when available.

Part One: Process Followed by the VSU Mediation Group

Background:

In 2005, the University of New South Wales Council commissioned a report into the impact of the Federal Government's proposed *Higher Education Amendment (Abolition Of Compulsory Up-Front Student Union Fees) 2005 Act*, also known as Voluntary Student Unionism, or VSU. This report, written by former UNSW employee Brett O'Halloran, was presented to the August meeting of the Student Affairs Committee of Council.

In response to Brett O'Halloran's report, titled "*The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW; an Issues Paper with Recommendations*" (attached, see Appendix H for the responses of the student organisations and the University to the O'Halloran report), it was agreed that the five UNSW student organisations would commence more formal discussions regarding collaboration and the provision of student services in a VSU environment. On the University's advice, two independent external mediators were hired for this process, which began in October 2005.

These mediated discussions have involved up to three representatives from each of the Union (trading as the "Source"), the Student Guild, the Postgraduate Board, the Sports Association and the College of Fine Arts Students' Association, together with a representative from the University (Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Resources). A full list of attendees has been included in Appendix A. Representatives have met approximately once per fortnight, committing a significant amount of time and resources to work through a process of addressing the variety of options for delivery of student services, through to a detailed analysis of potential structural models that could deliver these services. The VSU Mediation Group was encouraged to look at the services provided now and into the future separate to the existing student organisational structures, seeking to create a vision for student services and facilities in 2010. In order to foster trust amongst the representatives, all sessions were conducted confidentially, with all representatives signing Confidentiality Agreements at their first meeting.

In the midst of the mediation process, and after many months in parliament, the VSU legislation passed through the Senate on 9 December 2005, with an effective date of 1 July 2006.

Guiding Principles:

The mediated discussion process has been encouraged to continue with little interference or direction from the University. The role of the University representative to the discussions has been that of a conduit for information and a checkpoint for ideas, rather than explicitly providing direction to the discussion. As a result, the representatives of the existing student organisations have developed a number of key principles that have been used in the discussion process.

These principles have been reproduced in full in Appendix B, and provide an overview of the agreements between the members of the VSU Mediation Group as to

the importance of student organisations in the provision of student services, and the aspects of student organisations in particular that make them best placed to do so.

The Discussion Process:

Over the six month mediation process, the facilitators guided the VSU Mediation Group through several key phases: identification of key service areas; consideration of structural alternatives; modelling and model development; development of preliminary areas for University support; and, business consultation. These discussions can be summarised into four key phases:

1. Identification of Key Service Areas:

The first step undertaken by the VSU Mediation Group was to consider the services currently provided by the student organisations and the University, identifying several priority areas of service delivery that were common across all student organisations. This exercise was designed to allow the student organisation representatives in attendance at the VSU Mediation Group to think outside the services currently offered through the existing structures, instead considering the needs of the UNSW community more broadly.

This process also served to remove individual organisational “ownership” of existing services, and to aid all participants in understanding how current individual services could fit into larger service delivery areas. This process illustrated areas where efficiency gain was possible by grouping services that needed similar resource structures together.

An overview of key service delivery areas is as follows, with a more detailed discussion of these service areas provided in Appendix C.

- *Student Welfare:* To provide a wide range of services to research, support and enhance student welfare and the student experience. This would include providing an independent advocacy and legal advice service, mentoring and skills development programs, employment and work experience and subsidies to improve affordability and accessibility of components of the University experience while acknowledging the diversity of the UNSW population.
- *Social and Cultural Services:* Social and Cultural services are essential for “student life” on campus. These services provide students with access to resources, contacts and networks that create a sense of belonging to the UNSW community. It is important that students are able to influence the nature of these services and be involved in their administration. Services include student based clubs and societies, creative and cultural opportunities, and feature events.
- *Representation:* To facilitate access for students to effect change within all levels of the University and in the wider community through lobbying and networking/affiliations; as well as to develop the public profiles of UNSW students and enhance their opportunities by raising the awareness of their qualities and work.

- *Personal and Professional Development:* To provide a diverse range of opportunities for UNSW students to pursue individual cultural, religious, sporting and scholarly interests that develop graduate attributes, promote cultural exchange and make connection to our communities. This would include employment training, volunteer opportunities, cultural programs and events, development of sport from recreational to elite level, and the provision of facilities to support this range of activities.
- *Information Services:* The provision of timely information relating to facilities and resources as well as communication that meets the social, political and educational needs of students. This includes a range of delivery methods from publications through to orientation programs and face-to-face referral services.
- *Student Facilities:* The provision of easily accessible, affordable and safe facilities that service the diverse student community. This would include commercial, social and sporting facilities.

Using these six key areas of student services and their components, the student organisation representatives broke into a number of smaller working groups to develop a series of options for the future delivery of the services included within the key service areas. These options vary in the origin of the service delivery (for example, whether by the University, the student organisation(s) or the external community), as well as a number of potential funding options. Funding options varied in nature for each service, but included a variety of sources including external sponsorship or community donations, external service provision, student organisation subsidisation through membership fees, cross-subsidisation using commercial revenue, or University support. Appendix D contains a table showing the preliminary options developed during this process.

Throughout all stages of the option generating process the student organisation representatives sought to maximise efficiency of service provision and to avoid any overlap with services already provided by the University, the external community and other organisations on campus.

2. Consideration of Structural Alternatives:

Discussions on alternative structures for the delivery of student services began early in 2006. Representatives at the VSU Mediation Group identified a number of broad structural alternatives that were later considered by the group. Briefly, these options were as follows:

- *Integration/Absorption into the University:* This option refers to a situation where the functions of the student organisations are integrated into a single university department, or distributed across new or existing university departments.

- *A Federated Structure:* This structure could involve organisations with distinct and unique identities with an overarching governing management structure. This management structure would be responsible for such areas as membership database services, marketing, payroll, human resources, fee collection and the allocation of budget to the different organisational identities. All organisations would have representation on the overarching governing “committee”.

An alternative system of federation could involve separate organisational entities with distinct and unique identities, each utilising a centralised service provider for administrative, marketing, payroll and human resources services. Each entity would provide financial payment to the centralised body for the services received and would participate in its governance.

- *A Unified Structure:* This option involves a single organisation that controls all activities and services, under one governance structure. The functional aspects of this organisation would be run by separate departments whose strategic direction would be driven by a student-based committee structure.
- *Two or more separate autonomous student organisations:* (Not including Sport, as it was acknowledged that a separate sports organisation was a likely alternative.) This option could involve a number of different variations, including an organisational divide along any of the following functional lines: undergraduate/postgraduate, coursework/research, faculty/geography and service/representation.

To ensure there was no organisational bias present at this stage of the discussion, the student organisation representatives developed a set of criteria against which each structural option would be assessed. These criteria are as follows:

- 1) Democratic – the structure must have appropriate levels of student control and involvement.
- 2) Efficiency – the structure must maximise output, scope, range and quality of services.
- 3) Communication – the structure must encourage effective communication between students, the student organisation, the University, as well as internal communication between different areas of the organisation.
- 4) Sustainability – ensuring long-term financial sustainability, and a consistent standard of service provision in a VSU environment
- 5) Responsiveness – the ability of the structure to change, encouraging active involvement of students, and the ability to predict and respond to future needs of students.
- 6) Stability of governance - the organisation must be robust in response to destabilising political influences, and must be able to be maintained beyond incumbent personnel, and be accountable year to year.

- 7) Broad appeal – the relevance and attractiveness of the organisation to the student population, and its ability to generate membership.
- 8) Intuitive fit – the general sense of whether the organisation will work, whether it will be acceptable to the students in general.

Using these criteria, the student organisation representatives eliminated the options of ‘Integration/absorption into the University’ and ‘two or more separate, autonomous student organisations’, as well as the null option of retaining the current structures.

The representatives broke into two working groups to further develop the ideas of a federated or unified student organisation structure for the delivery of services under VSU. These working groups considered such factors as the division of the organisation into departments/bodies, governance, lines of reporting and authority, and the role of staff and student representatives.

The reports from the two working groups were presented to the VSU Mediation Group. Following discussion it became evident that the federated structure was the favoured model of the VSU Mediation Group. It was decided that the federated structure would be further developed.

3. Modelling and Model Development:

The development of the details of the favoured model was perhaps the most complex part of the mediated discussion process. This period involved weekly meetings of the student organisation representatives, and the formation of a number of working groups to develop particular areas of the model outside of the formal weekly meetings.

As would be expected, there were many differing opinions amongst representatives on different aspects of the new model. In an effort to work through this section of the task more effectively, the VSU Mediation Group sought to identify areas of agreement between members prior to considering more contentious issues. Several key areas of agreement formed the basis of these discussions, and are included in Appendix E.

During this process an interim report was created using the agreements included in Appendix E, as well as a preliminary proposal for a new structure. This document was presented to the governing bodies of the existing student organisations for comment. With the exception of the Sports Association, the governing bodies of all organisations provided in-principle support for the preliminary model and the mediated discussion process generally. The Sports Association Executive Committee gave their support to the model and the mediation process on the condition that Sport was not included in the new model, as the UNSW Sport working group had reached agreement on an alternative model for sport. The feedback provided by the governing bodies of all five student organisations was used to further develop the model, which is presented in detail in Part Two of this report.

4. Development of Preliminary Areas for University Support:

In parallel to the discussions of the VSU Mediation Group, representatives of the student organisations have been in discussion with members of the University's Senior Management Group to develop a proposal for financial support from the University for any new student organisation. These discussions have been unable to reach a final conclusion, as the true need for University support cannot be determined until business analysis of the new model has been undertaken.

As a result, it would be premature to present a definitive proposal for the level of University support required by the new organisation at this time. In an attempt to aid this process, the VSU Mediation Group has identified several key areas of support that could be provided by the University, both during the transitional period and ongoing. This preliminary breakdown of areas for potential University support has been included in Appendix F. In addition, this Appendix contains a summary of the resourcing of the Student Organisation(s) before and after VSU.

5. Business Consultation:

As the development of the favoured model of operations for the new student organisation continued, the VSU Mediation Group identified a need for a thorough business analysis of the new model to ensure its viability. A working group was established to determine the tasks required in the business consultation phase of the process, and the terms of reference that the consultants would be provided. The consultant's brief developed by the VSU Mediation Group has been included as Appendix G.

The original expectation of the VSU Mediation Group was that the business consultant would complete the required tasks by the end of April, for incorporation into this report for the University Council. This timeline was later re-adjusted following input from the Senior Management Group of the University, who offered to recruit and finance the consultation phase of the process. The business consultants selected were from PriceWaterhouse Coopers, and are due to commence the project during May 2006.

Part Two New Organisational Model

Background:

The following section presents a detailed explanation of the new student organisation model prepared over the six month mediation process involving representatives of all five UNSW student organisations and the University representative. The process of the VSU Mediation Group and the steps in the development of this model are included in Part One of this report.

At the time of writing, the governing bodies of the existing student organisations have not had the opportunity to consider the most updated version of the new organisational model. It is expected that this report will be presented to the existing student organisations by early May 2006, with the governing bodies offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed structure. As the mediation process will evolve into a comprehensive business analysis process during May, in concert with business consultants, appointed by the University, from PriceWaterhouseCoopers, it is expected that this report, together with feedback from the University Council and the governing bodies of the existing student organisations, will be provided to the business consultants as the basis for further development and testing.

It is worth noting that, while sports activities were removed from the new organisational model part way through the development process as a result of substantial progress within the UNSW Sport Working Group, representatives from the Sports Association have continued to attend the VSU Mediation Group. These representatives have provided valuable input into the discussions, ensuring that the new student organisation and UNSW Sport will be able to continue to work collaboratively under VSU.

Note on Membership of the New Student Organisation:

The VSU Mediation Group holds the following broad principles relating to the membership of the new student organisation:

- Membership should be an important part of the new organisation, functioning as a means of creating community on campus.
- Membership fees are a way for the new student organisation to generate income to support its services.
- Any membership plan for the new student organisation should be developed with consideration of funding support from the university, and the attractiveness of particular services to draw members.

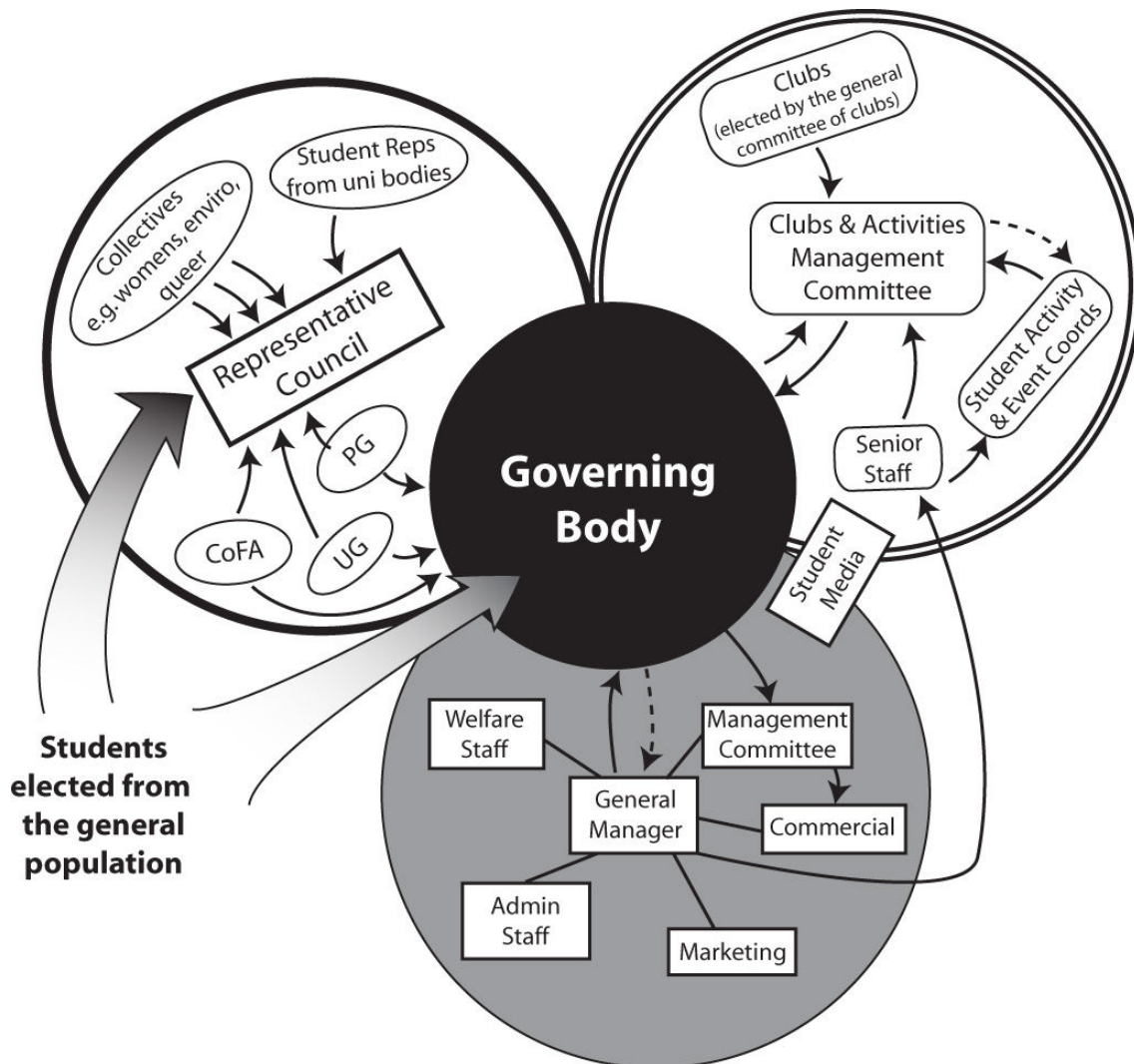
The VSU Mediation Group acknowledged that any services receiving direct support from the University would be expected to be made available to the entire student population, and not restricted to financial members of the organisation. As a result, further discussion on membership options should take place within the business consultation process in parallel to considerations on various options for support and provision of student services.

Introduction to the New Organisational Model:

As discussed in Part One of this report, the organisational structure favoured by the VSU Mediation Group was that of a single federated structure, combining components of the current services of the Student Guild, the Postgraduate Board, the Union (trading as the Source) and the College of Fine Arts Students' Association within three "semi-autonomous bodies". The VSU Mediation Group feels that this model allows for maximum organisational efficiency in the delivery of services, whilst still maintaining the identity and independence of particular areas necessary to engage the student population.

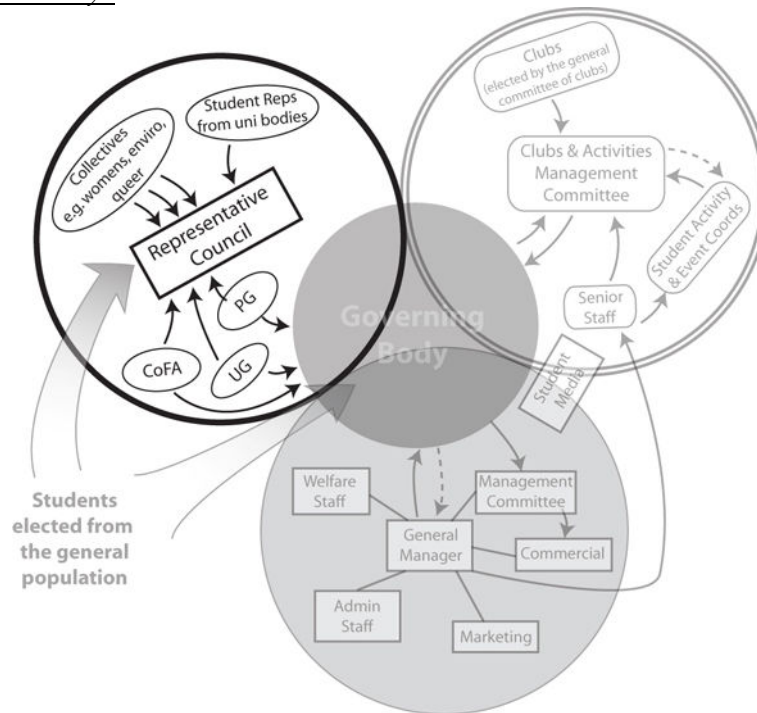
The section contains a diagrammatic representation of the new organisational model, followed by a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the component parts of the new organisation. In addition, the explanation of each "semi-autonomous body" contains a section detailing the principal purpose of the body, as well as particular issues that will require attention in the writing of the new organisation's constitution.

Diagrammatic Representation of the New Student Organisational Model:



Explanation of the New Student Organisation Model:

Representation Body:



Principles:

The representation body of the new federated organisation would aim to represent the interests of students, and to facilitate access between students, the University and the wider community to affect change. The representation body would also work to develop the public profiles of UNSW students, and raise awareness of their qualities and work (particularly for students of the College of Fine Arts).

Departments/responsibilities:

Within the representative body there exist a number of constituent departments. These departments report to the Representative Council, but are able to form positions different to that of the council, in order to represent the interests of their constituencies. The departments of the representative body are proposed to be:

- Undergraduate Students
- Postgraduate Students
- College of Fine Arts Students
- Collectives of like minded students (eg women, queer, international, indigenous)

It is intended that each of the Undergraduate, Postgraduate and College of Fine Arts Departments will have a distinct identity to maximise engagement and identification with their respective constituencies.

In addition, it is also proposed that the representative body facilitate a Forum of student representatives on University bodies including Faculty Boards, Academic Board and Council. This will ensure an opportunity for interaction and exchange between a range of student representatives.

Governance:

The representative semi-autonomous body is governed by a Representative Council which is made up of students from different constituencies. The Council would be responsible for determining the budgets of each of the departments of the representative body, as well as representing common positions across all departments in various forums. The final composition of the Representative Council is yet to be determined, but it is expected that this council would consist of:

- At least one representative from the Undergraduate Students' Department
- At least one representative from the Postgraduate Students' Department
- At least one representative from the College of Fine Arts Students' Department
- (Some) representatives from the recognised collectives
- Student representatives to University Council
- A representative from the Clubs and Activities management Committee
- A number of students elected from the general student population through faculty and undergraduate/postgraduate electorates.

It is expected that there will be between twenty and thirty members of the Representative Council.

Resources:

The Representative body of the new organisation would exist within a discrete area of the student organisation offices. This body would require the following resources:

- A receptionist/secretary
- Sufficient funds to ensure operational effectiveness, ability to engage student participation, and involvement of volunteers
- Office Space for key positions
- Open plan space for other positions to share common resources
- Office equipment – furniture, computers, photocopiers and printers
- Meeting rooms and multi-purpose space

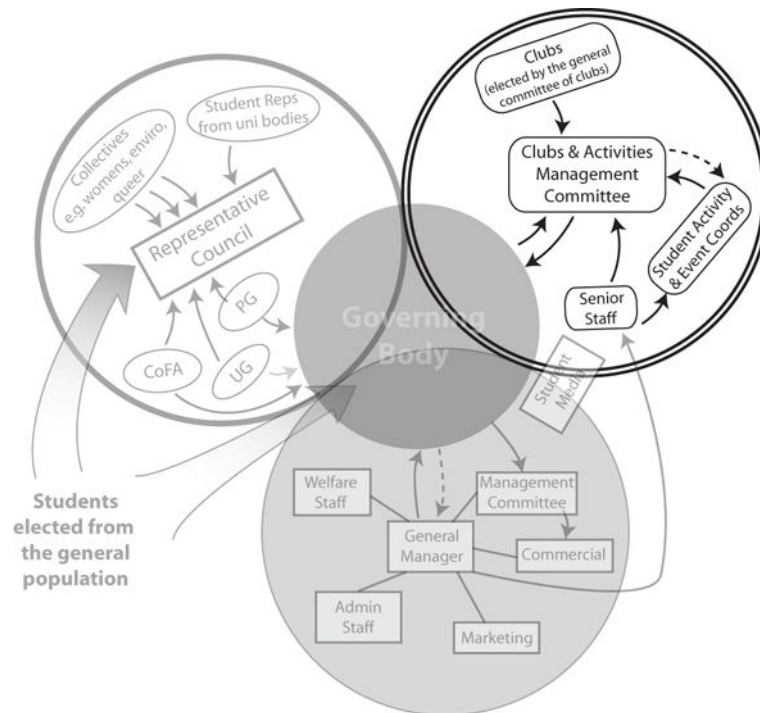
Safeguards:

There will need to be sufficient safeguards to ensure equitable representation and to preserve the distinct voices within the representative organisation. Organisational modelling should consider safeguards addressing potential, though unlikely occurrences including ensuring that:

- The Representative Council does not have the ability to “block supply” to the departments over a political dispute/disagreement.
- No particular constituency can dominate the representative council – i.e. to ensure that constitutional safeguards guarantee adequate representation on the Representative Council from students of different faculties and constituencies (especially for COFA students and postgraduates).

- That funding from the University that is tied to particular services is distributed to those services in a manner that is fair and equitable, and does not result in the removal of funds from those areas in other aspects.
- Provisions exist to ensure that each department is adequately resourced through the distribution of commercial revenue from the Central Services body and has the ability to independently support activities of direct interest to their constituencies.
- Provisions exist to ensure that all areas of the Representation body have adequate access to services provided by the Central Services body of the federated organisation.

Clubs and Activities Body:



Principles:

The Clubs and Activities body will aim to provide social and cultural services necessary for the development of “student life” at the College of Fine Arts and Kensington campuses of UNSW. These services provide students with access to resources, contacts and networks that create a sense of belonging to the UNSW community, as well as providing students an opportunity to develop their graduate attributes. In order to ensure that the services are relevant to the student community, there must be the ability for students to be involved in the delivery and administration of these services.

Departments/Responsibilities:

The Clubs and Activities body provides services and resources to students and student groups with a goal of developing the campus community. The Clubs and Activities body has the following departments:

- Clubs
- Student Programs
- Student Events
- Student Media (though as discussed in the Centralised Services section, this is an area of the new organisation that requires considerable further discussion).

Governance:

The Clubs and Activities body is governed by the Clubs and Activities Management Committee. The Management Committee would be responsible for determining the budgets of each of the departments of the Clubs and Activities body, as well developing initiatives for new activities and other services. The final composition of the Management Committee is yet to be determined, and will need to allow for input

from students from different faculties and constituencies, but it is expected that this council would consist of:

- Student(s) elected by the general committee of Clubs
- Student Activity Coordinators (responsible for specific activities or events)
- Senior Manager of the department
- Representative(s) from the Representative Council
- One representative from the Governing Body
- One representative from UNSW Sport

Resources:

The Clubs and Activities body would need to have access to the following resources:

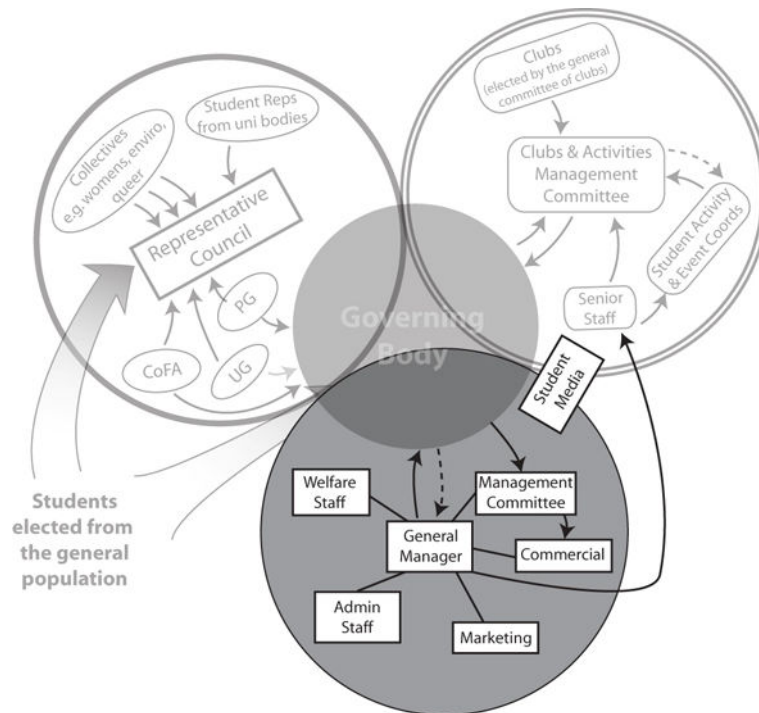
- Space – one wing of the student organisation office building
- Office space for permanent staff
- Open plan working space for clubs, student activity coordinators and activity/event volunteers
- Office equipment including furniture, computers, printers, photocopiers, and lockers for the secure storage of club/program information
- Provision of honoraria for student activity coordinators
- Access to vehicle(s) during event and preparation periods
- Permanent staff including a department manager, receptionist and a media coordinator.

Safeguards:

The Clubs and Activities body will require the following safeguards to ensure all UNSW students have opportunity to participate in and benefit from the activities of this body, with regard to location and needs:

- Provision to ensure that sufficient activities and events take place on the College of Fine Arts campus, and are not restricted only to the Kensington campus.
- Provision to ensure that funding from the University that is tied to particular services is distributed to those services in a manner that is fair and equitable, and does not result in the removal of funds from the department in other aspects.
- Provision to ensure that the department is adequately resourced through the distribution of commercial revenue from the central services body.
- Provision to ensure that all areas of the department have adequate access to services provided by the Central Services body of the organisation.

Centralised Services Body:



Principles:

The Central Services body of the organisation is responsible for the provision of the administrative and other “back end” services to other areas of the organisation, as well as the management of welfare, research and advocacy staff who work closely with the representative body. In addition, the Central Services body is responsible for the operation of the organisation’s commercial services.

Departments/Responsibilities:

Within this body are the following departmental entities:

- Welfare staff (including advocacy, research and legal services) – these staff would work closely with the Representative Council and its departments.
- Administration: includes human resources, payroll, information technology, and finance staff.
- Marketing
- Commercial
- Student Media (further discussion on reporting and placement of student media within the organisation is required)

Governance:

The Central Services body is overseen by a General Manager, who reports to the Governing Body. In addition, there is a Management Committee, made up of the General Manager, some Commercial Services staff, representatives from the Governing Body and others, which oversees the operations of the organisation’s commercial services.

Resources:

The Centralised Services body of the new organisation would exist within a discrete area of the student organisation offices. This body would need to have access to the following resources:

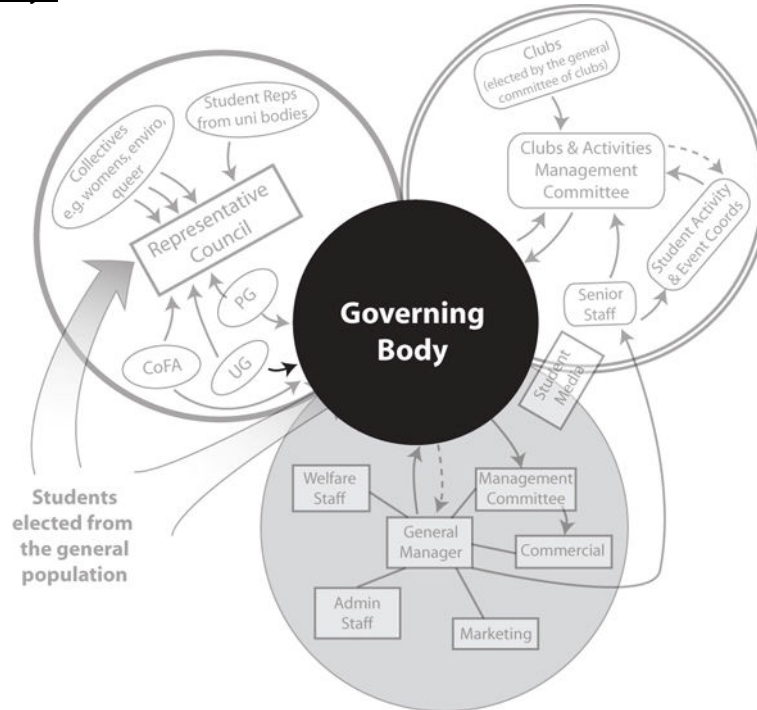
- Office space
- Office equipment including furniture, computers, photocopies, printers etc
- Access to meeting rooms
- Commercial space
- A number of permanent full time staff members (including the GM and senior commercial staff)

Safeguards:

The following safeguards would be required to ensure the effective operations of the Central Services body:

- That the operations of the body would not be subject to undue pressure from the other semi-autonomous bodies, whilst still allowing communication between bodies.
- That the services provided by the Central Services body are done so in a manner that is equitable to all areas of the organisation according to their need, and that the services required of the body do not extend beyond what the body is capable of providing.
- That the commercial revenues from the commercial services are budgeted wisely and where possible, actual rather than projected figures are used.
- That the welfare staff and services are available to all students including those from different faculties and constituencies (namely COFA students, and postgraduates). The availability of welfare staff and services to COFA students will depend upon some presence at the College of Fine Arts campus itself.

Governing Body:



Principles:

The Governing Body is responsible for the governance of the organisation as a whole. The Governing Body is not responsible for the operations of the three semi-autonomous bodies – this task is delegated to the Representative Council, the Clubs and Activities Management Committee and the General Manager respectively.

Structure:

The final form of the Governing Body is the last significant area to be agreed upon by members of the VSU Mediation Group, with further discussions required in respect to the overall number of members on the Governing Body, as well as which constituent groups would be entitled to have representation on the Governing Body, and to what extent.

Although consensus has not been reached on the composition of the governing body, discussions relating to the composition of the Governing Body have developed the following option:

- Five students – elected from the general student body.
- Four ex-officio student representatives – the convenors of the postgraduate, undergraduate and COFA representative departments and a student from the Clubs and Activities Management Committee.
- Three positions appointed by the University Council.
- Three life members/alumni elected from the life member/alumni.
- The General Manager of the Central Services body, in a non-voting capacity.

This composition has the support of the majority of members of the VSU Mediation Group. However, it is anticipated that discussion on this issue will continue in collaboration with the business consultants, and will cover the exact number of each type of representative on the Governing Body and what their voting status.

Beyond the structural discussions, there was general acceptance of the role of the Governing Body within the organisation. As presented in Appendix E the following list represents the agreed role:

- Legal accountability, including ensuring adherence to legislation throughout the organisation, and being the legal publisher for all organisation publications
- Ensuring the organisation is financially responsible and viable
- Ensuring that the organisation as a whole is implementing policy to achieve its constitutional goals
- Ensuring that the semi-autonomous bodies are meeting their constitutional goals
- Coordinating organisational strategic planning and ensuring that the strategy for the semi-autonomous bodies is consistent with that of the overall organisation
- Representing the views of the student organisation on issues which affect the organisation as a whole to the University and the broader community
- Consider the viability of budgets from and allocating funding to the semi-autonomous bodies.
- Overseeing management of centralised services
- Determining budget for centralised services

Safeguards:

Business modelling will require consideration of the need to ensure the governing body fulfils a governing role rather than a management role.

- The relationship between the Governing Body and the semi-autonomous bodies, including power and limitation of power, must be clearly defined in the constitution. In addition, a process for mediating disputes between the Governing Body and the governance of the semi-autonomous bodies must be provided in the constitution
- The responsibilities of the Governing Body and the bodies responsible for the management/governance of the semi-autonomous bodies must be clearly defined.
- The process of allocating funds, including University grants, external sponsorships and commercial revenue, between the semi-autonomous bodies must be clearly defined.

Conclusion

As presented in this final report of the VSU Mediation Group, consensus has been reached amongst the group representatives regarding the favoured structure for future student organisation operations under Voluntary Student Unionism.

The proposed structure is substantially different from the present structures of student organisations, despite superficial similarities. It is a single federated structure that consists of two semi-autonomous bodies: the Representative Council and the Clubs and Activities Management Committee. There is Central Services body that will provide shared services to the semi-autonomous bodies and undertake the commercial activities. Finally, there is a Governing Body of the Federation.

Although the Sports Association has been an active participant with the Source, the Guild, the Postgraduate Board and the COFASA throughout the Mediation Process, a separate proposal is being developed for UNSW Sport. The functions and activities of the other four student organisations will be reallocated within the new structure.

Many of the smaller details of the proposed structure require further development, however the VSU Mediation Group agrees that this development should take place within the business consultation process. This process also has the critical role of ensuring the financial and political stability of the new organisation is protected, and determining any interim arrangements that will be required for the transition into the new organisation. The VSU Mediation Group acknowledges that the business consultation process may identify flaws or areas for modification within this proposed model, and will commit to working with the business consultants to ensure that any changes made are acceptable to the group.

The timing of the preparation of this report means that in-principle support from the governing bodies of the existing student organisations will not be available prior to this paper being submitted to University Council, but it is hoped that comments from the existing student organisations may be tabled at the meeting.

The Mediation Group asks that the University Council note that this paper outlines the structure recommended by the VSU Mediation Group, and that Council provide in-principle support to this structure, subject to endorsement by the current student organisation boards and confirmation from the business consultants that the model describes a sustainable operating structure.

The VSU Mediation Process has resulted in an unprecedented level of cooperation between representatives of the five UNSW student organisations. The representatives have looked beyond their current organisations and the financial strain of Voluntary Student Unionism and worked towards the common goal of creating a new student organisation that will enhance the student experience for future UNSW students.

Appendix A

Attendees to the VSU Mediation Group

Mediators:

Nina Harding (Nina Harding Mediation Services)
Jane Elix (Community Solutions)

College of Fine Arts' Students Association:

Penelope Benton – Manager
Julian Bradley – President 2005 (in attendance until December 2005)
Hayden Daley – Treasurer 2006 (one session only)
Stephen Mok – Vice President 2005, President 2006
Edgar Schilter – Secretary 2006 (one session only)
Chloe Wolifson – Vice President 2006 (in attendance Dec 2005 – Apr 2006)

Postgraduate Board:

Ben Manning – Co-Convenor (in attendance from January 2006)
Eliza Muldoon – Co-Convenor
Yvonne Luxford - Manager

Sports Association:

Michael Collins – Executive Committee (in attendance from January 2006)
Bruce Frame – Manager (in attendance first session only)
Marie Kanaan – Staff
Cristin Quinnell – President (in attendance from November 2005)

Student Guild:

Scott Carn – Executive Officer (in attendance until December 2005)
Manoj Dias-Abey – President 2005 (in attendance until January 2005)
Petra Gulicher – Vice President 2006 (in attendance from January 2006)
John Lin – Secretary/Treasurer 2006 (in attendance first session only)
Xavier O'Halloran – President 2006
Sarah Pisani – Women's Officer 2006 (in attendance one session only)
Michael Pratt – Vice President 2005 (in attendance until December 2005)
Mansha Tandon – Tharunka Editor (in attendance one session only)
Jesse Young – Activities Officer 2006 (in attendance from December 2005)

Union (trading as the Source):

Kate Bartlett – Vice President 2005/2006 (alternating as observer/participant)
Tony Cinque – Chief Executive Officer (alternating as observer/participant)
Kirstin Hunter – President 2005/2006
Greg Moore – Honorary Treasurer 2005/2006

University:

Lyndell Carter, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources)

Appendix B

Guiding Principles for the Mediated Discussions

Early in the mediation process the representatives of the existing student organisations developed a number of key principles that were used throughout the discussion process.

These principles are as follows:

1. We believe that student organisations provide a broad range of essential services to the University community, and play an essential role in the development and delivery of these services. Student services provide a key component of the holistic student experience at the University of New South Wales and the development of graduate attributes.
2. The five UNSW student organisations recognise the benefits of greater collaboration, both with each other and with the University, to improve quality and efficiency of service provision in a VSU environment.
3. A key feature of student organisations is the fact that they are democratic, responsive, independent, and provide opportunities for student involvement that are essential in the development of a vibrant UNSW community.
4. Through engagement with student organisations and their diverse activities and services across different disciplines, students are encouraged to develop key graduate attributes and enhance their capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity.
5. That, if the University is serious in its commitment to supporting student organisations, the University should avoid imposing additional financial burdens on the student organisations, particularly during the critical transition period following the introduction of VSU.

Appendix C

Further information on Key Service Areas

Student Welfare

- Direct Advocacy: To ensure that individual students have access to a free, independent advocacy and legal service as required, and that the advocacy officer(s) are experienced in postgraduate, undergraduate and international student and legal issues.
- Indirect Advocacy/Research: To provide a group or unit that is dedicated to researching, reporting and improving the general student condition in the areas of policy development and research as well as linkages to national and professional bodies for research and promulgation of research results
- Subsidies: To ensure that resources are allocated to provide targeted services and facilities to improve the affordability and accessibility of the University experience, and to acknowledge the diversity of the UNSW population. For example discounted goods and services, funding to clubs and societies, child care, emergency loans and services for marginalized groups.
- Employment and work experience: To offer work related opportunities to students that provide appropriate remuneration, training, contacts and opportunities.
- Inductions: To ensure that all students are provided with access to both social and academic support networks, and programs designed to enhance their academic abilities and university experience, such as mentoring and skills development programs, as well as orientation week.

Social and Cultural Services

- Clubs and Networks: Ensure that students have access to well resourced and supported clubs and networks that balance the social experience and interests of the students, with a goal to developing their graduate attributes.
- Events/Activities/Sports: To hold regular and diverse events/activities that reflect and enhance the university community, for example sporting, exhibitions, festivals, awards, performances, orientation and parties.
- Feature Events: To create a sense of celebration, tradition and belonging within the UNSW community.
- Creative and cultural development: To create opportunities for students to express and engage in diverse creative and cultural endeavors.

Representation:

- Internal Lobbying/Advocacy: To facilitate access for students to all levels of the university to positively affect change.
- External Lobbying: To facilitate access for all students to the wider community to positively affect change in the interest of students.
- Affiliations: To peak undergraduate, postgraduate, service and sporting bodies.
- Organisational policy creation: Involves student representation and involvement on governing bodies.
- Public Profile Development: To represent students in a manner that enhances their future opportunities and raising awareness of the qualities of UNSW graduates.

Personal and Professional Development

- Vocational: Offer a broad range of employment training programs for UNSW students, such as subsidised job skills training for immediate employment and graduate employment.
- Altruistic: Provide access to programs that allow students the opportunity to participate and benefit the lives of others.
- Cultural: Provide programs, activities and events that acknowledge cultural diversity and promote cultural exchange, such as small and large scale events, access to performance, visual art and lounge space.
- Sporting: To provide support for high performance representation, coaches and courses, managers, and umpires, to foster sport and recreation within the university, from casual to elite sportspeople.
- Personal fulfillment: To provide an opportunity for UNSW students to pursue individual cultural, religious, and scholarly interests, for example prayer rooms and dissemination of information about awards, scholarships and competitions.

Information:

- Publications: Production and distribution of mixed media publications which meet the social, political and educational needs of students.
- Orientation: To ensure that all students have access to information relating to the facilities and resources available to them, consisting of guides and tours, resources and welcomes and information sessions.
- Website: To provide an updated online presence that contains a variety of information relevant to members of the student organisation(s).
- Off-campus information: Establish a flow of information to the external community via web information and print communication.
- On-campus information and referral: Provide several access points on campus dedicated to delivering face-to-face information, services and referrals.

Facilities

- Social: To provide easily accessible and safe social and recreational facilities for all students, including study spaces, rehearsal spaces, exhibition space, common and meeting rooms, and space for clubs and student groups to organise.
- Sporting: The provision of high quality recreational and competitive sporting fields and facilities.
- Commercial: The provision of convenient, affordable retail services for all students, including food, academic supplies, retail and specialty shops, catering service and information technology.
- Information technology: The provision of free or heavily subsidised access for all students to current information technologies to support their cultural, social and academic needs.

Appendix D
Service Delivery Options Table

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
Representation	<p>Internal lobbying/advocacy. <i>To facilitate access for all students to all levels of the University to positively effect change</i></p> <p>External lobbying. <i>To facilitate access for all students to the wider community to positively effect change in the interests of students.</i></p>	<p>Central point of contact to provide info and support to students about who/where/how to create change.</p> <p>Central point of contact to provide info and support to students about who/where/how to create change.</p>
	<p>Affiliations. <i>Provide benefits to students through affiliations with peak representation and international networking.</i></p>	<p>Includes peak UG rep. body, peak PG rep. body, peak student service based body and peak sporting body, buying cooperatives, and/or various other affiliations to smaller organisations.</p>
	<p>Organisational policy creation. <i>Student representation on governing bodies to ensure organisations remain relevant to the student body.</i></p>	<p>All campus organisations provide opportunities and facilities for student participation and feedback about decision making</p>
		<p>Uni to consult students/representatives on issues of student concern.</p>
	<p>Public Profile development. <i>Representing students in a manner that enhances their future opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Raising awareness of qualities of UNSW graduates that will enhance their future opportunities</p>
		<p>Promoting the current work of students in a way that will enhance their opportunities.</p>

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
Information	Electronic information provision	An up to date website that contains a variety of information relevant to members and the organisation. This would also provide better communications between student leaders and university service provision (maybe online forum with categories like marketing, student services, etc and a committee that meets regularly)
	Publication <i>Mixed media publications which meet the social, political and educational needs of students</i>	A regular email newsletter and less frequent limited run "special interest" printed paper, also available online..
	Orientation <i>All students have access to information relating to facilities and resources available to them</i>	Student trained student run campus tours and provision for online tour/orientation
	Off-campus info flow	A two way information flow via web/email and print about student organisations and our members to the outside world, and bringing relevant information from the outside world to students and members. This will occur via existing UNSW channels and via centralised coordination and publication for all student organisations
	On-campus info and referral	Several access points on campus, dedicated to delivering face-to-face information and referrals (in conjunction with publications as above) . SO to provide limited support dependent on physical location of SO.

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
Facilities	Social <i>Easily accessible and safe social and recreational facilities are available to all students</i>	Activities, events. Brand-able space
	Sporting <i>Provision of recreational and competitive sporting facilities</i>	High quality fields – University to provide. SO to coordinate usage by clubs etc.
		Gymnasium – University to provide. SO to coordinate usage by clubs etc.
	Commercial <i>Provision of retail services for students</i>	University to provide commercial space. Services to be provided by SO include for example, food, academic supplies, retail/stationery, specialty shops. Opening hours to cater for p/t and night students and post-grad
		Please note: The Mediation Group has agreed the following principles in relation to the provision of commercial space: 1. Commercial services are integral to the creation and operation of an independent student organisation(s). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will provide an independent revenue stream • They will also provide facilities that will be used in order to enhance the community environment on campus. 2. It is essential that the spaces provided to commercial services are well located so as to best enhance their effectiveness in providing revenue to support social and cultural services. 3. Commercial services will provide a source of income that is not tied to particular activities and is not dependent on university management approval should the SO wish to alter its student service offerings. In this respect, commercial services ensure that the SO will be better able to be responsive to student needs. 4. Commercial services will have to provide an overall positive contribution to the SO so that the income generated will be able to fund other parts of the SO 4. The University should provide a rental subsidy to the student organisation(s), as the majority of the space within these commercial outlets will be student space and a service to the student population.

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
	<p>Information technology <i>Provide free and heavily subsidised access for all students to current info -technology to support their cultural, social and academic needs.</i></p>	<p>University to provide email, dialup, computers, website to all students. These will also be used by SO in a range of communication activities.</p>
Social and cultural services	<p>Coordinated access to external funding opportunities</p>	<p>SO to provide staff and admin services. The level of Coordination support provided depends on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue</p>
	<p>Clubs and networks <i>Students have access to well resourced and supported clubs and networks that balance their social experience and interests</i></p>	<p>University to provide resourced office or space for clubs to use, and subsidized access to facilities. A Clubs administrator or coordinator will coordinate the clubs through a single office/point of reference. Support will also be provided in the form of expertise and event management advice, and assistance given with skills development for volunteers. The level of Coordination support provided depends on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue</p>
	<p>Events/Activities/ Sports <i>Regular and diverse events/activities that reflect and enhance the university community</i></p>	<p>Eg Sporting, exhibitions, parties, festivals, performances, awards, cultural events. SO to provide coordination support, the level of which will depend on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue.</p>
	<p>Other feature events <i>To create a sense of celebration, tradition and belonging within the UNSW community</i></p>	<p>SO to provide coordination support, the level of which will depend on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue.</p>
	<p>Creative and Cultural Development <i>Create opportunities for students to express and engage in diverse creative and cultural endeavours</i></p>	<p>Opportunities for specific cultural and cross-cultural experiences eg Cultural night markets, monthly seminars. These services could also be provided by the relevant clubs (coordinated as above)</p>
		<p>Opportunities for experiencing the arts. Eg providing grants, subsidizing space, organizing competitions etc. SO to provide coordination support, the level of which will depend on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue.</p>

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
<p>Personal and Professional Development</p>	<p>Vocational <i>Employment and work experience which provides remuneration, appropriate training, contacts and opportunities. All students are provided with access to both social and academic support networks, and programs designed to enhance their academic abilities and university experience.</i></p>	<p>The SO are in the process of developing recommendations for the Uni in taking on employment coordination services.</p>
		<p>Mentoring programs – SO to provide volunteers</p>
		<p>Employability skills training – SO to provide so long as cost-neutral.</p>
	<p>Altruistic <i>To offer students the opportunity to participate in programs that benefit the lives of others and develop their own attributes.</i></p>	<p>SO to coordinate and encourage opportunities for altruistic activities, including serving on a variety of university committees, assistance in cultural transition for international students, peer support networks, participation in development programs for communities (eg Outback Assist, Engineers without Borders, Warrane College Work Camp). The level of coordination and support provided will depend on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue.</p>
	<p>Cultural <i>Programs and activities that acknowledge cultural diversity and promote cultural exchange</i></p>	<p>Eg facilitating small scale/grass roots cultural events on campus, large scale cultural events, intercultural exchange, providing students with access to performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, visual arts spaces and studios (for example Hutcheson Gallery, COFA Gallery, Studio 1 and Dance Studio)</p>

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
	<p>Sporting Development <i>Provide support for students to access sport and recreational activities</i></p>	<p>Encouragement, coordination, assistance and support for sport and recreation services for students. This will primarily occur through Clubs (as above) and again the level of coordination provided will depend on the level of Uni support and the ability of the SO to generate revenue.</p>
	<p>Personal fulfilment <i>To provide opportunities for UNSW students to pursue individual interests</i></p>	<p>Uni to provide appropriate space, SO to coordinate access if necessary. Eg Prayer rooms</p>
		<p>Dissemination of info about awards/scholarships/competitions</p>
		<p>Availability of subsidised personal interest/recreational courses (can be effectively run in a community partnership).</p>
Student welfare	<p>Direct Advocacy <i>Individual students have access to a free independent advocacy/legal service</i></p>	<p>Advocates should be experienced in postgrad, undergrad and international student issues and legal issues</p>
		<p>Training and development for Student Advocates</p>
		<p>Referral services</p>
	<p>Indirect Advocacy <i>Facility to research/report and recommend improvements to the general student condition</i></p>	<p>Policy development</p>
		<p>Linkages to national and professional bodies for research and promulgation of research results.</p>

General service area	Specific service to be provided by SO	Service details
	<p>Subsidies <i>Resources are allocated to provide targeted services and facilities to improve affordability, accessibility and acknowledging diversity of the UNSW population.</i></p>	<p>Clubs and societies have access to space and subsidies and discounted goods and services (commercial and non-commercial)</p>
	<p>Support Networks for Marginalised Groups:</p>	<p>Support for the provision of services for marginalised groups including women, gay, lesbian or queer students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.</p>

Appendix E

Agreements on a New Structure

In developing a structural model for the new student organisation, the VSU Mediation Group sought to identify areas of agreement between each of the representatives. Identifying areas of agreement served as a basis from which the structural model could be developed, but also helped to identify particular areas that required further discussion.

The areas of agreement for the model of the new student organisation were presented to the governing bodies of the existing student organisations for comments and feedback, which was then used to further develop the preliminary structural model. The agreements identified by the student organisation representatives at an early stage in the process were as follows:

- The new Student Organisation will have an overarching Governing Body and its own constitution / articles.
- The Student Organisation will be comprised of a number of “semi-autonomous Bodies” that will be resourced and monitored (in regards to their performance against targets) by the Governing Body.
- The Student Organisation will have a voting majority of students on its governing body. Although it was agreed the proportion of student representation should be above 51%, consensus has yet to be reached on the exact composition of the governing body and further discussions are required.
- The University will be represented on the governing body.
- The staff of the Student Organisation will be represented on the governing body through the allocation of an “ex-officio” and non-voting position to the General Manager.
- The level of involvement of Alumni in the governing body or other representative roles is still under discussion.
- Other groups who would not be represented on the Governing Body, but whose views and input would be valued by the Governing Body include other University staff and the broader community.
- The Student Organisation should focus either on providing key services identified in Appendices C and D, or will work to ensure that they are provided by the University or another external source.

From these early agreements, the VSU Mediation Group developed a number of key points which were used in the development of the structural model for the new organisation. These key points were the basis for further discussion on this issue:

- 1) A centralised model is preferred over a decentralised model. A centralised model would involve a Governing Body, a centralised management and administrative department servicing the bodies of the organisation. (By comparison, a decentralised model would involve each

body of the new student organisation maintaining its own management and administration functions.)

- 2) The roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body will include:
 - Legal accountability, including ensuring adherence to legislation throughout the organisation, and being the legal publisher for all organisation publications
 - Ensuring the organisation is financially responsible and viable
 - Ensuring that the organisation as a whole is implementing policy to achieve its constitutional goals
 - Ensuring that the semi-autonomous bodies are meeting their constitutional goals
 - Coordinating organisational strategic planning and ensuring that the strategy for the semi-autonomous bodies is consistent with that of the overall organisation
 - Representing the views of the student organisation on issues which affect the organisation as a whole to the University and the broader community
 - Consider the viability of budgets from and allocating funding to the semi-autonomous bodies.
 - Overseeing management of centralised services
 - Determining budget for centralised services
- 3) The federation of semi-autonomous bodies will be responsible for
 - Representation
 - Liaising with other bodies.
 - Liaising between students and community.
 - Generating and maintaining initiatives that address the needs of their constituents
- 4) It is important that the new organisation has mechanisms to liaise with student representatives on academic boards, faculty bodies & University Council.
- 5) The semi-autonomous Bodies are likely to have differing management structures depending on their particular needs and the activities and responsibilities of each. This needs further discussion.
- 6) There should be a level of management and streamlining of service provision between the governing body and the bodies, which needs further discussion

Appendix F

Potential Areas for University Support:

Whilst it is acknowledged that it would be premature to present a final proposal for the level of University support required of an ongoing nature in order to allow the new student organisation to provide relevant and valuable services to the UNSW community, some broad areas of support have been identified.

The following areas correspond closely to the preliminary offer from the University's Senior Management Group as presented to the February meeting of Council, though the final dollar figure of support required by the new organisation, either categorically or as a whole, will not be determined until the conclusion of the business consulting process.

Transitional Costs:

- Legal fees and consultancy costs for the development of a new student organisation.
- Capital works to prepare the student organisation buildings (Blockhouse and Roundhouse) for occupancy by the new student organisation, including the creation of specialised areas for service delivery.
- Capital costs of furnishing and fitting out these renovated spaces – eg office furniture, computers, photocopiers, etc.

Space Costs/Forgoing Commercial Rents:

Some discussions have taken place on this issue, though negotiations continue. Space required by the new student organisation can be broadly divided into three categories:

- Office/Administrative Space (on Kensington and CoFA campuses);
- Special Purpose Space (eg gallery space, performance spaces, activity rooms); and
- Commercial Space.

Discussions between the student organisations and the Deputy Vice Chancellors Resources and Academic have developed a notion that administrative/office space should be provided to the student organisations at no cost, as a subsidy from the University. Discussions continue on the issue of commercial space, with the understanding that the return of space to the University will provide an opportunity for the University to gather revenue to support student organisations, but also that the ability to generate commercial revenue is a valuable tool for the student organisation to maintain a degree of independence to provide experience to students.

Support for Staff Positions:

To date the Senior Management Group has discussed providing support for seven staff positions across different areas of the organisation. Further consideration could be provided in this area, particularly with regard to the provision for the new organisation to attract and keep Senior Managers and an Executive Officer during the transitional period. This is of key importance, as the first Executive Officer and Senior Management Team will have a large impact upon the culture of the developing fledgling organisation.

Support for Honoraria for Student Coordinators/Office Bearers:

Whilst not raised in any reports from the Senior Management Group at the time of writing, the University could consider providing support for the new student organisation to nominally remunerate dedicated students in key specified positions for the work done for the new organisation. This is of paramount importance to any student organisation, as student participation is vital yet incredibly time consuming for the students who take on these roles, who otherwise may be able to obtain part-time work to sustain themselves.

Discretionary Support for the Provision of Services/Cultural Events:

A figure of some \$600,000 has been mooted by the Senior Management Group in its reports to University Council to date. This support would be invaluable to ensure the continuity and high standard of the services provided to the University community. A significant example of such an event is Orientation Week and the Yellow Shirts program. A definite figure of the requirement in this area will evolve through the business consultancy framework.

Additional Areas of Support:

Many of these ideas have been raised at different times throughout the mediation process, most notably through the presentation of a paper on this issue to the August meeting of the Student Affairs Committee. Additional areas for University support to those described above, but not limited to, include:

- Web/Email Hosting and IT support
- General insurance cover, including workers compensation insurance
- Provision of a subsidy towards the cost of utilities for student organisation operated administrative and/or commercial space
- Purchase/maintenance of vehicles for use by the new organisation through the University's fleet
- Running the elections for the representative positions on the new organisation
- Creation and administration of a 'student life fund' through UNSW Foundation
- Development of credit system for volunteers/office bearers to encourage participation and leadership within the new organisation
- Providing training courses through New South Global for student representatives and committee members.

Summary table:

The following table outlines the resources that are contributed to the current student organisations and how they might change with a new organisation. The transition period is not considered in this comparison.

Resource description	Before VSU (pre June 2006)	Proposed Post VSU (post January 2007) – see note
Compulsory student amenities fees	\$9.5m p.a.	Nil
Voluntary student amenities fees	Nil	\$1-2m p.a. (less marketing and collection costs)
General Student Cultural Services Support	Nil	\$0.6m
Funding for undergraduate essential services	Nil	4 positions plus non-salary support (includes legal and advocacy)
Funding for postgraduate essential services	Nil	2 positions plus non-salary support (located in GRS)
Administration space	Roundhouse, Blockhouse Sam Cracknell COFASA Level one East Wing Quadrangle	Blockhouse and Roundhouse proposed for new SO (UNSW proposes rent free with some maintenance costs funded by UNSW and argues this is worth approx. \$2.8m pa). Sam Cracknell for UNSW Sport Other spaces to be confirmed. UNSW asking for rationalisation of space.
Commercial space (food / retail)	Mathew's Food Hall, Arcade Store, Esme's, Badabagan, Nexus, Graduation and Gift Store, Quad Food Court, Quad Coffee Cart, Quad Stationery Store, Eats@The Round, Coffee Republic, Shop 24, 3 Zippy's stores. Campus Art Store (COFA)	To be confirmed – UNSW asking for rent. Some suggestions that the opportunity cost of rent in the spaces opposite is of the order of \$6m.
Special use space	Dance studio, darkroom, pottery room Kudos Gallery	To be confirmed – UNSW asking to review. To be confirmed – discussions more complex.
Community space	Various – sometimes mixed with other uses.	UNSW asking to manage, maintain and work with SO.
Volunteer time	Huge	Hopefully huge
Opportunity cost (for university)	Rental from commercial spaces	Rental from commercial spaces

Note: The costs of the mediation process, Childcare Support and Student Accident Insurance and “Support for the retention of a distinctive COFASA” are not included in the above table.

Sources:

- Paper to Council 20 February 2006 (University Management Support for Student Association Provided Services - Response to Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) Legislation)
- Paper to Council 10 April 2006 (Update on University Support for Student Activities in response to the introduction of VSU)
- Discussion draft (Use of Space by UNSW Student Organisations)

Further Discussion:

As the future student organisation does not yet exist, the current student organisations have felt it difficult to negotiate on its behalf. It must also be problematic for the University to negotiate with an organisation that does not yet exist. A potential solution could be a moratorium on any changes to the spaces used by the current student organisations until the end of 2007. That would permit the new student organisation to settle down and assess its operations in the VSU environment.

Before the introduction of VSU, the student organisations received resources in the form of compulsory student fees, and space from the University (mostly rent-free). The legislative changes will result in major changes to the funding arrangements.

The level and form of support from the University is critical to ensuring the financial and political sustainability of the future student organisations. First, they need to be financially sustainable. That is, their revenues and expenses need to balance throughout the year with suitable management for cash flow, uncertainties and reinvestment. Secondly they need to be politically sustainable. In the short term, the transition from the present structures has to be feasible for the boards/governing bodies of the present organisations. In the medium term, the new student organisation has to continue to be relevant to its members. In the longer term, its aims and achievements have to be aligned with those of its members and the University community it serves. Across all three time horizons, it is important that the student organisation be an organisation of students for students rather than a department or controlled entity of the University.

The main issues identified during the mediation discussions are:

- The amount of space, its location, its purpose(s) and use(s), the right to sublet commercial space, rents.
- General funding.
- Funding for specific functions to be undertaken by the student organisation e.g. advocacy.
- With the expected large decrease in funding from student fees, the University should not increase the financial pressure on the student organisations, but instead should if anything, increase its level of support.

Information received from the managers in the University suggests their objectives are:

- To see that resources provided by UNSW to the student organisation are used efficiently for the benefit of student community.
- That services which are specifically funded (e.g. advocacy) are available to all students irrespective of their membership status with the student organisation.

- That commercial space is operated to ensure the best return to the UNSW community is achieved.
- That because the rest of the University is operating under a space charging model, the student organisations should too. This model is to force efficiency of space usage, however it may be possible to use a different method to achieve the same objective.
- That the student organisation will operate effectively and efficiently.
- Some of the space currently used by student organisations should be returned for the University to reallocate.
- If less space is provided by the University to the student organisation, then higher funding can be provided.

One suggestion is for UNSW to charge the student organisation full commercial rents for commercial space, and to provide a grant in perpetuity equal to the initial rents. The student organisation may then choose to keep the leases on commercial space, or relinquish some or all of them, in which case UNSW may lease the space to other operators. If this happens, the student organisation will continue to receive the “grant in perpetuity” and it may allocate the difference it and the rents to providing other services. The concerns of the current student organisation are that there might be differences in future changes to the amounts of rent and subsidy, that non-student organisation operators won’t open at hours and times of the year that are unprofitable (but which are important for after-hours and research students in particular), and that the student organisation may be forced by the University to occupy less favourable locations.

A further problem with this method is that the student organisation might become a controlled entity in the legal sense. A high level of funding by the University and severe restrictions on the student organisations ability to generate funds from other activities may well trigger this. Legal advice should be sought during the consulting process to assess this possibility. The mediation group strongly believes the future student organisation should not be a controlled entity of the University, and we expect the University shares this view.

A variation on this arrangement was suggested by UNSW that includes discounted rents on commercial spaces, but without arrangements for swapping relinquished space with a grant in perpetuity or similar funding scheme.

Appendix G

VSU Mediation Group's Consultant's Brief

The University of New South Wales, on behalf of its Student Organisations, is seeking assistance to ensure a smooth transition to Voluntary Student Unionism following legislative change. In particular, business analysis services are required in order to assess the status of current Student Organisations in terms of financial, legal and personnel matters, and to provide advice on the proposed future structure for Student Organisations. It is also anticipated that the Consultant will make recommendations to the Student Organisations on options for implementation of the proposed future structure.

Background

There are five student organisations at the University of New South Wales Sydney campuses. These are the Student Guild, a representative and advocacy forum for students; COFA Students Association, which represents and provides services for students at the UNSW College of Fine Arts; the Postgraduate Board, whose focus is representation and advocacy for postgraduate students; the Sports Association, which manages sporting and recreational clubs and programs; and the University Union (now trading as the Source), which provides a range of social and cultural services and operates a number of commercial activities on campus.

Historically, the main source of revenue for the majority of these student organisations has been compulsory student fees levied by the University on behalf of the student organisations. Recent legislative change has introduced Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU), meaning that from 1 July 2006, universities can no longer levy compulsory fees for membership of student organisations. A significant reduction in membership fee income is anticipated.

The Student Organisations are currently engaged in a mediated collaborative planning process with the objective of developing a viable model for delivery of representational, advocacy, social, cultural and recreational services and activities to students under VSU. The outcome of this process will be presented to the University for endorsement and approval prior to implementation.

In this context, the Consultant will be engaged by the University but will maintain the confidentiality of the Student Organisation planning process, and will provide reports to the Student Organisations rather than to the University directly.

Task and Timeframe

Task 1: *Current Status Review and Report*

Review current situation of Student Organisations, including projections to year end 2006, with particular regard to:

- Financial structure and status (to year end 2006)
- Legal obligations including status of office bearers / board members
- Industrial relations matters

This review is to take into account a possible move to a new organisational structure and should consider a scenario of forced closure.

Output: Single report on the outcome of the review of each organisation.

Task 2: *Future Model Assessment and Advice*

a) Assess viability of proposed new structure/s in terms of:

- Financial viability
- Risks
- Operational considerations
- Appropriateness of Structure & Governance
- Capacity to meet objectives

b) Where appropriate, provide advice on options for improvement of the proposed model

c) Identify preliminary matters for consideration in transition to proposed new model, with reference to Report produced under Task 1.

Output: Report on proposed structure including advice on options for improvement, and preliminary matters for consideration in implementation.

Task 3: *Transition Advice*

In the context of a finalised structural model, provide recommendations for transition and implementation.

Output: Documented recommendations; Implementation Plan

Timeframe for Completion

Aim to complete Task 1 no later than 7 April 2006

Aim to complete Task 2 no later than 20 April 2006

Aim to complete Task 3 no later than 28 April 2006

Documents Available

The following documents will be made available to the Consultant on commencement of the engagement:

- Basic organisational information including - staffing, turnover, summary of organisational purpose, and legal status
- Financials
- Constitution, Bylaws, other relevant legal docs including any previous advice
- Relevant Employment Instruments including Enterprise Agreements, Awards, Contracts as applicable
- Annual Reports for last three years
- Organisational Chart
- Prior work on VSU including O'Halloran Report ('The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW: An Issues Paper with Recommendations')
- Relevant documents arising from VSU Mediation Group including Interim Report and Options Table

Contact Persons

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Appendix H Responses to the O'Halloran Report

14 July 2005

Student Affairs Committee

UNSW Union Response to the O'Halloran Report

INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the Union's position on the O'Halloran Report ('The Report') on *'The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW'*. In Part I of this paper we address the Union's specific concerns regarding the substantive recommendations in The Report. Beyond these concerns, the Union is dissatisfied with the methodology used to gather information for The Report and the lack of consultation during its preparation. Specifically, the Union believes that the substantive and methodological weaknesses identified in this paper undermine the ability of The Report to be viewed as a definitive document directing the provision of University support for non-academic services in a post-VSU environment.

The Union acknowledges the value of this report in providing a working document setting out support from the University for the UNSW student organisations in a post-VSU environment. The Union strongly supports the notion of transitional funding during the next eighteen months, and agrees in principle with many of the recommendations made in The Report. However, the Union firmly believes that The Report should not be seen as a definitive model for the provision of such support.

Importantly, the Union believes that this report fails in its objective to provide long-term strategic guidance for the provision of non-academic services at UNSW. Instead, The Report presents a series of short-term solutions designed to see the student organisations through the next eighteen months only. The Report contains no discussion of the criteria used to allocate transitional funding; nor is evidence presented in support of the organisational restructures it recommends. Most importantly, there is no evidence that these restructured organisations will be capable of sustaining an adequate level of service provision into the future, nor is there recommendation of how this might be achieved.

Each of the five UNSW student organisations will require extensive remodelling in order to survive in a post-VSU environment. Each of these organisations will be left in a weaker financial position at the end of this remodelling. It is essential, therefore, that any changes implemented during the 'transition period' (identified in the report as the twelve months following the introduction of VSU) should be done so with a view to securing a viable and sustainable organisation. The Report does not make recommendations with long-term strategy for organisational survival in mind, and it is for this reason that the Union urges the Student Affairs Committee and University Management to undertake a period of further research into long-term issues of service provision prior to accepting these recommendations.

I SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS

In this part, we outline the Union's concerns with specific recommendations in The Report.

1. *The Union-Guild Merger Recommendations*

The relevant recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: *'That the Union and Student Guild merge to form a single student organisation.'*

Recommendation 2: *'That UNSW create a working group to facilitate the merger of the Union and the Guild with an equal number of not less than three nominees from each organisation and chaired by an independent person nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).'*

Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21 and 22 are also indirectly relevant to the question of merger as they involve discussions about the structure of the other student organisations.

The arguments provided in The Report for merger are effectively that there will be economies of scale and less competition for members. The Report does not seriously canvass any counter-arguments. The Union believes that there are significant counter-arguments for such a merger; and, in fact, the Board of the Union considered the issue of a Union-Guild merger seriously in 2003 before rejecting it after a year long consultation process.

The Union has two specific concerns about this recommendation, beyond the fact that there are significant counter-arguments to a merger.

First, the recommendation fails to outline the nature or meaning of "merger." Merger may mean a takeover, it may mean the winding up of both of the organisations and the formation of a new organisation, or it may mean something entirely different. The meaning of merger is, in this context, particularly important because of the relative financial positions of the organisations.

Secondly, the discussion fails to engage in any process of due diligence. There is no quantification of the benefits and detriments of the proposal. There has been no effort to understand the current financial position of the two organisations; nor has there been an effort to understand the financial position of a prospective merged organisation. There has been no attempt, for instance, to quantify the Student Guild's liabilities regarding staff entitlements or their cash reserves for organisational restructure. The Union provided Mr O'Halloran with key financial information about the Union's current financial position – but this has not been included in the appendix of The Report. It is impossible to tell if such information has been provided by or sought from the Guild. It would be reckless and in breach of the fiduciary duties of the directors of the Union to accede to such a recommendation without due diligence. A decision about the benefits of a merger cannot be made until the nature of the merger is properly understood.

As such, The Union cannot accept Recommendation 1 of The Report without appropriate due diligence investigations. The Union is eager to be involved in a working group to discuss the benefits of collaboration with all five student organisations at UNSW. The Union supports this working group being mediated by an independent party. The Union believes that the purpose of this working party should be to create a vision of student organisations and non-academic student services post-VSU that are efficient, financially sustainable and responsible, and provide high quality, essential student services in line with the University's needs.

2. Moratorium over Space Leads to Further Uncertainty

Recommendation 9 reads: *'That UNSW agree to a moratorium on any changes to current Union commercial and retail operations, including occupation of space and income from leases, until at least the end of 2006'*

Recommendation 10 reads: *'That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources) initiate a formal review, with the involvement of the Union and UNSW Commercial Services, of all commercial and retail services on the Kensington Campus with a view to producing a long term plan for UNSW by the end of 2006'*

Recommendation 28 reads: *'That the current occupancy arrangements for student organisations continue under the transition to VSU and be incorporated in future agreements between the organisations and UNSW'*

Recommendation 28 seems to qualify recommendations 9 and 10 – effectively directing the formal review to recommend that the current occupancy arrangements be maintained.

The Union strongly supports the creation of a working group to ensure certainty in space occupancy arrangements. The Union has been promised on a number of occasions that such a group would be established; but nothing has eventuated. The key reason for this is that the Union cannot operate properly, or adequately plan for its operation post-VSU, unless it has certainty regarding its space occupancy, particularly as regards its income streams.

The problem with this set of recommendations is that they leave the Union in a position of great uncertainty. The Union is currently working on a process of extensive remodelling to provide sustainable operation in a post VSU environment. Any operating model for the Union in 2006 will need to be the model that it continues with into the future – the Union simply will not have the capital reserves to survive successive organisational restructures. The recommendation, as it is currently framed, means that the Union will be in a position of uncertainty about its future occupancy of commercial space until the end of 2006. However, if significant changes to the Union's operating practices are made at this time, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the Union to undergo a second major organisational restructure. This will be detrimental to the viability of the Union in providing of non-academic services on campus.

Rather than a twelve month moratorium on change, the Union would like to enter into negotiations for a long term strategic plan for space usage at UNSW to allow its current restructure to take into account the conditions it will be facing into the future, not just in the next eighteen months.

3. Incorporation

Recommendation 11 reads: *‘That student organisations be invited to prepare a proposal(s) for UNSW to consider with respect to the incorporation of student organisations at UNSW and that the University provide assistance as appropriate in the preparation of the proposal.’*

The Union strongly supports incorporation. The Union notes that we have been progressing this issue for over a decade. The Union further notes that it has presented a complete model of the incorporation to the University’s Senior Management Group (in early 2004). This model maintained the current control arrangements between the Union and the University, whilst ensuring limited liability and legal personality for the Union. This model involved the Union becoming a company limited by guarantee. The Union notes that this model, which was prepared by the Union at some expense and after extensive consultation, is not mentioned in The Report.

4. Honeypot Childcare

Recommendation 13 reads: *‘That UNSW permanently absorb the indexed funding for all subsidised student childcare places at Honeypot and The House at Pooh Corner’*

The Union strongly supports this recommendation. The Union notes, however, that, beyond the direct subsidy, the Union funds capital works and some management expenses (such as auditing and employee benefits) for Honeypot Childcare Centre. It is unclear whether this recommendation covers these costs. Further, The Report does not identify whether the University will take over the management of these centres, or whether the grant will be allocated to the student organisations to be administered under the current management arrangements.

5. O-Week, CONTACT and Learning the Lingo

Recommendation 14 reads: *‘That UNSW provide transition funding of \$50,000 to the Union/Guild for the Yellow Shirts, Learning the Lingo and CONTACT student volunteer programs and that this funding be reviewed at the end of 2006’*

Recommendation 15 reads: *‘That in the transfer of responsibility of O-Week co-ordination to UNSW Marketing, ensure the coordination function is adequately resourced on a permanent basis.’*

The Union strongly supports the continued resourcing of these three programs given their iconic status within the University and broader community. The Union notes, however, that the total cost of providing Yellow Shirts in 2005 was \$300,000, excluding volunteer resources. This funding grant does not cover even one-sixth of the cost of *one* of these programs.

The Union is concerned that recommendation 15 is ambiguous. Specifically, it might be read as suggesting that coordination for O-Week as a whole be transferred to UNSW Marketing. The successful Yellow Shirt O-Week program has, since its inception, been run by the Union. This has led to strong support from the student volunteer body and a great loyalty to the program – because it is run by a student organisation for the direct benefit of students. The Union believes that it is critical that that it be allowed to continue to run the ‘Yellow Shirt’ O-Week program. If, however, this recommendation is referring to the transfer of overall campus coordination of Orientation Week from the UNSW Counselling Department to UNSW Marketing then this is not a major concern for the Union. It is clear, however, that further consideration of this recommendation is necessary in order that its intent be readily understood

6. CASOC Funding

Recommendation 17 provides: *‘That UNSW fund the CASOC Co-ordinator role and provide \$40,000 additional funding to clubs and societies for 2006 to be reviewed at the end of 2006’*

The Union is concerned that this recommendation demonstrates that The Report has not provided a transparent criteria by which projects can be judged. This Recommendation provides for a significant amount of funding for ‘Guild’ clubs and societies. The Report does not acknowledge that the Union provides approximately \$80,000 in direct grants annually to clubs and societies; as well as many tens of thousands of dollars in in-kind support through room hire, catering, staff support and other such services. The Report does not seem to provide any reason or criteria for recommending that University funding should support the Guild CASOC system rather than the Union system.

If The Report instead means that this funding will be directed to the merged Union-Guild entity, then it is a recommendation which is premised on the success of recommendation 1 – which the Union has already noted is not possible without due diligence.

7. Miscellaneous Student Activities Fund

Recommendation 27 reads: *‘That the balance of the MSAF fund should be quarantined for the funding of UNSW student organisation initiatives with special priority given to projects that support the transition of the organisations to a VSU environment.’*

The Union supports this recommendation in principle. The Union believes, however, that it needs to be clarified. Specifically, the recommendation needs to clarify that the fund should be used for capital works. Further, the fund certainly should not be used for costs which have already been incurred by current legal arrangements, such as redundancies or payment of accrued staff entitlements, which should appropriately be borne by the cash reserves of the individual student organisations.

8. University Support During the Transition

Recommendations 16, 18, 23, 24, 25 and 26 all involve the University providing support for the student organisations during the transition. The Union supports the provision of transitional funding for essential student services, however this does not address the long-term strategic issues involved in organisational restructure and service provision in a VSU environment.

9. Standard Formal Agreements

Recommendation 12 reads: *'That UNSW develop standardised formal agreement templates to cover the relationship between the University and each student organisation'*

The Union supports this recommendation in principle. As discussed, it is difficult for any organisation to plan for its long-term operations under VSU without such an agreement.

10. Shared Membership and Infrastructure

Recommendation 5 reads: *'That the Sports Association continue to explore shared membership and infrastructure with the Union and the Guild for 2006 pending the adoption and implementation of recommendations 3 and 4.'*

This recommendation highlights that there are many different models through which organisational efficiencies may be achieved, as it clearly canvasses sharing of administrative costs and functions. Although the Union would have to engage in appropriate due diligence investigations, the Union believes that this sort of administrative collaboration will be essential for student organisations to survive post-VSU.

It is not clear why this recommendation does not also include the Postgraduate Board, or indeed the CoFA Students' Association. There are a number of 'back end' costs, for example payroll, account keeping, and the purchasing of membership database software, where significant collaboration and cost saving across the student organisations could be investigated. Representatives of each of the student organisations have had preliminary discussions on this matter.

II METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

The Union believes that The Report has a number of methodological concerns which undermine the credibility of The Report, resulting in the substantive flaws discussed in Part I. The Union's major concerns regarding the methodology of the preparation of The Report are as follows:

1. The Inclusion of Recommendations

The Report includes 29 recommendations. Many of these recommendations are of fundamental significance for the nature and viability of both student organisations and the provision of non-academic services on campus. The Union was specifically told The Report would not include recommendations. The Union was told this, prior to

consultation, by The Report's author, Brett O'Halloran. It was not until after the consultation process had ended and the Union had no further chance to provide input, that the Union was told that The Report would include recommendations. It goes without saying that the Union would have approached the process very differently had we been aware that The Report would include recommendations.

This is evident in the appendices to The Report, which include the Union's submission. The Union's submission is clearly formatted in order to best provide information of the Union's current operations. It is a document prepared to outline the Union's services and their value to the UNSW community. The specific request from Professor King was a document of the form: *'[listing] the major activities of the Union and a paragraph against each giving an indication of the reason for the activity, what the implication of VSU would be for that activity, and the level of resourcing required to maintain the activity.'** The Union did not feel that this request was indicative of a desire by the University to fund activities on campus, but rather was, as The Report's title suggests, an indication of the impact that might be felt by the UNSW Student Organisations under the proposed legislation. Had the Union been aware of the fact that the scope of this report would be expanded to include the potential for the University to fund specific activities, the Union would have provided more specific information and recommendations pursuant to this.

2. The Process of Consultation was Unsatisfactory

The Union has two primary concerns with The Report's consultation process.

First, the student organisations were given no chance to view The Report in draft form before its delivery. Specifically, the Union was given no chance to correct any misrepresentations in its position on various issues. Further, the Union was given no chance to provide any input into specific recommendations made in The Report. Had the Union had such an opportunity, it could have provided key information to rectify the misrepresentations and quantify strengths and weaknesses of the various recommendations.

Secondly, the Union is concerned that no 'independent' students were consulted. The Report covers the provision of non-academic services to students. Understandably, representatives of the various organisations have an obligation to their organisation to achieve the best outcome for that organisation; and, without a collective approach, it may be difficult for that to lead to the best outcome for students. The consultation included two student members of the Academic Board, presumably as independent representatives of the student population. Yet one of these representatives was the Co-convenor of the Postgraduate Board.

3. The Report Does not 'Build from Scratch'

The Report does not look at non-academic services as a whole. It does not commence with 'what students need' and then try and build a cost-effective model to provide services relative to what students need into the future. Instead, The Report takes the current models of service provision and student organisations and seeks to satisfy as

* Email correspondence, Prof Robert King to David Hume, March 10, 2005

many of the demands of members of the various student organisations as possible. This is highly problematic for two reasons.

First, it means that The Report does not view non-academic services as a whole. It does not consider the provision of non-academic services such as counselling, careers and employment, facilities etc. Yet, the only distinction between these services and services provided by student organisations is historical – i.e. they are provided directly by the university, rather than through the intermediary of a student organisation. The current legislation applies to all non-academic services, not just those provided by student organisations. The logical approach would, therefore, be to consider ‘university funding for non-academic services’ as a whole, and then to determine funding priorities within that. It does not necessarily follow, both as a matter of fairness and good governance, that when funding for non-academic services will be reduced by \$9M per annum, that this will only affect services provided by student organisations. If the University viewed a service being provided by a student organisation as more “essential” than a non-academic service provided by one of its own departments, then a properly strategic view would suggest that the University should allocate funding to the essential student service even if it means withdrawing it from a University-provided non-essential service.

Secondly, it means that The Report’s recommendations sometimes seem to reflect the demands of the student organisations during consultation, rather than the needs of students.

4. Key Recommendations Lack Evidence and are Based on Perception

A number of The Report’s key recommendations are not explicitly based on good evidence. For instance, Recommendation 1 advocates a merger of the Union and Student Guild. The Reports lists a number of benefits as being ‘straightforward’ – such as ‘costs savings on associated membership structure’ – but The Report does not explain why these benefits are only achievable through a merger as opposed to alternate collaborative organisational structures. More importantly, The Report fails to canvass any of the evidence opposing such a recommendation. For instance, it fails to consider the financial viability of such a merged organisation, or to suggest a governance structure that might resolve the fundamental organisational differences between the Union and the Guild.

5. The Report Favours Ambit Claims

The Report seems to favour the ambit claims of student organisations. The Union entered the process of consultation with a specific intent to be open, honest and transparent. The Union also entered the consultation process having been preparing and modelling for VSU for over a year. As a result, we were able to provide specific quantification of the costs of VSU. Further, because our modelling had been premised on the provision of no support by the university (a ‘worst-case scenario’), we did not make ambit requests during the consultation. We did not ask for hundreds of thousands of dollars of support. This was because we understood that The Report would not be including recommendations. Instead, we believed that The Report was intended purely to collect information for the purpose of preparing an issues paper regarding the actual state of the student organisations in 2006. The Union was able to

be realistic about its position and not make ambit claims *because* it has managed its risk very well. In contrast, the other student organisations seem to have made ambit claims. This is reflected in the financial recommendations. The Union receives approximately \$40,000 of direct funding for the upcoming year; other student organisations receive approximately \$617,000. This is entirely disproportionate to the relative size of the organisations, and the potential liabilities in 2006 if services are to be maintained at a level appropriate for students.

6. The Report Provides No Criteria or Priority for Funding

The Report recommends the allocation of \$1,000,000 to non-academic services in 2006. The Report provides no criteria as to how the relative allocations of this \$1M were determined. This is related to the point regarding the lack of evidence for key propositions, and leads to significant inconsistencies within The Report. For instance, Recommendation 29 recommends that UNSW should take over responsibility for the postgraduate computer laboratories; however, The Report does not explain why UNSW ought not similarly take responsibility for the (approximately 50) computers provided by the Union. Another example is that the COFA Students Association (recommendation 22) is given \$100,000 for organisational restructuring; yet the Union receives less than half of that (and that funding is to be directed to specific programs). This is despite the fact that the Union is a significantly larger organisation with significantly greater liabilities in 2006.

The Report also recommends the allocation of \$215,000 to the Student Affairs Committee for allocation on a priority basis. Again, there are no criteria for the allocation of these funds, or to justify the amount chosen. At face value, this figure seems to have been applied merely to balance the total amount of transitional funding to \$1M rather than as a result of careful consideration of the likely cost of this process.

7. The Report Misrepresents the Union's Stated Position

The Report misrepresents the Union's stated position in two key respects.

First, The Report suggests that the Union is equivocal regarding merger with the Student Guild. At no stage during the consultation did the Union say that it supported merger with other organisations – the Union said that it was working with the other organisations to collaborate in key areas for 2006. The Union could not support a merger until there was a clear quantification of benefits together with a proposed structure for a viable organisation.

Secondly, The Report suggests that the Union runs a number of services that are highly profitable. For instance, on page 24, The Report says that the Roundhouse Bar and events are run profitably. This is simply untrue. The Roundhouse, because of its large maintenance costs, poor parking and 'resort' trading patterns is a heavily subsidised venue – which provides quality entertainment and vibrant social space to students, for a subsidy of close to \$1m. The vast majority of the Union's other services, including its food operations, are not profitable in their current operation. Rather, because of the diversity of range supplied, the communal space offered and extended operating hours, the Union's food services are heavily subsidised in order to

provide a service to students rather than being simply a source of revenue. The Union has modelled for a significant rationalisation of services next year – providing a bare minimum of non-commercial services – and the result demonstrates a \$600k loss in 2006. The majority of the Union's services and programs are, therefore, not profitable. This has significant consequences for The Report because The Report suggests that the Union should fund unprofitable Guild services. On page 24, The Report says: 'the [Guild's] existing services will inevitably need some subsidy funding from the Union to survive'. This comment seems to derive from the unfounded perception that the Union is a highly profitable business, not the not-for-profit, service-based organisation that it is in reality. The Union Board could not, in line with each Director's fiduciary duty to the organisation, increase its budgeted 2006 loss of \$600k any further to subsidise other activities.

8. *The Report seems Internally Inconsistent*

The Report recommends the merger of the Union and the Guild, citing efficiencies and organisational similarities. However, The Report also recommends the separation of the Postgraduate Board from the Student Guild. It is unclear why the same reasons for the merger of the Union and the Guild do not apply to the PGB; or why the same reasons for the separation of the PGB and the Guild do not also apply to the Guild and the Union. Further, The Report does not explain how the merged Union-Guild entity will relate to a separate Postgraduate Board. Presumably, the merged Union-Guild will provide services to all students (whether undergraduate or postgraduate). It would not make sense, for instance, for the merged entity to refuse entry to food outlets to postgraduate students. It follows that the Union-Guild would also provide representative services to all its members. If it did not, then postgraduate students who became Union-Guild members would be paying for services they could not access. The Report does not explain how this will operate.

Another inconsistent recommendation on this issue is the continued existence of a separate Sports Association. If the purpose for merging the Union and the Guild is to provide increased efficiency and prevent organisational overlap, then considerations should to be made across all student organisations, for example, with regard to Clubs and Societies which are overseen to some degree by all three organisations.

9. *The Report's Recommendations are Unclear in their Relationship to Each Other*

Specifically:

Recommendation 9 states: '*That UNSW agree to a moratorium on any changes to current Union commercial and retail operations, including occupation of space and income from leases, until at least the end of 2006.*'

Recommendation 28 states: '*That the current occupancy arrangements for student organisations continue under the transition to VSU and be incorporated into future agreements between the organisations and UNSW.*'

In the discussion preceding recommendation 28, it is stated that the recommendation refers to commercial and retail space. Therefore, it seems that recommendation 28

qualifies recommendation 9 by saying that the current occupancy situation should not exist just for one year, but for years into the future. If this is the meaning, then the Union strongly supports this, and it should be made more explicit in The Report.

10. Many of The Report's Recommendations are Premised on the Merger of the Union and Guild

As discussed previously, the first recommendation in The Report is for the merger of the Union and the Guild. Many of the recommendations following are premised on that merger – particularly those recommendations which involve funding for Union and Guild services. The problem with this is that, if the first recommendation is rejected, it is unclear what will happen to the funding allocated in The Report and to which organisation this will be directed.

CONCLUSION

As discussed, the Union has a number of concerns both with the methodology and the substantive recommendations included in the O'Halloran Report (*'The Implication of VSU Legislation for UNSW'*). The Union is strongly in favour of the University providing transitional support for the five UNSW student organisations pending the likely introduction of VSU, and feels that this Report is a starting point for discussion as to how University support might be administered.

The Report clearly does not provide enough information as to the process and benefit involved with the implementation of a number of its key recommendations. Further, The Report does not provide any insight or opinion into the requirement of ongoing support from the University post-2006, or indeed any information to support its recommended student organisational structure as being the structure best suited to ensuring that vital non-academic services are sustainable in a VSU environment.

It would seem appropriate that the Student Affairs Committee, and thereafter the University Council, in their roles as creating the strategic direction of the University, should be considering various options as to the provision of non-academic services on campus in a post-VSU environment. Throughout the world there are many different models through which student organisations and/or universities provide these services. Unfortunately, The Report, as it provides narrow recommendations as to the allocation of transitional funding for the period of only one year, in fact limits the University and the student organisations in exploring potential options in providing high quality, efficient non-academic services to students in a long-term, financially sustainable manner. Of similar concern is the nature of the recommendations with regards to the restructuring of student organisations, as they do not seem to have been developed with strategic vision or long-term sustainability in mind.

The first goal in the UNSW Union strategic plan is collaboration, both with the University and other student organisations. The Union is eager to be involved in a process by which the Student Affairs Committee and University Council make clear strategic decisions as to what services, and to what degree those services are provided by student organisations. The Union will be conducting its own strategic planning on July 8 and 9, which will encompass collaboration with other student organisations, from administrative cost sharing to full mergers, and would will present the outcomes

of this process to the August meeting of the Student Affairs Committee. The Union hopes that the Student Affairs Committee will encourage all other student organisations to do the same.

Authors of the Union's Response:

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UNSW Union President 2004-2005

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UNSW Union President 2005-2006

Guild Response to
“The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW: An
Issues Paper with Recommendations”

Manoj Dias-Abey
President, UNSW Student Guild

Introduction

Brett O’Halloran was engaged by the University to consult widely and identify ways in which the University could help the Student Organisations make the transition to a VSU environment.

O’Halloran completed his report, “The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW: An Issues Paper with Recommendations” (“Report”), in June 2005. As well as containing a number of recommendations, this report canvasses practical monetary and non-monetary ways in which the University can support the Student Organisations withstand the deleterious effects of VSU.

The remainder of the Guild’s response will be structured into two parts: General Points and Addressing the Recommendations. The first section will be a discussion of some of the underlying assumptions of the O’Halloran Report. The second section will give the Guild’s response to particular recommendations. Please note, where a recommendation is not dealt with explicitly, this means that the Guild is willing to take direction from the Student Organisations affected.

Before proceeding further, the Guild would like to commend Brett O’Halloran for his efforts. It is worthwhile pointing out that O’Halloran was required to consult and prepare this report within a very tight timeframe. In addition, O’Halloran was working during a period of substantial uncertainty. Whilst there are several shortcomings in this Report, the Guild is strongly in favour of the general tenor; namely, that the Student Organisations will require significant aid from the University to survive and withstand VSU.

General Points

Transitional Period

Throughout the Report, O’Halloran makes reference to a ‘transitional period’. The manner in which the recommendations are structured seems to suggest that O’Halloran views the transitional period as being a one-year period. The Guild would like to strongly refute this premise. As O’Halloran himself mentions, Student

Organisations are initially likely to face a 90% reduction in income¹, and Student Organisations will likely take many years to recover completely from this.

The Guild would like to suggest that the transitional period be conceived as a three-year period. This timeframe is more realistic and also accords broadly with the experience of WA campuses faced with a similar situation². Having certainty of funding for a three-year period would also aid the Student Organisations immeasurably throughout the process of long-term planning.

Guild Recommendation 1: That the transitional period be conceived of as a three-year period.

Timing before University Council

The Guild would like to request that the recommendations arising out of the Report be considered at the 25th July University Council meeting. It is difficult to predict when the VSU legislation will go before Parliament, and hence, this should not be the basis upon which UNSW deals with the issue. The prevailing view in Canberra is that the VSU legislation could be passed at any stage throughout 2005³.

One of the greatest hurdles facing Student Organisations making a transition to a VSU environment is the lack of certainty. Knowing with some certainty the extent of University support would be of great help to the Student Organisations.

Guild Recommendation 2: That the O'Halloran Report be considered at the July University Council Meeting.

Addressing the Recommendations

Main Issues

Recommendation 1: That the Union and Student Guild merge to form a single student organisation

The Guild is broadly in favour of an amalgamation with the Union, believing that there is considerable strength in unity. The Guild agrees with O'Halloran's assessment that there are significant cost savings to be made in the event of an amalgamation due to economies of scale. In addition, both the Guild and Union have a similar philosophical basis and there already exists a great amount of synergy between our core functions (e.g. clubs and societies and the CCP grants).

¹ Brett O'Halloran, The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW: An Issues Paper with Recommendations, June 2005, UNSW: p. 1.

² Colleen Greenwell, VSU and its Impact on the Curtin Student Guild, March 2005, Curtin Student Guild.

³ Jenny Macklin, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Public Address to the Student Presidents Summit, 15th June 2005, Canberra.

However, we believe that the timeframe suggested by O'Halloran is unrealistic. The two Organisations will need to negotiate a new governance and management structure, determine staffing arrangements and also comply with our respective Constitutions and Enterprise Agreements regarding the amalgamation. The Guild submits that the beginning of 2007 is a more realistic deadline, by which these details can be finalised.

In the meantime, we propose that the Guild and Union should begin discussion on a number of interim measures to maintain and solidify cooperation between the two Organisations. The Guild has already proposed a scheme for centralised membership for the Union Board's consideration. We remain hopeful that the two organisations will be able to work together closely in 2006 whilst the discussions on amalgamation proceed in the background. We have identified three key areas that necessitate the Guild and Union working together much more closely: membership, marketing and funding for clubs and societies.

The Guild believes that both Student Organisations need to conceptualise the amalgamation as an opportunity to collaboratively develop a whole new structure for student representation and service provision at UNSW. We cannot approach this project with a mindset that looks to keep our respective organisations intact within a bigger structure, but rather, from the perspective of how the new organisation can best serve the needs of UNSW students.

Recommendation 2: That UNSW create a working group to facilitate the merger of the Union and the Guild with an equal number of not less than three nominees from each organisation and chaired by an independent person nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Guild believes that a committee with an equivalent number of representatives from each organisation as well as a nominated Chair from the Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Academic) is a good way of moving forward with discussions on amalgamation.

The Guild believes, however, that resolving the issue of amalgamation should be mainly a student driven initiative. Hence, the Guild feels it is important to clarify that the role of the Chair will primarily be a facilitative role. As such, we believe that the Chair should exercise their casting vote with great caution.

We propose that the Committee be established by mid-August to discuss the issue of amalgamation. We further propose that the terms of reference of the committee be as follows:

- a. Determine a governance structure for the Guild/Union amalgamated structure
- b. Determine a management structure for the Guild/Union amalgamated structure
- c. Determine a timeline for amalgamation

Recommendation 6: That the Guild Council considers the separation proposal of the PGB favourably and works with the PGB to expedite the separation process.

The Guild believes it is somewhat incongruous that O'Halloran recommends a merging of the Student Organisations on one hand, but advocates the separation of the PGB from the Guild on the other.

Guild Council has already taken a position on this issue, passing a resolution stating its opposition to formal separation at a meeting on the 15th March 2005.

Motion 150305-03: That the Guild Council acknowledge the desire of the Postgraduate Board to seek formal separation from the Guild. However, in the current climate of voluntary student unionism, the Guild does not believe that separation is in the best interests of postgraduate students. The Guild Council believes that a unified representative structure is, in the long term, better for the longevity and sustainability of student representation.

However, the Guild wishes to formally state its intention to renegotiate the memorandum of understanding in good faith to grant the Postgraduate Board a greater measure of financial autonomy.

Moved: Manoj Dias-Abey

Seconded: Kate Schouten

The Guild has already outlined the reasons it stands opposed to the separation⁴. However, in light of the resolution passed by University Council on the 23rd May 2005, the issue of the PGB separation has been placed on the Guild Council agenda, due to take place on the 19th July 2005. It would be pre-emptive for the Guild to comment on this issue until Council has made a final determination.

Recommendation 7: That, if the outcome explicit in Recommendation 6 does not occur, or if it is unduly delayed, the Council move as soon as practicable to expedite the separation of the PGB from the Guild.

The Guild is strongly opposed to this recommendation and believes that this degree of intervention into student affairs is unwarranted. The question of how best undergraduate and postgraduate students can be represented is a question for students to determine through the organs prescribed in the Guild Constitution, Regulations and related Schedules.

As outlined previously, the Student Guild does not believe that University Council has the legal authority to cause the PGB to be dissolved as a Constituent Board and be reconstituted as a separate Post-Graduate Student Association, unless both steps of the process outlined in the Guild Constitution are fulfilled⁵. Although, the first step of this two-limb process has been carried out, the second step, namely Guild Council authorisation, has not been granted. In view of this, University Council cannot legitimately and legally consider this issue.

Ironically, the Federal Government's arguments in favour of Voluntary Student Unionism are predicated upon removing student control of student affairs, the very thing that this recommendation seeks to do.

⁴ Manoj Dias-Abey, "Student Guild Response to the PGB Split: An Issues Paper for University Council (1)", Item 22.2, 18 April 2005

⁵ Manoj Dias-Abey, "Guild Response to the PGB Split: An Issues Paper for University Council (2)", 23rd May 2005.

Recommendation 11: That student organisations be invited to prepare a proposal(s) for UNSW to consider with respect to the incorporation of student organisations at UNSW and that the University provide assistance as appropriate in the preparation of the proposal(s).

The Guild has long had a position in favour of incorporation. In fact, the possibility of incorporation was first raised with the previous Registrar, Crystal Condous, in June 1994. The Guild sees several advantages to incorporation: separate legal personality, perpetual succession, power to hold property, greater degree of financial accountability and clearer fiduciary duties owed by Directors.

The Guild's legal advice seems to suggest that there are two possible models for the incorporation:

- The formation of an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1984 NSW*; or,
- As a company limited by Guarantee under the *Corporations Act*.

The Guild welcomes the opportunity to prepare a proposal regarding the Guild's incorporation for the University's consideration.

Funding Support

Recommendation 13: That UNSW permanently absorb the indexed funding for all subsidised student childcare places at Honeypot and The House at Pooh Corner (\$118K).

Inability to access affordable childcare seems to be one of the greatest obstacles to students with children undertaking tertiary study. The report commissioned into childcare by University Council in late 2002, identified that students with children often have extremely limited financial resources and find formal childcare costs difficult to meet⁶.

The subsidies, provided by the Student Organisations, towards student childcare places are an invaluable welfare service. As such, the Guild welcomes the recommendation in the Report for the University provide indexed funding for student childcare places.

The recommendation does not, however, address the question of what will happen to the Management of these childcare centres once VSU is introduced. Currently, representatives from the Guild, Postgraduate Board and Union sit on the Management Committees of these organisations. These student representatives ensure that these childcare centres continue to operate in a manner which makes themselves relevant to students. The Guild believes that even if the University were to absorb the indexed funding for all subsidised childcare places, it is essential that students should remain on the Management Committees of these organisations.

⁶ Alex Hanlon, Childcare Services at UNSW: Welcoming Families, March 2004.

Recommendation 14: That UNSW provide transitional funding of \$50 000 to the Union/ Guild for the Yellow Shirts, Learning the Lingo and CONTACT student volunteer programs and that this funding be reviewed at the end of 2006 (50K).

The Guild believes that this recommendation does not adequately describe how the \$50 000 is intended to be divided between the different Student Organisations. The Guild's subsidy alone for the CONTACT program is \$9 000 and it is estimated that the Union contributes a similar amount.

Recommendation 15: That in the transfer of responsibility of O-Week Co-ordination to UNSW Marketing, ensure the co-ordination function is adequately resourced on a permanent basis.

This recommendation fails to take into account the massive financial contribution Student Organisations make to O-Week. The hundred and twenty plus stalls which line the Main Walkway during O-Week provides the centrepiece around which O-Week is structured. The hire of stalls for this period costs the Guild approximately \$20 000. In addition to this cost, it is estimated that the Guild spends an additional \$10 000 on O-Week related expenditure.

O-Week is such a huge success at UNSW because it is a collaborative effort between the University, Guild, Union and Sports Association. The Guild would like to suggest the establishment of a formal committee consisting of representatives from all the key stakeholder groups to organise future O-Weeks.

Recommendation 16: That the Guild Solicitor be funded by UNSW for 2006 and that this funding be reviewed at the end of 2006 (\$80K).

The Guild is strongly in support of this recommendation as this recognises the vital role the Guild Solicitor plays in providing UNSW students with free legal assistance in relation to a number of issues.

The Guild agrees the re-location of the Kingsford Legal Centre (KLC) to the new Law Faculty in July 2006 will call for a review of this arrangement. If it were possible to transfer this position to the KLC, it would be important to determine a mechanism whereby the Solicitor would continue to be able to represent students in cases against the University.

The issue of *how* University funding will be given towards this position needs to be considered. The Guild is strongly of the belief that a direct grant of \$80 000 given to the Guild, on the understanding that this money is to be spent on the wages of the Solicitor, presents the best means by which the independence and integrity of this position can be ensured.

Recommendation 17: That UNSW fund the CASOC Co-ordinator role and provide \$40 000 additional funding to clubs and societies for 2006 to be reviewed at the end of 2006.

The two hundred and fifty clubs that currently form 'Clubs and Societies on Campus' (CASOC), form the heartbeat of campus life. These clubs represent a diverse range of social, cultural, political and religious interests and needs.

The administrative work that is needed to keep CASOC functioning smoothly cannot be underestimated. As such, the Guild is supportive of the recommendation to fund the staff position of the CASOC Co-ordinator.

However, the Guild believes that the additional \$40 000 suggested in this recommendation is grossly inadequate and only covers a very small portion of the grants given directly to clubs by the Student Guild. In 2005, it is projected that the Guild will spend approximately \$120 000 in club subsidies and grants. The Guild subsidies and grants ensure that most club events occur on a not-for-profit or cost-recovery basis. The Guild believes that additional funding of \$100 000 is a more realistic figure.

Recommendation 18: That UNSW support the current role of Guild Advocacy Officer through a 50% salary contribution for 2006, to be reviewed at the end of 2006 (\$31K).

The Guild is broadly in support of this recommendation and believes that the partial funding of this position will help minimise perceptions of a conflict of interest by UNSW students. The Guild Advocate often is called upon to represent students with academic grievances against the University, and it is essential that students continue to view this position as independent from the University. The Guild is cognisant that the actual mechanism by which the University funds this position will be integral to maintaining the independence and integrity of this position.

Other UNSW Assistance and Support Initiatives

Recommendation 24: That UNSW offer practical assistance to the Student Organisations in their drive to attract membership, especially in respect of web links and database access.

Recommendation 25: That UNSW support the voluntary collection of student association membership fees in 2006 by making available the current collection and transfer process after, if necessary, seeking clarification from the Federal Education Minister as to the validity of the process.

Recommendation 26: That the Head of the UNSW Risk Management enter into discussions with the Management of the UNSW Student Organisations with the object of producing cost savings in insurance premiums for those organisations.

The Guild supports the above three recommendations and believes that there are several practical and non-monetary measures which the University can take to show its support for the Student Organisations. As 2005 progresses, the Student Organisations will undoubtedly come up with a shopping list of measures and we ask that the University look favourably upon these suggestions.

Recommendation 27: That the balance of the MSAF fund should be quarantined for the funding of UNSW Student Organisation initiatives with special priority given to projects that support the transition of the organisations to a VSU environment.

The Report calls for the University to provide approximately \$1 million worth of funding for the Student Organisations in 2006, and the Guild believes that the terms of reference of the MSAF should be suitably expanded by University Council so as to allow some, or most, of this funding to come from the Fund.

It is the view of the Guild that the MSAF should not be accessed by Student Organisations to meet extant liabilities.

Recommendation 28: That the current occupancy arrangements for Student Organisations continue under the transition to VSU and be incorporated in future agreements between the organisations and UNSW.

The Guild is in favour of this recommendation as this provides security of tenure for the Student Organisations. It is important for the Student Organisations to be provided with certainty during this turbulent period.

Concluding Notes

The O'Halloran Report recommends a series of measures that the University can take to translate the spirit of University Council Motions CL98/61 (1998) and CL03/86 (2003) into practical action.

The Guild encourages the University to read the O'Halloran Report in conjunction with these submissions, to ensure that the University's response is tailor-made for the diverse needs of the Student Organisations.

Student Affairs Committee

14 July 2005
File

**UNSW Postgraduate Board Response to Issues Paper: The Implications of Voluntary
Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW**

Introduction

The response of UNSW Postgraduate Board (PGB) is overwhelmingly positive towards both the process and the results of the report prepared by the consultant, Brett O'Halloran, on the impact of VSU legislation on the student organisations at UNSW.

The PGB was particularly impressed with the consultative process, within which Mr O'Halloran was clearly actively listening to, and understanding of the needs of student organisations on campus and made himself available through email and telephone contact in addition to extensive face to face meetings.

The PGB is also pleased with the breadth of the report and the majority of recommendations, particularly the recognition of the need for the University to contribute financially to some services provided by student organisations (such as childcare) and to provide transitional funding to assist student organisations in maintaining viability. The PGB also welcomes the recognition of the need for its reestablishment as a separate organisation discrete from the Student Guild.

Specific Recommendations

Recommendation 6

That the Guild Council considers the separation proposal of the PGB favourably and works with the PGB to expedite the separation process.

The PGB restated its commitment to seeking separation from the Guild at the PGB meeting of 22nd June, 2005 with a further resolution endorsing this endeavour. The Co-Convenors have formulated a resolution for the consideration of Guild Council at their next meeting, believed to be 19th July, 2005. It is hoped that this resolution will be passed and that the PGB can then put into play the constitutional necessities in establishing a separate student organisation so as to best be prepared for the VSU legislation.

Recommendation 7

That, if the outcome explicit in Recommendation 6 does not occur or if it is unduly delayed, the [University] Council move as soon as practicable to expedite the separation of the PGB from the Guild.

The PGB hopes that it will not be necessary to enact this recommendation, however, it does accept that the intervention of University Council may be necessary. As a significant amount of

process will be required in establishing a separate PGB, it is vital that this commence without further delay.

The PGB is focussing strongly on future representation and advocacy to be able to have significant input into postgraduate experience at UNSW. The PGB sees its relationship with the Graduate Research School, for instance, as an important part of this strategy. Therefore, with the impending threat of VSU the PGB must be able to urgently position itself to access and communicate with postgraduate students through branding, marketing and promotion as a fully autonomous student organisation.

Recommendation 10

That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources) initiate a formal review, with involvement of the Union and UNSW Commercial Services, of all commercial and retail services on the Kensington Campus with a view to producing a long term plan for UNSW by the end of 2006.

Being conscious of the current lack of any significant income stream other than student fees, the PGB is keen to establish some viable commercial activities. To this end it would appreciate participating in a review as recommended.

Recommendation 11

That student organisations be invited to prepare a proposal(s) for UNSW to consider with respect to the incorporation of student organisations at UNSW and that the University provide assistance as appropriate in the preparation of the proposal(s).

The PGB welcomes this opportunity to consider incorporation as an option and will be guided by the University's advice on this issue in the establishment of the separate PGB.

Recommendation 12

That UNSW develop standardised formal agreement templates to cover the relationship between the University and each student organisation.

Whilst not opposed to this in principle, the PGB is concerned that the operations and size of each student organisation may necessitate non-standardised agreements. The PGB is particularly conscious of its developing relationship with the nascent Graduate Research School, and would not like to see this limited by a standardised agreement. It would, however, support the immediate establishment of agreements to guarantee such necessities as space and insurance, the collection of fees and marketing of services provided by student organisations.

Recommendation 13

That UNSW permanently absorb the indexed funding for all subsidised student childcare places at Honeypot and The House at Pooh Corner

The PGB welcomes the University permanently absorbing this funding, as the PGB currently contributes 11% of its discretionary budget⁷ to childcare. It is vital in absorbing these costs that the University commit to maintain the current management structure of these centres which has proven to work well in meeting the needs of student parents over several decades.

Recommendation 18

That UNSW support the current role of Guild Advocacy Officer through a 50% salary contribution for 2006, to be reviewed at the end of 2006

The PGB supports this recommendation and requests that at least the same support be extended to the PGB Advocacy Officer. The PGB recommends that UNSW support the current role of the PGB Advocacy Officer through a 100% salary contribution for 2006, to be reviewed at the end of 2006.

Recommendation 19

That UNSW provide transitional support funding of \$112,000 to the PGB to support its recurrent costs in 2006 and that this be reviewed at the end of 2006

The PGB welcomes this recognition of the important role that the University can play in the continued provision of services to students through the funding of the PGB. However, with limited preparation time and difficult to forecast membership rates, the PGB recommends that this transitional funding be guaranteed for a minimum of three (3) years and that it be increased to \$250,000 for the first year (2006), \$200,000 for the second (2007) and \$150,000 for the third (2008). The PGB would be happy to provide the University with full details of the expenditure of such funds.

Recommendation 23

That UNSW allocate \$215,000 for additional unspecified VSU transition support to be held in reserve and subject to allocation for 2006 by the Student Affairs Committee on a priority basis to be determined by the Committee

The PGB supports the establishment of such a reserve, but recommends that the amount be fixed at a minimum of \$500,000.

Recommendation 24

⁷ 32% of the PGB's entire budget is given to the Student Guild under its Memorandum of Understanding with them. Of the remaining 68%, 11% is donated to the Honeypot and House at Pooh Corner.

That UNSW offer practical assistance to the student organisations in their drive to attract membership, especially in respect of web links and database access

The PGB strongly supports and appreciates any assistance that the University can offer in this regard. For instance, the PGB would like exclusively to be able to send promotional and marketing material and information to both research and coursework postgraduate students, and to be integrated into the University's processes of marketing, recruitment, enrolment and orientation.

Recommendation 25

That UNSW support the voluntary collection of student association membership fees in 2006 by making available the current fee collection and transfer process after, if necessary, seeking clarification from the Federal Education Minister as to the validity of the process

The PGB strongly supports this recommendation, with postgraduate fees being transferred to the newly established separate PGB.

Recommendation 26

That the Head of UNSW Risk Management enter into discussion with the management of the UNSW student organisations with the object of producing cost savings in insurance premiums for those organisations

The PGB has had initial discussions with the Risk Management Unit with respect to insurance needs following separation, and welcomes the extension of those talks.

Recommendation 27

That the balance of the MSAF fund should be quarantined for the funding of UNSW student organisation initiatives with special priority given to projects that support the transition of the organisations to a VSU environment

The PGB believes that it is vital that the current MSAF balance of funds is maintained to be allocated under the existing criteria rather than being absorbed into the general university budget.

Recommendation 28

That the current occupancy arrangements for student organisations continue under the transition to VSU and be incorporated in future agreements between the organisations and UNSW

The PGB welcomes the opportunity to enter into arrangements with the University to formalise such arrangements, and supports the continuation of at least the current space allocation.

Recommendation 29

That the UNSW Library take over all responsibility for the operation and funding of the Postgraduate Student Computer Laboratory on Library Level 1

The PGB is pleased to relinquish any funding responsibility for the Postgrad Computer Lab, but would prefer to maintain a Co-Management Agreement with the Library with respect to the operation of the Lab.

Summation

The Postgraduate Board congratulates the University on the initiative of supporting the employment of a consultant to investigate the impact of VSU and applauds the comprehensive nature of the consultation process and the report itself, especially given the short time span.

The report recognises the unique needs of postgraduate students and the need for an independent PGB with a suitably high profile within a university which aspires to lead Australia in the provision of postgraduate study. The acceptance of this report and its recommendations, with appropriate extensions, will enhance this endeavour.

Student Affairs Committee

14 July 2005

UNSW SPORTS ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO O'HALLORAN REPORT

Executive Summary

The recently tabled report by Brett O'Halloran, *The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW: An Issues Paper with Recommendations*, provides an excellent overview of some of the issues facing the five student organisations at UNSW, and to a lesser extent the University itself, with the proposed introduction of the VSU legislation. The Sports Association is appreciative of the breadth and depth of the consultation undertaken by Mr O'Halloran, and is happy to endorse Mr O'Halloran's representation of our concerns both generally and with the onset of VSU.

The issues paper makes a number of recommendations, both financial and non-financial, that affect the Sports Association. Whilst it was not initially understood that the report would contain recommendations, the Sports Association is broadly supportive of the structural and operative recommendations included, but do not believe the issues paper should provide a basis for making decisions of a financial nature.

Three of the paper's non-financial recommendations directly affect the Sports Association. **Recommendations 3 and 4** concern the establishment of a single Sports Association which integrates the current Sports Association, Unigym and sporting facilities management. Regardless of the imposition of VSU, there could be no more positive move made by the University than this to most effectively maximise participation in sport and recreation activities by students, to most efficiently deliver sport and recreation opportunities, and to most successfully leverage via sport the UNSW brand name to prospective students, the University community, alumni, and the community in general. Although the objectives and structure of such an integration are yet to be established and critical, the Sports Association very strongly supports the concept recommended and is keen to develop the recommendations further.

In addition, **recommendation 5** advocates the Sports Association exploring options for shared membership and infrastructure with the Union and the Guild for 2006 pending the adoption and implementation of Recommendations 3 and 4. The Sports Association again supports the concept of this recommendation, and has had preliminary discussions with both organisations to this effect.

The issues paper also makes a number of non-financial recommendations that affect both the Sports Association and other student organisations. **Recommendations 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28** outline a series of measures the Sports Association believes

would be positive initiatives by the University towards maintaining student organisations and student services.

Finally, the issues paper makes two financial recommendations that directly affect, and one recommendation that indirectly affects, the Sports Association. **Recommendations 20** and **21** discuss transitional funding for the Sports Association in 2006 of \$200,000, and **recommendation 23** suggests funding of \$215,000 for unspecified transitional expenses of any of the student organisations.

Whilst appreciative of the support recommended, and keen for the issue of support to be clarified as quickly as possible, the Sports Association does not support the O'Halloran report being used as a basis for making decisions regarding financial support for student services or organisations. The issues paper was not commissioned for this purpose, none of the consultation focussed on this issue, and the paper does not attempt to address any outcomes of the recommendations. In the case of sport and recreation these outcomes include, inter alia, the loss of at least twelve clubs, meaning over 1,500 students would lose access to the sport or recreation of their choice; the retrenchment of over half of the Sports Association's office staff and over one hundred qualified and accredited coaches; the loss of high performance sport; and a diminished brand for UNSW, especially in comparison to the support being provided by Macquarie and Sydney universities.

All student services at UNSW deserve an opportunity to be more thoroughly considered than the limits of this issues paper allows, just as the effects of these recommendations must be analysed before any decision can be made on them. At first sight the provision of \$1,000,000 in funding from the University will be inadequate to support anything close to the level of services identified by Council as part of the "immense contribution of student organisations to the well-being of the University" (CL03/86). As such, the Sports Association would support the initiation of discussions with the University to canvass an appropriate level of financial or in-kind support for each student organisation.

Methodology

The Sports Association has had the benefit of reading the Union's response to the issues paper and, noting the detailed methodological concerns raised in their response, wishes to provide our more general impressions.

It is the Sports Association's understanding that the brief for the consultancy was only very loosely defined in the first instance, apart from a general commission to assess the impact of VSU on student organisations and the University. This loose definition was intended, we understand, to allow the issues paper to be shaped in response to the various concerns and needs of the student organisations.

In this light, the Sports Association is generally content with the level of consultation engaged in throughout the process, with sufficient opportunity to explain the workings of the Sports Association and air some current grievances. Some utility may have been found in a combined student organisation meeting facilitated by Mr O'Halloran, but this is not critical. Two issues are, however, worth noting.

The first methodological issue is that the issues paper does not outline in much detail what a post-VSU campus will look like. Should the legislation be adopted in its current form, the University will look and feel absolutely different in 2006 and beyond. Whilst we note the paper's preference for student organisations continuing to retain control of our own affairs, with the corollary being that the student organisations will decide which services continue and which are to cease, a full assessment of the impact of VSU and a post-VSU campus needs to include an indication of which services will no longer be provided at UNSW.

The second issue is the status of the recommendations. The Sports Association is not concerned with recommendations being included in the issues paper, especially as the student organisations are seeking greater clarity on their future. We would be concerned if these recommendations were viewed as the basis or starting point to further discussions, and even more concerned if they were viewed in some way as a definitive list of student organisation requests. As a reflection of the views of an independent consultant, however, they provide an interesting 'outsider's' perspective on the future provision of student services at UNSW.

Content of the report and recommendations

Section 2 of the issues paper articulates the concerns raised by each of the student organisations during the consultation process. The section devoted to the Sports Association appears to be a fair and accurate portrayal of some of the more pressing issues facing the Sports Association and its clubs in relation to our relationship with the University and general funding concerns.

Section 3 of the issues paper discusses some of the issues the consultant believes are of central concern to the student organisations and the UNSW community, and provides some recommendations for action. Where these affect the Sports Association these discussions and recommendations will be addressed in turn.

Political Context

The idea of the University providing assistance to the student organisations during a period of transition is a credible one and is supported by the Sports Association. The period of transitional arrangements, however, need to be extended to at least three years. It is unlikely that support will need to be provided at an even rate throughout the three years, so a staged implementation with the greatest level of support being provided in 2006 is probably practical. At any rate, viewing the period of transition as merely 2006 provides for an artificial assessment of the issues concerned.

Amalgamation of Separate Identities for Student Organisations

The issues paper addresses the existing arrangements for the provision of sport and recreation at UNSW and recommends massive structural change for the future. Whilst by necessity light on detail, and by nature unfortunately accepting of some of

the misleading assertions from Unigym management (including that the Sports Association has priority booking times at Unigym, and that the multi-purpose rooms, which by square metre are the most profitable space in the facilities, return very little income to Unigym), the overall assessment of the current situation is fair and accurate. Further, the choice of the UWA Sports Association as a model for change is an astute one.

The Sports Association believes the strategy of integrating the Sports Association, Unigym and sporting facilities management (recommendations 3 and 4) provides the best chance for both students and the University to continue to benefit from the myriad advantages sport and recreation provides, as well as leveraging off each other to create better results for all. There are obvious risks to students and the Sports Association in pursuing this type of change, but provided all parties approach negotiations with the objective of better serving the University community then the recommendation is achievable. Further, the Sports Association supports the concept of Recommendation 5 as one option for managing the post-VSU transition period.

Commercial Services

The issues paper addresses some of the matters concerning the provision of commercial services at UNSW. The paper concentrates, however, on the Union. One of the major issues the Sports Association has had in recent years is the ability to access only limited alternative revenue streams, with the result that the Sports Association is unable to be shielded from the impact of VSU. The Sports Association is keen to pursue some commercial activity in order to raise funds for student sport and recreation, or is happy for the University to provide a subsidy directly. A continued prohibition on the former without assistance in the form of the latter may be fatal to sport and recreation on campus.

Future Status and Relationship to UNSW

The issues paper addresses the subject of incorporation, noting that at various times in the past the Union, the Sports Association and UNSW management have been favourable to this form of association. The Sports Association supports the concept of Recommendation 11, and welcomes further investigation into this issue by all parties.

A more pressing concern is the relationship between the student organisations and the University. The Sports Association had a management agreement with the University between 1997 and 2002, but have not had a formal relationship since this time despite considerable uncertainty about a range of matters. Whilst it is not clear that a standardised template would best serve all student organisations or the University, the Sports Association strongly supports the concept of Recommendation 12.

Section 4 discusses the issue of funding support, correctly asserting that if UNSW management believes in the survival of the student organisations then providing transitional funding will be vital. The paper identifies two separate means of funding for the Sports Association, the removal of fees for the use of the university's sports fields (\$100,000) and transitional funding to sporting clubs (also \$100,000), in

Recommendations 20 and 21. The Sports Association supports the prioritisation of these two areas, and agrees that support for sporting clubs at UNSW is imperative and paramount. The Sports Association believes, however, that support of this level will unfortunately be inadequate, as canvassed later in this report.

The issues paper also recommends additional funding of \$215,000 to be distributed by the Student Affairs Committee on a priority basis to be determined by the Committee. The Sports Association supports the implementation of a residual fund to accommodate issues that arise for student organisations in the transition to VSU, and supports allocations from this fund being determined by the Student Affairs Committee.

Section 5 discusses ancillary support the University can and should provide to student organisations throughout the transition period. The Sports Association supports Recommendations 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 in their provision for non-financial support to student organisations

Effect of recommendations on sport and recreation at UNSW

A matter raised above outlines a weakness of the issues paper as being the exclusion of a picture of a post-VSU UNSW. It is acknowledged that such a picture is difficult to articulate, and that primary responsibility for determining the post-VSU environment should lie with the student organisations themselves. Another point raised above is the Sports Association's concern that the recommendations put forward by the issues paper be used as any sort of authority for determining the University's support for student services and the student organisations in 2006 and beyond. Viewed together, the Sports Association is concerned that decisions may be made regarding support for student organisations without a proper understanding of the effects those decisions may have.

The Sports Association has spent a considerable amount of time modelling the effects of VSU on sport and recreation at UNSW, including now the recommendations for 2006 included in the issues paper.

The compulsory Student Activity Fee comprises approximately 47% of the total revenue of the Sports Association and its constituent clubs, at approximately \$1.9m annually. The remainder is raised primarily through participation fees (29%) and various fundraising activities (17%). With limitations on commercial activity imposed by the University, it is clear that the loss of fee income can only be recouped by a combination of raising prices for participants and using club volunteers to do additional fundraising, and even by cutting the range of services and support offered to students many clubs will simply not be able to make up the shortfall.

The Sports Association is aware of many of the competing financial pressures on the University at present. Transitional support of the kind recommended in the issues paper, however, would mean a dramatic cut in the range and quality of sport and recreation opportunities available to students. It would also mean a dramatic reduction in the benefits UNSW receives from its sporting clubs and recreation programs. These clubs and programs at UNSW:

- help develop well-rounded, community aware graduates who go on to be our community leaders
- provide an opportunity for students to mix with other students across different faculties, schools and areas of study, developing a University-wide community and culture
- help students develop life-long friends, networks and a connection to their University
- help capture young people, especially women, at the time they are most likely to drop out of sport and physical activity
- provide a support network for students whilst at University, especially those from outside Sydney or Australia, allowing them to more easily transition into University life
- provide an opportunity for students to compete in clubs with a unique spirit and attitude to their sport, where the sport is important but very much in context
- corral, from a relatively small funding base, an incredible number of volunteer administration and coaching hours that the University could not afford to pay for
- provide an opportunity for students to participate in club and financial administration, including marketing, fundraising, running and participating in meetings, creating and working to budgets and dealing with governance procedures and the like
- provide links for the University with the local community through participating in the same teams or clubs or coaching junior and school teams, which in turn provides a positive image for UNSW into the community, and
- provide a unique and unrivalled connection with the University that extends well beyond graduation and students' own personal participation.

The immediate effects across the Sports Association of capping assistance at this level would be the following:

- the retrenchment of at least five staff members, reducing staffing levels in the Sports Association office from nine to four, of which the reduction in club support staff would be from seven to two
- the abolition of over one hundred paid coaches and support medical staff, and no support for coaching accreditation, with all of the resulting risk management issues involved with unqualified and unaccredited coaches
- no support for University Games, resulting in either withdrawal from competition by UNSW or participation expenses increasing by \$350 to \$400 per student
- no support for high performance sport, endangering UNSW's participation in high profile competitions and events
- reduced office services for clubs such as marketing, administration and internet support
- the abolition of sports scholarships to outstanding student athletes (sixty-five (65) scholarships were offered in 2005).

The second, and more damaging, effect would be the loss of a number of sporting clubs. Initial research shows that up to twelve (12) sporting clubs, including archery, basketball, jitsu, netball, outdoors, rowing, squash, table tennis, ultimate frisbee, underwater, waterski and windsurfing, would not be able to increase prices or do

enough additional fundraising to meet the minimum level of expenditure required to maintain a reasonable level of club activity. This means that over 1,500 students would lose the opportunity to participate in the sport or recreation of their choice, and the diversity of opportunity the Sports Association can offer would be narrowed considerably.

The third effect, alluded to above, would be the withdrawal from participation of UNSW in many high profile competitions and events. UNSW competes in competitions such as the National League Water Polo, Sydney Grade Cricket and the Sydney AFL, and is represented at the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, World University Games and numerous national titles. The UNSW name is broadcast in this way, and students have an opportunity to both study and compete at this level, because the Sports Association funds high performance sport and sporting scholarships to the extent it currently does.

The fourth major effect would be the diminished attractiveness of UNSW to prospective students, both in itself and in comparison to other universities in Sydney. The reduced range and increased cost of activities will dampen the University community and university life, and narrow the University more closely to a collection of classrooms. By comparison, Macquarie University are continuing with their construction of a \$25m sports and aquatic facility, and Sydney University will continue to leverage their control of their facilities and their alumni to provide a tremendous range of sporting and recreation options for students. The great strides UNSW and the UNSW Sports Association have made in the last few years would, even with the support recommended in the issues paper, be set back many years.

Appendix 1 details more specifically the financial effects of capping assistance at the recommended level.

Position

The Sports Association is appreciative of the action taken by the University in engaging Brett O'Halloran to research and write the issues paper, and conceptually supports the analysis provided by Mr O'Halloran of both the issues facing the Sports Association and the best structural way forward for all parties at UNSW in relation to the provision of sport and recreation services to students.

The Sports Association is also mindful of the background to the issues paper. The paper from Council's Undergraduate Student Representative, Nicholas Carney, in October 2004 called for the engagement of a consultant to consider what the impact (of VSU) will be and how it can be minimised, with the consultant

given the task of preparing a strategy for repositioning the student organisations to make them sustainable and to preserve essential student services.

Further, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in requesting information upon the engagement of the consultant, stated that the University believed that

it would be inappropriate to give more than an indication for general support of the current position until we see what the Government has in mind. Our

concern remains that anything other than broad support for this position could be divisive or used by those in support of VSU.

In this light, the issues paper provides a useful background to the issues facing the University and the student organisations post-VSU, as well as some interesting structural alternatives for the way forward. The Sports Association is very supportive of the University providing transitional support for the student organisations, and are eager to work further with Student Affairs Committee, University Council, University management and the other student organisations to best explore the options available for a post-VSU environment.

All student services at UNSW deserve an opportunity to be more thoroughly considered than the limits of this issues paper allows, just as the effects of these recommendations must be analysed before any decision can be made on them. At first sight the provision of \$1,000,000 in funding from the University will be inadequate to support anything close to the level of services identified by Council as part of the “immense contribution of student organisations to the well-being of the University” (CL03/86). As such, the Sports Association would support the initiation of discussions with the University to canvass an appropriate level of financial or in-kind support for each student organisation.

UNSW Sports Association

APPENDIX 1: SOME EFFECTS OF VSU RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE
UNSW SPORTS ASSOCIATION

	2005	2006 (inc. recommendations)
Student Activity Fee income	\$1,900,000	\$150,000 (est fees) plus \$200,000 (recommended in kind support from University)
Staff to support clubs (marketing, administration, finance) and administer recreation programmes	9	4
Coaching Support medical staff Coaching accreditation support	> 100 paid coaches and support staff All coaches qualified and accredited	0 paid coaches Few coaches qualified or accredited
Club financial support	Approx \$1,000,000	\$200,000
Facilities and grounds	Facilities Management (grass facilities) - \$102,500 pa Unigym – approx \$300,000 pa	Facility management - free of charge Unigym – approx \$200,000 pa
University Games participation	Yes Subsidised by \$200,000 (approx \$350 per student)	Probably not If yes, no subsidy
High performance sport (high profile competitions such as Sydney Grade Cricket, National League Waterpolo, Sydney AFL, Olympic participation)	Yes Subsidised by \$100,000 pa	No
Sports Scholarships	65	0
Number of sporting clubs	42	Maximum 30 (>1500 students affected)
Club expenses including registrations, equipment, repairs and maintenance, facility hire, referees etc	55% subsidy	18% subsidy
Coaching expenses	52% subsidy	No subsidy
Capital expenditure	52% subsidy	No subsidy
Number of recreational courses	>70	Approx 65
UNSW profile of sporting and recreation opportunities	Low in comparison to other Sydney-based Universities, in particular Sydney University	Lower due to reduced range of options available. Macquarie University constructing a \$25 m sports and aquatic facility Sydney University leveraging alumni support

COFA Students' Association

Response to 'The Implications of Voluntary Student Unionism Legislation for UNSW' by Brett O'Halloran

Introduction

COFA Students' Association is broadly welcoming and supportive of the aspects of the report that relate to it.

It is clear that Brett has fully understood the ethos of COFA SA and its singular nature.

COFA SA appreciates that Brett was charged with finding short-term solutions to the implementation of 'full' VSU and we feel that the report addresses this brief admirably.

The concerns of the SA are connected with longer-term issues and points of clarification.

Recommendation 22.

COFA SA welcomes the recommendation for \$100,000 transitional funding in 2006. However, the SA would encourage the University to consider a longer period of transitional funding of three years.

The transition from Compulsory to Voluntary fees will require a huge shift in student thinking. While new students may be receptive to the idea of paying a voluntary fee the greatest resistance will come from higher year students. The SA will need to cultivate the desire to pay a voluntary fee and this will not be accomplished in one year. We will need to build the voluntary ethos with new students in particular with, hopefully, levels of support growing as the new students of 2006 move through the system and replace those familiar with the compulsory fee. If the SA is to survive during this student 're-education' period funding for three years will be essential.

Recommendation 8

COFA SA strongly endorses the recommendation that it remain a separate organisation. It also endorses the proposal of reciprocal agreements between the student organisations.

Recommendation 12.

COFA SA is happy with the recommendation on standardised formal agreements.

Recommendation 15

COFA SA wishes to clarify that this recommendation refers to O Week at Kensington and not at COFA.

Recommendation 16

COFA SA would like to ensure that all COFA students are able to access the service of the university funded Guild Solicitor.

Recommendation 24.

COFA SA welcomes the recommendation for practical assistance from the University

Recommendation 25

COFA SA again welcomes the recommendation that UNSW assist the student organisations in the collection of voluntary fees.

Recommendation 26

COFA SA supports the recommendation that UNSW and the student organisations explore cost savings for insurance

Recommendation 27

COFA welcomes the quarantining of MSAF funds and the giving of priority to transitional projects.

Recommendation 28

COFA SA also welcomes retaining the status quo in relation to occupancy agreements.

In addition:

1. COFA requests that the transitional funding of \$100,000 per annum be extended to the end of 2008
2. COFA SA also requests that an additional \$50,000 per annum be granted for a period of three years to enable the continued running of the Kudos Gallery. The current lease on the gallery expires in June 2006. Without a guarantee of sufficient funding it would not be wise or prudent to enter into a legally binding contract in the full knowledge that it may not be in a position to meet this obligation.
3. COFA SA is aware that some of the other UNSW student organisations are less than happy with the report. The SA is concerned that SAC will be unable to reach a speedy decision on the report and that its recommendation to University Council will be delayed. With little over five months until the probable implementation of the VSU legislation COFA SA cannot afford any delays in the progress of the proposals contained in the report. The SA is a relatively tiny organisation with very limited reserves of funds. If we are to have a chance of survival we must know our position now, the SA simply cannot enjoy the luxury of procrastination.

Therefore, COFA SA requests that if SAC is unable to reach a decision on the report in full on Thursday 14th July, that the various recommendations be voted on piecemeal. This would enable the recommendations favoured by the relevant student organisations to be forwarded to University Council at the earliest possible opportunity.

Conclusion

COFA Students' Association greatly appreciates the understanding of our situation and position that Brett has shown in the report. Brett has clearly listened to and understood our concerns and views regarding the post-VSU situation.

The SA can see no benefit in any merger with the restructured Kensington based student organisations. COFA SA has only been so successful because of its relevance to and intimacy with its small and specialised membership. It was clear Brett was impressed during his visit to COFA by the range and breadth of services that we provide to our membership.

The SA operates on a relatively tiny income and the provision of our many services and activities is only made possible by the multi-tasking of the staff. Our greatest concern is that any reduction in income will have a disproportionate effect on the services we provide. A 50% reduction in income would translate into an 80% reduction in staff, which in turn would mean a huge reduction in the services we are able to provide.

The SA calls on SAC to make a speedy decision on those aspects of the report that relate to COFA SA.

Julian Bradley,
President COFA SA.

14th July 2005.

Student Affairs Committee
4 August 2005
Item 5.1.1
File number: 2005/1169

SMG Response to VSU

Issue

SMG's response to the Review of Student Associations pending the introduction of VSU.

Background

At the special meeting of the Student Affairs Committee of Council on 14 July 2005, the Committee passed the following resolution:

- i. Senior Management to bring forth a response to the O'Halloran Issues Paper, including to the specific recommendations of the Paper, and to discuss the concerns and issues raised in the student organisations responses, specifically the requests for additional funding, space allocation and other forms of support, and for a strategic vision for student services at UNSW; and
- ii. That the Student Affairs Committee recognises the critical importance of at least \$1 million in transitional VSU funding for the student organisations as recommended in the O'Halloran Issues Paper.

Discussion

Given the uncertainty surrounding the final form of the VSU legislation and the date of its introduction, it is not currently possible to provide concrete commitments in response to all of the issues raised by the VSU. Therefore, the attached proposed response is of a preliminary nature and the aim is to provide Student Associations with the general parameters within which SMG believes they should work to prepare for the introduction of VSU.

SMG will be able to respond in more detail to particular issues as they are addressed through the discussions indicated in the response document. Once the final form of the legislation is clear and the implementation date is known, SMG will be able to provide a more detailed response.

It would be inappropriate for the University to dictate to the Associations the final nature of their response. It is hoped that the Student Associations can be encouraged to work with the University towards the most appropriate set of arrangements for ensuring the continued existence of relevant Student Associations under VSU.

SMG has endorsed the attached 'stage one' response for distribution to the Student Associations and the Members of the Student Affairs Committee.

Recommendation

For noting.

Appendix I University SMG Response to VSU – April 2006

Council
10 April 2006
Item 14.1
File: 2005/1169; 2005/2323

ISSUE

Update on University support for Student Activities in response to the introduction of VSU.

BACKGROUND

At the February meeting of Council, the University made a clear commitment to support Student Associations and Student Activities at UNSW. The University detailed direct financial support of approximately \$1.5 million, to ensure that essential student activities can continue following the introduction of VSU.

A summary of the commitments made at the February meeting is as follows:

1. General Student Cultural Activities Support of \$600,000 per annum.
2. Four positions plus non-salary support to ensure the provision of essential services, including legal and advocacy, to all undergraduate students from 2007
3. Support for the retention of a distinctive COFA Student Association within the framework of the outcomes of the mediation process.
4. One support position commencing 2006 and non-salary support and an additional position in 2007 with non-salary support for postgraduate students to be located in the GRS.
5. Support for the integration of the Sports Association, Unigym and Sporting Facilities Management.
6. Childcare services support for students with transitional funding of \$118,000 for 2006 and integration of student childcare needs into the University's childcare strategy.
7. The University will meet the cost of Student Accident Insurance from 2007 at a cost per annum of circa \$160,000.

In addition, the University has supported and funded the current mediation process. It is anticipated that the final cost will be in the order of \$50,000.

DISCUSSION

Appointment of a Business Consultant

The University will appoint and meet the cost of a Business Consultant from PricewaterhouseCoopers to evaluate the proposed structure recommended through the mediation process. In particular, the consultant will evaluate the financial and legal viability of the emerging new structure. The consultant will also be required to develop an implementation strategy for the transition arrangements and will need to be involved in managing subsequent change.

Sport at UNSW

The University engaged Mr Bruce Meakins to review the current structure for provision of sporting and recreational services at UNSW and to make recommendations on how best to provide sport and recreational opportunities in the future. This report has been provided in draft form for discussion by the Sports @ UNSW Working Party, and has also been released

on a confidential basis to the VSU Mediation group. The Sports @ UNSW Working Party will discuss the findings and recommendations of the consultant's report at its meeting of 3rd April to provide feedback for the final report. Subject to the deliberations of the Working Party, it is anticipated that the final report and recommendations for implementation will be presented to Council at its meeting of May 15th.

Space - Block House and Round House

The University proposes to provide major space to the Student Associations through exclusive use of the Roundhouse and the Blockhouse. In particular, it is proposed that this critical space be provided without charge. It is further proposed that space in these buildings be 'controlled' by Student Associations and this would include the capacity to sublet with rental income being retained by the Student Associations. The arrangements will need to be formalised with signed agreements that will include the general provision of building maintenance.

Initial calculations based on usage type, space charge amounts and commercial rental estimates indicate that the value of the Block House and Round House is around \$2.8 million per annum. This represents a significant level of University support to Student Associations.

Space - other

It is envisaged that additional space on other parts of the campus will be offered through discounted lease arrangements, but agreements on space outside the Block House and Round House will not include provision for subletting.

Web link to Student Associations through the UNSW website

The University will work with the Student Associations to establish links from the appropriate UNSW site/s to Student Association web portals.

Collection of fees for second session 2006

There is no scope for the University to collect compulsory fees for second session 2006. The University is of the view that students refusing to pay would have a strong case and the University would not be in a position to enforce the collection of fees. In addition, it is not in the spirit of the legislation to move the collection date for session 2 to get around the legislation. As indicated above, the University will provide appropriate assistance to Student Associations to market themselves to commencing and continuing students.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the update on University support for Student Activities in response to the introduction of VSU.

31 March 2006