



UWA STUDENT GUILD
The University of Western Australia
M300, 35 Stirling Highway | Crawley, WA 6009
(08) 6488 2295 | hello@guild.uwa.edu.au
facebook.com/UWASStudentGuild | @UWASStudentGuild

111th Guild President's Report – Ordinary General Meeting 2024

Introduction

It is my pleasure to report to the Ordinary General Meeting of the Guild for 2024.

For the last 10 months I have had the privilege to serve as the 111th Guild President of the UWA Student Guild, leading the Guild Council in our mission to enhance the student experience on our campus, and contribute the student voice to University decision making. We have had a focus as an organisation on capturing the student voice in everything we do, and championing the needs of our community.

Throughout my term thus far, I have been blessed to be supported by a very hardworking team of students and staff. As such, I am excited to share the suite of work that we have been completing in 2024, and some upcoming projects that are yet to come from the Guild.



1. Surveying and Advocacy

One of our major focuses as a Guild this year has been ensuring that we directly incorporate the student voice into our decision-making and advocacy. As such, we have enacted more surveying, interactivity and feedback collection than ever, and we are able to use this insightful feedback garnered directly from students to inform high-quality recommendations to the University on policy and future-planning. A couple of the key issues that we have surveyed on so far include:

- **Special Consideration at UWA**, through which we produced a report presented to the University regarding the system and tension points that our community experiences.
- **Parking**, a survey to which 1000+ students responded, allowing us to work alongside the NTEU to provide critical recommendations for the way forward.
- **Submission times for assessments**, which led to a change in University policy to standardise submission times to 11:59pm for electronically submitted coursework assessments.
- **Accessibility at UWA**, to which we received more than 660 responses, which has been compiled into a set of actionable recommendations provided to the relevant arms of the University.
- **Guild and University Spaces**, from which we provided recommendations on study room upgrades, and to inform further development in the Guild Village.
- **Racism**, to better understand the student experience of racism on campus, and provide recommendations to relevant UWA committees and successive Guild Councils.

In addition, have an upcoming SGM concerning Palestine, called by petition for the first time in several years, which is an integral example of the ways in which students can have their voices heard on issues.

2. Commercial Infrastructure, Catering and Outlets on Campus

This year, we have worked hard to ensure that our commercial operations are even more student-friendly and affordable. As we move into a more digitalised age, we see an opportunity for the Guild to be at the forefront of virtual accessibility, while retaining our focus on welcoming physical spaces for our students. To support this, in 2024 we have been working on:

- Opening the **Refectory and Hackett Café** until 10pm, to support changing student study habits. We have seen an increased demand on campus for late-night study locations, and our existing commercial locations can now be utilised pursuant to this purpose.
- Establishing the **Tavern Lager**, a cheaper drink option, in the Tavern, to provide students with a budget-friendly alternative to our existing offering.
- Continuing development of a **Guild mobile app**, to eventually include online ordering from our outlets, centralise discounts and deals, and streamline the way students access information regarding events on campus.

3. Engagement, Events and Clubs

The Guild has always believed that our clubs and student activities are the lifeblood of the UWA campus, and a factor that sets us apart from our neighbouring universities and those over east. This year, we have innovated with a new suite of events and engagement initiatives in addition to our regular offering, including:

- Holding the biggest **Club Carnival** since the pandemic, showcasing our 100+ clubs and allowing students to engage with clubs in a casual, low-barrier manner.
- Affiliated **16 new clubs** to the Guild, who will now be financially supported through our grants.
- Held the **biggest College Row Ball** that the Guild has ever had at the Perth Convention Centre, through our Residential Students' Department.
- Held **Orientation Day Afters event**, engaging local bands to perform at the Tavern after Orientation Day, including a silent disco.
- Continued our **Sundowners initiative**, providing clubs the infrastructure to engage students in an afternoon event on Oak Lawn, early in Semester 1.
- Commenced work on a **'How to Run a Club' Guide**, to support our Club leaders in effective governance and engagement and encourage students to start new clubs.
- Still to come this year are our annual **Cruickshank-Routley Memorial Guild Ball, Spring Feast, Relay 4 Life, Guild Olympics** and the return of our weekly **Tav Wednesdays**.

4. University and Guild Infrastructure

Campus is the place that students spend most of their University lives. As a Guild, this year, we have focused on ensuring that campus works for the dynamic needs of our students, particularly in the age of digitalisation. While Reid Library is closed for renovations, alongside the University, we have worked to address growing pressures on the capacity of study spaces on campus. To support these goals, we have been working on the following projects:

- The **Guild Masterplan**, our multi-year multi-phase renovation plan for key Guild infrastructure including Guild Village, our Commercial Wing, the Tavern, and the Refectory undercroft and frontage. In mid-2024, **we commenced work** on the first phase of our renovations, focusing on the ground floor of Guild Village and the Tavern courtyard.

- Worked collaboratively with the Libraries team to secure a **Juris Doctor only study space** in the Law School Library, to support cohort collegiality in the Law School.
- Worked alongside UWA to deliver **upgraded lighting and security in Guild Village**, to ensure that our precinct is safe and welcoming for students, particularly after hours.
- Commenced establishment of a **HDR Study Lounge** in Guild Village, adjacent to the existing Postgraduate Students' Association Room, to address issues with collegiality amongst HDR cohorts.
- Converted Acorn Room, one of our spaces upstairs in the Refectory, into a casual study area, to address study seat capacity issues across campus.
- Worked with the Schools of Humanities and Social Sciences to start work on a **new Second-hand Bookshop**, run by and for students.
- Made upgrades to the Pride Room, Access Room, International Students' Department Room, and Women's room, and introduced the Ethnocultural Department Room for the first time.

5. Key University Consultations and Initiatives

A principal component of the work of the Guild involves direct consultation with the University on policies and initiatives that affect our members. This year, we have treated this responsibility to be the voice of students reverently, and as such, have been working closely with UWA to initiative projects that enhance the student experience on our campus, and support student success.

- Alongside the PVC(AE), introduced **Universal Submission Times** as a UWA policy, standardising submission times for electronically submitted coursework assessments to 11:59pm. This change was initiated based on feedback from students over a number of years that highly varied submission times disadvantaged specific cohorts of students and had impact on students' ability to succeed overall at UWA. We have had very positive feedback from students since this change was instituted.
- Worked successfully with the University to ensure the **early release of results and completion letters** for students applying for 485 Visas. Many international students were concerned with changes to Visas this year – so we were proud to work with the University to reduce anxiety around Visa applications for the cohort of affected individuals.
- Worked with the outgoing DVC-E to encourage compliance with UWA's standardised **assessment mark turnaround times and feedback requirements**.
- Advocated, alongside the Blackstone Society, for the Law School to trial **mandatory lecture transcripts**, to ensure accessibility of learning for students within the School.

6. Welfare, Safety, Cost-of-Living, and Inclusion

Every single day we see that many students on our campus are struggling – whether it be financially, with their wellbeing, with housing security, or with the way they engage with University life on or off campus. The Guild, as always, is focused on ensuring that we deliver services to support the needs of our students, and working in partnership with the University to wholistically support our students as they progress through their degrees. The needs of our students are diverse and dynamic – I am pleased we have been able to support students in 2024 and I am sure that student welfare will continue to be a critical priority for the Guild Council and staff teams of the near future. To give some examples of key initiatives and programs we have run this year:

- Welcomed **948 visits (as of August 2024)** to our **free Food Pantry**, supporting students struggling with food insecurity on campus. Our numbers at the Food Pantry are steadily continuing to increase as we navigate the current cost-of-living crisis.

- Aided **1359 students thus far** through Student Assist, our counselling and support service. Appointments with our Student Assist team fall into three categories – academic, financial, or welfare-related.
- Rolled out the **Respectful Relationships Module** as a mandatory element of Student Leadership training, to ensure that our club leaders are equipped to understand and report inappropriate behaviours on campus, and support others who experience incidents. We also advocated for the **Module** to become mandatory for all students at UWA. We believe it is critical for the University community to embrace any and all efforts to encourage positive culture on our campus, and to educate as many students as possible regarding sexual harm and inappropriate behaviour.
- Continued our **Tax Help Program**, to guide students through the tax return process.
- Worked with UWA Student Life on the **Party Right Program**, including new free resources for clubs to utilise at events and on social media in pursuit of student safety.
- Continued to support **SLAC, our Student Legal Advice Centre**, to counsel and connect students with professional legal advice on campus.
- Advocated for the introduction of a **cost-of-living grant scheme**, administered by the University.

7. Student Representation

This year, we wanted to use our positions in the Guild to ensure that the voices of all student representatives on camps, whether it be our Faculty Society representatives or individual students who are invited to sit on School Committees, are supported to communicate concerns and ideas directly to the University. The student representative structure at the University is expansive and has many moving parts – in my opinion, our job as the Guild is to ensure that this structure works smoothly and encourages students to use their voices to speak up for their communities. We have also been working this year to ensure that the voices of our students are amplified on a national stage, particularly in a year where we have seen so much change and innovation in the tertiary education sector.

In 2024, we have been working on:

- Altering the structure of the Student Consultative Committee to allow Faculty Societies to **directly interface with University management** to solve problems relevant to their students.
- Establishing a pathway between the Student Consultative Committee and the University's Student Experience Committee to ensure that student-driven policy changes can pass **directly from student representatives up the University decision-making pathways**.
- Provided additional support, via Education Council, for **International Student representatives** on Faculty Societies.
- Established mapping of all the student representatives on all School committees at the University, to enable better connections between School representatives and the Guild.
- Worked to establish the **Group of 8 Postgraduate Council**, to better coordinate unified, national postgraduate advocacy.
- **Expanded representation of student stakeholders** on key, decision-making University committees.
- Engaged with Federal and State government on issues relating to students, including **HECS debt, mandatory unpaid placements, student rental rights, SSAF administration, needs-based funding for disadvantaged students, and gender-based violence at universities**.

8. Guild Governance

Each year, the Guild (led by the Chair of Guild Council) has the responsibility of ensuring our governance processes are up-to-date, fair, and accessible for students. This year, we have had an ambitious effort to review many of our regulations and internal structures, including:

- Our **Election Regulations**, which were reviewed based on feedback from the 2023 Elections, to make Guild Elections fairer for all students.
- A **full review of all our Department regulations**, to align our representation and appeal processes, in order to advance the accessibility of our regulations to student representatives and our stakeholders.
- A **full review of our Tenancy regulations**, to ensure fairness in our tenant allocation processes, and make our tenant requirements more accessible for the Guild clubs.

In addition to these reviews, we have nearly concluded work on a 'How-to Guide' for representatives sitting on Guild Committees, to ensure that students joining a Committee know what to expect, and how to get the most out of their experience.

Conclusion

I am incredibly proud of the effort my team and the Guild staff have made this year to support and improve the student experience on our campus. All members of the 111th Guild Council, besides myself and the Postgraduate Students' Association President, are unpaid volunteers, who contribute to the UWA community because they care about making an impact on their university while they are here.

In 2024, we have been successful in making that impact a positive and memorable one. It has been the most incredible experience of my life to serve alongside such a hardworking, passionate team. I am eager to see what the rest of the year holds for us.

I would like to thank the student body for its support of the Guild this year and always.



India Creed

111th Guild President and UWA Senator



