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UMSU Media Officers 2016
INTRODUCTION

This report will outline the key activities, statistics, expenditure and recommendations of the 2016 Media Department of UMSU. This year saw a significant increase in online engagement, a growth in volunteers, and higher pickup rate. These achievements aligned with the aims and goals set by the Media Officers:

1. To establish a more inclusive and diverse Collective
2. To increase student engagement and recognition of the Department
3. To establish a video branch of *Farrago*
4. To fill the weekly Radio Fodder schedule with a diverse range of shows
5. To continue upholding the quality and independence of *Farrago*
6. To increase and expand campus coverage online and in print
KEY ACTIVITIES

LAUNCH PARTIES

Following the release of each of our eight \textit{Farrago Magazine} print editions, the Media Office hosted a launch party where all contributors to the Office and readers/viewers/listeners of the Office’s productions are invited to celebrate and socialise. When the venue and weather allowed it, music was supplied by Radio Fodder. Approximately 250 guests belonging to the Media Collective were invited to the public Facebook events each Launch Party, and the general student body was notified of each event through Facebook advertising, Instagram, Twitter and Email. An estimated 50 people attended each of the launch parties.

An additional Launch Party was held for the publication of \textit{Above Water}, hosted in conjunction with the Creative Arts Department. This had the same purpose and goal as \textit{Farrago} launch parties, and was held on 30 August at Union House Bar, Union House, Parkville.

The dates for each launch party and the location were:

- Edition 1: 23 February at Tsubu Bar, Parkville
- Edition 2: 24 March at North Court, Union House, Parkville
- Edition 3: 21 April at Tsubu Bar, Parkville
- Edition 4: 17 May at Tsubu Bar, Parkville
- Edition 5: 28 July at North Court, Union House, Parkville
- Edition 6: 11 August at Arts Lab, Union House, Parkville
- Edition 7: 7 September at Tsubu Bar, Parkville
- Edition 8: 11 October at Tsubu Bar, Parkville

\textbf{Purpose}: The purpose of these Launch Parties was to celebrate and congratulate contributors of the magazine, and to enrich the community of the Media Collective. Our goal was to foster an inclusive, accessible and casual environment where contributors could meet and socialise with one another.

\textbf{Evaluation}: Holding the event on campus helped make it accessible to a large majority of the student body while the inclusion of Radio Fodder added to the vibe of the party and helped merge the Radio Fodder sub-community with the wider Media Collective. We would recommend holding Launch Parties at non-Parkville campuses to engage even more students.

\textbf{Verdict}: Launch Parties are a popular and well-enjoyed event which proved fundamental to generating a sense of community in the Office. This event should be continued.
WORDPLAY

Three times a semester, the Media Office hosted spoken word nights where the collective and wider student body were invited to read and listen to one another. When the venue allowed it, music and microphone was supplied by Radio Fodder. Approximately 250 guests belonging to the Media Collective were invited to each of the public Facebook events, and the general student body was notified of each event through Facebook advertising, Instagram, Twitter and Email. An estimated 25-50 people attended each of the Wordplay events, performing a range of poetry, short fiction, excerpts, personal prose and plays.

The dates for each Wordplay event and the locations were:
Episode I: No.1 – 22 March at Arts Lab, Union House, Parkville
Episode II: Double or Nothing – 26 April at Arts Lab, Union House, Parkville
Episode III: Thr33’s Company – 26 May at Student Lounge, The Hub, Southbank
Episode V: Happiness is a Good Pun – 13 September at Raymond Priestley Room, Union House, Parkville
Episode VI: One More Time with Feeling – 18 October at Lions Bar, Southbank

Purpose: The purpose of Wordplay was to provide a low pressure, encouraging environment where student writers and performers could comfortably share their creative work. Our goal was to increase the number and diversity of performers, celebrate all forms of creative performance and engage more non-Parkville campus students.

Evaluation: There was an incredibly diverse range of performers and works during Wordplay events – from one-man plays to fan fiction and choose your own adventures. Our main challenge was attracting new members of the collective to participate and we had concerns that each event only drew the same group of people. In our two events held at the Southbank campus, we reached out to known VCA students within the Collective but it would have been better to promote more at Southbank to attract new students.

Verdict: Overall, Wordplay succeeded in becoming the space where student creatives performed their own work for the first time and it was extremely valuable to those who got involved. This event should be continued and expanded next year.

NATIONAL YOUNG WRITERS’ FESTIVAL

The Media Collective sent a contingent of 12 members of the Collective to the National Young Writers’ Festival in Newcastle. The contingent was made up on the four 2016 Media Officers, the four newly-elected 2017 Media Officers and four applicants who demonstrated significant commitment and contribution to the Office over the year and would gain valuable experience from attending the festival. Applications for these positions were open for everyone in the Collective and the four 2016 Media Officers were on the selection committee. While at the festival from 28 September to 3 October, the contingent organised and presented at a Student Media panel, and attended many writing and creative arts workshops and talks. We received accommodation subsidies and a small honorarium by the festival organisers in return.

Purpose: The purpose of sending a contingent to NYWF was to provide insight to the production and management of Student Media in Australia, to familiarise and socialise with other Student Media Collectives from other Australian Universities, and to gain valuable advice and knowledge about the Australian writing and publishing industry to grow and improve the UMSU Media Office in 2017. Our goal was to have an education and enjoyable festival, to provide networking opportunities for the contingent and to enrich the UMSU Media Office through these experiences.

Evaluation: The incoming Media Officers found the experience highly beneficial in meeting fellow Officers from other Universities, attending editing and diversity panels and bonding as colleagues. All members of the contingent expanded their networks and attended panels and workshops everyday. It was a shame that we could only bring four other members of the collective, however we live-tweeted and livestreamed the Student Media panel on Farrago’s social media accounts to better engage with more students.

Verdict: Attending the NYWF proved beneficial for all members of the contingent. It should be continued with some consideration into bringing more members of the collective or expanding the opportunities of the festival through the digital sphere.
NEWS CONFERENCE

The Media Collective brought a contingent of the four Media Officers and 15 subeditors to the National Editors Workshop and Skillshare (NEWS) Conference at the Wheeler Centre on January 28-29. The contingent attended panels, workshops and discussions focussed on student publications in print and online, and met with editors from other Australian universities.

**Purposes:** The purpose of bringing a contingent to the Conference was to introduce and familiarise the editorial team to the practices, skills and challenges of Student Media. Our goal was to bond as a newly-formed editorial team, to gain practical skills in design and editing, to be introduced to Media Law and Ethics, and to bring all of this knowledge into running the UMSU Media Office.

**Evaluation:** All members of the contingent learned important skills in workshops and panels presented by members of the writing and publishing community who have all experiences Student Media. We were introduced to many considerations unique to Student Media and got to know one another as teammates for the upcoming year. It would have been valuable to include the graphics contributors into this contingency, considering workshops relating to design and layout would have been highly valuable for these members of the team.

**Verdict:** This conference was uniquely valuable and relevant in its focus on student media. The Media Office should continue sending a contingent.

FITZPATRICK AWARDS EVENING

The Media Office will be holding an awards night to celebrate a wonderful year of writing, creating and producing. Nominations were open for all students at the University to recommend their favourite articles, artwork, videos and radio programs. A shortlist of candidates for each award will be announced on the Facebook event page prior to the event, which will be held at the Provincial Hotel on 22 November.
The Media Office published eight 64-page *Farrago* magazines across the year (Edition 7 was 88 pages to account for the Election Guide). Edition 1 had a 5,500 print run, Edition 2-6 had a 3,500 print run and Edition 7-8 had a 3,000 print run – these were complete distributed across three campuses. Any student of the University could submit writing and artwork to the publication, which is distributed. There were four year-long positions involved in the production of *Farrago* in print and online:

**Subeditors**: Divided into journalistic (12), creative (9) and general (19), 40 students provided structural and copy editing and written feedback for every piece of writing submitted to *Farrago*. The selection process involved an initial application, second-round subediting test and third-round interview.

**Graphics Contributors**: 32 students are commissioned 1-3 pieces of artwork per edition in response to writing submitted to *Farrago*. The selection process involved an initial submission of a portfolio/blog, and a second-round test responding visually to written material.

**Columnist**: 12 students have a spot in every edition of *Farrago* to host an eight-part written or visual series. The selection process involved an initial submission of sample writing, and a second-round test of sample writing.

**Web Officers**: Four students uploaded pieces and artwork to *Farrago’s* website, and assisted in some web redesign. The selection process involved an initial application and a second-round interview.

A newly created branch of the office, *Farrago* Videos can be found on the YouTube channel and on Facebook. Any student of the University can pitch and submit video content to be published on our channels. To establish the branch, 18 students were appointed members of the Video Team to produce content. Closed captions were provided for all videos.
RADIO FODDER

The two-year-old radio station provides training, development and digital broadcast for any student at the University. There are two semester-long positions involved in the production of Radio Fodder:

**Radio Presenters:** More than 90 students were trained and went on air to host weekly shows. The presenters created run sheets, Facebook pages and podcasts for their shows. The selection process involved applying with sample audio and run sheets.

**Radio Producers:** 17 students with previous training and experience in radio were selected from the Collective to oversee 2-3 shows each. Producers provided additional technical, promotional and content support to presenters, and corresponded with the Media Officers.

ABOVE WATER

The 64-page creative writing anthology produced by the Media and Creative Arts Department. All students at the University could submit via the competition from which a shortlisted selection of writing selected by the departments Officers. At the launch party, the winner for the writing and visual components of the competition, along with two runner-ups, were announced following judgement by a panel of industry persons was published. The winners were awarded $150 each and runner-ups were awarded $100 each. 1400 copies were printed and distributed around campus.

MARKETING TEAM

A team of six students managed the *Farrago* and Radio Fodder social media accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, as well as the general promotion of the Media Office through event presence and decor. The selection process involved an initial application and second-round interviews.
PROJECTS

FARMER’S MARKET

Radio Fodder set up a marquee and speakers at the Farmer’s Market each week to provide great music and atmosphere. It was also an opportunity to promote Radio Fodder and hand out Farragos to market-goers. It was a successful venture but we would recommend creating more promotional material such as posters and bookmarks to promote Radio Fodder, Farrago and the Media Office’s social media channels. Another use for the Farmers Market would be to get more radio presenters involved and use it as an opportunity to sign students up for radio training.

ABOVE WATER

Above Water is the Media Office’s creative writing anthology. This year it contained fiction, non-fiction and poetry as well as accompanying artwork. The anthology also has a competition aspect where submissions were considered by an Editorial Committee – the Media Officers and the Creative Arts Officers – and the shortlist is published in the anthology. There were three outside judges who chose an overall winner and their name, as well as the two runners up, were published on the inside cover. The cover art of the anthology was also part of the competition. Students submitted their artwork, and the Editorial Committee chose a winner who created the cover art. There was a launch party held in the student bar where we celebrated the anthology and heard readings from the winner, two runners up and several other writers. We would recommend focusing on marketing the open submissions for Above Water, particularly in terms of artwork, to reach a wider and more diverse group of students.

RADIO FODDER RESTRUCTURE

Radio Fodder was established by the 2015 Media Officers but was run by students, Ken Lim, Patrick Clearwater and Bren Carruthers. They spent their time setting up the studio, creating a training program and putting shows on air. This year, we re-structured the radio so that the four Media Officers were in charge of programming, training schedules and all technical aspects of the radio. This meant that information didn’t get lost down the hierarchy and everyone involved in the radio knew who to speak to. It was successful and resulted in more than 90 people attending radio training and 58 shows being on air. Plans are being carried out to significantly upgrade the technical infrastructure of the radio station, including a new panel and audio codec hardware. This process will most likely require support from MU Student Union Ltd’s capital expenditure pool.
STATISTICS

Accurate as of 21 November

Copies of Farrago printed: 29,000 copies
Copies of Above Water printed: 1,400 copies
Number of Radio Fodder programmes broadcast: 58 programmes

Top Five Farrago Articles Visited Online:
1. ‘Beer Not Books (or, the Unco-operative bookshop)’ by Martin Ditmann, Jeremy Nadel, Jesse Paris-Jourdan and Duncan Wallace – 2855 views
2. ‘Auction on College Crescent’ by Lucy Williams – 2780 views
3. ‘Tyson Holloway-Clarke Appointed UMSU President’ by Alexandra Alvaro – 1033 views
4. ‘Paid in Experience’ by Alexandra Alvaro and Sheri Lohardjo – 871 views
5. ‘He’s Mean Because He Likes You’ by Emma Hollis – 799 views


Mailing List Subscribers: 1800 subscribers
Newsletters Sent: 16 newsletters
Farrago Facebook Likes: 6515 likes (+48% since commencement of term)
Farrago Twitter Followers: 3,092 followers (+19% since commencement of term)
Farrago Instagram Followers: 1,519 followers (+287% since commencement of term)
Number of Farrago Youtube Subscribers: 107 subscribers
Average Online Reach (farragomagazine.com): 9319 pageviews per month
Radio Fodder Facebook Likes: 839 likes (+22% since commencement of term)
Radio Fodder Twitter Followers: 379 followers
Radio Fodder Instagram Followers: 145 followers

GROWTH OF SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH
The UMSU Media Department budget was formed with a focus on greater marketing and events this year. We were also operating under a funding cut in comparison to the previous. This weighed quite heavily on the printing numbers of Farrago and the technical maintenance of Radio Fodder. We also had to shift around funds throughout the year. Many of our initial purchases associated with the startup of a video platform were able to be covered by funds accrued from the 2015 UMSU Media Budget and the 2015 Whole of Union Line. We also relied on the 2016 Whole of Union budget slightly for the printing of Above Water. All expenditure is GST free and accurate as of 21 November.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Media Policy

The Media Department recommends the redrafting of a new Media Policy in consultation with the Collective to encompass all three branches of the Department, the volunteering structure, and further enshrines the editorial independence of the Department.

Mobile Website

Just below half of the views from farragomagazine.com were done so via mobile devices. Therefore the Media Department recommends redesigning the mobile interface of the website for a more functional and aesthetically pleasing mobile viewing.

Radio Restructure

The Media Department recommends a total restructure of the technical elements of Radio Fodder, including but not limited to the replacement of the panel to a studio-appropriate setup, audio codec and external podcasting. The replacement of the current technical hardware is long overdue and the network infrastructure in place is technically complex and surpasses the knowledge base of a regular student office bearer. A substantial change to the Radio Fodder hardware should ideally minimise the streaming downtime caused by current technical difficulties and lower the need for specialised knowledge.

Growth of Department

With the introduction of Radio and Video branches in the past two years, the Office community has grown exponentially. The Media Officers recommend UMSU assign more money to relocate the Media Department to Level 4 of Union House, soundproof the radio studio, build a filming and production space and create a hub for students and project groups to meet and access publishing, editing, illustration and sound software.

Student Engagement

The Media Department recommend that the incoming team of Officers continue to foster deeper student engagement with the magazine, radio, video and website. Magazine pick-up rates have increased dramatically this year, website views have gone up, Radio Fodder listenership is growing and video has enjoyed an enormously successful inaugural year of content. The Media Officers believe it would be of great benefit to both the office and to students if this increase in consumption could be translated into a greater degree of dialogue, engagement and student action. This would include a greater focus on non-Parkville campuses where the Media Office has traditionally struggled to find engagement and relying more on students to bring newsworthy stories to our attention.

Campus Reporting

The Media Department recommends a continued focus on campus reporting. With the new Farrago website, online stories were more easily shared and were the highest received articles online. Members of the university community also shared information with Farrago reporters about questionable practices on campus. Campus reporting should continue to grow next year to inform the student body of more university affairs and encourage more people to come forward and speak to the media.

Office Bearer-Media Relations

The Media Department believes that greater autonomy should be granted to office bearers who wish to speak on behalf of their department to the media, or at least Farrago. Seeking approval from the President or Students’ Council can be a time-consuming process for breaking stories and is an unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle. Office Bearers have presumably been elected to positions in which they have a high level of knowledge and competence to speak on without needing to have their views approved by the President or Students’ Council.