

# AGM 2024

## President's Report



### **Overview of the Term**

At the beginning of the term, we set key objectives to enhance student experience and engagement. Our goals included increasing engagement with key stakeholders, improving our online presence, and significantly enhancing the student experience through various on-campus events. AUTSA focused on creating more student events, including planning for the annual ball, orientation weeks, and the Annual General Meeting (AGM). More details about these events can be found in the AUTSA CEO's AGM report. These events provided entertainment, social opportunities, and fostered a sense of community. Additionally, this term we have upgraded the bar to make it more inviting and worked with the university to improve academic and enrolment processes, aiming to enhance the AUT student experience.

## **Introduction**

As the President of the AUT Student Association, it is my pleasure to present this report to you at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of our association's activities, achievements, and challenges since our last AGM. It is an opportunity to reflect on our progress, celebrate our successes, and identify areas for improvement. By sharing this information, we can ensure transparency, engage our members in meaningful dialogue, and set a solid foundation for future initiatives.

## **AUTSA:**

### **Student Representative Council (SRC)**

The student representative council (SRC) started 2024 with almost a full team having 1 vacant position as the city accommodation representative. Throughout Semester 1 we saw 3 resignations, all due to personal reasons. These roles have remained vacant since. The SRC had a 3-day training at the beginning of 2024 in February to become familiar with their role within AUTSA and AUT. The SRC met for monthly meetings during Semester 1 and will be doing so in Semester 2.

### **Elections**

Elections for the new SRC will begin in early Semester 2 to ensure we have our SRC candidates for 2025 elected by the end of Semester. 2025 is not a presidential year, however, AUTSA is continuing to aim for higher engagement in elections each year.

### **Titahi ki tua**

Continuing from last year, AUTSA is continuing to have discussion with TiTahi Ki Tua (TKT) about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to foster a strong relationship between our groups to be able to support all AUT students to thrive.

### **AUTSA Memberships**

Existing incorporated societies need to re-register under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 or they will cease to exist. Along with many other changes, the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022, have changed student associations to be membership organisations. This means that students are not automatically members

of AUTSA anymore and need to opt-in to become a member. It is also important to acknowledge students pay a compulsory Student Services Fee of \$1,146.15, which includes funding for AUTSA's services such as student advocacy and representation, legal advice, O Week events, clubs and societies, spirituality services, Student Job Search, Tautoko, debate, and student media. AUT provides funding to AUTSA based on the number of enrolments that AUT receives. Due to this model of funding, under the new Act students will not automatically be deemed as members of AUTSA upon their enrolment. AUT and AUTSA are working together to come to a resolution, while ensuring our students information is kept safe. AUTSA is exploring a potential Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to assist in safely storing student data for membership. Being able to track and monitor membership, will allow AUTSA to be able to gather more accurate data on student membership and engagement.

## **NZUSA**

NZUSA is disestablishing. Further conversations are taking place in July with the other university student associations to discuss the future of a national student association.

## **Academic Student Rep programme (ASR)**

This year, we launched the new Academic Student Representative (ASR) System across the university, aiming to fill over 200 student roles. In 2024, we successfully filled around 50% of these positions. Our goal is to continue collaborating with faculty throughout the year to fill the remaining vacancies and ensure robust student representation. As with any pilot year, there have been many learning experiences in managing a new system with numerous representatives. We have gained valuable insights and are committed to enhancing the undergraduate ASR program for 2025.

## **Student support**

Throughout this year, there have been numerous geopolitical tensions. AUTSA has remained steadfast in our commitment to supporting all AUT students and have been trying our best to respond appropriately. Recognising the impact of conflicts on students' wellbeing, we have worked to ensure students feel supported at AUT and want to remind students that they have access to free AUT counselling services to help navigate these challenging times. We continue to represent all students' voices and needs and want to ensure that students can speak up if they are feeling impacted by any global conflict.

## **AUT Success which benefits AUT Students:**

### **A1 building completion**

AUT has recently seen the new A1 building on AUT's North campus recently completed. AUTSA has been involved in ensuring there were events on campus during orientation week to welcome new students into the new building. Students on north campus have been using the new building as an extension of the library and attending classes in the building too.

### **3-day short extension**

Students would have experienced their first semester with the new 3-day extension. If students don't have exceptional circumstances but need a couple of extra days to submit your assessment, they can apply for a short extension of 3 days where you don't need to provide any evidence. Students can only have one short extension per course. The feedback from students has been positive and students are often making use of this extension when they are stressed with many assignment deadlines to help manage their workload.

### **Turn It In draft coach**

AUT has also enabled Turn It In draft coach for students to help students address unintentional plagiarism, improve citations and correct grammar. Although not many students on campus are aware of this feature, those who do use it have found it very helpful.

### **Generative AI**

As generative AI becomes more prominent in society today the university is confronted with the question about whether they should allow students to use Generative AI or not. Discussion is continually ongoing and therefore it is important for students to check with their lecturers and course leaders if Generative AI is permitted in courses.

## **Governance:**

### **AUTSA Board**

The AUTSA Board has met monthly since February 2024. The President has remained chair, and sits on the board with the Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Community and an elected student director from the SRC. Since 2023, we have said goodbye to Tom D, who has moved to the UK and welcomed Sarah M as a new independent director. We are currently recruiting for our third independent director. Guy A remains as an independent director. The board had a strategy review day at the end of May to discuss AUTSA's strategy to 2027 and realign us to our goals. This was a highly beneficial role that allowed us to think critically about AUTSA's position as a student association and allowed us to identify some areas of improvement, which will be further discussed at our upcoming board meetings in 2024 and 2025.

### **Constitution Review**

Societies must review their constitutions to ensure they can successfully re-register under the new Act. Therefore, AUTSA's constitution is being reviewed with the board working through possible changes to the AUTSA Constitution for operational effectiveness and flexibility, as well as the changes required under the new Act. Re-registration runs from October 2023 to April 2026. AUTSA is looking to undergo a comprehensive review and consultation with members before we accept the new constitution at our SGM later this year.

### **SGM**

A special general meeting will be occurring later this year to amend the constitution as recommended by our lawyers for the Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

### **Council**

As President, there is a crucial role to represent student voice at AUT's council. Council meets every 4-6 weeks and discusses AUT at the highest level.

## Summary:

### Challenges

Navigating through a recession and increased costs for food and services has been challenging. However, we have managed to achieve satisfactory financial performance, which is a notable accomplishment. The disestablishment of NZUSA also presents a challenge, and further discussions are planned with other university student associations to determine the future of national student association movements.

### Future Plans

Looking ahead, AUTSA aims to:

- Continue working with faculty to fill vacant roles in the Academic Student Representative System.
- Enhance student life through various initiatives and services.
- Foster a strong relationship with TiTahi Ki Tua (TKT) via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Re-register under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022, transitioning to a membership organisation.
- Implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to track and monitor student membership and engagement.

### Conclusion

AUTSA has had an active and impactful year, focusing on enhancing student life through representation, support, and engagement. We have navigated financial challenges successfully and are satisfied with our performance for 2023. The association is committed to continuous improvement and setting a solid foundation for future initiatives. I am grateful for the support and dedication of our executive team and members, whose contributions have been invaluable to our collective success.