

This report provides information on AUSA's activities in Representation, Advocacy and Welfare during the second semester of 2015, as per the Deed of Settlement between AUSA and the University.

## Representation, Advocacy And Welfare Overview 2015

- 1480 individual students elected as Class Representatives
- 71 Class Representative enquiries
- 1014 Student Advice Hub cases
- 218 food parcels collected
- 94 Hardship Grant applications
- 90 Textbook Grant applications

## Representation

### Class Representatives

The Class Representative system has continued to function well in Semester Two 2015. This semester, 1480 class representatives were elected, bringing the total to 2088 this year. Class representative numbers have been variable over the last few years. This is seemingly due in part to changes in staffing responsibilities due to FAR. This has now started to settle and there is increased clarity around this responsibility. Combined with better engagement from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, this has resulted in a high number of class representatives this semester.

The number of class representatives from the Faculty of Education and Social Work was a concern in Semester One. Following work with the Faculty, this has vastly improved this semester (from 4 to 31). A move to year reps rather than class reps also means that numbers will remain lower than previously. However, representation across departments remains inconsistent, and we are continuing to work with the Faculty to improve. Ensuring that all Faculties are properly represented is also an ongoing goal in Representation.

Training sessions were offered to these elected representatives, with pizza as an incentive for attendance. These sessions were well attended, although numbers dropped from the levels seen in 2013 and 2014. Continuing to provide comprehensive training and encouraging greater attendance at these sessions is an ongoing goal for AUSA. We are pleased

with the strong engagement with the Class Representatives system across most faculties, which shows that it continues to be an ingrained aspect of the University experience.

AUSA has provided two one-off training sessions during this period for Graduate of Management Masters students, and undertaken to update the guidelines for the Representation Department.

### Number of Class Representatives in Semester Two 2015

FACULTY	S2 2012	S2 2013	S2 2014	S2 2015
BUSINESS SCHOOL	175	203	221	236
FACULTY OF ARTS	330	405	296	378
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	4	23	54	31
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING	0	5	0	25
FACULTY OF LAW	15	16	31	38
FACULTY OF MEDICAL & HEALTH SCIENCES	57	108	91	54
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	244	220	169	268
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CREATIVE ARTS AND INDUSTRIES	0	30	48	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>1051</b>

### Key Activities

Much of the activity in Semester Two has focussed on providing as much support for Class Representatives as possible. In addition to the training at the beginning of Semester, AUSA has distributed a bi-monthly Class Representatives newsletter to give advice and information to representatives. There has also been ongoing support for Class Representatives given by the AUSA Representation and Engagement Manager, including advice on resolving problems within a department.

AUSA also held the Class Representative Awards, which took place in the Owen G. Glenn Building foyer on the 13th of October, with over 100 attendees and 26 winners. Each Class Representative was also awarded a certificate to thank them for their work. We were pleased to receive the highest ever number of nominations, with 312 nominations. This demonstrates not only the increasing levels of engagement between the Class Representative system and students, but also suggests higher awareness and support of the service offered by AUSA throughout the Semester.

### Challenges

As ever, a challenge for AUSA is to ensure representation across all classes! However, we are confident that the results shown demonstrate that the Class Representative system continues to prosper, with a high level of engagement from faculties and representatives themselves. Other than this,

there are no real difficulties with AUSA Representation.

## Student Representatives

### Committees and University Bodies

AUSA has continued to facilitate representation of the student voice within the University, playing an active part in internal committees at all levels of the University structure, with representatives on University committees including:

- University Council (two elected student representatives)
- Senate
- Education Committee
- Teaching and Learning Quality Committee
- Library Committee
- Equity Committee
- International Committee
- Schools Liaison Committee
- Academic Programmes Committee
- Human Ethics Committee
- Discipline Committee
- Student Consultative Group

The student voice is essential in the ongoing development of the University as an institution that primarily caters to students, and therefore student representation at all levels is vital. Because of this, AUSA was disappointed with the outcome of the reforms to the University of Auckland Council structure, which left just one student representative sitting on the Council.

As usual, AUSA also facilitated the appointment of and election of students onto Central Committees in Semester Two.

### Ongoing University and Student Relationships

As stated in the Semester One Report, AUSA has continued to maintain relationships with key staff members across the University. These relationships ensure an ongoing dialogue between AUSA and staff that allow us to effectively communicate student concerns, both in and outside committees and formal meetings. This means that as well as providing student input to university decisions and projects at commit-

tees and as consulted by the University, we are responsive to student concerns. We are made aware of student issues through unsolicited contact from students, requests from Class Reps, trends from Student Advice Hub cases, results from surveys and social media posts, and online discussion. This semester, this has resulted in feedback on issues ranging from the insecure return of marked assignments, "Clayton's examinations" in the last week of semester, charges for exam scripts and use of preferred names in exams, among others. This is combined with ongoing feedback on services from UCHS to evaluation systems to the Equity office.

Despite the absence of national or regional elections in 2015, AUSA has remained active in promoting student issues at a national level. AUSA has engaged with media on issues relating to student debt, pay equity and hardship and rising rental costs, with AUSA representatives regularly appearing on television, in newspapers and on radio to discuss these issues. Students also had opportunities in Semester Two to engage with local and national decision makers during Politics Week.

Our ongoing engagement with NZUSA ensures that AUSA is active in the national student movement, and we remain supportive of the work done on a national level to raise awareness of student issues and to advocate for students. Our membership of NZUSA this semester has seen our participation in a national Hui to discuss the future of the student voice. Our continued membership of NZUSA also ensures that the valuable research and advocacy that it has provided for many years can continue, and we have benefited this semester through the NZUSA Tertiary Education Income and Expenditure Survey, which crystallises many issues students are currently facing. We intend to utilise our relationship with NZUSA in making sure the student voice is heard in the Auckland local government elections in 2016.

AUSA has also continued to support University clubs in their campaigns and lobbying in Semester Two. In particular, we were able to support the Fossil Free UoA Society in their calls for the University to divest from fossil fuels through an entertaining presentation at our most recent Special General Meeting, and through raising their concerns with the Senior Leadership Team and at Council.

### AUSA Executive

We held the elections for the 2016 AUSA Officers and Portfolio holders in July and August. These saw the election of the first ever Political Engagement Officer and Culture and Arts Officer, as well as the election of an International Students' Officer under new eligibility guidelines.

As the elected representatives of students at the University, it is critical that the AUSA Executive understands the concerns of students and carries a strong mandate to represent those concerns. This Semester, in our most recent Special General Meeting we enacted a number of constitutional

changes to consolidate the elections and allow students to sign up to AUSA at the voting booths. Improving the engagement with elections will be an ongoing task for future AUSA Executives.

## Advocacy – The Student Advice Hub

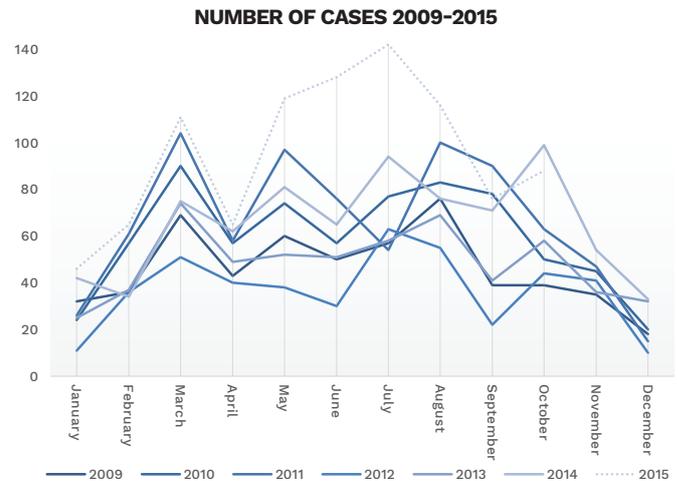
### Overview

Numbers at the Student Advice Hub have continued to rise exponentially in 2015, and the Advocates have dealt with a vast range of issues. The rise in cases per month can be seen on the graph below. The Hub continues to value face to face communication as an effective way of connecting with students, as well as ensuring that all enquiries are responded to within twenty four hours of initial contact. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the student volunteers, under the capable watch of the Advocacy Manager and Senior Advocates.

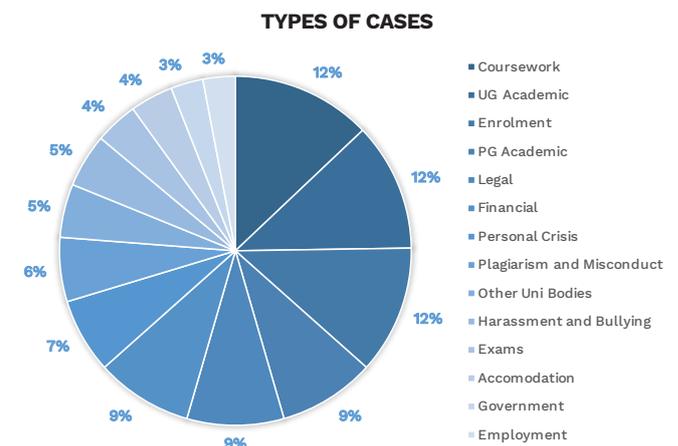
A key strength of the Student Advice Hub is the invaluable skill that our Student Advocates bring from the Law School. This knowledge, and the service that it enables us to offer is what we build our reputation on. In return we offer our volunteers hands-on advocacy experience highly relevant to their future careers. Students gain workplace experience that develops their skills as effective professionals and complements their academic learning, applying classroom knowledge to real situations and challenges.

This semester the Advocacy Team put in extra focus in promoting the Student Advice Hub through running Facebook competitions and setting up a stall at two events at the Law School. These competitions and stall set ups proved to be a success as several students and even lecturers came to the stall and spoke with some of the advocates about what the Student Advice Hub does and the way it operates. They went away with information, pamphlets and cards on how to contact us. These events are important to the Advocacy Service at UoA because having this service and making it known and available to more staff and students will lead to a better and healthier environment for all.

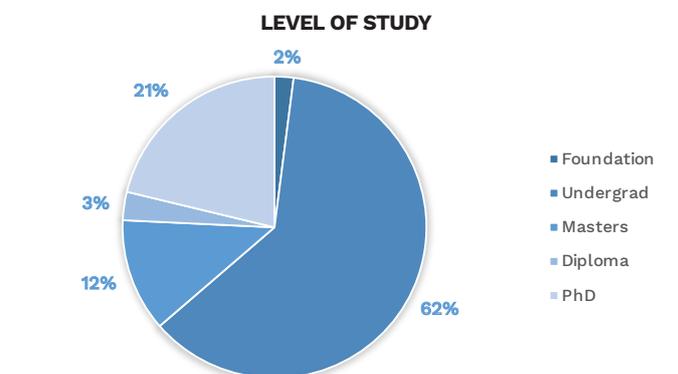
### Demographics



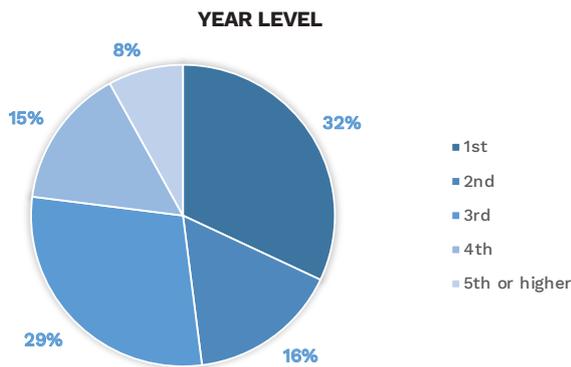
This semester the Hub has dealt with 480 cases, representing a 35% increase from Semester Two 2014.



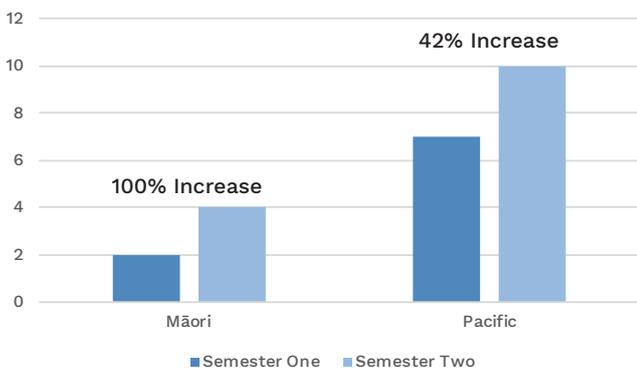
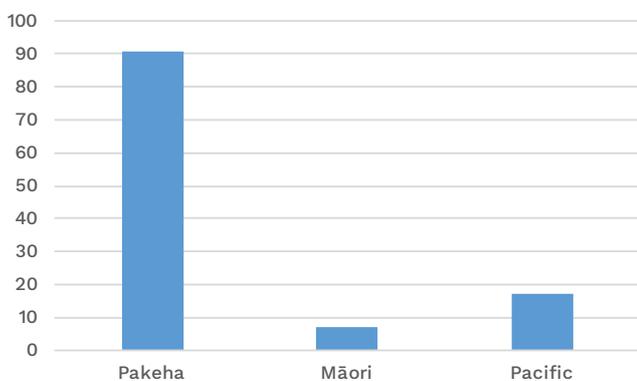
A majority of Student Advice Hub cases have dealt with academic issues and concerns, although general issues (for example relating to tenancy or employment issues) also represent a large number of cases.



A large majority of students visiting the Hub are undertaking an undergraduate degree, with the largest proportion of these being first year students. However, postgraduate students often go to the Hub with more complicated issues, taking up more time than a typical undergraduate case.



Of students who choose to disclose their identity, a majority identify as Pakeha. The Student Advice Hub, particularly the 2015 Senior Advocates, has been working on expanding awareness of the Hub amongst Māori and Pasifika students.



## Key Trends in Semester Two compared with Semester One

Accommodation cases have shot up in Semester Two with the overall cases from August to October alone being greater than January-July.

Semester Two saw an increase in international students compared to Semester One, reflecting our targeted marketing to these students.

In Semester Two we also had more Māori students compared to Semester One, reflecting our targeted marketing to these students.

## Challenges

The large increase in advocacy cases demonstrate that the Student Advice Hub has been successful in publicising itself, and that more students are becoming aware of the advocacy services that AUSA has on offer. However, it also shows that there are a large number of students who are having trouble with the University, the Government, or dealing with personal and health issues. One challenge for the Student Advice Hub is to continue to welcome these students while developing a sustainable strategy to deal with the ongoing rise in numbers. The ongoing demand for services not offered by the Student Advice Hub, including guidance, counselling and personal support demonstrates that students are either not aware of relevant services offered by the University, or need more support than they are currently getting.

It is important that the Hub continues to work on engaging with equity groups on campus. This was a project of the Senior Advocates and the Hub's first Master of Social Work intern, who sought to establish the Hub alongside the Tuakana programme as another support network for academic issues.

The rise in advocacy cases gives no indication of slowing, and it is likely that the demand for the Student Advice Hub will soon exceed its capacity. We have worked to address this by expanding the number of volunteer advocates and taking on a Master of Social Work student. However, in order to effectively meet the demands of the university community, the Student Advice Hub will require additional resourcing, in particular in the area of more permanent staff members, which would provide a more appropriate and sustainable solution than simply increasing volunteer numbers.

## Welfare

### Overview

AUSA Welfare provides an important safety net for students who face hardship at University. The current climate that couples the high cost of living in Auckland with the lack of governmental support means that students are more likely to face hardship in some form than ever before. AUSA support addresses this growing group of students. As student hardship increases and the cost of living increases, it is important that AUSA secure further funding for students in order to offer support that is meaningful.

As this is the first full year of an AUSA Welfare Vice-President in office, AUSA support services have extended and new projects have been initiated. These new projects do not only include specific support services but also include events and projects that are aimed at general student welfare and wellbeing.

AUSA has also continued to provide services for marginalised or vulnerable groups on campus. Numbers of students accessing Queerspace have risen steadily across the year, facilitated by the Queer Rights Officer, and a special Student Forum event was run to celebrate 'National Coming Out Day', as well as Pride Week early in Semester One. The Womens' Rights Officers have continued to facilitate Womenspace, run a wide range of women-focussed events including a successful Womensfest, and produced Kate Magazine in Semester Two. AUSA has also continued to maintain two Parentsplaces, one in conjunction with the University, and worked with staff on Tamaki Campus to establish a Parentsplace there. These services are all essential in ensuring that the University campus is a safe, welcoming and inclusive place for all students.

## Food Parcels

Students may collect up to three food parcels a semester. Each food parcel contains canned soup, protein, spaghetti, baked beans, cereal, and pasta depending on stock. 218 food parcels were collected this year.

YEAR	FOOD PARCELS
2015	218
2014	220
2013	175
2012	202
2011	164
2010	158
2009	98
2008	90

The food bank runs entirely on donated goods. Unfortunately this year AUSA has been unsuccessful in securing donations from organisations that have donated in the past, such as Watties and a pasta distributor. As there are many other organisations looking for similar donations, this is likely to get more difficult.

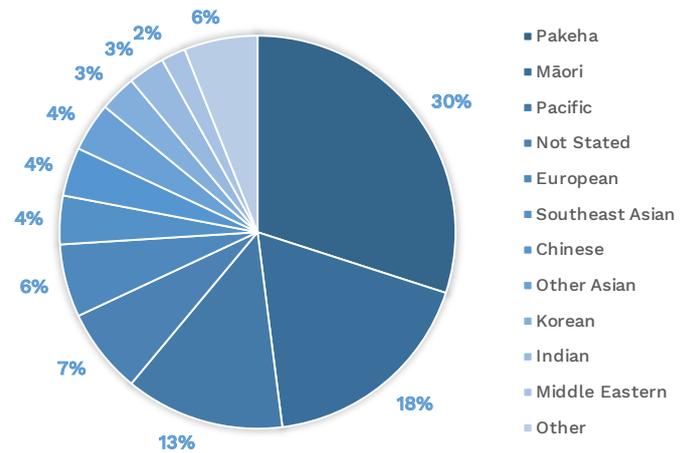
AUSA has therefore become more creative in securing donations. This year for the second year running, a university wide food drive was held where staff and students were encouraged to donate goods towards the food bank. This was very successful and donations more than doubled from the previous year. In addition, donations were mandatory as an entry fee to some of AUSA's otherwise free events. The ongoing support of the Christian Campus Movement has also been extraordinarily helpful and it is unlikely that the food bank could function as it does without their generosity. A donation from Sanitarium in Semester One was also much appreciated.

The food bank is also boosted by a weekly donation of bread from the bakery il Forno which a volunteer kindly delivers to AUSA each week. In addition, donations of fruit from community groups have been frequent throughout the semester. This is able to bolster food parcels and AUSA is exceptionally appreciative of this.

This year the Welfare Vice-President has been particularly proactive in ensuring larger food parcels are distributed to student parents as this is a group that struggles more than ordinary students. Boxes of food have also been sent to Tai Tokerau Campus at various points in the year in order to

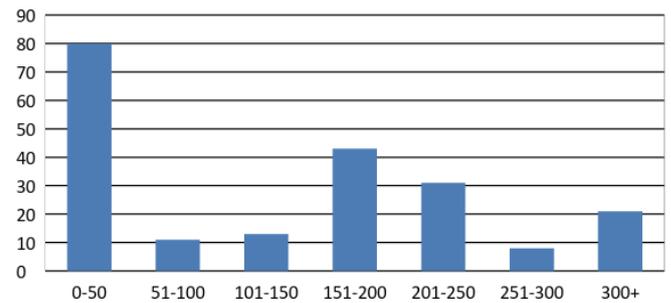
support students at that campus. A good relationship has also been developed with the Welfare Officer at the Epsom campus in order to ensure this service is open to students at that campus.

## Foodbank User Demographics

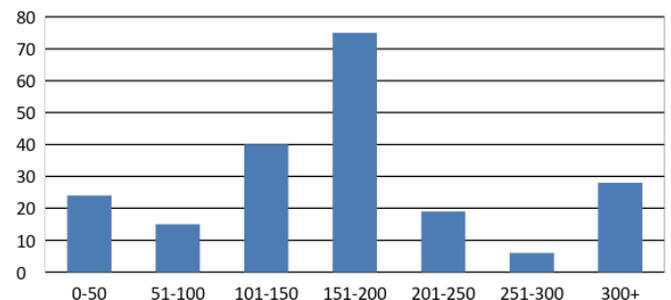


**ETHNICITY:** The largest group of food parcel recipients identify as Pakeha. However of note is the number of Māori and Pacific students who access food parcels (31% in total). This is disproportionately more than the number of Māori and Pacific students within the University (15%). This is also an increase from 2014 when 25% of food parcel users identified as either Māori or Pacific.

**FOOD PARCEL USERS WEEKLY INCOME 2015 (IN NZD)**



**FOOD PARCEL USERS WEEKLY RENT 2015 (IN NZD)**



**INCOME VERSUS RENT:** The average income of students who collected food parcels was \$130. The average rent of students was \$217. The disparity between these two figures highlights the weekly struggle of balancing a budget for

many students. This gap is likely to increase given the high cost of living in Auckland.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:** 9% of all parcels collected this year were picked up by international students. Although this is less than the percentage of international students at the University (14%), this is still a major concern as these students ought not to struggle as they have to demonstrate that they have access to a large amount of financial reserves before they receive a visas. It potentially reflects misinformation conveyed to international students before arriving in Auckland or a misconception regarding the cost of living in Auckland before arrival.

**POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS:** 36 food parcels collected this year were collected by students studying at a postgraduate level. This is 17% of the total parcels collected. This is just below the percentage of postgraduate students at the University (22%).

**STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENTS:** 15% of those who collected food parcels were students with dependents. It is very likely that this is above the University-wide percentage of this group. Such students were offered larger food parcels due to the added burden of feeding dependents.

## Hardship Grants

AUSA provides hardship grants for students who are in short term and unexpected situations. The grants are specifically for those in short term situations as unfortunately AUSA cannot provide ongoing financial support for students as this is outside of our resources. Students are eligible for one grant per semester of up to \$250 or \$400 for those with dependants. This year has seen an incredible increase in hardship grants. So far this year AUSA has received 94 applications for a hardship grant. This is a 130% increase from 2014.

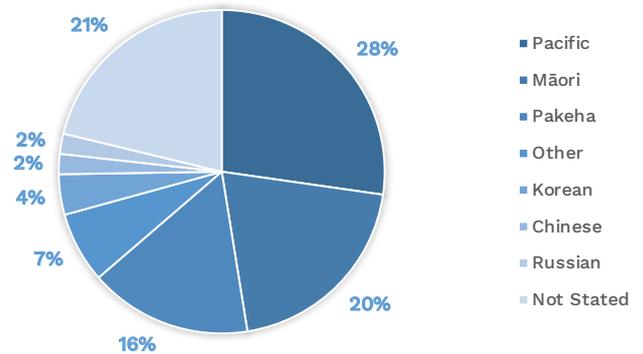
ACCEPTED	41
DECLINED	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>

YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	TOTAL GRANTED
<b>2015</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>\$9826</b>
2014	41	\$7225
2013	35	\$4125
2012	24	\$3855
2011	53	\$6100
2010	62	\$6080
2009	38	\$3,675
2008	18	\$1,640

A total of \$9826 has been distributed in 2015 across 41 successful applications. This increase in applications may be related to the increasing difficulty for students to maintain savings and emergency money for such circumstances. Students often live week to week due to the cost of

living in Auckland and there is limited governmental support as outlined above. This impacts students' ability to grow savings and leaves little room in times of emergency.

## Hardship grant application trends



**ETHNICITY:** The largest group of those accessing hardship grants identified as Pacific (28%) and the second largest group identified as Māori (20%). This is extraordinarily disproportionate to the number of Māori and Pacific students at the University and suggests that students from both of these groups are more likely to find themselves in short term and unexpected financial situations where they need extra support. This is also a 5% increase of Māori and Pacific applicants from the previous year.

**DEPENDENTS:** 26 students who applied hardship grants had dependents. This is 29% of the total applicants. Although the University does not collect data that would indicate how many students have dependents, it is very likely that is figure is far above the proportion of students with dependents at University. This reflects the added challenges that students with dependents, and in particular, student parents, face. The high number of students with dependents accessing food parcels and applying for hardship grants is a noticeable trend. AUSA recommends that the University look into gathering more information on student parents in order to ensure that equity measures can be put in place to address this.

## Textbook Grants

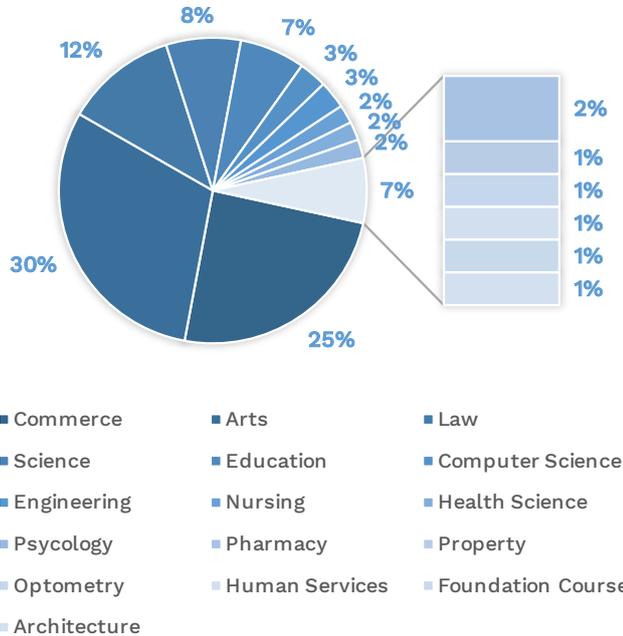
AUSA and UBS collaborate to provide textbook grants to students in need at the beginning of each semester. Each semester \$2,500 is divided between worthy applicants. This semester AUSA saw record numbers of applications as 90 applications were received in total. 27 of those applications were granted. Grant awards ranged from \$32 - \$250 depending on textbooks required.

YEAR (SEM 2)	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER OF AWARDS
2012	19	13
2013	20	14
2014	66	24
<b>2015</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>27</b>

## Faculty Breakdown

The increase in the number of applications suggests that awareness of the scheme is also increasing. As such, the

threshold for hardship that students faced has increased year to year. Moving forward it may be appropriate to consider further funding for this scheme whether from AUSA or UBS, or an additional donor.



to consider their wellbeing before heading into the exam season. Stress Less Study Week ran from the 19th – 23rd of October and featured a range of events including a Chill out Zone, free breakfasts, one free lunch, a visit from farm animals, colouring, and stress ball making. Part of the week was organised in collaboration with UniHealth who provided mindfulness sessions and a yoga session. The week was a success and saw high participation. It will likely be a feature each semester going forward. In combination with the inaugural SHAG Week (Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance) in Semester One, this sees two new general welfare awareness events added to AUSA’s calendar.

A second new initiative was trialled at the end of Semester One and is being carried out at the end of Semester Two. AUSA has collaborated with both O’Rorke and UniLodge to collect donated items from departing students in order to give such items to students in need. The project in Semester One was a success and is currently being carried out on a larger scale this semester. This both provides support for students in need and reduces waste from students in University accommodation. We are very grateful to O’Rorke and UniLodge for allowing us to facilitate this initiative.

## AUSA Campuspecs Optometry Grants

AUSA continued with its optometry grant scheme which began in 2014. This grant is a collaboration with Campuspecs who offer a free eye examination and glasses if necessary for every successful applicant. Originally Campuspecs offered 10 of these grants each year but as the scheme saw a major increase in applications, they have now generously increased this to 15. All 15 grants were distributed this year accordingly, out of 20 applications.

## Childcare Grant

As documented in the Semester One report, AUSA collaborated with a generous group of University staff to offer childcare grants for students in need. This is a direct response to the growing number of student parents AUSA sees accessing support services. 26 applicants applied in Semester One, despite the short lead-in time for the grant, reflecting the need for such support. This grant was ongoing in Semester Two, with an additional student receiving support following a request from ECE about a particular student. AUSA and its sponsors were happy to be able to assist the student in this way. The grant is likely to continue in 2016.

## Student Welfare Activities

This semester AUSA ran an inaugural week-long event at the end of semester that focused on encouraging students

## Parentspace

This semester, AUSA has continued to work with ECE to coordinate the University Parentspace in Old Choral Hall. This Parentspace is an addition to a smaller Parentspace which is run solely by AUSA in the same building. Currently 63 students are registered to the University space and AUSA has facilitated the administration of this. This number is likely to grow as awareness of the space grows. In response to the needs of student parents, the smaller AUSA space has become a breastfeeding/expressing priority space. In addition, AUSA has successfully worked with the equity office to ensure appropriate communication of parentspaces can be found on University resources such as the webpage.