

The University of Auckland Society

President's Report 2020



The Executive Committee in 2020:

Janet Copsey (President), Richard Northey (Vice-President), Karen Thompson (Treasurer), David Abbott, Paul Gilberd, Amy Malcolm, Eva Tollemache, Rachael Yang and ex-officio member Jody Clarke as the Executive Officer until mid-year when Shiprah Christian joined the team. Three Executive Committee meetings were held in person, one in February, one in August and one in October.

Membership

The current membership stands at 412 members with 1 new member joining in the 2019/2020 financial year. Because of the concerns relating to Covid-19, the decision was made not to seek membership renewals for the 2020/2021 financial year or to solicit donations in the same period. This will have an impact on the financial position of the Society in the next financial year.

Supporting the University Community

Through the Society's commitment to the Vice Chancellor's Student Support Fund, students in previous years have been able to take up once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to represent the University overseas. With the Covid-19 Pandemic the Society understandably did not receive any applications for the available monies and the Society has since asked Student Services, who manages the Student Support Fund on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, for alternative suggestions on how the Society could assist students.

The Society also contributed \$500 towards the cash prize for the Doctoral winner of the 2020 Three Minute Thesis competition. This year's winner was Margane Merion from Biological Sciences with her thesis title: "*Ecology and diversity of camouflage in New Zealand stick insects*".

Support from the University

As in previous years, the Alumni Relations team has provided considerable support to the Society through the Executive Officer, Jody Clarke, who also works as Alumni Relations Engagement Coordinator, and through the Treasurer, Karen Thompson, who holds the position of Associate Director, Communications and Alumni.

Events

Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic no events were able to be held this year, including Bright Lights and the Distinguished Alumni Awards dinner in late March (although the awardees' careers will be celebrated in 2021), the Graduation Gala musical event in May and the Golden Graduates lunch in October. No Society Salons were also held.

We are however delighted to be hosting the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dawn Freshwater, just prior to the formal AGM, for a discussion on the proposed new Strategic Plan for the University.

Janet Copsey
President, University of Auckland Society
13 November 2020