

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

VULS AGM – November 9, 2016

Presented by VULS President Travis Smith

## Introduction

The VUL ends 2016 fiscally healthy, with a solid cadre of employees and a membership roster that continues to grow. Our spirit and satisfaction scores are consistently high, and our breadth of programming is ever-increasing. Despite limits in staff time and resources, we've managed to undertake and finish many projects and initiatives this year. And we came in essentially on budget, with a small surplus this year.

As a board, too, we completed several major tasks that were critical for our long term stability and growth. We expect to see **continued growth of the sport** in the coming years, and we feel poised as a society to take advantage of that opportunity.

This year, the VULS celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From November 2015 to October 2016, the Vancouver Ultimate League Society was responsible for scheduling at least **5600 games, by at least 410 teams, in 14 leagues, on 32 fields**. All the rest of what we do is secondary to that primary achievement, and it makes me so happy that we provided that much spirited, satisfying ultimate to so many people.

It is no wonder, then, that we don't always realize the breadth of all this organization does in a year in addition to league games. We helped put on **four tournaments** (Spring Tournament, Babes 'n Hats, Life's a Beach, BC Place). We contributed significantly to the BCU and Ultimate Canada in the form of member fees, and to WFDF in the form of a grant to support the World Ultimate and Guts Competition.

We helped local club teams prepare for **regional, national and international competitions**. We sent **multiple youth teams** to multiple tournaments. We developed resources for players and captains, and held dozens of clinics and camps for beginners and advanced players, young and old.



## VISION AND MISSION

This year, we undertook to re-examine our mission as part of a more expansive update of our strategic plan (more on that later). We wanted to ensure we were clear in our focus as we looked ahead at the next five years. That led to a long process of outreach, introspection and discussion, out of which came this **update to the mission, and the creation of a vision statement**, both of which are distributed tonight.

One thing was clear as we debated and discussed these: Ultimate's roots in self-refereeing, in inclusiveness, in equality, and in joy, have created a culture that is something unique and that deserves protection. I'd like to recognize the Strategic Planning Committee for their hard work on this.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2016

The Strategic Plan provides operational guidance for the VULS. It is created by the Board of Directors and reviewed annually in order to develop initiatives/programs each operating year. The results of the metrics and gap analysis from the previous year are used to focus our limited resources to allow the VULS to best achieve the overall goals of the Strategic Plan.

This year marks **the end of the first VULS 5-year plan**, whose goal was to see 8,000 people playing spirited, satisfying ultimate in Metro Vancouver by 2016. I'm extremely pleased to announce that **we have accomplished that goal**: There is more ultimate being played around here by more players than ever before. I would especially like to credit Executive Director Craig Woods for this accomplishment: He has been the steady hand on the rudder.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

For more than a year, the Strategic Planning Committee has been working on the next five-year plan. It follows a different structure from the previous one, and is presented along with this report.

In it, instead of having only one overarching goal, we looked at the league's path ahead as relying on **four pillars: Youth, Adults, Regional and Leadership**. Each of those pillars was given specific, measurable goals we hope to achieve over the next five years.

The plan will be discussed in detail shortly, but overall, it represents a shift from a single focus, to one that covers all of today's VULS. We are now a much larger organization than we were five years ago. We have several major operations, all of which serve to guide us toward the accomplishment of our overall mission.

## GENDER PROGRESS

One of my proudest announcements is that we were able this Fall to **switch to a fully gender balanced 4/3 rule** for Fall 7-on-7 grass league, where the offense determines whether it's 3 or 4 women on the line. This brings us in line with the official USAU rules. We hope to continue this rule in the Summer. We also are planning to investigate methods to allow more gender-balanced play in 5-on-5 leagues. Also this year, we commenced work on a transgender policy, the results of which should be announced soon.

This type of work is undertaken because of our underlying values of inclusiveness and gender parity, and because these are issues that are important to us as humans, and as leaders in ultimate and the sporting community.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

This year we are **shifting our full-time staff from contractors to employees**. The reasons for this are several. First of all, as the league has grown, the structure and requirements of our organization have shifted such that it is necessary legally for some contract staff to be hired as employees. Secondly, we feel that to be a proper sustainable, Spirited organization, one that can attract and keep excellent employees, we ought to treat those who work for the VULS fairly and equitably.

That shift will happen in the coming year, and we will detail the financial effects at the next AGM. At this stage, we believe **the budgetary effect of this transition should be minimal**, a few percent at most compared to the size of the budget overall.

## BYLAWS

The Board Governance Committee worked on **several necessary changes to the bylaws**, prompted by province-wide changes to the BC Society Act that require us to be in line with new legislation.

## IT SYSTEMS

This year, IT Systems -- the Web site -- is covered primarily in the ED report, and this is a good thing. While it is still a significant part of our budget, we have encountered **few operational problems this year** with the development and maintenance of the site. We plan to explore ways to continue to deliver new and updated features, while keeping costs down. This may include **hiring a part-time IT resource**; again, this is being considered both to improve development efficiency and to limit, not grow, expenses.

## BOARD AND COMMITTEES

This year, we saw the resignation of one board member, Julie Gordon for personal reasons, and the appointment of one new one, Trisha Roberson, who I'd especially like to thank for her hard work bringing herself up to speed in the middle of the year.

The current Board of Directors (with current terms) are:

Travis Smith	President, 2015-2017
Rob Adams	Vice President, 2015-2017
Nora Bergh	Secretary, 2015-2017
Terry Yaremchuk	Treasurer, 2015-2016
Brett Anderson	2015-2017
Trisha Roberson	2016-2016
April van Ert	2014-2016 (Exiting after 2 years)

I'd like to also recognize April van Ert, who finishes a two-year stint with the VUL and will be stepping down after this AGM. Her fingerprints were on almost every item in this report and her alacrity and insightful questioning will be sorely missed.

The following people deserve recognition for their long hours of committee work this year:

<b>Board Governance</b>	Ensures good governance practices are followed; Maintains VULS By-laws.	<b>Rob Adams (chair)</b> , Nora Bergh, Olivier Lessard Fontaine*
<b>Hall of Fame</b>	Lead the selection process for inducting new members into the VULS Hall of Fame.	Rob Adams, <b>Terry Yaremchuk (chair)</b> , Ed Burnett*, Scott Lewis*, Anja Haman*
<b>Human Resources</b>	Supports Executive Director as required on staffing issues; Evaluates Executive Director performance.	Rob Adams, Nora Bergh, <b>April van Ert (chair)</b>
<b>IT Systems</b>	Provide guidance to the Executive Director on managing the VUL website/IT systems.	Brett Anderson, Travis Smith, <b>Craig Woods (chair)</b>
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Develops Strategic Plan documents; Works with Executive Director to set annual metrics and review gap analysis; Annually reviews and reports progress of the Strategic Plan.	Brett Anderson, Alex Chu*, Craig Kulyk*, James Rankin*, Trisha Roberson, <b>Travis Smith (chair)</b> , Craig Woods*, Terry Yaremchuk

\* non-board member

If it wasn't for their efforts, this organization would not last another season. If you are interested in assisting with the guidance of this organization, **please consider volunteering for a committee** that interests you. Contact any board member, or just email us directly.

## STAFF

I'll leave it to the ED to go into detail here, but I must take this opportunity to **thank all of our staff** for a wonderful year and for their hard work as well as their good ideas. I'd also like to give credit to Executive Director Craig Woods again for his long and hard work this year. If you've been a captain, you know it's **not easy to keep ultimate players organized**. Craig does it for thousands of us.

He oversaw a year of tremendous change and growth while still keeping the octopus-like operations of the league running quite well. His participation in every committee was impressive and extremely valuable. I was lucky to have someone so conscientious and committed to work with.

## CHALLENGES

We are facing a few possible challenges going forward. In addition to the usual operational risks, we are concerned about the **future availability of sufficient field space** if we continue to grow at the same pace we have been. We are investigating options here.

We also acknowledge that there's a **real estate crisis at the city level**, and that could have long-term effects on our continued enrollment, depending on how that affects the demographic composition of the city. We may be facing changes in employment levels, sensitivity to fee increases, or other concerns.

And we see that there are **changes happening in the sport at all levels**: professional ultimate, the growing possibility of becoming an Olympic event, the ways people come to the sport and why they leave it. We need to remember to serve our entire membership base.

Our year has been successful and our strategic plan points us in a good direction, but the seas may be rough along the way. I think that the election results of last night remind us that we can't be certain what the future will bring, but we can be certain that we need to be involved in order to shape it into the future we want.

## CONCLUSION

Someone asked me recently why I got involved with the VUL – why I became captain of East Van Halen, why I volunteered, why I joined the board. Put simply: I owe the VUL. I owe it for many things: a large portion of my friend circle, for my physical health and fitness. The community of Ultimate supported me at time when I needed it, and I've seen that happen for others, too.

Furthermore, Ultimate matters: to the people who matter to me and to this city. We all know people who have fallen in love because of ultimate. I have friends who played ultimate with guests at their weddings, with their family at Christmas, with strangers who didn't speak their language on fields halfway around the world (or halfway across the city). I've seen firsthand the joy it brings and the way that Spirit of the Game changes how people treat each other, even after they leave the field.

I believe we give to Ultimate, ultimately, because it brings more joy to the world. As we go forward, I encourage us all to remember that, and to be proud of what we are a part of, and to take Spirit with you, on and off the field, in all that you do.

On a personal note, this is the end of my first year as president of the VULS, and it's also, unfortunately, the end of my last year as president. My personal situation has me moving away from Vancouver, and so, despite my desire to continuing to serve this organization, it would be best if I step down as president. I will remain on as a regular board member to serve out my term, and possibly for as long as the members will have me.

Finally, I'd like to thank my girlfriend Emily Plommer for her support. And to those on the board, those who work or volunteer for the VULS, even those who are attending this AGM, I thank you as well.