

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

VULS AGM – November 7, 2018

Presented by VULS President Brett Anderson

## Introduction

The VULS ends 2018 as a stable and financially strong non-profit society. 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. As per our annual plan we completed the year with a manageable deficit.

While we have undertaken many ancillary projects throughout the year it is important to remind ourselves of the breadth of the programs we provide our membership. This year our membership rose to over 6,000 members. Over the course of the year the VULS scheduled 5450 league games involving 504 teams across 15 leagues on 43 fields. I view this as awesome.

Recognizing that there are many reasons people participate in VULS programs – fitness, general health, social interaction, learning something new, or providing a competitive outlet to name a few – we endeavor to provide programs and resources that fit the bill. In addition to our leagues these include youth programs, development clinics, hat and team tournaments, as well as support for local club teams.

The ability to orchestrate this volume of ultimate centric programming is accomplished by an army behind the scenes. While not wanting to steal too much thunder from the ED report a huge shout out and sincere gratitude to the VULS staff, all the volunteers, coaches, mentors, and board members. We couldn't have done this without you.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

This meeting marks approximately 2 years since membership accepted a new strategic plan for the organization. For the 5 years preceding the updated strategic plan the organization was focused primarily on a single metric – Growth. With the advent of the new plan our focus shifted from a pure numbers game to four strategic pillars – Youth, Adults, Regional, and Leadership – each carrying their own targets. This new plan has provided us with lots of opportunity but has not come without challenges. Chief amongst these is what to focus on when and how to deploy resources across different areas. With 5 tenured staff members and 7 board members, all who care deeply about ultimate in Vancouver, setting the course of where to put resources and what to execute yields passionate and fruitful discussion.

As I look back at the first year of this strategic plan (2017), at a board level it was really a year of getting our ducks in a row. We spent a lot of time becoming compliant with statute and limiting potential risk and liability for the organization. This included transitioning full-time staff to becoming employees, making several changes to our bylaws as promoted by changes to the BC Societies Act, and improving financial oversight. 2018 by comparison was about getting our feet underneath us to be well positioned to move forward through this strategic plan and beyond. One of the key areas of focus at the start of this year for me was to mitigate risk through documentation of processes. This is an area that we've made progress and will continue to push to move the needle.

## Youth

Youth continues to be a driver of growth for the VULS. Youth players currently comprise 23% of our membership. Our youth programs span the lower mainland and consist of over 1400 players, and 100 coaches. A huge thank you to everyone that works with our youth programs to instill the next generation with an understanding of what spirited, satisfying ultimate is.

## Adults

The engine that keeps the VULS running. This segment of membership is our largest and one that we monitor closely. Overall satisfaction levels amongst adults remains strong at 87%, though opportunity for improvement persists as we saw a fractional percentage decline in this reported metric from last year. This year we saw increases in adult membership of 3% - some attributable to supporting registration of regional programs. This growth was spread across experience levels from those with <1 year of experience right through 7+ years of experience.

## Leadership

The VULS continues to be looked at as a leader in the ultimate community in terms of policy, governance, and experience. Over the course of the year board members have been sought out by other organizations nationally and internationally to have conversations about what the VULS is doing or how we're approaching different situations. These always prove to be interesting conversations and give us an opportunity to inquire about their operations as well.

In addition to other organizations reaching out the VULS has continued to receive acknowledgement for the work being done with regards to inclusivity. This includes changing our policies to be more inclusive of transgender and non-binary gendered players, as well as the #throwtome social media campaign.

## Regional

This pillar in our strategic plan has firmly taken hold over the past two years. It was originally included to enable people to play quality ultimate near to where they live or work without having to commute into Vancouver. We also acknowledge that in a city with affordability challenges some of our membership are moving to the surrounding areas. At the time there were a smattering of small volunteer run leagues across the region, we weren't sure how we would support these groups, but it was a conversation that we wanted to start. We quickly found that some of them were very eager to start the conversation as well. What we found were several volunteers on the verge of burnout and more than happy to get varying degrees of support from the VULS. Two years in we're now supporting ultimate in Burnaby, New Westminister, and Surrey.

## Board and Committees

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

Brett Anderson, President	2017-2019
Trisha Roberson, Vice President	2016-2018 (up for re-election)
Sarah Cawston-Stewart, Secretary	2016-2018 (up for re-election)
Colin Dodds, Treasurer	2016-2018 (Exiting after 2 years)
Audrey Ng	2017-2019

Ken Su  
Rob Adams

2017-2019  
2017-2019

I'd like to recognize Colin Dodds, who finishes his term on the board and is not seeking re-election. He has been instrumental in developing and implementing financial oversight measures over the past two years. We are in a much better position from a financial governance position thanks to the work he's done. Additionally, he's opened his home to provide a venue for many board meetings over the years. We've seen a strong uptake in past board members continuing to serve on committees in recent years, this is something that I'd love to see happen with you. Thank you for your contribution over the past two years.

I'd also like to recognize Olivier Lessard Fontaine. A past board member who has been instrumental on our governance committee over the past several years since his resignation from the board. He has brought a passion for governance and been a leader on the committee providing continuity year over year.

The following people deserve recognition for their commitment to committee work this year:

<b>Board Governance</b>	Ensures good governance practices are followed; Maintains VULS By-laws.	Olivier Lessard Fontaine* (chair), Rob Adams, Sarah Cawston-Stewart
<b>Hall of Fame</b>	Lead the selection process for inducting new members into the VULS Hall of Fame.	Ken Su (Chair), Rob Adams, Audrey Ng, Ed Burnett*, Scott Lewis*, Anja Haman*
<b>Human Resources</b>	Supports Executive Director as required on staffing issues; Evaluates Executive Director performance.	Brett Anderson (chair), Audrey Ng, Travis Smith*
<b>IT Systems</b>	Provide guidance to the Executive Director on managing the VUL website/IT systems.	Craig Woods (chair), Ken Su, Rob Adams
<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.	Trisha Roberson (chair), Sarah Cawston-Stewart, Craig Woods*, Zun Zhang*

\* non-board member

The valuable work of committee members helps guide the VUL to operate as a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable Society. If you are interested in assisting with the guidance of this organization, please consider volunteering for a committee. There is a sign-up sheet at the back or track down one of your friendly board members to chat about getting involved.

## Staff

I'd like to thank all our staff for their efforts this year. Their hard work, creative thinking, and willingness to adapt, has helped the VUL be a model and resource for other Ultimate organizations.

Craig Woods continues to be an effective and engaged ED. His passion for the VULS and commitment to excellence has brought incredible value to our members over the years.

## 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 quality field space if we continue to grow at the same pace we have been. Regional expansion will support growth in field space, but this will remain a concern. The relationship with the Vancouver Parks Board through our ED is incredibly valuable.

We also acknowledge that there are affordability challenges within our city, and that could have long-term effects on our continued enrollment, depending on how that affects the demographic composition of the city. In addition to affordability challenges in the city affecting membership we've also seen our field costs increase, this is attributable to an increase in programs but also in the higher cost of synthetic fields. Since 2013 our overall field costs have increased by 40%. Our summer field costs have seen an increase of 25% over the same time. While our costs increase we need to be cognizant of the effect on our membership from fee increases.

We have been blessed with long serving, committed employees in the 4 years I've been involved with the organization. While I don't see this changing, having documented processes in place will support in providing fault tolerance in the event of staff turnover.

## CONCLUSION\*\*

Someone asked me recently why I got involved with the VUL – why I became a captain, 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.

Finally, thank you 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.

\*\* – borrowed and amended from Travis Smiths' 2016 president's report because it's so awesome and rings true to me, thanks Travis