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# QUOTALS

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The following are a few brief notes about QUOTALS, the development of the Association and some of its current and future activities.

## 1. About QUOTALS

The Queensland University Of Technology Association Of Law Students (“QUOTALS”) Committee is a voluntary organisation comprised of law students elected by the law student body. QUOTALS is not affiliated with the QUT Student Guild and thus does not receive union grants (nor does it utilise union property for its administration). The Association enjoys a good relationship with the QUT Law School which provides it with an office in the law building as well as telephone and photocopying services. Funding for activities is primarily obtained from memberships sold to students at the beginning and throughout the year with larger events (such as the Annual Law Dinner) usually being partly sponsored by law firms.

At a deeper level, these arrangements mean that QUOTALS is not about “student politics” per se in as much as office is not sought by organised groups aiming to promote and give effect to a particular ideological viewpoint – that is for another arena. QUOTALS, as the current committee sees it, is purely concerned with providing the services that law students need and want during their university life. It truly is an organisation run by law students for law students. Briefly, these services range from organising social, recreational, sporting and (dare i say it, cultural) events and opportunities for students to fostering closer ties between QUT law students and the legal profession in an attempt to promote QUT law students as the best possible graduates in the marketplace. In the modern competitive employment market (fuelled by the influx of a plethora of law school graduates), it is the latter of these two functions which is becoming increasingly important for QUOTALS.

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## 2. Development of the Association

QUOTALS began its life as the Association of Queensland Institute of Technology Law Students ("AQITLS") and obviously changed its name when QIT became QUT. As far as I can gather from the yearbooks of previous QUOTALS and AQITLS committees, the Association originally consisted of an executive (comprised of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) as well as first, second, third and fourth year representatives. Using the comments made by the committee members in these yearbooks as a guide, it also seems that originally AQITLS primarily saw itself as a social institution. This perhaps is encapsulated in the motto which AQITLS established for itself: *non modo nox quienta est ad epulandum dies sextus est semper feriae*, which, I am told, translates to "every Thursday night's a party, every Friday is a holiday!". In this respect the attitude of QUOTALS has remained somewhat unchanged. QUOTALS has found that students want well organised and affordable social events and this remains a primary focus of the Association. Events such as the Annual Law Ball and Annual Law Cocktail Party provide the opportunity for students to meet and socialise with their fellow students and future colleagues as such occasions often break down the barriers of communication which often seem to exist between students in the competitive and hurried environment at university. QUOTALS believes that encouraging students to participate in social and recreational activities is becoming increasingly important to quash the apathetic culture which can easily breed in a faculty which consistently seems to be growing larger in numbers each year. Furthermore, due to the multi-farious strands of combined law degrees and course structures offered by the university, students could conceivably plough through their whole course without as much as meeting other law students who are undertaking different structures of study in law. QUOTALS activities provide the opportunity to overcome this.

As the QUT law school has grown and matured, so too has the attitude and aims of QUOTALS. In addition to the executive and year representatives that originally formed the composition of AQITLS, QUOTALS has grown and developed such that now it also consists of two social co-ordinators, two sports co-ordinators, a careers/education officer, an activities assistant, a journal editor, a part-time representative and an Australian Law Students Association ("ALSA") representative.

Also, as alluded to above, QUOTALS has moved on from being the primarily "social" institution that AQITLS was to aiming to provide students with services which better equip them (or at least give them a "leg-up") to find employment. Such services and initiatives include the Careers Market Day, the Meet The Profession Night, the Careers Guide and others which shall be discussed further below. QUOTALS sees this type of work as one of the most essential and primary services it could offer to law students in the current extremely competitive employment market which perhaps did not exist (at least not to the same extent) when the law school was established twenty years ago. It is this which distinguishes QUOTALS from the "social clubs" around campus.

### 3. Current and Future Activities

#### (a) Education / Career Activities

As mentioned above, a major aim of QUOTALS is to promote QUT law graduates to prospective employers through its career oriented initiatives. On the 12th of March 1997, QUOTALS organised a very successful *Careers Market Day*. This was held in the QUT law library and seventeen organisations (including law and accounting firms as well as government departments/agencies) were represented. The morning provided valuable information to students about the different employment opportunities available to law graduates and law students as well how to go about applying for them. The occasion also enabled students to speak with members of the firms and departments and gather written materials from them as a means of obtaining information relating to what each organisation is all about. On a similar note, a *Meet The Profession Night* was held on the 19th of March at Dennison's Restaurant at the Sheraton Hotel. This provided students with the opportunity to meet and speak with members of the legal profession over drinks and hors d'oeuvres. This year was the third year that QUOTALS has held a *Meet The Profession Night* and was attended by more than forty professionals and over ninety students. This year's event was brought forward earlier in the year so as to coincide with the period in which firms were conducting interviews for articles of clerkship. This provided the opportunity for students who were seeking such positions (as well as students investigating possible work experience opportunities) to meet with members of the firms interviewing them (and possibly the interviewers themselves) in a more relaxed atmosphere before their interview.

QUOTALS views events such as these as an integral part of promoting QUT law graduates and providing them with extra opportunities to develop their careers in a field where opportunities for advancement are not based on academic results alone. QUOTALS hopes that such events continue in the future.

As a further means of assisting students in their career development, QUOTALS (in conjunction with the Griffith University Law Society) has produced a *1997 Careers Guidebook*. The guidebook contains information on over sixty law, accounting and consultancy firms, government departments / agencies, banks and private corporations as well as how and when to apply to such organisations for employment opportunities. The guide also contains information about judges associateships and work experience programs (written by students who have undertaken these positions) as well as some useful tips on how to survive the interview process. The guide was made available to students at a small cost to cover printing charges and free to those students who attended the *Meet The Profession Night*.

#### (b) Social Activities

The annual QUOTALS *Law Ball* was held on Thursday 24th of April at the Komodo Club at the Carlton Crest hotel. It was attended by in excess of 300 students and seemed to be enjoyed by everyone (though with four hours of a bar tab this is

probably not surprising!). The theme of this year's ball was the QUOTALS "Shaken But Not Stirred James Bond Law Ball". For some it provided the occasion to put on their finest attire and for others it was their last "big night out" before the commencement of the end of semester exams. For all, though, it provided the opportunity to meet and socialise with their fellow students.

The annual *Law Dinner* was held on the 15th of August and held in the Presidential Ballroom at the Carlton Crest Hotel. QUOTALS has been fortunate to recently have extremely high profile members of the Australian legal community as guest speakers at this event. Last year the guest of honour was former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia Sir Anthony Mason with Mr Justice Kirby of the High Court giving a speech this year on "Teaching Australians Civics" (reproduced in "The Sydney Morning Herald" on the 16th of March). QUOTALS believes that persons who attended these evenings have been privileged to have such high calibre speakers present and hopes that this tradition continues.

The annual *Cocktail Party* for 1997 is scheduled for September and if past Cocktail Parties are used as a guide then the event is expected to be huge. This function is held in conjunction with the Griffith University and University of Queensland Law Societies (with the University of Queensland Society of Commerce and Economics Students expected to be involved this year also) and thus gives students the opportunity to have an enjoyable night out with students from other law schools.

QUOTALS also organises various other general social evenings throughout the year held in various nightclubs around Brisbane.

### (c) Other Activities

The QUOTALS *Law Revue* is also scheduled for September and 1997 is the second year that this event has been organised. As well as providing an enjoyable and entertaining evening for all who attend, the evening also gives students an opportunity to display talents and creativity that may otherwise be hidden whilst at law school.

The date for the annual *Sports Day* is yet to be set but at the time of writing this article organisation for the event is well under way. This is also held in conjunction with Griffith and UQ and events include mixed netball, tennis, touch and perhaps this year soccer also. Though, the highlight of the *Sports Day* is probably the traditional rugby clash between QUT and UQ law students. On a yearly basis, QUOTALS has QUT law jerseys made up (usually with a different design each year) which are available for sale to students and also used by the QUT Rugby team in the match against UQ on the *Sports Day*.

The *QUOTALS Quarterly* is a newsletter produced by QUOTALS and the Association this year decided to change the focus of it and use the newsletter as a forum for students to voice their opinions. As well as serving this function, the newsletter also aims to help facilitate stronger ties between the legal profession and QUT law students. It aims to achieve this via the dissemination of information relating to the study of law at QUT and other issues which affect the lives of QUT

law students during their time at the law school, such as, for example, juggling study with full-time work, sporting commitments, distance, family commitments, etc. This newsletter experienced a few “teething problems” in 1997 and QUOTALS hopes that future QUOTALS Committees develop the idea more fully and continue to encourage submissions from students.

1997 also saw QUOTALS set up a *web page* on the internet. The information at the site is still in its infancy but QUOTALS hopes that as a service to students it will grow in the future to provide more information about QUOTALS, upcoming events and issues generally arising out of the study of law at QUT.