

# Feasibility Assessment of a LUSA Co-Presidency Model

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**Purpose:** To evaluate the operational, legal, and administrative feasibility of splitting the LUSA President role into two 0.5 FTE (20 hours/week) Co-President positions following the motion passed on 9 June.

## Summary of Key Findings

While establishing a co-presidency model was proposed to enhance accessibility, particularly for international students but also for postgraduate research students, a comprehensive breakdown of required duties, time duplication, budget constraints, and legal mandates demonstrates that the model is operationally unviable.

The fundamental barriers include:

- **Immigration New Zealand Restrictions:** International student visa regulations currently cap work hours at 20 hours per week (to be raised to 25 later this year) during teaching terms. Assessment of Immigration New Zealand (INZ) visa conditions confirms strict enforcement of the work-hour cap during teaching terms, with no statutory provisions or exceptions available for student governance roles.
- **Lincoln University Postgraduate Restrictions:** Lincoln University imposes a “house rule” for postgraduate students, limiting them to 20 hours of work per week to ensure they are able to focus on their studies. Upon investigation it was found that in some cases, research students can suspend their studies for up to a year, which may allow them to take on the presidency while still being enrolled. Challenges with this model include that these suspensions must be approved by the university and are typically only approved for health related reasons, and a suspension this long would not be possible for international students as they must be actively studying to maintain their visas (this would require a change to a work visa).
- **University Council Mandate:** By law, university councils in New Zealand must have a maximum of 12 members. Legislation states that one of these must be a student representative, permitting only one designated student representative in the context of Lincoln University (the single LUSA President). Splitting the presidency introduces governance friction, as current legislation and university policy permits only one student representative on the University Council. A co-presidency structure creates unresolved challenges around voting alignment,

delegated decision-making authority during live council sessions, and maintaining continuity when only one president is present.

- **Time Duplication & Overtime:** Overlapping duties and essential daily handovers consume approximately 19 hours per week per Co-President (38 combined hours), leaving only 1 hour per week per Co-President to perform all role-specific operational duties and projects.
- **Budgetary Constraints:** LUSA operates under restricted budgets and cannot fund double-billed meeting hours or overtime resulting from shared administrative duties.
- **Stakeholder & Advisory Feedback:** LUSA staff, the advisory panel, and university leadership have raised critical concerns regarding communication breakdowns, lack of organisational continuity, and fragmented management.

### **The Core Challenge: Time Duplication & Shared Overhead**

When two individuals share a single executive role, certain baseline duties cannot be divided; they must be executed concurrently or require exhaustive debriefs.

### **Mandatory Shared Overhead (Per Co-President)**

To ensure basic organisational alignment, **both** Co-Presidents would be required to participate in or execute the following:

- **Daily Co-President Catch-ups:** ~45 mins/day (4 hours/week) to align on decisions, committee updates, and daily strategy.
- **Joint Email Management:** ~5 hours/week each to monitor, sort, and process incoming communications.
- **Executive Management & Meetings:** ~3.5 hours/week average (weekly Exec meetings, fortnightly 1-on-1 catch-ups, schedule coordination).
- **Meetings with University Leadership:** Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Provost (~1 hour/week combined average).
- **Board Meetings & Reporting:** ~1.5 hours/week average (co-chairing, writing individual accountability reports, reviewing agendas).
- **Weekly LUSA Staff Meetings:** ~0.5 hours/week (+ extra for other meetings like RAM planning, event debriefs, advocacy catchups, etc.)
- **Te Awhioraki Meetings:** ~0.5 hours/week (fortnightly alignment).

## Total Mandatory Overhead: ~19 Hours / Week Per Co-President

(38 total paid labor hours combined across both individuals)

### Comparative Analysis: Single vs. Co-Presidency

- **Co-Presidency Model:** Out of a 20-hour work week, 19 hours are consumed by shared alignment, joint meetings, and administrative overhead. This leaves 1 hour per week for each Co-President to manage their specific portfolio of committees, projects, and university representation.
- **Single President Model:** Because shared alignment overhead is eliminated, a single 40-hour President executes these core baseline duties in ~19 total hours, leaving ~21 hours per week (or ~25 hours excluding daily catch-ups) to handle all operational portfolios, projects, and external representation.

The below table outlines just one of the ways we investigated the role to be split (the president that sits on council vs the one who holds most other committees) but we also investigated other structures such as academic vs engagement, admin vs outreach, etc.

| Task                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Hours Required                                                                                | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>President 1 (Council President)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Lincoln University Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reading agenda (They're very big)</li><li>- Attending meetings</li><li>- Reading agenda for and attending all subcommittees</li></ul>                                                                                                                                       | Average 20 hours a month<br>(20 / 4 weeks in a month)                                         | Subcommittees Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ahumairaki</li><li>- Awards Committee</li><li>- Appeals Committee</li><li>- Appointments Committee</li><li>- Audit, Risk, and Assurance Committee</li><li>- Capital Assets Committee</li><li>- Governance Oversight Group</li></ul> |
| Campus Service Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Organising meetings</li><li>- Setting up Agendas</li><li>- Getting reports from entities</li><li>- Student feedback (generally via a survey)</li><li>- Chairing meetings</li><li>- Reporting proposed changes to ARAC</li><li>- Reporting proposed changes to council</li></ul> | 40 hours total including all the prep and side projects involved<br>(40 / 52 weeks in a year) | This should be done by the president on council as there is a significant amount of carryover between the two due to having to report to ARAC and Council to present the proposed changes.                                                                                                         |

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| Disciplinary Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 10 hours a term.<br>(10 / 6 weeks in a term)                                                                                                                                 | (Not to be confused with council appeals committee)                                                                              |
| Euroleague Student Association                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Estimated at 10 hours per term based on initial baseline scope.<br>(10 / 6 weeks in a term)                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Total</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>Average 10.75 hours</i>                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>President 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                  |
| Manaaki Tauria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3 hours a month<br>(3 / 4 weeks in a month)                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                  |
| University Advisory Group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Sporadically throughout the year                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                  |
| Good One Party Register                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 10 hours every two months<br>(10 / 8 weeks in two months)                                                                                                                    | Includes driving to meetings as these are generally in the city, as well as reading the agenda and helping with matters arising. |
| Student Job Search                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 20 hours per semester.<br>(20 / 24 weeks in a semester?)                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                  |
| Club Grants Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2 hours per term<br>(2 / 6 weeks per term)                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                  |
| Aotearoa Tertiary Students Association                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 10 hours a month<br>(10 / 4 weeks in a month)                                                                                                                                | Pres will have to report back to other pres as well as participate in national campaigns which take significant time.            |
| Organising board meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning annual schedule for meeting dates</li> <li>- Organising room</li> <li>- Communicating with secretary about sending out invites and making agendas</li> <li>- Communicating with VP about which policies to work on next and if they need any support with that</li> <li>- Communicating with general manager about what they need included in the agenda</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 hours to plan<br/>(10 / 52 weeks in a year)</li> <li>- Everything else 5 hours per month<br/>(5 / 4 weeks in a month)</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                  |
| Work with VP on policies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1 hour per week                                                                                                                                                              | Keeping constant communication with the VP on what policies to work on next, how they're going, etc.                             |

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| Student Experience Board                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 3 hours a month<br>(3 / 4 weeks in a month)                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Financial Assistance Fund                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Varies a lot but avg. 1 hour a fortnight<br>(1 / 2 weeks)                                                                                                                             | If this president has any conflicts of interest with a specific case then the other can pick up that one.                                                                                 |
| <i>Total</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Average 9.35 hours</i>                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Both Presidents</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Daily Co-President Catchups                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Estimated approximately 45 minutes a day.<br>= about 4 hours a week                                                                                                                   | This will be crucial as the presidents have to be updated on what is going on in each others' areas, as well as communicating to be on the same page about decisions that are being made. |
| Writing the LUSA report for council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure both presidents' work is reflected</li> <li>- Communicate with Te Awhioraki Tumuaki Takirua to include their parts that they want to present</li> </ul> | 3 hours a month<br>(3 / 4 weeks in a month)                                                                                                                                           | This needs to be done by both, not just the council president, to ensure everything that is going on is captured.                                                                         |
| Meeting and communicating with the general manager                                                                                                                                                                                          | Half an hour a week                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Meetings with the University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vice Chancellor</li> <li>- Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost</li> </ul>                                                                                              | Half an hour a month<br>Half an hour a month<br><br>Total 1 hour a month<br>(1 / 4 weeks in a month)                                                                                  | Both need to be there for this one to ensure consistent communication and that both voices and perspectives are heard.                                                                    |
| Weekly staff team meetings                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Half an hour a week                                                                                                                                                                   | Both need to be there so that both know what is going on.                                                                                                                                 |
| Emails                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Probably about 5 hours a week each at least.                                                                                                                                          | System for this will have to be worked out.                                                                                                                                               |
| Board meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing separate Pres Reports for accountability</li> <li>- Reading Agenda</li> <li>- Setting up running order to keep track of time in meeting</li> </ul>                          | 6 hours a month<br>E.g. 2 hours to write presidents report, 2 hours to read agenda and set up run sheet based off that, and two hours to run the meeting.<br>(6 / 4 weeks in a month) | As co-chairs, both will have to be involved with this.                                                                                                                                    |

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| - Co-chairing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Managing the exec</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organising and running weekly exec meetings</li> <li>- Fortnightly catchups with each exec member</li> <li>- Any help exec members need in-between catchups</li> <li>- Organising exec for events plus other admin things like coordinating schedules, following up on exec blurbs etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 hours a week</li> <li>- 5 hours a fortnight (5 / 2)</li> <li>- 1 hours a week at least</li> <li>- 1 hour a fortnight at least (1 / 2)</li> </ul> | <p>Both presidents will have to be involved with this to ensure consistent communication.</p> <p>Group chats with each separate exec member and the co-presidents?</p> |
| Meetings with Te Awhioraki                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1 hour a fortnight (1 / 2 weeks)                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <u>Total</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <u>Average 19 hours</u>                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                        |

### Sporadic & Uncounted Commitments

- Neither 20-hour role accounts for the extensive list of annual, sporadic, or ad-hoc presidential commitments, including:
- **Annual Strategy & Induction:** Exec training/inductions (40 hrs), Election planning (40 hrs), Board meeting annual schedule prep (20 hrs).
- **Governance Reviews:** GM performance reviews (5 hrs/twice yearly), Exec performance reviews (10 hrs/semester), constitution/SLA/MOU multi-year updates.
- **Institutional Events:** Graduation ceremonies (2–3 full days/year), Semester Welcome presentations (4 hrs/semester), Flat visits (~20 hrs/semester), Major event support (O-Week, Re-O-Week, Garden Party).
- These also do not account for many hours spent responding to student complaints each week as well as advocating for various issues around the university.

### Feedback & Risks Identified by LUSA Staff

Feedback was gathered from the LUSA staff team (some of whom are long-standing over 10 years) who rely on presidential stability to execute day-to-day operations.

## Foreseen Strengths

- **Representation Outreach:** Sends a symbolic message of inclusivity and accessibility to the student cohort.
- **Event Support:** Additional physical presence at large-scale events (Toga Party, Grad Ball, Winter Ball, Garden Party).

## Foreseen Operational Challenges

- **Communication Breakdown & Line of Command:** Staff highlighted confusion regarding accountability. For example, if an Executive member fails to show up or breaches conduct at an event, it is unclear which Co-President receives the report and takes immediate disciplinary action.
- **Incomplete Handovers & Public Reputation:** Fragmented handovers run a high risk of missed emails, forgotten tasks, and double-handled queries, creating a perception of organisational incompetence to external stakeholders, partner organisations like the university, and students.
- **Double-Billed Meeting Costs:** LUSA would be paying two salaries for identical meeting hours (e.g., staff meetings, Exec meetings), effectively wasting paid productive time on duplicated attendance.
- **Loss of Organisational Anchor:** Outside the General Manager, the President is currently the only full-time presence at LUSA. The President acts as a constant operational bridge. Removing this single point of continuity places an unsustainable operational burden on the GM.
- **Role Fatigue & Vacancy Risks:** High administrative overhead in a 20-hour cap inevitably leads to burnout and unpaid overtime. Staff expressed concern that the Co-Presidency positions would see high mid-term resignation rates.

## Conclusion & Recommendation

While the intention behind a co-presidency model is rooted in improving accessibility and international student representation, the structural realities make it unworkable:

- **Legislative and regulatory limits** (Immigration New Zealand's 25-hour work cap and the legal limitation of one student seat on University Council) cannot be altered by LUSA internal policies.
- The **high volume of duplicated administrative overhead** (~19 hours/week) renders a 0.5 FTE (20-hour) split mathematically impossible without severe operational failure or systemic unpaid overtime.

**Recommendation:** LUSA should maintain the single-president governance structure while actively exploring alternative, non-constitutional avenues to elevate international and other diverse student voices within executive decision-making.