

# AUMSA December 2023 Newsletter



Kia Ora, everyone, and congratulations on completing another year of medical school!

I hope you are enjoying a well deserved break from study as we get ready for an exciting year ahead. And for those of us who have special and remedial tasks to do, best of luck, you will do great, and remember, for our Phase 1 students, there are numerous past student's notes to supplement study on drives found on your Class Facebook pages.

Now, looking to the year ahead, the entire AUMSA Council is working tirelessly to prepare a jam-packed year full of awesome events and advocacy goals to address some of the significant issues students are currently facing. Thanks to all those who filled out the AUMSA survey, which highlighted some key areas we can improve. These are explained below with some actions we will take to hit the ground running in 2024!

Stay tuned over the next couple weeks for the launch of the inaugural year of the AUMSA Flat exchange programme, connecting students in good faith to cut down the cost of remote placement runs and stopping students needing to pay double rent for up to 6 weeks!

Finally, a big welcome to the Class of 2028! Everyone from AUMSA and the entire UoA med school whanau are excited to have you join us on this journey!

Stay safe, rest up and, enjoy the summer period, and get excited for what will be a great year ahead!

Lachlan Markovina  
AUMSA President  
[president@aumsa.org.nz](mailto:president@aumsa.org.nz)

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## AUMSA Survey Results

In November, we sent out a survey to all Auckland Medical students to get some opinions on the important problems facing our cohort so we can make sure AUMSA's mahi aligns with the needs of our members. It will come as no surprise to anyone that the major thing on everyone's mind was Finances. Of the 77 students who responded, 57% said. Financial stress was the most significant issue they faced (20% said they struggled with the course content, and 14% said they struggled to balance the course with social, work and family commitments). Some other statistics:

- The average student rated their financial stress at a 7/10
- 55% said they had gone hungry due to financial stress
- 53% said they had avoided seeking medical attention due to financial stress
- 20% said they deferred or considered deferring due to financial stress

We have shared this information with MPD to give them more context on the scale of the issue.

Key issues that arose from the survey included:

- Extreme financial hardship
- Lack of transparency about the mahi the AUMSA council is working on
- Complaints around the lack of diversity and poor organisation of some AUMSA events
- Complaints relating to the medical programme and treatment by staff which AUMSA have not addressed

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In response to this and other feedback from the survey, the 2024 AUMSA council has made the following commitments:

## Financial support

- Continued advocacy for the TI grant
- Advocacy for other financial aid schemes
- Rolling out the Flat Exchange programme for short term placements
- A page on the AUMSA website with links to services that students can use for financial support
- Allowing split payments for AUMSA memberships
- Wider range of sponsors, including clothing companies and eateries, and a page on the website with offers available to AUMSA members

## Lack of Transparency:

- Revival of AUMSA Instagram as another channel to communicate with members
- Monthly newsletters sent out through all communication channels
- AUMSA meeting minutes posted on the website

## Social events:

- Releasing the full social calendar for 2024 in January
- Releasing tickets for events earlier
- More non-alcohol events or alcohol-free tickets for existing events
- More clinical site social events

## Issues with the medical programme

- All issues raised in the survey will be passed on to the MPD
- AUMSA meets regularly with the faculty through the SSCC meeting, and the meeting minutes from these meetings will be posted on our website so students can see the issues that are raised and the proposed action points from MPD
- Any issues should be reported to year level Class Reps who will escalate them appropriately

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We will do another survey mid-way through next year to get your feedback on our work. The more responses we get, the more powerful the results are, so when you see the invite for the next survey, please fill it out!

As members of the AUMSA council, it is our duty to make Med school an enjoyable place to be so if you ever have any issues or feedback about how we do things, please chat to any of our team members so we can make sure we are doing everything we can to serve you.

In our January Newsletter, we will share more details on the recent NZMSA Face to Face so you can understand the plan for national advocacy in 2024.

Until then, from the whole AUMSA 2024 Council, we hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you all again on campus next year!