



# POKÉMON FANCLUB

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## *Individual Awards – Secretary of the Year*

I have had the pleasure of being the Pokémon Fan Club of UQ's secretary for the 2015-16 Clubs & Societies year. In 2014-15, I was the club's Trading Card Game convenor, and in 2014 I was an active member. Throughout the year, I have balanced the role with two part-time jobs, a full-time workload in my Bachelor of Laws/Business Management degree (where I have maintained Honours eligibility), and various other volunteering activities.

I dedicate much of my time to connecting with our members and building meaningful relationships, going beyond the role of general liaison between the executive committee and the member base. My goal as secretary has been to facilitate community building, because I strongly believe our cause goes deeper than providing Pokémon related events to interested people. I aim to provide students with a safe place where they can comfortably be themselves, and unashamedly flaunt their love for a franchise that can often be subject to stigmatism and social taunt. This goal was largely influenced by what the club did for me when I first joined in 2014. The genuine relationships I have built with members is only further exemplified by their many nicknames for me, which include things like Baechel, Meme Queen and 'we get it, you Vape(oreon).'

Our vibrant and diverse member base of 260 people is testament to the culture I have helped develop, with members who study a range of different disciplines, as well as PhD, Masters and Honours students, non-student members, and a small handful of UQ staff members. I consistently try to ensure that the few members who go the extra mile and exemplify the values of our club are recognised, which was the driving force behind the introduction of our Closing Credits awards in December 2015. I would like to think that I have played an active role in improving the university experience for our members.

Beyond this, I have been principally responsible for individually designing every graphic banner we attach to our events, as well as room bookings, posting and advertising of events, organisation of semester calendars, and maintenance of the membership list. I have called and facilitated regular executive committee meetings, kept detailed minutes for those who could not attend, and have ensured that all information is fluid between executive members. There is also not a day that goes by where I am not managing one thing or another through our Facebook executive chat.

For a number of reasons, I have had to step up and take on duties beyond my general administrative responsibilities. At times I have even had to take on the role of Acting President. This included our QUT vs UQ Pokémon Championships, which was one of our biggest events of the year, as well as a trivia night. In this role, I have built a strong rapport with our sister club, QUT Pokémon, and am excited about the possibilities our stronger relationship offers.

A primary role that I have taken on throughout the year has also been ensuring that other executive members are keeping up with their responsibilities, are prepared for events falling within their portfolios, and understand the duties expected of them. On that basis, I am always willing to lend a helping hand where possible, particularly when it comes to organising, co-ordinating and running events. There is nothing that I do not do, whether it be staying up until 1am organising market day stalls, purchasing prizes, storing club property at my house and dropping it to campus when necessary, or organising barbecues. I have also stayed late in the Clubs and Societies room making badges so other executive members who live further away can get home at a reasonable hour. I am certain the executive committee and our members are aware that should they ever need something I am only ever a Facebook message away.

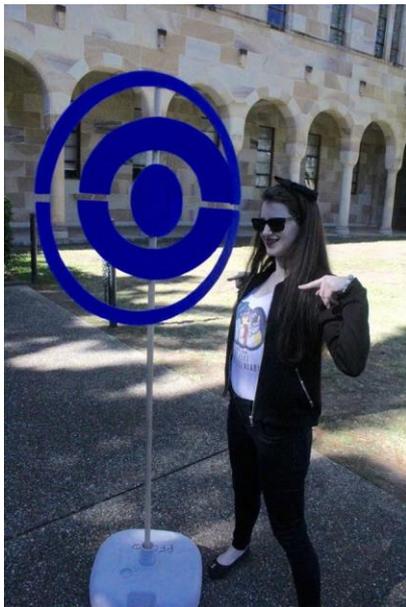
This year, with the assistance of Stephanie Otte, I also hand-crafted our PokéStop, and last year I cut out and painted our custom, to scale Ash Ketchum. Needless to say, I have ruined more than

a few pairs of pants at the hands of craft paint. I only hope that our culture of handmade merchandise and décor grows moving forward, as I think it adds additional character to the club's culture.

To be anecdotal about my level of dedication and sense of obligation to members, only two weeks ago, I was in Melbourne for a clerkship interview the day before a trivia night. I had organised to fly back the night before to make it in time for the event the following day, but missed my flight. I ended up flying to the Gold Coast late, catching a train back to Brisbane at 4.30 the next morning, working from 8am to 5pm, and then hosted the event, which started at 6pm.

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Our team at the Red Room's Pokémon Trivia in August this year. We won the best dressed competition.



The PokéStop that Steph and I built.



Zac Connor (member) and I showing off our matching Legendary Doge shirts.

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I believe that my contributions to the club and dedication to our members throughout 2016 has helped it grow into the enthusiastic and friendly community we see at every event. In fact, our presence, and the friendships that our members have made within the club, has seen an unofficial 'Pokémon Club corner' develop in the Science Learning Centre. I think that these friendships have grown, in part, due to the welcoming environment that I have worked hard to foster.

I am incredibly passionate about this club, and believe it is much more than 'just a Pokémon club.' I have seen it grow since its founding year, and am incredibly proud of my contributions. As much as I would like to say I have gone above and beyond the call of duty, I do not particularly feel that way. I think some stress or busyness on my part is a small price to pay when I see people enjoying themselves at events I have largely helped co-ordinate. I hope to take my work further in 2017 as the club's president, with my main goal being to extend our reach to the stars above.

Rachel Spain, Secretary  
Pokémon Fan Club of UQ