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International Students' Representative  
1st Quarter Report 2024  
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## **PART ONE: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES**

### **15.1. Promote via publications, promotions and campaigns, an environment within the Association and on campus which is supportive of cultural diversity.**

I was invited onto the Connecting Cultures podcast at Otago Access Radio by the lovely Arina for the second time. We discussed my goals as the International Rep for the year, as well as my experiences Arina was the ISR a couple of years back, and is an amazing human and host.

### **15.2. Organise and run events of specific interest and relevance to international Students.**

International Food Fest! Was a HUGE success (despite the incident) and I'm still getting fantastic feedback about it! I will make sure to update the handover document to have a couple more guidelines in place for next year onwards, but I'm so proud of everyone involved, it was a blast.

### **15.3. Be a member of appropriate internal committees of the Association, including, but not limited to:**

#### **15.3.1. International Committee.**

### **15.4. Chair monthly meetings of the Otago International Students' Association (OISA), ensuring that all committee members are advised of meeting times, that the agenda is prepared and circulated beforehand and ensuring that the standing orders of the committee are adhered to.**

There have been 3 total meetings of Otago International Students' Association (OISA) so far, with an SGM coming up to elect new officers into currently unoccupied roles. I was away sick for the most recent one post-IFF, but still made sure that comms from my side such as feedback for IFF and notice of upcoming events was communicated to the team through my Co-President Irfaan.

We had missed circulating a formal agenda beforehand for the first meeting, instead relying on the group chat, so I will need to do better in that regard and ensure a proper agenda is circulated with ample time for the members to all get a chance to look through it. Once a proper secretary is elected in the SGM instead of our Current Welfare and Equity rep as acting secretary to help out, I believe it will be an easier process. I am still getting used to the formal

process of chairing a meeting, but attending the committees that I am a part of, as well as the weekly exec meetings, have been a great way to know how to navigate being in that role, and what the expectations are for it.

### **15.5. Take direction from the Otago International Students' Association, on all matters relevant to international student members.**

I will make sure to listen to Mr. Nishida the Co-President very carefully and work closely with him throughout the year. He and I seem to have a steady working relationship already. He can sometimes be grating though.

### **15.6. Work on issues specific to international students at the University of Otago, including, but not limited to:**

#### **15.6.1. Academic issues within the University; and;**

I am campaigning for a lecture recordings policy that includes close captions alongside Stella the Academic Representative, and Tara the Welfare and Equity Representative. This is one of my biggest priorities of the year since I believe it has the potential to make the most ongoing quality-of-life improvements for international students from a language barrier (deciphering the kiwi accent) standpoint, as well as improving accessibility for every student, regardless of their situation or background. The existence of an option to turn this feature on will no doubt help students, and I have already received countless feedback confirming this.

#### **15.6.2. Social and welfare related issues within the University and the wider Community.**

The same as Section 12.6.1. I believe a well-made lecture recording policy will be an equitable policy, and an absolute must. It will do little to no harm to students who do not need it, while providing massive benefits and accessibility to students that do, in an area that is a fundamental part of all students' studying here at the University.

Another social and welfare issue within University that I believe is overlooked is the lack of "fun" (and safe) events at and around O-week and Re O-week specifically for international students to meet each other, or cater to students who do not enjoy big crowds and music-based events, or students who do not consume alcohol, for religious reasons etc. The closest thing is the international meet and greet, but I think it is still kind of stiff and is also I believe it is a world of a difference to meet or not meet that one person (that knows a person that knows a person) at the very beginning of your university journey in a new country. An addition of an event catered towards a different demographic, potentially focused on exploration and feeling connected and invested in your new community, could be a great alternative option to have. I'm currently in talks with the Social Impact Studio, to see if this could be arranged, but also open to exploring other options to make this happen.

**15.7. Maintain a good working relationship to the Association Student Support Centre Manager and Advocates so that the opportunity to share information about academic and welfare issues of relevance to international students is available.**

I have only met with Dwaine from Student Support once during the meet up, but I look forward to establishing a relationship with him as the year goes on, especially about international student accommodation as I'm aware that there is a lot to be desired in that area.

I have had one issue come up that we ended up having to defer to them and they were happy to take on the case as it was more of an immediate operations issue rather than a governance issue.

**15.8. Maintain a good working relationship with the International Office of the University, sharing information and ideas with them when appropriate.**

I have been working closely with Chelsea from the International Office to organize the International Welcome event, meeting with her multiple times over the past few weeks to organize it, as it is an event planned and funded by them, but executed and hosted by OISA. I also have a monthly meeting with Jason who is the Director International, and he has kindly offered to help me with any goals of mine throughout the year, as well as be a person of contact for any issues facing international students.

**15.9. Work in conjunction with the Finance and Strategy Officer and the Clubs Development Officer and the Clubs and Societies Representative to ensure the affiliation and support of international student groups.**

I have not done much in this area yet this year, other than message a few clubs at the beginning of the year who were affiliated last year, but had not re-affiliated yet. I will make sure to work with Abby (Finance and Strategy) and Emma (Clubs and Socs) more closely in the coming months.

**15.10. Maintain a good working relationship with the Administrative Vice-President, proactively bringing issues relevant to international students to their attention, and meeting with them on a weekly basis.**

So far, I have been bringing most of my questions and issues I've heard to Keegan when they have come up, but once the weekly meetings with Emily the Administrative Vice-President begin, I will bring issues to her attention instead, because the last thing Keegan needs is more work than she already does. I will instead annoy Emily.

**15.11. Sit on the New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA) as a member and maintain and fulfil the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding held between Association and NZISA.**

I attended the NZISA AGM last year with Cyrus, and from communications from Pauliasi the secretary, it appears the first meeting is coming up in the coming weeks. I have an established relationship with Irfaan who is the PR officer, and Sean who is the president, since they are both from Otago and I know them personally, I am kept closely updated about NZISA.

**15.12. Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.**

I have performed the general duties of all Executive Officers, details of which will be under "Part 2: General Duties of All Executive Members.

**15.13. Where practical, work not less than ten hours per week.**

If I exclude IFF, the amount of work I did before my first day in the office, as well as every instance where the role required more than 10 hours in the week, then I believe I am not reaching my 10 hour per week role.

But if I do include those, then I'm good. (I think this is at least a 15 hour pw role as it currently stands, but I'll see if the next few months are quiet)

**3. General Duties of all Executive Officers**

**3.1. The appointed term for all OUSA Executive Officers shall commence from the 1st of January and will terminate on the 31st of December of that same year.**

That's so true

**3.2. Where reasonable, all Executive Officers are expected to assist as volunteers for OUSA events and functions, including, but not limited to:**

**3.2.1. Assisting at the OUSA Tent City and other activities during Summer School, Orientation and Re-Orientation; and;**

Sausages were served, the students ate free food, cost of living crisis averted (not). Liam got to meet the Highlanders. I was very happy for him.

**3.2.2. Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.**

It is inappropriate.

**3.3. Where reasonable, all Executive Officers are to be available for Executive meetings, national conferences, national and local campaigns, Executive training sessions and Executive planning sessions.**

I've attended all training sessions so far, but missed out on one meeting last week without an apology by accident because I thought it got canceled when it wasn't.

I would like to try to keep this role as much as possible so I will try very hard to attend my next meeting. And the next one after that too. And so on.

## **PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

### **3.4. All Executive officers shall:**

**3.4.1. Keep up to date with the Finance and Strategy Officer's Executive budget, bringing to the Finance and Strategy Officer any spending proposals, keeping track of their spending and ensuring they do not exceed budgeted expenditure;**

The exec Beyblade tournament will have to come out of my pocket then.

**3.4.2. Educate themselves on needs and experiences relevant to historically marginalised demographic groups including intersectionality and promote and encourage all demographics to participate, where relevant, in clubs, societies, committees and OUSA events;**

I have been putting even more of an effort in this year to learn more about Te Tiriti and the history of Aotearoa, especially as I'm an elected official now. I'd been kind of giving myself a pass (and so have other people) since I'm an international student and did not go through the history classes here that most other people went through here. But that excuse is wearing thin, and I want to change that. As tangata Tiriti, I've been given so much from this country and its people, and it is honestly the least I can do to learn and act in a way that aligns with the principles of Te Tiriti and uplift the voices of Māori. I am a bit ashamed I don't know more, even though I've been here for 3 whole years now, but instead of turning that into guilt and making it about myself, I want this year to be a year of learning and humility, and doing what I can. I unfortunately missed out on the Te Tiriti workshop earlier this year since I was at home sick, but I will read/watch/talk to people to fill in the current gaps of my understanding, and adjust my actions accordingly, as well as encourage others to do the same.

**3.4.3. Prioritise sustainability and minimization of environmental impacts in all aspects of their role and keep up to date with environmental issues; duties of all Executive Officers.**

At every chance I get, I do/try to. I am doing everything I reasonably can to make it so that this becomes a fundamental duty of all human beings, and not only something that people need to tick off on their quarterly reports and then forget about.

**3.4.4. Every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community.**

Unfortunately I haven't been able to partake in an "official" volunteering service the last two months or so, so I'll have to make up for that in the upcoming quarters. But I have been called upon multiple times as "the Unicrew guy" this year to plug some volunteering projects, or come along to their trainings so I can give people a rundown, so I'm volunteering by proxy(?) But will do better.

### **3.4.5. Regularly check and respond to all communications.**

Doing so, but sometimes with a bit of delay if there is a big backlog. I need to make a routine of answering them at a certain time.

## **PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

- OUSA Executive
- Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust
- Otago Internationalisation Committee
- Otago Distance Learning Advisory Board
- Otago Summer School Operational Group
- Otago Health Science Internationalisation Committee
- Study Dunedin Advisory Board

## **PART FOUR: GOALS AND YOUR PROGRESS**

### **Establishing ongoing "Welcome" volunteering trips at the beginning of Semesters for international students**

One of the problems I have identified is that there are not many University events advertised to international students (especially full-degree ones, instead of semester-long exchange students who have a bit more structure and support during their time here) to get out in nature and explore, many of those experiences locked behind club trips that can be intimidating/costly for new students to join, or you have to know a person with a car. So as it turns out, Ōtepoti's most scenic spots and places where you can fully experience "Dunedin" as advertised in the drone shots, websites and pamphlets that these students would have seen before coming here turn out to be pretty difficult to get to.

I want to change that by making university-sponsored events that students only need to sign up for to attend, so they can explore, make some friends, and do some good in the community in the process, all with little cost to them, both financially and the mental energy cost of organizing something like this from scratch, as opposed to just signing up and showing up.

The benefits of this will be:

- Students make friends at the beginning of the year

- An alternative to partying and drinking culture if students do not participate
- Students learn that volunteering is not a scary activity, and actually quite intrinsically rewarding
- Students can send pretty photos back home so parents (or equivalent) are a little more convinced that sending their child to the corner of the world was a good call
- Students feel connected to the wider community, and feel more invested in Ōtepoti Dunedin, rather than just a place they are for a short time
- Students get to see parts of the city they otherwise might not have seen
- Students touch grass
- Buses are much more climate-friendly instead of a bunch of cars taking separate trips to the same locations
- Positive social impact!

I am in the process of organising a potential arrangement with the Social Impact Studio to make this happen, with the potential of an MoU on the horizon.

### **Lecture Recording Policy**

As mentioned in section 15.6.1, this is one of my primary goals. I've been in preliminary talks with the Academic and Welfare reps about this, and we plan to get the ball rolling and get the best possible version of this policy made and implemented as soon as possible.

### **PART FIVE: GENERAL**

Can't believe that a quarter of my time here is done already. I've been hanging on so far, but only with the help of some amazing people here at OUSA that need to be acknowledged:

Keegan, thanks for the work that you do, and the culture you cultivate in the exec. It's very much appreciated/noticed and we're super lucky.

Donna, thank you for being so lovely every time I talk to you, even if it's just to say hi, and for being so inspiringly wise and onto things.

Esther, I use the main entrance whenever I can just so I can say hi to you, thank you for the laughs and smiles and stories and for listening to mine in turn.

Dane, thanks for putting up with me calling you constantly before/during/after IFF and for saving IFF for all of us more times than I can count. The community thanks you and your orange events hat.

Also to everyone else: Please contact me if anyone is reading this, saying you read the report. I'm very curious who actually reads these.