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Postgraduate Representative

Second Quarter Report 2024

Submitted

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**Part One: Executive Officer Position Description Duties**

* 1. **Promote via publications, promotions and campaigns, an environment within the Association and on campus which is supportive of postgraduate students.**

The Society for Postgraduate Students has successfully run a series of regular, monthly ‘Imposter Hour’ events that provides postgraduate students with a space to talk about the good, the bad, the ugly about life in academia. Overall the response has been positive and we are improving the sessions every time to offer our postgraduate community what they feel they need most from these sessions.

The support we provide for students is not limited to official scheduled events. Through our social media and email channels, we regularly upload academic memes, news and articles of interest, and sending out emails about different events around campus that would be of interest to postgrads.

* 1. **Be one of the Association’s representatives on the University of Otago Senate.**

I have attended all meetings run by senate.

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

**1.3.1. Society for Postgraduate Students; and;**

I chair the club ☺

**1.3.2. Academic Committee.**

I have yet to sit personally on the committee as the ToR mentions the postgraduate representative sitting on academic committee just needs to be part of SPS but I plan to go along to some future events as we don’t have someone who is part of SPS that wants to be a consistent attendee. I have been kept up to date of discussions that have happened in the last couple meetings though.

* 1. **Chair monthly meetings of the Society for Postgraduate Students, 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.**

Unfortunately, we haven’t had as many SPS exec meetings as I would’ve liked at this stage in the year. The exec is composed of, obviously, all postgraduate students who are very busy and simply don’t have the time for bi-weekly meetings. Regular monthly meetings will take place during season 2.

* 1. **Take direction from the Society for Postgraduate Students on all matters relevant to postgraduate members.**

I have a wonderful team that are great at working together and coming up with plans to make my life easier.

* 1. **Be the Association’s representative on the Board of Graduate Studies.**

Yep, have attended all meetings ☺

* 1. **Maintain a good working relationship with relevant OUSA staff, ensuring that information is shared on issues of relevance to postgraduate students.**

I feel like I’ve done a pretty good job at reporting everything that is going on at our weekly exec meeting round-ups.

* 1. **Facilitate a variety of student representation on postgraduate related University Committees.**

I think I do a good job of representing the student voice in my committees, and when necessary, I make sure to get consultation from the postgraduate community about different issues that come up before speaking on anything that I’m not completely sure about.

* 1. **Maintain a good working relationship with the Director of Graduate Research School and endeavor to meet with them on a regular basis.**

I’d like to say that I have a good relationship with the Dean. I see Diane every month in our GRC meetings. I could probably be more proactive about working with the GRS more regularly though so that’s on me.

* 1. **Maintain links with and assist affiliated Postgraduate bodies.**

I have had several meetings with different persons on campus that have postgraduate students in their best interests. I have really enjoyed working together with everyone to put in some good mahi for the postgraduate community.

* 1. **Maintain a good working relationship with the Administrative Vice-President, proactively bringing issues relevant to postgraduate students to their attention, and meeting on a regular basis.**

I’d say Emily and I have maintained our relationship and I still love sweet Emily very much <3 Our meetings have decreased slightly due to my busy schedule but I am excited for more future meetings with her ☺

* 1. **Sit on the Society for Postgraduate Students as an ex-officio member and maintain and fulfil the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding held between the Association and the Society for Postgraduate Students.**

Yep.

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

Yep, I’d say I do, I hope everyone else agrees :’)

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

My average is 9.80 hours per week (sadge), including Easter and a menty B break.

**Part 2: General Duties of All Executive Members**

**2.1. 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.**

Sheeeeesh we’re halfway boiz :P

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

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

I know this question is not asking this but I was there for tertiary open day and our q+a tables in the link ☺

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

I contributed questions to the referenda and spread the word about voting on SPS social media channels.

**2.3. It is expected that Executive Officers attend Executive meetings.**

I’ve been to all of them!

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

Yep, I am always available for when I’m needed. I have a meeting coming up actually with all the other postgrad representatives in the country which is pretty cool :D

**2.5. All Executive officers shall:**

**2.5.1. 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;**

I have not seen much in terms of budgeting but Abby is doing great things for OUSA and associated parties.

**2.5.2. 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;**

My consultation with Māori and Pasifika academics have continued through this quarter.

**2.5.3. Act in accordance with and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi while exercising their duties;**

Yep, I’d like to think I do.

**2.5.4. Where reasonable, attend events hosted by clubs related to historically marginalised demographic groups;**

I would like to attend more events hosted by other clubs though but have struggled to find the time. I will try to attend some over 2nd semester.

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

In my day to day, of course I do but I have also attended air travel steering group meetings where we focus on leading the university to make sustainable choices regarding academic-related travel costs.

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

I don’t know if this counts but I tutored for free?

**2.5.7 Regularly check and respond to all communications.**

Yep, I have responded to everything.

**Part 3: Attendance and Involvement in OUSA and University Committees**

These are the boards I sit on:

* Board of graduate studies/undergraduate studies
* Graduate research committee
* Graduate research student liaison committee
* Senate
* Human ethics committee
* Air travel project steering committee
* Library committee
* Animal practice steering and compliance group

I have always and still really enjoy attending the meetings run by all of these committees. I always feel very supported by all the members and it’s a very nice feeling for my input to be asked for at the table. Special shout out to those who make that happen.

I know this question isn’t really asking for it but I think the majority of my “Influence” and representation of the student voice comes from the one-on-one and project meetings I have with different individuals around campus. I also especially love those meetings because I get to meet and hear from individuals around campus that are putting in the mahi for the student cohort voluntarily, outside of their day jobs. Frankly, considering the climate (vibe?) of the campus right now (can I say that?), it’s nice to work on projects with people who actually care about The People IYKYK.

**Part 4: Goals and your Progress**

1. Battling postgrad loneliness

Both my campaign and much of the mahi I’ve put in this quarter has emphasized the need for a ‘sense of community’ among postgraduate students and by proxy, battling the loneliness that comes from the postgraduate experience. ‘Imposter Hour’ was/is the major initiative that targets this goal, and its intentions were picked up by Unipress and the Otago Daily Times, which was a v proud moment for myself and the exec. In both articles, I talk about how meaningful social connection and comradery are important for surviving academia and I think Imposter Hour does a good job of offering a space and time for people to come chat and meet others who are struggling with similar postgrad-related difficulties. I will say, it’s kind of funny to think about how being successful at targeting loneliness will cause a diminishing of attendance at Imposter Hours. Paradoxical right? The response I’ve had from students who have attended have also been supportive and warm. Obviously Imposter Hour won’t be for everyone, but for those who have really benefitted from the session, it encourages me to keep hosting these sessions regularly because if anything, I hope it brings people comfort to know it is a safe space for them to come if they’re having a particularly bad week, even if it’s just me and one other person.

1. Postgrad open day

Think tertiary open day but for undergrads to learn about and get excited about postgrad at Otago. We had a pretty good response on our referendum question asking people for their thoughts on a potential event like this. Originally, we were planning on running the event ourselves and having departments literally “buy-in” to the idea [since we broke :’)]. Luckily, marketing reached out with a FAT budget and are supporting our vision for the event. We are on track for hosting the event in August. Yay! Watch this space!

1. Fortnight board games

Of course Imposter Hour is great and all but some people also just want to meet others in a fun and social environment, and not always with drinks involved. And obviously, we’re here to give the people what they want so we are planning on having fortnightly board games night at Card Merchant. Every Wednesday, card merchant does $2 entry and free access to their entire board game collection and we can order pizza in as well! What better way to get to know people than over an R-rated game of cards against humanity.

**Part 5: General**

With the halfway-point reached, I am of two minds. I feel like I have accomplished a lot while at the same time, I feel like there is way more I could’ve done in the last 6 months. Maybe I’m falling into the trap of comparing myself with other people. I have to constantly remind myself that we are all on our own personal journeys and that I’ve done what I’ve done and I should be proud of it. We all should be. The OUSA exec are all such wonderful individuals who have so much to give and have already given to this year’s student cohort. I’m positive that over the course of semester 2, we get up to more fun stuff together as an exec and form super cute memories. As I was preaching at tertiary open day: being on the OUSA exec is like having a family away from home.

* Hanna <3