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**Welfare & Equity Representative, Otago University Students’ Association**

**3rd Quarter Report – 3224 words**

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**PART ONE: Executive Officer Position Description Duties**

**10. Duties of the Welfare and Equity Representative**

**10.1. Assume all the powers and duties of the President in the absence of the President, the Administrative Vice-President, the Finance and Strategy Officer and the Academic Representative.**

There hasn’t been a need for me to assume powers and duties of the President during this quarter.

**10.2. Work to address issues affecting marginalised communities of students at the University of Otago, in areas including but not limited to:**

**10.2.1. Academic issues at the University of Otago; and;**

There is a range of mahi I have been involved in this quarter, that I think might be my most successful yet. To name but a few, being part of Academic Audit Panel speaking to AQA, meeting the University Advisory Group leads, recordings + closed captioning survey being promoted alongside Ibuki our International Student Representative & Stella Lynch our Academic Student Representative.

**10.2.2. Social and welfare related issues within the University of Otago and the wider community.**

This quarter has been really awesome connecting and working alongside the executive on collective mahi. I have had a couple 1-1 welfare encounters or connections that due to privacy reasons I will not disclose, but it has been good to see that the executive is being engaged by the student population for help.

Key issues I have lobbied, dental dams at student health, pay equity for note takers through DIS, sitting on equity committees, connecting with clubs for example; Thursday’s in Black + ODSA, around key issues being raised and taking it to Claire Gallop for further discussion. I do hope to see mandatory TWT training for all tutors and demonstrators at the university.

As discussed below, I keep over all social or welfare related issues that may arise at University of Otago and stay well connected with relevant groups or contacted directly raising any concerns.

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

**10.3.1. Standing Committee of the Executive; and;**

Any meeting I was unable to attend my apologies was accepted. I have made an effort that if I had missed important discussions I would meet with Keegan or key people in the executive well versed in that topic to catch-up and share input. I believe I have been a contributor across all matters the executive has encountered when appropriate.

**10.3.2. Residential Committee.**

As per last quarter, this committee didn’t invite me to join. We no longer have a residential representative but as a person who lived in a hall for three years as a sub warden for two I use that knowledge when discussing with members of the University.

**10.4. Where appropriate, brief the President on national and local tertiary sector welfare issues and representing the welfare interests of students on local body committees and boards.**

A special thank you to Keegan this quarter where the voice-notes have continued and has been really helpful sharing welfare related issues which she can raise in Council. It is important that welfare issues can be tag-teamed across different channels of the university to help push for a more succinct approach.

**10.5. Actively inform the student body of issues relating to their welfare, via publications, promotions and campaigns.**

Coming off the back of ‘Look After Your Mates’ it was awesome to be interviewed by Critic to discuss the core meaning behind this and shape it the way I wanted it to be perceived. Mental Health Awareness week is coming up so have a few plans to attend those events and be interviewed by R1.

**10.6. Maintain a good working relationship with relevant Association staff, including the Student Support Centre Manager, Queer Support Coordinator and Advocates.**

This quarter has been awesome to meet with a range of OUSA staff and relevant extensions to the association. I am most excited to say I am building a relationship with UniPol and believe that welfare and equity goes hand in hand with their values – I look forward to seeing how we can help each other.

**10.6.1. Meet with the OUSA Student Support Centre Manager on a regular basis, where possible and liaise with them on relevant welfare issues as they arise.**

Mainly meeting with Sophie Penn who is an outstanding advocate, our focus has been on restyling and kitting out the parental room and upcoming mental health week (23rd September – 27th). Its awesome to have this working relationship with her as our roles do go hand in hand and we’ve been able to bounce back ideas for both this quarter and the upcoming. I love their new office and I believe there is more foot traffic and cutest more accessible golden retriever for cuddles. Also Winer Wellbeing week was a great success!!

**10.7. Maintain a good working relationship with community organisations and groups that may provide services to the benefit of student welfare.**

I am well connected in the disability community and have been able to champion welfare issues at Otago through these channels. I have numerous volunteer roles where I have been able to connect with a variety of providers both at a local and national level to hear advice, similar concerns or offers of help.

**10.8. Facilitate in conjunction with the relevant committee chair a variety of student representation across welfare and equity related University Committees and OUSA Sub-committees.**

I both have the interpersonal connection with relevant clubs or advocates but ensure to also set up e-introductions so they can tell their own story or raise relevant concerns to leadership within the University. I always ask executive who are in the ballpen relevant thoughts on issues or advice on potential allies or good channels to escalate issues with at the University.

**10.9. Maintain a good working relationship with the University, particularly with:**

**10.9.1. The Director of Student Services;**

I met with Claire Gallop regularly when available, she has been a real asset to my role this quarter. I have taken a lot of welfare concerns directly to herself and Jo which we’ve been able to work over, redirect to relevant staff and get feedback on my presentation of ideas to boards.

**10.9.2. Student Health Representative;**

I sit on the Clinical Health Governance group where I meet with a range of people at the practice, but my main contact is Magaret Charles. This quarter I went in hard. I was able to make a presentation for the board outlining feedback from students that was anonymised and collected by Instagram and drop in table – wow what a game changer. I am constantly pushing back to make the student voice heard in this space and it does take up majority of my time some weeks. Its been awesome to also share these issues in my other roles especially around the international student medicals to people like NZQA when discussing the code.

**10.9.3. Disability Information Services;**

I have met with Melissa Lethaby on a variety of issues and discuss on a wide range of barriers students are currently facing. It has been particularly hard to hear the stories that continue of students being denied special consideration / extensions due to illness by professors and I do hope that with the collaboration the Disability Action Plan will ensure greater safety for students with disabilities. Melissa has been a vital sounding board for a lot of my concerns and has been really proactive with helping me or the issues raise speed along.

**10.9.4. UniQ;**

I have spoken with UniQ over email hearing key concerns and made a significant effort to share the gender-neutral bathroom, I have raised this appropriately with Claire and Jo, especially for the link.

**10.9.5. Te Whare Tāwharau;**

I haven’t met with TWT representatives this quarter but mainly is covered when discussing with Thursdays in Black because they have a close working relationship. I do however am pushing for demonstrators and tutors to have mandatory TWT training as to ensure Sophie Elliott’s legacy is not forgotten.

**10.9.6. Thursdays in Black;**

I have met with Ella and Caitlin regularly and have been wonderful to collaborate with. It awesome to hear their plans for the next year, ways I can support them connecting with Claire for example. I am looking forward to attending their one day event of “what I was wearing” campaign which will be very impactful. I am still at a dead end with drink covers but have raised this again throughout the university in hope I can find an answer.

**10.9.7. Chaplaincy Board; and;**

I attend the Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board monthly and have really enjoyed to get to know the board and the chaplains. It has been an absolute pleasure learning about their roles within the student community and I highly recommend any student approach the wonderful team they have. The had tertiary chaplaincy week between 11th August – 16th which I heard was successful.

**10.9.8. Any other Welfare and Equity related organisations.**

There is a range of committees I sit on, more OUSA related I have been privileged to be part of constitutional conversations to help ratify ours while improving it where needed as we transition to modern challenges. I have outlined the committees I sit on below and have raised issues both there and back at OUSA when appropriate.

**10.10. Maintain a good working relationship with Clubs and Societies Representative to collaborate on welfare issues and opportunities regarding clubs.**

Emma literally sits next to me, so I’d like to see her try breaking-up our working relationship. It been awesome to bounce ideas back and forth and I love talking about welfare issues that are raised in her portfolio or brainstorming improvements for better buy in by students.

**10.11. Be available via cell phone at all practical times.**

I respond promptly to any messages or emails that need my attention but important to note this on-call system is interesting in itself as some people may not have capacity or traveling at times to respond.

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

Discussed in part two of the report, but yes.

**10.13. Where practical, work not less than twenty hours per week**

Over the last quarter I averaged 20 hours per week.

**PART TWO: General Duties of all Executive Members**

**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.**

This is correct.

**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;**

I was able to sit at drop in tables and when my schedule permitted helped elsewhere when needed.

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

I am promoting the current OUSA elections for 2025 through my own personal channels and encourage anyone to apply.

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

I have attended majority of meetings but at times I was unable to be there in-person, all of my apologies accepted.

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

Yes, I have been able to discuss with Keegan on any relevant topics but also as an executive what would help us grow in both quarter 3 and 4.

**3.5. All Executive officers shall:**

**3.5.1. 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;**

This quarter has been beneficial in having Daniel being on-boarded to focus on the OUSA budget. I believe I have given excellent feedback to the organisation regarding the budget and with prior board knowledge have suggested other positive revenue benefits which I hope to be considered in the future.

**3.5.2. 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;**

I have prior experience in the student movement, and I have been able to draw on connections to benefit policies, feedback, and the student body. As a disabled wāhine who originates from a rural background I am conscious I am bringing perspective of that intersectionality to this role. I have an ongoing commitment to be a life-long-learner, educating myself on important mahi or issues to highlight marginalised communities’ struggles. When there is an experience or mahi I can’t speak to, I aim to either redirect them to appropriate representatives or ask for the ability to make comment after consulting with the student population. Being born political due to my intersectionality, I was pretty much forced to be exposed to inequities of others which I have enjoyed listening to, educating myself and others when appropriate. I welcome students with lived experience to share their story and priority issues and how I can best support them.

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

I continue to learn the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, I try my best in using Te Reo in everyday life and have enjoyed learning new words from fellow Māori friends. It is also important to me I would never overshadow any advocate who whakapapa Māori and if there was ever a conversation had at a committee or board level, I would redirect them to our co-tumuaki Gemella and Distance.

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

Not as much as I would have liked as the first part of the semester saw me regularly being out of Dunedin, but I am happy to report I loved the kava session the beautiful OPISA put on for the executive during Tongan Language week <3

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

A key motivator of mine is sustainability in the context of emergency management, resilience planning and environmental issues. I am acutely aware of my impact and limit purchases especially fast fashion. It is also really important to acknowledge not everyone has the ability to be environmentally conscious due to financial barriers or accessibility needs but that just recognises a current system in society regarding the need for a better policy for a circular economy to help aid sustainable choices.

It’s been awesome to see Liam begin to build an environmental network across the campus, we had Fran the Green MP and ex-ousa also attend and discuss with later. I have still been corresponding with relevant staff around the period project but believe the resource would better suit next year as there should be a better plan for distribution. I have however touched in with library staff and campus watch surrounding if we can provide aid in the meantime.

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

I spend a lot of time volunteering at a national level in the disability movement space, often these trickles down into the space of local communities in Dunedin. I easily would be volunteering 20 + hours a week most time dependent on increase / need / positions. However, I would like to recognise capacity and would love to do more at a local level if my energy levels as a person with disabilities.

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

I do this and love emails, however, also appreciate the voice notes as I often check in with madam president to ensure I am on track with expectations.

**PART THREE: Attendance and Involvement in OUSA and University Committees**

The list of committees that I am involved in is set out at 10.13. I have enjoyed being involved in these committees with other board members being supportive. They are essential parts to the university system to allow for equitable progress across departments. Here is a list of the committees I sit on.

* Clinical Governance Group (Student Health)
* Equity Advisory Group
* Ethical Behaviour Committee
* Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board
* Constitution Committee
* Waste Management Governance
* Sophia Charter Implementation Working Group
* Library Group Committee

**PART FOUR: Goals and Your Progress**

Updates on my goals from last quarter;

1. *Lecture recording policy with Academic + International OUSA representatives that also reflect accessibility and universal design which includes closed captioning.*

I believe that this goal is on track and I look forward to seeing a draft policy end of year. We were successful in getting both feedback from staff and students, as this was part of my campaigning for OUSA executive 2024 and other mahi helping Vic lobby mandatory lecture recordings, this is awesome to see.

1. *Run “look after your mates” which is collaborative with our clubs & socs.* 
   1. due to time constraints and ousa marketing limitations they were unable to give this campaign the much needed TLC to get this across the line with clubs in an opt-in scenario. It was put on posters throughout the university but they did not post it on their socials.
   2. I was happy to be interviewed by Critic to really shape the student perception on this campaign as did not want it to be a parental look.
   3. I hope that a welfare related campaign will be built into marketings schedule every year for the executive to use this resource to share socials and capacity.
2. *Review mental health support at Otago University and make recommendations for improvement through conversations with Student Support & Student Health*

This has been a continuous effort, my shift with student health became more clinical in how they are offering their services and the way they are approaching conversations + what they have to offer. I highly encourage any student willing to share feedback to me to please contact [welfare@ousa.org.nz](mailto:welfare@ousa.org.nz) <3

1. *Working on the Disability Action Plan with relevant university staff to ensure a more accessible learning environment.*

Complete, great success. \*Borat voice\*

1. *Effectively work in partnership with minority groups and uphold their mana and pressing issues and ensure.*

Continuous goal that I hold myself accountable to.

1. *I do hope to work closer with Political and Residential Representative focusing on the cost-of-living crisis that students face to help get relevant data on the state our community is made to live in.*

This is in the works by the whole executive and seeing a joint effort between Ibuki and Liam, I do look forward to seeing the results if needed happy to share my input.

**PART FIVE: General**

Firstly, may I say, I have felt this has been one of my most impactful quarters, I am really proud of the work I’ve done and the connections I helped build for OUSA. I have heard the critics loud and clear, you want a shorter report so here it is in its glory, but I hope it doesn’t take away from the work I have done or stuff I may have missed. I look forward to begin the handover period in the next quarter.