

Hanna Friedlander

Postgraduate Representative

Third Quarter Report 2024

Word count: 2150

Part One: Executive Officer Position Description Duties

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

On top of our regular impostor hour sessions that we run and have been talked about in previous report, the society for postgraduate students have begun running regular social board games night. We have had a pretty good turnout at each session so far and hope that it can eventually run on its own without any of the exec being there to host.

- 1.2. Be one of the Association's representatives on the University of Otago Senate.**

I have attended almost all meetings run by senate. This quarter has been especially busy for me as a PhD student and some weeks I have been away for conferences and teaching purposes.

- 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 <3

- 1.3.2. Academic Committee.**

I'm not sure there have been any meetings this quarter.

- 1.4. 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.**

I know in my last report I said we would have more meetings, but regretfully, they have not happened as frequently as I would have liked. Postgraduate students are busier than ever during semester 2 so it is practically impossible to get everyone in a room at the same time. I have regularly met with my exec members on separate occasions individually and have spoken to them about SPS matters.

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

The great thing about the imposter hour and board games sessions is that I get the chance to talk with postgrads around the campus about what is on their minds regarding postgrad life at Otago. I would argue these conversations are what directs my actions as the postgrad representative the most, especially when it comes to advocacy and support.

1.6. Be the Association's representative on the Board of Graduate Studies.

Same as in 1.2: I have attended almost all meetings. This quarter has been especially busy for me as a PhD student and some weeks I have been away for conferences and teaching purposes.

1.7. 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.

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

Until now, I hadn't noticed how well this duty captures the role of the postgraduate rep whereby my role is not just responsible for representing postgraduate students but is also there to be a voice for students and to offer my advice from a student perspective. I would argue that I provide a more holistic student perspective because I have already completed undergrad- I know what it feels like to both be an undergrad just swimming unbeknownst to everything that goes on both at the university and staff level, and the doors that open up to you once you become a postgrad and are more involved at the level of academics. I have also felt sometimes (esp. this year) that I've become an advocate for staff too since many postgraduate students are staff of the university and encounter separate issues to just being a student in that domain as well.

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

Now that we have an official dean, Diane and I have agreed on the importance of maintaining regular meetings between GRS and OUSA postgrad rep role and we have scheduled monthly catch-ups where I can bring up any concerns or requests from the postgrad community and I can hear about initiatives that are being worked on at GRS that I can then share back to my peers.

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

I have continued to have 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.

1.11. **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.**

Love emily, she's great and always super supportive <3 we maybe haven't met as frequently as we could've been but I think both of our schedules have been pretty busy this quarter.

1.12. **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.**

Yes.

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

Yes, hopefully everyone else agrees :)

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

My average is 7.73. Yeah, not a great quarter for me in terms of average hours. This quarter has been especially busy for me personally so there are whole weeks that I had to blank out because I was either away for a conference or just too busy with running experiments or teaching. In saying that, none of it directly affected the workload demanded of me in my role. I think, because of the time of year, there are also lower numbers of proposals for new papers/paper revisions coming through and there have also been committee meetings that have been cancelled due to not enough agenda items so much of the work and commitments that filled up my hours in previous quarters have just not been required of me this quarter. This is not an excuse – I could've done extra to fill up my hours, so apologies for that.

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.

Noted.

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;

Not applicable this quarter.

2.2.2. Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.

Not applicable this quarter.

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.

I went to the budgeting info session, which was really helpful to understand what the budget is all about :)

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;

Daniel has been great at keeping the exec informed about what is specifically important for the exec to be aware of about the budget. I'm pretty sure he personally has not spent any of our money, which is what the duty/question implies lol

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;

Yes. I really enjoy sharing with others everything I have learned from different workshops and seminars I have attended that have educated me on different populations and I always encourage my peers to attend similar workshops as they have been most enlightening and fun!

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

Yes. I aim to do so everyday.

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

I really wish I could attend the Reo classes that Te Rōpū Māori runs and the community Friday at the museum classes as I have been wanting to incorporate more reo in my day to day but unfortunately, I teach during those times. I really loved the Kava night that UOPISA kindly invited the exec to. It was a wonderful first experience of kava!

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

Yes.

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

My tutoring has continued, and I have also provided teaching of lab skills for early postgrad students.

2.5.7 Regularly check and respond to all communications.

Yes, I think my response latency has decreased a bit this quarter though...my bad guys

Part 3: Attendance and Involvement in OUSA and University Committees

Here is a list of 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

Part 4: Goals and your Progress

1. Imposter Hour

Imposter hour has been great, as always. We have great turnouts and great discussions and from the feedback we have received, participants come out of our sessions feeling better than when they came in and that is everything to me.

2. Postgrad open day

Most of this quarter has focused on bringing the postgrad open day to fruition, which is on track to happen on September 19th. Like many initiatives, it hasn't been smooth sailing, which I don't wish to talk about in this report, but I am very hopeful for the event's success and hope similar events will be held in future years. I can't wait to report on the event in my final quarter report.

3. Bi-weekly board games

As mentioned earlier, board games night has been super successful and we will continue holding it regularly so that eventually it can be self-sufficient and run on its own!

4. Goals before the end of the year

I want to direct my attention to ensuring a smooth transition and hand-over of the postgrad rep role and SPS. Over time, the club has ebbed and flowed in terms of the quality of its events, and there is an observed lack of continuity in what the club stands for. Obviously, I came into this role conducting a major overhaul of the existing club to start a new vision and purpose for the club and I underestimated how hard it would be to do so in just one term. I am committed to ensuring whoever comes after me will be well-prepared for the role and I want to offer as much of my support as possible in helping to build up the community to what I believe it can be.

Part 5: General

I'm writing this as I'm listening to the presidential debate, and I am really inspired. I think, and maybe some others on the exec would agree, but the role is something that I had to grow into. This role is inherently political, of course, but it doesn't really hit you until you've spent some time in the role. Since being in this role now for 3 quarters, I hold a lot of passion for making the university experience that much better for my fellow students. Being a student representative is more than just a position—it's a powerful platform for creating real change. As a rep, I have had the opportunity to influence key decisions that impact not just my peers but the way the entire university thinks about how things should be run. I have had the most amazing experience, engaging with all the wonderful faculty around campus who really do care about students. My participation with the range of committees and working groups ensures that the student voice is not only heard but is actively involved in decision-making processes. The exec role is truly unique placed in a university environment that offers students a chance to leave a lasting legacy. Look at the superb efforts and success (fingers crossed!) of Tara, Ibuki, and Stella with making the lecture recordings policy with closed captions a reality! Before I start sounding like a walking ad for OUSA, I just want to end by saying I have really enjoyed every moment as an exec member and I am so fortunate to have worked alongside such admirable members of the exec who will go on to do great things in life <3