

Amy Whyman

Welfare and Equity Representative

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report – 2965 words

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**Part One: Executive Office 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.**

I have not had to do this thankfully yet. I feel that if I do something has gone terribly, horribly wrong.

**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;**

Stella is an impressive machine. Since she has been here for a year, currently she is taking whatever is given to her and running full speed with it. She is also very good at consulting the rest of the team, but due to my lack of experience all the ideas that I have she has already thought of (again what a G). Once we get underway with our agenda committees and new projects, it will be much easier to collaborate.

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

I'm trying to meet with as many groups and people within the University and OUSA to talk through our goals, their goals, and ongoing projects. Once I have gained more knowledge through these meetings, I will be more proactive than reactive.

I'm also trying to keep up to date with relevant news and issues that effect our Otago student community and beyond through keeping up to date on the news, newsletters from different advocacy clubs, and the Critic.

**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;**

So far I have not missed any meetings this year.

### **10.3.2. Residential Committee.**

Residential Committee has not yet had a meeting this year. Once they are up and running, I will make sure to attend all meetings I can.

### **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.**

Liam and I currently are having weekly formal meetings alongside informal chats often to ensure accurate communication on relevant issues.

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

So far there haven't been many opportunities to inform the student body of issues related to their welfare. In the future I will use key resources like Critic, Radio One, posters and forums to make students aware of these and ways they can be helped.

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

Within the last couple of weeks, I have tried to meet with relevant OUSA staff both formally and informally to introduce myself and understand what their goals and ongoing projects are for this year. I have had meetings with Student Support staff but not one-on-one yet as it has been a busy time of year and hard to fit into schedules. Hopefully I will be able to do this within the next couple of weeks.

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

I have met Dwaine a couple of times in group settings, but since it's a busy time of year for both of us I haven't been able to meet with him personally yet. I am currently trying to meet with Sophie Penn about the upcoming year and will try and meet with Dwaine once I have more of a handle on our projects this year.

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

Currently I am trying to meet with as many different University and affiliated staff that deal with welfare and equity issues so I can understand the different projects that other people have that OUSA can help collaborate on. I have e-introduced myself and invited many different affiliated welfare clubs to join our Welfare Council and most are keen but do not have specific representatives yet.

**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.**

Currently I provide student representation on the following committees: Hocken Collections Committee, Library Services Committee, Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust, Vice Chancellor Staff and Student Advisory Group, Hardship Fund Committee, Ethical Behaviour Committee, Clinical Governance Group, Equity Advisory Group, and Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Consultative Body. Most of these groups I have either met with their Chair to talk through my role within them or had the first meeting.

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

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

I have not met with Claire Gallop but I have reached out over email for an introductory meeting. I've heard she is quite hard to get a hold of sometimes due to her busy schedule, so I'll reach out again if unsuccessful.

**10.9.2. Student Health Representative;**

I have had a meeting with Margaret Charles, one of the Chairs of the Clinical Governance Group. She talked about the student representative role on this group and showed me the different services offered at their facility.

**10.9.3. Disability Information Services;**

I have set up a meeting with Melissa Lethaby in a couple weeks. I look forward to meeting her properly.

**10.9.4. UniQ;**

I have not met with UniQ this year yet but I have invited them to sit on Welfare Council once that is up and running and they were keen. I plan to meet with their executive before that starts.

**10.9.5. Te Whare Tāwharau;**

I have a meeting with them on Monday and I'm excited to hear about what they are doing this year.

**10.9.6. Thursdays in Black;**

I have informally met with Ella both this year at Clubs Day and previously, but I haven't met both Ella and Celia formally within my role. I have also invited them to join Welfare Council but plan on meeting with them before that starts.

#### **10.9.7. Chaplaincy Board; and;**

I have met with the Chaplaincy Board a few times this year. I was invited to their dinner at the start of the year and went to their first meeting this year. I was also on their hiring committee for their newest Chaplain over the summer. They are lovely.

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

I want to keep growing the relationships created in previous years by the welfare and equity representatives.

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

It has been good getting to know Deborah within an OUSA capacity. We are on the Student Welfare Agenda Committee together and I hope to assist with welfare and equity issues and opportunities whenever possible.

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

My number is not readily available to all, but all at OUSA have it and if anything warrants a phone call I would be happy to give it out. I am always reachable via email.

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

This is discussed in Part Two.

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

This quarter, I have worked less than twenty hours a week. I chalk that up to starting relatively early in January when most other exec members and University staff I would usually liaise with being on holiday and not knowing the scope of my role terribly well. That and imposter syndrome. I will work harder for the rest of the year to make up for the low hours this quarter.

### **Part Two: General Duties of All Executive Officers**

#### **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.**

Yessir.

**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 helped every day during Tent City and Clubs Day handing out treatles, signing people up to the GreenCard, gaining student consultation with our agenda items board, and handing out sausages. I was meant to help with International Food Fest preparation but had a small medical emergency so no longer could (I'm fine now, RIP to the top of my thumb). I did a speech at the first 'Summer in Dunners' event but was not needed for the other iterations. I did go and get a sausage and talk to OUSA Student Support and Clubs and Socs staff whenever practicable.

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

Have not had to do anything in this area yet however I am ready to help if/when it comes up. This year is local council elections so I imagine we will do some things surrounding that.

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

So far I have made it to all Executive meetings and almost all training sessions. I had to miss a bit of the weekend training before O-Week because I had an exam.

### **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.**

I will try my best to be available for all OUSA and national events wherever practicable in the future.

### **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 year I'm on the Finance, Expenditure and Strategy Committee (FESC) so I am up to date with all things brought to that committee. I have not spent any OUSA money this year but if and when that happens Daniel will be the first to know.

#### **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 do my best to educate myself on historically marginalised demographics and the intersections found within our university community. I bring the perspective of a queer woman to this role. I have an ongoing commitment to come into every situation brought to me with an open mind and to learn. Whenever there are experiences that I cannot speak to or I am not the best person for that question, I try to reorient them to people who can speak

to the issue with more knowledge or experience or make a comment after gaining permission and consulting the student population.

I was a kaiāwhina whare for two years and within that I was met with many different issues of inequity and discrimination. My default coming into that kind of situation is with support and curiosity and that will not change within this role. I look forward to having ongoing relationships with ODSA, TiB, UniQ, and other groups and leaders within our community here to help and advocate for historically marginalised demographics.

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

I will continue to learn about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and try to uphold those values as best as possible within my everyday life both in and outside of this role. It is also important to note that I would never try to overshadow any advocate who whakapapa Māori and if a conversation at a committee or board level, I would redirect them to our co-tumuaki Ngātiki and Porourangi.

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

I would love to attend more of these events. I went to the Otago Disabled Students' Association's AGM on Friday, which was great. Any events that I am made aware of or am invited to I will try to attend.

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

I am very aware of sustainability issues both personally and within our community. My family has always tried to be as sustainable as possible, so I recycle as much as possible and try to reduce my waste by buying in bulk and plastic free. The more I learn about my role the more I will try and integrate sustainable practices into the way OUSA runs.

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

I'm actively looking for a more regular voluntary service. This quarter I helped with making up hall packs in January. It was great, I felt like I was in an idle game.

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

I love emails. I am also the kind of person that cannot have an email just sit in my mailbox without doing something about it.

### **Part Three: Attendance and Involvement in OUSA and University Committees**

The list of committees I am involved in within the University is set out in 10.8. If there are any other committees I find out about or am invited to I will try my best to attend and represent students.

### **Part Four: Goals and Progress**

This year, OUSA has six overarching areas we would like to focus on creating change in. Personally, I'm focussing on Student Welfare and Student Housing. Within those areas my goals are:

1. Te Whare Tāwharau training for tutors and demonstrators within the University
  - a. This aims to create a foundation of understanding within many student-facing academic roles so if a student needs help, no matter who they go to they are supported. As a subwarden, I was surprised by who came to me when they had an issue. Sometimes it was because they sought me directly but a lot of the time they needed someone to talk to and I just happened to be there. To make this training mandatory is to make sure that students have a decent standard of care throughout their time at Otago no matter who they choose to go to. This is especially important for something as sensitive as matters of sexual harm or violence.
  - b. I believe this is a very achievable goal. I'm meeting with TWT next week to introduce myself and see any ongoing goals and projects they have this year. If this is already something on their agenda I am more than happy to help however I can, and if not I will raise the idea and talk through more specifics in terms of implementation and viability with them.
2. A more accessible policy for special consideration, special arrangements and extensions for those with chronic illnesses and disabilities on campus
  - a. This is an idea that was brought to me by Tara, as was the one above. However, this is still something I would like to fight for. With chronic illnesses and disabilities there will always be good and bad days. To recognise this is to make our University a more accessible place. No one can control how their disability changes from day-to-day, and I believe that should be reflected in our special arrangements policy.
  - b. I also believe this is an achievable goal. Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka's Disability Action Plan 'Te Kokeka Whakamua' was launched last week and goal 3 involves reform to their special considerations and alternative arrangements policies. If we make use of this opportunity and push what is already being pushed University-wide, we can help make sure this plan makes the changes it says it will.
3. Creating legitimacy for the Sub-Warden Committee this year that stays long term
  - a. This is from personal experience. Being a kaiāwhina whare is an amazing job, and one that is so important to the college systems running smoothly. Not only that, our University is the gold standard for pastoral care in this country. That being said, the students who are giving their time and energy to make the residential halls a supportive, safe, and fun space for first-years and

beyond to be in are severely underrepresented and overworked. I was in the college system for 3 years, one as a first year and two as a subwarden and within my time there, I noticed and was made aware by others of systemic issues that require systemic change. Before any of this can happen though, we must first create a committee where subwardens feel safe to come forward with their issues and, most importantly, that is seen as legitimate by senior staff and Campus and Collegiate Life Services. Only then can actual change be created.

- b. Out of the three goals here, this will by far be the hardest. That doesn't mean I will not try to achieve it, but I'm aware of the extent that the Campus and Collegiate Life Services want to preserve the way things are. Firstly, Callum and I (but Callum is heading this) must create a Sub-Warden Committee that colleges are willing to allow their representatives to be compensated for their contributions. That is the first step towards legitimacy here.

### **Part Five: General**

It is early days, but I'm excited to be here. Thank you for voting me in and I will try my hardest this year not to throw away my shot.