

Fergus Parks

Postgraduate Representative

First Quarter Report 2025

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### **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.**

Please see part 5.

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

I have participated in the senate meeting for this quarter.

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

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

Please see part 5.

**1.3.2. Academic Committee.**

All meetings have been attended so far 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.**

Please see Part 5.

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

Please see Part 5.

**1.6. Be the Association's representative on the Graduate Studies Committee.**

Yes

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

I have made my rounds with OUSA staff and have so far had a positive experience in my handlings with them. Thank you Donna for pointing me in the right direction and fellow staff in dealing with my ramblings.

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

While I'm still in early days and finding my feet I have so far felt welcomed and understood on the various committees and enjoy a positive relationship on all committees so far.

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

All is fine between us and we have regularly planned coffee catchups to discuss matters regarding GRS issues and liaison with OUSA.

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

I largely have been informed by the Divisional Representatives.

**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.**

Yes, Kamesha and I so far have had a positive working relationship on various matters in and out of OUSA.

**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.**

See Part 5

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

Yes

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

At present, I have worked 10.56 hours per week this quarter.

**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.**

**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;**

Duties were performed with great teamwork by all in planning, organising and implementing O-week activities.

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

I organised a general election poll during O-Week to gauge where students are thinking of voting so far, and apart from a few jokers (looking at you Troy), the data has helped to provide a look into current student's political leanings. I have given suggestions to Flynn regarding the DCC by-election, and planning regarding this year's general election has largely been limited to Flynn so far.

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

All meetings have been attended so far and I intend to keep this streak up.

**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.**

All initial training sessions this year and staff meet n' greets have been attended so far.

**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;**

Yes.

**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;**

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

Yes.

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

Apart from a catch up with TRM and chats with Sami and Jarna I have not attended such events yet.

**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, working with Kamesha and the passing of the support to the Denniston plateau development protesters.

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

Unfortunately, this has not been met and is next to impossible regarding my roles and jobs outside of OUSA both juggling master's studies and part-time work. I will look to see if I can squeeze some volunteer work in future, but this will provide quite a challenge in my situation.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

**Part 4: Goals and your Progress**

**Goals:** With induction over and an understanding of how the OUSA system works I can now look to the future regarding goals as follow.

- Host regular soap box chats to catch up with students and their opinions, a beer crate for this has been sourced and just needs some reinforcing so I don't break it.
- Begin to deepen cooperation with GRS to enhance post graduate events in place of SPS.
- Planning a system to keep in communication with students in the satellite campuses.

**Progress:** So far one of the initial goals regarding the fate of SPS is underway (see Part 5) in carrying over from Josh's duties last year. I've organised regular catch ups with them to ensure a smooth relay between them and us to ensure student voices are heard. Alongside this Ive also been in communication with the university regarding my plans and had an interview done earlier in the quarter.

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/hes-not-a-hypocrite>

## **Part 5: General**

As my predecessor, Josh, has outlined in his past reports, the duties of the SPS have failed. While the club may have initially been founded for the right reasons, advocacy for post-graduate students and the organisation of social events, in the year immediately following its founding, any interest in the club and events has vanished. Event attendance was poor, with those who ultimately showed up being almost always part of the event organisers' friend group. Alongside this, the idea that this would act to represent the interest and lobby support for postgraduate student causes is already fulfilled by the GRS and me in the representative position. Thus, in cooperation with a caretaker council of Joshua Stewart, Will Biss, and me, we held an SGM on the 5th of March to decide the club's future. Again, attendance was poor, relying on asking friends and immediate contacts to show up. As a gauge of how little interest in the club there is, only one person showed up, who was not asked if they could attend. While the club could have potentially continued to exist in a limited social capacity away from any advocacy role, the failure of any student engagement sealed this club's fate. Therefore, in meeting with constitutional and OUSA guidelines, the club is to be disbanded.

As we speak, others and I are currently sorting the disbandment process, with any last issues and debts being sorted. Ella, as the club's and socs representative, is aware of this ongoing process, and already the club has been removed from the OUSA list of active clubs. In the future, I hope to work with GRS to further integrate events with them and OUSA to provide a social experience for post-graduate students.

Should any future post-graduate representative wish to revive the club, what remaining funds from the treasury will be held for a period of 5 years, which can go towards a new club should sufficient interest be raised again.

Cheers.