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Academic Representative

Second Quarter Report 2026

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2147 Words

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

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

I did not assume the power of the President this quarter.

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

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

Yes

**9.2.2. Academic Committee.**

Yes

**9.3. Chair monthly meetings of the Academic Committee, ensuring that all committee members are advised of meeting times, that the agenda is prepared and circulated beforehand and that the standing orders of the committee are adhered to.**

First Academic Committee woohoo! There was not a huge turnout which was so sad but there were super productive conversations, the main topics of conversation were relevant university policy changes and getting student input from student representatives/faculty representatives and drafting up what I can take back to CALT and the relevant staff steering any policy change.

**9.4. Take direction from the Academic Committee on all educational matters relevant to the Association and its members.**

Yes.

**9.5. Where reasonable, ensure that different representatives of student educational issues are present on the Academic Committee.**

Yes.

**9.6. Be one of the Association's representatives on;**

**9.6.1. University of Otago Senate;**

Yes.

**9.6.2. University of Otago Board of Undergraduate Studies; and;**

Yes – this is now the Academic Committee

**9.6.3. Other University committees, boards, advisory groups and working parties as appointed by the Executive.**

Yes, I am.

**9.7. Where appropriate, facilitate a variety of student representation on academic related University Committees and Divisional Boards.**

Yes- same as last quarter - I have been working closely with Student Voice this year to gather students who have input in various areas to bring them to different committee meetings along with getting actual direct input from them regarding paper proposals and changes being made to courses.

**9.8. Where appropriate, brief the President on national and local tertiary sector educational issues and represent the educational interests of students on local body committees and boards.**

Daniel and I tend to be aware of what is going on at the same time without the need for me to brief him. Our regular catchups with Tim Cooper are a great way to touch base and make sure we are all on the same page about what is going on. I don't sit on any local tertiary sector boards, I don't have the time to do so, and any local tertiary sector board has a wider purview than just education – there are better people to sit in these places than me.

**9.9. Facilitate and provide feedback and consultation for academic proforma.**

Yes. So much. This is like my entire job. There are some super cool papers and courses brewing in the background which I cannot really share anything about, but epic papers may be dropping.

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

Yes.

**9.11. Maintain a good working relationship with relevant Association staff, including the Class Representative Coordinator, and liaise with them on relevant educational issues as they arise.**

Yes, I do.

**9.12. Act as the Executive's representative to the Class Representative System and assist in their promotion.**

Yes.

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

**9.13.1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic);**

Yes.

**9.13.2. The Director of Summer School;**

Have not yet met.

**9.13.3. The Director of Academic Integrity;**

We have a good working relationship.

**9.13.4. The Divisional Associate Dean Academics;**

I see them regularly in other meetings, and they are often my first port of call when a student has an issue.

**9.13.5. The Director of Distance Learning; and;**

Have not yet met.

**9.13.6. Dean of Learning and Teaching.**

Tim and I have a great working relationship as we sit on pretty much all of the same committees, so I see him more than I see my own family.

**9.14. Establish a good working relationship and communication with academically orientated clubs or societies, liaising with the Clubs and Societies Representative as and where needed.**

Yes! We did a tiny collab on some clubs and socs constitutional work.

**9.15. Maintain a good working relationship with the Postgraduate Representative, to facilitate communication and collaboration as necessary, across undergraduate and postgraduate academic matters.**

Fergus and I have a good working relationship. We sit on a number of committees together and talk about anything relevant. A lot of the time it is just us and a room full of staff.

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

Yes.

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

I believe I do.

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

I worked an average of 18.54 hours this quarter (flopping in that last week due to completing 5 exams in two weeks challenge meaning I could not attend any committee meetings but I will be staying here over break to hack away at more policy work to make up for this).]

## **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.**

Yup.

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

I still love to yap with the student body. This is one of my favourite parts of being on the exec.

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

Yes! Love Market Days and St Patty's was epic!!! Grad was cool too – was really epic to be apart of this!! Ready for ReOri!!!!

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

Yes.

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

Yes. I had to miss the meeting last week due to exams.

**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.**

N/A

**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;**

Yes.

**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,**

Yes. All the time.

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

I always do my best to uphold Te Tiriti in my duties as a member of the OUSA Exec.

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

Yes – again I love to yap.

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

I don't own a car. I love Orbus. I bus everywhere.

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

I try help out at R1! Got to do some guest shows over NZMM this year which was epic. I <£ Radio One.

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

Yes, I do – currently have a backlog of emails from exam week though.

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

1. OUSA Exec
2. OUSA Standing Committee
3. OUSA Academic Committee
4. Senate
5. Academic Committee
6. Sciences Divisional Academic Board
7. Standing Committee for the Sciences Divisional Academic Board
8. Quality Advancement Committee
9. Digital Learning Environment Project Steering Committee
10. Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
11. Advisory Committee on Student Advising
12. Teaching Excellence Awards Panel
13. Assessment Policy Working Group
14. AI Literacy Working Group

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

#### **Changes to the University Assessment Policy**

Following on from the concerns identified in my last quarter's report regarding inconsistency and lack of clarity around assessment practices across the University, work has now progressed beyond identifying these issues and towards developing structural solutions. While the initial focus of this work centred heavily on AI and the growing disparity between students who engage

with AI tools in vastly different ways, it has become increasingly clear that these concerns sit within a much broader issue surrounding assessment design and consistency more generally.

We are currently undertaking significant work to review and modernise the University's existing assessment policy to ensure it is better equipped to respond to the realities of the current academic environment. While AI has been a major catalyst for these discussions, the scope of this work extends far beyond AI usage alone. The proposed changes seek to improve clarity and consistency for both students and staff by addressing a range of recurring student concerns, including clearer guidance around AI use in assessments, more transparent expectations for group assignments, greater standardisation of deadlines and assessment procedures across papers, and broader structural changes aimed at making assessments more equitable and easier for students to navigate overall.

A dedicated working group is actively refining these proposed policy changes, with student input remaining central throughout the process. In particular, the University-wide AI survey launched earlier this year generated approximately 180 student responses, providing valuable insight into how students are currently engaging with AI in their academic work and helping identify specific areas where current assessment structures may no longer be adequately serving student needs. These responses have been incredibly useful in helping shape the direction of the proposed amendments and ensuring student experiences remain at the centre of the process.

A major concern consistently raised by students throughout this work has been the way assessment practices themselves appear to be shifting in response to growing concerns around AI usage. Increasingly, students have reported a heavier reliance on group work, in-class discussion based assessments, and other alternative assessment formats which, while often introduced as mechanisms to preserve academic integrity, can sometimes create additional stress and significantly alter the learning experience. There is a growing concern that efforts to respond to AI usage are unintentionally resulting in assessments becoming less accessible and increasingly inconsistent between papers and departments.

A significant component of this policy review therefore involves ensuring there are stronger institutional safeguards and clearer parameters around assessment design, so that necessary responses to emerging technologies do not disproportionately impact students or create inequitable learning environments. Because assessment policy interacts with a number of related University policies and procedures, this work has also involved substantial behind-the-scenes policy review and amendment across multiple interconnected frameworks.

The current goal is to finalise these proposed amendments and bring them before Senate for consideration in late August or early September. While individual departments will continue to retain discretion over how assessments are delivered within their disciplines, the objective is to

ensure stronger University-wide consistency and establish clearer expectations that keep both students and staff on the same page moving forward.

Students who are interested in learning more about the proposed changes or who would like to provide feedback are encouraged to get in touch, as student consultation continues to remain a central part of this process.

### Other

The policy work outlined above has taken up the majority of my time outside of regular committee meetings, consultation on paper changes and other academic matters currently moving through the University, alongside ongoing work relating to the new Aorua/DLM spaces and associated student-facing changes. A significant amount of academic policy work is happening behind the scenes at the moment, and much of my focus this quarter has been directed towards ensuring students remain represented in those conversations as these changes continue to develop.

I know very few students are likely reading these reports, but *Critic* I know you are. I need your help. I have recently been thinking about whether there may be merit in exploring the implementation of a mandatory interview process for entry into the University of Otago Medical School. To be very clear, this is currently nothing more than an early-stage idea so please nobody come for me. At this stage, I am simply interested in gauging student opinion and broader sentiment around whether this is something worth exploring further.

My initial thinking is that a process like this could potentially alleviate some of the growing pressure created by increasing Health Sciences enrolment numbers while also helping ensure selection processes better identify applicants with the interpersonal and professional attributes necessary to produce more well-rounded doctors. I have absolutely no idea whether this idea has legs, but if anyone has thoughts, strong opinions, or thinks this is either brilliant or terrible, I would genuinely be interested in hearing student perspectives.

### **Part Five: General**

I have nothing to add but #timeforSem2.