



**DERMOT FRENGLEY
POSTGRAD OFFICER
1ST QUARTER REPORT 2019
SUBMITTED 20-03-2019 AT 12:00PM
A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WORDS**

***ONCE AGAIN, I DO NOT LIKE THE TITLE "OFFICER" AND REITERATE THAT I THINK REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE MORE REPRESENTATIVE.**

KIA ORA, I AM DERMOT AND THIS IS MY REPORT.

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.

One of my focuses this year is making OUSA more postgraduate friendly. I don't think that OUSA is failing its postgraduate members, but OUSA can and should do more. Postgrad's are not currently very engaged with OUSA's various services and from what I can understand this is largely due to them not being aware of how much OUSA can do for them outside of O week events.

Earlier on this year I talked with Charlie the Editor of Critic about a postgraduate column similar to 'beyond the grad' circa 2017, however after discussing the need for consistent work required we decided that it might not be the best way to reach out to postgrads. I do intend to write opinion pieces for the critic regarding postgrad issues and will write one regarding Postgraduate Allowance in the lead up to the NZUSA 'Rally for Postgraduate Allowance' event on April 11th (if Critic will have me).

I put forward a motion for OUSA to support the 'Rally for Postgraduate Allowance' which was well received and supported by the exec. This is an immediate campaign that I believe is very important to the wellbeing of postgraduate students and will be organising a petition drive and a rally at the clock tower to mirror the one that will be going on at Parliament at the same time.

Looking for a less content demanding/heavy media source, I have decided that a one hour a week radio show interviewing postgraduate students on their research would be the best way forward. This idea wasn't mine originally (shout out to Sinead), but I have talked more with Tom Tremewan about it, and he is on board with the idea and thinks it would be a good thing for postgrads and Radio 1.

I have, with the help of Finance Officer, Bonnie Harrison, set out in my budget allocation for monthly tea and coffees for postgrad students. The first of these will start in April!

1.2 Work with the University and the Student Support Centre to implement OUSA's policy on Postgraduate Student Representatives.

I have been working with the university on getting better representation at a postgraduate level, the biggest advancement I have had with this is being appointed to the Graduate Research



Committee by the Board of Graduate Studies which is a new level for student representation at Otago. I am also working on having two divisional postgraduate representatives present in the new humanities structure.

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

I have represented OUSA on Senate this quarter. We watched an informative video of Tony Ballantyne talking about 150 years of Scarfie Culture.

1.4 Where required, assist the Education Officer to administer aspects of the Departmental Postgraduate Student Representatives system including:

- 1.4.1 Maintaining regular contact with representatives from postgraduate classes or programmes via email or other means; and
- 1.4.2 Encouraging regular postgraduate class representative meetings, and attend these meetings whenever possible.

My main means of keeping in touch with postgraduates across the university is through the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee and the divisional reps on the Otago Postgraduate Society.

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

- 1.5.1 Postgraduate Committee;
- 1.5.2 Education Committee; and
- 1.5.3 Welfare Committee.

None of these Committees have met yet.

1.6 Chair monthly meetings of the Postgraduate Committee, 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.

For the first time in recent history there will be a Postgrad Committee this year, a number of people have been contacted regarding their availability/interest but no one has been appointed as yet due to waiting on a few people/organisations to confirm themselves/a candidate.

1.7 Take direction from the Postgraduate Committee on all matters relevant to postgraduate members.

In lieu of the Postgraduate committee as of yet I have been relying on the opinions of the OPA exec to help give me perspective and differing accounts on issues.

1.8 Normally be the Association's representative on the Board of Graduate Studies.

I have been.



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

I have been working closely with Will Dreyer (Education Officer) on the issue of tutor pay which has arisen this year.

As mentioned in 1.1 I am keen to make OUSA more postgraduate friendly, so far I have talked with Jason Schroeder head of events about the possibility of a postgrad pint/open mic night that would be a chance for postgrads to meet socially and showcase their talents.

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

I am currently working with the PVC of Humanities on securing two seats for postgrad students on the new divisional board structure.

1.11 Maintain a good working relationship with the Director of Graduate Research Services and endeavour to meet with them on a monthly basis.

I have been meeting with Rachel Spronken-Smith on a regular basis this quarter, she and I have a positive and productive relationship. She often brings postgraduate issues to my attention and vice versa. We are currently working on a new master's thesis supervisor agreement form that has more of a focus on mental wellbeing and professional relationships than the currently existing one. Hopefully it will come into force later this year.

1.12 Maintain links with and assist affiliated Postgraduate bodies.

I sit as an ex-officio member of the Otago Postgraduate Association (OPA) this is a role that I enjoy and have been present at all the weekly meetings that have occurred since I got back to Dunedin. OPA is still an emerging association and I see it fulfilling an important role in providing social, mental wellbeing and networking opportunities for postgraduate students. As part of strengthening OPA I have begun working on a memorandum of understanding between OUSA and OPA so that OPA can have access to direct funding at the discretion of the OUSA exec and in doing so better provide for a group of OUSA's members that sometimes lie outside of OUSA's direct reach.

I helped to organize OPA's wine and cheese that was held on Thursday the 14th March which was lit.

1.13 Maintain a good working relationship with the Administrative Vice President, proactively bringing issues relevant to postgraduate students to their attention, and meeting with them on a weekly basis.

The AVP and I have a cordial and pleasant professional relationship as well as getting on as mates generally. If anything comes up I let him know. I am also helping him work on a postgraduate Maori research symposium.

I also have regular meetings with the president.



1.14 Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.

See part Two.

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

I have been consistently been working more than 10 hours a week this quarter.

PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

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

- 2.1.1 Assisting at the OUSA Tent City marquee and other activities during Summer School, Orientation and Re-Orientation;
- 2.1.2 At an individual Executive Officer's discretion, be a safety contact during Orientation, Re-Orientation and other OUSA events throughout the year;
- 2.1.3 Collecting for the capping charity; and
- 2.1.4 Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate, including but not limited to advertising the election and collecting votes.

I helped out with all Wednesday free bbq's that OUSA hosted during summer school bar the first one which I was not here for. I helped out with the Orientaster gig which was held in the Main Common Room. I also was present as much as possible at the OUSA 'flat' at tent city during O week. I also volunteered at the international food festival at the end of O week.

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

I have attended all OUSA exec meetings this quarter that I have been in Dunedin for as well as our pre O week training days and retreat.

2.3 All Executive Officers with control of budget lines, or who have been allocated a budget line, shall maintain detailed budgets and not exceed their budgeted expenditure.

I have not exceeded my budget.

2.4 All Executive Officers, where possible, shall maintain regular, publicised office hours, and are expected to regularly check and respond to all correspondence received.

My office hours are 2-4 Mondays.

2.5 All Executive Officers shall every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community.



I have been helping with the NZUSA local body election campaign which is outside of my OUSA role.

PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

I have sat on a number of different boards and committees this year, representing postgraduate students at Otago and a part of that has been representing students on research based committees as well as decision making ones.

The Boards/Committees I sit on:

- Board of Graduate Studies (14th February and 7th March)
- Senate (27th February)
- Animal Practice and Compliance Steering Group (5TH February)
- Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee (22nd February)
- Human Ethics Committee (31st January, 21st February and 14th March)
- Library Services Committee (Hasn't sat this quarter)

Of these, the most time consuming would be human ethics as the applications that need to be read are usually quite considerable but I have heard whispers that the April BOGS agenda is usually a hefty one, so I have that to look forward to.

On another note, I haven't been able to sit in on a meeting as of yet, but working alongside Rachel Spronken-Smith the Dean of the Graduate Research School I have been able to secure a OUSA ex-officio seat on the Graduate Research Committee. Big thanks goes to Rachel for recognising the importance of student representation especially at higher levels of the University systems.

Most important of all is the Postgrad Committee!! Which I have not got fully functioning as of yet but will do so by the end of April.

PART FOUR: GOALS

My goals for this year are numbered off and below them are how I am planning to achieve these goals.

1. *Address the gap between OUSA and Postgrads*
 - Organise and fund Postgraduate specific events throughout the year
 - Work alongside, collaborate with and support the Otago Postgraduate Association (OPA)
 - Push for more of a postgrad focus within OUSA.
2. *Get the University to better support Postgrads*



- Lobby the University and Graduate Research School to guarantee parental leave for postgraduate students (particularly PhDs)
 - Lobby the University to require Postgraduate Courses to allow for sick or distress leave
 - Push for a Postgraduate Studies Specialist at Ask Otago
 - Ensure there is decent support for international postgraduate students. This can be done by ensuring that OUSA/Student Support become more involved with providing international students accurate, unbiased information and support for when they first arrive here.
 - Lobby the University to change the funding and charging systems for PhD students.
3. *Campaign for Postgrads on a national level*
- Make sure that OUSA supports and backs NZUSA's postgrad allowance event and that there is a physical presence of it on the Otago Uni campus.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

This year has been off to a great start and I feel going into the second quarter will be even better as I am now feeling set up and am able to begin executing my goals and officially form the postgrad committee. One thing I do find challenging is the lack of cohesion amongst postgrads as a general group. This is largely due to issues outside of my control such as age differences, coming from outside of Otago, and lack of interdepartmental communication, however I do believe there is more that OUSA Can do for postgrads and I want to ensure that this year and going into the future, OUSA does provide fully for postgrads.

On a side note:

I am going to be working on OUSA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy with Kerrin.

I chaired the Te Roopu Maori Student General Meeting on Tuesday the 19th of March.