

Tēnā kotou,

This document aims to outline any achievements during this past quarter and to provide a baseline of accountability (William Dreyer 2019). During this quarter, I chose to focus on two goals: (i) mental health and wellbeing; and (ii) health insurance. Progress is being made on both fronts and I hope to be able to present results in my future reports. Further details regarding the execution of these goals are laid out in Section 1.6.2.

I chose to focus on these two goals this quarter due to the significance of these matters pertaining to international students. First and foremost, we must look after ourselves in order to function and perform well. A multitude of cultures still reject notions of mental health and illness, however, members of the international student community are determined to raise awareness and break the stigma surrounding this issue. I am fortunate in my position to be working with people who are passionate and driven in their endeavours to prioritise mental health and wellbeing.

In reviewing health insurance policies, and the services available under these policies, it is hoped that any suggestions made be considered to reflect the needs of the international student cohort. Accessibility, inclusivity and improvement continue to be the driving forces behind this review. In this process, I am still awaiting statistics and relevant data to reflect if any necessary recommendations are to be made.

Another recurring issue related to the aforementioned goals is accessibility to information. It is often the case that a student wishes to seek specific services, assistance or advice, but are unsure where to begin. In the progress of these goals, I am also taking note of information accessibility so that students are not deterred from seeking the assistance they need. This is a matter I wish to pursue further with the International Office in the next quarter.

If anyone has any questions or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [international@ousa.org.nz](mailto:international@ousa.org.nz).

Ngā mihi,



Otago uni **students'** association

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2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report 2019

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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 cultural diversity.**

Multiple OUSA-affiliated Cultural Clubs held events over the second quarter. These events were promoted through the club's various Facebook pages and through the International Cultural Clubs' Presidents Page.

I have actively shared Silverline Sessions centred around international student wellbeing with the Cultural Clubs community on Facebook. This included the promotion of events such as 'Dump With Us' and 'Discovering Danners'.

Via email, I have promoted the International Food Festival as an opportunity for OUSA-affiliated Cultural Clubs to partake in a community event that embraces the diversity of the student body. Sixteen clubs have confirmed their involvement. Event planning and preparation is underway.

### **1.2 Organise and run events of specific interest and relevance to international students.**

#### **(a) International Committee (ICOM) Wine and Cheese**

ICOM held the Semester 1 Wine and Cheese on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May at Joe's Garage. The purpose of the Wine and Cheese is to encourage connections and good relationships between clubs, and to create an opportunity for Cultural Club members to meet other members within the Cultural Club

community. More than 90 tickets were sold to members of the various Cultural Clubs. ICOM has received positive feedback from attendees.

## **(b) International Food Festival**

The International Food Festival will be held during Re-Orientation Week on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July. I am assisting Shannon van Rooijen from the OUSA Events team in organising this event. My duties mainly consist of organising and communicating with the Cultural Clubs.

## **(c) International Cultural Carnival**

The International Cultural Carnival will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July in the Link. The venue booking has been arranged and I have promoted the event among the Cultural Clubs. As of this year, the event will pass along to OUSA Events, mimicking the organisation of the International Food Festival, to ensure its continuity into the future.

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

#### **1.3.1 International Cultural Council;**

This quarter, ICOM has held four meetings. The meetings were mainly focused on the planning, execution and overview of the ICOM Wine and Cheese. One of these meetings was held with the Cultural Clubs and focused on promoting and encouraging involvement in events centred on diversity and inclusion.

#### **1.3.2 Welfare Committee; and**

So far this quarter, WelCom has held two meetings. I have sent apologies for both meetings; the first one due to academic commitments and the second due to being away from Dunedin. I have been keeping up to date with the minutes being circulated via email.

#### **1.3.3 Education Committee.**

N/A

- 1.4 Chair monthly meetings of the International Cultural Council, 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 Council are adhered to.**

I chaired all the ICOM meetings this quarter, booked meeting rooms, confirmed times and circulated agendas through our ICOM Facebook page. The relevant minutes were taken by the ICOM Secretary as well and circulated to all ICOM members via the aforementioned Facebook page. ICOM is unable to hold meetings this month due to my absence during the month of June. Our next meeting is likely to take place in early July.

- 1.5 Take direction from the International Cultural Council on all matters relevant to international student members.**

During this quarter, ICOM shared feedback regarding the ICOM Wine and Cheese, ideas for future events and any feedback on issues pertaining to International Students. All members were actively involved in the planning of our events.

- 1.6 Work on issues specific to international students at the University of Otago, including, but not limited to:**

**1.6.1 Academic issues within the University; and**

No particular concerns were raised during this quarter. As always, I remain in contact with the staff at the International Office and am happy to bring to their attention any matters as they arise.

- 1.6.2 Social and welfare related issues within the University and the wider community.**

**(a) International Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Silverline: I have been in discussion with Amal Abdullahi, the international student co-ordinator, about incorporating ideas for international student-focused events and seminars. I was also involved in a focus group session to provide insight as an international student for Amal's research in creating an international student wellbeing guide.

OUSA Student Support: I have contacted and discussed with Sage Burke the services and programmes available for international students relevant to their wellbeing. I hope to arrange for a future meeting with Sage or Hahna Briggs this next quarter to discuss international student wellbeing further.

NZISA: Within my capacity on the Representative Council, I have assisted NZISA in providing insight and ideas surrounding international student wellbeing matters such as the International Student Wellbeing Strategy, student safety, NauMai (website for international students who are coming into New Zealand), tenancy issues and labour exploitation.

University: Due to recent threats to the safety of students in Auckland made online under the hashtag "#MakeNZWhiteAgain", I reached out to various members of staff in the University. The University has reassured me that such behaviour or opinion is a "direct violation of the Code of Student Conduct", that "very clear standards and expectations regarding this type of behaviour" exist, and there is "zero tolerance on this kind of behaviour...[and] around our expectations of speech and expression of opinion by staff and students".

## **(b) International Student Health – StudentSafe insurance**

Sexual health survey: I have been in contact with Nishanthi Perera, a PhD candidate from the Department of Sociology, regarding her survey, 'Sexual health knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of international university students of Otago University'. At present, I am assisting her in making this survey accessible to international students as data from the

survey could prove highly beneficial in improving international student health services and implementing inclusive changes in insurance policies.

Student Health: I am waiting to hear back from Student Health Services regarding international student numbers reflective of services accessed.

**1.7 Maintain a good working relationship to the OUSA Student Support Centre Manager and Advocates so that the opportunity to share information about academic and welfare issues of relevance to international students is available.**

During this quarter, I attended a meeting with Sage Burke to discuss international student concerns, and the assistance and services available to them. Matters raised included support services available for students affected by the Christchurch terrorist attack and work exploitation.

**1.8 Maintain a good working relationship with the International Office of the University, sharing information and ideas with them when appropriate.**

I am confident that I have a good working relationship with Jason Cushen, the Director of the International Office, and other staff members from the International Office.

**1.9 Maintain a good working relationship with the Administrative Vice President, proactively bringing issues relevant to international students to their attention, and, where reasonable, meeting with them on a weekly basis.**

I am confident Porurangi and I have a good working relationship. I report back my progress on my projects as necessary when I see him in the Bullpen, at least once a week.

**1.10 Work in conjunction with the Finance Officer, the Clubs Development Officer and the Recreation Portfolio Executive Officer to ensure the affiliation and support of international student groups.**

I am confident Bonnie Harrison, the Finance Officer, and I have a good working relationship.

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

During this quarter, I have done my best to attend and actively participate in most of the OUSA Executive meetings.

## **1.12 Where practical, work not less than ten hours.**

The Executive has implemented a new time tracking system which I find useful for taking note of how I fulfil my hours. I am confident that I have worked for at least ten hours each week, aside from Weeks 22-25, due to academic commitments and being away from Dunedin. While I am away, my hours have staggered but I aim to make up for lost hours during Re-Orientation Week and will continue to do corresponding work. Aside from these recent weeks, I have been present at the OUSA Exec bullpen at least twice a week to answer emails, connect with fellow exec members and to organise plans for future events.

## **PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

### **2.1 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;**

None of the above events have taken place this quarter. In preparation for Re-Orientation Week, I am assisting OUSA Events with the planning of the International Food Festival by liaising with the International Cultural Clubs through email. I am assisting Shannon van Rooijen in communicating with the Cultural Clubs, organising the kitchen times and kitchen supervisors, and answering any questions relating to the Food Festival.

**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;**

During this quarter, I have not been a safety contact. I am happy to assist as such should the need arise.

**2.1.3 Collecting for the capping charity; and**

During this quarter, OUSA had the capping charity. To my knowledge, the charity chosen was agreed upon during an Executive meeting, but no collections were organised.

**2.1.4 Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate, including but not limited to advertising the election and collecting votes.**

I assisted with the referenda and volunteered assistance for the forum.

**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 a majority of the executive meetings. Unfortunately, I have been unable to assist with OUSA's Local Body Elections Campaign due to academic commitments, such as timetable and test clashes, and being away from Dunedin. I am very keen to assist with LBE after I return to Dunedin in July.

**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 the budget line assigned to me by Bonnie. This quarter, ICOM organised a Wine and Cheese. I have maintained detailed expenditure of this event and invoices incurred with the OUSA Accounts staff.

**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.**

To the best of my ability, I have maintained regular office hours and regularly check and respond to all correspondence I receive.

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

During this quarter, I have volunteered my services to the Postgrad Allowance Rally, the Referenda Forum, Tertiary Open Day and Volunteer Day at Araiteuru Marae.

### **PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

I have attended meetings for the following university committees: Otago Internationalisation Committee; Otago Distance Learning Advisory Board; Summer School and Continuing Education Board; Otago Health Science Internationalisation Committee; and Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board. I am unable to attend meetings from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July due to being away from Dunedin.

### **PART FOUR: GENERAL**

During this quarter, I have had the opportunity to work with Te Whare Tāwharau, a sexual violence drop-in, support, and prevention centre, and represent OUSA as a member on its Advisory Committee. Furthermore, I am working on collecting resources for international students to improve information accessibility as addressed in my summary. In the next quarter, I will arrange a meeting with the International Office to discuss this further.

### **PART FIVE: GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**(i) Mental health and wellbeing**

As stated in Section 1.6.2 (a), much of the work this quarter centred on mental health and wellbeing. Much of what 'mental health and wellbeing' encapsulates goes beyond simply looking after one's health; it includes safety, tenancy and housing, and accessibility to information and services. In the upcoming quarters, it is hoped that this scope of international student issues be improved in other areas as well.

**(ii) Health insurance**

As stated in Section 1.6.2 (b), progress is still underway. I am awaiting the relevant data and statistics to begin the reviewing process. Once the data comes through, I will draw up recommendations, and present the document and findings to the International Office.

**(iii) Work exploitation**

During this quarter, not as much focus was given to this goal. I aim to pursue this goal further in the next quarter and will outline my progress in my next report.

**(iv) Community engagement**

I aim to pursue this goal further next quarter as I will be involved in the International Food Festival, the International Cultural Carnival and the Silverline Festival. Through these events, I hope to promote international student engagement with Kiwis and values of diversity, tolerance and racial awareness.

**(v) Handover document for future International Officer(s)**

I aim to update the International Officer Guide and Handover Document to enable a smoother transition into the role. The role has changed since Rachel Goh, the 2016 OUSA International Officer, first created the document. I have added comments to the existing document and seek to complete an updated document before the OUSA Elections. In this document, I will update relevant information, reflective of changes that



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have taken place since last year, include recommendations and outline resources useful to the role.

295 words