



Tēnā koutou,

This document (sort of) outlines what I have been doing this quarter, I don't like it and I don't like how the reports are structured but it is important to be accountable to the student body. However due to these being a very corporate way of being accountable, they don't really help the average student to understand what I have been doing.

The report also doesn't take into account the allocation of my hours, being a ten-hour role, I am meant to spend five hours on general exec stuff and five hours focusing on postgrad specific issues. In a busy week these can easily spiral out of control with reading agendas and documents for multiple committees taking far longer than I care to admit and the committees themselves taking up five hours easily. General exec duties can be demanding as well depending on the week, but it is hard to articulate in this report hours spent cleaning barbecues or setting up booths. However, it is part of the role and I am happy to do those hours, it's just hard to fit them clearly into this report.

Below is a quick summary of what has stuck out to me this quarter:

- Been a Student Representative on eight different Boards/Committees throughout the University;
- Sat on a tonne of Committees, Boards and Working Groups throughout the University;
- Been working on my goals
- Helped with the OUSA Local Body Elections Campaign on the ground and strategy wise.
- The biggest for me this quarter was easily the Postgrad Allowance Rally! This required a lot of work on my part to get it off the ground and organised. Not to brag but we ended up being the only Students Association to have their own rally, and the only rally on campus in NZ. We got a bit of media coverage and had speakers from the University there to show their support for letting postgrads have a fair go at financing their study. I am proud of how it went

If anyone has any questions about this report or anything in general, please get in touch with me via postgrad@ousa.org.nz

Cheers and thank you,

Dermot Frengley, OUSA Postgraduate Executive Officer



DERMOT FRENGLEY
POSTGRAD OFFICER
2nd QUARTER REPORT 2019
SUBMITTED 20-06-2019 AT 9:50PM

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.

I wrote a piece advocating for the importance of students caring about the postgraduate allowance for the Critic (thank you very much!), collected signatures for the petition and organised and emceed OUSA's own postgrad rally. I see this as being part of promoting an environment that is supportive of postgraduate students.

I have, with the help of Finance Officer, Bonnie Harrison, set out in my budget allocation for regular tea and coffees for postgrad students. The first of these started in May in conjunction with an Otago Postgraduate Association writing retreat event. Initially they were going to be monthly, but we are now doing fortnightly due to trying to keep it more accessible for people. They are being held fortnightly from now until the end of the year and offer a great opportunity for postgraduate students to meet peers from outside of their departments. Although currently uptake is minimal, through word of mouth and pairing it with other postgrad specific events will help it to grow.

I along with members of the Otago Postgraduate Association (OPA) Exec made a written submission to the Graduate Research School's Review Panel. We were then invited to make submissions in person with members of the panel on the 11th of June. Together we pushed for greater involvement of the University with the pastoral care of its postgraduate students.

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 along with Will Dreyer, however this is appearing to have faced some roadblocks from the University officials responsible.

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

I have represented OUSA on Senate this quarter. I spoke in favour of the Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors that I worked on with Rachel Spronken-Smith.



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.

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.

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

This year I've shifted efforts more towards the Otago Postgraduate Association rather than the Postgraduate Committee. OPA being a group of postgrad students I can rely on to give me critical advice and support. As an ex-officio member, I meet with them every two weeks at least, secure funding on their behalf from OUSA and help with events aimed at all postgrad students.

I am confident in the ability of the Otago Postgraduate Association Exec to function as my Postgrad Committee, they are students who have been elected to their roles by their fellow postgrads, I bring them matters to get their opinions on, they bring me issues that impact postgrads and they help me to address them.

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 continued to work with Will Dreyer (Education Officer) on the issue of tutor pay which has arisen this year.



I have met with Debbie Downs the CEO in regard to ways we can make postgrads feel more included with OUSA, One strategy highlighted was focusing on more family friendly events that cater to mature students. Although I am working on this, this is a goal I have yet to tick off.

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

I am.

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.

I was consulted on the new master's thesis supervisor agreement form and spoke on its behalf in senate saying that 'OUSA supports this document but as with many things it doesn't mean that the job is over yet'. More work needs to be done in regards to the pastoral care arm of the Graduate Research School.

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 meetings that have occurred this quarter. I have a very close relationship with OPA and find them to be a great resource for myself as the Postgraduate Officer and for postgrad students.

Since last quarter the work I have been doing with the memorandum of understanding has been stalled due in part to Matthew Schep who I was working closely on the MOU with had to hand in his dissertation and I got caught up with OUSA and my own studies. However, I will ensure that this MOU will be finished if it's the last thing I do.

Following the March 15th Terror attacks, I got in touch with the Otago Christchurch Postgraduate Students Association and extended my sympathies and support.

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.

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.

We haven't had as many big OUSA events this quarter that have required my help but I volunteered to help with the former exec members tour of OUSA that the secretary organised.

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 been available for all executive meetings outside of not being here for research/illness.

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.

I have been quite closely involved with the NZUSA Postgraduate Allowance Campaign, including helping with the submission that was put forward to the select committee and coordinating with the petition delivery at parliament.



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 (BoGS)
- Graduate Research Committee
- Senate
- Animal Practice and Compliance Steering Group
- Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee
- Human Ethics Committee
- Library Services Committee
- The Otago Institute Council

Of these the two I find the most crucial to my role as speaking on behalf of students would be BoGS and the Graduate Research Committee, these give me a chance to advocate for students within the mechanics of the university and where real change can happen.

This quarter I was also invited to have a seat on the Otago Institute Council, which is the Otago branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Although not a direct University committee the membership is made up of academics and they are quite involved with postgrads, for example setting up travel grants for postgrad students.

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

I have been doing this in conjunction with OPA, largely due to their own enthusiasm and keenness to be involved with anything postgraduate related. Of note this quarter has been the writers retreat and bringing back the postgrad tea and coffee. Other than OPA there is also the Student Research Symposium's Wine and Cheese poster session which is a joint event with the Graduate Research School.

- Work alongside, collaborate with and support the Otago Postgraduate Association (OPA)



I have been working even more closely with OPA than I expected I would have, and I find them to be incredibly helpful, supportive and a good source of guidance for me. They are a real asset to me.

- Push for more of a postgrad focus within OUSA.

This is something that has been helped by having a decent amount of postgrad students as members on the exec. There is a recognized need for OUSA to have a bit more of a focus on bringing postgrads into OUSA, I have had meetings with the CEO in regards to how we can meaningfully achieve this so that the impacts are felt long term, not just within this year. One strategy highlighted was focusing on more family friendly events that cater to mature students (which postgrads make up a good amount). Although I am working on this, this is a goal I have yet to tick off.

2. *Get the University to better support Postgrads*

- Lobby the University and Graduate Research School to guarantee parental leave for postgraduate students (particularly PhDs)

This is a discussion I have had with a number of different people in the university, including the Graduate Research School and Richard Blaikie. The general feel to this is quite disappointing with the main response being 'it is ok to take time off from doing your PhD for having a child' and them not really understanding that its not a situation issue but a circumstances one. It is an issue that I will continue to work on but the general attitude of the University is disheartening and this is something that will need continued work on for a long time.

- Lobby the University to require Postgraduate Courses to allow for sick or distress leave

This is very similar to the above; the general feel is that the University are happy and content with where they are on the issue and won't move without significant pressure. It will still be on my agenda but may have to be rethought as to how the best way to approach it is.

- Push for a Postgraduate Studies Specialist at Ask Otago

This is an area I am making headway on. Thankfully academic staff from around the University are supportive of this and that makes it a lot easier to gain traction. Without stitching University representatives up and sabotaging the push, I will say that there is an ongoing move to make this happen which I am spearheading but more work is needed to be done.

- 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.

This is something I was keen to work on with Sabrina but due to conflicting schedules and our own business it hasn't happened so far, which is disappointing because it is an important issue.

- Lobby the University to change the funding and charging systems for PhD students.



I had a meeting with Financial Services in regards to this matter and they were very stringent in saying it is logistically impossible, however I have found out that PhD students can request to pay the ssf in broken up amounts and they typically always say yes but do not like to advertise that they do that.

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.

Yes, big goal ticked off! Very happy with this one with the only Postgrad Rally to happen on campus in NZ. However the job is not over yet and more work needs to be done so that someone else can pick this up at a similar time next year to show the government it is important.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

This year had been off to a great start and I am still very happy with how it has been going. However, writing this report has made me reflect back on where I was at the start of the year and at the end of the first quarter and things have definitely changed since then. I came into 2019 ready to change everything and shake it up, but you hit challenges and struggles on things that shouldn't be challenges at all, opportunities to do the best thing for students appear in areas you didn't ever imagine and the path you take changes.

In regards to setting up the postgrad committee and not meeting my goals already, the year is not over but it is also important to realise when things are too much and when to back off from something rather than exhausting your energy with little to show for it.

To anyone who has read this far, good on you, and remember to mention the paragraph below next time you see me.

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