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International Students’ Representative

3rd Quarter Report 2021

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

1. **Promote via publications, promotions and campaigns, an environment within the Association and on campus which is supportive of cultural diversity**

Otago Daily Times (ODT) and OARfm interviewed me about the International Cultural Expo and their significance to the international student community and local community, especially during the pandemic where border closures are in place.

1. **Organise and run events of specific interest and relevance to international students**
2. OISA Board Game Night

The board game night was hosted for international students to create new friendships and spend quality time together by playing board games. Due to the very positive feedback from those who attended the event, it is now hosted bi-weekly until October 2021. I have also organized another board game afternoon and an online board game night (Jackbox) during the lockdown.

1. International Cultural Expo (ICE)

I organized the logistics behind International Cultural Expo – a space for cultural clubs to showcase their culture safely. 8 cultural clubs participated in this event, while some cultural clubs did performances on the event. OISA also initiated a ‘What’s Your Diversity Story?’ session, a safe space for people to submit their confession about cultural diversity anonymously.

1. OISA Wellbeing Check

This was mainly organized by Tithi Gandhi (OISA Welfare & Equity Rep), where each OISA committee member was assigned a day to give their own wellbeing tips for the mid-semester break and lockdown.

1. Online Study Group

This was organized by Violina Gunawan (OISA Academic Rep), where a 3 hour Zoom session was hosted to allow students to study/do their thesis together in an online space.

1. OISA AGM

I have started the planning of OISA’s AGM. This will be finished at the next quarter.

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

**15.3.1 International Committee**

I have been present to all 7 meetings. During those meetings, we discussed the organization and execution of the events, updates from each representative – Academic, Residential and Welfare and Equity from the different OUSA committees that they are a part of and discuss ways to solve matters arising. Also, this quarter focused on evaluating OISA’s performance for next year’s committee and lockdown updates.

* 1. **Chair monthly meetings of the Otago International Students’ Association, 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**

I have chaired 7 bi-weekly meetings with the Otago International Students’ Association Committee. We have decided our regular meeting times where all committee members are available. The Secretary would take meeting minutes, and other committee members to participate when they have comments to make, updates, questions, and concerns. Agenda is prepared by the chair, following up from other committee members and circulated beforehand. The Vice President would circulate the meeting minutes afterwards once approved.

* 1. **Take direction from the Otago International Students’ Association, 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**

During this quarter, the OISA committee continues to actively create their own initiatives on events fostering cultural diversity within the university and the local community, also supporting on the execution of OISA events and other cultural club events. This quarter, we focused on making the International Cultural Expo possible and actively voicing their thoughts on ideas of OISA restructuring and representation

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

**15.6.1 Academic issues within the University**

I am working with Violina Gunawan (OISA Academic Representative) to create academic posters that promotes the services of Student Learning Development and Higher Education Development Centre for international students to use. Further action points from this would be seeking feedbacks from international students on those services.

I have opened the conversation on seeking general issues that international students are facing with all cultural clubs, to which most cultural clubs’ executives will update me on any academic issues that they have found.

**15.6.2 Social and welfare related issues within the University and the wider community**

Lydia Li (OISA Residential Rep) has created infographics that raises awareness about the Healthy Homes Standard that international students should know when moving into a new flat. My work on this is consultation of poster and filling in the missing details, more work will be done on advocating of other residential aspects such as – Conflict Resolution, Rent, etc.

Similar with 12.6.1, the conversations have also expanded to the general welfare state of the cultural clubs too.

I reached out to Hamid Zawari (Afghan Students’ Association President) to discuss on how to support the Afghan students affected by the humanitarian crisis. From the discussion, I have shared resources collated by Hamid to the OISA Facebook Page, I have also connected Hamid with the International Student Advisers.

During the lockdown, I have shared relevant resources and Facebook posts via OISA from OUSA and NZISA of support services that international students can use during the lockdown, it includes, but not limited to financial hardships, mental health crisis and academic resolutions.

* 1. **Maintain a good working relationship to the Association 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**

I have not actively discussed issues with Sage Burke (Student Support Centre Manager) but have been listening to issues raised by other OUSA executives passively. The meetings with Sage have stopped temporarily due to the lockdown.

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

I have helped Hamid Zawari in connecting with the International Student Advisers on the matter of supporting Afghan Students affected by the humanitarian crisis. I was a part of the Working Group for International Reset and Recovery with Michaela Waite-Harvey (OUSA President), where International Office and the External Engagement Team discussed about strategies to support international students at the university and recruitment of prospective international students to the University of Otago.

There was a further conversation with Jason Cushen (Director of International Office) and Danielle Yamamoto-Kerr (Manager of International Student Services) about strategies on supporting OISA and OUSA affiliated cultural clubs more, specifically funding, active working collaborations, networking and longevity as they are student leaders of their community and the direct point of contact for many students.

* 1. **Work in conjunction with the Finance and Strategy Officer and the Clubs Development Officer and the Clubs and Societies Representative to ensure the affiliation and support of international student groups**

I have been working well with Josh (OUSA Finance and Strategy Officer 2021) on having some good yarns about financial admin. I have been working well with Dushanka (OUSA Clubs and Societies Representative 2021) on relaying concerns from cultural clubs. I had a conversation with Nicky Bisley (Clubs Development Officer) on restructuring OISA committee for the cause of better representation of the international community.

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

I have been catching-up with Emily (OUSA Admin Vice President 2021) regularly and we have been keeping constant communication on international students’ issues (causes, consequences, and solutions) as well as long-term projects for the benefit of international student community (more in Part Four: Goals and Progress)

* 1. **Sit on the New Zealand International Students’ Association (NZISA) as a member and maintain and fulfil the terms of Memorandum of Understanding held between Association and NZISA**

I have fulfilled the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding by actively contributing to their meetings, consultation and participated on their submissions and the organization of Future Female Leadership Conference as a Logistics Co-Ordinator

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

I have done all my general duties as an OUSA Executive which are described in Part 2: General Duties of All Executive Members

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

I am confident that I have worked no less than 10 hours per week this quarter.

**Part Two: General Duties of All Executive Members**

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 the same year.**

I am still on position until the 31st of December.

1. **Where reasonable, all Executive Officers are expected to assist as volunteers for OUSA events and functions, including, but not limited to:**
   * 1. **Assisting at the OUSA Tent City marquee and other activities during Summer School, Orientation and Re-Orientation; and;**

N/A

* + 1. **Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate, including, but not limited to advertising the election and collecting votes.**

I have promoted the OUSA Elections for the 2022 OUSA Executives to all cultural club executives, OISA committee and to all international students via OISA Facebook Page. I have also attended all the OUSA Elections Forums. I have sent questions for the referenda in the best interests of all international students at the University of Otago.

* 1. **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 am present to most Executive meetings. I have sent apologies to a few meetings and an Executive training session, due to volunteering at Bersatu Games, academic and personal commitments. I was present at OUSA’s Semester 2 Goal Planning session.

* 1. **All Executive Officers shall:**
     1. **Keep up to date with the Finance and Strategy Officer’s Executive budget, bringing to the Finance and Strategy any spending proposals, keeping track of their spending and ensuring they do not exceed budgeted expenditure;**

I have communicated with Josh on any unexpected financial admins relating with OISA and OUSA, in which we have already discussed a solution that we are satisfied with. Internally, I am controlling the budget with Chloe Ieong (OISA Treasurer), by keeping records of all expenditures in the form of receipts and they will be subsidized accordingly.

* + 1. **Educate themselves on needs and experiences relevant to historically marginalized demographic groups including intersectionality and promote and encourage all demographics to participate, where relevant, in clubs, societies, committees and OUSA events**

I am currently taking HIST231 – Special Topic: An Introduction to Pacific History, in which I learned about the history of Oceania. I was a panelist for PILO’s Panel Discussion – Gender in Culture, where I shared Indonesia’s perspectives on gender, also listened and learned about Pacific and Maori’s perspectives of gender in culture. I have also listened and learned on the ethnic communities lived experiences at the International Cultural Expo.

* + 1. **Prioritise sustainability and minimization of environmental impacts in all aspects of their role and keep up to date with environmental issues;**

I have checked to make sure that all materials used in OISA events are biodegradable, if appropriate and think of its longevity of equipment before purchasing.

* + 1. **Every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community**

I have taken five hours of voluntary service by contributing my services at the On-Site branch to the Vaccination Pop-Up Clinic hosted by Te Roopu Maori, University of Otago Pacific Island Students’ Association and Te Kaika.

* + 1. **Regularly check and respond to all correspondence received.**

I have checked and responded at the very best through my e-mails as quickly as possible and Messenger from cultural club presidents and OISA FB Page.

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

* OUSA Executive
* OUSA Submissions Committee
* Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board
* Otago Internationalisation Committee
* Otago Distance Learning Advisory Board
* Study Dunedin Advisory Board
* Otago Summer School and Continuing Education Board

I sent my apologies to one of the Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust Board meeting due to my academic commitments.

**Part Four: Goals and Progress**

Goal 1: Supporting On-Shore & Returning Students Affected by Covid-19

Continuous work on border recovery have been done, in terms of providing clarity to current onshore students, as they have inquired about the state of borders. I have actively shared relevant support posts from OUSA and NZISA through OISA on support services that people can use. I have shared my thoughts to Kevin Guo (NZISA Public Relations Officer) on the decision by Ministry of Social Development to close the national emergency funds, which can be seen on the NZISA press release. Many students have talked to me personally, in which they shared their experiences of their struggles and issues on this lockdown, which I have told them to either share it to other relevant OUSA executives or I will raise them to relevant organisations. I have worked on heavily promoting the vaccination pop-up clinic to international students, as international students were the cohorts targeted by them.

Goal 2: Increasing International Student Network

There is no significant progress on this goal, as the framework for the Buddy Program has been finished. Further action point on this goal, would be to have further conversations with International Office on Buddy Program as an OISA and International Office Project and its ideal mechanism to make the project possible.

Goal 3: Workshops on Rights and Services

There has been a lot of thought put into this, by making sure that all sections of the university are covered on the online platform, this included advice, support services and recommendations in sectors of academic, residential, welfare, student life, health, insurance, visa, career, Dunedin, New Zealand, and many more. Further works will be on consulting relevant students and organisations to ensure that all information written in the platform are correct and accurate. Also, designing the platform to make it neat and aesthetically pleasing.

Goal 4: Organise culturally sensitive collaborative events that celebrates the inclusivity of intercultural background and experiences

The International Cultural Expo (ICE) was the main driving force on making this goal possible during the quarter, while other cultural clubs participating in ICE showcased their culture, OISA hosted submissions of anonymous confessions on cultural diversity from public members. This allowed public members to share their experiences that may not necessarily fit within the set image of their culture.

**Part Five: General**

This quarter, I had a meeting with Bridgehour, a Taiwanese government agency – supporting International Students in Taiwan about my strategies on hosting events for international students and common advocacy issues. I have also had great yarns with Donna about the OUSA Elections and the matters arising of the role - International Students Representative. I have also met with Otago Korean Students’ Association with Silverline to host Our House, a safe space to open the conversation on Covid-19 Impacts, ironically this is postponed due to Covid-19 Lockdown.Overall, I had a lot of fun during this quarter and I am excited and nervous to fold the chapter at the end of the final quarter of the year.