Melissa Lama

President of the University of Otago Pacific Islands Students’ Association (UOPISA)

3rd Quarter Report 2021

Submitted 24-09-2021 at 3pm

Word Count: 2531 words

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

1. **Duties of the University of Otago Pacific Island Students’ Association President**
   1. **The University of Otago Pacific Island Student Association President shall be a voting ex-officio member of the OUSA Executive.**

Currently in practice I have been voting in the matters that are presented to the Association Executive, given that I am present at the meeting, or otherwise stated in abstaining to vote.

* 1. **The duties of the University of Otago Pacific Island Student Association President are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Otago University Students’ Association and the University of Otago Pacific Student Island Association.**

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Otago University Students’ Association (OUSA) and the University of Otago Pacific Islands Students’ Association (UOPISA) is still being developed at this point in time and should be completed in the fourth quarter 2021.

* 1. **Where practical perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.**

This is covered in part 2.

* 1. **Provide a verbal report on activities of University of Otago Pacific Island Students’ Association at each OUSA Executive meeting.**

This is reported back in the weekly OUSA exec meetings.

* 1. **Work no less than five hours per week as ex-officio members of the OUSA Executive**

This is covered in part 2.

**Part Two: General Duties of all Executive Officers**

* 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.**

Completed thus far

* 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 and other activities during Summer School, Orientation and Re-Orientation; and;**

Away during 3 days of Re-orientation. On this same week, assisted with welcoming Pacific students back to semester 2 through Pacific Island Centre.

* + 1. **Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.**

Yes, myself and UOPISA support these events as they help engage our Pacific students in student politics.

* 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 have attended all executive meetings where practical except for when this clashed with the student vaccine clinic. I also attended the training session with Marlon Drake. I have included the remaining sessions in calendar for 2021.

* 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 officer any spending proposals, keeping track of their spending and ensuring they do not exceed budgeted expenditure;**

This has mostly been in discussion with OUSA president, moving forward we do hope to include Finance and Strategy officer in MOU potential proposals.

* + 1. **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, committees and OUSA events;**

This quarter by far has been my busiest. Advocacy from a Pacific perspective as a student leader was requested regularly in various groups and spaces mentioned in report. I have been more active in my mobilisation when it comes to engagement from my wider pacific students, for the purpose of ensuring I was reflective of them in the advocacy I gave on their behalf. Conducting surveys, hosting discussions via zoom and holding discussions on social media was some of the ways I tried to gauge their thoughts on issues regarding “freedom of speech and Covid vaccinations etc.”. The response from our Pacific students was overwhelming, but equally welcomed, as it showed they were engaging with us. This allowed UOPISA enough data driven information to direct us in how we can be better position ourselves to support their needs directly. Where I see improvements in my leadership, is in my ability to engage with students who are not involved in student associations. The individuals who do not feel represented in these groups. I hope this quarter I conduct other means of engagement for this particular cohort of students who want to be heard, but require leaders like myself to do better in what that looks like.

I also recongnise that I could have done more to encourage the discussion around the “conversion Therapy” topic with our Pacific Students. Despite this subject being quiet taboo in our cultures, I as a leader should have advocated and did more to uplift the voices of our rainbow community, to ensure they know I am doing what I can to create a better, more equal safe space for their voices to be heard. I was vocal on social media; however, I should have been stronger in other areas of engagement around this topic.

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

Improvements can be made in this area for UOPISA. Part of planning session for 2022.

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

Currently I dedicate my voluntary service hours to my Pacific community. I am actively attending community events and meetings that work to foster innovative ideas to better our communities’ wellbeing. One of those initiatives is through my co-chair position on the National Tongan Covid Response Group, where I advocate the voices of my local community to government officials. I am also writing up a Mental Health report to the Ministry of Health regarding the Dunedin Tongan community and their journey through Covid, to inform the government on where mental health support needs to improve in the Southern Region. Most recently I have been leading a Pacific Youth Covid Engagement Strategy, the purpose of the strategy is to support young Pacific people in making a decision with accessing vaccinations. This work is also informing the government on how they can better their communication with our most marginalised communities.

* + 1. **Regularly check and respond to all communications**

I have continued to check my correspondence regularly and have responded to all emails and messages as soon as possible.

**Part Four: Ex-Officio Member Descriptions**

1. **The President is the primary elected representative of members of UOPISA. The President will lead UOPISA in fulfilling its core functions and achieving its goals. This includes:**
   1. **Main spokesperson for UOPISA.**

I have represented UOPISA at the following events:

* + Regular communication with the UOPISA Sub-Committee
    - This aims to support the Pasifika student associations and communication about key messages from the OUSA, the university and Tauira Pasifika.
  + Regular communication with Tauira Pasifika
    - Tauira Pasifika have been active in communicating and engaging with issues and current events occurring for UOPISA, for example the Patrol Care Code review. This quarter we have yet to meet in person.
  + Regular meetings with Student Support Services of each department.
  + Monthly meetings with the University of Otago Pacific Leadership Group (PLG)
    - These meetings aim to facilitate around the table discussion on current events, policy and updates with all of the Pacific Deans for the various teaching disciplines.
  + Meetings hosted by the Pacific Development Office concerning the Pacific Strategic Framework
    - We are now in the finalizing phases of this Pacific Strategic Framework, one of my concerns in the first quarter was the student voice not being reflective across the whole strategy. However, the PLG are working to establish tangible goals and engagement strategies to strength the student voice in the strategic framework.
  + Ōtepoti council monthly meetings with wider Pasifika community, hosted by the DCC.
  + Co-hosted monthly meetings with Pacific Island Centre, the purpose is to bring presidents of our student associations to touch base on how we can better engage students to PIC.
  + Covid response group with Māori and Pacific Development office, Pacific and Māori Centre and Te Roopu Māori. The purpose was to discuss the current situation for PI and Māori students in lockdown (Zoom, weekly).
  + Wellsouth Pacific Health Network meetings. In this forum, regular conversations on updates vaccination data was shared for the Southern Region (Zoom, weekly).
  + Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Ministry of Health Pacific Leaders Fono (meeting). Advocating on the needs of Pacific Students from Otago University (once a month).
  + Ministry for Pacific Peoples Covid Youth Fono (once a month), advocating on the need for DHB’s to cater more accessible information regarding the vaccinations to young people.
  + Pacific Leadership Forum – Covid Response Team, seeking guidance and possible networks to support our push for a student vaccination.
  + “Give nothing to racism” campaign conducted by the University. Helping to ensure the current complaint process is up to date and student friendly. Second part to that is creating cultural intelligence workshops for staff and students.
  + Interview panelists for “Student transition officer” 2x roles for Pacific Island Centre recruitment, alongside HR department. Did 8 interviews over a week this quarter.
  + Attended the Pacific Leadership Fono in Auckland on behalf of UOPISA. Alongside university senior leaders, Pacific staff. My role was to give a student address to the “external engagement” networks from Auckland.
  + Attended the “Dawn Raids” official apology in Auckland on behalf of UOPISA and other community roles I hold.
  + NZQA Pastoral care code advisory group engagements on behalf of UOPISA. Everything done via phone and Zoom.
  + Keynote speaker on the “proposals against incitement of hatred and discrimination” at Canterbury University.
  + Appeared and gave media interviews this quarter, for Pacific Media news, TV one news, Otago Daily Times, 531 PI, Newstalk ZB, Radio NZ, Stuff news, Critic and Tahu News.
  1. **Chair and convener of executive and general meetings.**

I have chaired all meetings for UOPISA. I have chaired Ola Malohi research meetings with student lead advisory group.

* 1. **Chief representative and responsible for all internal and external relations.**

I have attended the regular Pacific Leadership Group meetings. I have maintained contact with the member associations of UOPISA through online chat forums. I have maintained contact with Tauira Pasifika through various forms of communication as well as attending their one-day workshop with UOPISA. I have supported the formation of 2 new Pacific Island associations this quarter, alongside other exec members in UOPISA. I have supported the wider Pasifika community events in facilitation and mentoring roles.

I have been working alongside Mercy hospital homework center to support year 13 students looking to attend Otago University in 2022. This also involves supporting parents with enrollment and studylink.

Spoke to the Office of the Children’s Commissioner regarding the realities of walking in the western world of academia and community as a Pasifika student. Guest speaker for Tongan Language week 2021.

Pacific Trust Otago have been an on-going community organisation who supply food vouchers and social support to our students, maintaining a good relationship with them requires me to attend regular community and organisation meetings. This occurs fortnightly.

* 1. **To establish and maintain our relationship with OUSA, ​Te Roopū Māori ​and the University, where appropriate.**

I have attend most of OUSA exec meetings for the third quarter. Apologies was given for one exec meeting due to vaccination clinic lead by UOPISA and TRM. I work collaboratively with OUSA president Michaela on issues that affect our Pasifika students, most recently the need for a student led vaccination clinic on campus and the future budget line we are hoping to establish, are some examples of work we hope to get outcomes for. OUSA have been very supportive of UOPISA and our concerns.

I have maintained a good relationship with Te Roopū Māori (TRM) by maintaining contact with TRM Tumuaki: Karamea Pewhairangi. TRM and UOPISA meet on weekly basis to plan and run a “Leadership Weekend” for our members, this is currently postponed till further notice due to Covid levels. I continue to be in contact with members of TRM about the sharing of resources, other opportunities for collaboration and sharing experiences. I appreciate my relationship with TRM and look forward to continuing to implementing some of the collaborative work we have been planning.

This quarter TRM and UOPISA alongside Te Kaiaka medical center planned and implemented a student vaccination clinic held at Forsyth Barr Stadium. In the space of 2 days, we managed to vaccinate 2100 students.

MOU with UOPISA and OUSA is set to be completed next quarter.

Have contributed to weekly OUSA exec updates for Critic –Media.

* 1. **Establish and maintain relationships with external/Internal stakeholders where appropriate.**
* Tangiliima Feleti (Manager of Pacific Islands Centre).
* Dr. Tasileta Teevale (Director of Pacific Development Office).
* Dr. Losa Moata’ane (Associate Dean Pacific Division of Sciences).
* Associate Professor Daryl Schwenke (Associate Dean Pacific Biomedical Sciences and Division of Health Sciences.
* Dr. Patrick Vakaoti (Associate Dean Pacific Division of Humanities).
* Esmay Eteuati (Associate Dean Pacific Otago Business School and Division of Commerce).
* Dr Michelle Schaaf (Division of Humanities)
* Student Support Staff for Humanities, Sciences, Health Science and Commerce.
* Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade- Pacific Strategy.
* AKO Aotearoa.
* Pacific Trust Otago.
* Te Kaiaka Medical Centre.
* Ministry for Environment.
* Ministry Foreign Affairs and Trade.
* Ministry of Health.
* I have met with the following key stakeholders from other student-led groups:
* Mary Jane Kivalu (Fusifonua Consultancy Partners)
* Ali Leota (ex-President of Tauira Pasifika)
* Jaistone Finau (President of Tauira Pasifika)
* Geraldi Ryan – President of international students Association
* Lauren Dewhirst- President of the Disability Students Association

**Part Four: Goals and your Progress**

1. Pasifika Mental Health Campaign – Theme is yet to be decided, TBC.
2. To establish UOPISA own budget line with the University of Otago TBC. Hoping to follow up from VC Summit.
   1. I plan to set up a MOU and a budget streamline structure that ensures our associations receive financial support for the pastoral care they provide for our students. Outside of what the university provide already.
   2. Progress is slow. However, the Vice-chancellors summit helped with further progressing this goal.
3. To establish an office space for UOPISA
   1. In conversation with Pacific Island Centre.
4. Attend as many student events as manageable
   1. Progress: I have attended various events that have had Zoom capacity and face to face attendance. National Pacific language weeks hosted by our student associations is one of example of this.
5. To finalise a MOU between UOPISA and OUSA. This shall be finalized in the next quarter.
6. To collaborate with TRM on a “Leadership Weekend” event.
   1. Progress: Planning meeting happens weekly with TRM executive.
7. To help build the capacity of our association leaders in governance training.
   1. UOPISA exec have an event that brigs all our interested future leaders to come along and hear what exec roles for associations entails and how we current leaders can support them in their capacity to feel confident to step into these roles.
8. To actively support the Mirror on Society policy and ensure nothing changes for our students and their pathways.
   1. Waiting on announcement regarding the findings from review.
9. Support and Lobby the “Pacific Arts and Performance” Paper for summer school through Te Tumu.
   1. No progress yet.

**Part Five: General**

During this quarter, I have:

* Encouraged associations to apply for Dunedin council Pasifika innovative fund for 2022.
* Hosted a civics education workshop alongside Adult Education Aotearoa in Auckland and Christchurch.
* Helping business/commerce school with their outreach PIPE program for school holidays.
* Assisted Business School in the relocation of the Pacific room in commerce school.
* Did radio/TV Interviews with various media outlets regarding social issues affecting our Pacific students.
* Networked with various government departments on what “better” support looks like for our Pacific students. E.g.: Ministry of Social development, Ministry for Pacific Island Peoples.