

Sean Teow

International Students' Representative

3rd Quarter Report 2022

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

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

OISA has been diligently promoting our events this quarter: Board Game Night with ORBS, Mix and Mingle 2.0, Queer Movie Night, and we have had our biggest yet with International Cultural Expo (ICE). We've also been actively promoting our next biggest events; All In (Silverline collaboration) and NZISA Roadshow (NZISA collaboration).

OISA has been working very collaboratively with the International Office working in tandem to promote these events through blackboard, our member emails, and OISA social media.

I have also been actively promoting International Cultural Expo (ICE) through an interview with OARfm on their Connecting Cultures feature. I also had a discussion about cultural diversity during this feature.

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

As mentioned in section 15.1 OISA has had a good quarter organizing events of specific interest to international students. We've had a tough time doing so in Semester 1 but we had planned some events to be run during Semester 2 and luckily all of them were able to go ahead except for the OISA Ball. We decided to not go ahead with the OISA Ball and instead go with ICE because of logistical and administration demands that would have ultimately impacted the OISA Committee in a negative way. ICE allowed us support from OUSA which helped to lessen the administrative demand of organizing a big event.

Lo Wei Hong, OISA's Postgraduate Officer has received praise from the International Office and OISA alike for regularly running the Postgraduate Drop-In sessions that has allowed International Postgraduates to connect with one another. With bitter sweetness, Wei Hong has finished his academic commitments but can no longer continue to run these sessions due to him returning home for the first time in years. I will be substituting his role in running these events for the foreseeable future.

Our smaller scale events have been run successfully and we've had new and old International Students turning up. It has been a pleasure to see these students enjoying themselves at our events and all credit is due to the hard work of my team.

The International Cultural Expo was hosted on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Our team was working on a tight timeline to get it up and running and we extend our gratitude to all OUSA departments who have helped us in both their leniency and patience with the organization of the event. The efforts of all involved culminated in a successful event that saw 'genuine connection' between both local and international students from the feedback we have garnered.

We have also been actively collaborating with the Social Impact Studio and NZISA to organize two big events aimed at benefitting our International Students. All In, the event with the Social Impact Studio will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> September whilst the NZISA roadshow will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. I will be emceeding for both events and we hope it has a successful turnout.

Lastly, OISA will be holding our annual AGM on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, we hope to see a new generation of International Students take up the roles for next year. It's been my utmost privilege leading OISA this year and I am very proud of the work my team has put out despite issues we faced as a team.

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

**15.3.1 Otago International Students' Association**

I have chaired all OISA Committee meetings this quarter excluding one due to having Covid. However, I was in attendance for all OISA Meetings. We have had very fruitful discussions this semester and have strived to tackle advocacy, support for cultural clubs and our international students, and organize events for them.

We have decided to prioritise events for this semester as our main focus, OISA was aware of the limited timeframe until our Exec has to hold our AGM for the new Execs. With this in mind, we thought the best use of the last months in these roles was to organise as many events as possible.

**15.4 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**

As mentioned in Section 15.3 I have chaired all the meetings this quarter, excluding one, with the OISA committee. We continued to use the OUSA Exec Bullpen as our regular meeting venue on Tuesday, 7-8PM bi-weekly. 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. We have decided to share the workload of approving meeting minutes amongst OISA's other Co-President (Tee Seu Wand) and my Vice-President which would then be circulated amongst OISA Committee members for approval.

**15.5 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 has been active in optimising work efficiency and fair workload, from feedback I have shifted to delegating more tasks more actively considering the logistical demands of the events we were organising. I always include them in the decision making process and ensure that they have a chance to contribute feedback on any ideas, issues, or projects that is of relevance to the team. My team has been nothing but diligent in the organisation of our events as well as working for all International Students in the community albeit with some costs to our other aspects of our lives, we hope to finally get some rest after our AGM.

**15.6 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**

International Students are getting by now that lectures are being held physically, it has been a weird grey area regarding how the learning environment has been impacted but I actively seek out feedback so that we may learn how to best resolve these issues.

Through my meetings with the Distance Learning Advisory Board, I've obtained feedback regarding the negative impacts the last few years have had on not only our students but our lecturers. There is avid mention of burnout and I seek to be part of discussions to resolve these issues so we may better look after ourselves and facilitate a better environment for everyone at the University.

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

As mentioned in the previous sections, our events have been targeted to be inclusive and holding a safe space for our International Students. We know that making friends can be a hard thing at University so have ensured there are continuous events that allow for facilitating this networking.

I have been active in representing our diverse cultural youth in Dunedin by joining the Otago Youth Vision Partnership Group (OYVPG) which was an opportunity presented to me by the Dunedin Multi-Ethnic Community (DMEC) President (Lux).

**15.7 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 emailed Sage Burke and he has notified me that should there be any grievances or issues pertaining to International Students he will inform me. So far, none has been raised to my concern from him.

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

OISA and the International Office continues to have a very good relationship. As mentioned previously, efforts to tackle Postgraduate community issues have been facilitated by both Lo Wei Hong and Simone Freeman of the International Office. We have also employed the International Student Blackboard to help promote our student lead events.

I also chaired the third OISA x IO meeting which continues to prove extremely collaborative and impactful in strengthening the bonds between student and staff. Due to having Covid I had to postpone the meeting to September. Discussions showed great contribution from both staff and students and there was a good balance of opinions that fed into a wider consensus on certain issues. This is the last meeting between this year's OISA Exec and the IO, we've had a good year strengthening the bonds between both parties and I want this tradition to continue for years to come.

**15.9 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 am confident I have a good working relationship with Emily Fau-Goodwin (OUSA Finance and Strategy Officer 2022) and have worked closely on trying to secure more funding to help support International Students. I am also confident I have a good working relationship with Tulsi Raman (OUSA Clubs and Societies Representative 2022) and Kathryn Corry (Clubs Development Officer), we work closely together to support the Cultural Clubs. We have decided to motion for the funds attributed to the OISA Ball to ICE which worked out in the end and we were able to do more for ICE this year than the previous year.

**15.10 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 Maya (OUSA Admin Vice President 2022) when I can and she has always been an amazing help in directing my efforts towards supporting International Students. We communicate on a very regular basis and even if we don't catch-up more officially we are always updating each other through our chats on messenger.

**15.11 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 attending all the NZISA Reps Council meetings, except two (travelling back home after years and a being unavailable for one more) and contributing feedback and updates from the local Otago region. I have also been taking a more active role in leading more national wide student pressure on the visa situation this year, I hope to get an open letter drafted with the contributions of other NZISA Reps and submitting it to the Ministry of Immigration for further consideration but work has been delayed due to personal and OISA commitments. I hope to follow up with this after all major events are over before the year is over. I have also been active in organizing Dunedin's NZISA Roadshow which will see guest speakers and lots of VIPs attending.

**15.12 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

**15.13 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 or at least made up for it in the following weeks or weeks before.

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

**3.1 The appointed term for all OUSA Executive Officers shall commence from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and will terminate on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of the same year.**

I have three months until the termination is applicable.

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

**3.2.1 Assisting at the OUSA Tent City marquee and other activities during Summer School, Orientation and Re-Orientation; and;**

N/A

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

OISA has helped to promote OUSA elections. I have also helped out with Local Body Elections.

**3.3 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 all Executive meetings except for one due to personal unavailability and also help out where I can with local campaign BBQs.

**3.4 All Executive Officers shall:**

**3.4.1 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;**

See section 15.9.

**3.4.2 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 have been actively discussing about belonging and identity pertaining to our International Students when being in New Zealand amongst formal and informal meetings.

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

OISA has continued recycling, reusing, and reducing any material we have used for our events.

**3.4.4 Every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community**

I have been achieved more than my 5 hours by helping out with BBQs, going to colleges to promote local body elections, and helping out the OUSA Welfare Officer with packing down the Sensory Rooms during Diversity week.

**3.4.5 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
- 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 was absent to a few meetings due to academic commitments (clashing tests/exams/due dates) and travel reasons but have always contributed my points in detail to these meetings despite my absence. Apologies were given for all absent meetings.

#### **Part Four: Goals and Progress**

##### Goal 1: Address the underlying issues that have been affecting international student welfare

Homesickness has been a source of upset for many International Students but the borders opening has allowed for many students to go back home and this has alleviated this issue to a degree. Additionally, graduations now can have families travel overseas to be part of their momentous occasion.

Visas still remain an ongoing developing issue that has proven difficult to address. After my major events I will start working on this again.

Rachel Fleener has also raised the issue of the lack of sexual healthcare in our International Students' insurances.

##### Goal 2: Bridging students and university staff together, ensuring a stronger relationship between both parties (COMPLETED, see Section 15.8)

##### Goal 3: Increasing Off-shore student support and their accessibility to student services (COMPLETED)

##### Goal 4: Create intercultural events that privilege the cultural diversity and minority groups of the University that are mindful of their personal and cultural wellbeing(COMPLETED, see Section 15.2)

#### **Part Five: General**

It's been a very tiring quarter and I have been getting rest where I can but also helping out where I can. I believe after September is over I can start focusing on more things and get some more energy to do more work. It has been an amazing privilege working with OUSA and I continue to enjoy my work within the association. Much love from me per usual.