

**Ravneel Chand (PhD Candidate)**

Postgraduate Representative

4th Quarter Report 2022

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**Part One: Duties of the Postgraduate Representative****14.1. Promote via publications, promotions and campaigns, an environment within the Association and on campus which is supportive of postgraduate students.**

During this quarter, I helped plan and lead events and campaign in support of graduate students. A lot of work has also been put into advocating for the students on various issues and suggestions. Particular emphasis was placed on flexibility regarding Pūtea Tautoko funds for students who are directly or indirectly affected. Additionally, through the newly formed Postgraduate Scholarships Strategy Working Group (PSSWG), the focus remains on discussing student concerns related to high living costs and housing issues.

**14.2. Work with the University and the Student Support Centre to implement the Association's policy on Postgraduate Student Representatives.**

The Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee (GRSLC) will meet once more for the year at the end of November. I look forward to Keegan, the 2023 postgraduate rep. The conversation continued on supervisory relationships, ongoing institutional support for doctoral students early in their careers, housing shortages for returning and new postgraduates, concerns about racism and other support for domestic and international doctoral students. In addition, the similar concerns, which also include scholarships for postgraduates, were further discussed in the newly established Postgraduate Scholarships Strategy Working Group.

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

#### **14.4.1. Otago Postgraduate Association; and;**

The OUSA Postgraduate representative sits as an ex-officio member of the OPA. During this second quarter, we (OPA executives) have been running various events to create a supportive postgraduate community. Our focus is to reach as many graduate students as possible and involve them in various events that we have planned for them.

#### **14.4.2. Academic Committee.**

All postgraduate matters are handled by GRS and I have been in contact with the Dean to create a more supportive environment for the graduate students at the university.

#### **14.5. Chair monthly meetings of the Otago Postgraduate 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.**

OPA executive meetings are held at the end of each month. I chair the OPA executive meeting where we discuss the upcoming events or matters that require attention in order to provide the best possible supportive environment for graduate students at the university.

#### **14.6. Take direction from the Otago Postgraduate Association on all matters relevant to postgraduate members.**

The fourth quarter was a great opportunity for me to further strengthen the network between the student representatives through the GRS and the student representatives of the OPA. This opened up more opportunities for networking with the team. The AGM is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month.

#### **14.7. Normally be the Association's representative on the Board of Graduate Studies.**

At this meeting, GRSC matters and proposals or changes to academic papers were discussed.

**14.8. Maintain a good working relationship with relevant OUSA staff, ensuring that information is shared on issues of relevance to postgraduate students.**

I made sure that the responsible OUSA staff are informed about topics that are relevant for graduate students. This includes OUSA representatives and the marketing team.

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

This quarter I have set on several University Committees (please see Part 3) to advocate for the necessity and significance of graduate student support at the university.

**14.10. Maintain a good working relationship with the Director of Graduate Research School and endeavour to meet with them on a regular basis.**

During this quarter, Prof. David and I had many discussions about scholarships and postgraduate student concerns. Concerns from the Pacific and Mori Associations were also discussed further.

**14.11. Maintain links with and assist affiliated Postgraduate bodies.**

I have worked closely with the OPA to increase their marketing/visibility.

**14.12. 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.**

All student OUSA executives are part of the Facebook messenger group, which allows us to discuss anything related to student support or general OUSA matters.

**14.13. Sit on the Otago Postgraduate Association as an ex-officio member and maintain and fulfil the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding held between the Association and the Otago Postgraduate Association.**

As an ex-officio member of the OPA, I actively seek updates from other executives on concerns and matters that require attention across departments.

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

I believe I am fulfilling this part of my role (see Part Two).

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

This quarter, my work hours were inconsistent. I do not mind because I anticipate that my hours will fluctuate more for the remaining year.

**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 that same year.**

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

**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 attended almost every executive meeting this quarter.

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

No discussion on this yet.

**3.4.2 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;**

I planned this through OPA's goal of encouraging more graduate students to participate in organised workshops or other events where possible.

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

Our university is committed to achieving Net Carbon Zero status by 2030 by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than half. We intend to continue to advocate for climate action in our postgraduate community as it is one of the most impactful ways to make a difference.

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

N/A

### **3.4.4 Regularly check and respond to all communications**

I am able to correspond emails as soon as possible or forward them to the relevant parties if necessary.

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

I have served on several different boards and committees so far and represent postgraduates at the University of Otago. These include:

- Graduate Research Committee
- Animal Practice and Compliance Steering Group
- Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee
- Project Steering Committee (PSC)
- Human Ethics Committee
- Divisional Board Meeting and Divisional Leadership Groups (Humanities)
- Graduate Student Committee (Humanities)
- Pūtea Tautoko hardship fund panel (graduate)
- Air travel project steering committee
- Academic committee
- Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee (GRSLC)
- Postgraduate Scholarships Strategy Working Group (PSSWG)

### **My goals this year:**

- Continue to advocate for the graduate cohort, particularly with ongoing issues related to scholarships, housing options for internationals, and supervision issues.

Keep working to create comprehensive support for graduate students through OUSA and OPA and various bodies at our university.

- To engage more graduate students through the OPA events. This is intended to promote the community of graduate students at our university.

This quarter was an action-packed end to my tenure with the OUSA Executive. We started the quarter catching up from Q3 and by the end of Q4 I can safely say we have caught up and are ready for the final events of 2022 (Supervisor Awards 2022) and the start of 2023. A big goal for me this year was to increase the representation of graduate students at the university. We have managed to create spaces for postgraduate consultation, advocacy and representation, including working with student representatives in different departments to improve communication between these representatives and decision makers, create better opportunities for consultation with postgraduate and new student representatives up to bring-level university committees/boards.

My biggest win this quarter, indeed this year, has been working with the university and GRS to raise awareness of graduate student concerns (scholarships, cost of living and oversight issues). The new Dean has endeavoured to form a separate Postgraduate Working Group (PSSWG) specifically aimed at addressing such issues and concerns.

#### **Part Four: General**

The last three months of my year on the OUSA Executive were busy and fun. Many thanks to the Executive and OPA for making this year what it was, and of course, it was an honour to work with the graduate students.