

Cyrus Yam

International Students' Representative 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report 2023

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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**

Because I was not back in Dunedin during O-Week due to plane tickets being unavailable, I am basing this report on information that I had been relayed to and had relayed.

The International Food Festival (IFF) started back up after a year of hiatus with 10 clubs signing up to participate. It was a great success thanks to the excellent management from the OISA side and obviously, the clubs willing to participate and cook up great food for us to enjoy throughout the event.

I was also invited by Arina Aizal to record an episode of Connecting Cultures, a show under OARfm (105.4FM), to represent diverse individuals within our intercultural community here in Dunedin. I got the opportunity to talk about my goals as the International Student Representative (ISR) this year, focusing on cultural diversity, community integration and student support. The goal is to help international students feel at home in local communities, easing the amount of homesickness and loneliness international students might face, helping them have an overall good experience in Dunedin.

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

Because there are no more restrictions when compared to last year, there are now more events that are planned in person and more in the making. The event management would be mostly done in conjunction by the other Co-President (Tiara Das) and the Events and Strategy Officer (Sean Teow) (ESO) for fair workload distribution.

OISA and the International Office have been actively collaborating on events. One of which is the OISA x IO Meet and Greet where members of the International Student Community could meet each other and staff, which both the Co-President & ESO is working actively with Daniel Bond (International Student Support Advisor) to set up.

### **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 attended the 2 meetings that were scheduled for this quarter.

**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**

I have co-chaired the 2 meetings with the Co-President for OISA. Meeting times have been facilitated to the best of every member's availability and a regular meeting time has been organized by the Secretary (Fonie Ka) in the next quarter. Fonie has been diligent in taking meeting minutes, circulating agendas prepared by the Chair, and ensuring members are well informed of the meeting date and time. Other members have also contributed their thoughts and updates to these meetings and added any agenda items of concern.

**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**

OISA members have been active in ensuring that we are there for the students by attending orientation seminars for new International Students during Orientation week and sharing important information around what support services are available. They have been great at connecting with the first-year students. OISA plans to be more accessible this year and be closer to the students we support through the refinement of our various platforms. I plan to work with them to create more culturally sensitive events that tailor to the welfare of the International Student community.

**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**

I had a meeting with the Internationalisation Committee and is attempting to foster a stronger working relationship with them to ensure that the delivery and quality of online learning is being upheld. Because I had a lab clash, I was unable to attend the first meeting fully. I plan to let them know that OISA could be and would be a pathway for students to express their concerns and provide academic support.

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

I have been actively working with the IO, OISA and other organisations to provide useful information for new international students that had arrived in Dunedin for their studies. More social and welfare issues details have been covered under section 15.2.

**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 am organizing a meeting with Sage Burke of the OUSA Student Support Centre that will happen in the next quarter.

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

I have continued the good working relationship with the IO by continuing the OISA and IO meetings that would happen every quarter. I would also be meeting with Jason Cushen (International Director) monthly for catchups.

**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 working with Emily Fau-Goodwin (Finance and Strategy Officer) and Reid Eberwein (Clubs and Societies Representative) so that anything that involves international students or organizations would require me present. The Clubs Development Officer has not been appointed at the time of the report, I will ensure that a healthy work relationship would be established between us.

**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 met with Imogen Macalister (Administrative Vice President) and had set up a weekly regular meeting time with her. I have also upheld a good working relationship, asking regularly whether there is anything I can help with but also bringing issues relevant to the International Students to her for further discussion. If there are any issues or concerns from my end of the spectrum, I will contact her throughout my term.

**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**

During this quarter, I have attended the NZISA SGM as a Council Representative and casted my votes on candidates for the NZISA Executives.

**15.12 Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers**

I have performed the general duties expected of me as an OUSA Executive, details of which will be under "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 an average equivalent to no less than hours per week.

## **PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

**3.1 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 currently 3 months into my term and my term will terminate in 9 months' time.

**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**

Preparing for Orientation, I had recorded a welcome video for the International Office to broadcast during the International Student Welcome, which the video was not broadcasted due to IO having to change their plans.

I was not in Dunedin during summer therefore I could not help on any activities that was on during the summer break.

**3.2.2 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 was present at all Executive meetings. I was also present for the whole of Executive Training Day.

**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 for details.

**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**

An improvement from last year is that I have not been brought to attention about any targeted comments for the time being. I will continue to be on the lookout for any targeted comments that appears.

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

OISA and I have promoted Drop For Good to ensure these items are finding a home.

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

I have undertaken the minimum five hours of voluntary service contributing to the All Saints Fruit & Veges Program.

### **3.4.5 Regularly check and respond to all correspondence received.**

I have regularly checked and responded to all correspondence I have received in a timely manner. I have also been actively checking the OISA Facebook Messenger for any student concerns and responding urgently to any Cultural Club matters in the Cultural Club Execs Messenger chat.

## **PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

- OUSA Executive
- Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy Trust
- Otago Internationalisation Committee
- Otago Distance Learning Advisory Board
- Otago Summer School Operational Group
- Otago IT Governance Board
- Otago Project Steering Committee
- Otago Health Science Internationalisation Committee
- Study Dunedin Advisory Board
- Library Services Committee
- Computer Based Examination Working Group
- Tertiary Planning Group (DCC Committee)

### **• PART FOUR: GOALS AND YOUR PROGRESS**

#### **Goal 1: Encourage cultural exchange and cultural diversity in Otago**

- One pathway to helping this cause would be creating and holding events that encourages local and international students to talk with each other and help foster relations. From what I know, the interactions between international students and local students might not always be great, resulting in some international students being in their own bubble and not have the full Otago experience. The Otago experience, to me, is not only the university and studying, but more about what else Otago has to offer except studying. Interacting with the locals is considered very important to me since this would truly offer a way to truly experience the New Zealand culture. I will continue to encourage and push

for events that help serve the goal to offer international students an easier and fun path of experiencing Ōtepoti and Aotearoa.

## **Goal 2: Establish awareness of present student support systems**

There are a lot of support for international students provided by the university, OUSA, and other different organisations. Despite there being a lot of support present, not everyone would know about there being support present that can help with the specific matter that you are stuck with. To my knowledge, quite a few international students would refrain from finding support simply because they are not used to finding help. Even if they want to find help, there are not enough advertisement for international student support that exists. Some students always say, "Give us more support!", but I think the most important thing is to let everyone know about the support that is already there, then we can build on that and provide more that was not covered by the current systems.

## **PART FIVE: GENERAL**

No updates for the time being.