

Kaia Kahurangi Jamieson
Welfare and Equity Representative
1st Quarter Report – 3269 words
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PART ONE: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

10. Duties of the Welfare and Equity Representative

10.1 Assume all the powers and duties of the President in the absence of the President, the Administration Vice-President, the Finance and Strategy Officer and the Academic Representative.

I have not been required to assume the powers and duties of the President during this quarter.

10.2 Work on issues specific to minority groups of students at the University of Otago, including but not limited to:

10.2.1 Academic Issues at the University of Otago; and;

This quarter, I have been involved in a working party tasked with scripting and reviewing a disability admissions process for medical school. This has led me to form a relationship with the Disability Services Office. I have been reviewing equity within other admissions pathways to the health sciences and plan to expand my review to other competitive programs, like law, in the coming quarters.

10.2.2 Social and welfare related issues within the University of Otago and the wider community.

I have spent a lot of time interacting with Student Support this quarter. My involvement has been hands on in some instances, working with the Are You Okay team and packing care packages. I have also been advocating for the expansion of Student Support, both physically and in terms of the services they are able to offer, with more staff and training. This has involved discussing expansion initiatives with Quintin (OUSA president) and external politicians. We have made good headway and I am positive about the potential we have to expand Student Services this year.

I recently produced a short video to publicise the national teachers' strike on the 16th or March, an issue relevant to the university (especially students in TCOL) and externally, in the wider community.

I am currently working on a program to provide some welfare officers in OUSA affiliated clubs with some welfare training and trauma/drug response training.

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

10.3.1 Standing Committee of the Executive;

I have attended all meetings of the executive committee.

10.3.2 Residential Committee; and;

This Committee has not commenced yet

10.3.3 Welfare and Equity Committee.

I am working on a sign-up form and am initiating discussions with Quintin and relevant bodies on the role and purpose of the Welfare and Equity Committee.

10.4 Chair monthly meetings of the Welfare and Equity Committee, 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 noted above, this committee is not established yet for 2023, but I look forward to gaining insight into the issues experienced by the student body and working collaboratively to come up with resolutions I can action in my position within OUSA.

10.5 Take direction from the Welfare and Equity Committee on all welfare matters relevant to the Association and its members.

Once the committee is established, I look forward to gaining insight into some of the matters I have been working on – particularly relating to the expansion of student support and, if applicable, any ongoing considerations with disability admissions criteria to the health sciences. I am also keen to hear from those in the committee about the issues they see to be significant to the student body.

10.6 Where reasonable, ensure that as many different representatives of student welfare issues are present on the Welfare and Equity Committee as possible.

I will generally promote the sign up for throughout the university, while also placing emphasis and time on circulating it within as many minority and representative groups as possible.

10.7 In order to provide feedback and information, work with members of the Welfare and Equity Committee, including, but not limited to:

10.7.1 Disabilities Rep;

I plan to circulate the sign up form within ODSA and relevant groups.

10.7.2 Queer Rep; and;

I plan to circulate the sign up form within UniQ, Student Support and relevant groups.

10.7.3 Women's Rep.

This will be an advertised role, alongside general committee roles. I plan to circulate this role in groups concerned with women's rights and representation.

10.8 Where appropriate, brief the President on national and local tertiary sector welfare issues and representing the welfare interests of students on local body committees and boards.

Quintin and I have a close working relationship and I endeavor to keep him up to date with any issues arising and my relevant actions.

10.9 Actively inform the student body of issues relating to their welfare, via publications, promotions and campaigns.

As I am only in my 5th week of work, I have not yet reached the stage with any issues where I need to circulate them among the student body. Should this occur, I will utilize recourses like Radio One and Critic, along with paper campaigns and posters, to call student attention to such matters.

10.10 Maintain a good working relationship with relevant OUSA staff, including the Student Support Centre Manager, Queer Support Coordinator and Advocates, meeting with them weekly where possible and liaising with them on relevant welfare issues as they arise.

I have had a close working relationship with Sage and the rest of the student support office since taking up my role. I have relayed appropriate student support concerns to Quintin and other relevant parties and kept Student Support in the loop of OUSA's relevant plans and actions. I have approached politician Chlöe Swarbrick with an intent to enlist her help in expanding student support, which she has been keen to discuss – I am currently in the process of setting up a meeting with her and Sage. I have been involved in Are You Okay, the Flattening Carnival and m currently working with Student Support to establish further initiatives to support student wellbeing.

10.11 In consultation with the Student Support Centre Manager, maintain a good working relationship with community organisations and groups that may provide services to the benefit of student welfare.

I have met with a variety of people and organizations in my time so far as welfare and equity rep. I have gone for coffee with both the Proctor, and, later on, with Sage to meet Bella Pullon from Wellsouth. I have met with Melissa Lethby from Disability Services along with a handful of employees working in the department. I have had a decent amount of involvement with Chaplaincy services, attending committee meetings and helping to interview and select a new ecumenical chaplain. I attended the first meeting of the Student Health Clinical Governance committee in February and plan to be present at these into the future.

10.12 Maintain a good working relationship with the 'Are You OK?' coordinator to ensure, where reasonable, Executive assistance is available.

I am a trained volunteer with Are You Ok. I helped out on Toga night in O-Week, and have since been involved in other hands-on initiatives with Student Support. I am currently looking into how we can adapt the Are You Ok program to provide a crash-course to clubs' welfare officers.

10.13 Facilitate in conjunction with the chairs a variety of student representation on welfare and equity related University Committees and on OUSA Sub-committees.

I provide student voice on the following committees: Ethical Behaviour Committee, Equity Advisory Committee, Otago Chaplaincy Trust Board, Student Health Clinical Governance Board and the Tertiary Chaplaincy Consultancy Board. I have also put my name forward as a representative on the Hocken Collectives Committee, but have not yet been contacted about this. I have also been in touch with representatives from TiB, SSD and Know Your Stuff to discuss how I can provide student or OUSA perspective in relevant matters.

10.14 Maintain a good working relationship with the University, particularly with:

10.14.1 The Director of Student Services;

I have not been able to meet with Claire Gallop yet as she has been away. I have reached out via email, and plan to follow up if I do not hear back soon.

10.14.2 The Director of Student Health;

I look forward to meeting with Margaret Perley in the coming weeks, as I have not yet had time to reach out.

10.14.3 Disability Information Services;

I met with Melissa Lethaby and a handful of staff earlier in the year and look forward to initiating a follow-up meeting soon to discuss any matters that have come up since.

10.14.4 UniQ;

I have not yet met with UniQ but have reached out and look forward to catching up with relevant members of staff and working with the group.

10.14.5 Te Whare Tāwharau;

I contacted Tarn from TWT at the beginning of the year to introduce myself. We had a meeting date which was postponed, and we plan to meet sometime this week.

10.14.6 Thursdays in Black;

Eli from TiB and I have been in touch, and plan to meet up and discuss how our roles can best interact over the coming year. I have a conflict with TiB weekly meeting times but will attend them where I can.

10.14.7 Chaplaincy Board; and;

I have worked with the Chaplaincy Board recently to appoint a new ecumenical chaplain for the university and will continue to offer my involvement where possible and attend meetings.

10.14.8 Any other Welfare and Equity related organisations.

I hope to grow relationships with relevant clubs and their welfare officers, as well as Know your Stuff, the Sophia Charter, Good One-Party Planning and SSD.

10.15 Liaise with the Clubs and Societies Representative to assist those affiliated clubs that have a focus on student Welfare and Equity.

I have a close working relationship with Reid and am currently endeavoring to plan a skills course for Welfare officers of clubs. I have also been involved in making decisions about the affiliation of clubs based on their ethical behavior.

10.16 Be available via cell phone at all practical times.

My phone number is available on my email signature to make it easy for anyone to contact me by cell phone. I have not had an OUSA related call yet, but answer all calls from unrecognized numbers between the hours of 8 and 6.

10.17 Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.

This is discussed in Part Two of the report.

10.18 Where practical, work not less than twenty hours per week, from January 1 until December 31.

Over the past 5 weeks, I have worked a maximum of 26.5 hours in a week and a minimum of 16, averaging out at 21 hours a 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 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:

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

I was here for the last week of Summer in Dunners, where I helped at the sausage sizzle and, once that was finished, at the Radio One stand. Throughout O week I was very involved in OUSA initiatives. On Monday, I undertook 8 hours of Are You Ok training, along with an hour of work at the OUSA tent at Tent City. On Tuesday I spend the day at Tent City before volunteering with the Are You Ok team from 7pm-1am at Toga Party. On Wednesday I helped with the sausage sizzle and interacted with students at Tent City, and on Thursday I spent the day at Clubs Day helping out.

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

I have signed up to sit on an OUSA executive sub-committee concerned with OUSA's involvement in engaging students in political matters for the coming election.

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 have attended all Executive meetings, as well as our Executive training session earlier in the year.

3.4 All Executive Officer's 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.

I have not spent any OUSA money so far, so I have not had a lot of interaction with Emily yet. This will increase over the coming weeks, once FESC meetings commence, which I have put my name down to be a part of.

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 do my best to be aware of any privileges I hold as a cisgender Pākehā woman, continually educating myself through reading, listening to and engaging with stories and lived experiences of marginalised demographics and communities. Part of my effort to be conscious of my privilege includes acknowledging my inability to speak out of turn on behalf of minority and marginalised communities I am not a part of. I do my best to seek out perspectives from groups and communities I am not part of and will continue to prioritise this as I form the Welfare and Equity Committee over the coming weeks. I have had a decent amount of exposure to historical stories and perspectives of marginalised communities through my education in philosophy, sociology, history, social anthropology and English lit, which I am grateful to have received. I have also read the Te Tiriti O Waitangi and do my best to

work by this but am aware that hearing about lived experience from students overrides this as a resource. I am open and keen to hear from students in marginalised communities about what they think I could do better, and how I can better assist these demographics for the good of current and future students. I look forward to working more with UniQ and ODSA in the coming weeks, along with Elisepa and Haki.

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

The physical environment is acutely important to me personally, as evidenced by my personal living choices, including vegetarianism and the decision to minimise my consumption of physical items and packaging. Respect for the environment is a value I carry in every part of my life – OUSA work being no exception. Earlier this year I got in touch with Wā Collective, a business producing period cups, as I saw that they were closing and wanted to discuss whether OUSA could purchase any excess stock. We were able to purchase 100 period cups and have subsidised these to only \$20 per cup. These are available from the Clubs and Socs building and OUSA reception. I am very grateful to Wā Collective for their generosity and concern for the environment and am glad to have been able to make these great products more accessible to students – using period cups in place of pads or tampons minimises period waste, as period cups are a long-term, reusable investment.

3.4.4 All Executive Officers shall every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community.

This quarter I have volunteered with Are You Okay (6 hours), Radio One (3 hours), and the Otago University Snow Sports Club (30+ hours)

3.4.5 All Executive Officers are expected to regularly check and respond to all correspondence received.

I stay on top of correspondence by checking and responding to my emails daily. I hope to receive more emails from students in the coming weeks.

PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERISTY COMMITTEES

The list of committees that I am involved in is set out at 10.13. I hope to get involved in more committees, the administrators of which I have reached out to, and am excited to commence the welfare and equity committee and attend any other OUSA subcommittees commencing over the coming weeks (Political, FESC, Residential).

PART FOUR: GOALS AND YOUR PROGRESS

1. Work with Student Support and other relevant bodies to increase access to mental health support and promote early intervention

I have had discussions with Student Health, Student Support and Well south on issues of mental health, suicide prevention and postvention. I accept that these are overwhelmingly large issues faced by the whole of Aotearoa, but still endeavour to make small but impactful change for our local students. At the moment, three of the main initiatives I am focussing on to combat these issues are (1) expanding Student Support's Peer Support team's training, capabilities and capacity, (2) growing the relationship and interactions between Student Health and Student Support when it comes to ongoing, long-term support for mental ill or struggling students, and (3) providing baseline mental health support training and prevention training for welfare representatives in clubs.

2. Reduce harmful drinking and drug culture in Dunedin while preserving the fun of partying

In the long-term, I would love to see Dunedin host a new student bar (similar to U-bar) where students ate safe to drink and party in a safe and mediated environment, with attractions like live music and dancing spaces. I believe the lack of student bars pushes students out to the street to party, which increases harmful incidents involving badly built flats being over capacity and students overdosing on drugs and alcohol. I am a big supporter of initiatives like Know Your Stuff and Good One. During O-Week, I was able to contact tenants of 8 of 12 flats hosting parties and convince each flat to register their party for good one. This meant that each flat had a police correspondent get in touch with them to explain the risks of things like upper stories and roofs as settings for parties. As far as I have been made aware, there were no significantly negative events during O-week, in terms of harm caused to students by drinking, drugs and partying. My current goals are to expand the capabilities of the Are You Okay team to have them involved and on the ground during events like O-Week, Re-O and St. Patrick's Day on Castle Street. Having worked with the team during O-Week, I was surprised and delighted to see students really value and utilise the service, including the 'Chill Out Zone', which provided students with a space to just have a sit down and get away from the rush of the party, take a breather. My goal to reduce harmful drinking culture is something I plan to really focus on in the coming quarter.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

- Excited to initiate and expand relationships with TWT, ODSA, UniQ, TiB, Know Your Stuff and Good One.
- Very keen to hear from students about what they feel is important – hmu, we represent YOU and want to support you to have a safe, fun and educational uni experience!
- Keep an eye out for the Welfare and Equity Committee signup sheet – I am super keen to have as many people involved as possible. Please feel free to

get in touch directly if you would like to represent a particular marginalised demographic, and don't be afraid to advocate for yourself as a valuable asset to the committee! We want to get perspectives from all sorts of students from all sorts of backgrounds <3