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Welfare and Equity Representative
2nd Quarter Report – 2723 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, there has been a lot of issues related to the uni cutting staff, so that has been the main point of concern for OUSA. I attended OUSA's protest against the budget/staff cuts, met with UniQ about how we could improve life for queer people at the university. I also made a video for marketing for the tertiary open day highlighting how OUSA advocates for a range of student needs during their time at UoO.

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

In my last report, I wrote: "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". I am pleased to recount that we rolled this out to a range of welfare reps, presidents, vice presidents and general executives with great feedback.

On the topic of clubs, I am in the process of re-writing the OUSA Clubs and Socs sexual misconduct policy, after a meeting where myself and a student advocated for the systemic restructuring of the process of misconduct complaints within the clubs systems.

I have met with representatives from Thursdays in Black, Hold Onto Your Friends, UniQ and Te Whare Tawharau, SSDP and NZUSA.

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 having trouble finding members for this committee. We uploaded a signup sheet but this has had no significant uptake.

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.

We are still generally promote the sign up for throughout the university, while also placing emphasis and time on circulating it with as many minority and representative groups as possible. I cannot think of any more avenues to pursue to initiative signups- if any students reading this document would like to be involved, or feel it is integral I get this committee up and running as soon as possible, please email me.

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;

Please see above

10.7.2 Queer Rep; and;

Please see above

10.7.3 Woman's Rep.

Please see above

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. We have occasional official 'catch-ups' and talk often in the office.

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

I have worked with Critic, RNZ, The Project, Stuff and individual students with podcasts for their classes. I endorsed, personally shared and helped to lead the protest against cutting staff from the university earlier this quarter.

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 met with more staff at Student Support this quarter.

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 maintained a relationship with Sage and we have coordinated on events like MHAW. I have also met with representatives of TIB, UniQ, HOTYF.

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. This quarter, we ran a successful welfare introduction program for clubs' execs' based on the R U OK training schedule.

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, HOTYF, WellSouth, UniQ and Know Your Stuff to discuss how I can provide student or OUSA perspective in relevant matters. I have also signed up to the selection committee for a UoO fellowship to provide a student perspective.

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

10.14.1 The Director of Student Services;

Claire and I have met for coffee and have a good working relationship.

10.14.2 The Director of Student Health;

I have not yet met with Student Health's director but I have met with the heads of various departments and have a good holistic knowledge of the 'going ons' based on my seat on the CGC.

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;

Quintin and I met with UniQ earlier this quarter and, since, have had them at an OUSA meeting.

10.14.5 Te Whare Tāwharau;

I met with the staff of TWT and my inbox remains open to them.

10.14.6 Thursdays in Black;

I have met with exec from TIB and plan to attend a meeting at some point to meet the rest of the exec.

10.14.7 Chaplaincy Board; and;

I attend meetings with the chaplains and worked with them to provide a meditation session during MHAW.

10.14.8 Any other Welfare and Equity related organisations.

I have a relationship with Hold Onto Your Friends and have been in contact with SSDP>

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

Reid and I worked together on a welfare course for relevant clubs execs and he was at the meeting where I advocated for the reform of the OUSA sexual misconduct policy. I attended the panel for the new clubs and socs rep and look forward to working with her next quarter.

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.

I worked 20 or more hours averaged over the prior weeks of the quarter. Over the last couple of weeks, my hours have dropped due to exams – emphasis on the ‘student’ part of student’s organization!

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;

We haven’t had any relevant events this quarter.

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 executive meetings, FESC meetings, a panel with the PM and catch-up afterwards, attended an NZUSA national council meeting, the AGM, a strategy meeting with Imo, Gina and Quintin.

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 am part of FESC and have a good working relationship with Emily.

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 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.

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 volunteered with Critic and Otago University Snow Sports Club. Together, this combined for over 30 hours of voluntary service.

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. This quarter, I created a 'take what you need' board, as part of MHAW, which was very well received, and every envelope was taken. I also put out a survey to hear from students how the Uni and OUSA can better support their mental health needs.

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. Having worked with the Are You Okay 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. The welfare training I set up for clubs' execs went well and will hopefully give execs the tools they need to limit harm from drugs and alcohol when they encounter it. I have participated in discussions about student safety and introducing positive party spaces with HOTYF, SSDP, the exec and OUSA, the DCC and Student Support.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

- 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!
- Please give us a student bar