

Liam Patrick White

President

1st Quarter Report

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PART ONE: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

1. Duties of the President

1.1. Be the official spokesperson for the Association.

I've done this to the best of my ability. Comments have been given on behalf of Otago Students to the ODT, TVNZ, Critic Te Ārohi, the New Zealand Herald, Times Higher Education but I suppose also during the University's Pae Tata People Domain Launch where I presented the measures in the plan that would support students.

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/high-rents-putting-students>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/ousa-seeking-input-boycott-sanctions-policy>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/domino%E2%80%99s-gets-o-week-takeaway-message>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/study-loan-delays-stressful-and-scary-otago-students-say>

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/rebirth-new-zealand-student-unionism>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/news/article/11541/mr-prez-bribes-the-media-with-1k-centenary-book-pl>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/news/article/11533/bds-complaint-prompts-30-minute-robust-exec-discus>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/news/article/11497/bds-banned-dominos-gate-crashes-tent-city->

<https://www.critic.co.nz/columns/article/11485/your-ousa-executive-2025>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/news/article/11519/amnesty-youth-otago-verbally-attacked-for-pro-pale>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/features/article/11523/11-hours-with-the-student-president->

<https://www.critic.co.nz/columns/article/11503/ousa-exec-ousas-five-big-issues>

TVNZ haven't sent me a copy of my interview yet 😞 but it was about student housing in Dunedin.

1.2 In liaison with any appropriate affected parties, coordinate and oversee all interactions with other student associations, media organisations, the University of Otago, the Dunedin City Council, the Government of New Zealand, local authorities and any other external organisations and their representatives

Note above with regard to media.

I'm working closely with VUWSA, TTAP, TMĀ, LUSA, AUSA, AUTSA, NDSA, NZISA, WSU on getting the Aotearoa Tertiary Students' Association (ATSA a.k.a. new NZUSA) off the ground and running.

I met with Rachel Brooking and Francisco Hernandez to discuss student issues like cost of living, housing and Voluntary Student Membership for Associations.

I also met with James Meager, who is a very nice guy for a National MP. He tried to convince me that OUSA should buy flats... I asked with what money, and he just laughed at me.

I also wrote to some of the tertiary and education MP's asking what their plans were for the year and what can be done to support tertiary students. So far Chippie is the only one to write back. Legend.

I've met with the Monsieur le Mayor Jules Radich and discussed what can be done to improve safety measures in Dunedin, deal with glass and get it so you're not hit by a bus when you walk down Albany. He said he would try to strong arm the supermarkets into decreasing glass vessel sales and would work with us on increasing lighting around key areas.

I've also met with Steve Walker from the DCC to talk about what can be done to get students out and voting at Local Body Elections this year. I had a very brief conversation with Elliot Weir from ORC about a similar issue and about seeing what can be done about improving public transport accessibility for students.

I've also been trying to support students in directing complaints towards the relevant authority in the Uni.

I've also met with both the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor. They're very nice and very supportive of student ideas. G-Money has agreed to see what he can do to support some of our projects this year which is awesome. Trish has also agreed to try and develop some regular support for the Exec in terms of governance training and mentoring.

1.3 Maintain a good working relationship with the Otago Polytechnic Students' Association (OPSA) and coordinate joint activities when relevant or practical.

I have met with Sarah very briefly, but the calendar has filled up really quickly, so I haven't found the opportunity yet. But don't worry Sarah the invite is coming!

1.4 Be the Association's official representative on relevant external boards, committees or executives, including, but not limited to:

1.4.1 Council of the University of Otago (and requisite sub-committees);

Yep!

1.4.2 University of Otago Senate;

Yep!

1.4.3 New Zealand Union of Students' Association's National Council; and

Yep!

1.4.4 Any other national student body affiliate where applicable.

I am the Otago Representative on the President's Council of ATSA, Chair of the ATSA Constitution Committee and Otago Rep on the Strategic Plan Committee

1.4.5 Hold membership and, where reasonable, attend all internal committees of the Association.

I believe I have attended everything so far. FESC is running and off to a strong start to the year. POLCOM is equally busy and is hitting the year in stride and sifting through OUSA Policy. I've made it very clear to the team that all OUSA committees must be meeting regularly and are a good opportunity to give everyone a sense of what's happening but also where they can contribute.

1.6 Be given first opportunity for appointment as a director of any company where the Association holds the power to make such an appointment, excluding OUSA Holdings Ltd and its subsidiaries, if the executive chooses not to appoint an external director. This must occur in accordance with the OUSA appointments policy.

I got first choice! But decided my time was better spent elsewhere.

1.7 Chair all meetings of the OUSA Executive and ensure that the standing orders of the Executive are adhered to.

Done and dusted! I think I've done a pretty job as chair so far; I've frontloaded a lot of the big work and discussions which is good. No violations of standing orders, except that I learned I have to yield the chair when I am giving an opinion on a matter as practical. I don't think this is a major violation and will keep it in mind for future.

1.8 Ensure that an adequate level of consultation between the Executive and staff is maintained on all relevant matters of interest to the Association.

I think so? I'm really trying to bridge the gap between the Executive and staff without crossing professional boundaries. I think it's really important that everyone is on the OUSA team and are all working collaboratively to support students.

I also went around in the first week and chatted with every department while dropping off cookies and chocolates which was really nice, and I've got a great rapport with lots of staff members.

1.9 Where relevant matters arise, prepare verbal reports to the Executive and a written summary for the Executive, of all relevant matters of interest to the Association.

I think I've done this? There is probably some stuff going on that the Exec need to be updated on, but I'm trying not to overwhelm people too early with things that won't emerge until Sem 2.

1.10 Report on NZUSA activity at regular OUSA Executive meetings.

Need to update this with ATSA. I think a major part of ATSA has to be that each Association executive is entrenched in its business to ensure that ATSA goes beyond "something President's do" and becomes something that all executive members and students can be involved with.

NZUSA is linger in the background, still trying to sort out the admin to wind it up. Which is sad but unfortunately necessary.

1.11 In conjunction with the Finance and Strategy Officer and Political Representative, oversee any political campaigns undertaken by the Association actively seeking to inform the student body and general public on student issues and concerns.

Q1 is probably too early to be overseeing political campaigns, we just finished O-week. I've got everyone on their agenda committees... even they haven't all met yet. Jett and I have discussed what we need to start thinking about. I'm hoping that once the agenda committees and the newly formed political action committee gets up and going, everything will move at pace.

1.12 Maintain a good working relationship with the Administrative Vice-President, Finance and Strategy Officer, Academic Representative, and Welfare and Equity Representative, meet with them weekly and, where reasonable, liaise with them on daily basis.

What the good golly gosh. I'm not going to meet with them weekly. I see everyone almost daily and try to check in with them to see how everyone's going. I think that everybody is doing reasonably well, there are different workloads across the team, and I probably need to start delegating more things down to free up time for my own projects.

But yes, I think I have good relationships with everyone even if they wouldn't admit it.

1.13 Maintain a good working relationship with all other Executive Officers and, where reasonable, liaise with them individually on a weekly basis.

I think everything's going well. The benefit of asking most of the team to run is that I know most everyone on the team and am learning how they best work.

1.14 Maintain a good working relationship with Te Rōpū Māori Tumuaki and uphold the duties of the President as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Otago University Students' Association and Te Rōpū Māori.

I tell you what. It's great to chat to people who get it. Ngātiki and Porourangi are honestly lovely. I helped chair their SGM and I think that went pretty well. We haven't organised the details of the MoU but we're aware that we need to get onto it.

1.15 Maintain a good working relationship with University of Otago Pacific Island Students' Association President and uphold the duties of the President as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Otago University Students' Association and University of Otago Pacific Island Students' Association.

Seluvaia hates me, I think. But in a good way? We get along really well, and I know how busy she is and is always willing to put a hand up to support OUSA. I've got the MoU sitting in my inbox which I'll have a look through and hopefully bring to the next exec meeting.

1.16 Maintain a good working relationship with the Vice Chancellor and uphold the duties of the President as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Otago University Students' Association and the Vice Chancellors office.

I love G-Money. I know that makes my job really hard, but he says all the things I want to say before I say them. Like he is Grant Robertson. I think we've got a positive relationship so far. I've yet to organise my regular catchups with him yet because I thought I had but turns out a bunch of one-off meetings isn't the same as a regular meeting. Oops. But I see him all the time and have caught him in passing to run ideas by him. What a chill dude.

1.17 Maintain a good working relationship with the Chief Executive Officer and, where reasonable, meet with them on a weekly basis. Maintain a good working relationship with the advisory board and, where reasonable, liaise with them on a regular basis.

I think Debbie and I have an awesome working relationship. It feels mature yet collegial. We've got a lot of cool things coming down the pipe later in the year that will I think will push OUSA forward over the coming years. We've got our weekly meetings down and my only complaint is that they're not long enough, but Debbie is awesome and super supportive of the Exec and I.

The Advisory Board are awesome, I don't think I'm utilising them enough, but I think that will pick up as the year goes on and I'm able to step back into the higher-level thinking once the Exec get their feet on the ground a bit more.

1.18 Supervise the Chief Executive Officer on behalf of the Executive, including setting and reviewing of annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

On it! We're working through the CEO Review process; I have also sat down with Daniel and Amy to brainstorm possible KPI's this year. I have yet to talk to the advisory board about what the next step following this is.

Also, Debbie has agreed to monthly reporting to the Executive.

1.19 Where appropriate, seek advice from the Association lawyers on legal matters relevant to the Association to do with governance.

I have yet to call them but know that I need to.

1.20 Be available via cell phone at all practical times.

Had a terrifying call with the ODT who threatened to call me at any time on St. Paddy's. But yes, I'm available all the time for anyone who needs me. Like superman but no powers and in all other ways worse.

1.20 Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.

Keep reading.

1.21 In the final quarter, write and submit an Annual Review as President, for the purpose of inclusion in the Annual Report.

Will do. I'm also going to present a monthly report on behalf of the Executive at the end of the month.

1.22 Where practical, work not less than forty hours per week.

I am actually quite surprised my average only sat at 43.44 when I did a 60-hour week and a 55-hour week. If you take out the first week where I only worked for 3 days and did 25.5 hours, it jumps up to 46 hours.

PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

2. General Duties of All Executive Officers

2.1 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.

Noted.

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

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

Yep! I was really happy with the Exec's engagement over Ori, I believe we had exec members at every event! I also helped out a couple of times with the Summer in Duffers BBQ's which were a great way to support the team and meet students.

We ran the Exec stall in the OUSA Backyard and ran the sausage sizzles during the day for Tent City and Clubs Day.

I also helped out for the cooking during International Food Festival which was an awesome way to see some of the Cultural Clubs that make up a massive part of student body.

I also went to the Flat Fest and chatted with some students there about their flats and what's available to them for support.

2.2.3. Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.

No referenda or elections (thank God) so far. A student has reached out to asked for a bit of information about the Semester One referenda.

2.3 It is expected that Executive Officers attend Executive meetings.

Yep! Loving all exec meetings!

2.4 Where reasonable, all Executive Officers are to be available for national conferences, national and local campaigns, Executive training sessions and Executive planning sessions.

I think my biggest success of the year so far was the Executive training week and leadership retreat in Warrington. It was a great way to catch people up on what's happening at OUSA, what our legal responsibilities are and to do some preliminary planning with the team.

We've got some more training coming up around the advisory board, how to contribute at Uni committees and H&S.

2.5 All Executive officers shall:

2.5.1 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 major spending proposals as of yet, and I have told the team to be very mindful of the Exec budget this year as there isn't a ton of breathing room.

2.5.2 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 remember Keegan referring to herself as a lifelong learner in this area, and I think I'm in the same boat. I'm always trying to learn more and improve my knowledge, so far, the year feels like it's getting away from me which hasn't left me with enough put in the work that's needed in this area.

2.5.3 Act in accordance with and uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi while exercising their duties;

I think so! I need to practice my karakia

2.5.4 Where reasonable, attend events hosted by clubs related to historically marginalised demographic groups;

So far yes!

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

Yep! Looking into what Net Carbon Zero could look like at OUSA. Also talking about what additional external funding OUSA might be able to get for sustainability initiatives.

2.5.6 Every quarter undertake five hours of voluntary service which contributes to the local community; and;

I'm counting my work on the Southern Young Labour Exec as my voluntary service. I've probably done around 10ish hours for the quarter?

2.5.7 Regularly check and respond to all communications

I think some comms have been delayed and are sitting in my inbox, but I'm trying really hard to get to things as needed.

PART THREE: COMMITTEES

If I were to list every meeting, I had this document would be much much longer than it would possibly need to ever be. Committees though I could give a reasonable shot.

- Council - Met
- Senate - Met
- Appeals Board - Met
- Finance and Budget Committee - Met
- Digital and Technology Committee - Met
- NZUSA Council – Met
- ATSA Presidents Council – Met and Chaired
- ATSA Constitution Committee
- ATSA Strategic Plan Committee
- Tuakiritaka Project Steering Committee
- Sophia Charter Working Group
- Constitutional Review Committee
- Executive Branding and Marketing Group
- Health and Safety Committee
- Residential Committee
- Sub-Warden Committee
- Campus Life Events Group
- Entertainment Review Working Group
- Teaching and Timetabling Committee - Met
- Central City Safety Advisory Group - Met
- Blues and Golds
- Grants Panel
- FESC
- Polcom
- Academic Committee
- Welfare Council
- Political Action Committee
- Good One
- Learner success plan governance group
- North Dunedin Community meeting

PART FOUR: GOALS AND PROGRESS

Goal One: (Re)build a connection with students, both as OUSA and as President

This one is pretty self-explanatory. If I have to explain to one more person what OUSA and the President does, I'll rip my goddamn hair out. It's unbelievable that students pay over a grand a year and have no idea what that money goes to and where it gets spent. I want students to feel a clear connection with OUSA whether they love us or hate us, I just want them to feel something and be engaged.

I'm trying to push through tons of traditional and social media to reach all students so if nothing else they know me. I had someone at a party come up to me and say that they'd seen my tiktoks which was cool.

But I think a big part of getting students to engage is letting them know what OUSA is and what it's here for. Which is a service provider and advocate for students. It's here for you and to make sure that you have the best activity during your time studying at the University of Otago.

Goal Two: Look into OUSA's service provision and see what we're missing

This is a terrible year to be looking into this. The budget is tight and there's not a lot of room to be expanding what OUSA is doing.

My guesses on what OUSA is missing: Student bar and live-music venue, a property portfolio of student flats, greater hardship support through emergency accommodation, volunteer opportunities, academic support and improved digital means of engaging with OUSA and the Exec.

However, these are off the dome.

Goal Three: Work towards Financial Sustainability and Long-term Projects

Goal three and goal four really link in quite closely. OUSA has been in need of a change of direct for almost a decade now.

OUSA relies heavily on our Service Levy funding from the university and short-term sponsorships and advertising revenue which is extremely volatile year-to-year. To build an OUSA that better serves us and the students' after us, OUSA needs a financial model that is sustainable, diversified and supports students. OUSA has to push into a space where it's not just surviving but modernising.

Part of this, is building a vision for what OUSA, Otago and Dunedin will look like in 10-15 years. This is a long time to look forward, I mean I'll be 30 which is basically in a rest home. But for something like OUSA it's really important that we're looking to the future and trying to get a sense of what a better tomorrow can look like.

It's easy for a student association to get caught up in short-term survival, running events, and just making it through the next year. But if we don't take a step back and think big picture, we risk leaving the next generation of Otago students with the same challenges we're dealing with today.

That's why we're working on a Strategic Vision for OUSA—a plan that doesn't just react to problems but actively shapes the future of student life, advocacy, and the role of OUSA in Dunedin.

The vision will lay out: 1) what OUSA should look like in 10-15 years, 2) what Otago's student experience should be, 3) How OUSA can future proof itself.

Goal Four: Make OUSA a Political and Advocacy Powerhouse

OUSA should be a force to be reckoned with both locally and nationally. Students are facing a brutal environment and OUSA should be louder, more aggressive, and impossible to ignore when it comes to student issues.

We're starting some of that work with the political action committee and focussing on student issues. Now it's just putting in the mahi over the next nine months.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

I tell you this President gig is awesome. I am really loving my time at OUSA. I feel like a lot of the time I'm still learning a lot of things but I'm becoming more decisive on issues, more proactive in my time management and better at planning and admin work.

There has been a lot of getting my feet on the ground this semester and yet, I still think a lot of good work has been done; the work-plan, the exec meetings, an awesome O-week, developing our annual agenda, OUSA's first big Exec training in a while. Next quarter is now all about actioning the work that we've started and progressing towards our goals.

I always like to wax and wane at the end of these reports about what OUSA is and what its value is. I think in a time like ours where everything feels stacked against us OUSA has a couple of important roles to play supporting students who have been knocked down but also providing them those moments to disconnect and just be themselves in a safe and secure environment.

I'm honestly not totally sure what the year will bring or what difference I'll be able to make but I want everyone to know that OUSA needs to start looking towards its future and seeing what it can bring, rather than putting out fires every year.

Bless up Otago (this includes you humble Critic contributor and Exec who have to reach this)