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President

2nd Quarter Report

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# PART ONE: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

## 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, at an upcoming presentation to University IT and the International student welcoming. Most of this has been fairly reactionary, and I’d like to shift to proactively getting the student opinion into the media.

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/dcc/ultimatum-student-needs-delivered>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/culture/article/11710/ousa-president-liam-white-caught-with-his-pants-do>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/student-pub-still-wanted-referendum>

<https://www.1news.co.nz/2025/05/19/inspectors-to-check-conditions-of-dunedin-student-flats/>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/healthy-homes-checks-coming-student-flats>

<https://www.critic.co.nz/features/article/11621/the-national-student-association-you-havent-heard->

<https://www.critic.co.nz/news/article/11711/mould-mapping-north-d>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/opinion/campus-which-played-its-part>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/561463/dunedin-students-told-not-to-put-up-with-run-down-flats-as-rentals-inspected>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/nz-news/360693628/dunedin-student-flats-targeted-tenancy-law-crackdown>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/student-quarter-left-out-draft-plan-influx-ignored>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/%E2%80%98majority%E2%80%99-student-flats-had-issues>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/campus/students-party-hyde-st>

https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/561902/some-landlords-tenants-unaware-of-healthy-homes-standards-despite-looming-deadline

Also some letters to the editor here and there in the ODT.

### **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**

I believe so! We got all the other student associations (except UCSA) down for a weekend for the ATSA conference, and while we’re back to the drawing board on a national student union, I think it still offers a great opportunity.

I’ve also been engaging with UCSA around alcohol harm reduction and sharing notes around what has been happening in that space.

To the best of my knowledge, there has been limited media engagement with the rest of the exec and media – have given some Jett some support around some stories.

I do not want to oversee all over the interactions between OUSA and the University of Otago lol.

Jett and I (he did most of the work to be fair) delivered a submission on the DCC 9-Year Plan that I think was great and really keenly communicated our points.

I’m also going to try inviting some Government Ministers and opposition spokespeople down to talk to the Exec about the issues we’re facing, and hopefully getting some good answers out of them. Might hand this off to Jett but idk.

I’d also like to push OUSA more out into the community and engage with other local community groups to improve the Town-Gown relationship.

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

Still have yet to meet with Sarah, but I’ve reached out! They’ve also (the day before I started writing this) reached out and asked to collaborate and support student enrolment in LBE which will be a great campaign to co-run. Would be great to have a sit-down between the two Execs and see what we can collaborate on.

### **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**

WHOOPS.

### **1.4.4 Any other national student body affiliate where applicable.**

Yep…

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

I think a lot of people have made the point that OUSA Committees have been running well, without much work sustaining them. Hopefully this is something to shift out of for next quarter. I’ve got a plan.

Credit to Daniel and Amy though. FESC is running the best it has in a long time and we’re having really good conversations around the association and some necessary future proofing. POLCOM is running well but OUSA’s policy framework is completely wrong, and needs looking at. I know Amy is pursuing this with the help of the Advisory Board, but good to highlight as an action.

### **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.**

I think it’s probably fair to say that this year has had some significantly more difficult discussions than last year; looking at BDS and Jett’s Council runs that probably haven’t been handled perfectly on my end. I stand by all decisions made, but have also found some resources from Sports NZ around how to be a better chair so will be following these up.

### **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 everyone has been really busy and have become quite siloed both on the staff and executive side. It’ll be a bit of a mission to bring everyone together. Once we get closer back to Re-Ori, I’ll be going around with snacks again and having a chat with departments to get everyone’s feedback and opinion.

Student Vision 2035 (long-term desired future state) is still being developed, but has hit a snag around operational manager consultation with so many people being sick, but still looking forward to having this with staff, the executive and then a joint session.

Some Executive members have raised concern about a lack of consultation within the team, I’ll try to work on this going forward noting that my personal style is find an end goal and move towards its quickly so there are likely to be bumps with this moving forward.

### **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.**

Likely to do more of this going forward, I was definitely better with this around Q1 and I know it raised some frustration but it is difficult at times to appreciate the level of difference in knowledge between myself and other Exec members, I just assume everyone knows what I know. But this is flawed for obvious reasons.

### **1.10 Report on NZUSA activity at regular OUSA Executive meetings.**

There hasn’t been terribly much to report as there as still growing pains, we’ve added it as a static point on the agenda, I think a written report following the ATSA conference would’ve been worthwhile, and will note this for future Presidents.

To provide any semblance of a report would underplay how significant the growing and teething pains for all involved, but again I’m still optimistic that with us all coming back to the drawing board with what I personally feel like is a better model, but we’ll see.

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.**

During the little quarterly catch-ups with the team nearly everyone cited frustration with how little the campaigns have moved over the last quarter. I would say again, this quarter has been incredibly busy and we have made progress. There is probably some validity to the criticism that I’ve taken too much of a leadership role on too many of the campaigns going forward, I always considered my position as “active support” but I think this has meant that there isn’t a very clear “lead” on each campaign. I’ve gone back to the drawing board, and am working on a little Notion page to help manage actions, leads and what I believe to be the most important next step.

I suppose because everyone is going to be reading this it’s probably good to just say that I have a plan in place to keep campaigns moving through weekly meetings, more aggressive accountability and a greater emphasis on shared responsibility and exec members taking individual leadership on campaigns that excite them.

### **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.**

Will be shifting back into a model closer to this, I have been meeting informally with Daniel and Amy M weekly if not more to discuss progress and where things are moving.

Stella just sort of runs on her own, and that’s fine she’s a machine and has my complete faith. But I think I’d like to have a closer working relationship so I can see where she needs greater support, and can encourage delegation to Josh who is still looking for more work, Jett who is ready to help on campaigns like Paid Placements and Ibuki because he’s a sweet little guy.

I definitely haven’t given Amy W the support and advise that she’s needed over the last Q, and honestly haven’t seen her a ton (outside of the flat because I’m learning to respect work-life boundaries), but we’ve agreed to more weekly meetings.

I’ll be honest, the relationship between myself and the 20-hour roles have certainly been tested of the last month and a half, but as I’ve said to them I’m hoping that we’ve hit rock bottom and are ready to push on for a better and more collaborative second half of the year.

### **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 everyone is going well, and I think the knowledge gain across the whole team is much better than last year, I think everyone by this point has a reasonable grasp on their role, and I will be meeting weekly with people to discuss their progress and how things are going in their role, as well as these more regular campaign meetings.

To the whole team, I’ve realised that people don’t realise that they can come to me and ask for advice. This is another thing that I thought was obvious so failed to communicate. My door is always open! You don’t need to set up meetings with me (though they are appreciated). I really want to help you guys get your projects over the line and see you all succeed! I genuinely would rather you guys bug me and ask for too much advise and help, than not come and talk to me when you need help.

### **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.**

MoU signed! Good to get this off the ground, haven’t given as much focus to TRM as I would’ve liked but I know that I’m always welcome down at the Whare and I hope they know that they’re welcome at our office. Pou and I have been meaning to catch-up for what feels like 2-weeks now but just keep missing each other!

### **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.**

Haven’t seen much of Seluvaia recently, I’m assuming it’s just exams and stuff but also got the MoU signed!

### **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.**

Yep finally got regular meetings with him, and am making more of an effort to hold him to account on some particular student-y things. But I like to think we get along, even if he does make fun of my fashion choices.

### **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.**

Again, I think Debbie and I have a good working relationship. I think we’ve both been feeling under the pump recently and with the loss of her EA our regular meetings have paused. But even then, I believe that Debbie is aligned with the Exec on all of our major projects, as is the theme for the year, the difficult part is finding the time.

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

These definitely got finished later than I liked. But we now have firm alignment on the KPI’s which includes written monthly reporting and an upcoming annual plan.

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

Yep, had a good conversation with Malcolm about legal obligations of the board and empoyer obligations.

### **1.20 Be available via cell phone at all practical times.**

Yep!

### **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.**

Yep!

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

My average has dropped this quarter to 42.5, but it’s a goal of mine next Q to use these hours more on student outreach and campaigns.

# PART TWO: GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

## 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.**

Whatever pal.

### **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, helped organise the Exec for University Open Day.

### **2.2.3. Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.**

Massive thank you to Amy, Abby and Donna for all their work on the referenda this semester, it’s not an easy piece of work and I’m glad really glad to say that we got some great questions answered. I didn’t have much to do with the process, and would’ve liked to have been more engaged but all is well.

I also think that Deborah raised a great point of how we can make this a more inclusive process to the student body. I’d recommend for future Presidents to present the referenda questions with names attached when they go to the exec, to make sure that Exec questions are moderated and weighed.

### **2.3 It is expected that Executive Officers attend Executive meetings.**

Yep!

### **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.**

Done this.

### **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;**

Daniel and I haven’t met for an Exec budget update, from what I understand we’re on track for our budget. Still have yet to sort out the campaigns donation, to make sure that we’re resourced for all the work we want to do.

### **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;**

Yep, would like to attend more club events. I’m particularly going to shout out MUSA, I think they’re a great club and actually have been really supportive of me trying to get involved which is nice.

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

More needs to be done in this space, but I don’t think I’m the person to say what. It would be worthwhile in future to bring in an external cultural audit of OUSA to make it more inclusive.

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

Again would like to do more.

### **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!

### **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, and also undertook some voluntary work on behalf of ATSA beyond my role as OUSA President.

### **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 - OML
* ATSA Strategic Plan Committee - OML
* Tuakiritaka Project Steering Committee - Met
* Sophia Charter Working Group – Met
* Constitutional Review Committee - Met
* Executive Branding and Marketing Group
* Health and Safety Committee – Daniel?
* Residential Committee – Not met
* Sub-Warden Committee – Not Met
* Campus Life Events Group – Apparently hasn’t me
* Entertainment Review Working Group - Met
* Teaching and Timetabling Committee - Met
* Central City Safety Advisory Group - Met
* Blues and Golds - Upcoming
* Grants Pannel - Met
* FESC - Met
* Polcom - Met
* Academic Committee - Met
* Welfare Council – Amy?
* Political Action Committee - Met
* Good One
* Learner success plan governance group - met
* North Dunedin Community meeting - Met

# PART FOUR: GOALS AND PROGRESS

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

This is going to be a major focus of mine over Q3. We can’t make any of the changes we want to make without reaching out to the student body. I’ve made it really clear that OUSA acts as a union on behalf of its members. OUSA is currently relying on its reputation that it gained has gained over the last 20-years, but that reputation is wearing thin because we can’t mobilise or organise our members. When I say this, I don’t mean getting 20,000 students lining up George St. I literally mean getting 50 people who aren’t exec or critic into a public forum.

Jett and I have talked about a public engagement campaign being his focus for the next semester; organising regular hall, club and public meetings

I’m trying to push through tons of traditional and social media to reach all students so if nothing else they know me. I’ve had lots of people recognise is me which is cool, but how can we transfer this into action.

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.

This is still sitting here, I haven’t changed this from the last report because there probably isn’t an update.

**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.

This is the update from last quarter, and I think it’s important this stays here, but in my mind all of my goals link back to this. How can we rebuild a sense of student momentum, that carries OUSA forward into a new era of student political action. Because it is hard out there for our students; housing, financial hardship, mental health and a grim future all put our membership into unnecessary harm.

Yet OUSA is only as strong as the student body, and I’ll be honest the student body is weak at the moment, how can we get back and nurture strength and collective power into our membership? I am firm that this is what OUSA needs.

**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.

Hahaha. I love Q1 me. I think everyone on the team recognises that we have seriously lagged on the advocacy side. I am still considering resignation if we can’t get back and build momentum behind these goals, because without giving greater effect to our advocacy OUSA should not and eventually will not exist.

I appreciate there are some ongoing questions around OUSA and my neutrality. I will make the point again, OUSA should not be neutral nor can we in good faith. If we are neutral then in my mind we are indifferent the interests of our members.

# PART FIVE: GENERAL

I’m going to be very honest: the last month and a half hasn’t been easy. I’ve probably considered resigning 4-5 times over the last month. That isn’t to say that the people aren’t amazing or the role isn’t a privilege; because both are true. But something hasn’t felt right and I have honestly been questioning my ability to lead our team. Whether it’s internal tensions, a loss of direction, or just the sheer weight of expectations, it’s like the wheels have come off a bit.

I’ve found myself grappling with the gap between the ambition we’ve set as a team and the reality of our ability to achieve it. We began the year with a really clear direction: “an Executive for something different.” Committed to shaking things up and raising the bar of what an Executive can achieve. I know that the entire team is frustrated with each other, me included. There are some of you pulling your hair out, asking what you’ve signed yourselves up for, believe me I get it.

Without questioning anyone’s resolve or dedication, I feel sure that there are those on the team who question this vision for OUSA; a strong union fighting for change in partnership with a strong and engaged student membership. This can feel too big, too radical and too hard to believe in our day and age. I acknowledge that I might be wrong to believe that we can build this, but I am equivocally not going to stop believing in it and working towards it.

I also understand that I have not conducted myself in a manner that fills us with confidence in our ability to deliver this. I feel like this quarter I have let the team down. I haven’t provided each of you with the support, guidance but most importantly the trust for each of you to excel in your projects. For that I am sorry, and am looking forward to rebuilding what has been lost with each of you.

I know why I’m here. Seeing excited students welcoming us into their flats, hearing what’s important to people and reminding myself that it’s best OUSA can be a mechanism between the student and our stories into the systems that govern their everyday lives. Despite all of our frustration, each one of you have shown resilience. I’m proud of everyone on the Exec team for continuing to show up even when we can all acknowledge that we haven’t lived up to our vision.

But I still believe in the potential of what we can achieve. OUSA should be something that students feel a part of. A voice in a room that they can’t be in, a friend when they need it, but most importantly a force for a better tomorrow. I believe that OUSA shares the same mission as the University and the student body; shifting from surviving to thriving.

We have to reconnect with our purpose, restoring our belief in progress, and building the energy we began with. I want the second half of our time at the wheel to be about rebuilding faith in the vision that both we and the student body can believe in.

I know that every single one of you is feel frustrated, I get it. But at the end of the day we all care. We all want to come out of this year knowing that we have left OUSA and Otago better than when we found it. I want to be very clear on our current trajectory that will not be the case, but I believe that we can change this; by working together and trusting one another. If nothing else, that’s the vision for Q3.