

Liam Patrick White

President

4th 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 have continued to act as the official spokesperson for the Association

- Giving speech at ASPAs
- Speaking to the Dunedin City Council on Albany St.
- Representing student perspective at University Council regarding University Fees
- in an op-ed for the ODT around student and tertiary engagement with the city -
<https://www.odt.co.nz/opinion/will-it-be-end-big-show-if-town-and-gown-can%E2%80%99t-be-aligned>
- in an op-ed for Spinoff around the importance of tertiary education and its recent pressures -
https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/10-11-2025/weve-forgotten-what-universities-are-for?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Will%20Te%20P%C4%81ti%20M%C4%81ori%20s%20brutal%20MP%20purge%20succeed%20in%20ending%20its%20turmoil%3F&utm_campaign=The%20Bulletin%20-%20November%2011%2C%202025

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

Very minimal external engagement over this quarter. I am continuing with many of my regular catch-ups with Mayor Sophie, Rachel Brooking, Francisco Hernandez and key University personnel.

Most of this is just wrapping up for the year and ensuring some continuity for with the relationships and key projects.

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

I did make efforts regarding OPSA and better engagement, have yet to meet their new advisory board.

I still think there is some merit to a shield-style competition between Uni and Polytech students, but that idea has fallen off my radar this year, but something for Daniel to pick up if interested.

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

WHOOOPS. Probably needs to be amended noting OUSA's withdrawal.

1.4.4 Any other national student body affiliate where applicable.

Yep. There's a handover/introduction session being planned with all of the outgoing Presidents and new Presidents.

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

Yep, but most of these have pretty much wound up for the year.

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.

N/A

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

Yep! I don't think any standing orders have been violated.

It does feel like (granted it's November) that the culture around the Executive has vastly improved now that the partisan dogfight is over. Which thank Christ it is.

I think, while everyone is tired and very much ready to move on, the personal relationships have vastly improved and a much healthier working environment has set in.

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.

There is a very fair criticism that the Executive failed to engage staff early enough in our projects, particularly the Deloitte Review. Definitely a lesson for Daniel and the next Executive going into next year around engagement. While it certainly put Debbie in an awkward position, we were prioritising speed and confidentiality at that point.

Otherwise, I think we're about solid. It'll be interesting to see if/whether the Executive will be brought into planning for next year, but yet to be seen.

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.

Yep have done this with the NDSA MoU situation, but otherwise nothing overly hectic has arisen.

1.10 Report on NZUSA activity at regular OUSA Executive meetings.

Not really relevant, and there hasn't been much at the national level.

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.

Less relevant to quarter four, certainly not as many campaigns run this year as I would have liked. Local Body worked well, and can serve as a good pilot/blueprint for next year's national election.

I think the comment I would make for the next Executive would be to start much smaller with campaigns – start by doing videos, media and posters just general awareness raising.

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.

This has certainly gotten much better, Amy M and I have a working relationship that was lost for a number of months, so that has been really appreciated by me.

Daniel and I have been spending quite a lot of time together with handover/chats about next year.

Stella and I haven't really had many of these catch-ups or really any insight into what she does, and this has been doubly true over this last quarter.

Amy W and I do liase daily as we live together, and have definitely moved away from the "work at home" chat which has been good.

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

Yep.

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 beleive so, definitely could have done more in this space, but with everything winding down in Q4 there hasn't felt like a particular reason to do this.

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.

Really the same as above.

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.

Again, not really a ton to talk about at this point of the year. I honestly really describe my relationship with Grant – I assume it's good? I go to him when I have issues or try to catch him when he's around but University affairs haven't been my focus this year so I haven't seen him overly much.

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 a healthy working relationship and she has been a great sounding board and professional partner over this last quarter, allowing me space to identify areas for organisational and self-improvement.

I think we're really lucky to have Debbie as CEO.

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

Yep. Still going through the performance review process, and this is definitely dragging out much longer than it should have with the requirement of an additional document that I was not aware we needed around Debbie's self-assessment against the job description, but this should be mostly wrapped up by the end of this week.

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

Have done this, not sure it's appropriate to discuss what for, but happy to update orally where people need a review.

1.20 Be available via cell phone at all practical times.

Yep! – Except when I had my exam.

1.20 Perform the general duties of all Executive Officers.

Pt. 2!

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

Yet to do, and probably will doing in the dying days of the Presidency. So expect me to reach out to everyone for their successes for the year.

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

At the direction of the Executive, it has been a real focus of mine to bring my hours up over this last quarter. My annual average is sitting at 39.28 (98.2% of 40 hours) which puts me at the fourth highest (relative to hours) for the Executive, behind Amy, Josh and Ibuki.

My hours for the fourth quarter are also good, sitting at 35.00 hours (87.5% of 40 hours) which puts me at the third lowest relative relative to hours. But if you control for the weeks were I was running my Presidential campaign, I'm sitting at 42.79 (106% of 40 hours), which puts me at the second highest relative to hours.

Looking ahead in my calendar, it does not look like these hours will drop off over the course fo the rest of the year (particularly December), remembering that I began earlier and finish later than all other Executive members.

I am very comfortable with my hours and my efficiency over the last couple of weeks. I think my attendance at the office has been far more regular, showing up earlier and being one of the last to leave.

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.

Yep. Sadly no changes or extension here ☹️.

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

Sure.

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

N/A

2.2.3. Assisting with elections and referenda where appropriate.

Not allowed! But I am very proud to say that I sponsored OUSA's Executive election pullout for this year as part of the Local Body Magazine project (campaigns budget used Stella!)

2.3 It is expected that Executive Officers attend Executive meetings.

Yep, I don't think I've missed any.

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.

Not looking like we'll have the opportunity this year for an end of year ATSA Conference. Not saying that I'm disappointed just noting.

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;

I don't think Daniel has ever presented the Executive with a financial update lol.

Kept the Executive informed on the exceeded expenditure around the NDSA MoU.

Push our Drop for Good Budget further by getting both a van and a truck for the same cost of last year's van. So big success.

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, one of the questions I studied up for my exam was around the ideology and formation of Te Pāti Māori so that was a really interesting topic (and has become even more useful today!)

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

I think the shift in MoU relationships has been good, providing more resources for Te Rōpū Māori to provide more service by-Māori for-Māori

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

I don't think a single club event has occurred in Q4.

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

Drop for Good!

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

SYL again. I've also been volunteering a little bit with the Public Service Association, Valley Project and looking for some community activist based volunteering.

2.5.7 Regularly check and respond to all communications

Yep!

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 – Technically met?
- ATSA Presidents Council – Met and Chaired
- Tuakiritaka Project Steering Committee - Met
- Sophia Charter Working Group – Only meets once a year
- 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 isn't me
- Entertainment Review Working Group - Hasn't met this Q
- Teaching and Timetabling Committee - Met
- Central City Safety Advisory Group - Met
- Blues and Golds – Done and dusted!
- Grants Panel - Hasn't met this Q
- FESC - Met
- Polcom - Met
- Academic Committee - Hasn't met this Q
- Welfare Council – Hasn't met this Q
- 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 one has been hard with everything going on – as Josh likes to joke, students are definitely more aware of what's happening!

I do still think that this year has been great in terms of student engagement, yes we had to beat each other up to get there, but students are vastly more aware and engaged with the conversations and debates we were having as an Executive.

Now it's how we turn that next year into mobilised action for the election.

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

Again, I'll echo my last report. 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: More direct flatting support in accommodation checks, property portfolio, student bar, volunteering opportunities within OUSA departments, for-profit student events like gigs, grad nights and divisional balls.

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

I largely thought that this was going to drop off the radar, so I'd like to give massive credit to Daniel for really pioneering this over Q4 by leading much of the work around the Deloitte review, which will be a great way to identify what opportunities we're failing to capitalise on. So great work there.

Goal Four: Make OUSA a Political and Advocacy Powerhouse

I do genuinely believe that this goal has been achieved. Far more people look to OUSA as a major local player. This year, I think we've set the standard of what OUSA can be in terms of a strong local citizen in our engagement with the Dunedin City Council. A lot has gone into this relationship, so I do hope it continues into the future.

Even now, I still get LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram messages about what a rental WoF means, how we can reduce the glass problem and improve student engagement with politics. This year has been great for publicising the issues that students face, and putting us a key community in need. So I would count this as a success.

Not every year can boast flashy solutions, but in the lead-up to the election it's clear the issues that are facing students.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

What a year, eh?

I went back and read my Q4 report as Pols Rep and my Q1 report as President. I really did believe that we could change the student experience at Otago, and, maybe even change the world a little while we were at it. I don't think those high ambitions were a bad thing. If anything, they were what kept me going when every day felt like a grind and the problems felt bigger than what we had to throw at them. We were trying to do all this in a year where the tertiary sector was under huge pressure, costs were climbing, and it often felt like students were being treated as an afterthought.

Regardless of how this Executive is remembered, I am genuinely proud of the work we've done this year. I'm especially proud of the work we did on student housing to make sure North Dunedin keeps being seen as a real community that deserves decent homes. I'm proud of our role in defending the Albany Street cycleway and insisting that students and safety were at the centre of that debate. I'm proud of the groundwork we've laid for a proper student bar and for a stronger, more visible association. We didn't fix everything, but we will leave a mark on our campus

To Otago students, our members, whether you ever realised you were one or not I'd like to offer a massive thank you. Thank you to everyone who voted, emailed, showed up to a forum, or just stopped me in the Link or the street to share a story about your flat, your coursework, your mental health, or your fears about the future. This association only matters because you do. Please keep turning up, keep demanding better, and don't ever let anyone convince you that "students don't care."

To the OUSA staff, you are the people who quietly hold this place together. You dealt with my big , tight timelines, and occasional mild chaos with patience, professionalism, and a sense of humour. You've backed students through some of the toughest years our sector has seen without public recognition. It has been a privilege to work alongside you and to see just how much care and skill goes into making OUSA function day in, day out.

A special thank you to the amazing Donna Jones. I can very comfortably say that without your advice and support I would have resigned in May. I remember there was about two weeks where I was coming to you every day saying "this just feels harder than it should, maybe I should step down." Now, while some people might have preferred that, your kind support and fighting spirit kept me going. Thank you so much Donna OUSA is so lucky to have you.

This year has taught me a lot about leadership, and also about my limits. I've learned that leading is often less about grand speeches and more about long emails, compromise, trust, and taking the heat when things don't go to plan. I've learned that you can't please everyone, and that if you're doing this job right, you probably shouldn't.

To Keegan and the 2024 Executive, thank you for all of your support this year and last. For all of its weirdness and spats, I don't think there was a group of people more perfectly suited to be OUSA Executive members at that time. You did your jobs with humility and humour. Keep in touch, and all the best for whatever comes next.

To the 2025 Executive, you guys have been absolutely fantastic. There were definitely moments where we wanted to gouge each other's eyes out, but our mutual obligation to the student body meant we powered through, again and again no matter what was thrown at us. Each of you has been dedicated and hard-working, and I am incredibly proud to say that I got to lead such an incredible team.

To Daniel and the 2026 Executive, I wish you all the best. You can choose to carry on our work or not, but you can't blame us forever, and you'll have to walk on your own two feet to create the change our students need. The fights around housing, association membership, student fees, and student voice are far from over. Next year will be a big year, politically, financially, and culturally, so don't take your roles for granted. Back yourselves, trust your gut, listen to students, push through the rough patches, have a good time, and make some memories along the way. I'm around for a phone call or a beer (whatever is needed) and happy to offer advice or assistance wherever I can.

There is still a lot of unfinished business. We haven't yet secured automatic membership. The student bar isn't open yet. Student housing is still too cold and too expensive. The sector is still fragile. But OUSA is still here. Under voluntary membership and in the middle of all these headwinds, that is no small thing. This association has outlived governments, vice-chancellors, and whole policy regimes because generations of students dared to believe it was worth fighting for.

On a personal note, I want to thank my friends Van, Hana, Roger, Louis, Jett, Amy Whyman, my partner Chikita, my whānau and the mentors who've backed me, challenged me, and kept

me grounded this year. You've listened to rants, given me sage advice and encouraged me to look beyond OUSA when I got too deep into the hysteria of it all. I couldn't have finished this term without you all.

I have loved my time at the University of Otago – as a student, as an Exec member, and as President. It has been one of the great privileges of my life to give something back to a community that has given me the best memories, friends, and opportunities anyone could ask for. The University of Otago has changed my life; I hope in some small way I've helped change it to.

I have tried to lead as a steward of something bigger than myself: an association built by generations of students who dared to believe that our voices, together, could change things. I hope OUSA carries that tradition for a long time to come.

Liam White

OUSA President 2025