

Tara Shepherd

Welfare & Equity Representative

1st Quarter Report - 3449 words

Submitted: 13/03/23, 9:10 am

PART ONE: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

10. Duties of the Welfare & 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.

There hasn't been a need for me 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;

I have been involved in working with the University & Disability Services in helping with their Disability Action Plan. I have been able to build a good relationship with these leaders and look forward to creating a reoccurring meeting to strengthen collaboration opportunities with individuals of said group.

I have a close working relationship with Ibuki our International Student Representative & Stella Lynch the Academic Student Representative. Since being back on campus there is a collective goal between the three of us to review and ascertain universal lecture recording policy which highlights the need for universal design and closed captions. This mahi I believe is a crucial part to ensure accessibility for all students attending university & I look forward to championing this with the collective but recognise this is early days and may take some time to get it over the line.

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

I was quite excited to come on-board during o-week as I was able to attend many of the events like tent city which allowed me to initially interact with our wider community. I have spent some time interacting with Student Support, first meeting via zoom and reconnecting at shared events or meetings. However, acknowledging the start of the semester there is an increased need for support from their services and we haven't been able to have a follow up in person to create a reoccurring meeting.

I have been able to connect in person with some cool groups so far such as Thursdays in Black, internal discussions with Becca, UNIQ President. I wanted to make direct contact with other leaders via email but opted for the shared Facebook group to introduce myself & open line of contact. Important to note I am still attempting to nail down some other times to discuss with people from UNIQ, Te Whare Tāwharau to note a few. I have some aspirations to a shared campaign with all the clubs and OUSA focusing on looking after your mates, this is still in draft form and in talks with the executive, but I do look forward to championing this important mahi.

I am keeping up to date with relevant news and research being published those effects our Otago student community, including recently reviewing the Drugs NZ report which further highlights marginalisation and especially disproportionately people with disabilities.

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 only missed one meeting due to a preplanned appointment, but my apologies were accepted in the minutes. I will however note I have attended all important training sessions and have ensure to ask questions and contribute accordingly.

10.3.2 Residential Committee; and;

This Committee has not invited me to join this year, but I will make a note to follow up to ensure there wasn't a miscommunication in handover. I collaborate with the residential representative closely throughout the quarter and often discuss shared experiences of welfare at halls or flatting situations.

10.3.3 Welfare and Equity Committee

I have discussed with the President, Keegan regarding how it would look when I bring it back but haven't gone through internal processes yet.

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.

Please refer to 10.3.3 as committee has not been established for 2024.

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

In the event the committee is established, I would look forward to an additional feedback avenue to gain further insight into some of the core issues that are facing marginalised communities on campus.

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

In the event the committee is established, I would promote the sign-up process throughout the university and would like to hold it quarterly. It is important to me that it was an accurate capture of the student population with ensuring that all minority groups are represented where 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 would continue to build my connection through relevant groups such as the Otago Disabled Students' Association and then also circulate through Disability Services Newsletter.

10.7.2 Queer Rep; and;

I would circulate this through UniQ, however it is important to note with the voting of the last election to have a Queer Representative on the Otago University Students' Association, it may be more appropriate that elected individual reside on this committee.

10.7.3 Women's Rep.

This will be an advertised role, alongside general committee roles. Ideally also capturing those who are international students, of different religions or migrants to ensure a variety of cultural representation to this role for women's rights.

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.

Keegan and I meet fortnightly and have built an ongoing close working relationship with to ensure collaboration and accurate communication for relevant issues that arise.

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

This is my 4th week of being in Dunedin and officially being OUSA Welfare and Equity representative so there hasn't been too many opportunities for widespread information regarding welfare issues. However, it is important to note I am currently in the draft form of creating a campaign where the student community is empowered to lean on each other and look after their friends. When this is happening, I will utilise key resources like Radio One, Critic, posters, relevant newsletter and potentially forums to mobilise student attention.

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.

Since beginning in my role in Dunedin, I have always made an effort to meet OUSA staff and relevant officers. Over the summer period when I hadn't been officiated into the role yet as it only starts when you arrive in Dunedin, I did spend time connecting over email and zoom specifically with the sustainability centre and student support office staff. At the moment, I have reached out to all currently relative contacts, but as it is the start of semester / year it is particularly challenging nailing down an in-person meeting. Any welfare concerns have gone through appropriate channels, and I look forward to hearing a report from student support staff on key themes that have been particularly prevalent in 2024.

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 either in person, via email or during meetings a variety of people from a range of different departments so far as welfare and equity representative. As mentioned above, I am yet to meet with Claire Gallop the Director of Student Services and Melissa Lethaby Manager of Disability Services & Support. It is important to note I have met these two people prior to my role and have worked on collective mahi that I hope to strengthen the connection with OUSA this year. Attending Ethical Behaviour Committee, I was able to meet the Proctor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, and a range of awesome staff. I look forward to attending more committee meetings on a range of different topics to collaborate on important topics. I met with Margaret Charles twice prior to the first meeting I could attend in person of the Student Health Clinical Governance committee in March.

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

Unfortunately, I seem to have missed this in the handover. I will aim to follow up with the team to ensure I can help support in any events that is necessary. Noting I have friends' who volunteer on the team and by observation O-week was a success, big shout out the Are You Ok team who do important mahi with a great hands-on initiative.

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.

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 but reached out via email for a one-on-one meeting, however I am in a upcoming hui with her this Thursday so hopefully plan to follow up with a time set.

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 have collaborated with Melissa Lethaby on issues in the prior positions, I do look forward to meeting with her again in a OUSA capacity and see where the Disability Information Services goals align.

10.14.4 UniQ;

I have not yet met with UniQ formally, I have however enjoyed meeting Becca briefly over the past four weeks in different meetings. I hope to meet with Juno and Becca over coffee soon, we have quite busy schedules and UniQ have been doing some incredible mahi that have taken up a lot of their time.

10.14.5 Te Whare Tāwharau;

I exchanged a email with Hahna from TWT at the beginning of the year to introduce myself. We are looking to find a suitable time to meet in person.

10.14.6 Thursdays in Black;

I was excited to meet Ella & Caitlin from TiB and I look forward to supporting such important mahi where I can be of effect.

10.14.7 Chaplaincy Board; and;

I haven't worked with the Chaplaincy Board yet, I do look forward to attending the next upcoming meeting.

10.14.8 Any other Welfare and Equity related organisations.

I hope to grow relationships with relevant clubs and their welfare officers, Keegan and I have an upcoming meeting with the Sophia Charter Implementation Working Group.

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 enjoyed getting to know Emma and see where we can collaborate, especially on the aspirational looking after your mate's campaign. I joined the Facebook page and introduced myself to the designated representative of the clubs part of that group. As there has already been two new clubs affiliating to OUSA, I do look forward to seeing the group grow.

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, preferably would like a text prior by that number so I know who I am picking up the phone to.

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 3 weeks, I have worked a maximum of 23 hours in a week and a minimum of 20, averaging out at 21 hours a week. I am currently in my fourth week with already 12 hours and it is a Tuesday. It is important to note prior to my start date of 19th February, I spent my personal time prior to honorarium using time to assimilate, read handovers, write introductory emails and zooms which totalled 35 hours.

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

Yes

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 not here throughout summer as I was doing other mahi and planned a national conference for our disabled leaders across the motu outside of OUSA. When I was here during O-Week I participated in sausage sizzles, helping out and getting to know the team. My aim was to attend all relevant OUSA events during O-week, I went to tent city all of the three days, the international food festival where I enjoyed some Vietnamese food!

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

This year is not an election year, however it is the first year of the new government and the student population may urge OUSA to be involved with relevant political matters.

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 almost all Executive meetings, my apologies was accepted on 5th of March due to a prior appointment and have attended all of OUSA Executive training sessions.

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, I will connect with Abby to find due course processes for the time coming. I am not on FESC committee this year but relevant information will be brought to our general executive meetings weekly.

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 am grateful I have prior experience in how the student movement works, how to connect with marginalised groups in a culturally appropriate manner and how to be an ally in championing all important student issues. As a disabled wāhine who originates from a rural background I am conscious I am bringing perspective of that intersectionality to this role. I have an ongoing commitment to be a life-long-learner, educating myself on important mahi or issues to highlight marginalised communities struggles. When there is an experience or mahi I can't speak to, I aim to either redirect them to appropriate representatives or ask for the ability to make comment after consulting with the student population.

Being born political due to my intersectionality, I was pretty much forced to be exposed to inequities of others which I have enjoyed listening to, educating myself and others when appropriate. I welcome students with lived experience to share their story and priority issues and how I can best support them. I do look forward to my on-going relationship with key leaders like Liam Young, the Otago Disabled Students' Association President & Becca Thorby the UniQ President.

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

A key motivator of mine is sustainability in the context of emergency management, resilience planning and environmental issues. I am acutely aware of my impact and limit purchases especially fast fashion. It is also really important to acknowledge not everyone has the ability to be environmentally conscious due to financial barriers or accessibility needs but that just recognises a current system in society regarding the need for a better policy for a circular economy to help aid sustainable choices.

I am going to actively look into period poverty and if we can find a business that we have the ability to bulk purchase and subsidise period underwear. I believe this would be a really good asset for our students, especially those who menstruate who may have not been able to try period underwear as of yet as they can be a little more expensive than tampons or pads.

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

I spend a lot of time volunteering at a national level in the disability movement space, often these trickles down in to the space of local communities in Dunedin. I easily would be volunteering 20 + hours a week most time dependent on increase / need / positions. However, I would like to recognise capacity and would love to do more at a local level if my energy levels as a person with disabilities.

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

I love emails, it is my preferred form of communication. I often am checking my emails minimum of 10 times daily and respond accordingly. I do hope I receive emails from students about welfare concerns in the coming weeks.

PART THREE: ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVMENT IN OUSA AND UNIVERISTYCOMMITTEES

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. I hope to have a close relationship with the sustainability office this year and find committees through that avenue that may be appropriate to collaborate with.

PART FOUR: GOALS AND YOUR PROGRESS

I believe I have set out my goals quite clear throughout this report, however happy to be more cohesive and list them off:

1. Lecture recording policy with Academic + International OUSA representatives that also reflect accessibility and universal design which includes closed captioning.
2. Undergoing draft form currently to potentially launch a “look after your mates” which is collaborative with our clubs & socs.
 - a. This is an aim to improve better awareness of looking after your friends at parties, ways to declare misconduct or support systems to help you.
 - b. This passion stems from me going into my fourth year and acknowledging that for the past three years I was at University College, 2021 as a first year & 2022 – 2023 as a sub-warden where I witnessed and supported students when things didn’t go as planned. Its important to me that our cohort of students on campus recognise the importance of staying with friends, ways to get immediate support and report or rehabilitation after unplanned circumstances.
 - i. I am particularly passionate about working with Thursdays in Black this year and hope we can collaborate on effective mahi.
3. Review mental health support at Otago University and make recommendations for improvement through conversations with Student Support & Student Health
4. Working on the Disability Action Plan with relevant university staff to ensure a more accessible learning environment.
5. Effectively work in partnership with minority groups and uphold their mana and pressing issues and ensure.

PART FIVE: GENERAL

I am really excited to be onboard for OUSA 2024 as an executive member, the team is wonderful, and I believe everyone in the room has a core goal of doing the mahi for our collective. I do wish to help

students gain more awareness about OUSA, how to reach out and the importance of using your student representatives. I am here for YOU, please send issues my way as I am willing to fight for YOU, (when legally permits, I do not want to get into a physical altercation please 😊)