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LIFE ON CAMPUS

NEW PRESIDENT | Harriet Geoghegan looking forward to challenges of office

Making a positive change

GAVIN BERTRAM

THE election for 2010's Otago University Students' Association president turned out to be a one-horse race.

But despite her only competition pulling out, Harriet Geoghegan still had concerns about being taken seriously.

"I had in the back of my mind that if I got elected, people would think I was only there because nobody else was.

"Whereas I take it seriously and know a bit about OUSA and have some solid plans."

Geoghegan is a member of this year's student executive, and so has experienced the students' association's inner workings.

It was this, and a desire to see some of her work through that eventually spurred the commerce and law student to stand for president.

"It took a bit of persuasion, mostly from one of my flat mates who said it would justify the amount of time I spend working on projects."

Geoghegan could get in there and make



» Front door: Next year's student president Harriet Geoghegan outside the OUSA office

work on in 2010 is a restructuring of the student executive, which has been discussed at length this year.

She's on the working party looking at the size of the executive, so wouldn't comment on what changes should be implemented.

Geoghegan would also love to see OUSA's many services promoted more widely to the student body, "because she doesn't think

the organisation gets the credit it deserves.

"A lot of people commented that 'I didn't realise this was run by the students' association and not the university'.

"I think there needs to be a massive promotion, because it's not quite as out there as it could be."

This will become a hot issue as the spectre of voluntary student

membership raises its head. The VSM bill is currently before Parliament, and if passed could mean that students would no longer have to be association members,

Geoghegan says OUSA can overcome that, but promoting the array of services they offer is paramount.

"The first thing that needs to happen is make students aware of the difference it would make if OUSA wasn't there.

"It's everything from Unipol to clubs and societies, student support and sitting on education boards."

The new president is looking to get a head start on 2010 by making sure she and her executive are fully prepared when they take the reins.

Geoghegan hopes this will mean she can achieve some of the things she set out to do, instead of following a pattern which has seen projects lose momentum as the academic year passes.

"I'm meeting with the new executive this Saturday, just to find out what everyone wants to see done with OUSA.

"I think it's important to plan things from this year because we can get some solid things in place."

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