



Walker Macmurdo
Humanities Representative
1st Quarter Report 2010
Submitted 25-03-2010 at 1:50pm
1930 words

PART ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES

As per Section 32.5.1 of the OUSA Constitution I am studying for a qualification within the Humanities academic division, as was I doing so in the year of my election. I studied law in the year of my election and I currently study law and philosophy.

As per Section 32.5.2 of the OUSA Constitution I am responsible for the representation of Humanities students within the University, OUSA and the community. In saying that, I have endeavoured to do this to the best of my abilities this semester through attending Humanities Divisional Board meetings as well as the Humanities-specific events as described below. There have not been an overwhelming number of opportunities for me to specifically deal with Humanities students and Humanities-specific issues this quarter. However, when these opportunities do arise I have worked to ensure that I am there to represent Humanities students.

Overall, this semester has seen an overwhelming focus on general OUSA duties over Humanities-specific duties. This is primarily due to the fact that several time-intensive OUSA events occur in the first quarter. These include executive training, attending the NZUSA conference, volunteer work at Orientation Week and the unique challenge that VSM puts on OUSA and the Executive. This is described in detail below.

PART TWO: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

I have divided part two into two parts. The first deals with my general duties as an Executive Officer, and the second deals with my Humanities-specific duties.

General Duties as an Executive Officer

2.1.1 Assisting on the OUSA Help Desk and other activities during Orientation: During Orientation I spent three two-hour sessions handing out Orientation packs, taking photos for OUSA key chains, answering questions and directing people to various places while manning the OUSA caravan. Further, I spent time breaking down the caravan at the end of the day.

2.1.2 Being harassment contacts during Orientation events: I was scheduled onto Are You OK? for two shifts during Orientation. One was cancelled due to a miscommunication, but the one I attended on February 24 was uneventful save for an incident which was handled terrifically by Imogen. According to my calendar I spent five hours at the event on the 24th.

2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5: Non-applicable

2.2 Attention to Executive meetings, national conferences, national and local campaigns, Executive training and Executive planning: I have attended most of the Executive meetings this quarter. I have found this



somewhat difficult due to the changing times of these meetings, but it has not been too much of a problem. Hopefully a set time for meetings can be worked out soon.

I attended the NZUSA national conference in late January. As those who were there know this was a fairly-intensive all-day conference where we attended several workshops and meetings with other student representatives. Unfortunately, I found few of these conferences helpful and quickly grew tired of political views taking precedent over actual progress for students. Although the opportunity to bond with the rest of the Executive was great, I feel as though sending all 17 of us up may not be the most efficient use of students' resources.

The central campaign we have been focusing on for this quarter has been the anti-VSM/Save Our Services campaign. I haven't played an active role in the organization of this campaign, but during the week of March 22 I spent two hours manning the online submission stall in the link as well as time on the evening of March 23 putting up black plastic for the "service blackout" campaign. I hope I can continue to work with those who take a more active role in organization and implementation of the campaign in order to ensure that it is successful.

I took part in the two days of Executive training OUSA had in mid-January. I found it incredibly helpful as both a training session for learning what I am supposed to do in my role as a support person for Humanities students and as a teambuilding exercise. Further, the strategic planning sessions during this training period and throughout the rest of the first quarter have provided me with ideas to shape my plans for the year in my capacity as the Humanities Representative and generally as an Officer.

2.3 Maintain a Detailed Budget: This has not played too much importance for me in the first quarter as I have yet to spend anything out of my budget. However, I have established my plans for my budget with the Finance and Services Officer. Although it is not particularly detailed, I have submitted a rough guide for how I plan on spending my \$250 for the year.

Duties as the Humanities Representative

7.1.1 Assisting in the recruitment, training and support of class representatives within my division: I admit to having taken a somewhat limited role in dealing with class representatives in Humanities for the first quarter. Although I attended the summer school class representatives meeting with the Education Officer in February, beyond this I have had a limited role in dealing with class representatives. I will try to make time to attend a class representative training session before the end of the week of March 22.

7.1.2 Maintain regular contact with class representatives in their division; and

7.1.3 Encourage regular departmental meetings with class representatives and attend these meetings whenever possible: Again, I have played a limited role in dealing with class representatives this quarter. However, as far as my duties as per 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 are concerned, I don't think any opportunities for me to do so have come up.

7.2 Attend all meetings of the Humanities Divisional Board and express OUSA's viewpoints on any issues: So far I have attended the one Humanities Divisional Board meeting this quarter. Unfortunately I had to leave early, but during the hour I was able to spend at the meeting I was able to put forward my viewpoint on one issue relevant to OUSA. It was over the division of workload of a 300 level POLS paper, and how it was potentially unfair to students who would receive little small-group feedback from their lecturer on an

assignment worth 40% of their overall grade. I suggested that the assignment either be divided into two smaller assignments or that the students were able to communicate with the lecturer on a small-group basis to work out any issues they may have with the assignment (The Board seemed to approve of the latter). My concern was that students who were struggling with the hefty assignment would have little feedback, and the grades of those who didn't understand it wholly could suffer immensely due to the weight of the project on their overall grade. Ultimately, I had an enjoyable experience and I hope to contribute further on these meetings throughout the year.

7.3 Maintain a good working relationship with the Pro Vice Chancellor of Humanities and endeavour to meet with her on a monthly basis: Unfortunately, I have been unable to meet with Professor Franzmann before the submission of this report but I will be doing so on Friday March 26. If there is interest in knowing how the meeting went please inquire during the next Executive meeting.

7.4 Display advertising material of personal contact details and office hours around the teaching spaces in my division: I have yet to do this. I will do it as soon as possible.

7.5 Maintain links with and assist affiliated bodies within my division: Few opportunities have arisen in the first quarter for me to link and assist with affiliated bodies. However, when these opportunities have arisen I have ensured that I am there to communicate with these groups. One such occasion arose on March 11 when I attended the Welcome to the 2010 Otago University Fellows. Although this has little to do with Humanities Students, the ability to meet some of the prominent people in the department was well worth it. Another arose on March 24 when I attended the Welcome to Maori and Pacific Island Humanities Students, where I was able to talk to the support staff for Maori and Pacific Island students at the University and meet some students as well. I will be sure to attend as many of these events as I can during the year.

7.6 Ensure that information is shared with appropriate OUSA staff on academic issues within my own division: This has yet to come up. The only major issue which is looming on the horizon for Humanities students is the review of the Honour's program which will be held in late May. I will be reporting in detail on that when the time comes.

7.7 Maintain a good working relationship with the Education Officer, proactively bringing issues from my division to her attention, and meeting with them on a weekly basis: See 7.8

7.8 Be a member of the Education Committee: I have fulfilled my duties as per 7.7 through reporting any relevant information at the Education Committee meetings. This has been somewhat difficult lately due to a scheduling clash with class, but it will be worked out shortly. So far I have had one relevant issue to report to the Committee, being that described in 7.2. Assumedly, as the year picks up I will have more issues to report. I plan on reporting on my meeting with Professor Franzmann at the next Committee meeting.

7.9 Maintain a reasonable balance between division specific work and general OUSA work: This has been a difficult goal to achieve this quarter. Due to the structure of events for OUSA during the year, an overwhelming amount of general business falls in the first quarter (NZUSA Conference, Orientation, training) and there are usually few education-specific issues which arise outside of committee meetings. However, I have seen to it that I attended these events when they arise. This is described in 7.5.

7.10 Work not less than ten (10) hours per week: Barring the weeks in early January, I have so far been able to complete my minimum of ten hours of work every week. I am present in my office most weekdays; although I concede that I am not always doing OUSA related work when I am there. However, between



Executive meetings, internal and external committee meetings and volunteer labour work as well as the work I put in during Orientation, training and NZUSA conference I have been able to put in at least ten hours every week.

PART THREE: GENERAL

As the requirements for the "general" category are vague I will use it as an opportunity to cover a few things which fall outside of parts one and two.

Human Ethics Committee

I could not find a subsection to describe external committee representation in parts one or two so I am putting it here. I sit on one external committee, the Human Ethics Committee, which discusses and approves submissions for any research projects involving human participants at the University of Otago. So far one OUSA-relevant issue has arisen. A few research submissions from students wish to use a perceived "OUSA email database" to find volunteers for their tests. I had to inform the board that no such database existed and that we were unable to contact our constituents. They seemed surprised, but unconcerned.

Office Hours

I have not set out any specific office hours, but I am in my office most of the time during the school day as I do my class work in my office. As a rough guide, my hours are:

Monday: 10am to 1pm

Tuesday: 11am to 1pm

Wednesday: 12pm-1pm

Thursday: 11am to 1pm

Friday: 12pm- 2pm



GOALS

I am working on laying the groundwork for a few Humanities-specific events throughout the school year. So far, I have two planned.

The first is another go at Quiztacular: the Humanities superquiz which Cordelia Huxtable introduced last year. Quiztacular was successful last year and I hope to do it again, but perhaps with some great prize support. I plan on having this towards the end of the first semester. My working title is Bride of Quiztacular.

The second is something which hasn't been done before: A Humanities career fair. This would likely be in a similar vein to the Law and Commerce Expo which took place in mid-March and would focus on the varied job opportunities available to Humanities students after graduation. Due to the amount of organization which would likely be required for such an event, I plan on having this towards the end of the second semester.

I am also gearing up for the Humanities honour's program review which is coming in late May. I plan on contacting class rep's in late April to hopefully get some feedback on the review and to present it when the time comes.

I don't have any specific recommendations for OUSA for 2010. So far, the year has been great and I would like to thank the President and everyone else who has put hard work into making this especially hectic quarter manageable. I look forward to working with everyone for the rest of 2010.

Word Count: 244