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OUSA International Students Representative
1st Quarter Report 2010
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PART ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES

The International Students' Representative is responsible for representing the interests of members who are not New Zealand citizens, within the Association, University and community. He/she will also facilitate quality representation of these members and pursue projects of benefit to these members.

PART TWO: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

This is the start of my second full term in this position, and it can say that everything has been quite smooth so far, and I am enjoying the position more than last year.

9.1 Promote through campaigns, education and other initiatives, a diverse and multicultural environment within the Association and on campus.

So far for this point a very little have been done, however the International Cultural Council has been planning to host the international sport weekend which is coming up this weekend. I play a part in helping promote it and organise some part of it. The aim for this event is to bring together students from all over the world to make new friends and enjoy their company.

9.2 Work towards the elimination of racism and intolerance within the Association and on campus.

For this point I have recently hosted the Race Relation Day on the 20th March with the Dunedin Multi Ethnic Council. The event was aimed at raising awareness that we might have a different skin colour and such, but in the end we are all here to learn about each other and we can definitely live with each other. The events attract about 250 people, and everybody left the event making new friends and learning something new about other cultures.

9.3 Work on issues specific to international students at the University of Otago

This has been my main focus since the start of the year, trying to define what exact issues international students seem to have. I might have missed the NZUSA Conference, however I did have a chance to chat with most of the international students' reps around the country though email and Facebook, as well as a brief chat and email with David Do, the NZUSA co-president. At this moment, after discussions, the main focus of international students would still be the international students fees. This seems to be the most debatable one throughout the country. The two other concerning aspects from University of Otago seems to be the new insurance policy and the plagiarism that seems to still happen.

9.4 Maintain a good working relationship with the Welfare Officer, proactively bringing issues to her or his attention, and meeting with her or him on a weekly basis.

I have attended one welfare meeting this quarter, and did a brief summary of what I have done. Other than that I haven't been contacting her as much as I want, as many of the issues coming up haven't been available to be compiled into a full report to her.

9.5 Maintain a good working relationship with the International Office of the University, sharing information and ideas with them when appropriate.

I am part of the International Mentor Program which looks after the new international students coming into the University of Otago. This program is a very good incentive as it really helps new student settle in. Having OUSA tie into it helps students understand OUSA faster and in more detail.

9.6 Convene the International Students' Council.

This is the first year the council is officially associated with OUSA, as it was the first time that the Term of reference has been done for this. At the moment the council has 20 international club members and is looking likely to be increased in the future, as I have been meeting with a lot of international students who have expressed interest in forming a cultural club for their country. I would note so far I have managed to convince the Korean Students' Association to reaffiliate themselves to OUSA after a two year absence.

9.7 Organise and run events of specific interest and relevance to international students.

I have already started planning for the two biggest events that are aimed fully at promoting diversity to this university. The first one is the International Food Festival which is set for the 15th July. I have already met with and have approval from the DCC to host the event, which I will be working very closely with the events team to coordinate. The second event is International Cultural Night which is to be hosted at Town Hall on the 24th July. This event is aimed at promoting University of Otago as a diverse range of cultural identities.

9.8 Work in conjunction with the Finance and Services Officer, the Clubs Development Officer and the Clubs and Societies Representative to ensure the affiliation of international student groups.

I share the office with Dan so that probably helps, this quarter I have been fairly busy informing the clubs about the IRD process, as all of them found this rather new. As well, I have been working closely with the Dunedin Community Accounting regarding planning to host a treasurer training, as many international clubs are failing to understand the accounts systems. I have also taken this opportunity to look into all the international clubs' constitutions and help them update them accordingly in line with OUSA policy. This proves to be quite a challenging task as all the clubs seem to have different constitutions from the OUSA template all together.

PART THREE: GENERAL

CCG

I sit on the Combine Christian Group as a messenger from OUSA, as the CCG seems to have a lot of great incentive for students and maybe this is something OUSA can help out with.

Orientation Week

This year at Orientation I helped out at the caravan. I also helped do the BBQ during the Clubs and Socs day, which I also attended to help some international clubs set up, and to use it as a chance to introduce myself to them. I helped out at the CCG tents throughout the week to help looking after the students' welfare and making sure that the tent is running smoothly.

VSM



This has taken a large amount of time. I helped out at the VSM desk and the debate that was hosted by OUSA. I also gave a presentation at the first International Cultural Council meeting to the entire international club community presidents regarding the issue. This was worth it, as the ICC passed a motion that international students are against VSM. I also have had some personal one-on-one sessions with some international students who expressed their ideas regarding VSM. It was a very fun and exciting chance to learn about what students from other places think about VSM, compared to their own country's system.

Project

International Students Internship

This is an ongoing project of placing a recently graduated international student into an internship position in either a local company, or a nation-wide company. The incentive was first introduced two years ago, but due to administrative problems it was off the radar. This year I am working closely with them to get it back up and running, as it is a very good incentive for international students.

New Committee

I have been looking into starting up a committee that contains all the University's related services that have to do with international students (eg. the Learning Centre, disability services etc.). I want this to happen because I have a feeling that international students haven't been able to access all these services widely enough, so I will be looking into working closely with all the services to find out the reasons why, and how they can be improved to accommodate international students.

Compile the International Cultural Council Nation-wide report

As part of I have too much free time (...), I have once again tapped into how the country's international student councils work, to slowly moving the ICC into a nationwide network. I would like to be able to show and discuss with other associations who haven't got one yet, to start one up and show all of them the comparison of what all the ICCs around the country are like. The report is aimed to be presented at the June/July NZUSA Conference.

NZUSA International Conference

I have been in contact with NZUSA co-president David Do regarding OUSA being the host of this year's International Conference. I have also started on all the issues, and what should be happening at the conference. As I have been in the job for my second term now, I know what is needed to train all the international reps.

Committee

Foundation Board

I will be attending the Foundation Board meeting to discuss about their new program for foundation students leading into University entrance, and how much preparation students have, compare to going to year 13 in high school.

Grants

I attended the meeting and had fun giving out grants to all the clubs, extra thanks goes to being able to leave the building due to fire alarm being set off by the toaster. It was FUN!!!!



GOALS

My main goal for 2010 seems to be only to stabilise the International Cultural Council and try to make it have more representation from all over the world. I also aim at having a nation wide International Cultural Council.