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Clubs and Societies Representative
1st Quarter Report 2010 (1st January – 25th March)
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PART ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES

The Clubs and Societies Representative is responsible for representing the interests of all clubs, societies, unions or other bodies affiliated to the Association and will provide these groups with assistance where required and ensure the necessary support, advice and resources for affiliated bodies.

For my fulfilment of these duties, please see below.

PART TWO: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES

"If this is to be our end, then I would have them make such an end as to be worthy of remembrance." – Théoden, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002 film version)

This quarter saw the start of my second term as Clubs and Societies Representative; the experience I gained from last year, together with the less toxic Executive environment this year, has enabled the completion of a number of long-running projects. My enthusiasm at a productive quarter, however, has been tempered by the great dark cloud of Voluntary Student Membership (VSM) hanging over the Association: much of my time has accordingly been spent trying to mobilise students (and others) against the looming threat of Roger Douglas' Bill.

Clubs and Societies Work

i. Operation Old Blue/Guillotine: Affiliations and Disaffiliations

A key part of my job description is dealing with the affiliation of new Clubs (important in meeting my goal of facilitating more people in Clubs), and the disposal of defunct Clubs (important so that resources are freed up). One new Club was affiliated this quarter: the Kayak Racing Club, with another affiliation (Food Not Bombs) pending. Community Support Youth was the sole disaffiliation this quarter.

As affiliation is a collaborative effort with the Finance and Services Officer, the Kayak affiliation was also a useful test-run in terms of initiating the hapless James into the Kafkaesque realm of administrative affiliation paperwork. Similarly gone-over was the amended (read: new) constitution of the Theatre Sports Club, which was ratified by the Executive with only a quibble over an extra 's'.

ii. Clubs Day

The largest Clubs event of the year took place on Wednesday, 25th February. Traditionally an opportunity for new Clubs Reps to introduce themselves to their constituents, the recognition factor associated with being a second-termer enabled me to focus less on introduction and more on making Clubs realise that Roger Douglas' Bill will kill off future Clubs Days. Very much a VSM-themed day for me, I visited every Club stall in the Building, handing out information, and encouraging Select Committee submissions. When not reminding

people of the gigantic anvil hanging over our collective heads, I used the opportunity to update my Club contact details, and to sign up for a variety of Clubs. While I will not be able to actually participate in more than a small fraction of them, this not only enables me to show some solidarity with my constituents, but also to receive Club correspondence throughout the year, which is useful in terms of understanding individual Club issues.

iii. Affiliated Clubs Council

Held on Tuesday, 16th March amid some inclement weather, the first Affiliated Clubs Council meeting of the year went smoothly (certainly smoother than last year...). The ACC (of which I am Chairman) provided some useful feedback on Clubs Day, as well as providing a nice forum for Harriet and the two visiting NZUSA Co-Presidents to talk about VSM. Also raised was my Clubs Charter idea (see goals section) and IRD issues. Having spent an hour on the phone to the IRD investigating how my constituents (most of whom aren't accountants) would go about meeting their particular obligations, it was nice to be able to clarify the process to Clubs directly (I emailed them the details too).

The ACC further fulfilled its (major) duty in selecting two representatives to sit on the OUSA Grants Committee. Pushing the free food angle is certainly a major enticement to get people to put their hands up.

iv. Operation Scrooge McDuck: Grants

Perhaps the most meat-and-potatoes item of my job description, I am Chairman of the Grants Committee, which sits on a budget of \$47,000. With the first Grants Round closing on 18th March, I went over the applications with the new Assistant CDO (Sandra), formulating recommendations that will go to the Committee on 25th March. From the applications received thus far, it seems that the no-alcohol-or-food rule of Grants requests needs to be reiterated.

v. Operation Shake-up: Affiliation Reform

Easily my proudest Clubs-related achievement this quarter, my year-long project of overhauling the Affiliation Policy has finally been completed and ratified (the year-long nature of it explains the now-infamous "happy little dance"). The most important change is the replacement of the old 90% student membership threshold with a staggered system: 75% student membership for Clubs with 10-40 members, up to ten non-student members for Clubs with 41-99 members, and 90% student membership for Clubs with 100+ members. This should make it easier for smaller Clubs to maintain their institutional memory year-in-year-out, while ensuring that "deadweight" in larger Clubs is kept to a minimum.

Other important reforms include the axing of the requirement that Club fees in excess of \$100 have to be approved by the OUSA Executive. This (unworkable and arbitrary) requirement has been replaced by a right of appeal system: Clubs can charge what they like, but any member considering a fee unwarranted or excessive may appeal to the OUSA Executive for remedial action. This should hopefully maintain an effective balance between Club autonomy and individual student welfare. Also instituted is the right of Clubs to disaffiliate voluntarily and distribute their assets upon dissolution as they see fit (something they have been able to do in practice, so this finally brings policy into line with reality).

More minor changes include an emphasis that OUSA's reserve powers are only to be used in emergency circumstances (removing the dictatorial aroma that permeated the old policy), and a clarification of the



Continuing Affiliation requirements (notably the role of the Bank Authority Letter). Overall, given the blood, sweat, and tears that went into the new policy, one hopes that it will remain an enduring document.

vi. Operation Doolittle: Club Communication

There are essentially two means of constituent communication: face-to-face and electronic. Face-to-face is more difficult to arrange, but is key to effective representation. This quarter, in addition to the regularly-scheduled opportunities to liaise (Clubs Day and ACC), I have continued my habit from last year in making appearances at Club AGMs/planning meetings whenever reasonably practical (for instance, I attended the Classics Society meet-and-greet, and popped in to an UNYANZ meeting at Governors Café). I have also met with representatives from the Unite, the Tongan Association, the Rugby Club, WTF Taekwondo, and the Rapier Group regarding various issues that they needed specific advice on. I am regularly in the office on Monday afternoons in case a constituent requires me.

As for electronic communication, the chief means is, of course, the Clubs Mailing List I established last year. The List is time-consuming from an administration perspective (it is critical that the contacts are kept up-to-date), but provides an ease of constituent communication that few other OUSA representatives enjoy. In addition to my monthly Clubs newsletter (continued from last year), I have used the List for periodic updates about policy change, IRD issues, the VSM debate, and Grants.

vii. Miscellaneous Clubs Activities

Other Clubs-related stuff this quarter has included updating the media release template (created in 2006 but neglected until 2009), investigating Club Brochures (another project from last year), and trying to deal with a dodgy out-of-date Club website.

Other Job Description Duties

viii. NZUSA Conference

My second NZUSA January conference was much more enjoyable than my first (organisation helps!). Worthwhile workshops included the one on International Students (I used information from there in my VSM submission), as well as the one on Postgraduates. Not-so-worthwhile ones included a very strange one on the Vagina Monologues (it was promoted as a Thursdays in Black workshop!). Unable to really engage in portfolio networking due to the relative uniqueness of my portfolio (the only comparable position I encountered was a Recreation Officer from AUSA), I ended up having a prolonged chat with MAWSA about VSM rumours. And then there was ultra-short Closing Plenary, where the procedure was just dodgy. But definitely an improvement from last year.

Having a full driver's licence and a car, I was one of those people ferrying the Exec to and from Christchurch airport for the Wellington flight (thus doing my ten hour quota while driving).

ix. Training Sessions

I attended all the various training sessions this quarter (while I do have a year's experience already, it is helpful to discuss Executive functions and get other perspectives). Many thanks for Harriet and James for organising this. Ditto with the Strategic Planning sessions.



x. Are You OK

I attended all five Are You OK sessions this quarter, which meant a fair bit of running for help, press-ganging flatmates, putting up with repetitive jokes, and, in one case, driving my colleagues home. The worst thing is probably the sleep deprivation.

xi. Help Desk/Caravan

Long hours were spent distributing pens (and collecting petition signatures) at the Orientation Help Desk, and distributing bags from the Caravan in ridiculously hot weather. I also organised a mini-Help Desk (with the ever-popular pens) for Summer School course approval.

PART THREE: GENERAL

i. Operation Klondike: External Policy

The other long-running project completed this quarter was my final compilation of all current OUSA External Policy in bound booklet form. 66 pages long, this is the first such compilation since 2005, and corrects various problems found in previous booklets.

ii. Internal Committees

I sit on both WelCom and EduCom, and am generally the resident minute-taker (making a point of getting the minutes typed and distributed within 48 hours). In terms of WelCom issues, I directed the Committee's attention to the employment issues surrounding the University's redefinition of Anniversary Day (well done Claire for actioning that), initiated a revisiting of OUSA's stance on accommodation, and have helped out with the green buckets.

iii. PolCom

I am one of PolCom's usual suspects. This quarter I tinkered with the Affiliation Policy to get it into its finally-ratified form, wrote a section in the Elections Policy dealing with tied elections (subsequently ratified), have drafted a Student of the Month Policy and a Policy Policy, and have made various suggestions to other peoples' policy-related tinkering.

iv. Student of the Month

In collaboration with Stephanie Reader (Education Officer) I have aimed to revive the Student of the Month Award (originally created by Tania Cumming in 2007). To this end, I have drafted a designated Student of the Month Policy (to create an underlying framework for the award), and started investigating potential prizes and budgets.

v. Operation Ragnarok: VSM

It has been so important to make students aware of what they stand to lose, and to transfer those feelings to the parliamentarians via submissions. To this end, and in addition to the various actions mentioned above, I



again utilised the "petition signature production line" (aka the ID card queue on course approval days) to collect signatures for an anti-VSM petition. The petition, as of the end of February had over 2700 signatures (16% of the entire Dunedin campus), and will be sent to Wellington at the end of March. I have also been in contact with various groups about submissions, and was utterly delighted when the Otago Rugby Football Union agreed to write an anti-VSM submission (the Rowing Club has obligingly got in touch with its Olympians as well). My own submission, clocking in at 3974 words, has been sent off, with an OUSA promotional DVD enclosed to inform the parliamentarians about what we do for our members.

xii. Distance Learning Advisory Board

The only meeting of the DLAB this quarter was on 17th March. The DLAB is keen on expanding courses available for distance learners. Never having been a distance student myself, my mission is mostly to be a note-taker, and pass everything along to EduCom (the improved state of EduCom this year makes this much easier).

xiii. Other External Committees

The first meetings of the Lecture Theatre and Timetable Committee and the Library Services Committee will be on 25th March. I have made a point of collecting peoples' timetable horror stories, so I can share them with the Committee.

vi. Miscellaneous

Extensive furniture moving, lunch with Skegg and Company, et cetera.



GOALS

1. The creation of a Clubs Charter to formally announce the nature of OUSA's relationship with Clubs (in terms of mutual rights and obligations).
2. Facilitating Club Brochures.
3. Facilitating more students in Clubs and more Clubs on campus (ideological goal).
4. Maintaining a high standard of constituent service.
5. Stopping VSM (a goal out of my control, but it won't be for lack of trying).
6. Tidying up internal policy (especially Grants).
7. Resurrecting Student of the Month in a sustainable manner.

83 words.