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Queer Representative
1st Quarter Report 2010
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PART ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES

Section 32.13.2 of the Otago Students' Associations constitution states that the Queer Representative is responsible for representing the interests of Queer Students within the Association, the University and the Community. It also States that they (Queer Rep) will also facilitate quality representation of Queer Students and pursue projects of benefit to Queer students.

In terms of representation, I have represented queer students throughout the first quarter mainly on exec meetings and internal committees (WelCom). Because the Queer Community is so diverse, liaising with UniQ (a queer social support affiliated club) and the Queer Support Coordinator has been something I have endeavoured to do. By doing this, and by being easily accessible (I wrote an article in the Otago Gaily Times and regularly write small articles for the monthly UniQ Newsletter), I think that I am better able to provide queer students with QUALITY representation and with projects that BENEFIT queer students. The rest of the report goes into more detail what I have achieved so far this year.

PART TWO: EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION DESCRIPTION DUTIES.

GENERAL OFFICER DUTIES.

2.1.1 (Assisting on the OUSA Help Desk and other activities during Orientation). Over Orientation I worked on the help desk in ID card line in the link and OUSA caravan. Help desk and Caravan duties added to 14 hours in total. The first day of the caravan ran well but the later days weren't quite as busy as we had run out of bags due to a late delivery. I also helped out on the BBQ for clubs day outside the Clubs and Socs building. This also ran quite smoothly even though we had troubles with one of the BBQs we were using. I also stayed on for longer than I was meant to on the BBQ. Some might say that this extra BBQ work was done because I'm hard working, it's actually because one of my life goals is to become the BBQ Master.

2.1.2 (Being harassment contacts during orientation events). Over Orientation I worked three ARE YOU OK gigs. The training definitely helped prepare me for this. The first gig I did was relatively quiet but the second and third gigs were quite busy and I worked till about 1:30am-2am. Being harassment contacts can be quite intense and for some emotionally draining, so I was disappointed we didn't get ori passes for the extra hours the exec put in. I think most exec volunteered more than 16 hours over Orientation which was the prerequisite for getting an Orientation pass for the Event's volunteers.

2.2 (Within reason, Executive Officers are expected to be available for Executive meetings, national conferences, national and local campaigns, Executive training and Executive planning). I have attended all executive meetings so far, although I did have to leave early for one of them. I attended the OUSA Executive training on the 23rd of January. I thought this was excellent bonding time and a chance to find out what other exec members were planning on doing throughout the year. The second day of this training session involved governance and management training (which I turned up half an hour or so late for due to unforeseen circumstances) and a strategic planning session. Both these were facilitated by outsiders and I thought they



were very beneficial for exec members especially the new ones. I especially liked the strategic planning session.

I also attended ARE YOU OK training facilitated by Tania from student support during the first exec training session in January. This proved to be very beneficial. Tania also co facilitated with a mediator from the University, an Effective Communication workshop on the 19th of March which I attended.

Unfortunately, due to a drive to Christchurch from Dunedin at midnight, and a flight out of Christchurch to Wellington at 6am in the morning, I was pretty tired for the first day of the Women's Conference (25th January). I also didn't have the chance to catch up on sleep so I was tired for most of NZUSA's main conference. But that didn't matter because I had a great time. I thought the Women's Conference was well run and I got some great stats regarding women in the workforce. The main NZUSA Conference was also well run but I didn't enjoy a couple of workshops, mainly the Queer workshop. Was it the hungover presenter or the fact that I didn't learn anything of extreme importance? I don't know, but I did learn that OUSA is a role model association in terms of queer representation and support.

I have been involved with the VSM campaign mainly by helping out with the stalls in the link and the BBQ held outside the union for the debate. I wanted to cook the sausages but that was someone from events job. Oh well, I did get to hand out sausages to the crowd. I also wrote a little blurb in the UniQ newsletter encouraging people to write a submission and to go to the 'save our services' website. There is still more to be done with the VSM campaign but I'll end up doing what is planned after the due date for this report.

2.3 (All Executive Officers with control of budget lines are expected to maintain detailed budgets for their cost centres, and not significantly exceed their budgeted expenditure). I can say I have not yet exceeded my budget. I have spent money from the Queer Rep line for a poster campaign I'll be running in April and that all so far.

QUEER REPRESENTATIVE JOB DESCRIPTION.

15.1 Promote through campaigns, education and other initiatives, an environment within OUSA and on campus that is supportive of Queer students). I am running a poster campaign which will start during Diversity Week in April. This poster campaign will consist of three posters. One with a gay male couple with their backs to the camera, one with a gay male couple with their faces towards the camera and one with a lesbian couple facing the camera. I held the photo shoot in the Otago Room at Clubs and Socs and got Wei Ping to take the photos. The photos turned out great and the posters should be ready by the 19th of April. The aim of the posters is to "normalise" queer relationships to non queer students and to affirm queer relationships for queer students. Watch this space for a report on how this campaign went and the feedback I received from queer and non queer students.

15.2 (Work towards the elimination of bigotry and intolerance towards Queer students within OUSA and on campus). I think working towards 15.1 also means working towards 15.2. While the posters aim to affirm queer relationships, they also aim to eliminate bigotry and intolerance towards queer students. The quote "why is that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands" (Earnest Gaines) will be on one of the posters to question the logic behind any intolerance or bigotry towards queer people.

15.3 (Work on issues specific to Queer students at the University of Otago, including but not limited to...15.3.1 Academic Issues, 15.3.2 Social and welfare issues within the community and 15.3.3 Issues of interest

to the queer student body). I have done some research on what issues face queer students. Verbal harassment seems to be the obvious issue, and something I hope to work towards eliminating with the campaign reported on for sections 15.1 and 15.2. The Human Rights Commission's Transgender Report (2007) found that often, transgender students found the lack of access to unisex toilets a problem within their tertiary institution (HRC Transgender Report 2007, p. 31). I emailed someone at property services asking how I could go about changing this but have received no reply. I brought it up in a WelCom meeting and was told that it would probably have to be something Harriet brought up in a council meeting. I intend to write a proposal of some sort for this cause in the upcoming months.

15.4 (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). While I haven't met with Welfare officer on a weekly basis one on one, we have had regular WelCom meetings which have been an opportunity to update her of issues facing queer students.

15.5 (Maintain a good working relationship with UniQ, sharing information and ideas with them when appropriate). I have drafted up a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the 2010 queer rep position and UniQ Otago. This outlines the relationship between uniQ and me so there is no misunderstanding on what both group's aims are. It will also help ensure the queer community does not get confused with what each group is doing. I have made an effort to attend regular UniQ meetings, liaising with them where appropriate and reporting to them when needed. It is important to note that I am no longer part of the UniQ collective. This ended up being too confusing for both parties involved last year. I do however have speaking rights at all meetings unless the collective really don't want me too.

15.6 (Be involved in campaigning and lobbying on issues affecting Queer students). This is something I think is covered with 15.1, 15.2 and 15.3 but for the sake of putting something here... I have received feedback from students in the queer community that finding flats can be hard and at times quite unsafe. I mentioned the idea at a WelCom meeting and Tania from student support mentioned the issue to Adele at the University's accommodation office. I emailed Adele specifically about having a queer-friendly option on the website. I haven't received any feedback from that just yet though.

15.7 (Organise and run events of specific interest and relevance to Queer students). I have organised a venue for a queer film festival I will be running in August. I had a meeting with Chris Mac who is running the Academy Cinemas and he seemed very keen on hiring the place out for five days. Dunedin has not hosted a queer film festival for quite some time so I thought this could be an opportunity to get both the wider queer community and queer student community involved thus having subsidised student ticket prices.

I have worked with James Burford, the new Queer Support Coordinator over at student support on organising Diversity Week. This is predominantly a student support venture but I am organising a DJ for the Queerest Tea party and a one off film screening. I have been liaising regularly with James and intend on keeping regular contact with him throughout the year, keeping him updated with what events and campaigns I will be holding/running.

15.8 (Represent Queer students on University and OUSA committees, as required by the Association). I am on the University's Quality Advancement Committee. We had a meeting on the 23rd of March and went over two surveys. I am also on OUSAs Welfare Committee, Environmental Committee, Governance Structure Review Working Party and the Fair Trade My Uni Steering Committee.



PART THREE: GENERAL

I helped the Women's Rep Shonnelle on International Women's Day. I specifically helped with minding the Women's Room and I also helped with blowing up balloons for the event. I attained a not so serious eye injury during this task and had to take time out for five minutes. I have recovered from this.

I helped with the OUSA bucket delivery, packing buckets and delivering them to flats in the student area on a Friday afternoon and for a short two hours on a Saturday. This was pretty rewarding. Who knew students could get so excited over cleaning products.

As mentioned above, I am on the Fair Trade My Uni Steering Committee. We have an event next week, the OUSA Easter egg hunt. I have organised the cooking utensils, the gas cookers and the hot chocolate for this event. Again, watch this space for a report on how this went.



GOALS

142 WORDS

International day against homophobia 17th may

- For this day I want to queer up the university. I intend on getting a speaker in to host a presentation during the day and at night I am going to host a queer themed quiz night as a fundraising event. I expect all exec members to be at the quiz. You don't have to know anything about queer pop culture. The quiz will be very broad and there will be prizes.

Get University to agree on having easily accessibly unisex toilets in all new buildings.

Make finding flats or flatmates easier for queer students.

Find my inner queer powers so I can colour the world rainbow.

Create campaigns and events that affirm queer identities.

Create a "diversity" pamphlet for tutors, lecturers and university staff.

Make Otago University the most queer-friendly campus in the world.