



guide to being a

Class Representative 2016

OTAGO POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' ASSN

The decision-making body of the association is the Advisory Board, which is made up of a group of 7-11 students from various schools/campus locations within the Polytechnic including reps for Maori, Pacific and International students.

Class Reps on the Dunedin Campus, are welcome to apply for a position on the Advisory Board - their contribution at this level would be very valued. All students are welcome to attend Advisory Board meetings, which are usually held fortnightly.

All officers are elected by the student body - the 2016 Advisory Board members were elected last year with some positions being open for nomination and election at the 2016 OPSA Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016.

Central and Distant Representatives will be elected by their class and names forwarded to the OPSA Dunedin to maintain contact

OPSA MISSION STATEMENT

"To have an effective student controlled organisation that implements policies and promotes the provision of services, facilities and amenities which will foster the educational, social, cultural, recreational, emotional, physical and welfare needs of all enrolled students, present and future. Services and support will be focused on student engagement, retention and success, including advocacy and representation, effective communication and providing an excellent learner experience"

www.opsa.org.nz

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Many thanks for agreeing to be a Class Rep this year – OPSA and Otago Polytechnic really value your input as you will represent students' views and needs while contributing to the development of student services and amenities on your campus

OPSA can't accurately represent the interests of all students, so by increasing the scope of representation to the "grass roots," the Class Rep system helps to empower the wider student body with Reps being the link between the polytechnic, academic staff and OPSA.

OPSA provides this link to aid the communication flow, especially if there is a complaint or suggestions from individuals or members of a class or course. As paying clients, students have a right to receive a standard of service that meets their expectations.

Class Reps will also provide valuable information to the "Student Council" (*you will have the opportunity to be elected on to this committee*) who then provide the "student voice" to the Council of Otago Polytechnic

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2016

ENROLLED STUDENTS

CLASS REPS

OPSA Advisory Board

OPSA PRESIDENT/CHAIR

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ARE ELECTED TO THE FOLLOWING PORTFOLIOS

Welfare Officer
Education Officer
Recreation Officer
International Student Representative
Maori Student Representative
Pacific Island Student Representative
Auckland Campus Representative
Central Campus Representative
General Board members x 2 (*Dunedin Campus*)

OPSA ELECTED OFFICERS & STAFF 2016

President/Chair		
Kayla Miller	027 553 6535	Opsa.presidents@op.ac.nz
Welfare Officers		
Kerry Rushton	027 455 7616	k.rushton@hotmail.co.nz
Education Officer		
Jayden Cromb	022 1207 644	Crombih1@student.op.ac.nz
Recreation Officer		
Dylan Mead	027 753 3063	Dylan.mead@hotmail.co.nz
International Representative		
Vaishak Babu	022 310 8923	Babuv1@student.op.ac.nz
Maori Representative		
Tania Gilbert-Kennedy	022 649 7752	Taniagk65@gmail.com
Pasifika Representative		
Leina Fofoa	022 340 7568	Fofoals1@student.op.ac.nz

OPSA STAFF		
Student Support Adviser		
Lesley Scoullar	027 611 7795	Lesley.scoullar@op.ac.nz
Activities/Volunteer Coordinator		
Dylan Mead	027 753 3063	Dylan.mead@hotmail.co.nz
Office Assistant		
Christian Watson	027 254 1121	Peanut.watson@xtra.co.nz
Media/Communications		
Adam Walker	027 819 7644	adam@newstalkzb.co.nz
Designer		
Paul Charters	022 095 1164	paulcharters@greyliondesign.com
Website		
Blake	027 326 1164	blacekaleb@gmail.com
Receptionist		
Kylie Hohaia	027 860 4968	kyliehoho@msn.com
EVENTS / VOLUNTEERS		
Jenna Salvador (Intern)	021 081 62766	Salvjm1@student.op.ac.nz

OFFICE HOURS: 9am-4pm Mon-Thrs close 3pm Friday

Phone / Fax: 03 477 6974 or 0800 762 786 ext.8332

studentnews@op.ac.nz

A SELECTION OF STUDENT SERVICES PROVIDED FROM THE OPSA OFFICE

For a full list of services refer to the 2016 OPSA Student Calendar

OPSA offers students a range of handy, free or low cost services and facilities

- *ID Cards - Library/Computer & door access*
- *Community Service Card applications*
- *School/ Class Grants (budget / organisation)*
- *Assistance Fund applications*
- *Fax & Photocopying (cheap!)*
- *Bus Timetables & Discounts Lists*
- *Family planning & healthy lifestyle info*
- *Grants, sponsorship & awards information*
- *Harassment & complaints procedures*
- *Help with tenancy issues and a multitude of other topics*
- *FREE student Calendar & bags*
- *FREE bins for give-away goods*
- *Lost Property*
- *FREE student telephones*
- *Postal (stamps and envelopes)*
- *Contacts for recreation groups*
- *Board games and student diaries*
- *Student Job Search information*
- *Microwaves & amenities*
- *Contacts for support groups*
- *Student regulations & policies*
- *Budget Advice (confidential service) and emergency funding*
- *FREE pens*
- *Radio 1 discount cards*

CLASS REP ELECTIONS

Elections should take place in the first two weeks of semester one

Training takes place at the **first Class Rep meeting on Thurs 10th March 2016 – 12 noon** – venue to be advised

The procedure for the elections is simple and flexible

- Lecturers will ask for one or two people to volunteer
 - The class can vote by show of hands if too many people volunteer
 - Each candidate should get to briefly state why they should be the Class Rep
 - OPSA can assist if the lecturer requests assistance with elections

The newly elected Class Reps name(s) and contact details need to be sent to OPSA (on the form provided) and details posted on the class notice board and web site (where applicable)

ROLE OF THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

- Liaise with students, staff and OPSA ensuring information transfer.
- **Attend Class Rep meetings** (if in Dunedin) which will be organised by OPSA.

Class Reps are mainly concerned with academic or service matters, such as quality of education or service delivery and provision of student services on campus. For example, issues such as assessments, quality of teaching, access to services such as computers, course materials, after hour and library access. Services may include: microwaves, furniture, social events or provision of sporting or recreation facilities etc.

The primary role of the Class Rep is to convey and facilitate concerns, suggestions and issues that are raised by class members to the appropriate forum. OPSA offers direction, guidance and support in all areas of facilitation for Class Reps, and will act on their behalf if the need arises.

WHAT DO CLASS REPS DO ?

- Make yourself known to students, lecturers and staff **and check your polytechnic e-mail once a week**
- Liaise with staff, listen to and help students who approach you with issues or suggestions
- Relay information from OPSA to your class and inform OPSA of issues that require student representation.
- Attend Class Reps meetings held each semester (if in Dunedin) – you will be notified of the dates

Class Reps function to improve communication in order to prevent problems

WHAT CLASS REPS DON'T DO ?

- Don't deal with harassment cases - issues of this nature need to be referred to a contact person.
- Don't overload yourself with class rep work to the extent that it has a negative impact on your studies
- Don't deal with large scale or intensive advocacy or get involved in serious conflict issues
- Don't try and counsel students who may have personal problems.
- Don't get involved with staff employment issues.

OPSA is always available to help. We do not expect the class representative to 'go it alone'.

ISSUES YOU MAY NEED TO CONSIDER

- Are **assessments** fairly weighted, evenly spread throughout the year and clearly set out?
- Are **lectures** clearly structured, easy to follow and can you hear and understand what lecturers are saying?
- Are **resources** (prescribed texts, library books, web pages, computer labs, etc) accessible?
- Are **services provided** meeting your needs?

REWARDS FOR THE REP

Empowerment

- Play a more active role in determining the direction of your education
- Get the chance to become involved with Students' Association activities

Skills Development

- Improved communication skills, mediation, and personal crisis management.
- A reference letter confirming your role, initiative and involvement for your CV

Meet New and Interesting People

- Get to know the people in your class and build relationships
- Learn to interact with people from all levels of the polytechnic

WAYS TO DEAL WITH AN ISSUE

- **DO NOTHING** -*not a good look* or **TALK TO THE ACADEMIC STAFF DIRECTLY**
open and direct communication is often the best way to resolve some issues

there is no “right” way to deal with an issue - if you are not sure, talk to OPSA staff to get some help or advice

GUIDELINES / SUGGESTIONS ON HOW YOU MIGHT DEAL WITH AN ISSUE / PROBLEM

it's best to be open and honest with lecturers before the problem gets out of control.

- **Approach the lecturer** and ask for 5 minutes in class to discuss the matter
 - Students may pass on less urgent concerns (such as lecturers speaking too quietly or too fast, or non-availability of library books) etc. these can be **dealt with informally**
 - **If a Class Rep or any other student brings a matter of concern to a Lecturer's attention, it is important that neither the student or the Class Rep feels that they will be disadvantaged in any way as a result.**
 - Treat students and lecturers equally. Don't let issues of race, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, marital or parental status, or physical ability influence the treatment of problems.
- **Discuss the problem in full with the student or group and clarify.**
 - Specific details: where, why, what, how of the issue. Ask if they want to deal with it themselves, use you as support or take it to OPSA.
 - It is wise to try and deal with the issue himself or herself, with support from a Class Rep or support person first, if you feel comfortable with this.
 - What does the student want to do?
 - Some may want formal action others may only want to air their concerns.
 - The level of confidentiality desired.
 - Confidentiality must be assured, if you raise the issue with another party ie. the lecturer or OPSA you must ask the person first if they desire confidentiality.
 - For more urgent problems arrange to **speak to the class** (when relevant) and meet with the lecturer as soon as possible thereafter.
 - These urgent issues may include assignment due dates, clarity of lecture content, etc.
 - When does the student want the problem addressed - some do not want issues addressed until after the course is completed
 - Keep them informed about what you plan to do and when you are going to get back to them with the outcomes.
 - If the matter involves an individual student, attempt to take the student with you to speak to the lecturer.
 - Think the issue through and find out if the issue is isolated or it is affecting other students.
 - You could bring up the issue in class with out the lecturer present if the issue does not have a sensitive content or if you are unsure, visit OPSA to discuss and receive advice

GUIDELINES FOR A MEETING

- Make an appointment, rather than rushing the lecturer after the lecture.
 - Keep the appointment and sit down in their office and discuss the problem.
 - Most lecturers are pleased to get student feedback
- Prepare and plan how you want to approach the issue.

IN THE MEETING

- Explain the issue and why it has arisen clearly and precisely
- Try to resolve the issue with one meeting and take notes on what is said
 - The conclusions you reached and what action will be taken
 - If the lecturer does not follow through, you will be able to show on paper what agreement was reached.

IF THE ISSUE WAS NOT SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED WITH THE LECTURER

- Write a letter to the Head of School and request a written reply from the recipient
- If you are in doubt come to OPSA and we can check the letter before you send it.

Keep in touch with OPSA about what is happening so that we also are informed about the issues

OR bring the issue to OPSA, we can advocate on your / class's behalf and take the issue through the appropriate avenues of discussion and endeavour to gain a resolution.

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE THESE WORDS: *remember the difference.*

CONCERNS are less serious issues that can be dealt with by an individual or the Class Rep

COMPLAINTS are serious formal matters

- They must be made in writing are dealt with by HOD's or the Director of Quality

HARASSMENT ISSUES

OPSA and Otago Polytechnic are committed to providing a safe working and study environment in which all staff and students are treated with respect and dignity.

Harassment can be:

- verbal, written, visual or physical behaviour
that is offensive, hurtful or unwelcome to a person receiving it.

Who to talk to if you feel you have been harassed:

- Any lecturer, Programme Manager, Head of School/Division or the OP Student Services Manager
- Your hall supervisor or residential assistant, staff at OPSA or a harassment contact person
- The Occupational Health & Safety Adviser who is the Harassment prevention programme manager.

Contact People

The list of contact people is displayed around campus on notice boards or obtained from the OPSA office, Customer Services or Student Health and Counselling

For more information go to www.opsa.org.nz

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOU TO FOCUS ON THIS YEAR!

February Orientation events on Polytechnic & University campuses
Watch out for the Orientation Issue of OPSA's student e-magazine and posters

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT 12 noon *(venue will be confirmed prior)*

Thursday 10th March

OPSA first Class Representative Meeting

- Each full-time course or class from each school will be asked to nominate at least two (2) students to represent you during the year.
- OPSA will give these Reps all the support they need to fulfil this role.

Thursday 10th March

Nominations open for any vacant positions on the 2016 OPSA Advisory Board

- nominations close for any vacancies on Tuesday 22nd March

Wednesday 23rd March - OPSA Annual General Meeting

This meeting adopts the OPSA 2015 Financial Statement and elects any vacant 2016 OPSA Advisory Board Members

Wednesday 21st April -

Pacific Island, Maori and International Student Meeting

JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL POSITIONS WITHIN THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION, INCLUDING CLASS REPS AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS, ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE OPSA OFFICE - OPSA welcomes your interest and participation

During Semesters I & II

Dunedin Class Rep meetings will be held over lunch hours

OPSA will contact you initially via your polytechnic e-mail

***PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER YOUR E-MAIL (noted on your ID card)
& ENSURE YOU CHECK IT FOR WEEKLY UPDATES***

We will send you a text reminder on the day – so make sure we have your cell number

INFORMATION YOU MAY NEED

OPSA has forms for students needing:

- Financial Assistance (various forms of assistance available)
 - Individuals can make an appointment at OPSA (or email) for a confidential meeting to discuss how best we can help
 - OPSA is also a branch of the Dunedin Budget Advisory Service so we can offer students a comprehensive budget service
- OPSA Special Assistance Grants
- OPSA Class Rep – Class grants
 - All groups on campus can apply for 1 of 3 contestable funds:
 - Exhibition & Study Grants
 - Recreation & Social
 - Travel & Promotions – for funding
- Scholarship Information www.otagopolytechnic.ac.nz
- Otago Polytechnic Education Foundation Grants
- Funding for Maori , Pacific Island and International student networking
- Other Funding - check out the “Breakout” system at the Dunedin Public Library – this lets individuals know if there are any funding providers available to them
- Awards – you will be given information about
 - Otago Polytechnic Teaching Awards
 - OPSA Student Graduation Awards
 - OPSA Staff Awards
 - OPSA Sporting “Blues” awards for sporting excellence and/or administration

Info on other awards that may arise from time to time will be emailed out

We also provide a student “self service” area for photocopying, binding, and laminating etc. which is open during our office hours

Please check your email each week, and feel free to come to the OPSA Office we are located in the Mason Centre (off the Hub) - or email anytime to discuss matters of concern, to offer suggestions, give us feedback, tell us your needs, or just “hang out” in a cool place !

You don't have to wait until a Class Rep meeting !