

OTAGO REGION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Josh Meikle – VP High Schools

Date: 3/10/2018

Overview

Over the course of year, I found the duties of this role falling into four different categories: events, high school ambassadors, liaisons, and promotions. Each of these took the forefront at different times of the year and were carried out to varied levels of success.

The year in general was one where we saw a lot of success in terms of the creation of educational content, as well as the general organisation of events. What was a difficulty and continued to be an issue throughout the whole of 2018 was engagement of high school students and teachers. For whoever takes on this portfolio in the future my advice in relation to this would be that regardless of what methods are being used for promotion not to be afraid to continuously follow people up. This is more likely to return results than it is to harm relationships with the school, high school ambassador, or whoever else is being contacted as often the reason something hasn't been acted on or carried out is because it was forgotten about or isn't regarded as a top priority.

I would like to extend a huge thanks to all the members of the regional council that I have worked with this year, it has been immensely positive experience to collaborate on projects. In particular I would like to thank Jehoon Mun for throughout the year making sure the Otago region was ticking along and being available as a touchstone for any issues or concerns, Mika Young for coordinating the outreach MUNs this year and also being a fantastic partner in working on putting together the OSYF conference, George Sabonadiere for working with the high school ambassadors throughout the year and providing significant input as to how the programme can improve and develop, Sylvia Duncan for being there to manage welfare concerns, plans and protocol throughout the year in a manner that was brilliant and efficient, particularly in relation to OSYF, and Farah Barzak for coordinating the OSMUN 2018 conference during first semester.

Events

The plan for high school events this year was to run OSMUN, OSYF, outreach MUNs, and potentially a high school ambassador led event. Of these the only event that didn't reach planning stage was the high school ambassador event, which will be discussed later. The other events were fully planned and set up to go, however, OSYF and COMUN were unable to run due to lack of interest.

We had difficulties this year in getting enough applications for event committees. This led to council members taking on more significant roles in each event committee. It was valuable to have council liaisons on the committees; however, this role can be better defined going into the future. Comments from non-council members on these committees expressed that there was more room for guidance as to what each role on a committee should manage. We took this advice on when coordinating OSYF and this led to a more positive and effective committee setting. I would like to

emphasise the importance of ensuring that event committees are in communication with each other and the council.

The various events throughout the year produced very good educational content showing some of the talent within the Otago volunteer base. Where there were pitfalls was around the area of promotional engagement. This was a general issue throughout the year for all things within the Otago region with typical promotional methods not working as well as they do within other regions. For the next VP High Schools I would note that the Hunter Centre is a great venue for events and would advise encouraging committees to explore this option.

High School Ambassadors

This part of the portfolio was co-managed with George Sabonadiere (GM). We took a slightly different approach to the high school ambassador programme than previous years. The focus was on creating an environment where ambassadors felt they were getting development and value from the role that was in line with what they wanted. The reason for this was because previous high school ambassadors had expressed that they felt like they were only an extension of the Otago regions promotions to schools. What this looked like was focusing on organising workshops and events for the high school ambassadors throughout the year focused on upskilling and coming together as a group. That came at the expense of establishing more specific expectations for the high school ambassadors that they had to meet, an example of this was a relaxation on any requirement to host their own model UN events. Going into future it will be valuable to try balance this sort of approach with a high school ambassador programme more like other regions. In this regard it is particularly important to be aware of the upcoming High School ambassador policy and how this may impact the flexibility of the Otago region to shape their programme.

I would recommend to the next VP High Schools to establish this programme early in the year and make sure that there is a clear plan throughout the year that can be communicated to the ambassadors from the get-go. Also, I would encourage pushing for an event where the ambassadors get to meet and engage with the council in a more informal context. It was extremely valuable this year to have a general member help manage the programme as well. This meant that some of the aspects like coordination of events would be taken care of allowing more of a focus on other things like educational content for these events or broader planning.

Liaisons

At the beginning of the year I made a particular effort to engage with the schools around Dunedin and establish lasting connections with teachers there. This was met with varied success with there being a partial list of teachers from schools that are willing to help promote events within their community. This engagement took the form of contacting schools to arrange a time to speak to assemblies about UNYOUTH as an organisation and enquiring as to whether there were specific teachers that would be interested in UNYOUTH. In carrying this out in future I believe that it can be valuable to get help from other council members in order to be able to engage with as many schools as possible, as well as have some form of media to bring along such as PowerPoint or video to make the presentation more engaging.

It was valuable to be able to meet with teacher contacts at the start of the year. Past this there was less contact with these liaisons apart from around the time of events. I would suggest keeping in more regular contact with these teacher liaisons throughout the year to keep them updated as to other UNYOUTH news and opportunities, and to see if they would like us to come into schools to

do things like run MUNs for a class or talk about a specific issue. There is definitely a lot of room for further engagement with schools through these teacher liaisons. This engagement doesn't necessarily need to take the form of a MUN or likewise either as there are many other ways to provide civics education within schools that UNYouth volunteers are particularly equipped to be able to do.

Promotions

This was a tricky issue for the whole region and I believe that it needs to be more extensively discussed and engaged with my both the 2019 and 2018 Otago Council so that we can develop an approach for 2019. In general, we need to focus on making promotions more engaging, visible, and accessible. This means getting onto things early, developing new resources and making use of connections within schools and other communities well.