

McMaster Students Union

MSU



Municipal Advocacy Week 2015

A Report by the **McMASTER STUDENTS UNION**

Municipal Advocacy

Foreword

In November 2015, the McMaster Students Union held its first Municipal Advocacy Week. From November 16- 20, representatives from the MSU met with key stakeholders from the Hamilton community to discuss a variety of student issues, including student housing, employment, culture, and transit. The week was very productive, and gave the MSU a deeper understanding of how different aspects of the city interact with McMaster students and how the MSU can work to keep student priorities integrated within the municipal context.

In this report, the main discussion points and outcomes of the meetings have been compiled, along with descriptions of several Hamilton community events that were attended throughout the week. Lastly, a summary of our [#MacLivesHere](#) Housing campaign is included. For each meeting or event, actions items were highlighted where necessary to demonstrate the steps the MSU will take to move its community engagement priorities forward.

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Stakeholders

Over the MSU's Municipal Advocacy Week, the MSU met with 15 stakeholders. These were:

Monday November 16, 2015

- Aidan Johnson - Ward 1 Councillor
- Jason Farr - Ward 2 Councillor
- Matthew Green - Ward 3 Councillor
- Hamilton Hive
- Chris Murray - City Manager

Tuesday November 17, 2015

- Sam Merulla - Ward 4 Councillor

Wednesday November 18, 2015

- The Hamilton Community Foundation
- The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Thursday November 19, 2015

- Mohawk Student Association
- David Dixon - Director of Transit HSR
- Fred Eisenberger - Mayor of Hamilton

Friday November 20, 2015

- Paul Miller - MPP Hamilton East-Stoney Creek
- Monique Taylor - MPP Hamilton Mountain
- Jason Thorne - General Manager of Planning and Economic Development
- Norm Schleeahn - Hamilton Economic Development

Meeting Summaries

FRED EISENBERGER – MAYOR OF HAMILTON

The MSU's meeting with the Mayor focused on several key student issues, including: student housing, local transit, student-community relationships, and student employment and retention. The Mayor is a clear stakeholder for students because of his leadership within the City, as well as his presence on various committees and sub-committees relevant to students. The meeting was overall quite positive and began a relationship between the MSU and the Mayor's Office that, if continued, can yield mutually positive results. Some of the tangible impacts of the meeting included:

Developing a Municipal Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy Group

- Currently the MSU is part of a roundtable with the Mohawk Students' Association, Redeemer Student Senate, and our local MPP Ted McMeekin to discuss student issues relevant to the provincial sector. Meetings occur once every four months at one of the three post-secondary institutions. The idea of establishing a municipal version where the MSU, MSA, and RSA could meet every four months with the Mayor, City Councillors, and City Manager to discuss student issues took place.

Youth Advisory Committee

- The City currently has a Youth Advisory Committee which discusses mainly high school level youth and education issues. Another option reviewed was revitalizing this committee, which has not been active for some time, and introducing post-secondary issues and partners to the table. Thus the MSU would have a City committee responsible for discussing the integration of McMaster University into the City.

Downtown Residence

- Discussions revolved around the changing relationship between students and the City as represented by the private student residence likely to be built at Liuna station. The MSU learned that this residence will most likely be open to either undergraduates or graduates, and will play an integral part in integrating students with the City.

Action Items

1. Creation of a Municipal Post-Secondary Advocacy Group
2. Revitalizing the Youth Advisory Committee
3. Reaching out to developers and university administration regarding downtown student residences

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

AIDAN JOHNSON - WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Meeting with Aidan Johnson was a productive conversation which focused on the student experience in Ward 1. As the councillor of McMaster's ward, Aidan Johnson is an extremely important stakeholder for the MSU to work with when addressing issues on-campus and in the Ainslie Wood-Westdale neighbourhoods. Opportunities for improvement moving forward include:

Student Housing in Ainslie Wood and Westdale

- The MSU discussed the #MacLivesHere Housing campaign and various student issues. Also discussed was the Rental Housing sub-committee, which is a city of Hamilton committee that meets quarterly to discuss rental housing in Hamilton.

Transit in Ward 1 and Light Rail Transit (LRT)

- The MSU also discussed the issue of transit in Ward 1 and the future role of LRT in McMaster students' lives. Cllr. Johnson brought up the City of Hamilton's LRT sub-committee and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's LRT Task Force and talked about their role in coordinating the LRT implementation in Hamilton.

By-laws and Relationship Building

- The MSU discussed continuing by-laws education for students and continuing to build a relationship between McMaster and the permanent residents of Ward 1. It was expressed that ensuring a positive dialogue between the MSU and other Ward 1 residents was a priority in order to maintain healthy community relations.

Action Items

1. The MSU will keep Cllr. Johnson informed regarding current and future housing campaigns to ensure student housing concerns in Ainslie Wood and Westdale are addressed
2. An MSU representative will sit on the Rental Housing sub-committee
3. An MSU representative will sit on both the LRT Taskforce and the LRT sub-committee

JASON FARR – WARD 2 COUNCILLOR

Jason Farr is the councillor for the downtown Ward 2. Ward 2's proximity to McMaster, along with the downtown's influential role in student life, made this a meaningful meeting. The discussion centered on the topic of downtown renewal and engaging students in the downtown core. The MSU focused on the future of downtown residences and the value of the MSU advocating for these spaces. Also discussed was how increased student presence in the downtown core can lead to an increased perception of safety downtown. Discussion items include:

Discover Your City Week

- The MSU discussed pursuing a potential collaboration between the City, Horizons, and SCSN on events for Discover Your City week in February. Cllr. Farr was also interested in helping organize free busing for the MSU's Horizons conference if the MSU intended to send students to the downtown core for one of the evening activities.

Student Housing Downtown

- Councillor Jason Far was in favour of encouraging further discussion on downtown student housing options. Cllr. Farr believes that downtown student housing is one of the key methods of introducing students to the community and contribute to engagement and retention.

Action Items

1. The MSU will meet with the university to discuss the impact of downtown residences on students
2. The MSU will work with Cllr. Farr for free busing to the downtown core for student events

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

MATTHEW GREEN - WARD 3 COUNCILLOR

Councillor Green has been Ward 3 Councillor since the last municipal election in October. Some of his key interests include affordable housing and public transit, and he sits on the Planning committee, the rental housing subcommittee and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce LRT Taskforce, making this a very relevant meeting for students. The MSU engaged in meaningful conversations around student representation at City Council meetings, student housing, and transit. There were several key takeaways from the meeting.

Student Housing

- The MSU discussed having student representatives on the City of Hamilton's rental housing sub-committee. This committee will be creating a registry of landlords in Hamilton, working towards the long term goal of licensing landlords.

Transit and LRT

- Cllr. Green also brought up the LRT subcommittee and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce LRT Taskforce. He mentioned that the MSU should push for open data from the city in order to have a better understanding of the meetings in advance.

Student Union Collaboration

- Cllr. Green also recommended combining advocacy efforts with the Mohawk Students' Association and Redeemer College when addressing student issues in Hamilton to city council.

Action Items

1. Student representation on the student housing committee to be established to address landlord licensing
2. Student representation on the LRT sub-committee and Task Force
3. Developing the Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy group and revitalizing the Youth Advisory Committee

SAM MERULLA - WARD 4 COUNCILLOR

Sam Merulla is a long serving Hamilton councillor and thus represents a key player in the MSU's local advocacy work, despite not being McMaster's city councillor. The discussion largely emphasized the downtown renewal, student retention, and Hamilton transit. Several follow-up objectives include:

Downtown Renewal

- The MSU had an extensive discussion regarding the development of the downtown residence at Liuna station. Cllr. Merulla considers it an optimistic investment for student integration with the city. He also believes that with the recent LRT announcement students are particularly well poised to become active and fluid citizens of the Hamilton community.

Strategic Plan

- The meeting also focused on how best to integrate students into the long-term economic and general plan for the city. Cllr. Merulla suggested the MSU reach out to city staff to ensure that students are represented in the next long-term strategic plan for the city.

Youth Advisory Committee

- Mr. Merulla was very interested in reactivating the Youth Advisory Committee with a broader mandate to include post-secondary students rather than just secondary school students.

Accessible Transit

- The MSU also discussed accessible transit, particularly related to the DARTS service provided by the city. The conversation touched on increasing the availability of DARTS, as well as increasing the locations of which DARTS can drop off students on campus. Cllr. Merulla provided leads for the MSU to continue on this advocacy work.

Action Items

1. The MSU will communicate with city staff regarding including student priorities in Hamilton's long term strategic documents
2. The MSU will re-establish the City of Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee
3. The MSU will access leads around improving the accessibility of the DARTS service

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

TERRY COOKE - PRESIDENT AND CEO, HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In this meeting the MSU addressed how each organization can work together to support initiatives in the City of Hamilton; especially pertaining to student retention. The MSU discussed potential funding opportunities for the MSU's CLAY conference and potential HCF Change Camp involvement. A broad discussion also occurred around the future of the City of Hamilton from a youth perspective. Shared views and opportunities moving forward include:

HCF's ABACAS program and CLAY

- The MSU discussed potential funding for McMaster's Creating Leadership Amongst Youth (CLAY) Conference from HCF's Advancing Post-secondary Access (ABACUS) program

Student Retention in Hamilton

- The MSU discussed how to better include McMaster students in the Hamilton community, and also the opportunity that Change Camp presents to continue conversations youth & student retention. To those who are unaware, Change Camp Hamilton is an initiative that the MSU pioneered last year in collaboration with McMaster University, the City of Hamilton, Mohawk College, and the Hamilton community. It is a participant-driven dialogue that brings together students, residents, and educational partners in a conversation on community and partnerships.

Action Items

1. The CLAY Coordinator will reach out to staff from their ABACAS program to help fund delegates from Hamilton
2. HCF and the HCF Neighbourhood Leadership Institute will be invited to Change Camp in March to continue these dialogues

THE HAMILTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The MSU met with Hamilton Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Keanin Loomis and Policy Analyst Huzaifa Saaed to discuss student representation, student employment, and transit in Hamilton. The MSU is a member of the HCC, and discussed involved how the HCC represents the MSU and provides a platform for student advocacy. The MSU also talked about how the HCC can support the MSU in advocating for student priorities in important City decisions.

Student Representation

- The MSU discussed having more representation at city council meetings and HCC suggested that students attend city council meetings to remain updated on City initiatives, discussions, and priorities.

Transit

- The MSU discussed the goal of acquiring a seat on the LRT sub-committee and the HCC LRT Task Force, as students are large stakeholders in the construction and ongoing planning of the new LRT lines and infrastructure.

Student Employment

- Huzaifa and Keenan brought up Magnet, a platform to connect students to jobs in Hamilton that will be unveiled soon. They also mentioned the HCC finds it difficult to promote employment and engagement opportunities at McMaster because the decentralized career and co-op systems make it confusing to promote job opportunities to the right audience. The MSU's role in the Bay Area Economic Summit (BAES) for the upcoming year was also discussed.

Change Camp

- HCC is interested in representing the voice of businesses in Hamilton at Change Camp in March 2016.

Action Items

1. An MSU representative will be present at City Council meetings
2. A student will be present on both the LRT sub-committee and Task Force
3. The MSU will continue to work in partnership with the university's Network for Community Campus Partnerships to develop a resource to centralize and better coordinate students, staff, and community partners with regards to engagement in Hamilton

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

HAMILTON HIVE

The MSU met with Alyssa Lai and Abir Abdulla from Hamilton Hive Executive team to discuss students as young professionals in Hamilton. The conversation revolved around student retention and how to help students begin their professional careers. Some key points from the meeting included:

Student Support & Engagement in Hamilton

- The need for better support for students transitioning out of university, and the need for more professional development at university was discussed. To address this need, the MSU talked about creating a speaker series with HiveX members and Mac Alumni where they could share their experiences, highlighting the opportunities they found in Hamilton.

Action Item

1. Developing an MSU-HiveX speaker series to help students transition into the Hamilton workforce, and reduce the brain drain Hamilton experiences from McMaster graduates leaving the City

MOHAWK STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

The MSU met with the President Luke Baylis, Vice President Kyle Datzkiw, and Vice President TJ McBean of the Mohawk Students Association (MSA). As two of the major post-secondary education institutions in Hamilton, the MSU realizes the importance of a coordinated student advocacy effort. Each organization reviewed their municipal advocacy priorities, as well as the mutual interests in student engagement and retention. Some discussion points include:

Community Day

- The MSA wants the MSU to be involved in their “Community Day” in April, an event that will bring together stakeholders from across Hamilton to engage meaningfully in the city.

LRT

- Mohawk won't be directly connected to the LRT, but they would like their transit to have access to major hubs on the LRT. This information is helpful when the MSU serves on the LRT sub-committee and Task Force and must represent student issues during the planning and implementation of LRT.

Student Housing

- Mohawk does not experience student housing challenges to the extent of the MSU, and they expressed they are wary of asking for higher standards and safety from landlords because they do not want rent prices to rise.

Athletic Fees

- There are close to 1,000 students at Mohawk who attend McMaster through IAHS (McMaster's Nursing program). These students pay athletic fees to the athletic facilities at Mohawk, but would prefer to use those at McMaster. Thus, the MSA are interested in having their students' fees redirected to McMaster's athletics.

Change Camp

- The MSA is interested in the MSU's second annual Change Camp conference. During Change 2015 there was little collaboration between the MSU and the MSA, but both organizations agree the MSA can participate in both the planning and implementation of the event. The MSA is also interested in potential cost-sharing, send student representatives to the event, and contributing to the post-event projects that arise.

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

Tuition

- The MSU discussed rising costs of tuition, and the MSU's upcoming letter-writing campaign which will allow students, faculty, and staff to sign letters that will be sent to the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities around a fully funded tuition freeze. Based on this campaign concept the MSA is interested in getting involved in the MSU's tuition letter writing campaign in January.

Action Items

1. Ensure that the MSA is invited to planning meetings for Change Camp
2. Keep the MSA updated regarding the MSU's upcoming tuition letter writing campaign
3. The MSU will explore the option of redirection MSA student athletics fees to McMaster facilities
4. The MSU will attend the MSA's upcoming Community Day in second semester

PAUL MILLER - MPP HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK

Paul Miller has been the MPP for the Hamilton East - Stoney Creek riding for the past eight years. Though McMaster is not in his riding, MPP Miller is an important stakeholder in the Hamilton community who has the ability to bring the student voice to the provincial government. The discussion with MPP Miller centred around the Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act Private Members Bill that was recently put forward, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, the Tenant Act, and the upcoming tuition framework renegotiation.

Pathways to Post-Secondary Excellence PMB

- This PMB, championed by MPP Yvan Baker, is related to articulating and better measuring data that is important to students in post-secondary education. The MSU, as does OUSA, is in strong support of this bill because of its focus on student success metrics and data collection. While MPP Miller supported the general idea of additional data collection around post-secondary education programs in Ontario, he had concerns regarding the effectiveness of the data reporting mechanism and its impact on international students and substantive change.

Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act & Tenant Act

- MPP Miller wholeheartedly supports the Sexual Violence Action Plan act and during the discussion brought up the Tenant Act, mentioning that he believes it should be mandated that all leases have a clause that allows tenants to move out without penalty if they are being sexually harassed.

Tuition Framework + Financial Assistance

- MPP Miller was receptive to a fully funded tuition freeze and wants to see an increase in student employment in Hamilton. He also brought up the potential for the NDP to continue taking progressive stances on tuition and its potential lowering in the future as well.

Action Item

1. The MSU will work to introduce an advocacy point around including the tenant clause in leases to OUSA's long-term advocacy

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

MONIQUE TAYLOR – MPP HAMILTON MOUNTAIN

The meeting with MPP Monique Taylor was very productive. The MSU had the opportunity to advocate for student needs and mention recent work being done by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, such as the upcoming tuition freeze campaign and the tuition budget submission. The MSU also discussed student engagement strategies. Some key discussion points included:

Engagement in the Hamilton Mountain

- The MSU also discussed creating a Hamilton Mountain Art Crawl on Concession Street to bring students up the mountain and connect the uptown and downtown. This arose because of the concern that McMaster students are beginning to interact more with the Hamilton community yet the Mountain is still a challenge for student engagement.

Tuition and Financial Aid

- The MSU started a conversation around eliminating merit-based scholarships from public dollars and moving those funds to needs-based grants. MPP Taylor was not able to speak too much to these ideas, but agreed with the principle that more needs-based financial aid for students should be a priority. The MSU also provided updates around its upcoming fully funded tuition freeze campaigns.

Action Item

1. Exploring the possibility of collaboration regarding Hamilton Mountain Art Crawl

JASON THORNE - GENERAL MANAGER OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning and Economic development decisions have an immeasurable impact on students' lives; from issues of zoning and student housing to whether or not they decide to stay and work in Hamilton after graduating. Our meeting with Jason Thorne centred around student employment, bylaws, and housing. We also talked downtown renewal and student retention.

Employment

- In terms of employment while in school and after graduation, we discussed the role of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Workforce Development. This committee was struck earlier in 2015 and has been tasked with developing strategies to improve the relationship between education and industry in Hamilton.
- They were also receptive to the idea of helping connect McMaster students and graduates to relevant employment in the Hamilton community, but mentioned that it was difficult to coordinate with McMaster's many separate co-op and career services.

Student Rentals and Landlord Licensing

- As in several of the other meetings, we discussed the Rental Housing sub-committee and the potential role for a student on this committee. We also discussed landlord licensing in Hamilton with the Bylaws team.

Student Retention

- In our meeting we discussed the concept of "complete streets" being implemented downtown and brought up several strategies for getting students involved with the community

Downtown Renewal

- We discussed different ways the city is encouraging development and student engagement in the downtown core, including student residences

Action Items

1. Exploring the option of having student representation on the Workforce Development Taskforce
2. Continuing the discussion regarding landlord licensing and having a student on the student housing committee
3. Continue to work in partnership with the university's Network for Community Campus Partnerships to develop a resource to centralize and better coordinate students, staff and community partners with regards to engagement in Hamilton

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

CHRIS MURRAY - CITY MANAGER

Meeting Chris Murray was a very productive conversation centered on student retention in the city, transit, and future partnerships and projects. Mr. Murray is an important partner for the MSU in all of these areas and it was great to hear how supportive he was of many initiatives that the MSU considers valuable. Some potential opportunities moving forward include:

Transit & LRT

- The MSU discussed the LRT implementation and the potential place for students on the City's LRT sub-committee. Mr. Murray agreed that LRT would be a key way of integrating students better into the City, and thus LRT must be accessible and convenient for student usage.

Municipal Post-Secondary Advisory Committee

- Mr. Murray was friendly to the idea of establishing a local Hamilton Post-Secondary Advisory Committee in partnership with the Redeemer Student Senate and Mohawk Students' Association.

City Studio Hamilton

- Mr. Murray brought up the development of a partnership between Mohawk, Redeemer, and McMaster on a project similar to Vancouver's City Studio for Hamilton. CityStudio is a formal partnership between the Vancouver municipal government and Vancouver post-secondary institutions where students and faculty work on real City projects with City staff. The partnership emphasizes creativity, innovation, leadership, and interdisciplinary learning. The Network for Community Campus Partnerships is working with the City and the university administration to launch this project in Hamilton, to be titled CityLab, and the MSU will continue to be supportive of this endeavour.

Action Items

1. Placing a student representative on the LRT sub-committee
2. Developing the Municipal Post-Secondary Advocacy Group
3. Continue supporting the development of Hamilton's CityLab

DAVID DIXON - DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT HSR

The MSU currently undergoes extensive dealings with the HSR, as the MSU and HSR work each year to provide McMaster students an extensive and extremely well-priced 12-month bus pass. This pass supports student integration into the Hamilton community, as well as the accessibility of many students to study at McMaster. During our meeting, the MSU had an initial brief of the HSR's perception of the student bus pass and how the MSU and the HSR can continue to build our relationship moving forward. Some discussion points include:

Hamilton Transit

- Both the MSU and HSR wanted to evaluate the new provincial and federal landscape around transit funding and infrastructure in Hamilton and to discuss future steps to improve student fluidity within the City. With a largely provincial and federal interest in infrastructure funding and developing, it is important for Hamilton to take advantage of this non-permanent culture.

Connecting Students with Hamilton

- There was a discussion around how the HSR and MSU can work together to better serve students and facilitate economic growth within the community.

Presto Integration

- The MSU also discussed the possibilities of integrating presto with municipal transit to equip students with convenient modes of transportation within Ontario and Hamilton specifically.

Action Items:

1. The MSU will begin work with David Dixon around the implementation for LRT in Hamilton
2. The MSU will begin future negotiations with the HSR for future bus pass administration

Meeting Summaries (cont.)

NORM SCHLEEHAHN - HAMILTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Norm Schleeahn is a member of the Hamilton Economic Development team. The MSU met to discuss student issues such as the downtown renewal, student retention, and public works. The meeting provided several possible next steps, such as:

Hamilton Economic Development Role

- The MSU discussed how to better provide co-op and work-integrated learning experiences to students from traditionally underrepresented faculties such as arts, humanities, and social sciences. Mr. Schleeahn stated that Hamilton Economic Development usually focuses on the STEM fields in regards to these opportunities, but was open to widening the purview to support these other faculties.

Student Retention

- The MSU had an in-depth discussion around the role of students in the community and how to better support students after graduation. This led to talks about increasing the number of students working with the City during the summer or after graduation, as well as providing more internships within the City.

Action Item

1. Working to help Hamilton Economic Development better provide co-op and work-integrated learning experiences to students from the arts, humanities, and social sciences

Summary of Action Items

Throughout the week, the MSU found that many similar topics and action items arose from meetings. In this section, we have separated these by theme and attached the specific action items.

Transit

Light Rail Transit

- The MSU will place a student representative on both the City of Hamilton's LRT sub-committee and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce LRT Task Force to ensure that student concerns remain a priority in the implementation of Hamilton's LRT
- The MSU will begin work with David Dixon around the implementation for LRT in Hamilton

Accessible Transit

- The MSU will use the leads provided by Councillor Merulla to improve the accessibility of the DARTS service

HSR Partnership

- The MSU will begin future negotiations with the HSR for future bus pass administration

Housing

Landlord Licensing

- The MSU will place a student representative on the Rental Housing Sub-Committee
- The MSU will keep Cllr. Johnson informed regarding current and future MSU housing campaigns

Downtown Housing

- Starting a conversation with the university administration and City stakeholders regarding the potential impact of downtown student residences.

Bylaws

- The MSU will continue bylaw education to ensure that students are aware of their rights and to minimize conflict in student neighbourhoods
- The MSU will work to introduce an advocacy point around including the tenant clause in leases to OUSA's long-term advocacy

Summary of Action Items (cont.)

Employment

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce on Work Force Development

- The MSU will present to participate in this taskforce, and explore the opportunity to place a student representative on the taskforce

HiveX Speaker Series

- The MSU will develop an MSU-HiveX speaker series to help students transition into the Hamilton workforce, and reduce the brain drain Hamilton experiences from McMaster graduates leaving the City

Magnet

- The MSU will explore Magnet, a platform to connect students to jobs in Hamilton which will be completed in the near future

Bay Area Economic Summit

- The MSU will attend the Bay Area Economic Summit (BAES) for the upcoming year

Hamilton Strategic Plan

- The MSU will communicate with city staff regarding including student priorities in Hamilton's long-term strategic documents

CityLab

- The MSU will partner with McMaster University and the community to introduce Hamilton CityLab

Hamilton Economic Development

- Working to help Hamilton Economic Development better provide co-op and work-integrated learning experiences to students from the arts, humanities, and social sciences

Culture

Mountain Art Crawl

- The MSU will work to develop a Hamilton Mountain Art Crawl on Concession Street to bring students to the mountain

MSA Community Day

- The MSU will attend the MSA's upcoming Community Day in April 2016

Change Camp

- The MSU will ensure the MSA is invited to planning meetings for Change Camp
- Both the Hamilton Community Foundation and its Neighbourhood Leadership Institute will be invited to Change Camp in March 2016 to continue their relationship with the MSU

MSU and MSA Collaboration

- The MSU will partner with the MSA regarding the MSU's upcoming tuition letter writing campaign
- The MSU will explore the option of redirection MSA student athletics fees to McMaster facilities

MSU Events

- The MSU will work with Cllr. Farr for free busing to the downtown core for student events
- The MSU CLAY Coordinator will reach out to staff from their ABACAS program to help fund delegates from Hamilton

General Coordination

Municipal Post-Secondary Advisory Group

- The MSU will establish a local Hamilton Post-Secondary Advisory Group in partnership with the Redeemer Student Senate, Mohawk Students' Association, and the Mayor of Hamilton to discuss student issues every four months

Summary of Action Items (cont.)

Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee

- In consultation with City Councillors, the MSU will re-establish the Youth Advisory Committee and transition it to become more post-secondary student focused

Centralizing McMaster Career, Co-op and Community Engagement Services

- The MSU will continue to work in partnership with the university's Network for Community-Campus Partnerships to develop an on-campus resource to centralize and better coordinate students, staff and community partners with regards to engagement in Hamilton.

City Council

- The MSU will ensure there is a student representative at each city council meeting

Community Events

During our Municipal Advocacy Week, MSU representatives also attended the following community events.

Ambitious City

Each year, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce hosts an 'Ambitious City' event, with this year's event being modeled around Hamilton as the new 'Brooklyn'. It consisted of keynote speaker Carlo Scissura, who is the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce CEO, as well as a panel featuring Hamilton Community Foundation, Sonic Unyon, and Civic Action Toronto. We attended this event as a part of our Municipal Advocacy Week, and it was extremely well received by the MSU attendees. It was very informative, helping us re-think Hamilton's capabilities as a city. Lessons learned included rezoning underused city space, not undervaluing the importance of a city night life, and the urban planning necessary for successful transit, housing, and consumer outlets.

Hamilton Gallery of Distinction

The Hamilton Gallery of Distinction is a body which recognizes members of the Hamilton community who are considered worthy of celebration for their achievements and impact on their community. This year the inductees included Reverend Todd Bender, S. Patricia Filer, Michael and Jane Schwenger, Dr. Mohit Bhandari, Jack Clifford McFarland, and Terry Edwin Yates. Overall, the event was a great way for the MSU to establish and maintain new relationships with Hamilton leaders, such as David Braley, who have contributed significantly to McMaster's progress.

#MacLivesHere

#MacLivesHere: A Student Housing Campaign

Introduction

An important portion of our Municipal Advocacy Week was the MSU's student housing campaign. With roughly 10,000 - 12,000 students living in the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods surrounding McMaster University, student housing is a significant topic that often needs to be pushed into the spotlight. The tenant-landlord relationship, household maintenance problems, and housemate living dynamics make up a few of the many issues which permeate the day-to-day lives of nearly half of McMaster's student population. Through this campaign, the Student Community Support Network, Advocacy Street Team, and External Affairs committee looked to deconstruct the overarching student housing picture at McMaster by helping to provide resources, personal accounts of off-campus living, and advocacy solutions.

Goals

The goals for #MacLivesHere were as follows:

- To educate students about legal pieces related to off-campus living (Residential Tenancies Act, Hamilton Bylaws as relevant to students)
- To advocate students around housing in Westdale and Ainslie Wood
- To educate and promote self-advocacy practices for students
- To provide help to students with transitioning into off-campus living

To educate students about the Residential Tenancies Act and Hamilton Bylaws, the MSU used the website to distribute simplified versions of these laws, which make them more accessible to students. The MSU also set up tables in the lobbies of Mills Library and Thode Library where students could talk to Advocacy Street Team members about their student housing concerns. As well, the MSU distributed information to help provide potential answers towards student questions. At these tables, students could also fill out brick-shaped postcards which were all addressed to Ward 1 Councillor Aidan Johnson, either explaining their experiences living in Westdale or requesting change - addressing the advocacy side of the campaign. These letters will then be discussed with Ward One Councillor Aidan Johnson to see what steps can be taken to provide solutions to the challenges outlined.

#MacLivesHere (cont.)

Lastly, the MSU provided the annual Leavin' The Nest workshop on Wednesday, November 25. This workshop covered topics such as:

- Questions to consider when choosing housemates
- Addressing illegal clauses in leases
- Landlord and Tenant responsibilities
- Simplifying the Residential Tenancies Act



Conclusion

In conclusion, the MSU's first Municipal Advocacy Week was a very worthwhile endeavour. The MSU learned more about Hamilton, established new relationships with members of the Hamilton community, and had the opportunity to strengthen relationships with our traditional partners. By following up on the discussion points and action items from our meetings, the organization will work to make sure that student issues continue to be a priority at the municipal level. Moving forward, if the MSU continues a municipal advocacy week each year and addressed the areas of work that arise, the MSU can become a substantially more active members in its surrounding community.



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