



Report

From the office of the...

Commerce Caucus

TO:	Student Representative Assembly
FROM:	Commerce Caucus
SUBJECT:	Semester 2 Update
DATE:	February 19th, 2016

Hello and Welcome Back!

We hope that you had an excellent break during reading week and were able to catch up on work, sleep, and time with family and friends.

What this report will do, is outline the major objectives in our original Yearplan, discuss progress, identify barriers, and next steps where they exist.

1. Develop a Strong Presence among Commerce students at DeGroot

Yearplan Description: We believe that a big issue last year was that the presence of the Commerce SRA was not nearly strong enough among Commerce students. We are looking to completely revitalize that relationship, and be the people that students go to with their issues about the Faculty.

Update: One of the most successful aspects of outreach this year has been the renewed connection with the DeGroot Commerce Society. In the past, that relationship has been very strained and almost working against each other, but always towards common goals. This year we have been able to mend that bond, collaborate on a variety of initiatives, and stand as a united front in terms of our advocacy priorities to the faculty and administration. Additionally, we have been able to use our outreach hours in locations with high commerce student traffic to raise awareness about the SRA, what we do, and emphasize our availability to students. Finally, we have been able to drastically improve our online and social media presence. Our twitter has gathered over 125 new followers and well over 40,000 total impressions. Facebook has also increase by approximately 100 new page likes and increased interactions.

Next Steps: Now that the relationship with the administration and the DCS have both drastically improved, a significant priority moving forward and in transition to next year's caucus is the importance of a strong social media presence. This will allow commerce

students to be more aware of the work being done by the DCS and SRA, as well as provide positive channels for them to reach out to their representatives.

2. Work towards adjusting the midterm schedule to avoid back-to-back exams on weekends

Yearplan Description: A huge obstacle for commerce students are the frequent back-to-back midterms that occupy Fridays and Saturdays. These midterms create major stresses for commerce students and seem to directly clash with the University's focus on mental health and overall wellness. The long term goal for this is to do away with back to back midterm exams, and to come up with more accommodating midterm schedules for commerce students.

Update: There have been numerous meetings with DCS representatives, various students engaged on this issues, as well as the Associate Dean Academic (Dr. Emad Mohammad) and the Director of Student Experience (Jennifer McCleary). This issue of feasibility is still prevalent in the main discussions with administration, emphasizing that fact that weekend midterms are designed to allow professors who teach multiples cores to maintain equity between their sections. Additionally, that some students are registered with SAS are able to reschedule midterms or receive other related accommodations.

Next Steps: Potentially reaching out to professors to gauge the importance of weekend/Friday midterms to their instructional plans, while primarily continuing to work to develop alternatives that can be presented to senior administration and department heads within DeGroote to present them clear evidence to the negative implications that this practice has on students and the possible solutions based on their previous arguments and norms.

3. Improve Academic Quality for Commerce Students

Yearplan Description: A huge complaint among Commerce students for the past few years has been the lack of quality in certain classes. A lot of the classes in Commerce are simply straight from the textbook and their does not seem to be a lot of effort put into teaching the subjects effectively. This has prompted a number of classes to have a tenth of the students attend each class. A lot of students feel as if they're money is being wasted by subpar required classes which the professor is simply putting the textbook on slides and reading the information out. This year we are looking to tackle this problem and pave the way for future generations to have a much better academic quality.

Process: The movement towards improving the academic quality within DeGroote can seem like a long and somewhat ambiguous task. This year, our primary focus has been to work with the DeGroote Commerce Society to establish a united stance, and have very clear objectives and beliefs to advocate upon. Additionally, it has been to meet with

administration, primarily Associate Dean Academic, Emad Mohammad. Finally, it has been to regularly check in with students and to engage them through the process during outreach hours, general conversations, as well as various DCS townhalls, AACSB discussions, and focus groups.

Outcome/Next Steps: The major outcome that has been demonstrated this year has been a very clear set of advocacy priorities: increasing case and projects load, more in depth testing than solely multiple choice, emphasis on positive and effective teaching styles. These have been clearly acknowledged by the faculty and administration through various projects and initiatives. The next steps to continue this success is threefold: continued collaboration with the DCS, the release of the Commerce survey, and the successful transition of new SRA members to continue these priorities.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at anytime and I would be more than happy to chat or set up a time to meet and discuss our recommendation. Thank you very much.

Kind Regards,
Jethro Krause
SRA Commerce Caucus Leader
Honours Bachelor of Commerce, Level III
srafinance@msu.mcmaster.ca