Dear Assembly,

I have submitted two motions today, one to rescind the current MSU Accessibility Policy, and another to adopt the new MSU University Accessibility Policy.

It may seem odd to rescind and adopt a new policy that was only created less than a year ago, but there are two main reasons for this. The first is that we received an influx of additional student feedback this year on how we can be better advocating for students with disabilities, both through the 2015 Accessibility Forum held in October, and through the student working group for the revision of the McMaster Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities. The second is that the current policy has a lot of information that pertains directly to the MSU, which belongs in an Operating Policy and not a general policy. For instance, “Recommendation Two: All MSU workspaces should strive to implement universal designs that are accessible to student employees of all abilities” currently does not bind the MSU to make any changes, but by putting it into an Operating Policy, it does.

Our process for this has been to take all of the MSU-specific recommendations and forward them to the Operations committee for implementation into a new Accessibility Operating policy. All other recommendations we kept and added to based on the new data and feedback from students this year. As it stands, the new policy is currently divided into six different sections –

1) Physical Barriers  
2) Universal Design of Learning and Courses  
3) Student Life  
4) University Transition  
5) University Services: Student Accessibility Services & the Student Wellness Centre  
6) Funding & Financial Aid

Myself and the Maccess Coordinator, Alex Wilson, have authored the new policy and worked to ensure that each of these sections are built on data and feedback directly from students. Please contact either of us should you have any questions about the new policy.
Cheers,

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