



MEMO

From the office of the...

Vice President (Education)

TO: Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Spencer Nestico-Semianiw, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: Vice-President (Education) Report
DATE: March 16, 2016

Dear Assembly,

Hi everyone! I hope you're all doing well during the busy March weeks! I'd also like to congratulate you all on officially completing your terms on the SRA. It's been a great year filled with its fair share of ups and downs, challenges and successes. As is the trend with my reports, I have included my platform below with updates under each point. The new updates since my last report are written in blue to distinguish from past work. Overall, I have currently completed 22 of the 25 projects I campaigned on last year, with one looking to be completed at today's meeting and the other two being completed in the remaining month. If you have any questions regarding the progress of these points and where they are moving in the future, please let me know. Thank you for the great year!

PLATFORM

External Portfolio

Federal – Explore Federal Advocacy Options

Assessing CASA

1) Request CASA Observer Status

Progress Update: Completed

Description: In May 2015 I reached out to the Chair of CASA, Erik Queenan, to discuss the MSU's future in CASA and how the process of requesting Observer Status worked. He informed me that there was no formal process, and that if the MSU wanted to attend CASA events and partner with them over the year, this would definitely be possible. As a result, Ehima and I were able to attend CASA's Get Out the Vote campaign in August, where we made connections with a variety of CASA delegates and Home Office staff, shared our thoughts on CASA's work, and learned more about their Get Out

the Vote campaign. After the conference we informed CASA the MSU would not be purchasing their Get Out the Vote materials, but would be interested in partnering still if relevant. Since then I have had several calls with both Erik and Matthew Rios, a CASA Home Office staff, to discuss our own respective work and to maintain a positive relationship between each other. As it stands now, the MSU does not see significant benefit in attending CASA's Policy and Strategic conference, but will be receiving updates from them after it occurs in November. **I have continued having calls with CASA's Executive Director to keep each other updates on our work post-election. I have continued calls with CASA executives to maintain and strengthen the relationship between the MSU, OUSA, and CASA. OUSA's Executive Director was also sent to CASA's Lobby conference to strengthen ties, and CASA will be presenting at OUSA's Transition Conference on their work and recent advocacy priorities.**

- Metrics:**
- a. Get Out the Vote attended
 - b. Several calls with CASA's Chair and Home Office
 - c. OUSA Executive Director attended CASA LobbyCon
 - d. CASA scheduled for OUSA TransCon

2) Continue CASA's Structural Changes

Progress Update: Completed

Description: In my platform I discussed implementing structural changes to CASA to ensure the MSU and other Ontario schools would have a place in the organization and CASA itself would become a more productive and effective body. To do this, I have discussed improving CASA at OUSA's Steering Committee table, where I gauged interest from other Ontario schools in federal advocacy. I have also brought this up with members of CASA at their Get Out the Vote conference and through numerous phone calls with CASA staff and Chair Erik Queenan. I also called the Presidents of the University of Calgary and Alberta student unions to gauge their perspective as large schools in CASA. This being said, there has been no significant headway on CASA's behalf on structural changes. Since the MSU no longer has the power to shape CASA as a non-member, there is little to be done when CASA is uninterested in better catering to Ontario schools. As a result, I will be lessening my efforts on reforming CASA and focusing more on other federal advocacy venues, to be discussed below.

- Metrics:**
- a. Numerous phone calls with CASA members, staff, and executive
 - b. Discussion at OUSA Steering Committee

Strengthen CASA's Advocacy

Progress Update: Completed

Description: In my platform I discussed ensuring that four areas of federal advocacy regarding student issues were being lobbied on by CASA. I brought up these four areas of advocacy (Canada Student Grants, Tax policy, Indigenous students, International students) with CASA in conversations at their Get Out the Vote conference, and CASA has confirmed they will have standing policy and advocacy on each of these issues. To

ensure these issues are still priorities for the MSU, we will be bringing them all up when we meet with our newly elected MP Filomena Tassi in the coming month, as well as other MPs who we will reach out to soon. In the last month our second federal HPSAG occurred, and it was definitely extremely positive. In the room we had the MSU, Redeemer, and MSA representatives present, and had Filomena Tassi (riding MP), Ted McMeekin (riding MPP and Minister), and Han Dong (MPP and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities). We discussed the recent outcome of the provincial budget, and discussed more funding for mental health frontline care, Yvan Baker's Private Member's Bill, and the upcoming tuition framework. I am confident these collaborative meetings will continue and build an even more positive bond with our local MP.

Metrics: a. Discussions at CASA's Get Out the Vote and confirmation of CASA's advocacy on them

b. Scheduled and held meetings with MPs to discuss

c. Reached out to MSA and Redeemer to introduce a federal HPSAG

d. Second Federal HPSAG hosted at McMaster

Federal Election

Progress Update: Completed

Description: Thanks to the help of the Advocacy Coordinator (Christine Yachouh), Advocacy Street Team, Education Team, SRA members, and a number of volunteers, the MSU ran an extremely effective and successful MacVotes campaign. This campaign included a number of events, including an election professor panel discussion, a 1280 election social, live airing of an electoral debate in Clubspace, the all-candidates debate in MUSC, and an Election Afterparty. The campaign also involved preparing the MacVotes website, as well as developing promotional videos, rave cards, Infographics, blogs, lawn signs, shirts, and lanyards. Lastly, we supported this work with consistent social media promotion, broken down party platforms, interviews in local media, and were even picked up nationally by the CBC. Overall, we are extremely happy with how the campaign went, as we feel we created a very strong and positive culture on campus around civic engagement, as well as strong voter turnout at our campus polling stations.

Metrics: 500+ students voted at Les Prince on election day, 1900+ during satellite polls, 5 MacVotes events, 5 student blogs, 2 promotional videos, hundreds of rave cards, 1 comparative Infographic, dozens of volunteers

Building the MSU's Federal Brand

Progress Update: Completed

Description: Due to the federal election, I thought it would not be a good use of resources to schedule meetings with MPs who may be gone for the majority of my term. As a result, now that the election is over, the MSU will be reaching out to MPs to discuss student issues by the end of this semester and figure out next steps. As well, I also

campaigned on best practice venues for federal advocacy through OUSA. This has culminated in one of the most exciting developments of my work, which is a potential U15 federal advocacy organization. The USC President Sophie Helpard has reached out to a number of U15 student unions, and we will be having a call next Friday to discuss areas for collaboration and next steps for better coordinating federal efforts. I am cautiously optimistic that we could be setting the stage for a future new, and stronger, federal advocacy organization.

I attended a conference call in Toronto with the members of around 7 student unions across the country. We discussed the potential for collaboration in federal advocacy in both the short-term and the long-term, and the outcomes seem very positive. We will be sending a delegation to Ottawa in late March as a way of conducting joint federal advocacy, as well as taking on several policy areas to advocate on. I also tasked our Federal and Provincial Research Assistant with conducting research around areas of federal advocacy we could do, and have circulated those to the group to provide next steps. Since then we have worked on branding for this group, which is comprised of partnerships between the student unions of Canada's top 15 research-intensive universities, the U15.

I have met with Filomena Tassi and we reviewed both of our priorities moving forward. We discussed a variety of student issues and ways in which Ms. Tassi could support the MSU and McMaster students. I have also reached how to the MSA and Redeemer to discuss implementing a Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy Group (HPSAG) for federal lobbying, similarly to what we do with Ted McMeekin. This would involve ourselves, Mohawk, and Redeemer students advocating to our federal MPs every four months on different student issues. We had our first Federal HPSAG two weeks ago, where we discussed the Canada Student Loans program, tax credit reallocation, and financial literacy. The MSU was also personally invited to the Hamilton pre-budget consultation, and we have submitted our views for this consultation.

In the last months I have primarily been involved with preparation for the upcoming U15 advocacy trip to Ottawa, occurring from Monday March 21 to March 25. Although the MSU unfortunately cannot attend due to our Student Recognition Night, I have been extensively involved in the planning and preparation for the week. I have participated in multiple meetings, and have developed the organizational structure for the group. I have also been involved in developing portions of the policy we will be advocating on, specifically related to federal financial aid and youth employment. I will be participating on calls with the group each evening during the trip to receive updates and provide the MSU's perspective on the group's work. The next step will be to ensure the incoming MSU executive are transitioned on this file and that the group itself continues to be strengthened moving forward.

Metrics: U15 Student Union Collaboration Developed

- U15 Delegate Trip to Ottawa Planned
- Federal HPSAG Developed and Held
- MSU Pre-Budget Consultation Submission Presented
- U15 Trip Occurring
- U15 Transition Document Being Prepared

OUSA Leadership

Progress Update: Completed

Description: To fulfill this goal, I ran and was elected President of OUSA in May of this year. Although the months since then have been challenging, I have unequivocally been made certain that this was the right decision for the MSU this year. Through the MSU's leadership as President this year, we have ensured tuition has been the number one priority for the organization, and we have had remarkable leverage in shaping the organization. OUSA is doing a number of innovative and exciting new things this year, such as planning a best practice sharing event for all student union executives, as well as better promoting its annual priorities in September. We also have made changes to our budget, financial practices, and bylaws, and have written an excellent and Annual Plan and are in the process of writing a new Long-Term plan. Expansion this year has also been a priority, and we have expanded operations more in municipal advocacy too. We have also made student outreach and visibility a priority this year, and are reaching this goal by running an extensive tuition campaign at the beginning of January, as well as providing additional campus visits, and more campus updates and blogs. **In January OUSA also hosted its tuition campaign, which the MSU was instrumental in orchestrating. The campaign was picked up by the Toronto Star, CP24, local newspapers and Toronto radio stations, and we received over 3,000 letters from students, with 1,100 coming from McMaster students. We also developed a mid-year campus update, and have had several observer confirmations for OUSA's Spring GA. Otherwise, I am currently writing OUSA's Advocacy Conference Report, which details the meetings we held at Queen's Park in early December. This conference had student representatives meet with over 50 MPPs to discuss tuition, tax credits, the funding formula, and work-integrated learning.**

OUSA experienced its biggest win in last month's provincial budget when the government committed to satisfy a half-dozen of OUSA's long-term recommendations regarding financial aid. The provincial government will eliminate tuition and education tax credits, develop a new Ontario Student Grant that is more equitable and upfront, decrease parental and spousal contributions, and extend eligibility to students regardless of the time between high school and university and regardless of whether students took time off during their degree. These wins were a result of years of OUSA's advocacy, and it was important that the MSU continued advocacy on tuition and financial aid this year through OUSA.

Through my role as President of OUSA I have also begun serving on the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training, and will be conducting student consultation on various issues discussed at that body. So far I have attended the inaugural meeting of that group. Lastly, OUSA Steering Committee has just approved OUSA's 3-year long-term plan, which includes important goals for growth in the near future. I am excited to see how this plan shapes OUSA and improves upon its current successes. Other small developments include selecting and training MSU

delegates for OUSA's upcoming Spring General Assembly, as well as editing the Students with Disabilities policy paper.

Metrics: a. Elected OUSA President

b. Renewed collaboration between OUSA and COU

c. New events, campaigns, and outreach initiatives

d. MSU priorities of tuition/work-integrated learning/funding formula within OUSA's five annual priorities

e. MSU empowerment to chair SC meetings, make executive discussions on organization, and speak through OUSA to all stakeholders

f. Attendance at a variety of sector events in Toronto and Hamilton

g. McMaster centered OUSA Annual and Long-Term Plans

h. OUSA Advocacy Conference held and report developed

i. OUSA tuition campaign run with local and provincial news coverage, and over 3,000 letters signed

j. Mid-Year Update Developed, and OUSA GA observers secured

k. 2016 Provincial Budget Contains Several Significant OUSA Wins

l. Serving on the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training

m. OUSA Long-Term Plan Approved

n. Students with Disabilities Editor and Teaching & Assessment Author

OUSA Presence

Progress Update: Completed

Description: There were three aspects I discussed in my platform around OUSA presence. The first was blogs. The MSU has been very successful with this so far, as we have the higher number of blogs on OUSA's schedule than any other school (by a high margin) and this has allowed many McMaster students to write pieces that are now circulated on a provincial platform. The second aspect was on-campus awareness. This has been completed through OUSA's campus visit to McMaster in September, as well as through multiple stories in The Silhouette around OUSA. Both the Advocacy Street Team and myself also make it a priority to discuss and showcase OUSA wherever possible in conversation, and the January tuition campus through OUSA will be another way to improve OUSA's visibility on campus. Lastly, OUSA Maroon papers have not been completed yet, but we will be able to provide links for OUSA's paper briefs on our website soon. In addition, OUSA Maroon papers are being completed currently, and will be provided on the MSU website once they are completed. Links to OUSA briefs (Maroon papers) are now available on the MSU website. We have continued to ensure the Silhouette covers OUSA, with a front page, news article, and President's Page referring to OUSA in a January issue. I also delivered OUSA's first mid-year update to the SRA in January as well, as OUSA's tuition campaign received over 1,000 McMaster signatures.

As a result of the recent provincial budget the MSU released an OUSA-focused press release, and I handled dozens of interviews with on-campus and local media sources around OUSA's work with the changes. The MSU has also continued contributing a substantial number of blogs to OUSA's blog schedule.

Metrics: a. Half a dozen OUSA blogs from the MSU contributed **(7/10 total OUSA student blogs are from the MSU)**

b. OUSA McMaster campus visit

c. OUSA coverage in The Silhouette **over three times**

d. OUSA tuition campaign planned for January

e. OUSA Maroon papers completed

f. Mid-Year Update Provided to SRA

g. OUSA Tuition Campaign

h. OUSA-Focused MSU Press Release on Budget Changes

Municipal Affairs

ChangeCamp

Progress Update: [Completed](#)

Description: ChangeCamp will likely occur at the end of January this year, with our first planning meeting this upcoming Monday (right before this report is submitted so I will not have time to incorporate my thoughts here). The planning and implementation for this will be a large part of our Community Engagement Coordinator's portfolio this year, and she has been involved in preliminary work for this. However, I have worked with the Network for Community-Campus Partnerships on initial discussions, and we are looking to partner more closely with Mohawk and the Mohawk Students Association on the event. **I have reached out to the MSA and they are very interested in attending the event. We have discussed the theme of the event, as well as the budget, cost-sharing, location, and date. Currently, ChangeCamp is planned for March 3rd, and will have representation from the MSU, MSA, RSA, City of Hamilton, McMaster, and City Councillors. We are now developing table topics and questions, and redesigning the promotional material.**

[ChangeCamp occurred on March 3 and represented an extreme growth in the event since last year. The event hosted over 200 individuals, with a large showing from McMaster, Mohawk, and Redeemer students, as well as elected officials, faculty, Hamilton residents, and community organizations. The event received great reviews from attendants, and we are currently reviewing and compiling the notes from the table topics. We are currently pursuing financial opportunities to fund several of the projects that come out of ChangeCamp this year, and the report will be released in the next several weeks. Lastly, thanks to External Affairs Committee a ChangeCamp Preview Day was hosted in the MUSC Atrium, where ChangeCamp was promoted to students and students who were not able to attend the event were able to contribute to mock roundtables.](#)

- Metrics:**
- a. Planning meetings scheduled
 - b. Thoughts on how the event will run this year done
 - c. First planning meetings have been completed
 - d. Budget, location, date, invitees have been confirmed
 - e. Table topics and questions developed
 - f. ChangeCamp completed
 - Mayor, McMaster President, Mayor's Chief of Staff, Redeemer President, Ward One City Counselor, Hamilton City Manager in attendance
 - Over 200 people in attendance
 - #CCHamOnt trended 7 nationally
 - Feedback forms showed average 4/5 rating on the event
 - Extensive roundtable discussion feedback collected and being reviewed
 - Funding being secured for ChangeCamp projects (Application for CivicAction Grant)
 - g. Daily News Article Published, Report being released
 - h. ChangeCamp Preview Day Hosted

Network for Community-Campus Partnerships

Progress Update: Completed

Description: This is a committee that I will have ongoing involvement with throughout the year. So far I have been attending all the meetings, and have introduced our Community Engagement Coordinator to them as well. Through these meetings we planned the Research and Education retreats, and I ensured there were students in attendance at both those events. Also, I met independently with the Chair and Coordinator of the Network to discuss MSU involvement and leadership that will result in several student showcase events throughout the year. I have also worked with the Network to plan a Community Engagement Student Retreat this Thursday to receive feedback from students around community engagement at McMaster and future directions. So far the attendance is approximately 30 students from 3:30 - 6:30, and we will be comprising a report afterwards. This work will also help inform the MSU's future advocacy as well as the upcoming ChangeCamp conference. The Community Engagement Student Retreat has been occurred, with several pages of great student feedback. The MSU has also placed students on each Network working group that has emerged. I have continued to be involved with two of the three working groups and have begun developing training for MSU clubs on community engagement. I will also be transitioning the new Community Engagement Coordinator into this work so they sit and contribute on each of these working groups.

- Metrics:**
- a. Strong MSU representation at the Network
 - b. Strong student representation at Network Research and Education Retreats
 - c. Several upcoming MSU-led community engagement events
 - d. Community Engagement Student Retreat Held and Feedback Collected
 - e. Students placed on each Network working group

- f. Working groups strategic priorities and tasks defined
- g. MSU Clubs community engagement training being developed

LobbyCon (now dubbed Municipal Advocacy Week)

Progress Update: Completed

Description: In my platform I wanted to develop a municipal advocacy week that mirrored the provincial and federal weeks that OUSA and CASA operated respectively. So far the week is largely planned, with fourteen meetings scheduled with Hamilton stakeholders including the Mayor, MPPs, city managers and staff, Ward Councilors, and Chamber of Commerce representatives. The week is to occur at the end of November, and the MSU will be releasing a report on the discussions that occurred at each of the meetings. **This week was recently completed and was very successful. We held 14 meetings throughout the week as well as attended a variety of community events such as Ambitious Cities and Hamilton Gallery of Distinction. We also made progress on at least a half dozen student advocacy priorities and have released the report detailing the various discussions from the week, with the corresponding outcomes.**

- Metrics:**
- a. 14 meetings scheduled
 - b. Students assigned to each meeting
 - c. Agenda for meetings currently being developed
 - d. Week completed with 20 unique meetings/events held**
 - e. Report published and present on the MSU website**
 - f. Dozens of important outcomes to follow-up on in the coming months**

McMaster Innovation Park Entrepreneurship Conference

Progress Update: Partially Completed

Description: There has been little headway made yet on this event. Our Community Engagement Coordinator will be involved in planning this event and their work will be nearly exclusively devoted to it after the completion of ChangeCamp. Thus, the event will likely occur sometime around the end of March. At the beginning of the summer I booked a tour with MIP to view the facilities and discuss costs. **There has still been little progress on this platform point. We will most likely assess the planning of sessions after the majority of ChangeCamp work has occurred.**

This platform point will most likely not be completed on the same scale as others, but I still hope to host a small event at MIP in April to transition many new Education Team, SRA, and part-time managers in the work MIP does and the importance of community-engagement. I have met with Spectrum and the McMaster Industry Liaison Office regarding the event, and will continue benefiting from their support and ideas for the event.

- Metrics:**
- a. Tour of MIP in early summer
 - b. Meetings with Spectrum and the McMaster Industry Liaison Office**
 - c. MIP Itinerary Developed**

MSU and City of Hamilton Employment Initiative

Progress Update: Near Completed

Description: So far, I have had preliminary discussions with both Sean Van Koughnett and the Chamber of Commerce around improved employment initiatives. The university has now adopted Magnet, which is a connective service for students around local and high profile undergraduate and graduate jobs. Over the rest of my term we will be assessing the success of this platform and how the MSU can move forward. In addition, I have also worked with the Student Success Centre to try to provide more Hamilton-based jobs. We've also met with various Hamilton stakeholders during our Municipal Advocacy Week to discuss student employment, including the city manager and department of Economic Development. The MSU now has several next steps that have emerged from the Municipal Advocacy Week. This includes making a delegation to the Blue Ribbon Taskforce, exploring the Magnet platform, helping develop CityLab, and partnering with Hamilton Economic Development.

Currently, I have been working with Hamilton Economic Development to schedule an MSU delegation from the floor at the next Blue Ribbon TaskForce, which will allow the MSU to contribute to these discussions around youth and student employment and retention. I have also met with Gisela from the Student Success Centre as she sits on this taskforce to provide the McMaster perspective. In addition, I am currently scheduling the first municipal HPSAG with the Mayor, Chief of Staff, City Manager, and City Councilors to discuss student issues from McMaster, Mohawk, and Redeemer. The goal of that meeting will also be to establish the principles for an MOU that the MSU, MSA, and RSA could sign with the City of Hamilton, mirroring the recent document approved by City Council between the City and the three Hamilton post-secondary educational institutions.

- Metrics:**
- a. Meetings with Sean Van Koughnett, Magnet, Student Success Centre, and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton Economic Development, Chris Murray
 - b. MSU Municipal Advocacy Week held and several partnerships formed to advance student employment
 - c. MSU Delegation to the Blue Ribbon Task Force being developed
 - d. First municipal HPSAG being planned and MOU signing established

Internal Portfolio

Advocacy Restructuring

Progress Update: Near Completed

Description: So far, this has become a Board project that each of us has been working on separately and cohesively. As I write this, tomorrow (Sunday) we will be having a meeting between the Board and the six Commissioners to discuss how to better support commissioners and whether or not any organizational restructuring is necessary within the MSU to better support our work. Depending on the outcome of this discussion, I am optimistic that we will be able to bring a proposal or thought experiment to the SRA to discuss how to ensure our committees, part-time, and full-time staff our best supported.

I believe that within these proposals and discussions will be the solution the problems I discussed in my platform around EA and UA specifically. **The Board has continued to meet on this topic, and will be presenting to the SRA on structural changes in the coming months.**

Currently the SRA will be discussing and voting to approve hour increases to both the University Affairs and External Affairs Commissioners due to the trends in increasing size of their respective portfolios. As the EA Commissioner last year this is a change I highly support, and think it will continue to improve the power and productivity of the Education Team.

- Metrics:**
- a. Several Board meetings on the topic
 - b. **Board + Commissioner meeting occurred**
 - c. **Proposals drafted to the SRA for structural changes**
 - d. **Commissioner Wage Reviews Sent to SRA**

Course Wiki

Progress Update: **Completed**

Description: Much of the work for this initiative has been thanks for the University Affairs Commissioner Blake Oliver and the University Affairs Committee. So far around 5% of courses at McMaster have been completed on the Wiki, and we are aiming for a hard launch this December during course evaluations and then continued promotion throughout second semester. The UA committee also hosted a Course Wiki party in the MSU office to fill out courses and get MSU leaders excited about the initiative. We are excited for the launch to get all students at McMaster filling out and using the platform. **Our Communications Officer is in the process of developing the promotion material for a hard launch of the platform.**

The Course Wiki was officially launched in early March and was exclusively done on social media. Members of the Advocacy Street Team, University Affairs Committee, External Affairs Committee, SRA, and part-time managers were also encouraged to edit and share the course wiki to students. We have received a recent influx of edits, and hope the Course Wiki becomes infused in McMaster's culture. We will continue promoting the Wiki for the duration of my term, and it will be the responsibility of the incoming executive to see how to continue promoting the service.

- Metrics:**
- a. **Two** course wiki parties held
 - b. 5% (150 or so) courses filled out
 - c. Promotional material being designed
 - d. Bugs with the platform that were present in May have been resolved
 - e. **Official launch planned for the end of January**
 - f. **Course Wiki Promotional Material Developed**
 - g. **Official Course Wiki Launch Occurred**

Peer Tutoring Network

Progress: **Completed**

Description: This is an initiative that Ehima and Dan have primarily been working to implement. To my knowledge we are looking at designing that platform for this network and then once it is launched I will be able to evaluate the efficacy of the program and address any concerns. Currently, we were looking into a company called HelpHub, but their functionality couldn't deliver, so we were approached by another Canadian company and will be now choosing between the two with Student Affairs. The website will be run by McMaster and be a McMaster-centered page however.

Unfortunately the university has delayed their implementation of the Peer Tutoring Network until the 2016-2017 year, meaning that there was little review for me to do as the program had not been rolled out. However, I will continue providing any support to the SSC as this program is finalized, but otherwise it will fall to next year's team to ensure the program is running effectively.

Metrics: a. Decision to create the online platform for the network
b. Review of different companies to occur

Academic Affairs Council

Progress: Completed

Description: So far the AAC has been doing excellent work this year. We have had around four meetings so far and have shared each of our own best practices and have taken on several projects. These include developing specific student recommendations for course evaluations and career & co-op at McMaster, which I will be presenting to the university. Also, we will be working on a Course Evaluations campaign (to be discussed below), and will also be publishing reports on Reflection at McMaster, and Sustainability at McMaster in the second semester. In second semester, the Academic Affairs Council was used to circulate tuition letters and have them signed by students. This body will also be attending ChangeCamp, and is promoting the event to other interested students.

Academic Affairs Council members promoted and attended ChangeCamp, and we have gathered significant feedback around sustainability measures as well. In addition, each VP Academic met with their respective faculty or program Dean/Director to discuss TA training and whether they were in support and what they'd like to see out of a TA training program. Lastly, AAC has been the venue for important advocacy to have degrees specify a student's major/minor, and we will be advocating to McMaster's Undergraduate Council to approve this change.

Metrics: a. Over a dozen meetings occurred
b. Course Evaluations student recommendations completed.
c. Career & Co-op student recommendations completed
d. Reflection and sustainability chosen as our report priorities for the year
e. Work done on both the tuition campaign and ChangeCamp event
f. Work done on degree specifics on certifications, and feedback on accommodations

Tuition On-Campus

Progress: Completed

Description: I am very satisfied with the progress we have made on tuition so far this year. So far I have chaired three Tuition Task Force meetings, and I have done much follow-up work from those. Primarily, earlier this year I reported the eight tuition task force objectives that we approved at the summer meetings. We have made progress on all of them. First, Saad and I have completed a draft of the new tuition policy, which we will be bringing to the SRA by the end of November. Second, we have evaluated the MSU bursary and Dan will be exploring options to ensure the student financial assistance the MSU provides is best distributed to students. Third, I have worked with the SSC to add specific SFA for students with disabilities and indigenous students on the Mac Money Centre website, as well as added a new section on SFA on the MSU website. The MSU and SSC will also be jointly promoting SFA-related information to students throughout the year. Fourth, the MSU will be designing an informational and ideally letter-writing campaign around tuition for second semester, after OUSA's campaign. Fifth, Ehima and I presented at Board of Governors around tuition, which was extremely well received. We now have meetings scheduled with the CFO to discuss implementing an activity-based funding model, where we will also bring up transitioning merit-based scholarships to needs-based scholarships, removing interest on deferral tuition payments, and better collaborating between OUSA and the COU on advocating for a fully funded tuition freeze in the next tuition framework. Sixth, we have conducted research on needs-based scholarships at McMaster, and now have data on how much money the university could transition from merits-based scholarships. Seventh, our University Affairs Research Assistant will be publishing a 'Tuition at McMaster' report by the end of the year. **Eight, we have met with Dee Henney to discuss the removal of interest from deferral tuition payments and have set up another meeting with the Finance Chair with the Board of Governors. We are also making progress with re-budgeting merit-based scholarships into needs-based scholarships, both on the entrance and in-course side of things. Presently we have an upcoming meeting with Student Affairs and Financial Aid to discuss transition money into needs-based scholarships. We will also be meeting soon to follow-up on the tuition removal. This was the topic of an MSU session Giuliana and I held at the Student Leadership Conference.**

In the last weeks the Federal & Provincial Research Assistant and I have written and released the Tuition Report: The State of Tuition & the Financial Aid Environment at McMaster. This report details the long-term trends and recent changes regarding tuition, financial aid, and fees at McMaster University. The report will be used as both an advocacy and informational document for incoming student executives. In addition, Ehima and I passed changes to the Tuition Task Force operating policy at the SRA to ensure the body continues to operate even more effectively moving forward. Lastly, the MSU has received some very notable successes regarding financial aid and fees at McMaster. Unfortunately these changes are currently confidential, but we hope they'll be available to promote in the coming weeks to the wider campus community.

- Metrics:**
- a. Three Tuition Task Force Meetings
 - b. Eight official Tuition Task Force Objectives

c. Tuition Policy Draft Completed. - Now passed by SRA

d. Board of Governors Presentation

e. Please see Description for all other tangible objective updates

f. Partnership with McMaster on tuition campaign

g. MSU Tuition Report Complete

h. Tuition Task Force Operating Policy Re-Evaluated

i. Financial Aid/Fee Improvements

Mental Health

Progress Update: Completed

Description: There are several notable updates in this area. First, I have created a student academic accommodations working group to mirror the university body that is overhauling the current university policy on academic accommodations. This student group has developed over three pages of student recommendations on academic accommodations, and these were extremely well received by the university working group. I will be working on the official university body over the next months to ensure these recommendations are adopted in the official new policy. Also, I have worked with the Student Wellness Centre to organize mental health first aid training for around 25 full- and part-time MSU staff, including the entire Board, peer support PTMs, and many service executives. This training allows our staff to better recognize mental health concerns in students and provide them with resources and support. As well, the Student Mental Health Network I discussed in my platform has been formed and I have chaired the first meeting. Allison (Student Wellness Centre) and I will be meeting this week to discuss the feedback and figure out what our priorities will be for the year around next steps for mental health. Lastly, Christine and Blake have begun the preliminary work on MacTalks, which will occur for two weeks in February around mental health on campus. **The MSU has two focus groups this week to garner student feedback around mental health on campus. We have also begun work on compiling peer mentorship programs, and have continued our work on academic accommodations.**

The university's academic accommodations policy that I have contributed to is still on-track for implementation in the 2016-2017 year, with extensive student consultation and feedback provided. In addition, the Student Mental Health Network has proven effective at gathering student feedback on mental health at McMaster, and our upcoming meeting will review the recent MacTalks campaign and its successes and challenges. In addition, the university has developed a one-year update on the Mental Health & Well-Being Strategy, and the MSU has compiled a list of peer mentorship programs at McMaster to review and place on both the MSU and university websites.

Metrics: a. Academic accommodations student recommendations created.

b. Attendance and extensive contribution at all academic accommodations meetings

c. Mental health first aid training organized for two dozen MSU staff

d. Student Mental Health Network formed and first **two** meetings held **with tangible next steps illustrated**

- e. MacTalks planning underway (UA and AST-driven)
- f. Peer Mentorship Compilation Begun
- g. Mental Health Focus Groups Completed
- h. Peer Mentorship Compilation Complete
- i. One-year Mental Health & Well-Being Strategy completed
- j. MacTalks review occurring at Student Mental Health Network
- k. Academic Accommodations policy on-track for 2016-2017 year

Quality of Teaching

1) OUSA Policy Paper

Progress Update: Completed

Description: Over the last several months I have been co-authoring the OUSA policy paper on Teaching & Assessment. I was in charge of the assessment section, which was an entirely new area of OUSA policy. The first draft of the paper has now been completed, where it will be debated and ideally passed at OUSA's upcoming General Assembly. I then attended OUSA General Assembly after selecting and training McMaster's delegation, where we passed all three OUSA policy papers, including my own. Both the paper and our delegation received very positive feedback from other delegates.

Metrics: a. First draft of policy completed. Will be finished by mid-November at GA.

b. OUSA General Assembly attended

c. Teaching & Assessment policy paper passed unanimously, including uniquely McMaster-centric asks such as differentiated assessment, removal of the bell curve, and better evaluation accountability

d. I have currently been placed as the editor for the Students with Disabilities policy paper

2) TA Training

Progress Update: Completed

Description: At the beginning of my term I had meetings with CUPE and MIIETL separately around TA training. The meeting with MIIETL went very well, and we discussed various ways to improve TA training. The meeting with CUPE went questionably, and I realized that CUPE is very strict in the way it would like to see TA training implemented. As a result, I have tasked our UA research assistant with doing best practice research on TA training, and depending on that research I will either approach the university during their collective bargaining process, or will work with Arshad from MIIETL to provide non-mandatory but highly incentivized TA training programs. The MSU contained an important piece of TA training in its budget submission to the university. Our official stance has been four paid 3 or 5 hour training on sensitivity and quality of teaching training. We wish this to be funded by the university through negotiations with CUPE in their upcoming collective bargaining. We

have met again between the MSU and CUPE's boards to discuss how to implement this training.

This year TA Training has been a priority for the MSU and we have ended the year ensuring that both CUPE and the university are making this a topic of discussion for their collective bargaining. The MSU is hopeful that some form of TA training will result from the bargaining process, and afterwards the MSU has developed the relationships with CUPE, the Provost's Office, and MIETL to ensure that we will be involved in shaping the training program.

Metrics: a. Meetings with MIETL and CUPE held
b. Research on TA Training best practices
c. TA Training Section in MSU Budget Submission
d. Follow-Up Meetings with CUPE
e. CUPE and the University will both be discussing TA training during collective bargaining

3) Course Evaluations

Progress Update: Completed

Description: So far, I have sat on the Teaching Evaluations Committee with the university to discuss better ways to measure teaching excellence and one aspect has been around course evaluations. As a result, I have worked with the Academic Affairs Council to develop student recommendations around course evaluations, and we will be running a campaign in November with the goal of demonstrating to students that course evaluations matter and can have a tangible impact on their education. This campaign has been run and we are excited to see how it impacts the number of course evaluations as well as the perception around course evaluations. I will also begin working with the university on our committee's recommendations around course evaluations to faculty and admin.

Since my last report we have done extensive work on planning the second semester course evaluation campaign, and have been working with the university to ensure there is promotion from the university and faculties. In addition we believe this will help improve the impact of the campaign on faculties and instructors such that they are more willing to listen to course evaluations and provide mid-year evaluations. In addition, AVP (Faculty) Susan Giroux is currently writing the Teaching Evaluation Committee report, which will provide recommendations to the university. I'll be working with her to ensure the student recommendations are included in this report.

Metrics: a. Contributions on Teaching Evaluations Committee
b. Course evaluation student recommendations completed
c. Course evaluations campaign developed to run in late November
d. Course evaluations campaign run with events held, promotional materials, and videos circulated (UA and AAC-driven)
e. Second semester Course Evaluations campaign prepared, with greater partnership with the university
f. Teaching Evaluation Committee report developed

Career & Co-op

Progress Update: Completed

Description: So far, I am in the process of developing career & co-op student recommendations with the Academic Affairs Council. I will then present these to Sean Van Koughnett and we will discuss how best to move forward with career & co-op structure at McMaster. In addition, I have had meetings with the SSC around the services they provide, and have worked with them on pilot projects to improve career & co-op at McMaster. One event was an online alumni forum hosted for Arts & Science, where students could chat with alum about their career paths and how they decided what career to choose. The event was a great success and as a result the SSC will be looking to expand the program into other faculties. Another event I have worked on is the upcoming Hack Your City event, which is a collaboration between Spectrum and the MSU to allow students to solve community problems through the use of Big Data. Finally, I am in the opening stages of having the MSU sponsor the ACTION conference as a way to get students to attend and learn more about entrepreneurial skills, especially in the context of Hamilton business. **This sponsorship has now occurred and we sent one student to the conference. The career & co-op student recommendations are now completed and have been brought up with our AVP Students to discuss next steps.**

Student Affairs is beginning now to review career & co-op at McMaster, and these services at McMaster will likely undergo extensive changes in the coming years. Fortunately the student recommendations we have collected will be used when decided how to redesign career & co-op at the university. In addition, I have met with Gisela from the SCC regarding introducing Magnet and promoting the service to students, which will occur in the next month. This service will become integral to the student experience at McMaster, and we hope to promote it through the MSU, faculty societies, and McMaster departments such as the SSC.

Metrics: a. Career & Co-op student recommendations **completed and discussed with Sean Van Koughnett**

b. Arts & Science online forum completed

c. Hack Your Community planning **(and event)** completed

d. Action conference partnership initiated **and delegate sponsored with MSU sponsorship**

e. Meeting with Gisela regarding Magnet and Alumni employment program

Accessibility Campaign

Progress Update: Completed

Description: In late September, the MSU hosted Maccess, a campaign designed to reduce the stigma around disabilities at McMaster as well as to provide positive next steps to accessibility at our school. Of all the work I've done this year, this project is one of my proudest moments in the job, as I truly feel that this was something I pushed to happen with the university and MSU, and it did to great success. Overall, the campaign

was one of the busiest the MSU has ever seen, with 9 events occurring over the span on four days, including fairs, sessions, speakers, and group activities. The campaign was also coupled with extensive online promotion, student blogs, MUSC/Mills Plaza tabling, a video, and a banner for students to sign titled “What Does Accessibility Mean to You?” We received very positive feedback from students around the MSU finally doing a large accessibility-related campaign, especially in partnership with the university, and I hope to see more in the future.

- Metrics:**
- a. 150+ student attendance at events
 - b. One promotional video
 - c. Variety of social media promotion (cover photos, website, blogs, Facebook event)
 - d. Silhouette and McMaster Daily News coverage
 - e. 9 events (all found at msumcmaster.ca/maccess)

MIETL

Progress Update: Completed

Description: This campaign point focused around getting students more involved with MIETL and ensuring the department is very student-centered and focused. I have had preliminary meetings with Arshad, but the success of this initiative will require further work over the next six months. **I have had another meeting with Arshad about better promotion of MIETL events for students as well as about partnering between MIETL and TAC for a best practice event. We will be moving forward on this event in the coming months.**

In recent weeks I have had several meetings with Arshad around MIETL's work and about better promoting MIETL's events to students. Currently MIETL and students are very happy with the Student Scholars program, which has had very positive outcomes for both the university and students. As of now MIETL representatives will be in attendance at TAC's awards event, and afterwards we will discuss hosting a Best Practice Sharing Day with the award winners.

- Metrics:**
- a. **Two meetings** with MIETL
 - b. **Partnership with MIETL on Best Practice Sharing Day and TAC Event**
 - c. **Better MIETL event promotion to the student body**
 - d. **MIETL presence at TAC's award ceremony**

On-Campus Indigenous Support

Progress Update: Completed

Description: This part of the portfolio has had headway, but there is still much to do. So far, I have sat in on MISCA meetings, met a variety of active MISCA members, and have talked with Diversity Services on our plan to tackle these challenges this year. I have also had meetings with Diversity's Indigenous Coordinator, Esmonde, as well as two MISCA members, Donovan and Evan. From the meetings we are going to be scheduling to student focus groups to get feedback from McMaster's indigenous student population

on the biggest challenges they experience at McMaster. These will likely occur at the end of November. Then, with this student feedback the MSU, through UA, EA, MISCA, and myself will all begin rewriting the MSU policy paper on Indigenous student issues. We hope to see this pass at the SRA in mid-second semester. Once this has passed, I will then have two months to bring up the paper with the university, and start the ball rolling on the recommendations that are contained in that policy. **These focus groups occurred and we received very meaningful feedback from the students who attended. We've decided to host more focus groups in early January to get more feedback as well, and then will begin writing the policy. Now that the January focus groups have occurred, we have extensive feedback from students. Our University Affairs Research Assistant has identified the trends from this feedback and we will begin structuring it both into a report to the university, as well as an MSU general policy paper.**

As a result of my interaction with MISCA and Indigenous focus groups, an Indigenous student advocacy document has been developed outlining dozens of recommendations for McMaster University to adopt. A meeting is being scheduled for MISCA and President Patrick Deane to discuss the recommendations to see how they can be infused into McMaster's life. In addition, this document will be an important student contribution to the work McMaster is currently doing around adopting the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Report. In addition, I will be meeting with the SRA Speaker to discuss the potential for acknowledging Indigenous land claims at SRA meetings, which was another recommendation that came out of the Indigenous focus groups.

Metrics: a. Meetings with MISCA, Diversity Services, and UA/EA

b. Indigenous student strategy solidified for the year

c. Student focus group questions designed

d. Student focus group dates TBD very soon

e. Student focus groups held with 8 pages of feedback gathered in both December and January

f. Trends from feedback identified

g. MSU Advocacy Document Completed with MISCA Recommendations

h. Meeting Scheduled with McMaster President for Discussion

i. Meeting Scheduled with Inna about Indigenous-friendly SRA Practices

j. MSU Indigenous Students General Policy Developed

Overall Summary

Number of Projects: 25

Number Completed: 22 (Request CASA Observer Status, Continue CASA's Structural Changes, Strengthen CASA's Advocacy, **Building the MSU's Federal Brand**, Federal Election, OUSA Leadership, **OUSA Presence**, **Network for Community-Campus Partnerships**, **LobbyCon**, Accessibility Campaign, OUSA Policy Paper, **TA Training**, **Career & Co-op**, **Course Wiki**, Academic Affairs Council, Tuition On-Campus, Course Evaluations, MIIETL, Mental Health, Change Camp, Peer Tutoring Network, On-Campus Indigenous Support)

Nearly Completed: 3 (Advocacy Restructuring, MSU and City of Hamilton Employment Initiative)

Others Partially Completed: 1 (McMaster Innovation Park Conference)

To be Completely Completed Second Term: 0

Other Non-Platform Projects

Hiring – Summer and October hiring for University Affairs Research Assistant, Federal and Provincial Research Assistant, Community Engagement Coordinator, and OUSA Fall General Assembly Delegates. Applications for next year's part-time positions are on the site. Hiring for OUSA Spring General Assembly Delegates and part-time Education Team staff is currently ongoing. I served on the hiring panel of the MSU Communications Officer and a Student Success Center position as well.

Ombuds – Sean van Koughnett, the current Ombuds, and myself are evaluating the funding, structure, staffing, and service of the McMaster Ombuds office. A set of recommendations are being provided to the McMaster and MSU Presidents.

Valedictorian – I have been involved in the planning and selection of Fall Valedictorian ceremonies and candidates. I have circulated information for Spring Valedictorian selection processes and placed students on each committee. Faculties and programs are currently interviewing and selecting successful candidates for valedictorian, and there are MSU representatives on each committee.

Conferences & Events – Attended OUSA Transition Conference, OUSA Strategic Planning Conference, CASA Get Out the Vote, OUSA Training Day, 8 OUSA Campus Visits as President, Bay Area Economic Summit, Toronto Mental Health Symposium, Waterloo Velocity Visit, SRA/MSU Retreats, Ryerson Student Centre Visit, OUSA General Assembly, and Ambitious Cities. Have served as an MTCU Employment Summit Panelist, attended OUSA's Advocacy Week, attended the McMaster Student Leadership Conference, the federal Pre-Budget Consultation, and the MSU State of the Union. Health Sciences Inquiry Panel, Walrus Talks, Women's Empowerment Conference, Budget Lockup, Change Camp, Premier Questioning Event, OUSA Spring General Assembly. (Future) - OUSA's Partners in Higher Education Dinner, MSU Transition Weekend, OUSA Transition Conference.

University Budget Submission - Our Board has decided to complete a university budget submission, and I have tasked our University Affairs Research Assistant with preparing it over the last weeks. This budget submission has now been completed and submitted to university administration. It can also be found on the MSU website. We will be discussing our recommendations with the university in the coming months. This budget submission had significant impact on the university and the MSU's advocacy efforts. The budget was the motivator for the Provost to introduce the budget submission process to more university special interest groups, and the university has committed to use our

budget in collective bargaining with faculty and staff unions, as well as to move forward on TA training with CUPE. Our submission also positively impacted financial aid improvements at McMaster, with more information being released publicly in the next weeks.

Transition - In the next weeks I'll be working on my Transition Report to pass on to the incoming Vice-President (Education). This report will be available on the MSU website in two months, and will include my thoughts and summaries on each of the projects I've done this year and various aspects of the job that are important for the new Vice-President (Education) to understand.

This summarizes the work that has been done so far this year. This will also serve as my last report to this SRA. I'd like to sincerely thank all of you for the year we've had, and for your commitment to improving the student experience at McMaster. This has been a great year for students, and I'm excited to see the MSU's continued success in representing students. I welcome all questions requiring any clarification on any of these issues in the future.

Thank you,

Vice-President (Education)
Spencer Nestico-Semianiw