Message to the Assembly

To the Student Representative Assembly (SRA) from your respective faculties: I would like to congratulate you on your accomplishment! You should be extremely proud of your courage to stand in front of your constituents as well as the winning of your seat in your caucus. You have been chosen by the students of the school to lead them for the 2016-2017 school year. Right now is one of your most important duties as an SRA member. You are responsible in choosing the individuals who will be the Vice-Presidents of the McMaster Students Union.

My main reason for running for the Vice President Administration is that I love McMaster. This school has been where I have created myself, and has allowed me to cultivate wisdom academically, environmentally and socially. I have made an effort to share with many of you what I can personally contribute that makes me a well-founded contender for this position. Personally, there is nothing that I want more than to work with each and every one of you, as well as our part-time and full-time staff to foster an atmosphere that allows others to be subjected to a similar opportunity for growth at this institution.

The role of Vice President Administration entails creation of training, offering managerial support and collaboration with both university and external partners. I feel that my priceless experiences set me apart that I can bring forward an entirely unique characteristic to this role. I understand the need for intense preparation as well as a proactive approach to issues. As manager you are required to handle any situation which arises and be able to provide a calming support to all those looking to you for guidance. My portfolio delivers a diverse perspective and new refreshing voice to the MSU. Through my different co-op placements and jobs I am equipped with the life skills to be the best candidate to handle the roles and responsibilities for this position.

Finally, it is important that you elect a board who collectively will represent best interests of the students here at McMaster. We need a hard working team who can cohesively achieve the goals they set out to accomplish, to not only meet the needs of the students, but exceed expectations. As the Vice President Administration, I will work to see that President Elect Justin Monaco-Barnes, the rest of the incoming board and the assembly, as well as our part time managers succeed this year to enhance the overall student experience.

With all of this, it is with great enthusiasm that I present to you my objectives and vision for the 2016-2017 school year.

Jonathon Tonietto
Vice President Administration Candidate.
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Experience

Co-President Materials Science and Engineering Club (MSE)  September 2014- Present

McMaster Engineering Welcome Week Representative  September 2011, 2015

Vice President of Events MSE  September 2012- April 2014

McMaster Engineering Society Level I Student Representative  September 2010- April 2011

Nationally certified Lifeguard  January 2008- Present
McMaster University, Windsor, Essex, LaSalle, ON

- Certified Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard Service and Standard First Aid Instructor,
- Worked in on many teams in an aquatic setting proactively stopping dangerous scenarios, while responding to emergency situations that arose, including multiple spinal injury management and other first aid scenarios, as well as public relations issues.

Engineering Co-op Student, Maintenance Supervisor:  May 2015-August 2015
Professional Maintenance Team
Etobicoke Casting Plant, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Toronto, ON

- Project lead on issue which is one of the top 3 losses for the plant, Vacuum Valve Failures, solution implemented halved the scrap rate on the machine, increasing machine uptime, part surface quality and strength increase, and decreasing failures extending tool and mold lives. Project will save the company millions of dollars annually,
- Investigated the problem, using different tools and techniques to identify the root cause of the issue, as well as implement the necessary measures to mitigate the problem.

Engineering Co-op Student:  May 2014- August 2014
Scientific Research & Experimental Development Tax Credit Program
Automotive Research and Design Center, Chrysler Canada Inc., Windsor, ON

- Understanding of the policies and regulations surrounding the SR&ED tax credit program,
- Established systems for incoming co-op students to have an easier and more efficient transition into the role.

Innovation Intern (Co-op)  April 2012-September 2012
Automotive Research and Design Center, Chrysler Canada Inc., Windsor, ON

- Demonstrated resourceful acquisition of information and relaying relevant information to different engineering departments, this required excellent communication skills,
- Actively participated in the full spectrum of the product development process stemming from the problem, requirements and constraints, concept development and validation all the way to implementation.
Platform

After talking with so many different students I kept hearing reoccurring cries for more effort to bolster the MSU’s efforts towards Mental Health. I am excited for you to read my platform, during this campaign period I have sat or will sit with many of the SRA members, have met, will meet, or have been in contact with many of the incoming and outgoing Part Time Managers who I would be working with. Additionally I have met with many full time staff to discuss what our interactions will be and some of the options which I will be bringing to the role.

Mental Health Campaign

Mental health of student’s is something that is predominant in our society today. I want to work with Justin Monaco-Barnes platform point to help our peer support services to increase their outreach and effectiveness. I plan to work closely with the PTM’s for SHEC, WGEN, PSL, QSCC, SWHAT, and Diversity Services to create a vibrant safe space for all students. Additionally, I would like to work with the SPARK, Horizons, and CLAY coordinators to help raise awareness toward mental health to first years and young leaders. I would like to see our Maroons promote positivity and joy to students throughout the school year.

Random Act of Kindness Day

This is something which I think that the MSU should continue and expand with a multitude of services. The project was a full term project for our Sustainability 3S03- Implementing Sustainable Change. Our group lead McMaster’s First Random Act of Kindness Day on November 6th, 2015. This is something where we could get multiple services involved with. We could make this a campus wide event. Other universities take part in this as well Guelph, Waterloo and Laurier. This is an opportunity to create a community engagement on a university level through the promotion of positivity. We could utilize SCSN and have a presence around Hamilton as well. If we were to bring this up with the Welcome Week Planners (IRC, SOCS, and Faculty planners) we could get more of an impact as well. Involved with this day is a Kindness Tree, this is a plastic sheet that on it there was a bare kindness tree and individuals could stick positive notes on about what they were thankful for or just inspirational notes.

Healthy Lifestyle Outreach

Specifically, working with SHEC (but not restricted to), I would like to create campaigns promoting healthy living to students. This would include the promotion of alternative active lifestyles. What this would entail is provide information on how vital it is for a student to exercise, and get outside. Expand the idea of exercise to individuals that it does not have to be at the Pulse. Utilize what we have with our Athletics and Recreations department for students. Promoting the outdoor jungle gym, or the programs like Yoga, Latin Dance, Haidong Gumbdo, or Meditation courses put on by our Recreations department. These courses run at a reduced price for students and meditation is free. The campaign would shine a light on the McMaster Swimming Pool, which offers both Saturday and Sunday Leisure swims where we have a BLOB that can be brought out for students use.
Alongside this there would be a campaign for healthy eating. Through teaming up with MACBread Bin, we could provide an awareness campaign for the positive effects of healthy eating. How important that diet is for your mental health and your physical health.

Additionally, the introduction of an advocacy campaign of everyday things that you can do to help relieve yourself of mental fatigue. I think that there is a value in introducing a colouring station in MUSC once a week for a “Mindfulness Monday”. Colouring can be considered as therapeutic during stressful periods, as well as stimulates creativity and communication of various parts of the brain. This could is something that does not require a large amount of capital investment. All that is required is tables and chairs, after discussing this with Lori Diamond (MUSC Administrative Director) we would work out whether these could be provided by Campus Events or if it would be smarter to purchase these items. We can then get colouring books, coloured pencils, crayons and markers.

**Peer support initiatives and engagement**

Our peer support services just have continued to expand.

- I am excited to work with Ryan Deshpande the incoming MSU diversity services PTM on his rebranding/restructuring of his service. Since WGEN and MacAccess have been created it leaves Diversity Services in a unique scenario where Ryan is going to take them forward with a whole strategy and I am ready to support him.
- With the creation of MacAccess, I am ready to work with Alexander Wilson the incoming PTM for this new service. I will be there to support him every step of the way. Together with the full time staff as well as the support of the BOD I am confident we will be successful.
- I am eager to see Aly Khalifa the incoming QSCC PTM succeed. I will do whatever is necessary to help him implement his idea to create a similar model to SHEC for the service. He is bringing in some fantastic new ideas that will really help to fortify this long standing service and I will be ready to support him in this process.
- Working with the MUSC Administration as well as members of the SRA, I would want to work with faculty societies to help add murals to the stairwells of MUSC. After a discussion with Lori, she mentioned that this is something that has been brought up before by others and as long as there is no fire-safety issues this could be done. I would work to spearhead this campaign, making sure that these murals would need to adhere to Human Rights and Equity Services criteria as to negate a positive all-inclusive space here at McMaster. We would develop a schedule as to if and when we would cycle these murals and allow a new artist to create a masterpiece.
Continuing Success

Part Time Manager Engagement

Being a student run organization each year brings new faces to every role. This is similar to co-op educations like the ones that I have completed while at McMaster. I have entered positions where there is actually zero training, and zero transition between myself and the previous individual; it is extremely difficult. Through my conversations with outgoing part-time managers of WGEN, QSCC, EFRT, CLAY (incoming for this one), WHAT, Shinarama and Terry fox coordinators a common theme was expressed of there was a lack of training, insufficient transitions between outgoing and incoming PTM’s, as well as at time a disparity in communications with the Board of Directors.

PTM Specific Trainings

For the trainings many of the PTM’s displayed a concern for both the lack of human resources training as well as financial training. With the latter of these two, I would work actively with the full time staff, as well as whomever is elected into the role of Vice President Finance. I would want a training that would provide the PTM with the knowledge of who to go to on the accounting team for our MSU, as well as help strengthen the relationship between our PTM’s and the BOD. The training would entail what is required of them with their budget, as well as providing them material and resources that they could feel more comfortable independently budgeting.

With respect to the former of the two this is the larger of the two issues. Many of these PTM’s have never held a role as a manager before. Human Resources training would be trainings spanning a wide berth of topics. This could be anything from crisis management & conflict resolution with respect to tricky situations to instructions on delivering feedback for performance evaluations. Utilizing the skills I have learned in my 9 years as a lifeguard and 6 as an NLS instructor, I would create training for the PTM’s with respect to calmly mitigating through crisis, and specific actions when providing reviews. Working alongside John McGowan, Victoria Scott, and Jess Bauman I would utilize their expertise and knowledge pertaining to ambiguous incidents they have observed over the years. Work to create a training that is Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliant, while going over specifics of health and safety, training, hiring. For the off season hires, I will ensure to provide them with the same level of adequate training that the other PTM’s received as well. I want them to feel as though they are up to speed with everything and ready to deal with their positions respectively.
Communication & Transitions

Upon interviewing the outgoing PTM’s there were concerns with the level of communication. They were satisfied with the support which was provided by the BOD when an issue would arise; however, I would take more of a proactive approach to communicating with the team. Through my schooling, jobs and co-ops I have learned the invaluable wisdom of:

i) An proactive is always better than reactive
ii) When there is an issue you need to go to the source and you need to see the problem first hand
iii) Communication is mandatory for a team to work efficiently
iv) Journals and logs help immensely when reflecting on experiences

With respect to proactive this is like when dealing with forest fire mitigation. It is better to complete regular controlled burns then to wait for the enormous devastating forest fire. Alongside an open door policy, I would complete bi-weekly checks with the PTM’s. These would be 5 minute meetings where I go to their office and sit down with them. If there are no issues it would just be a check in to see how things were with school and life; however, if there is an issue that needs to be addressed, we could then schedule a meeting with the required parties to address the problem(s). Not only would this allow me to have face time with the PTM, I would then be spending more time with them at their service with their volunteers really connecting on a personal level.

In lifeguarding you are always communicating with your fellow lifeguards. Whether it be through verbal, non-verbal hand and eye gestures or whistle signals, you are in contact with the other members of your team at all times. I want to have this with the PTM’s, their executive teams, and their volunteers. I want this organization to feel as though their Administrator is there for them ready to help at any point in time.

Finally, transitions, to help the transitions, I would encourage every PTM (and SRA and BOD member) to keep a journal with them. Whether they use their mobile device, start a word document, or even an actual notebook. I will be encouraging the PTM to be using this readily since it will allow for them to be able to provide a transition report with tangible examples from experiences they dealt with for the next year’s incoming coordinator.
SRA Engagement

Along with the PTM’s there is a new group of SRA members who bring their own platform and their own goals that they want to engage their constituency, and McMaster. I want to provide a positive environment, one which fosters success for all of the caucus’s. I want to bring forward a sense of collaboration with their respected faculties, and faculty societies. With this SRA I would like to bring forward a transparency for the students of McMaster, so they know where their money is going and what their elected officials are doing.

SRA Specific Trainings

I will engage with the SRA and create a comprehensive training for them, allowing for a smooth transition. This will be what lays the foundation for the entire year. Additionally, there will be specific facilitation and planning of training in the summer months (MSU Retreat). For our SRA who join in by-election I will work to create a comprehensive plan to bring them to the level they need to be immediately.

Open Source Democratic Senate

The idea behind this is to create more of a transparency for each faculty. What this would mean is create a means (either specific software, or Google forms) where the faculty would be informed by their caucus about the important MSU issues which are to be voted on in the meetings. The SRA members would send this out through an email and the interactive avenue will allow for the SRA members to see where their faculty’s ideology lies with the issues. There can be comments sections which would help to bring forward questions which the SRA members may not think about specifically.

This is something that will help to increase the transparency of the MSU as well as the SRA to the student body. That they can see really what it is that their student council does on a week by week basis.

Faculty Societies Reports

I will encourage that the caucus has members at all of their faculty societies meetings. This is another task that will help to bridge the gap between the faculties and this student government. Additionally, it will be good to hear from the SRA representatives that go what is happening from the faculties. This could be the introduction of more collaboration between not only different faculties for certain initiatives but also for the MSU services to partner with different groups on campus.

Meetings and Transitions

Similar to the PTM strategy, I would like to meet with the SRA bi-weekly, again just to check in on how they are doing, how is their platform going, are they completing reflections so that their incoming receives a well-documented transition report. Also it is to check on moral and see if you are doing okay with respect to school, as well as life.
Synergistic engagement

Encourage the engagement between the different services provided. Service-to-Service as well as Service-to-SRA cooperation and collaboration

With speaking with the different incoming and outgoing PTM’s there have been many who want to foster partnerships and relationships with certain services. Many of the services provide overlapping characteristics to what they provide.

Trainings

These are the trainings that are necessary for both the PTM’s as well as the SRA members for next year’s MSU.

Human Rights Training

Anti-Oppression training is something which is required in a leadership position, especially in one as diverse as a university. I would continue that every PTM, SRA members, BOD member and Maroons take AOP training. I want to work with the outgoing and incoming PTM’s to identify where there may be a specific training which will be required. Then with Human Rights and Equity Services, each group could tailor the training accordingly. Going further, I would work with the peer support services so that together the PTM’s and I could train their execs accordingly. This is an area where we could have the different services partnering up if their needs are similar.

Stress the importance of HRES Planning for Accessibility Checklist with every service event plan. This will be emphasized during the Part Time Manager Training. With respect to

Innovation Training

I would like to provide our PTM’s, BOD, SRA and some full time staff to attend a unique training experience I would bring to the role. I would have them complete Innovation training. I have been in contact with the Fiat Chrysler Automotive Innovation team. I would work with them to have them come and facilitate an innovation training workshop. This would be something special, something that would provide our PTM’s with a priceless very useful tool they could bring to their managerial positions as well as their lives. Based on the conversations I have had there would be minimal costs associated with bringing this team in since they do not charge for the services. It would help the managers develop skills in problem statement creation, deep level brainstorming, and analysis of ideas so that they can work with their teams as think tanks to come up with innovative ideas to address the issues that will arise over their year. Also there would be a trickledown effect to the exec team who would be able to pick up the skills and carry them forward into the future.
Welcome Week

Welcome week is something which I hold near and dear to my heart. It is where I initially realized that I felt that this school was my home. I understand that as the Vice President Administration welcome week and orientation is a large part of the job. I would be sitting on both the Welcome Week Planning and Implementation Committee, and the Welcome Week Advisory Committee. I would be required for my input and guidance to help plan and efficiently execute Welcome Week 2016. In preparing for this I have already reached out to the incoming and outgoing: Residence Orientation Planners, the Welcome Week Faculty Planners and the outgoing Student off Campus Society Welcome Week Planner (will be connecting with the Incoming before I take my term).

Collaborative Efforts

Through my contact with these individuals I understand there was not a high level of communication between these stakeholders. Based on Laura’s suggestion, I would work to help facilitate earlier and more frequent meetings between these individuals, she also mentioned that it would be ideal if I would take a leadership role with respect to the documentation side of the Faculty Cup to forgo confusion. The IRC has also approached me saying that there needs to be conversations which are had between the two groups. I am ready to facilitate the conversations with all parties to bring us together to have a more inclusive, life changing experience for the first years entering the school.

I will work with our PTM’s as well that we are offering special events that are tailored to the strategic priorities of Welcome Week. I think that the MSU services have a very critical role during welcome week and the campaigns regarding: alcohol awareness, sexual violence, and mental health. I am excited to work with every stakeholder to plan and participate in another Welcome Week representative training conference.

Continuing Leadership

One thing that I would specifically like to implement with is the continuation of student leadership for faculty representatives after Welcome Week is concluded. This past year the engineers wore our suits for the entire second week as well. This action is something that is invaluable to first year students. Once Welcome Week is over and they have met their new friends; however, they did not find out which building was what and where they need to go for class. If we were to work with the IRC, SOCS, Faculty Societies, and Maroons, it would help to calm the nerves and reduce the stress of actually starting university.
Community Engagement

As has been seen by McMaster hiring, then the SRA with the voting to remove Duclair from his position with Security and Parking Services there is disconnect between McMaster University and the City of Hamilton. I believe that more can be done by SCSN, and Shinarama to engage the community. Upon speaking with Riley, the former Shine/Terry Fox Coordinator she mentioned an idea to do “Walks through Westdale” as well as other neighbourhoods in Hamilton like Locke street, or James street. This would get the first years out and into the community and a share of what they bought that day would go to the Shinarama fund.

MSU SLACK

This is the SLACK app; it is the next generation of what BBM was.

This is an instant messenger app, where you can have channels for collaboration, private channels for sensitive information, and direct chats with individuals. This app has the ability to sync to Google Drive, and Dropbox allowing you to share files faster and more readily than before. This can be put on all different devices. With the proper implementation you could put all of the different services on there with their execs, the different SRA caucus’s could have a place to communicate. Additionally, this would be priceless on Welcome Week when an issue arises. This would allow for more readily collaboration processes between IRC, SOCs, Faculty Societies and the MSU. Finally, it allows for more immediate availability for different PTM’s when they have questions or issues which may arise.
Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review my platform, and ideas that I would bring to the role. I think that the idea of student politics is amazing that every year you have a new group of individuals who have never worked with one another, all coming together to try to achieve greatness. You get to grow, learn and experience everything with one another, all for the betterment of this wonderful place we call home.

If you were to vote me in you would be completing the actions which Justin has started of “Popping the MSU bubble”. Together would be the dawn of a new day for the McMaster Students Union. We have the chance to build a foundation that encourages growth from every part of the university. It shows that we are ready to be progressive and move forward to something new. This year’s MSU would be the change.

I have the knowledge base and the experience to manage the operations. I want us to have an opportunity this time next year look at all that we have done and be proud of the change. I am a tried true leader, underpinned with practical real world experience which makes me ready to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of Vice President Administration. I will work day and night with our service managers ensuring that I will be there for them, ready to support them, offer them the resources they require, not only as a boss; also as a friend.

Cheers,

Jonathon Tonietto