

MIRANDA CLAYTON

for Vice President Finance





To anyone taking the time to read this,

Thank you. Depending on how much you know about the role of VP Finance, my platform may not look like what you were expecting. The truth is the VP Finance is not the one crunching the numbers and doing the accounting because we have hired staff for that. When I was researching this role I was told it had three parts: communication, advocacy, and internal MSU matters. The more business oriented part is what falls into the internal MSU section but that leaves communication and advocacy. It turns out the VP Finance is also the least structured of the VP roles, meaning it leaves the most room for an individual twist on it. I chose to take a more holistic approach and view this role as the VP Resources rather than the VP Finance.

To have a healthy community you need good people, decent space to operate out, and a budget that meets your needs. The VP Administration takes care of people but only people for MSU Services. I care about more than our services. My first platform ring is clubs. It is a lesser known fact that the VP Finance is the VP with clubs in their portfolio yet the relationship between the VP Finance and Clubs Administrator has been described to me as "vestigial". I think if we rekindle the relationship between the VP Finance and the Clubs Administrator we can see more communication and support than ever before to address clubs issues from a multi-levelled standpoint. My second is the MSU. I want cost to not be a barrier to our volunteers, students to have valuable options at Union Market and 1280 for their downtime, and to have them be able to properly log their hours during work for the MSU. My third platform ring is everyone. How can the MSU provide for students who are not directly involved through clubs, employment, or services? I think the answer is commuter community space and better Budget Town Hall sessions so they know what their money is being used for.

I have put a great amount of work into providing for all communities I have been part of for the past four years. I have adjusted the Clubs offices allocation system. I played a major role in making financial transparency fair for non-University non-MSU levy collecting groups. Under my leadership, the marching band has become more financially accessible than ever before and obtained space like we could not have dreamed of in our first few years. All the provisions I have made for these communities have lead up to this. A platform based on community that builds outward to incorporate as many students under the MSU wing as possible. It may not have advocating for Maccess space, the budget, and financial training for PTMs on it but that is because those are givens. It is obviously that, if elected, I will dedicate my time to these things. In my platform I focused on the novel ideas. Ideas that will allow me to provide for MSU members like I have every other community that has provided for me. I think it is time to go beyond the budget and recognize that with the push power of a board member, the VP Finance is a powerful player in ensuring students have access to all the resources they need. I know no one can approach this position with the love and steely determination to see communities succeed that I have because is a natural continuation of the work I flourish in. It would be my highest honour to continue this work with you as your MSU VP Finance.

Sincerely,



Miranda Clayton
Vice President Finance Candidate

Experience

2011-2012 [the bottom]

- General member of the McMaster Marching Band

2012-2013

- Promotions Director of the McMaster Marching Band

2013-2014

- President of the McMaster Marching Band
- Chair of Recreation Division on the Clubs Executive Council
- Logistics Director of Feminist Alliance McMaster

2014-2015

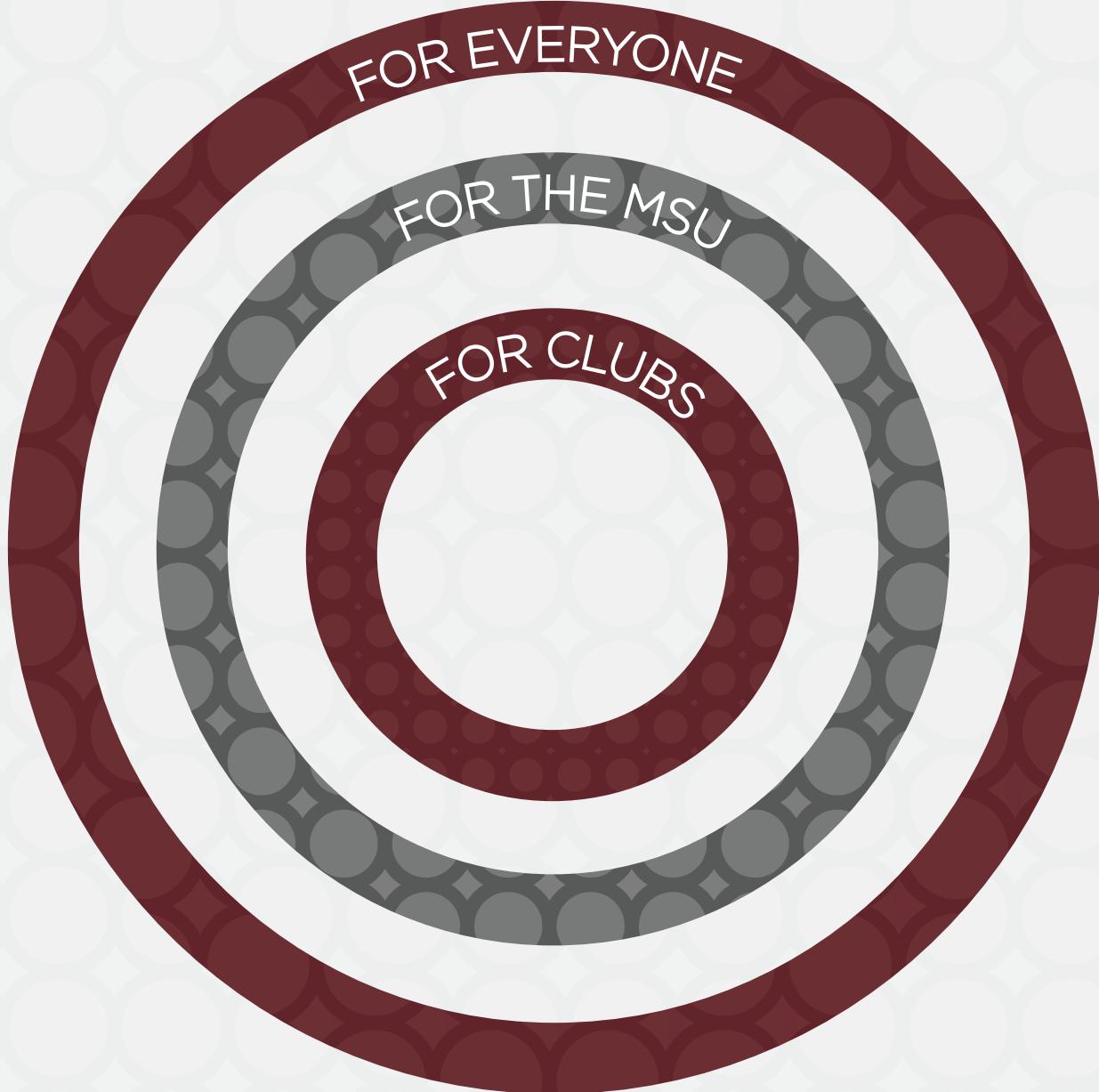
- President of the McMaster Marching Band
- Mac Farmstand Customer Service Representative
- Chair of Recreation Division Clubs on the Clubs Executive Council
- MSU Member of the Bylaws & Procedures Committee

2015-2016 [here]

- President of the McMaster Marching Band
- SRA Science Representative
 - SRA representative on the Clubs Executive Council
- MSU Operations Commissioner

Vision Statement

For the MSU to be recognized as a community made up of smaller communities, while part of a greater community itself, with all shared communities being allocated what they need to function to the best of their ability.



For Clubs

Financial Communication Evaluation

Clubs have a tendency to let their cheques sit in the accounting office which is unproductive for them and us. MSU Bucks are money allocated to each club that can only be spent on MSU services and, while clubs are happy to be given this, many are not happy with the implementation method. For example, some clubs do not feel the need for a bank account but you need one to access the MSU Bucks. The biggest fault of the MSU when it comes to clubs is only asking for the opinion of the Clubs Administrator when looking for feedback when really the diverse set of people using it should be asked to come up with the best solution. If elected, I will assist the incoming Clubs Administrator in running a largescale feedback forum for clubs to address their financial concerns. Once the best way to implement MSU Bucks is developed and the communication breaks are patched, clubs will be in a much better financial position. The incoming Clubs Administrator is also planning to hold clubs-specific budget town hall sessions to address communication gaps. If elected, I plan to be present at them because I believe clubs need to know someone higher up in the system cares about them to begin addressing the communication breakdown.

Clubs Courtesy Card

The MSU Courtesy Card is given to those who volunteer their time to the MSU and allows them certain perks for their service, the most popular being free hot beverages from Union Market on Wednesdays. The incoming Clubs Administrator has expressed that he would like to implement a version of the card for club presidents. Having been one for years, I can tell you that it is often a thankless job. You know your community cares about you but it would be nice to get a few perks in exchange for your unpaid time spent building a community within the MSU. If elected, I will support this endeavour by working with the new Clubs Administrator to develop a card that provides perks to clubs presidents while not sinking the revenue of the services included. The key is to provide discounts that incentivize club presidents to buy things they normally wouldn't for their clubs and boost sales. For example, discounts on larger poster sizes or cardstock at Underground.

Space Advocacy

We have over three hundred clubs and nine offices in Clubspace for them. Each office has three clubs operating out of it so only twenty seven clubs are able to obtain an office from clubs allocated space. Some others manage to find offices in other buildings but it still is not enough to house all the clubs that would operate better with offices. It was part of the president-elect's platform to advocate for more clubs space but that is not under the jurisdiction of the Clubs Administrator. It is in the portfolio of the VP Finance to obtain and allocate spaces to MSU departments. I have a large amount of experience advocating for community space needs and as a club that manages two on campus storage spaces, I would say I did a pretty fine job of it. If elected I will use my space advocacy skills to carry out the president-elect's clubs platform and advocate for more clubs allocated space. The plan is rather long term but these are formative years for determining what is moving where in the next decade as more buildings are planned out. The Student Wellness Centre will be moving out the MUSC basement in the future so the current plan is to advocate to the MUSC administration for the MSU to take the basement space for clubs. This way clubs stay centralized in MUSC for a more cohesive clubs community.

For The MSU

Revenue Generating

We may be a non-profit organization but we do aim for certain services to generate revenue. TwelvEighty and Union Market are two of these services and I have a few ideas I would like to work on implementing with the incoming directors in the hope of boosting revenue. My idea for Union Market is small but worthwhile. Soup currently comes in Styrofoam containers and anyone can tell you those are not sustainable at all. With many people opting for reusable containers over throw-away ones to reduce trash I think it is time we move to biodegradable packaging and research to ensure it is just as cost efficient as Styrofoam. Then we can attract people who want to enjoy soups without the environment paying for it.

I have two ideas for TwelvEighty: better named and advertised deals plus piloting Pub Night. Everyone knows about TwelvEighty Club Night yet all the walls around TwelvEighty are plastered with the same posters for club night weekly. I think we need to redistribute the advertising budget to include advertising food and deals better. Lots of students are not aware that a burger and fries is cheaper at TwelvEighty than La Piazza so why not proudly display that? While we are at it, we need to make the deals more fun so they are memorable. A good example of fun is the "burger and a bevy" deal. It seems odd but more whacky names with advertising dedicated to them may boost business. My preliminary suggestion is "Tendie Tuesday" so chicken fingers (or tenders as some call them) are discounted every Tuesday but of course this could take more brainstorming from students like you later.

My final idea for TwelvEighty is Pub Night. Club Night is fun but only caters to a certain crowd. What if you are not up for dancing or EDM and just want a beer with a friend after night class? The Phoenix is usually packed and very loud, especially on Tuesday trivia night. I think it is time undergrads got a chill pub environment to call their own. Dim the lights, bring out the acoustic, and there is a more relaxed undergrad pub atmosphere to compete with the Phoenix on Tuesdays. Fun themes may be a winning combo as well. There is lots to explore with revenue generating because simple ideas are sometimes the most effective. If elected, I promise to explore the options I put forward here. Sustainable soup packaging, better food deals and advertising, and Pub Night are all things that can be implemented or piloted in a one year term.

For The MSU

Subsidized Vulnerable Sector Checks

This year CLAY was the first service to go through with having volunteers undergo a vulnerable sector check. Whether more services implement it or it stays to only CLAY, I plan to implement a system so cost is no barrier to covering the check and volunteering. The cost of getting a vulnerable sector check is \$25 for volunteering purposes and \$50 for employment purposes, which is easily someone's grocery money for the week. After talking to several Part Time Managers (PTMs) the system I am proposing involves a form each PTM who chooses to implement vulnerable sector checks can send to their volunteers. The form allows anyone who is in need to fill it out and bring it to the MSU accounting office so they can collect the money to file for their vulnerable sector check without depleting their bank account and potentially creating hiring bias with their respective PTM should they know they needed assistance. The system works on an opt-in basis. PTMs of a service where there is a power dynamic must opt-in to using vulnerable sector checks then volunteers must opt-in to having it covered by the MSU if they truly feel they need it. This way the MSU saves the most amount of money by only covering those in dire need and having the PTM decide who needs the checks as it may not be necessary for all volunteers of some services.

Implement Use Of Hour Tracking Software

Wage reviews were a hot topic this year and there was no standardized process for them other than asking the person of interest to log their hours on a google doc. That only provides the most basic information and is of little help when making decisions regarding whether their hours need changing. Luckily, it is the twenty first century and there is software to help with this. If elected, I plan to implement use of hour tracking software such as Harvest and pilot program use with commissioners. Harvest allows the administrator, who could be the VP Finance and/or VP Administration, to see the hours all employees have logged with their notes on that work session. It will also show the type of work that person did as a general category such as promotions as opposed to logging different sessions designing posters for different events. Harvest can be configured to any job and allow people to log by project, client, etc. to customize their experience.

Employees can also set reminders for hour logging to ensure none are missed as well as notifications for when a certain percentage of hours per week out of their total are logged. These features benefit both the MSU and our employees as it will make them more cognizant of their work, monitor their hours for efficiency, and ensure we both have a record with qualitative and quantitative information for wage reviews. The program is best piloted with commissioners as a test group because the six positions are similar yet different enough to allow for comparing and contrasting between them. This way we can both figure out the best way to train a group of employees to use the software for the wage review process while evaluating commissioner hours at the same time.

For Everyone

Continue With And Improve Budget Town Halls

Dan D'Angela, the outgoing VP Finance, did a great thing this year by implementing Budget Town Hall sessions. In these sessions students can come watch a presentation about our budget, have a discussion about where they think money would be best allocated, and enjoy some complimentary snacks while there. An honest conversation goes a long way and cookies never hurt either. The issue was these sessions, while a great idea, were poorly attended. If elected, I will rework the Budget Town Hall sessions into something that's a little more convenient for students. I think we should have multiple sessions a day so as to maximize availability to people not in class. The sessions should also have more of a drop in feel so students are less intimidated to join the conversation should they be late or need to leave early. The last issue to tackle is the name. Budget Town Hall sounds dry but that is not anything some rebranding could not fix. Students are usually at least curious as to where their money goes. We can make satiating that curiosity fun to result in a more well-informed student body.

Advocate For Commuter Centred Space

The Society of Off Campus Students, or SOCS, may not be under the MSU but most SOCS members are MSU members. Ever since the destruction of Wentworth House, SOCS members have had no place to call their own. They usually operate out of Clubspace but get asked to leave regularly as the space is booked out by clubs for events. Commuting first years have higher drop-out rates than first years in residence and I see why. They do not have the support network and stable community hub that students in residence have. If elected, I will advocate for a designated SOCS lounge area to act as a designated community hub for off campus students, much like Clubspace is for clubs. Having a space dedicated to off campus issues also allows for an exciting partnership between SOCS and SCSN, thus the MSU, to have a shared space to bring Hamilton issues to light and hold SCSN events and office hours. This space could potentially boost attendance at MSU events as instead of going home and staying there commuters could have a place to rest or work between classes and the event. This partnership will touch the lives of thousands of students each year as a home is made for them and there is somewhere to learn about the city they reside in and how to navigate it.

For Everyone

Hospitable Hospitality Services

Great strides in communication have been made with Hospitality Services over the past two years but we need to build on this and keep expanding. There is a student value brochure available online and tips to make it cheaper, such as picking up your order instead of having it delivered, that many students and student groups are unaware of. We need to create an actual partnership with communication beyond the Board of Directors to make students aware of their options. It needs to be on the clubs website, it needs to be emailed out, and it needs to be discussed so if TwelvEighty cannot cover the food they want they know they can save at least a little bit. I also want to work together to create an overall value menu of all meals available on campus for under \$6.00. This would include TwelvEighty, Union Market, and Hospitality Services venues together in a master list of all cheap meals that should be publicized both on Hospitality Services and MSU websites. Sometimes answers are already there, you just need to shout them to the world.

On a more ambitious note, I spoke with Chris Roberts, the director of Hospitality Services, and he is open to piloting a \$5.00 meal much like the Friendly Fiver program at Ryerson. The program would use Hospitality space and employees to create a bulk, cheap meal that sells for \$5.00 a portion. The opportunities are better with a partnership though. If we use TwelvEighty space and operate the \$5.00 meal program out of there the cooking can be overseen by a Hospitality Services chef who will provide a cooking lesson on the meal of the day to a group of students who help with all the cooking and clean up after. Then the meal is produced by student volunteers for students, can be provided multiple times a week, they can take home a portion for themselves with the recipe, and they learned something. I am also open to looking into student job creation models or gauging interest from TwelvEighty kitchen staff on having this be part of their job. The program would operate after TwelvEighty closes for the night to make the food in bulk then store it overnight. The next day the meal would be advertised, heated and sold. It may not be glamorous but it gets the job done and provides value to students. If elected, I will fully explore the potential for \$5.00 value meals so whether it is a once a week option through Hospitality or a multiples time a week option through TwelvEighty, we will be providing a cheap way to get through the day. This coupled with the under \$6.00 value menu means students will be able to keep more money in their pockets than ever before.

Summary

For Clubs

- Discuss MSU Bucks and financial communication with clubs to address issues as well as attend clubs budget town hall sessions to help bridge the gap
- Aid the incoming Clubs Administrator in creating a Clubs Courtesy Card
- Advocate for more space in MUSC for clubs

For The MSU

- Implement sustainable soup packaging at Union Market, better food deals and advertisements at TwelvEighty, and Pub Night at TwelvEighty in the hope of generating revenue
- Implement a vulnerable sector check subsidization system so students are not limited by that cost as a barrier
- Pilot use of hour tracking software to give wage reviews a much needed process with quantitative and qualitative information as well as aid employees in learning about their own efficiency to critically evaluate what can be done in paid hours

For Everyone

- Continue with an improve Budget Town Hall sessions with several drop-in sessions for a more relaxed feel and some better branding to draw more in
- Advocate for a shared space between SOCS and SCSN to create a partnership that brings commuter community needs and Hamilton community needs to the forefront
- Create a true partnership with Hospitality Services to advertise cost saving tips to students through our channels, assemble a shared “ultimate value menu” of all campus food under \$6.00 and where to find it, as well as pilot \$5.00 value meals either once a week through Hospitality Services or multiple times a week through a partnership between the MSU and Hospitality Services

Closing

I hope my platform resonated with you on some level but if you have any concerns, or just want to say hi, please do not hesitate to contact me. I was the Operations Commissioner that implemented mandatory Outreach Hours so I am also more than willing to meet with you in person to discuss anything you would like regarding my platform, the MSU, or university. If you are an MSU member, thank you for reading and please take the time to contact your SRA caucus to discuss who you would like to see as VP and why. If you are an SRA member, please remember that although this election is internal your job is to represent your constituents. Encourage them to come forward, engage with them, and respect their concerns. You have a lot of difficult choices to make in your first month on the assembly but with careful research and outreach you can make the best choice for you and your constituents.

Contact Me

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Contact Your SRA

Please note most caucuses have a Facebook or twitter page you can search and contact as well as the emails listed.

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McMaster Students Union

MSU

