

Matthew Brodka

Finance Commissioner Candidate



- ▶ Student Voice
- ▶ Financial Advocacy
- ▶ Vice President Support

Introduction

The McMaster Students Union is an organization responsible for representing and providing service to the **22,558 full-time undergraduates** at McMaster University. A non-for-profit organization, the McMaster Students Union aims to **advocate** for, and **enhance student life** on campus. The Union has a bounty of positions to ensure all facets of the organization are running smoothly - education, peer support, and clubs to name a few. In saying this, it is with great honour that I declare my candidacy for the **Finance Commissioner** position of the McMaster Students Union.

Experiences

Educational Experience

I am a second year student in Mathematics and Statistics seeking to obtain an Honours Bachelor of Science (B.Sc. Hons) in **Actuarial and Financial Mathematics**. Notable courses in the program include:

- Mathematical Finance and Accounting
- Differential Equations and Advanced Calculus
- Linear Algebra
- Statistical Methods and Applications

With the completion of the previous courses and continuation of my degree, I feel that I have a strong foundation in **quantitative and qualitative finance**. I look for this knowledge to **transcend** into the position of Finance Commissioner.

Work Experience

Leadership and Team Development Coordinator

August 2014 - Present

McMaster University Athletics and Recreation
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

- Provide an opportunity for teams, university, and corporate groups to engage in experiential adventure based learning.
- Facilitate leadership and team building initiatives and assist in high ropes activities.

Trail Survey Coordinator and Research Assistant

May 2015 - Present

McMaster University/Hamilton Burlington Trails Council
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

- Gather community input on local trails in order to determine areas of outdoor trail improvement, contribute to outreach, media designs and administrative work.
- Assist in the development and facilitation of volunteer training for over 30 university and community volunteers.

Community Engagement Coordinator

February 2015 - April 2015

McMaster Students Union (MSU)
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

- Assisted in the planning, organization and execution of the inaugural *ChangeCamp Hamilton* event - an event connecting McMaster University, students, and community members to various organizations in Hamilton.
- Contributing author to the final *ChangeCamp Hamilton* report.

Other Experiences

- Perspectives on Peace Certificate (McMaster University)
- MSU Horizons Conference Executive - 2016 Events Coordinator
- MSU CLAY Conference - 2016 LDL

My Platform

Student Voice

The McMaster Students Union must always take into consideration the voice of students on campus - this pertains to **financial decisions** as well. As the Finance Commissioner of the MSU, I believe that a large part of the role is to **gather student input** on the finances of the MSU and McMaster as a whole. Through the following plan I believe that I will meaningfully contribute to **student outreach** regarding the finances that impact students on a daily basis:

1. Effective Display of Financial Projects

- Ensuring all SRA Finance Standing Committee documents are posted to the standing committee webpage.
- Advertised bi-weekly summaries of the Finance Committee work.

2. Financial Affairs Council

- On top of the Finance Committee, I wish make better use of the Financial Affairs Council, according to Bylaw 7/C.
- This group will encompasses individuals such as the **VP-Finances of each Program Society**. As a student in Math and Stats, I am aware of the challenges that smaller program societies may have, and how a limited budget can impact the actions of program societies, the IRC, SOCS, etc. With continuous **consultation** between these groups I believe that we can effectively gather input on the diverse opinions and concerns of students regarding their finances.

3. Student Life Enhancement Fund (SLEF)

- The Student Life Enhancement Fund is an immensely important fund in place for student **participatory budgeting**.
- On top of promoting the SLEF in order to grow the number of submissions and student engagement throughout the decision making process, I believe it is also important to gain feedback on the **quality of previous projects**.

4. Restructuring of Budget Town Hall

- Working alongside the VP-Finance in order to restructure the Budget Town Hall, allowing the collection of both **qualitative** and **quantitative** data.

Financial Advocacy

This year's SRA passed important motions pertaining to financial advocacy for the McMaster Students Union.

As the Finance Commissioner of the MSU, I believe that a portion of the role should be dedicated toward financial advocacy. After researching the platforms of the incoming **Student Representative Assembly**, I found that I would be able to fulfill this task by working alongside the assembly, **VP Finance** and **VP Education**. Through these joint efforts I feel that we will be able to continue efforts towards financial advocacy.

The following is an outline of my **vision for financial advocacy**:

1. University Budget Submission

- The **University Budget Submission** on behalf of the MSU is a project with the intent to positively enhance student education and financial well-being. As the Finance Commissioner I would like to continue working on this project.
- Upholding the previous budget submission which highlights: **tuition and financial aid, paid teaching assistant training, and student space.**
- Participating in the **research and preparation** of the next university budget submission. Topics of interest may include: university repairs and upgrades, EFRT funding, faculty specific budget breakdowns, courseware costs and Open Textbook Model, residences, meal plan cards, etc.

2. Increased Number of ATMs

- Currently students on campus face the issue of being charged extensive service fees with the use of ATMs. We do not always have the time to venture off campus to our affiliated bank - in support of **University Affairs** I would like to explore the possibility of addressing this matter.

3. Sobi Bike Negotiations and Referendum

- In dealing with Sobi bike negotiations, there are several factors that must be taken into consideration. In having conversations with Hamilton City Council regarding cycling, I feel that I can effectively contribute to the discussions surrounding Sobi bikes.

Vice President Support

The Finance Commissioner acts as a **support system** and **liaison** between the Vice-President of Finance, Finance Standing Committee and the rest of the MSU. While it is important to highlight specific platform points I wish to complete throughout the year, a large portion of my time in the role will be spent in supporting projects of the VP-Finance. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Wage Reviews

- Assisting in the development of a **wage matrix** to ensure congruency in wage reviews across positions in the MSU. More clarity in job specific compensation is essential.

2. Business Unit Reviews

- While the VP-Finance wishes to work on a TwelvEighty business plan, I wish to evaluate Underground and the direction it should be headed as a business unit.

3. Campus Master Plan Critique

Summary

It is with great pleasure that I outline my platform for Finance Commissioner of the MSU. I am approaching this role with a solid foundation of the structure of the MSU, and with this awareness, understand the impact financial decisions can have on the day to day operations of the Union. While bound by the budget set in place, it is critical that the we push these boundaries - seeking to advocate for and enhance student life on campus. My structured, yet open approach will allow me to follow my vision for the financial health of the McMaster Students Union, while still upholding the job description of Commissioner, supporting the Board of Directors, and maintaining the values of the organization.

I have a passion for the MSU, a passion for McMaster, and the readiness to work alongside each and every one of you to ensure we are doing the best we can to advocate for, and enhance student life.

Best,

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