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CHANGES ON THE HORIZON FOR McMASTER STUDENTS

Matthew Dillon-Leitch discusses Gmail, the Student Life Enhancement Fund and the upcoming MSU Presidential Election



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Gmail

The long awaited contract between McMaster University and Google has been signed, and Gmail is slated to replace MUSS as McMaster's official email provider. The integration of this new system will take place over Reading Week. Your email address will stay the same, and your current emails will be migrated as well. Some of the big changes include increased inbox capacity from the 15 MB you receive with MUSS to 25 GB with Gmail, a sharable calendar, Google Docs which will allow you to save your documents and work on them with friends or groupmates online. This project began back in February 2010 as the MSU passed a motion to support a cloud based email system. Following that motion, MSU representatives met with the Chief Information Officer of University Technology Services (UTS) and discussed possible options. A student survey was launched in October, and students were able to choose between Microsoft's Live@Edu and Google's Gmail/Google Apps. Of the 3500 students who voted in the "No More Mail Fail" survey, 70% voted in favour of Google's Gmail/Google Apps and the University began to work with Google to make this happen. Much like the University of Alberta, the contract negotiations took a considerable amount of time and in December 2011, the document was finalized. This project should serve as an example of the role student opinion and student government can play in improving our University.

The MSU not only passed a policy on email, it also asked students to vote on which system they wanted. The response rate was massive, especially considering it was merely a survey, but the results proved there was student support for this initiative. This is precisely how we can change things at McMaster, and by asking you the right questions on issues you care about, we can get results.

What's Your Idea?

The Student Life Enhancement Fund is looking for undergraduate ideas to improve student life on campus!

One of the initiatives I spoke of when I ran for President last year was investing in student ideas. Through the MSU's work with the Office of Student Affairs and the Student Services Committee (SSC), we have found a way to make this possible. Starting this year, students will be able to submit their project concepts and funding requests directly to the Student Life Enhancement Fund. Traditionally, funding requests have only been accepted from the managers of student services and departments, but this year, students will be able to submit their own ideas. Funds allocated for past projects have ranged from a few hundred dollars, to tens of thousands, so there is no idea too big or too small for the Student Life Enhancement Fund.

The purpose of the Student Life Enhancement Fund is to provide seed capital and financial support for student-run and University based service providers to expand their programming, infrastructure and/or operations. The fund targets initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to improve and enhance student life, especially projects that promote cooperation between departments. Any project/idea pursuant to a service or department under the umbrella of the Office of Student Affairs or the McMaster Students Union is eligible. Visit enhance.mcmaster.ca to view past projects, find service provider

contact info and to submit your idea(s).

MSU Presidential Election

Finally, MSU Presidential nominations are now open! The nomination period runs until January 19th, and the campaign will span January 23rd until February 2nd. Nomination packages and official rules are all available on the MSU Elections

department website. If you or someone you know is interested in taking on the responsibilities and opportunities that come with the position of MSU President, check out the details at elections.msumcmaster.ca.

The MSU Presidential Election will take place on Wednesday, February 1st and Thursday, February 2nd.

DO YOU HAVE A
GREAT IDEA TO
ENHANCE McMASTER?



THE STUDENT LIFE ENHANCEMENT FUND:

- Provides start-up funds for new, innovative/creative programs or student services within Student Affairs and/or the MSU
- Supports initiatives that improve the quality of student life
- Offers students a chance to make a difference in their University experience
 - All ideas welcome BIG and small



enhance.mcmaster.ca

THE NEW ONTARIO TUITION GRANT HAS ARRIVED

The program comes at the cost of three existing programs, but students can count on MSU advocacy to continue fighting for more affordable education



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On January 5th, the Government of Ontario launched the Ontario Tuition Grant – a sigh of relief for over 300,000 students across Ontario. If eligible, the new grant will mean \$800 off your tuition fees for this semester, and an annual reduction of \$1600 beginning in September. Unfortunately, not all students qualify for the grant. Check out

www.ousa.ca/tuitiongrant to see if you are entitled to the grant.

If you are on OSAP and eligible for the grant, you need not apply for this semester – your money will be deposited directly into your account by the end of January. If you are not on OSAP but still qualify, you will have to go to www.ontario.ca/30off and fill out the form to claim your \$800. The deadline for applying for the grant is March 31.

As happy as this news is for hundreds of thousands of students, it is still disappointing to see that the announcement of this grant was accompanied by the cancellation of three other great programs; the Ontario Trust for Student Support, the Textbook and Technology Grant, and the Queen

Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship. In addition, \$100 million is expected to be recovered by providing fewer provincial grants and loans as a result of the new program's interaction with existing grant and debt relief. The new program is expected to cost \$420 million upon full implementation.

Rest assured, however, that the MSU is continuously working with government officials to expand financial assistance, grant eligibility and most importantly – establishment of a new tuition framework that is progressive and fair to students.

The MSU will be working closely with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), our provincial lobby partner, to continue to fight for students'

interests at the provincial level. Currently, OUSA advocates on behalf of more than 145,000 professional and undergraduate, full-time and part-time university students at nine student associations across Ontario. The MSU and OUSA share a common vision for an accessible, affordable, accountable and high quality post-secondary education in Ontario. To achieve this vision, the member schools of OUSA come together to develop solutions to challenges facing higher education, build broad consensus for our policy options, and lobby government to implement productive change. For more information about the new Tuition Grant or getting involved with OUSA, please contact me directly at vped@msu.mcmaster.ca.



The President's Page is sponsored by the McMaster Students Union. It is a space used to communicate with the student body about the projects, goals and agenda of the MSU Board of Directors.

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