



REPORT

From the office of the...

Advocacy Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Sandy Tat
SUBJECT: Advocacy Report #1
DATE: September 27, 2016

UPDATE

Advocacy has successfully hired an executive team and is in the process of promoting and hiring Street Team volunteers. Advocacy worked to increase awareness and visibility of the pillar throughout September, via social media and in-person tabling. Challenges have been developing effective promotional strategies alongside coinciding promotional campaigns from other MSU Services. Successes have been positive reception of the student- and feedback-centered framework of this year's Advocacy operations thus far.

SERVICE USAGE

Reporting "service usage" for the Advocacy Street Team is limited due to the nature of the pillar and given the timeline of September. During the leadership Horizons conference, 42 students signed up to be on the email list and ClubsFest added another 31 student emails. Advocacy executive positions received a total of 26 applicants.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Advocacy held a table during ClubsFest on September 7th. Over thirty students signed up for the emailing list to be alerted for when Advocacy Street Team volunteer applications would be released. Many students stopped by to learn more about Advocacy, took swag, and numerous students provided feedback on advocacy campaigns they would like to see (e.g. tuition transparency). Presence at ClubsFest helped to move forward Advocacy's goals of increased promotions and awareness.

Early September was committed to the hiring process for Advocacy executives to fulfill the positions of Logistics (2), Promotions and Outreach (2), and Volunteer (1) Coordinator. 7 applicants applied for Logistics, 4 for Promotions, and 15 for Volunteer for a total of 26 candidates. 10 interview offers were sent to prospective candidates. The hiring board for the positions consisted of myself, Vicky Liu (External Affairs Commissioner), and Rohoma Zakir (Macademics PTM). Interview questions emphasized conflict resolution, time management, and skills/experiences relevant to the role. Questions, except for situational-based, were sent ahead of time to promote accessibility. 7 hiring offers were sent and accepted. As of September 12th, David Lee and Merima Menzildic are the Logistic Coordinators; Atherai Maran and Sai Galapi are the Promotions and Outreach Coordinators; and Mishaal A Qazi is the Volunteer Coordinator.

On September 15th, Advocacy was present during the Elections Fair in the Moulton EMR to promote first year involvement so as to achieve increased awareness of Advocacy, as well as promote opportunities for first years to learn more about the MSU.

On September 27th, OUSA head office came to McMaster for a Campus Visit. Tabling was set up in Mills Library which allowed for an optimal environment for students to learn about OUSA. It was noted that McMaster had the most students sign up for the OUSA mailing list than any other university that participated in the OUSA campus visits. Note for future improvement is to have Advocacy Street Team and the Education Team engage in greater promotion of the campus visit.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The Advocacy Coordinator will be attending an all-day OUSA Training at Trent on Monday September 26th. Knowledge and skills imparted from the training conference will be brought back and relayed to the Advocacy Street Team executives.

Advocacy Street Team Volunteer applications have opened and will close at 11:59PM on October 2nd. The promotional plan for volunteer applications will commence on September 26th, as to have provided space between current promotions for Diversity Services volunteer applications and MSU Maccess service launch/Humans of Maccess campaign. OUSA General Assembly delegate applications are also open and close on October 2nd. Promotions for OUSA have begun and will pick up in the week of September 26th.

The mental health campaign, #MacTalks, is scheduled for November 7th to 11th, which has moved from its previous date in order to not coincide with the By-Elections and Referendum. A mental health feedback survey has been developed with assistance from the part-time managers of the peer support services, Michael Wooder, and the Advocacy executive team. The survey should help to inform the strategic priorities and programming for the MacTalks campaign. Promotion of the survey should begin on October 2nd. I will be receiving Applied Suicide Intervention Training in case of crises during MacTalks event programming.

The Student Housing/Community Engagement Campaign, organized in collaboration with the External Affairs Committee and Student Community Support Network, is scheduled for November 21st to 25th. Preliminary meetings have begun to discuss strategic priorities and community partnership opportunities for the campaign.

BUDGET

A total of \$100 has been spent for the Advocacy Street Team, primarily from ClubsFest preparation, promotional designs from the Underground, and tokens of appreciation for the volunteer executive team. Budget constraints lie in that this is the first year that Advocacy has a formalized budget, and therefore has no previous guidelines to amount of money that should be budgeted towards promotions, campaigns, etc.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer management has been very successful so far. First executive team meeting was conducted to promote team bonding, volunteer appreciation (dinner and dessert was provided by me; personalized notebooks and welcome letters were provided as a token of appreciation), and discuss aspirations within our positions and expectations from one another, particularly from the Advocacy Coordinator. Professional development has been emphasized as conversations were had early on with the executive team on how they would like to grow in their positions. Growth opportunities are promoted to the executive team, such as for involvement in standing committees, OUSA campus visit, and more.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

As much as I have received training, there has been a lack of explicit protocol and process for administrative and part-time manager responsibilities. For example, promotions training has been limited. I believe part-time managers would benefit by a clearer definition of the roles of the Communications Officer and Student Life Development Coordinator so as to collaborate on tasks that fall within their roles and timelines. Though promotions training is being conducted in the last weeks of September, the dates may not necessarily allow for the part-time manager to attend. I would prefer further outlined steps for financial, event planning, promotional, and administrative responsibilities.

SUCSESSES

The Advocacy Street Team executives and I have engaged in consultations with students who in the past and/or presently have expressed disappointment with advocacy campaigns, such as MacTalks. These consultations are intended to be open to criticisms, have constructive conversations, and work towards solutions. This is embodied in the student-focused, feedback-valued approach the Advocacy Street Team has adopted for this year's campaigns and operations. The conversations have been very warmly received and allowed for Advocacy to have gained support and developed positive working relationships with students who are impacted by this year's advocacy campaigns.