



Report

From the office of the...
Vice President (Education)

TO: Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Blake Oliver, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: First Report
DATE: October 24, 2016

Hi Assembly,

I can't believe it's been almost six months since I started as the MSU's Vice-President Education. After a long and hot summer, and a busy September and October, I am excited to tell you all about the projects and progress I've made on my year plan so far. Since I haven't reported yet, this will be a rather long report. I have tried to address major projects that I've been working on, but inevitably, not everything is covered in this report. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours,

Blake Oliver
Vice President Education
McMaster Students Union

MSU Policy Conference

I have been working hard with the Education department to make this a reality. We have named the conference "MSU Policy Conference" (or informally, Policy Con) and the first conference will take place on Saturday, November 12.

The three policy papers that will be coming to the conference, as well as the Assembly on Sunday, November 13, are:

- 1) Ancillary Fees
- 2) Sexual and Gender Diversity
- 3) International Students

I have taken the lead on Ancillary Fees and I am working with a group of student authors on this paper (Esra Bengizi, Ashley Eom, Jordan Cole, and Urszala Sitarz). So far, this paper has included a Think Tank to outline important topics, and on Saturday, October 15, authors submitted their PCRs (principles, concerns, and recommendations), which will make up the framework for the paper. I have been incredibly impressed with the group of student authors and feel very confident in the PCRs that have been put forward. On Saturday, October 29, authors will be handing in final copies of their papers, with body text included. I am confident that this deadline will be met.

Other papers being worked on have been taken on by the University Affairs Committee (Sexual and Gender Diversity) and the External Affairs Committee (International Students). The latter paper included focus groups and a survey, both of which were successful at hearing student feedback for inclusion in the paper. Both papers are also on track to complete deadlines.

Below is the complete policy paper cycle for this fall:

POLICY PAPER CYCLE - FALL

Task	Date
Think Tanks	Week of Sept. 26
PCRs due	Oct. 15
Rough copies due	Oct. 29
Edited papers due	Nov. 1
Conference	Nov. 12
SRA Meeting	Nov. 13

At Think Tanks we will:

- Set the direction for the policy
- Outline the policy with specific sections
- Designate authors and editors to specific sections
- Review important dates

When PCRs are due, you will:

- Submit a completed version of your Principles, Concerns, and Recommendations to Blake for each assigned section, in a grouped format
- Blake will relay a finalized paper outline to all authors shortly after
- Authors should relay to researchers if they need any additional research done based on the PCRs

When rough copies are due, you will:

- Submit copies of PCRs with body text to Blake
- Blake will compile these and send them out to editors

When edited papers are completed, we will:

- Send out completed papers to conference delegates to read, pre-conference

At the conference, we will:

- Host breakout sessions where students will rotate through rooms for each policy
- Go through each PCR with each group to gain feedback from delegates and SRA members
- Make edits to the policy in the evening based on the gathered feedback

At the SRA meeting, we will:

- Formally present the changes we made to each policy to the SRA
- Debate and pass the final policy

In addition to papers, myself and the Advocacy Coordinator have been busy planning the conference itself. Policy Con registration opened the week of October 17, and will close on October 30. The conference is taking place in Celebration Hall with a target of about 60 - 70 delegates. It will include a free breakfast and lunch, as well as guest speakers (including Sean Van Koughnett, our dean of students). As well, rooms are booked in KTH for breakout sessions (where the delegates will be able to engage with authors). I will be able to provide an update on how registration went at the SRA meeting - as I write this report on Monday evening, we currently have 38 registrants, which I am very pleased with. So far I have worked with the Marketing & Communications Director on developing a strategy for promoting the conference including wide-format banners, posters, and social media. I am excited for students to register!

As well, for everyone's information, we have solidified dates and times for next term's policy-passing conference. This is mainly to ensure that all authors will have time to do research well in advance of the policy (forums, focus groups, surveys, etc.) as second term tends to be a very

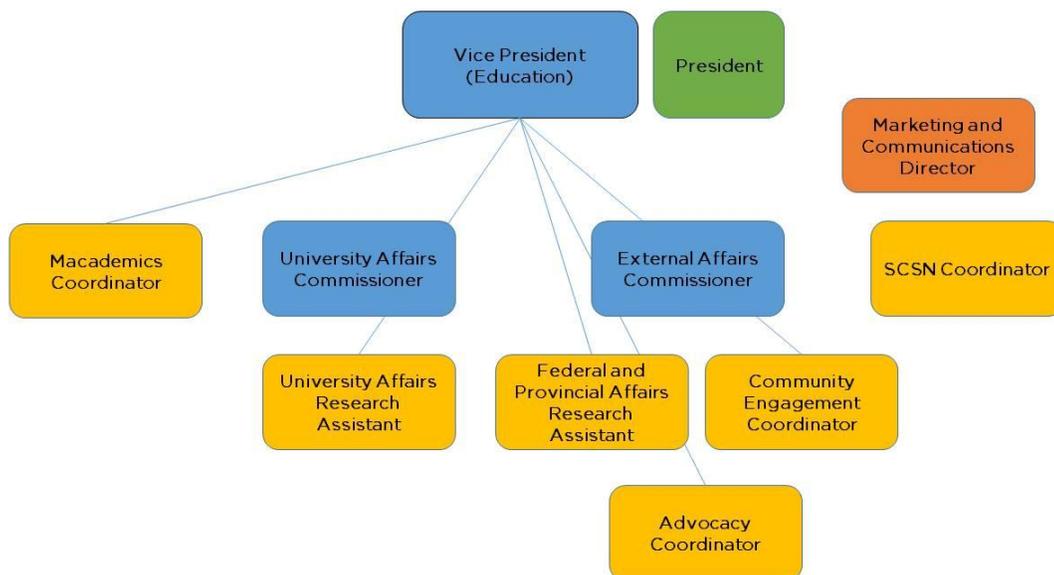
busy time. It is likely that there will be primary research completed in this term.

Task	Date
Think Tanks	Week of Jan. 23
PCRs due (and registration opens)	Feb. 11
Rough copies due (and registration closes)	Feb. 25
Edited papers due (and go out to delegates)	Feb. 27
Conference	Mar. 11
SRA Meeting	Mar. 12

Education Team Restructuring

In my platform, I outlined splitting the External Affairs Commissioner into two roles: the Municipal Affairs Commissioner and the Federal & Provincial Affairs Commissioner, each with their own committee. In evaluating this idea, this turned into a much larger project of re-evaluating the entire structure of the Education Department.

For reference, here is the current structure of the department:



I have done heavy consultation with full-time staff as well as current staff within the Education department, and have now come up with a (fairly long) proposal to restructure the Education department. The issues I outlined in this proposal are:

1. **Overlap in the community engagement and municipal advocacy portfolio**, including the positions of External Affairs Commissioner, the Community Engagement Coordinator, the

- Advocacy Coordinator, and the Student Community Support Network Coordinator.
2. The creation of the Marketing & Communications Director role, which is meant to focus on **Government Relations as well as Communications** - some of which also exists within part-time roles in the Education Team.
 3. Ensuring that **lobbying and advocating are conducted by our elected representatives**, and prioritizing opportunities for these representatives to lobby on their own behalf.
 4. Defining **support roles** within the team - including support for our **events and campaigns**, logistics, and **full research support** for policy creation.
 5. Running campaigns that are **advocacy** focused, and that include clear outcomes and student demonstration for a specific change.
 6. The **project-based nature of research**, which is often at odds with the current division of our research assistants.

This proposal, which includes changes to part-time staff directly under my position, as well as commissioners, will soon be coming to EB as well as the SRA. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the proposed changes!

Academic Affairs Council

This year, I was really interested in ensuring strong participation from the various VP Academics on the Academic Affairs Council. Over the summer, I passed changes through the SRA (meeting 16E) to bylaw 7B - Academic Affairs Council, to remove unnecessary members and add in the University Affairs Commissioner along with the new Macademics Coordinator. I also tried something new - I met with each and every member of the Academic Affairs Council one-on-one over the summer, to get a sense of their goals and platforms. To me, this was a great way to not only get to know the VP Academics, but also to ensure that they felt a strong connection to myself and the MSU.

So far, the Academic Affairs Council meetings have boasted high attendance, and I have been very happy with the amount of work that each member has invested into their role. While it is still occasionally difficult to reach some members, all have been vastly helpful in gathering information about Work-Integrated Learning within their faculty, the Learning Portfolio, and various ancillary fees.

MSU Macademics

Perhaps one of my largest accomplishments to date, I worked with the Executive Board to expand the offerings of the Teaching Awards Committee, ultimately resulting in a brand new service: MSU Macademics. The service now includes:

- Teaching Awards
- Promotion of teaching & learning/pedagogy
- Academic resources
- Course Wiki
- Promotion of course evaluations period

The structure of the service is:

- Macademics Coordinator (PTM)
 - Promotions Executive
 - Teaching Awards Committee Coordinator (and committee)
 - Research & Resources Coordinator
 - Logistics & Volunteer Executive
 - Course Wiki Coordinator

I helped Rohoma hire the executives this year and they are great! Thus far, I have been so happy to see the success of Macademics. I encourage the SRA to check out their new site at www.msumcmaster.ca/macademics, and also read their executive board reports found under EB documents.

Tuition Task Force

Work on projects within the Tuition Task Force are well underway, with members particularly interested in increasing the transparency of fees that students pay into the University. Luckily, Ryan MacDonald sits on tuition task force, and is working to create a financial transparency fair that would not only detail how the MSU fees are spent, but University fees as well.

On the other end, I have been working with OUSA to ensure that tuition freeze is a priority for the organization this year. While the provincial tuition framework is due to expire this year, there is reason to believe that the province will simply extend the current framework for an additional year, and rework the framework next year. This would be potentially positive for students, as this would put the framework closer to the election. We will be closely monitoring and advocating as best we can.

Other tuition and fee-related updates are found elsewhere in this report.

McMaster Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Since beginning my role, I have sat in many meetings and think tanks related to this policy. It is due to reach the Senate by December or January. Some things I am looking forward to seeing in this policy are:

- No mandatory intake appointments at Student Accessibility Services for students who have permanent disabilities - this was a

- clear ask from the MSU's University Accessibility policy paper, and something that I met specifically with the Dean of Students to discuss and ensure would be an outcome of the policy
- Students will no longer have to hand-deliver letters to professors in order to receive accommodations
 - There will be a clear process outlined for retroactive accommodations, for students who require these types of considerations
 - Students will not have to disclose their diagnosis in order to receive accommodations
 - There will be a section regarding interim/informal accommodations, which will ensure that students receive accommodations in good faith if they are temporary or medical documentation is not yet available

I have also written a blog on this topic (available at http://www.ousa.ca/blog_academic_accommodations_for_students_with_disabilities) where I go in depth about what has been happening at Ontario universities since the OHRC intervened on this case last year. It also got picked up by the Academics Top Ten, which was a pretty big accomplishment for me. Feel free to check it out if you are interested!

TA Training

I met with CUPE 3906 in the summer before they began their bargaining process to ensure that TA training was a priority. While they assured me that it was something they were looking for, they mentioned that there are other priorities that their membership deemed more important to them personally. As bargaining is ongoing, the MSU cannot currently do anything to influence the outcome as per our own policies on labour disputes. I am cautiously optimistic about the outcome of bargaining.

Indigenous Course Requirements

Over the summer, I had many meetings with the McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA) about the topic of Indigenous Course Requirements (ICRs). This was something I outlined in my platform, but also something that MISCA has been talking about for years.

In order to facilitate discussion on this topic, I scheduled a meeting for myself, MISCA, and Patrick Deane. This meeting included topics other than the ICR, but I emphasized the need for a committee to explore this topic. In addition, I also attended several meetings with Patrick Deane's senior advisor to follow up on the topic. As an aside, I also wrote a blog on this topic - http://www.ousa.ca/blog_it_s_time_for_canadian-wide_indigenous_course_requirements.

I am happy to say that I now have a seat on a new committee struck by Patrick Deane known as the Joint Indigenous-Administration Consultation Group. The first meeting of this group will be on December 12. I look forward to continuing to discuss ICRs at this group.

Apart from just ICRs, I have been working to form a positive relationship with MISCA and ensure they are being treated fairly within the University community. This is an ongoing project, but something I have dedicated a lot of my time to. Two additional projects that MISCA has approached me about include:

1. An MSU service for Indigenous students - something I think is worth exploring; and
2. Connecting with Indigenous student groups at other campuses. I have reached out to OUSA schools to compile information about their Indigenous student associations on campus, and relayed that to MISCA.

Plastic Water-Bottle Free Campus

Working with Justin and the rest of the team, we worked this summer to implement boxed water at Union Market. We received samples in August (left picture) and we were excited to see them on shelves on Sept. 23 (right picture)!



While we are still currently selling plastic bottled water, this will be phased out by January. We will also be advocating to the University to go plastic water-bottle free as an entire campus via our budget submission, which you can read more about a little bit further down.

Gender Neutral Washrooms

I have been working over the summer with the Equity and Inclusion Office on this issue. In addition, the QSCC and Facility Services has also been looped into the discussion. We have formed a working group to address this and I am confident that we will see a lot of movement on this point this year. Some things that we are working on include:

- Creating a PACBIC Working Group on LGBTQ+
- Researching building code requirements for all-gender washrooms
- Contacting HRC for recommendations
- Researching multi-user stall design
- Determining signage
- Educational campaign to general population

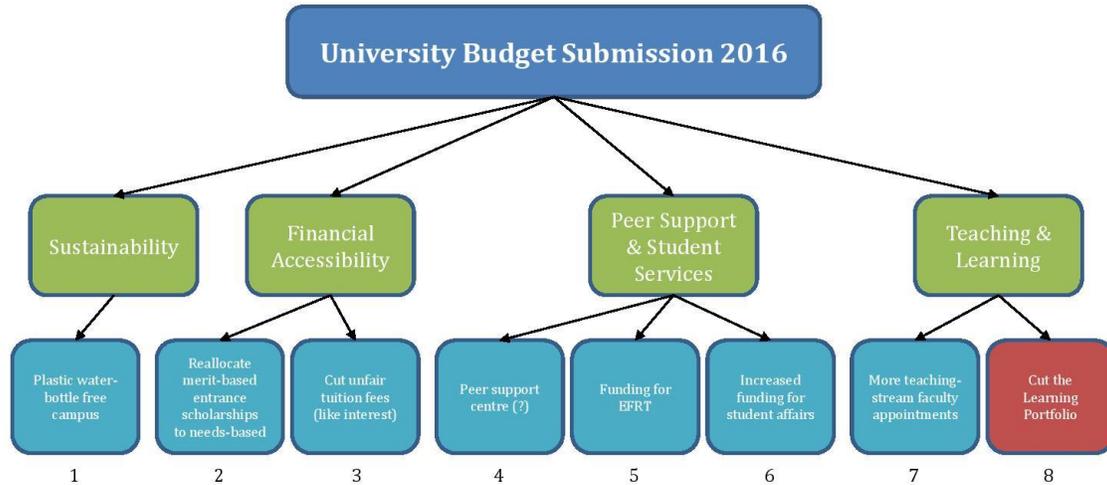
As the working group progresses, I will keep you informed with what is happening on campus. Right now I am working to finally release the audit of washrooms that I worked on as University Affairs Commissioner - it is in the final stages.

Budget Submission

This has been a major project throughout the summer, and one that is ongoing. Through working with the board, various commissioners, and my research assistant, we have done considerable work to prepare for the budget submission. The graphic below outlines the four key areas of the budget submission, with a total of eight asks underneath.

For clarity, the asks are:

- For the University to become a plastic water-bottle free campus (see Plastic Water-Bottle Free above)
- For the University to reallocate merit-based scholarships to needs-based
 - Second year Hooker and Senate scholarships (250k)
 - Some entrance scholarships
- Cut unfair tuition fees - for instance, the "flex plan" fee which charges students \$35 to split up their payment into two terms
- Hire a full-time staff to coordinate training and oversee peer support services on campus
- For the University to fund half of the costs of MSU EFRT
- Increase funding to the Student Affairs department (this will allow services such as Student Success, Student Wellness, Athletics and Recreation, and Student Accessibility Services)
- Increase the amount of teaching-stream faculty appointments (vs. research stream) at the University
- Cut funding to the Learning Portfolio project



- 1 - Justin
- 2 - Blake
- 3 - Blake
- 4 - Shaarujaa
- 5 - Matt Brodka & Meg Hsu
- 6 - Ryan
- 7 - Blake
- 8 - Blake/Justin

Compulsory Ancillary Fees Agreement

Myself, along with other members of the BoD, have been working with Student Affairs to develop a new Compulsory Ancillary Fees agreement with the University. This agreement is what outlines the terms and process by which the University consults students on ancillary fees (for instance, the Student Services fee, the Athletics and Recreation fee, the Student Wellness fee, etc.). We have been working with complex issues, such as how much money should be allocated to SLEF (Student Life Enhancement Fund) versus student services, as well as how much fees can be raised without going to referendum. I will be presenting soon to the assembly to go over the proposed changes to the CAF agreement (likely early in January).

First Year Council

Something I outlined in my year plan was providing more opportunities for first years in residence via an expansion of first year council. The new and improved FYC has been elected now with councillors for every residence. I am excited to work with the new group on advocacy initiatives, as well as a policy paper on the first year transition next term.

Change Camp

Over the summer, myself and the Community Engagement Coordinator have been heavily involved with the planning of Change Camp. We have been trying to expand Change Camp from a singular event into a year-round initiative that encompasses many events throughout a one-year cycle. Some things that we have been working on include:

- Creating workshops to tackle each of the six "Your Future Hamilton" themes - the MSU is considering hosting one of these workshops under the theme of Student Engagement (November 17 - mark your calendar!)
- Working to support Hack the City, an initiative spurred by undergraduate students and allows them to take on real questions in the city via a case-competition/hack-a-thon format
- Holding a workshop to encourage students to complete a Change Camp recommendation via 100 in 1 day, and give them the tools they need to bring ideas to fruition

OUSA Ancillary Fees Policy

This term, I am authoring the OUSA Ancillary Fees policy along with Ryan MacDonald, and my colleagues Leah Brockie from Queen's and Colin Aitchison from Laurier. This policy has taken a lot of time and research to complete, but it is now in editing stages. Ryan and I mainly focused on the policy surrounding fair-cost sharing, which included:

- Course-specific fees (textbooks, physical and digital learning materials, course ware, field trip fees, etc)
- Student contribution to operating funding of universities
- System-wide exemption under the provincial ancillary fee framework
- Vendor-wide exemption under the provincial ancillary fee framework
- Work-integrated learning placement fees
- Funding for essential student services
- Funding for capital projects

Our paper will be passed at OUSA General Assembly on November 6.

OUSA Best Practice Sharing Day

Once a year, all OUSA schools come together for Best Practice Sharing Day. This year, McMaster hosted Best Practice Sharing Day in August. It was a great opportunity for all executives to share what they are working on and learn what other student unions do.

OUSA Campus Visit

I was so happy with how Campus Visit went this year! We set up in Mills plaza, which gave us a lot of traffic - staff suggested we continue to use

this location in following years. Campus visit's aim is really to let more students know about OUSA who might not - and we got the most students out of all OUSA schools to sign up for the mailing list! Thank you to everyone who helped out.

OUSA General Assembly Hiring

Each year, it is up to the Vice President Education and SRA External Affairs Commissioner to hire delegates for OUSA General Assembly. This year, we wanted to have a hiring process that more closely reflected what we were looking for in potential delegates. We made the following changes to the interview structure:

1. We sent out some questions in advance, to allow time and research for candidates that have not been involved in this portfolio before
2. We focused on ensuring that candidates understood provincial advocacy specifically
3. We added questions for returning candidates
4. We incorporated a question that focused on ability to critique policy statements. On their written applications, candidates identified which of the three policy papers they are most excited about. With this information, I was able to circulate sample policy statements to candidates from each paper. What I essentially did was use real policy statements in the draft papers, and edit them to include something that I didn't agree with, or that was at the very least debatable. We were looking for candidates who were able to meaningfully engage and debate the statement.

With these new practices, I feel extremely confident in my team of delegates for general assembly!

Provincial Advocacy

Over the summer, I attended some meetings with regards to provincial advocacy. This included:

- Meeting with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of Education with regards to non-financial barriers to access to post-secondary education
- Meeting with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development with regards to changes to student financial aid with the impending OSAP and OSG implementation
- Our Hamilton Post Secondary Advisory Group, where we lobby Ted McMeekin on provincial issues. We mainly talked to him about:
 - Data accessibility, and what was formerly Bill 127, the Pathways to Post Secondary Act (before parliament was prorogued)

- Funding for more essential student services, such as Student Wellness, and Student Accessibility Services
- The need for more work-integrated learning opportunities
- OUSA meetings:
 - Transition Conference - met incoming Steering Committee, as well as stakeholders from OCUFA, CSA, COU, ONCAT, etc. and did some training, as well as shared priorities
 - Strategic Planning Conference - passed budget and decided on strategic priorities, amongst other things (see full report) - included Tuition and Student Support Services as priorities, both of which were in my platform
 - 6 steering committee meetings (one each month)

Federal Advocacy

In addition to advocating to our MPP at HPSAG, we also now advocate to our MP, Filomena Tassi. These are the topics we brought up with her:

- Incentives for sustainable infrastructure in capital projects
- Expanding eligibility for grants for students with disabilities
- Lifting the cap on the Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) to allow more Indigenous students to access post-secondary education

Meanwhile, federal advocacy has been a whirlwind. I will give you a rundown of what has happened:

June - I begin calls with Western USC about continuing ADVOCAN this year, they are receptive.

July - calls continue, with membership including Western USC, Waterloo Feds, Queen's AMS, UTSU (University of Toronto Students' Union), UBC AMS, UMSU (University of Manitoba Students' Union), and USSU (University of Saskatchewan Students' Union). I start to realize that I am uncomfortable with the direction the group is heading in. For instance, the group wants to move forward with only one ask for lobbying week, when in the previous year, there were three.

Meanwhile, Justin and I travel to Winnipeg for CASA's Policy and Strategy Conference. We are hoping to influence CASA's priorities for the year, as well as assess the organization for future years. We realize that CASA's priorities are not what we expected. As CASA has about 22 member schools, they send out a questionnaire and ask each member to rank potential priorities. The finalized list consists of 4:

- Economic Barriers to PSE
- Research and Innovation
- Student Employment
- Student Wellness

We quickly realize that since CASA represents a small number of graduate and college associations, they must include priorities that appeal to this group, even though they are in the minority (for instance, research and innovation). As well, we realize that there is a lot of regionalism in CASA (for instance, there is a strong coalition of Alberta schools, who vote in a block for all motions). The board of directors seems very disconnected from the membership, and member schools are simply not comparable in most cases to the MSU (much smaller with less resources). We are asked not to engage in priority discussions. Ultimately, we are unhappy with CASA.

August - I continue to become uncomfortable with the direction of ADVOCAN as many student associations want to advocate on increasing university funding for indirect costs of research. Myself and the board of directors feel that not only is this not a priority for the MSU membership, but it is not even a student-centric priority - it is a university priority. I attempt with some success for the second priority to be the PSSSP cap, but I am unable to talk about students with disabilities, international students, student employment, or sustainable infrastructure, all of which are also important federal priorities.

Around this time, I reached out to my colleague at WLUSU (the Wilfred Laurier University Student Union), Colin Aitchison, University Affairs. WLUSU is an OUSA school, but they do not have any federal affiliation. They are also not a U15 school, although they are similar to us in terms of size and scope. I asked Colin about what WLUSU was doing this year for federal advocacy, and he let me know that they go up to Ottawa each year independently to lobby - and he asked me to come along.

September - I bring up the issues I am facing with ADVOCAN and CASA to the BoD as well as Executive Board. I am given a directive to lobby with WLUSU rather than either of these groups. I formally tell ADVOCAN that the MSU will not be lobbying alongside them this year, but that we are open to continuing next year should priorities align.

October - Our federal advocacy week is scheduled from Monday, November 14 - Friday, November 18. I will be attending along with Justin, Vicky (SRA External Affairs Commissioner), Colin (WLUSU VP University Affairs), and Phil (WLUSU AVP University Affairs). These are our priorities:

- Students with Disabilities
- Indigenous Students
- International Students

Overall, I feel much happier with this decision, as we are able to lobby on issues that I was elected to lobby on. As well, I am excited that Vicky is able to join us - it's rare that an External Affairs Commissioner is able to actually advocate externally, due to the transportation and time commitment required, but it all worked out.

We have not yet solidified our asks, but when that is complete, I am happy to update the assembly. The meetings we have set up (as of now) are (26 in total):

- Filomena Tassi, MP for Hamilton West- Ancaster - Dundas
- Bardish Chagger, MP for Waterloo and Minister of Small Business and Torusim, Leader of Government in the House of Commons
- Pam Damoff, MP for Oakville North - Burlington
- Mark Gerretsen, MP for Kingston and the Thousand Islands
- Seamus O'Regan, MP for St. John's South - Mount Pearl
- Bob Bratina, MP for Hamilton East - Stoney Creek
- Harold Albrecht, MP for Kitchener - Conestoga
- Celina Ceaser-Chava, MP for Whitby, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
- David Sweet, MP for Flamborough - Glanbrook
- Brian May, MP for Cambridge
- Lloyd Longfield, MP for Guelph, Chair of the Liberal Innovation & Post-Secondary Education Caucus
- Raj Saini, MP for Kitchener-Centre
- Lillian Eva Dyck, Saskatchewan Senator, Indigenous Rights Advocate
- Kellie Leitch, MP for Simcoe-Grey, Official Opposition Critic for Health, Candidate for CPC Leader
- Marco Mendicino, MP for Eglinton Lawrence
- Raj Grewal, MP for Brampton East
- Peter Schiefke, MP for Vaudreuil - Soulanges, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
- Paul Facuette, Parliamentary Affairs Advisor to the President of the Treasury Board
- Phil McColeman, MP for Brantford-Brant, Official Opposition Deputy Finance Critic
- Cathy McLeod, MP for Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo, Official Opposition Indigenous Affairs Critic
- Michelle Rempel, MP for Calgary Nose Hill, Official Opposition Immigration Critic
- Marwan Tabbara, MP for Kitchener South - Hespeler
- Richard Cannings, MP for South Okanagan - West Kootenay, NDP Critic for Post-Secondary Education
- Rachel Harder, MP for Lethbridge, Official Opposition Critic for Youth
- Michael Chong, MP for Wellington - Halton Hills, Candidate for CPC Leader
- Francois-Philippe Champagne, MP for Saint-Maurice - Champlain, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance

In terms of the future of federal advocacy for the MSU - it's a big question mark, but not just for us. CFS, CASA, and ADVOCAN all have

gaping flaws that I do not think can be overcome. People are starting to notice as well - many schools signed a letter this year signaling their unhappiness with CFS, with the intent to change bylaws to make it easier to leave the organization. As well, as previously described with CASA, the structure of representing graduates, undergraduates, and college students just does not work or make sense. I know from conversations of some larger schools within CASA that they are considering leaving due to some of these issues. Finally, with ADVOCAN, the group only consists of 6 - 8 of the U15 schools, while excluding other schools (such as Laurier or Laurentian) that may be powerful allies, but do not "fit" as they are not a U15 school. I will be interested to see what changes are made to these organizations over the next few years, but for now, I would suggest that the MSU continue to remain unaffiliated with the various federal organizations.

Supporting the SRA

I have been working with Ryan and Aquino from SRA Science to help them achieve their platform point of more podcasted courses on campus. Mainly, this has involved liaising with the registrar, and with Audio Visual Services. As well, I have been working with Ikram from SRA Social Sciences to work on her platform point on Work Integrated Learning, which will be worked into the WIL campaign we are hosting through OUSA.

I have also been making a concerted effort to bring my University Affairs and External Affairs commissioners to more of my lobbying meetings and empower them to complete their platforms. For instance, I have been working with Meg to implement her platform point on extended library hours in Thode, and I am able to bring Victoria to Ottawa with me to lobby federally. Although it is not always possible with the low number of hours given to each position, I think it is really important to work with these SRA standing committees and give them the opportunity to really advocate for students.

Finally, I just want to reiterate to all SRA members that I am always happy to help if you want to chat about platform points. Since I do this full-time, I might be able to point you in the direction, or set up a meeting with someone who can help you. The board is here to be your resource.

Valedictorian Selection

I sat on all of the committees for valedictorian selection, and all fall valedictorians have been selected. Looking forward to re-doing the process in the Spring, however this time I will be including SRA members on committees relevant to their faculty - so be sure to stay on the look-out for that in February and March.

Network for Campus-Community Partnerships

The Vice-President Education sits on McMaster's Network for Campus Community Partnerships (NCCP), which aims to further community engagement initiatives within the University. It is also related to Change Camp as much of the membership overlaps. The vision and purpose of this group has greatly changed within the past year, with the largest change being the addition of working groups. These working groups include:

- Community-engaged education
- Community-engaged service
- Community-engaged research
- Poverty and inclusion
- Healthy spaces and communities
- Knowledge sharing and open access

I now sit on the community-engaged service working group. One thing that I am working on as a part of this group is introducing clubs training for community engagement. This was something that was highlighted at last year's student summit on community engagement - we have many clubs that participate in community engagement, but we many do not have the skills to create lasting partnerships within the community. We will be looking to reach out to clubs that currently do community engagement in order to assess what type of training might be best.

AWWCA - Ainslie Wood Westdale Community Association

Justin and I attended the Annual General Meeting of the AWWCA in order to meet some community members and participate in discussion. As well, we purchased memberships for some EA and SCSN members, in order for the MSU to have more of a voice at this table.

Transit Advocacy

In the summer, an issue arose with regards to the King bus line, where some Westdale permanent residents were advocating for this bus to be removed from Sterling/campus, and re-routed to Main St. Justin and I met with Ward 1 Councilor, Aidan Johnston, to advocate for the line to remain on campus. Thus far, the route has remained on Sterling and campus.

Medical Notes

Over the summer, the SWC began charging students \$20 for medical notes. This was largely due to the lack of compensation for writing these notes - most physicians at SWC are paid through billing to OHIP. However, medical notes cannot be billed to OHIP. I met with Sean Van Koughnett and leadership of the SWC to express some concerns, and this decision was reversed (i.e. SWC will not be charging for medical

notes this year). However, they will be tracking notes and proposing a solution for next year. In our Ancillary Fees paper, there will be a recommendation for this issue, in order to hopefully prevent students from shouldering the cost of these notes.

Learning Portfolio

Justin and I have been sitting on the Provost's Committee on the Learning Portfolio. As it stands, we have many concerns with the Learning Portfolio, and thus we will likely be recommending that it is cut in our budget submission. We attended meetings for the committee over the summer and were not convinced that this tool added any value to students, even with the new PepplePad software.

Ontario Universities Taking Action Against Sexual Assault

I attended the first OUTA conference with Lainey Stirling, WGEN Coordinator, in August. Overall I felt as though the conference was a positive experience, and we were able to hear about some successful programs from other universities in the country.

Peer Tutoring Network

Over the past several years, the MSU has been working with the Student Success Centre (SSC) to create the Peer Tutoring Network. It all started with Teddy Saull - MSU President in 2014/15 - who ran on the idea of creating a low-cost peer tutoring program for students. In its current form, the Peer Tutoring Network has two real components:

1) HelpHub - Almost like Uber but for tutors, anyone can be a tutor as long as they have a B+ in the course they are tutoring. Students can rate tutors on the site. As well, tutors have a profile where they can list qualifications, training, etc.

2) Students pay \$10 USD/hour to the program, while student tutors are compensated \$15 USD/hour. The \$5 subsidy is provided through SLEF.

Over the summer, I worked with faculty societies to try to make the launch of this program successful. The McMaster Engineering Society (MES) was very supportive. The MES had their own successive peer tutoring initiative for years, but had noticed a lot of logistical issues with administering the program. They have chosen to combine their program with ours, and now Engineering students are able to access the Peer Tutoring Network for \$5 USD/hour due to additional subsidy from the MES.

Unfortunately, the McMaster Science Society (MSS) has decided to launch their own peer tutoring initiative at the same time that the SSC has launched theirs. Although I and SRA Science met with the leadership from the MSS several times to express concern, ultimately

these were not heard. It is disappointing but we hope to see the MSS collaborate with the SSC in the future. Overall, there is really no benefit to having a separate program. Integrating all programs into one peer tutoring network ensures that students from all faculties have access to tutors for all courses, allows training programs for tutors to still exist (as they can be listed on their profile), and ensures that student money is being spent responsibly. Happy to answer any questions on this as well.

Bay Area Economic Summit

Victoria Liu and I attended the Bay Area Economic Summit in Burlington this year. This conference was run jointly by the Burlington Chamber of Commerce (BCC) and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (HCC), and was about economic development in the "Bay Area". Many impressive attendees were there, including the Premier, Kathleen Wynne. Overall we felt as though it was a worthwhile opportunity, and would suggest sending 2 - 3 delegates in the future.

International Students

A few weeks ago, an international student from Nigeria (Chukky Ibe, former SRA Social Sciences) reached out to me about an issue facing Nigerian international students. Essentially, due to an economic crisis in the country, there are about 60 students affected who are unable to access money to pay tuition, rent, etc. We met with Dee Henne, the CFO and AVP Administration and her team to talk about a long-term solution to the issue. We are re-convening in the coming weeks to propose solutions.

Staff Management

In addition to restructuring, much of my time is spent managing my wonderful education team. Most of you know that I directly see five part-time staff: the Federal and Provincial Research Assistant, the University Affairs Research Assistant, the Community Engagement Coordinator, and the Macademics Coordinator. I don't come from a background of management so it has been a learning curve for me, but I have worked with my staff to try to find ways that they communicate and work best.

In addition to staff directly under me, I also work closely with the talented and intelligent University Affairs and External Affairs commissioners - Megan Hsu and Vicky Liu. So far we have accomplished a lot together with Policy Con, and I am happy to see these standing committees thriving!

One thing to note is that we are hiring an additional temporary Community Engagement Coordinator to assist with special projects for the rest of term 1. This position will be hired by next week.

Upcoming Events and Initiatives:

- *OUSA Delegate Training - Sunday, October 30* - will be training all OUSA delegates on the papers, procedure, and what to expect for General Assembly.
- *OUSA General Assembly - Thursday, November 3 - Sunday, November 6* - we will be passing three policy papers: Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, Ancillary Fees, and Rural and Northern Students. We will also be deciding on papers for the next term!
- *Policy Con - Saturday, November 12* - can't wait to see you all there! We will be passing three policy papers: Ancillary Fees, Sexual and Gender Diversity, and International Students.
- *Federal Advocacy Week - Sunday, November 13 - Friday, November 18* - detailed earlier in the report, will update on outcomes at a later date.
- *Provincial Advocacy Week (Lobby Con) - Sunday, November 27 - Thursday, November 31* - like federal advocacy week, we will be lobbying the provincial government with OUSA. Our priorities for this week will be tuition, data collection, and sexual violence prevention.
- *MacTalks - November 7 - November 11* - our annual mental health campaign
- *OUSA Work Integrated Learning Campaign - November 21 - November 25* - a campaign focused on diversity of work-integrated learning experiences, and collecting information from students on the topic
- *Community Engagement/Student Housing Campaign - November 28 - December 2* - a campaign jointly run by EA and SCSN to promote engaging in the community and being a good neighbour

Upcoming Projects: objectives outlined in my Year Plan that I will be taking on throughout the second half of my term

- Long-Term Plan - something Ryan and I are both interested in creating, him more so on the long-term vision for services, and myself more so on the advocacy priorities
- Assessment of Blended Learning Courses - doing primary research to learn from students about their experiences in blended learning courses

- Working on getting earlier exam schedules - working with the University to release exam schedules earlier
- First Year (Transition) policy paper - to be completed next term. along with the Indigenous Students policy paper from External Affairs and the Food Security policy paper from University Affairs in the Spring Policy Con
- Strategic Mandate Submission to the University - our SMA will be updated this year, and the MSU will do a submission to highlight important aspects to students
- Working on the establishment of an MSU Sexual Violence working group
- Gaining membership on the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Workforce Development - to advocate for student employment within Hamilton
- Planning a City Council presentation - on the results of the Your City Survey, particularly in regards to student housing
- Municipal Advocacy Week - tentatively scheduled for the first week back to school in January
- The first ever municipal HPSAG - a Hamilton Post Secondary Advisory Group (Redeemer Student Senate and Mohawk Students Alliance) with city councilors and the mayor
- Lobbying for improved student housing, including at the provincial level
- Authoring the OUSA Indigenous Students Policy (depending on if it is picked at the General Assembly to go to Spring GA)

Conclusion

This report is a snapshot of what I've been working on over the past six months. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. While some projects are directly from my year plan, others are responses to problems that have arisen throughout the year, or a re-visioning of a project that I have decided to go in a different direction with. I am excited to chat with you all about what has happened so far!