Dear Members of the Assembly,

Hello everyone! It has been a great year thus far, and I can’t believe how fast time seems to be flying. Into our seventh month, we are now past the halfway mark – terrifying. The past couple of months since I have last updated you all have all been filled with lots of hard work, dedication, and passion from all corners of the MSU. My primary focus this term was the Pulse expansion, as well as the new student space in IWC. This project is very important for many reasons so Ryan and I wanted to make sure we covered ever little detail before presenting the final plan to the SRA. I will focus on three projects I have been working on over the past couple of months even though they are still ongoing and will take a bit more time to complete. Reach out anytime if you want to talk more about other projects/initiatives I am working on that are not touched on in this report.

Now without further adieu, here is my Presidents report covering the time since I last presented at the begging of the term. Again, feel free to ask me any questions you may have with regards to projects I have been working on. And as always, I am always here to support you and your vision in order to help you all achieve all of your specific mandates.

PROGRESSION ON YEAR PLAN:
1) Sustainability

As I mentioned in the last report, I was working all summer on a sustainable infrastructure plan which officially got announced earlier on in the term. 43 million
dollars will be invested into ABB, as well as a campus wide electricity and heat
cogeneration (COGEN project), which enhances McMaster’s ongoing energy
conservation efforts. This project was something I was quite passionate about as it
will reduce McMaster’s carbon footprint exponentially over the coming years.
Government Relations and myself put in many hours to make sure this plan was
created efficiently, as well as reaching out to all of our local, provincial, and federal
politicians to ensure we received adequate funding.

Another ongoing project that falls under this category is the plastic water
bottle free policy the MSU will be creating. Blake and I have been spearheading this
idea from the summertime and we are excited to see where we are now. Boxed
water is currently in place, and selling as we speak alongside other water choices. As
of January, the plan is to eliminate the other water bottle choices at Union Market, as
well as work with the University to follow suit. There has been a lot of positive
feedback with regards to this single use plastic water bottle free initiative, so we are
excited to take the next steps soon.

2) Pulse Expansion + Student Activity Building

You have all seen the comprehensive plan Ryan and I put forward last week to
the to everyone. This project has definitely taken the most amount of attention over
my term. Rather than going over each detail on this report, I will provide the link
(msumcmaster.ca/president) for a further reference. This project is something that I
ran on back in the January election, and is an idea that has come together with the
support of the BoD, Student Affairs, and Athletics and Recreation. I can’t express
enough how proud I am to have worked with everyone on this project, and
absolutely could not have gotten to this point without that help. We are of course
wanting a ton of student feedback on this project so Ryan and myself can make this
as student focused as possible.

3) Health Science Library extended hours

Another platform point of mine was extending the HSL hours during the exam
periods. I have been working alongside Jennifer McKinnell who is the Director of HSL,
and we have made great strides in making this platform point a reality. A few of the
main challenges we have faced revolve around the buildings infrastructure. Because
that space is attached to the hospital, there is a large concern with students having
direct access to the hospital after hours. Another issue we are sorting out is how to
accommodate access from the front of HSL during the winter season (snow
clearance, proper lighting, etc). Jennifer has been extremely helpful with progressing
this vision, and though we are close to making it a reality, there are still a few more
hurdles for us to stride over.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

This past weekend I attended the OUSA Fall GA with Blake and our amazing
team of MSU delegates. This GA took place in London at Western University, and was
on overall success on multiple fronts. The three papers that were being discussed
were, “Northern and Rural Students”, “Ancillary Fees”, as well as “Sexual Violence”.
It’s always an interesting experience to see what other schools from across the
province have to say about specific issues. One of the most beneficial aspects of this
conference for me is the ability to talk to various student union leaders, and learn
about what they are working on/their overall structure. I find it is always best to learn
by looking at what others have done, where they have failed, and where they have
succeeded. Building relationships with other student unions can also be crucial
toward organizational growth, and future aspirations. This GA was a great experience,
Blake did fantastic job coordinating the day by day, and our group made me proud
to call myself a Marauder.

A few weeks ago I went on a trip with the Director of Alumni Advancement to
Montreal, Halifax, and Boston. The purpose of this trip was to speak to fellow Alumni
while providing them a chance to touch base with representatives from the school
they once attended. The feedback from these events was terrific – it truly is
wonderful to see just how proud each and everyone one of these grads are to call
McMaster home. I got to meet lots of outstanding individuals who inspired me to
reach for the best in myself. Going to these cities, as a representative of the MSU, truly
is a humbling experience, and a privilege I do not take lightly by any means.
UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Looking ahead I will be going on a few more road trips, mainly to advocate the provincial, and federal government on student needs. I am looking forward to the discussions I will have with various government officials, as well as provide Blake any support she will be needing to achieve her overall mandate.

The Student Assistance Program has been officially rolled out and is available for full usage. It is the Boards plan to continue to promote this service to all undergraduate students, as well as invest more resources to make it more well known across campus. This service is an excellent resource for all students to help aid them with not only with mental health services, but also legal, finance and more.

I am continuing to work on courseware by contacting more faculties for the second term of term. There has been a focus on science right now as we are working on developing the 1M03 course pack which is fairly complicated, but will open the door for future first year courses. There have been a few unforeseen challenges that have come up in pursuit of this task, but we are working through them.

The first half of this term has been incredibly efficient, and we as an SRA have gotten lots of work done. I can't express how proud I am of each one of you, and I am so excited to finish off this year with everyone. I get the pleasure to spend each day with a Board of Directors who inspire me to be my best at all times, and genuinely care so much about this organization, and school - their passion is contagious. As always, never hesitate to talk to me for any support you may need in the future, and remember that like Shaarujaa’s window, my door is always open.

Talk soon,

Justin Monaco-Barnes
President & CEO
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