



Report

From the office of the...

Vice President (Education)

TO: Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Blake Oliver, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: Education and Advocacy Operating Policy
DATE: March 22, 2017

Hello Assembly!

I am presenting major edits today to the Education and Advocacy Department operating policy as per my presentation last week. For further information, I have attached the plan I originally presented to the BoD, which goes into specifics of why I have made changes. It is a little outdated but should provide some context.

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Regards,

Blake Oliver
Vice President (Education)
McMaster Students Union

McMaster Students Union

The Education Team: Master Plan

A Blake Oliver Dream in a Ryan MacDonald Package

Foreword

Treasured colleagues and dear friends,

Over the past ten months, I have had the great privilege of being the Vice-President Education of the McMaster Students Union. I entered with a platform mostly based on advocacy priorities, but also based on some of our internal processes and structures based on my previous experience within the Education department. Some of my platform points that were operational in nature included:

1. **Creating MSU Policy Conference** - I wanted to overhaul the way that we research, write, and pass policy statements and papers by introducing a system where myself, the University Affairs Committee, and the External Affairs committee all author one policy per term, and present the policies to the SRA during a conference to allow for meaningful student engagement and input.
2. **Splitting the External Affairs Commissioner and Committee** - I wanted to explore dividing the committee into the Municipal Affairs Committee and the Federal & Provincial Affairs Committee, to better resource this aspect of the department.
3. **Adding services to Teaching Awards Committee** - I worked on this project over the summer and created the MSU's newest service, MSU Macademics, along with a new position that I oversee, the MSU Macademics Coordinator.
4. **Creating an Annual Campaigns policy** - I wanted to outline goals and targets for campaigns that are run annually by the MSU.

Along the way, I've found that one of my biggest roadblocks has been navigating the complexity of the Education team in its current format. Some of the above platform points have already been implemented - Teaching Awards has become Macademics, and the first Policy Conference will be held in November - but with others, I have taken some time to evaluate the best way to proceed. With my experience thus far in the role, the biggest issues I have experienced so far in the team (some of which I was aware of and tried to address in the above platform points) 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.

In tackling these issues, I have worked with staff currently in the roles, as well as the Board of Directors, to suggest changes to the structure that I believe would positively affect the Education Team. And thus, The Education Team: Master Plan was born.

I am excited to take you on a journey through the history of the Education Team, the current structure, the challenges of said structure, and my vision for newly defined roles within the team.

To end with an inspirational quote,

"All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they are now getting. If we want different results, we must change the way we do things." - Tom Northup

While we have been lucky to achieve positive advocacy outcomes over the past few years, I strongly believe that these results could be made more successful with a change in our current advocacy operations.

Truly yours,

Blake Oliver
Vice-President Education 2016-17
McMaster Students Union

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Current Structure

The current structure of the Education Team, as outline in MSU Operating Policy "Education and Advocacy Department" is as follows:

- **President** - supervised by students-at-large
- **Vice-President Education** - supervised by the SRA
- **SRA University Affairs Commissioner** (and the SRA Standing Committee on University Affairs) - supervised by the SRA
- **SRA External Affairs Commissioner** (and the SRA Standing Committee on External Affairs) - supervised by the SRA
- **Advocacy Coordinator** (and the Advocacy Street Team) - supervised by the Vice President Education
- **University Affairs Research Assistant** - supervised by the Vice President Education
- **Provincial and Federal Affairs Research Assistant** - supervised by the Vice President Education
- **Community Engagement Coordinator** - supervised by the Vice President Education

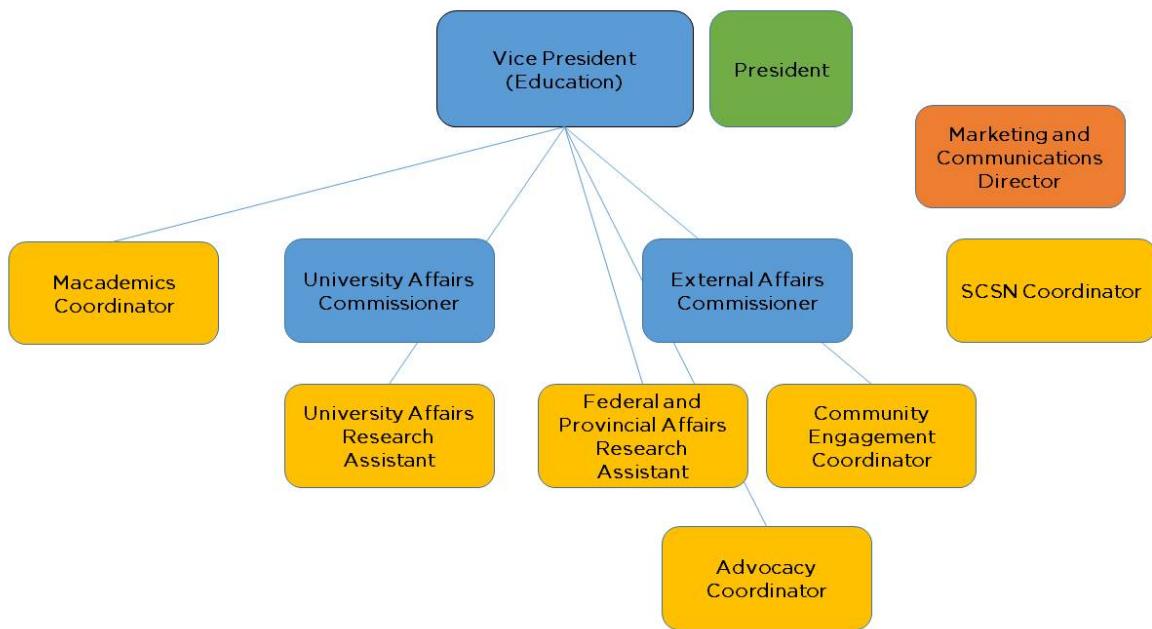
In addition to these roles, other roles addressed in this plan will include:

- **MSU Macademics Coordinator** - supervised by the Vice President Education
- **MSU Student Community Support Network Coordinator** - supervised by the Vice President Administration
- **Marketing and Communications Director** - supervised by the General Manager

While this report will later go into detail on the various roles and responsibilities of these positions, this section will briefly detail the structure of the current system via the infographic below.

Please use the legend as follows:

- Blue - elected and held accountable by the SRA
- Green - elected and held accountable by students
- Yellow - part-time staff hired and held accountable by the Executive Board through relevant Vice President
- Orange - permanent full-time staff held accountable by the General Manager



MSU Advocacy: A Brief and Recent History

The MSU Constitution states that the MSU "will seek to facilitate communication between the student body, the University, and other organizations". Who performed this aspect of the organization has changed greatly over the past few years. From the MSU's inception to today, the organization has joined and left several provincial and federal lobbying entities such as CASA, OUSA, CFS-O, and CFS. As of the writing of this document, the MSU is current a member of OUSA, and no federal lobbying organization.

Thank you to John McGowan and Michael Wooder for your contributions on this aspect.

- 1992- Three executive positions were created: **AVP External Affairs**, **AVP University Affairs**, and AVP Services and Promotion. These positions operated at the level below the Board of Directors.
- 1999 - AVP External Affairs and AVP University Affairs were amalgamated to create the Board position, **Vice President Education**.
- ~90s - 2004 - A full-time employee, the **MSU Researcher**, investigated projects and submitted reports for the SRA, the Executive Board, and the Board of Directors. This position also monitored aspects of educational policy and would advise the board. As well, the position maintained the "MSU Research Library", which focused on materials relating to political and educational issues.
- 2005 - The MSU Researcher role was amalgamated with a role known as the "Public Relations Director" and evolved to become the "Student Life Development Coordinator", with the addition of a part-time Public Relations Assistant and a part-time **Research Assistant**
- 2008 - The role of Research Assistant evolved into **Government Relations Assistant** and **OUSA Campus Coordinator**.
- 2011 - The role of OUSA Campus Coordinator evolved into the **Advocacy Coordinator** and the **Policy & Research Assistant**
- 2012 - The role of **Research Assistant** was re-introduced
- 2015 - The role of Research Assistant was evolved into **University Affairs Research Assistant**, **Federal & Provincial Research Assistant**, and **Community Engagement Coordinator**

How we Advocate within the MSU

To better define the current roles within the organization, as well as what is needed within the organization, this report defines the **necessary tasks** for the Education department to complete:

- **Primary Research** - also known as information-gathering, this is the action of collecting data and opinion from students. It could take place via:
 - Events (for instance, ChangeCamp or PolicyCon)
 - Forums (for instance, the Accessibility Forum)
 - Focus Groups (for instance, the Sexual and Gender Diversity Focus Groups)
 - Surveys (for instance, the Your City Survey)
- **Secondary Research** - collecting and compiling information via studies that have already been completed
- **Policy-Writing** - defining principles, concerns, and recommendations of students to a stakeholder, in a way that proposes educated solutions to the issues students are facing
- **Campaigns** - connecting with students or demonstrating student interest on an issue. It could consist of:
 - Events
 - Promotional Strategy
 - Volunteer Management (Advocacy Street Team or other volunteers)
- **Lobbying in-person** - meeting with decision-makers and presenting ones point of view. This could occur via:
 - Regular meetings (for instance, the Hamilton Post-Secondary Advisory Group meetings, or Admin Con)
 - Lobbying weeks (for instance, Hamilton Advocacy Week, or Federal Advocacy Week)
 - Government/Stakeholder Relations
- **Written lobbying** - proposing a change in writing to a decision-maker (for instance, the University Budget Submission)
 - Submissions
 - Other written content (blog posts, reports, articles, etc.)

To further define roles and responsibilities, we must also ask - **who do we advocate to?** There are four main categories:

- University Affairs (advocating to **University administration**)
- Municipal Affairs (advocating to **city councillors, staff, and the AWWCA**)
- Provincial Affairs (advocating to **MPPs, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development**) - oftentimes done via OUSA

- Federal Affairs (advocating to **MPs**) - occasionally but not currently done through a federal lobbying organization such as CASA

Roles and Responsibilities of Current Positions

To detail roles and responsibilities of current staff, the next pages consist of tables to indicate which areas each position is currently operating within. The table will indicate which responsibility the position is taking on (for instance, conducting secondary research) along with which stakeholder the position caters towards (for instance, the University).

Please use the legend as follows:

- **Green** - an responsibility of the position that is currently being filled
- **Yellow** - a responsibility often or occasionally taken on by the position that is neither expected nor consistently performed from year-to-year
- **Red** - a responsibility rarely taken on by the position that is neither expected nor consistently performed from year-to-year
- White - a responsibility never taken on by the position, and is not expected to be taken on by the position
- **Blue** - a responsibility that is expected of the position, but that they have not assumed

University Affairs Commissioner

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Focus Groups	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	Surveys	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Secondary Research	Secondary Research	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Campaigns	Events	Yellow	White	White	White
	Promotion	Yellow	White	White	White
	Volunteers	Yellow	White	White	White
In-person lobbying	Meetings	Green	White	White	White
	Lobbying weeks	N/A	White	White	White
	Gov. Relations	N/A	White	White	White
Written lobbying	Submissions	Green	White	White	White
	Blogs/other content	Green	White	White	White

- Information-gathering through student consultation at forums, focus groups, and via surveys
- Secondary research
- Policy-writing (2 policies per term)
- Lobbying University administration
- Submissions to University administration (working on budget submission)

- May occasionally perform campaigns

External Affairs Commissioner

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Information-gathering through student consultation at forums, focus groups, and via surveys (Your City Survey)
- Heavily involved in Change Camp
- Secondary research
- Policy-writing (2 policies per term)
- Lobbying municipal, provincial, and federal government (tends to be more focused on municipal due to part-time nature of the role)
- May occasionally perform campaigns (for instance, the Student Housing campaign)

University Affairs Research Assistant

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				

	Meetings				
In-person lobbying	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
	Submissions				
Written lobbying	Blogs/other content				

- Occasionally assists University Affairs Committee in primary research efforts (focus groups, forums, surveys)
- Secondary research heavily
- May occasionally aid in University Budget Submission

Federal and Provincial Research Assistant

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Occasionally assists External Affairs Committee in primary research efforts (focus groups, forums, surveys)
- Secondary research heavily - specific focus on federal, as provincial is done through full-time staff at OUSA
- May occasionally aid in submissions to provincial or federal government

Community Engagement Coordinator

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				

Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing			
Campaigns	Events			
	Promotion			
	Volunteers			
In-person lobbying	Meetings			
	Lobbying weeks	N/A		
	Gov. Relations	N/A		
Written lobbying	Submissions			
	Blogs/other content			

- Occasionally assists External Affairs Committee in primary research efforts (focus groups, forums, surveys)
- Your City Survey
- Secondary research heavily
- Main planner of Change Camp from the MSU
- Involved in government relations through the planning of municipal advocacy week
- May occasionally aid in submissions to municipal government

Advocacy Coordinator

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Attends OUSA General Assembly, in that way contributes to provincial policy-writing
- Runs campaign events and plans campaigns (this year: Student Housing, Work-Integrated Learning, MacTalks, Tuition)

- Creates social media strategies to promote campaigns and what the Education Team is doing
- Coordinates volunteers (Advocacy Street Team)
- Acts as OUSA Campus Coordinator – works with OUSA to plan OUSA Campus Visit, OUSA General Assembly (if on campus), and the OUSA campaign
- Coordinates logistics, planning, and promotion of PolicyCon

SCSN Coordinator

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Works on Change Camp
- Aids with the Your City Survey and the Habitats submission
- Runs the Student Housing campaign in collaboration with External Affairs and Advocacy Street Team
- Attends AWWCA meetings
- Mets regularly with Ward 1 Counsellor Aidan Johnston and other relevant stakeholders
- May occasionally participate in lobbying weeks, such as Municipal Advocacy Week
- Service provision

Macademics Coordinator

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				

Secondary Research	Secondary Research			
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing			
Campaigns	Events			
	Promotion			
	Volunteers			
In-person lobbying	Meetings			
	Lobbying weeks	N/A		
	Gov. Relations	N/A		
Written lobbying	Submissions			
	Blogs/other content			

- May gather information via service provision (notice a particular class has poor reviews on the Wiki, or that a specific resource is lacking on campus, etc.)
- Gathers information on quality of education to disseminate to students
- Mainly operates via service provision

Vice President Education

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- May occasionally be involved in information-gathering via Change Camp, forums, focus groups, or surveys
- Policy-writing at all levels of government and the University – 2 MSU policies per year, 1 – 2 OUSA policies per year
- In-person lobbying to University administration and all levels of government, including regular meetings like HPSAG, as well as lobbying weeks at all levels of government, and AdminCon
- Occasionally participates in government relations

- Writes University Budget Submission and other submissions from the MSU

President

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				█
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings	█	█	█	█
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A	█	█	█
Written lobbying	Submissions	█	█		
	Blogs/other content	█	█	█	█

- Attends OUSA General Assembly, in that way contributes to provincial policy-writing
- In-person lobbying to University administration and all levels of government, including regular meetings like HPSAG, as well as lobbying weeks at all levels of government, and AdminCon
- Occasionally participates in government relations
- Contributes to University Budget Submission

Marketing & Communications Director

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion	█	█	█	█
	Volunteers				
In-person lobbying	Meetings		█	█	█
	Lobbying weeks				
	Gov. Relations	N/A	█	█	█

Written lobbying	Submissions			
	Blogs/other content			

- Heavily involved with promotions of advocacy efforts, via letter-writing, President's Page, social media coordination, etc. – particularly with university and municipal advocacy
- Attends meetings such as HPSAG
- Heavily focused on government relations, particularly in the local area (local MPs and MPPs), sets up meetings such as HPSAG, federal advocacy week

Current Challenges

As introduced in the foreword, the current challenges within the department include:

1. Overlap in the community engagement and municipal advocacy portfolio

Multiple positions (the Community Engagement Coordinator, the External Affairs Commissioner, and the SCSN Coordinator) are involved in Event-Planning within Municipal Affairs, which is specifically referring to Change Camp. In addition, these positions also collaborate on the Your City Survey (Surveys). This portfolio also sees a lot of overlap in campaigns, with the Advocacy Coordinator, the SCSN Coordinator, the External Affairs Commissioner, as well as the Marketing & Communications Director all overseeing municipally-focused advocacy campaigns. Finally, government relations in this position is also crowded, with the Marketing & Communications Director overseeing municipal government relations, but the Community Engagement Coordinator planning Municipal Advocacy Week, and the SCSN Coordinator also maintaining government relations with elected officials.

2. Government Relations as well as Communications

As outlined above, the Marketing & Communications director is meant to maintain government relations. This is well-suited for a full-time role as it adds continuity and allows us to grow our relationships. However, overlap occurs in municipal relations. In addition, there is overlap within promotions of advocacy. While the Advocacy Coordinator coordinates campaigns and supervises promotions executives, promotional efforts also go through the MSU communications department. This issue can be boiled down to this statement: Advocacy is a pillar of the organization, not a service. The duplication exists because when the Advocacy Street Team acts as a service, with executives who promote what the team is doing, it duplicates the Communications department in promoting what the organization is doing on its advocacy front.

3. Ensuring lobbying, policy-making and advocating are conducted by our elected representatives

In some cases, such as the SCSN Coordinator or the Advocacy Coordinator, lobbying, policy-writing, and advocacy is occasionally performed by a hired part-time staff rather than an elected student representative. In addition, it is often difficult to provide opportunities to elected officials. For instance, the

External Affairs Commissioner is rarely given the opportunity to lobby, as any meetings they would take would likely be off-campus and difficult to access considering they are paid 6 hours per week. This is lesser, but still apparent within the University Affairs Commissioner.

4. Support for our events and campaigns, logistics, and full research support for policy creation

The Advocacy Coordinator role is meant to provide logistical support for many areas of the Education department, including campaigns, events, and student outreach. However, the role also includes management of a volunteer team, classifying it as a Part-Time Manager position. This classification can be misleading as the position is much less autonomous than other Part-Time Managers in the organization. For instance, having the Advocacy Coordinator submit a year plan and report to the Executive Board rather than to the Vice-President Education directly can create more autonomy for a position, where more direct logistical support is required in the department. In addition, research support has also been an evident issue. As indicated, research assistants employed rarely do any primary research, and that gap is typically filled by standing committees and commissioners, adding pressure to these roles.

5. Running campaigns with clear outcomes and student demonstration for a specific change

The effect of creating a role like the Advocacy Coordinator, which is focused on campaigns and outlines a year plan to the Executive Board months before these campaigns are to take place, has caused the department to essentially run campaigns for the sake of running campaigns. Awareness campaigns, like MacTalks and even student housing, should not be run through the Education department. We have dedicated services to run awareness campaigns. The Education department should solely focus on advocacy campaigns, i.e. putting pressure on a stakeholder and calling media attention to a student issue with a clear directive on the change students would like to see (for instance, last year's Time Out Tuition campaign). Often, these types of issues are hard to predict, and impossible to plan 6 - 8 months in advance. As well, campaigns are effective when limited. I believe the direct of the department should focus on fewer campaigns (1 - 2) and ensure they are focused on advocacy.

6. The project-based nature of research, which is often at odds with the current division of our research assistants

Research assistants are currently divided by stakeholder, i.e. the University, the municipal government, and the provincial/federal government. However, projects that I assign to research assistants often cross these boundaries. For instance, research assistants assist the commissioners in developing policy. However, policies are aimed at a specific topic - for instance, International Students - and may need research on internal as well as external topics. Research assistants end up working on projects outside of their department. As well, in the case of the federal and provincial research assistant, there is seldom work in the provincial file due to full-time staff who work at OUSA.

A New Structure

To combat the aforementioned challenges, I propose these changes to the department:

1. Splitting the External Affairs Commissioner and Committee into the **Municipal Affairs Commissioner and Committee** and the **Provincial & Federal Affairs Commissioner and Committee**
2. Removing stakeholder-division of research assistants, and adding an additional research assistant, to total three (3) **Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants**
3. Retiring the roles of **Advocacy Coordinator** and **Community Engagement Coordinator**
4. Creating a new role, the **Educational Initiatives Project Coordinator**
5. Changing the supervision of the Macademics Coordinator to the Vice President Administration
6. Removing the lobbying component to the Student Community Support Network

This will result in a new structure, consisting of clear lobbyists (advocates) and clear support staff:

Lobbyists

- **President**
- **Vice-President (Education)**
- **University Affairs Commissioner (and committee)** - supervised by the SRA
- **Municipal Affairs Commissioner (and committee)** - supervised by the SRA
- **Provincial and Federal Affairs Commissioner (and committee)** - supervised by the SRA

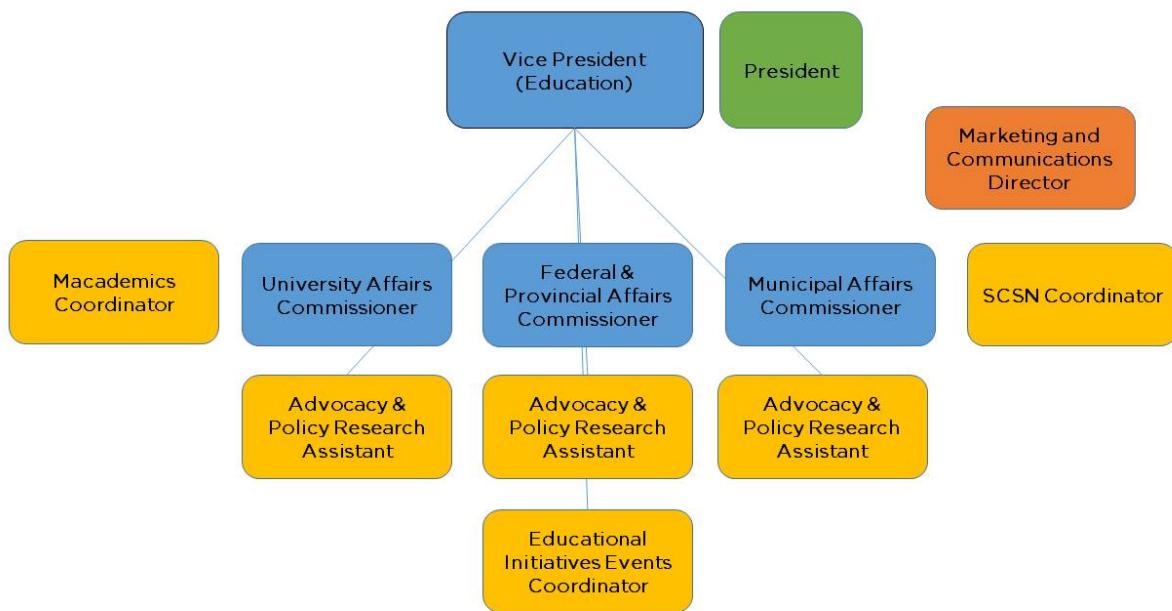
Support

- Three (3) **Advocacy Research Assistants** - supervised directly by the Vice-President Education

- **Educational Initiatives Project Coordinator** - supervised directly by the Vice-President Education (not through Executive Board)
- **Marketing & Communications Director** - supervised by the General Manager

The infographic below will outline the new structure of the department. Please use the legend as follows:

- Blue - elected and held accountable by the SRA
- Green - elected and held accountable by students
- Yellow - part-time staff hired and held accountable by the Executive Board through relevant Vice President
- Orange - permanent full-time staff held accountable by the General Manager



Changes to Processes

Accompanying changes to personnel structure, I would also like to propose changes to some of our processes. Essentially, two changes:

1. Policy process - the current process has each committee (University Affairs and External Affairs) along with the Vice-President Education each take on a policy paper to author each term. However, similar to the issue with the research assistants, policy topics do not fall under just university affairs or external affairs. Each policy topic contains elements of each. Under the new process, **each Advocacy & Policy Research Assistant will be assigned to one policy topic**, and 1-2 members from each standing committee (University Affairs, Municipal Affairs, and Provincial & Federal Affairs) will be invited to author a paper each term. The research assistants will facilitate primary research as well as be a direct aid for each policy paper, taking the lead on supporting the growth of our policy directives.
2. Campaigns - we will no longer run awareness campaigns, and **solely focus on advocacy campaigns**. This will lessen the amount of campaigns run through the department each year. Due to the lesser amount of campaigns, the Education team will **no longer feature an Advocacy Street Team**.

Roles and Responsibilities of New Positions

To detail roles and responsibilities of new staff, the next pages consist of tables to indicate which areas each suggested position will operate within. The table will indicate which responsibility the position is taking on (for instance, conducting secondary research) along with which stakeholder the position caters towards (for instance, the University).

Please use the legend as follows:

- **Green** - a responsibility of the position consistently from year-to-year
- **Yellow** - a responsibility that could be taken on by the position occasionally that is neither expected nor consistently performed from year-to-year
- **Red** - a responsibility that may rarely take on by the position that is neither expected nor consistently performed from year-to-year
- White - a responsibility never taken on by the position, and is not expected to be taken on by the position

The roles and responsibilities of current positions are also outlined in point form with changes highlighted in red, and responsibilities that have moved from another role indicated in green:

University Affairs Commissioner

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Information-gathering through student consultation at forums, focus groups, and via surveys with support from RAs
- Secondary research with support from RAs

- Policy-writing (sending committee members or self to work on 3 policies per term)
- Lobbying University administration
- Submissions to University administration (working on budget submission)

Municipal Affairs Commissioner

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Information-gathering through student consultation at forums, focus groups, and via surveys (Your City Survey) with support from RAs
- Involved in Change Camp
- Secondary research with support from RAs
- Policy-writing (sending committee members or self to work on 3 policies per term)
- Lobbying municipal government Attends municipal advocacy week

Provincial & Federal Affairs Commissioner

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	Meetings				
In-person lobbying	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
	Submissions				
Written lobbying	Blogs/other content				

- Information-gathering through student consultation at forums, focus groups, and surveys with support from RAs
- Secondary research with support from RAs
- Policy-writing (sending committee members or self to work on 3 policies per term)
- Attends OUSA General Assembly, in that way contributes to provincial policy-writing
- Liaise with OUSA to create McMaster student blog schedules
- Lobby provincial and federal government via relative lobbying weeks, when possible

Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Assist Committees in primary research efforts (focus groups, forums, surveys), particularly when relating to policies
- Facilitate the policy-writing process of one (1) policy per term
- Secondary research for committees as well as the Vice President (Education) when required
- Special projects as required, such as submissions, reports, survey analysis, etc.

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Educational Initiatives Project Manager

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Plans campaigns when necessary, including events and logistics
- Acts as OUSA Campus Coordinator – works with OUSA to plan OUSA Campus Visit, OUSA General Assembly (if on campus), and the OUSA campaign when necessary
- Coordinates logistics, planning, and promotion of PolicyCon
- Main planner of Change Camp from the MSU
- Manages basic operations of the Education department (website management, booking rooms, etc.)

SCSN Coordinator

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			

	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Works on Change Camp
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- Runs the Student Housing campaign which will not include advocacy outcomes
- Attends AWWCA meetings
- Service provision

Macademics Coordinator - newly supervised by the Vice President Administration

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- May gather information via service provision (notice a particular class has poor reviews on the Wiki, or that a specific resource is lacking on campus, etc.)
- Gathers information on quality of education to disseminate to students
- Mainly operates via service provision

Vice-President Education

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				

	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- May occasionally be involved in information-gathering via Change Camp, forums, focus groups, or surveys
- Policy-writing at all levels of government and the University -MSU policies, 1 - 2 OUSA policies per year
- In-person lobbying to University administration and all levels of government, including regular meetings like HPSAG, as well as lobbying weeks at all levels of government, and AdminCon
- Occasionally participates in government relations
- Writes University Budget Submission and other submissions from the MSU

President

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Attends OUSA General Assembly, in that way contributes to provincial policy-writing
- In-person lobbying to University administration and all levels of government, including regular meetings like HPSAG, as well as lobbying weeks at all levels of government, and AdminCon
- Occasionally participates in government relations

- Contributes to University Budget Submission

Marketing and Communications Director

		University	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Primary Research	Forums/Events				
	Focus Groups				
	Surveys				
Secondary Research	Secondary Research				
Policy-Writing	Policy-Writing				
Campaigns	Events				
	Promotion				
	Volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
In-person lobbying	Meetings				
	Lobbying weeks	N/A			
	Gov. Relations	N/A			
Written lobbying	Submissions				
	Blogs/other content				

- Heavily involved with promotions of advocacy efforts, via letter-writing, President's Page, social media coordination, etc. – particularly with university and municipal advocacy
- Attends meetings such as HPSAG
- Heavily focused on government relations, particularly in the local area (local MPs and MPPs), sets up meetings such as HPSAG, federal advocacy week, and municipal advocacy week
- Creates social media strategies to promote campaigns when necessary and what the Education Team is doing

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What will the cost be? Will this provide more resources to the Education department?**

Due to the new system for part-time wages, I cannot say what the exact cost will be to the organization, as I am unsure of both what the current positions would be graded as, as well as the new positions. Under the previous hourly system, these are the current hours of the department:

Lobbyists (not including President): **49 hours/week**

- Vice President Education - 35
- University Affairs Commissioner - 6
- External Affairs Commissioner - 6

Support staff (not including Marketing & Communications Director) **42 hours/week:**

- Advocacy Coordinator - 12
- University Affairs Research Assistant - 10
- Federal and Provincial Affairs Research Assistant - 10
- Community Engagement Coordinator - 10

One thing to consider is that although commissioners technically receive six hours a week, they are likely working at least 12 - 15, and occasionally up to 20 hours each week. When the roles are evaluated under the new grid, I would expect their pay to go up regardless. If we were to remain within the hourly part-time staff structure, the hours I would recommend would be:

Lobbyists (not including President): **80 hours/week**

- Vice President Education - 35
- University Affairs Commissioner - 15
- Municipal Affairs Commissioner - 15
- Federal and Provincial Affairs Commissioner - 15

Support staff (not including Marketing & Communications Director) **40 hours/week:**

- Educational Initiatives Project Coordinator - 10
- Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants (3) - 10 each, 30 total

Obviously, increasing commissioner hours by such a drastic amount would be a fairly large cost, but again this would rather be a reflection of the actual work currently put in, as well as an opportunity to provide these elected

officials with more opportunities to meaningfully contribute to lobbying efforts. In terms of support staff, the suggested hours actually decrease, as the number of campaigns will decrease. As well, additional support would be provided through the Marketing & Communications Director through additional promotional responsibilities and planning of municipal advocacy week, which would likely amount to a few hours each week.

2. Will eliminating the Advocacy Street Team eliminate opportunities for students to get involved with advocacy? Also, if we do a campaign, who will act as the street team?

I think this warrants a further discussion and I am happy to discuss this aspect of the plan further. Personally, I first became involved with the MSU through joining the Advocacy Street Team and learning about OUSA, CASA, and post-secondary through that opportunity was very valuable to me. However, I do not think that the team will be valuable when there are less campaigns to run and essentially less to do, especially since volunteer retention has historically been difficult for this team. Additionally, having a team of volunteers begs the question, who will manage it?

In addition, we have created new opportunities for students to engage in our advocacy in a very real and meaningful way. For instance, MSU Policy Conference is open to all MSU members, and allows them to learn about the MSU's advocacy and personally shape what our stances are on various issues. As well, with the addition of the Provincial & Federal Affairs Committee, volunteers will be able to engage meaningfully with OUSA, author papers, and have an opportunity to really participate in the advocacy initiatives within our organization.

With regards to who will be on the ground during campaigns, as they will be less frequent, I believe this can be overcome by reaching out to the Maroons, as well as committee members on relevant committees, and SRA members.

3. Should commissioners report to you, or the SRA?

This conversation has been going on for a long time. In fact, there was a year (2012-2013) in which commissioners were hired, and each committee additionally had a "chair" which performed administrative duties for the committee like drafting agendas and booking rooms. This change was made during SRA meeting 12B, and then was later changed back to the current process that year in SRA meeting 12P (see meeting minutes). There are definitely positives and negatives to having hired commissioners (potentially renamed AVPs) and elected commissioners.

I have had the unique position of both being the University Affairs Commissioner and the Vice-President Education. From the perspective of the University Affairs Commissioner, I really liked being held accountable by the SRA because it allowed me more autonomy and also bestowed upon me the title of "elected representative". If I disagreed with the Vice President Education's direction, I felt like my voice had more value as I was, like the position, also elected by the assembly for my own ideas and principles.

Now that I am the Vice President Education, I would love to have commissioners become AVPs and report to me directly, as it would bring more resources to my role. However, I do not think it would really affect my day-to-day operations in the department. I have a wonderful working relationship with the commissioners and for all intents and purposes, we work as a cohesive unit.

That being said, I have also been in the position where I have been an assembly member and felt dissatisfied by a commissioner's performance. In that instance, no disciplinary action was taken on the commissioner as they only report to the assembly 4 times throughout the entire year. It is difficult to hold them accountable. When a position is accountable to a Vice President, it is much easier to ensure that the employee is fulfilling their duties within the role.

Overall, I do not feel strongly about commissioners vs. AVPs. I do think that this is a structure that has been attempted in the past, and has failed. I also think that this warrants a larger conversation, not just about commissioners that fall under the Education department, but also about the Bylaws & Procedures Commissioner, the Operations Commissioner, the Finance Commissioner, and the Services Commissioner. I do not feel as though this conversation must happen in order for the changes to the Education department to be successful.

4. **The structure of the Education Team has changed a lot recently, why should we make further changes?**

The changes I have proposed are based on both problems that have plagued the Education department for years (for instance, the Advocacy Coordinator as a support role for the Vice President Education), issues that have arisen from the new changes and roles that create overlap (for instance, the Community Engagement Coordinator is now in its third year of existing), and new developments that have caused increased demands on the department

(for instance, now that we have no federal advocacy organization, we must now allocate increasing resources to advocate federally on our own). This is my third year being involved in the department, and the changes I am proposing are not simply based on my style of management or leadership, but rather on consultation with full-time staff, board members, and my own multi-year experience in the organization. It may be possible that next year's Vice President Education notices structural issues with the new structure; in that case I would recommend that they pursue changes. However, the changes I am proposing I strongly believe are important for the department to act more effectively, as outlined throughout.

5. Will this place increasing demands on the Marketing & Communications Director?

I would more so say that the changes reflect what the role of the Marketing & Communications Director is, which is to promote what the organization is doing, and also manage government relations. With the former, it is important to recognize that **advocacy is a pillar, not a service**. Thus, the promotions of our advocacy efforts should not come from a separate entity (the MSU Advocacy Street Team) but should rather come from the organization itself as it is an integral piece of our operation, as defined in our constitution. I think it is appropriate to have this managed through the communications department. On the latter point, the previous role of the Student Life Development Coordinator previously managed government relations via organization of the Hamilton Post Secondary Advisory Group and other instances. That change here is relatively small; the role will now include further organizing lobbying weeks such as Municipal Advocacy Week and Federal Advocacy Week (the latter which the role has already been doing). The employee has been consulted and agrees that the added responsibilities would be relatively small and manageable, and fit within the scope of the role.

Conclusion

Thank you for entertaining my long, drawn-out, intensely explained plan for how I want to restructure the Education department.

To quickly summarize: I have outlined six issues within the department, with these solutions:

1. **Overlap in the community engagement and municipal advocacy portfolio** - solved by eliminating the Community Engagement Coordinator position, lessening responsibilities of the SCSN Coordinator, and creating a role specifically for municipal advocacy (Municipal Affairs Commissioner)
2. **Government Relations as well as Communications** - solved by eliminating the Advocacy Coordinator role so that the Marketing & Communications Director can promote advocacy efforts via the communications department, and eliminating the Community Engagement Coordinator position to allocate all government relations to the Marketing & Communications Director
3. **Ensuring that lobbying and advocating are conducted by our elected representatives** - solved by adding a commissioner role (Provincial & Federal Affairs Commissioner) and empowering these positions to primary act as lobbyists and policy-makers, as well as eliminated hired PTM roles involvement in lobbying
4. **Support roles for events, campaigns, logistics, and research** - solved by the creation of the Educational Initiatives Projects Manager, who will focus on supporting the Vice President Education and commissioners with all event planning and logistics, as well as adding a third research assistant to assist in policy development
5. **Advocacy focused campaigns** - solved by eliminating the Advocacy Coordinator along with the Advocacy Street Team, allowing the department to use discretion when planning campaigns that are timely and meaningful
6. **The project-based nature of research at odds with the current division of our research assistants** - solved by eliminating the division of research assistants, and creating three Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants

I am excited to further discuss the ideas outlined in this package, receive feedback, and proceed with a refined vision for the Education department.

Truly yours,

Blake Oliver
Vice-President Education 2016-17
McMaster Students Union