



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

## President & CEO

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TO:	Members of the Assembly
FROM:	President
SUBJECT:	Presidents Report
DATE:	March 26, 2017

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Dear Assembly,

My apologies for submitting this report late, as you all know I just returned from an unpaid leave of absence. This will be out last meeting together as a group and it certainly is a reminder as to how quickly time flies by. It seems like only yesterday I was not only running for this role, but meeting all of you in this setting for the first time. This year has definitely been a learning opportunity for me in many ways, and has given me a chance to grow more as an individual, and as a leader. As assembly members, you all did a great job at challenging perspectives, providing diverse opinions, as well as remaining respectful. I wish you all nothing but best throughout the course of your future endeavours, and am confident that you will all continue to do great things.

Ryan, Shaarujaa, Blake and myself have gotten a lot done this year so I will do my best to only focus on various initiatives that stem from my platform. If you are seeking a more through outline we, and the organization has completed over the past year, please check out our State of the Union document which can be found here: [msumcmaster.ca/governance/state-of-the-union](http://msumcmaster.ca/governance/state-of-the-union). As always, if you have any questions, or want some more detail on a

particular issue, you can reach out to me at any point in time. Even though I will be gone come May 1st, I will always only be one message away, and will happily chat about anything (MSU related or not) now, and once I am no longer in the role. As you all go off to take on further leadership roles in this organization and beyond, it is always important to keep in mind one great quote, "If I am wrong, educate me. Don't belittle me". You will always come across individuals who will disagree with you, or hold different beliefs, but being rude or belittling them only because they hold that different view is no way to make progress. It is important to remember that behind that different opinion is a human being who may agree with you on most other issues. There are lots of individuals in my life who I disagree with on many issues, and vice versa. Despite this, we are still able to have a respectful relationship with one another outside of those conversations, while challenging our diverse views when within the particular conversation. As SRA members this happens a lot, and I am proud to see how many of you have handled yourselves in and out of those conversations with one another.

Thank you all again for your support, thoughtfulness, and care during my time as MSU President. It is a point in my life I will never forget, and will cherish for the entirety of my life - thanks for being a part of that.

Warmest regards,

A hand-drawn signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Monaco-Barnes'. The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract, with a large 'J' and 'M' being the most prominent features.

Justin Monaco-Barnes  
McMaster Students Union President & CEO

## Platform Updates

### Sustainable McMaster

This platform point was tackled in multiple ways. From a grassroots approach, to the bigger picture, sustainability is a subject that means a lot to me.

Plastic Water Bottle Free McMaster	This year we saw the implantation of a new MSU bylaw which banned the selling of single use plastic water bottles. This was done because plastic water bottles are one of the top contributors to our carbon footprint, and by taking this first step we are declaring that this is a conversation that is important to us as a community. When other schools have done a similar initiative, they found huge spikes sugary drinks which is obviously counter intuitive to promoting a healthy active lifestyle. With the introduction of Boxed Water, we were able to remove plastic bottles, but still provide a single use container for water consumption that is more sustainable on the whole. The goal is to continue to apply pressure to the University to follow suit so one day McMaster as a whole will be single use plastic water bottle free as well. You can find additional information here: <a href="https://thesil.ca/bye-bye-plastic-hello-boxed-water">thesil.ca/bye-bye-plastic-hello-boxed-water</a>
First Year Reusable Water Bottle Giveaway	This Welcome Week the MSU provided each first year student with a branded MSU water bottle that was refillable in order to promote sustainable water consumption. On top of this, we supplied Union Market with additional bottles that would be sold for cheaper than any other refillable bottle on campus.
Recycled Paper	The Underground, as well as the MSU office now prints with paper that is recycled in order to reduce our carbon footprint. In addition, the Underground is also now looking for other alternatives with it comes to sustainability for different aspects of the business.
ABB Renovation	This summer I spent a lot of my time working with McMaster not only on the proposal to the federal Government for the renovations of Arthur Bourns Building (as well as a Cogeneration system that well affect all of campus), but I also spent a lot of time lobbying to all three levels of government. After all of this hard work from all of our ends, we were able to secure \$37.5 million from the federal government, as well as \$5.5 from the provincial. You can find additional information here: <a href="https://thesil.ca/mac-s-surprise-new-investment">thesil.ca/mac-s-surprise-new-investment</a>

## Lowering Student Costs

This was handled in multiple different ways. You will see other factions of this point on other Vice Presidents report as well because some of these were full team efforts. I will focus on two ways costs were lowered to students this year.

Courseware	<p>This was one of my most challenging platform points for a few different reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) <u>Competing interests</u>: The University also sells courseware (and makes a lot of money off it) so they have a very firm grasp on the market. Having said this we do still make and distribute them for some courses, but there a lot more potential that could be had. It has been (and will continue to be) an uphill battle with the University, but it is one that I hope future leaders will continue to take on because the value to the students, and the MSU is immense.</li><li>2) <u>Awareness</u>: A lot of professors have no idea what the Underground is, how it functions, or how the MSU is involved - this is a problem. Of the few professors who have heard of it, they believe it is a student run shop that deals with small end, project based work. This concept needs to be changed. In the final weeks of my term, I will be working with the Underground to formulate a strategic plan in order to tackle this vary issue. One we have the tools and structures setup, and a solid foundation moving forward, I am confident that this is something that will overcome.</li><li>3) <u>Support</u>: The Underground can't to do this alone, they will need to be supported and helped by future Boards in order to help them be successful.</li></ol> <p>Having said all of this, there have been minor victories along the way. Working closely with Dr. Joe Kim and his Intro Psych classes, though we were not able to get the courseware printed and distributed through the Underground (I hope this can be changed in future years), we were able to help them lower the cost of the overall book. This cost reduction saw a decrease in roughly \$40 000 student dollars which isn't small by any means.</p> <p>We have also secured additional Kin courses, and almost confirmed Bio 1M03 (until a last second unforeseen circumstance). With the the continued work of the Underground, and the foundation we will have finalized by the end of my term, I am confident that this is a project that will indeed help students with courseware costs for years to come. Side note: All of our courseware is now printed on recycled paper.</p>
Marmor Fee	<p>This year we saw the elimination of the Marmor fee which saved each student \$9.22 each. As a whole, that is roughly just over \$200 000 student dollars that will now be saved moving forward.</p>

### Health Sciences Library Extended Exam Hours

This has been one of the most difficult platform points yet. Working through all of the bureaucracy that is McMaster Hospital has been frustrating to say the least. Having said that, this is still something I am actively working for and have hope that we can still make this a reality. The goal is to have the space open for the entirety of the exam period to provide students with additional quiet space on campus for late night studying.

### Pulse Expansion + Student Activity Building

Well where do I begin on this one. As far as my workload goes, this project definitely consumed the most amount of my attention both physically and mentally. I took a two week unpaid leave during this time to help promote the referendum, and provide as much information as I could to the student body due to the complex nature of what this project was. We all know that referendum for this space expansion failed by 10 votes in January with one of the largest concerns being the fee increase. Knowing this, Ryan and myself approached the University and explained that though we care about this project immensely, we do not feel comfortable bringing it back this academic year due to the nature of what happened in January. We explained that the only possible way we would do this is if they were to address one of the largest student concerns in a significant way - the fee. We explained that we felt as though this is something we should entertain the idea of if the University came to the table with an additional \$10 million upfront to the capital fee, thus lowering that cost to students by 24%.

There were a few weeks of back and fourths, and offers that were lower than our original ask but we stood firm on what we wanted. Then on the last hour we received a phone call saying that we had got what we were looking for. It turns out, losing the first referendum was the best bargaining chip we could have asked for. After this, we added three more requirements in order for us to request that the SRA bring it back to a special referendum. Those several requirements were: making this project an Advancement priority for future donations (which would lower costs), honour our original MoU giving the MSU full autonomy despite the capital contribution, a commit to a grocery store with first right of refusal, and to have all of this agreed to, in writing, through a signed letter to the SRA from the Provost. Once all of these requests were addressed, we felt comfortable bringing it forward to the SRA. The SRA then voted with over 2/3 majority to send this back to a special referendum in March. Ryan and myself took an unpaid leave of absence in order to do our best job at informing students with regards to every detail this project consisted of. After a long 8 days of campaigning, and doing our best to inform students of the details, and changes to this referendum from January, it received a voter turnout of over 30% and passed with 59.2% of the students voting in favour. Below is a break down of votes:

**Pulse & Recreation Expansion and Student Activity Building Referendum**

Option	Votes
Yes	3854 (59.2%)
No	2660 (40.8%)

**VOTER SUMMARY**

<b>Total</b>	6759
<b>Abstain</b>	245 (3.6%)

Ryan and I already have a meeting scheduled to go over next steps to finalize the plan, as well as discuss next steps. I took an unpaid leave of absence for this project twice because I truly believe in what this will bring to our campus. From more space, increased access to health and fitness, to tackling food security, this project really does offer something for every kind of student to make their experience the best it can be. For more information about this referendum, you can find additional information here: [thesil.ca/pulse-sab-results-2](https://thesil.ca/pulse-sab-results-2), and here: [dailynews.mcmaster.ca/article/students-approve-landmark-expansion-of-activity-and-rec-space/](https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/article/students-approve-landmark-expansion-of-activity-and-rec-space/)

### Safer Campus

As mentioned in my previous report, I have begun working with the folks at the Equity and Inclusion Office in order to work on sexual violence prevention, and education on campus. If you are wanting to learn a bit more about what kinds of education we will be working on, my last report which was February 21 went over all of those details. We will spend the last part of this month, and the month of April developing some different educational workshops for a diverse range of students. As well, we will be working with SACHA (Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton Area) in order to see what are the best ways we can collaborate to provide a more whole experience for students on and off campus.