Dear Student Representative Assembly,

These past two months have been a whirlwind and I’m excited to update you on everything that I’ve been up too! Naturally the 1280 proposal has taken quite a bit of time but I’ve still managed to chip away at most of my platform + a number of extra projects that have popped up.

1280 Café

The most ambitious point on my platform is well underway after receiving a $99 000 allocation from the SRA last meeting! To give you a sense of the steps this took and where we currently are the first month was spent creating a vision document, doing heavy consultation with the 1280 team as well as a variety of full time staff. We reached out and contracted facilities, took measurements of 1280 and assessed various options, established a summer cost, and received some unofficial quotes on flooring and other aspects to create a draft budget.

The second month was spent creating a summer timeline, more clearly determining realistic phases for the café in addition to logistics of potentially running it with the 1280 team. Analysis was done of both 1280 and Union Market to assess potential sales and estimate labour costs for the café. A separate analysis was done for the prep space to estimate cost savings to union market. All of these analyses were crafted into charts and used to write both the memo and final 1280 proposal for the SRA meeting. Feedback was collected from the SRA and the motion was passed.

Since the SRA meeting we have had two meetings with the architect. A 2 hour walk through was done in addition to a preliminary drawing that was procured with furniture samples. A focus group was conducted to gather feedback on the café design and furniture selections, and feedback was submitted to the architect in the second meeting on July 10th, 2017 where myself, John McGowan, Rick Haja, and our project manager worked through the budget with the architect to determine what scopes of the project we could realistically do for our price point.
To date no expenditures have been made but many of them will be occurring soon as we have to order furniture, select lighting fixtures, and select a colour scheme. In a discussion with the architect we have made it clear that we want to prioritize the quality of the space vs the time of completion. We realized that much of the furniture the focus group preferred will have to be custom made - requiring an increased lead time on these products. As such, attempting to open for Sept 1. will result in increased fees from the contractors. We have decided to schedule the launch of the café for end of September/beginning of October with priority given to potentially opening it in phases. The largest complication is the furniture, but it is necessary to ensure that this café possess the unique feel that will make it successful.

TwelvEighty

This is our largest business unit and is a mammoth to take on. To give you a sense of its size, TwelvEighty employs near 100 part-time staff in addition to 4 full-time staff and collects almost $800 000 in revenue in one of its worst years last year (in addition to losing nearly $250 000).

While building the proposal for the café I took a deep look into the past trends of our beloved campus bar & grill to see if there was something that could explain the loss and determined two things: 1. About $120 000 decrease in food sales and 2. another $70 000 decrease in liquor sales.

Below are two plans to fix those this year (one in outside of my original platform and one inside)

Food Sales: Online Ordering

Very Simply, TwelvEighty is failing to keep up with the changing student demographic in almost every sense. When we analyze when food sales drop, it starts in October and then heavy falls towards December.

The reason is pretty easy to spot: as the school year gets busier, less students want to spend time sitting in a restaurant. The solution? Online ordering system.

To date, the 1280 staff have looked at 7 different companies and decided to go with a company called ‘ChowNow’. It operates in a variety of American restaurants and some Canadian ones and will result in both a website and an app that a student can interactively order food from and pay with visa/debit/apple pay!. The current plan is to implement this in July, train staff in August, and slowly roll out over the school year ramping up promotions in end of October/November/December. The target demographic for this right now are current 1280 customers (the ones who come in September). This would be the easiest market to expand into limiting the amount we would need to spend on promotions – focusing on the low price of hot food on campus.

Liquor Sales: Revamped club nights
We’ve known for a while that club nights are dying. But I’m happy to say that myself, the 1280 team, and Campus Events have come together to completely revamp 1280 club nights!

New model: There will no longer be a club night every Thursday (tbh, only around 5 or 6 of them actually made a decent profit). Instead, we’ll be focusing on throwing club nights on dates that were proven successful last year in addition to other high-profile times during the student calendar (homecoming, Halloween, etc.). We’ve reduced the amount of club nights from 24 to 18 and expect to not only save money by cutting the unwanted club nights but increase revenue by reimagining the way we provide this experience to students.

Club nights will now each have a theme (ie. Latin night, Trap night, Soca/Hip Hop night) that will be organized throughout the year and advertised throughout the end of August so a student will know when specific club nights are.

There is a large trend across the country for a decline in liquor sales in millennials, so while this plan is sure to increase the quality and attendance of club nights it will be interesting to see if liquor sales increase alongside it. Either way, this needed to be done.

**More Premium Events**

In conjunction with the last point, Campus Events will be creating a seamless branding for both club nights and premium nights at TwelvEighty with about one premium night (hired artist) coming in about once a month on months with high club attendance (October, November, January, February)

**Ensure Campus Events Programming is Student Driven**

The Programming Advisory Committee was struck in late April at the first SRA meeting I observed as the VP Finance-elect and is scheduled to meet in late July. The AVP Finance Scott will be chairing this committee and has met with Campus Events to determine how they can effectively work together and what events they will be focusing on collecting feedback for.

This committee will play a large role in Term 2 premium events and determining what type of programming we would offer during frost week.

**Professional Development Opportunities**

Cited as my second most ambitious platform point, this is also well on its way to being completed ahead of schedule. I’ve been fortunate enough to work closely with the *lovely* Ryan Deshpande on this and we’ve developed something called the ‘McMaster Student Economic Engagement Strategy’ alongside the SSC, Alumni, Community Engagement Office, and Hamilton Chamber of Commerce which outlines the ways in which the MSU plans to work with our community and campus stakeholders to effectively connect students
to experiential and professional development opportunities. We spent the first month consulting the aforementioned stakeholders and developing a preliminary version of this strategy.

While many discussions with Ryan lie around work integrated learning, my role is in evaluating how we connect our students with professional development opportunities in the community – specifically through the chamber of commerce. I’m also pleased to announce that for the first time we sent the largest student delegation to ever attend the Bay Area Economic Summit as a proof of concept with 10 MSU representatives including 3 MSU members (we made ourselves quite known to the Burlington & Hamilton business community).

I have a meeting with the chamber in the next few weeks to discuss how we can further integrate students into chamber events and connect student groups with local businesses.

**Sponsorship & Fundraising Package**

Worked with the AVP Finance, Scott Robinson to establish a timeline to build a Sponsorship & Fundraising package for clubs throughout the year. He will be consulting with a variety of clubs and our brand new Campus & Commercial Partnership Coordinator to assemble a best practices sponsorship/fundraising package to be distributed to clubs and campus groups for the 2018/2019 year.

**Budgeting Training**

In a similar fashion to the last point, Scott will also be working with the Campus Events department to expand off of Ryan MacDonald’s event planning package to create a budgeting package for costs typically associated with running events and a list of vendors typically used by students in the Hamilton area.

**Transparency**

This is something both Scott and I will be working on with the finance committee once it starts to meet in September. The goal is to host two budget fairs (one per semester) that pop up in different locations across campus to better outreach to students to display where their fees are going too.

**Discount Card**

We have just hired our Campus Commercial Partnership Coordinator who will be taking this project on as a part of their portfolio! Their role is to be the MSU’s lead salesman creating advertising packages across all of our departments. Next week I’ll be sitting down with Dave Dedrick (Underground Creative Director) and the CCPC to determine how to most effectively approach the idea of a discount card and integrate it into our sales portfolio

**Evaluating the Child Care Center**
This is something I thought I would be doing in the winter term but due to recent developments with the university and a new Child Care center coming up in the new Peter George building, Chukky and I have been meeting occasionally to determine how to better integrate the CCC into campus life. We've met with Debbie Thompson from the childcare center and are currently assembling a strategy and recommendations for the Childcare center throughout the school year.

HSR Implementation

This has been much more difficult than the MSU could have anticipated. PRESTO has been increasingly difficult to work with and we will be determining this Thursday if we will be moving forward with the PRESTO pass for this year. They have been unable to produce a critical piece of software on their end to allow for a seamless card distribution model that will ensure that if a student does not register their card and loses it, they will still be able to get a new bus pass.

If PRESTO is unable to produce this piece of software by this Thursday we will be thinking of a plan B for the bus pass this year. If PRESTO is not integrated this year, students will not be charged the extra 5$ included in the referendum.

SAB Consultation

Much of my time over the past two months has been spent pouring over the SAB memorandum of understanding. As we convert the MoU to an MoA (legally binding) we have entered a number of small negotiations with the university surrounding the fine details of operations of the space. Some of these discussions have been centered around athletics and recreation use of the space, and minor back and forth comments. I'm hoping to have this wrapped up very soon and send the final MoA over to our lawyers for approval.

In regards to the timeline things are moving very quickly. The architect will be selected by the end of this month and discussions around the space and its details will be working out with the architect and SAB Ad-Hoc committee in August/September. Whichever architect is chosen, a large effort will be made on both the part of the MSU and the architect to outreach to students for feedback on the building design. More details around this can be talked about in the coming months.

Decreasing the Cost of Repsuits

This is something that I am incredibly excited to say has been completed WITH extra bonuses for students. By working with Charitees, a local clothing supplier, we have been able to secure a deal for all residences reps and almost all faculties where reps pay 40$ as a base price for a rep suit! For comparison, arts & science suits last year costed $120. By creating and negotiating this package deal we were able to reduce the cost of repsuits by over 40% and save students over $24 000.
In addition to this, we were able to secure a deal that ensured (in 2018/2019) 10% of the cost of the suits would be donated by the company and used to create a rep suit bursary for students who can't afford suits.

This is a huge win and is currently being carried out by both the Welcome Week Faculty Coordinator and the Residence Orientation Planner.

**Job-Related Tasks**

**Welcome Week**

Welcome week is well underway with regular meetings occurring regarding its planning. It’s weird how fast WW creeps up on you but starting August 26th we'll be in full swing and I am incredibly excited for it. Below are some other WW related things I've been working on in addition to overall work with the SSC, Residence, SOCS, and faculties.

**Welcome Week Strategic Themes: Alcohol Awareness**

This year the MSU has taken on the WW strategic themes (formerly under the SSC). I chair the committee for Alcohol Awareness and we’ll be taking a different approach to interacting with students by integrating videos and snapchat into the campaign in addition to the regular lawn signs. I'm really excited to see the MSU take a lead on these and think that better outreach and events/programming that is more student friendly will make a huge impact on incoming first years.

**Welcome Week Clubs Integration**

This was something on Chukky's platform that I am a huge fan of. Both Preethi and I have been working closely with him and the Welcome Week Advisory Committee to make this possible. Chukky will probably talk more about this.

**SRA Training**

This was fun! If you guys have any more questions at all about finances, our investments, or our business units please feel free to shoot me a message. I'd be more than happy to talk to you about it or demystify how the MSU works!

**Services Support**

**MacCycle**

Richard has a lot on his plate. Historically MacCycle has been one of the most neglected services with out proper shelving equipment, tools, or accounting systems. We've had a number of great PTMs come through the service but Richard has been fantastic in wanting to clean up the service.

We've been working closely together to create an accounting system for MacCycle and do some safety upgrades around the shop + create an inventory
and consistent price list. Preethi has also been working closely with Richard to help him build his exec team and this year will be critical to determine the effectiveness and the future of MacCycle.

FYC

With the IRC disappearing last year the structure of FYC was changed to include a part time manager + 12 elected residence chairs. With a large change in FYC structure last year was a trial year that revealed an amazing opportunity for FYC to advocate for first years in residence but also presented a variety of challenges.

Currently I’m in discussions with the Director of Housing and Conferences to find ways to better partner this year and have them/residence life co-fund FYC. More on this to come in the coming months! Hazra Chowdry, the FYC Coordinator will be integrated into these discussions once she starts in August.

University Budget Submission

Naturally Ryan has taken the lead on this but so far we’ve met and laid out a timeline for the school year of when we would like to get this done by. Im sure he can talk more about his!

Homecoming

As promised Homecoming will include a Friday and Saturday NIGHT concert! It will be the last weekend of September and Campus Events has been working on some very exciting stuff for you guys. Stay tuned!

That’s all for now & I look forward to updating you all in the next report!

Sincerely,

Daniel Tuba D’Souza
Vice President (Finance)
vpfinance@msu.mcmaster.ca