POLICY PAPER

Student Employment and Experiential Education

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Introduction

Student employment and access to high quality, accessible experiential learning opportunities are issues of increasing importance to students, universities and the government. From these experiences students gain opportunity to what has increasingly become essential skill development, financial compensation, and connections to the work force. Recognizing their importance, the premier has committed to providing one Work Integrated Learning opportunity to every student in Post-Secondary Education. This policy focuses on what these opportunities should look like and how students can access high quality career and experiential learning opportunities.

The role of career and cooperative education services at McMaster is discussed in terms of accessibility, outreach, and training. With the ultimate goal of creating, curating, and advertising high quality and field related opportunities to students as well as ensuring students are adequately prepared to apply for these positions. Additionally, the importance of co-curriculars as a mechanism for skill development is discussed and recommendations on the resources available to students to communicate their skill development are put forward.

A large part of allowing students to develop and specialize in the workforce, is allowing them autonomy and self-direction. For many students entrepreneurship presents the perfect opportunity to grow and challenge themselves while building on their studies. However, these opportunities can be scarce, underfunded, and targeted to specific disciplines over others. Further investment in the funding and universality of entrepreneurship services is discussed.

Students should have access to experiential education opportunities through their courses. Many programs already offer such courses, but they are often limited to those enrolled in specific programs. This paper outlines this importance of programs and facilities creating and expanding these learning opportunities to increase students’ access.

Lastly, the role of government regulation and investment as well as access to funding is discussed. The role of the city and the university in preparing and funding students in community engaged experiential education and employment opportunities is outlined as a priority. The provincial government is asked to close legislative loopholes in the Employment Standards Act that would prevent students' labour from being unprotected. All levels of government are asked to increase the availability of employment opportunities, and for accessibility and efficiency to be prioritized in application and funding procedures. Finally, disparities in McMaster’s Work-Study Program qualification criteria are explored.

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2 Ibid.
Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education offices
Services and Promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: The Student Success Centre, along with Faculty Career, Co-op and Experiential Education services should adequately promote all services they offer to students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should offer adequate training to students on essential career and academic skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: Current services do not adequately train students on essential career and academic skills, resulting in many students missing out on research and experiential education opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should better promote their services to students through a variety of media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should create an Avenue to Learn shell that advertises various academic, personal and professional resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services and the Student Success Centre should facilitate essential academic and professional skill development events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Any existing workshops that currently train students in academic and professional essential skill development should be better promoted to engage more students.</td>
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</table>

Student Success centre should create an avenue to learn tab or shell titled Student Success. The mere purpose of this tab is to provide students with a platform where they can develop their academic, personal and professional skills. One of the most important skills is to educate students on the process of writing a grant application. Students lack this vital skill, which can help them but not only receive beneficial grants but also establish connections.

An example of essential academic skills would be that of the grant writing and application process. There are number of benefits associated with grants, just the process of applying for grants itself is a learning experience. It is a great way to develop a research proposal, expand your professional network and most importantly as a student lower financial burden. About 36% of students in Ontario reported receiving non-repayable funding in the form of scholarships, grants, bursaries, scholarships or contributions from non-family individuals; at the median, these sources provided $1,600 in funding. The past decade has been a period of great change for the post institutions in Canada. Tuition fees have been risen and so have the non-educational cost of attending university/college. Therefore, it is important that students are given proper access to such resources and educate them on writing grant applications.

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3 "Access, persistence and financing: First results from the Postsecondary Education Participation Survey (PEPS)." Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics - Research Papers. Statistics Canada Catalogue number 81-595-MIE2003007, free.
Career and Co-op Services as mentioned earlier, are not promoting their workshops efficiently. Meaning most students either do not hear about the service/workshop or show lack of interest in such events. Social media should be properly utilized, this includes Twitter, Facebook, YouTube videos, providing prizes by participating in online surveys/contests etc. in addition, it is important to cater these workshops for students from to all disciplines. This way every faculty is targeted and hence a better event turn out. In addition, flyer/poster should be placed in locations that student's use the most. For example: Student Center, washroom advertisements, BSB, outside GO Bus stations etc. Another recommendation is to hold run a Grant Writing 1A03 event, with the goal of educating students about grant writing process. There should be graduate students or key note speakers that can give their inside tips on writing an efficient application.

To make the whole application process more accessible, and to improve general promotion for these opportunities, Career and Co-op Services should explore more holistic tactics for promotion outside of online job boards. Having more in-house events that are better promoted through non-online sources (posters, booths, etc.) could reach out to those outside the users of the current system; like those without adequate access to computer services and software applications at Mac. This may also increase the credibility of the online system and give students a forum for questions and feedback. More could be done by the University itself. Library computer services are adequate but not available at all times, and only Lyons Media Centre can accommodate for special requests in terms of computer applications. Having an application process for access to a computer lab or computer application for students at McMaster University could be an acceptable way to address this issue.

**Centralizing Online Job Boards**

| Principle: Job opportunities for students should be advertised in a public, streamlined manner. |
| Principle: All students should have access to existing career opportunities in their field of study. |
| Concern: High volumes of job postings irrelevant to a student’s field of study inhibit their ability to find meaningful job opportunities. |
| Concern: Students are not receiving adequate notice of career opportunities, negatively impacting their ability to apply. |
| Concern: The current method of online job board postings is not accessible to all students or employers. |
| Concern: Current job boards are difficult to navigate and search functions are not effective. |
Recommendation: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should improve search filters surrounding applicants’ qualifications, academic programs, and interests.

Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should provide a centralized platform to combine existing job boards.

Recommendation: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services job boards should adhere to a standard of at least two weeks allowance between opening and closing job postings.

Effective communication is in the best interest for all parties, students and employers, in finding the best fit for filling professional positions. By improving this communication, all students will have equal access to opportunities, meaning the most qualified, best suited candidates can be selected by employers. It is important that Career and Co-op services focus more efforts on this effective communication to all students so as to best inform them of job opportunities that are available.

Students are not receiving adequate notice of career opportunities. Postings may not be available early enough for students to see and respond to opportunities effectively within their already busy schedules. Additionally, the current job board systems supported by McMaster University does not provide alerts or differentiation for new job postings, as well as allow older ones to linger. Time may be spent on an application that is no longer viable; time which for a student is very important to be made effective for successful employment. The current model is a difficult to use platform where opportunities can be lost simply due to protracted action in taking down old or filled postings and a lack of alerts to new ones. To address these barriers limiting access to employment, Career and Co-op services should create a centralized job board where all McMaster affiliate opportunities can be found. This product could be facilitated through the existing OscarPlus application/domain, or by other means.

Job boards should adhere to a standard of at least two weeks allowance between opening and closing job postings. Additionally, there should be quick removal of non-viable postings, so that students do not waste time applying to them, or become overwhelmed or discouraged by a confusingly erratic number of job postings.

Improving search filters to enable clarity surrounding necessary qualifications would be an adequate way to streamline the current job search process at McMaster supported online applications. Having filters that can be applied along the categories of degree type/level, amount and types of experience, number of working hours, general field of study, organization, etc. This will help students to find the most relevant employers and cut time from the application process. It will also help to engage students as the current process, with large time investments and low rewards, can disillusion some from returning to the job hunt. Having effective search terms, can be especially useful for those in interdisciplinary and niche programs who

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don’t fit into a specific work or education category. Career and Co-op services should be working in tandem with employers to meet this need.

To effectively compete in the modern labour force, a student must have somewhat specialized experience (volunteer or work-related) in their field of study. To this end, the University should effectively facilitate the connection of students to related field opportunities through existing structures.

Current job postings do not effectively inform students of jobs related to their field of study, inhibiting their ability to find meaningful career opportunities due to the high volume of unrelated content. The University’s two most popularized job platforms are conveyed through MOSAIC and “OscarPlus” do not contain useful search filters for amount of hours required, sequence sorting categories, as well as specific degrees and disciplines. Things like application deadlines, position types and employment categories which are available on OscarPlus, are not available on MOSAIC. To streamline the job search process, the University should support more specificity related to these search filters to facilitate succinct, quality job postings that are most relevant to the fields of students, no matter their faculty or program. In this way, students will have a more specific personalized approach to their employment needs from their faculty and have the most relevant opportunities readily available.

Students only have a certain amount of time to spend on job applications. To this end, the University should effectively facilitate the connection of students to related field opportunities as efficiently as possible so as to increase the amount of students applying for employment, and to ensure employers are accessing the most relevant pool of applicants.

Current job boards can display an overlap of many postings, with some outliers for each. This can be exhausting for students to pick out individual different postings by scanning numerous online job boards to find specific exceptions. The University should also provide a centralized community engaged platform for career opportunity services to combat repetitive postings through a common network. These platforms are not adequately connecting students to opportunities due to a lack of connection and centralization.

To remedy this, the University should use a method of increased centralization of job boards by utilizing/partnering with other local systems with similar mandates, (such as Magnet, for example) to increase pool of opportunities and collect into one point of access for students seeking jobs. This would both eliminate the repetition of postings, and help to define best practices and opportunities for students through a wider net of participants.

**Improving Access to Career-Relevant Jobs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: OscarPlus should be a quality resource for finding a wide variety of career-relevant job opportunities.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Some opportunities posted on OscarPlus have been reported as being disreputable or having suspicious activity.</td>
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</table>
Concern: There is a lack of variety in job postings due to the limited number of employers using OscarPlus.

Concern: McMaster University does not have enough employer relationships to provide an adequate amount of meaningful job opportunities to students.

Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should actively create and filter partnerships with a variety of employers to offer students several job options from various fields.

Recommendation: The Student Success Centre should create a feedback mechanism to allow students to report on their experiences with jobs found through OscarPlus.

OscarPlus is one of the most used University-supported online job posting system. For the University to take pride in this, it should be a quality resource for students to find a wide variety of reliable career opportunities. However, some opportunities currently being posted on OscarPlus have been reported by students as being disreputable or having suspicious activity. This takes away from the credibility of the program as well as the other organizations that are posting there. It is unfair for students who use the application, and must be addressed. Additionally, there is a lack of variety in job postings due to the limited number of employers using OscarPlus.

To remedy these concerns, the Student Success Centre should establish better relationships with the employers they partner with, and should be confident in their credibility. The Student Success Centre should also actively seek a variety of employers to give students a diversity of job options from various fields to choose from.

Feedback is an important part of an improvement process. The Student Success Centre should allow for students to provide feedback on opportunities that asked for inappropriate information, or who had other negative experiences. One way of doing this could be to implement a 3 strike system based on this feedback system; where warnings are given to the organizations with repetitive misconduct. This would hopefully allow for students to report suspicious activity and maintain the credibility of the job board as a whole. Additionally, the overall student experience can be improved, for example, a concern that has been put forward was the redundancy of applying on Oscar Plus as well as on the company website. This is an easy solution to solve as long as student feedback and needs are being made a priority.

**Transition into the Workforce**

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<tr>
<th>Principle: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should prepare all students for a smooth transition from academia to the workforce after university.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: Students are unsatisfied with the current transitional information and services in place at McMaster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Student Success Centre needs to better promote Career Fairs and improve access to all students.</td>
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Co-op programs alternate periods of study with work placements, offering students a structured approach that integrates their academic studies with work experiences in a related field. A longitudinal study was done among 20,000 university graduates it was found that co-op graduates earned salaries 22.2% higher than those of their non-co-op peers in their first year in the workforce. University co-op graduates have also been found to be less likely to be overqualified for their jobs. In addition, earnings and employment rates are significantly higher among Canadian university co-op graduates. Co-op programs help students to get an idea of what work after post graduate studies look like, help preparing them for life after university. The importance of Co-op is evident in undergraduate studies and thereafter is evident. Nevertheless, the issues is that current structures in place to facilitate this transition from university to workforce is not adequate.

The Career and Co-op services offers various services that provides learning space for students. The learning space refers not just to a physical location, but also the social environment in which a WIL program takes place. Creating an effective learning space entails constructive assessment that enables students to learn and improve, as well as quality mentorship from individuals who understand the program’s goals. These services and workshops are not inclusive of individuals who commute or have a sort of disability. It is our institutional aspiration to work towards campus that adopts to the social definition of disability by responding with creating events/workshops that fulfills the needs of everybody. This also includes holding events that are not just restricted from 9am-4pm. For commuters, it is already hard to get excess to on campus resources and events. Therefore, it important to be considerate of timings when holding career fairs/workshops. In addition, as mentioned earlier services should be encouraged to hold more and better promoted job/career fairs on campus for student convenience. Social media should be properly utilized, this includes Twitter, Facebook, YouTube videos, and providing prizes by participating in online surveys/contests etc.

In addition, Transition Out of University Conference should be implemented early in the year (Level III and IV for those not completing their degree with honours). This goal of this conference should be to help students transition out of university in to actual workforce. There should be keynote speakers and mini workshops that is catered towards students from all disciplines. There should then be a follow up event

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provided by the Career and Co-op services just to make sure students are not confused about the information received in the conference and further provide them with the resources that are available on campus.

### Student Engagement and Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students should have a voice in what services are offered through their faculty’s Career, Co-op, or Experiential Education Office and the Student Success Centre.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Students currently have little to no input in which services are developed and improved by Career, Co-op, Experiential Education Office and the Student Success Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Career, Co-op, Experiential Education Offices and the Student Success Centre should implement a feedback model for their services where students can help pinpoint where gaps in knowledge can be filled through events, workshops, and outreach.</td>
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About 51% of McMaster students believe that there is a lack of advertising with regards to co-op opportunities, volunteer placements, and internships within the Hamilton community (McMaster Students Union 2016). According to Your City Survey, students do not believe they are given the opportunity to get involved in various aspects of the city. The biggest discrepancy is 58% in regards to a broad choice of places to work and professional job opportunities. Students feel that there is lack of involvement in McMaster services and different workshops/events provided by them.

Along with lack of proper advertisements, one of the major concerns of Career and Co-op services workshops is the use of students input and feedback. Different faculties hold various workshops regarding co-op opportunities but one of the reasons these workshops do not go as successfully is not inputting student voice in such events. For the academic Year: 2017-2018 Co-op Canadian Citizen and Co-op (International - Visa Student) pay a mandatory Supplementary fees of Fee of $5,250, broken into three instalments of $1,750.00.\(^8\) In addition, all undergraduate students pay a Career and Professional Development Fees of $267.99. Considering that students pay much fee towards co-op, it is important that their opinions and recommendations should be taken into consideration. Below are the anticipated fees per each four-month academic term for students entering our MBA programs in September 2017.

One recommendation is for the Career and Co-op services to implement a feedback model for their services and more specifically for events and workshops. Career and Co-op Services should then apply that feedback to future action. There is a current feedback system for some of their workshops, however, this system is not placed in use properly. Inputting student’s voice makes them to participate more in the service. It gives students the initiative to attend the workshops and other future events that can greatly benefit them. Voicing for a change and watching it being implemented in the future events, gives students the idea that their opinions matter. Even from early on, many schools of thought in psychology acknowledged the importance of the

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8 "MBA Tuition and Supplemental Fees." MBA Program. [https://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/fees-and-scholarships/mba-tuition-and-supplemental-fees/]
feeling of belonging and appreciation. One of the biggest core values as human beings are to feel needed, appreciated and to be part of a community.

On a much larger scale, it grabs the attention of more students and hence greater turnout at the events/workshops. Innovation and change is ideal to run successful events in the future, therefore, this feedback model assures improvement. After each workshop/event held by the Career and Co-op services a feedback form should be available when the event ends. In addition, a separate form should be posted online prior to the event, which is focused on what the students want to achieve from the event. Along with the form, students should be given the opportunity to provide feedback or any other raise any other issue they have in person. One way to do this is for the Career and Co-op services to hold office house or for students to book appointments. Furthermore, it is important for the services to make sure these issues (being feasible) are heard and implemented.

Co-operative Education, Placements, and Practicums

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle:</th>
<th>All students enrolled in a program with a co-op or practicum requirement should have the resources necessary to find one that suits their needs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern:</td>
<td>Students experience difficulties with finding practicum and co-op placements, often resulting in opportunities they did not want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td>Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should better assist students and facilitate the process for finding co-op and practicum placements.</td>
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Co-op or practicum placements are resource-intensive, with the burden being placed not only on the students but on the institute too. It has been determined that practicum placements positively affected students’ academic performance, with an increase in perceived employability; and expedited employment upon graduation. Preceptorships. Students participate in activities that are considered core to the curriculum and necessary for successful completion of the program, and are closely monitored by individuals working on behalf of the institution. However, securing sufficient high-quality placement sites is a perennial concern for postsecondary institutions.9

Practicum placements are not hard to find; the issue is where and when to find them. Hence, a lot of students a not taking advantages of the different placement opportunities provided here at McMaster University. As mentioned before, students are paying a decent part of their fee towards Career and Co-op services. However, what is the point if they are not even given the proper resources to access these opportunities. Western University hosts annual Hack Western event where students are provided access to experts, mentors and number of workshops as well as dedicated learning tracts. These are inclusive events that are catered towards students from all disciplines. McMaster does have great resources, nevertheless, some departments are more excelled in this field that others.

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One solution to this issue, is providing students with a ballot system. The placement center, in this case Career and Co-op Service should be the bridge between students and placement. So if students go there with an interest, the system should be able to direct them to a placement that fits their need. These students should then receive a ballot via their McMaster email, so that it is easy to access. The PNB department here are McMaster follows this ballot system and it been in place for a very long time. In PNB, the ballot system allows students to pick their upper years undergraduate PNB courses that are catered towards research and co-op opportunities. Hence, a similar system should be adopted by Career and Co-op Service, which the students can greatly benefit from. This not only helps students to find placements that they are interested in, but also makes it easier for the faculty staff as most things are done electronically. Staff charged with supervising or mentoring these students need to have a strong understanding of the program and its aims to serve in that role effectively. Via this ballot system the issue of supply and demand (in other words, matching the available students with their needs) is solved because study are directly being placed in their area of interest. There is a significant administrative burden involved with getting a ballot program off the ground as well as the ongoing time commitment required for managing the program. Nevertheless, for this system to work a great deal of assistance and cooperation is required from the Career and Co-op Service.

### Co-Curriculars and Skill Articulation

| Principle: | McMaster University should provide access to high quality co-curricular learning opportunities for students. |
| Principle: | Students should receive recognition for skills and achievements they gain both in and outside the classroom that they can demonstrate to potential employers. |
| Concern: | The reduction of the MacServe program has left a gap in programming for students to gain practical experience through co-curriculars. |
| Concern: | The University has no formalized way of acknowledging students’ soft skills that are learned in the classroom that are recognized by outside parties. |
| Concern: | The University has no formalized way of documenting students’ extra-curricular activities. |
| Concern: | PebblePad is underutilized by McMaster students and those who have reported a lack of utility. |
| Concern: | Only select employers will request or read a learning portfolio, mitigating their use. |
| Concern: | It is difficult for students to demonstrate their extra-curricular activities to employers since there is no formalized procedure for recognition. |
| Recommendation: | McMaster should continue to create partnerships in the community to create service learning opportunities throughout the year. |
| Recommendation: | McMaster should promote volunteer opportunities in the community through a centralized board. |
Learning both in and outside the traditional university classroom setting should be equally valued. Co-circulars have the ability to enhance students’ education experience, with participation being positively associated with higher academic achievements. Additionally, students can gain valuable skills through these activities, which will ease their transition from university into their careers. For these reasons, McMaster should encourage student participation in these activities by promoting and, where possible, offer high-quality opportunities.

McMaster Student Success Centre used to offer the MacServe program, which offered students unique experiential learning opportunities through a trusted source. However, this program was greatly reduced in 2017. This has created a gap in experiential learning opportunities. The Student Success Centre should reflect on the successes and failures of the MacServe program and apply this knowledge to a new experiential learning program. This can take the form of partnering with local organizations to create such opportunities throughout the year while focusing on best practices including sustainability and cultural sensitivity. The Student Success Centre should create a centralized board promoting these full-curricular activities. To be unique from similar services, McMaster should approve each opportunity based on a set of criteria that evaluates its sustainability, impact on the community, and utilization of volunteers’ skills. Additionally, there should be the potential to filter the listings to cater towards different student’s interests.

To formally document student’s co-curricular experiences, McMaster University should create an institutionally recognized co-curricular record. Doing so recognizes that learning outside the classroom is equally valuable and incentives students to engage in co-curricular activities. These records would be similar in format to an academic transcript. Students would add to their record by submit their activities to university administrators. To ensure legitimacy of entries, these activities would have to meet certain qualifications or be certified by administrators. Several universities have already developed co-curricular records, including University of Toronto.

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Laurier13, Carlton14, and Western15. McMaster University should look to these for best practices when developing their own.

In order to acknowledge students’ accomplishments and soft skills gained through curricular and co-curricular activities, MacPherson should continue to develop a digital badge system. Digital badges are a representation of a particular, skill, interest, or achievement.16 They are earned by completing a certain activity, whether online, in the classroom, or in the community.17 They are particularly helpful in recognizing learning, and establishing one’s identity and reputation.18 It has been found that badges increase students’ motivation when the task is challenging while also attainable.19 It should also heighten the earners reputation, and represent a transferable skill that will be recognized potential employers. UBC and University of Calgary have already developed robust badge systems.20,21 Fees to implement this program are limited.22 The program most often used to develop badges, Open Badges, is open source and free to use.23 Development of the badges themselves requires technical skills that many employees at the university would have. In order to further encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities and to recognize their accomplishments, the university should implement the low-cost badging program.

The benefits of reflections are also well-documented.24 McMaster currently encourage students to reflect on PebblePad, a web based program known as a Personal Learning Space. PebblePad documents the transferable skills students gain from experiences throughout their undergraduate education25. It is a very expansive service, offering templates for reflections, abilities, achievements, activities. However, this service is underutilized by students. Students report the interface is not user-friendly, they dislike it is housed on an external site, and they would prefer to submit

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
20 “Open Badges UBC,” The University of British Columbia, accessed October 14, 2017
21 “UCalgary Badges,” University of Calgary, accessed October 14, 2017
22 Consultation with the MacPherson Institute.
reflections in similar ways of other assignments in their courses. While they do like the templates, the Student Success Centre should provide similar resources on their website for students to refer to.

**Entrepreneurship**

Principle: All students, regardless of program of study, should have access to courses and experiences that develop entrepreneurial skills.

Principle: Entrepreneurial learning opportunities should be experiential and involve forming connections with the Hamilton community.

Principle: All willing and qualified students should have access to funding support for the purpose of exploring entrepreneurship opportunities in the City of Hamilton.

Concern: There are no general or interdisciplinary entrepreneurial courses available to all students.

Concern: Opportunities given by Forge@Mac are only available to a handful of students and not well advertised.

Concern: Government funding to entrepreneurship is extremely limited.

Concern: McMaster’s intellectual property policy is harmful to students.

Recommendation: McMaster University should create a Level I or II general experiential course focusing on building entrepreneurial skills.

Recommendation: McMaster should promote more Forge@Mac opportunities to increase the number of applicants.

Recommendation: McMaster should increase funding to Forge@Mac and other entrepreneurial opportunities to make it available to more students.

Recommendation: The City of Hamilton and McMaster should create a joint fund that student entrepreneurs can access when starting a business.

Recommendation: McMaster should remodel its intellectual property policy emphasizing transparency and students’ rights.

Students with some form of entrepreneurial experience gain many valuable skills which allow them to be more successful in the workforce. Attention recently given to Waterloo’s velocity program highlights how Waterloo’s focus on entrepreneurship

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26 Policy Conference delegates in discussion with authors, November 5, 2009.
27 Ibid.
attracts employers and makes their students more employable\textsuperscript{29}.

McMaster does not currently offer undergraduate courses related to entrepreneurship, other than those restricted to social science\textsuperscript{30}, commerce\textsuperscript{31} or engineering students\textsuperscript{32}. Creating or working for a startup while enrolled as a full-time student is difficult to fund and balance with other academic commitments, and therefore students should have the opportunity to learn skills related to entrepreneurship in other ways\textsuperscript{33}. An entrepreneurship course could focus on skills necessary to work in a startup or development environment, which are transferrable to any technical and social future entrepreneurship endeavours\textsuperscript{34}. Skills gained from a specific entrepreneurial experience may not be as widely applicable\textsuperscript{35}, and therefore McMaster should provide both experiential and classroom learning opportunities.

Currently, for a McMaster student to develop a business around an idea or product they have developed, they need to receive permission from all possible stakeholders within a brief window of time\textsuperscript{36}. If the idea or product was developed as part of a public-private partnership (PPP), any institutions involved can make a claim for the intellectual property, McMaster having priority\textsuperscript{37}. McMaster should remodel this system in a way which echoes Waterloo's policy, where a student who wishes to use University resources as part of their venture may sign a clear contract detailing each party's rights and responsibilities, including that the University covers costs involved with patenting, and guarantees the student 75% of profits\textsuperscript{38}. This way, students are supported in their business ventures, and have a written agreement that defines their ownership of their intellectual property.

The Forge is a Hamilton-based organization which works to encourage entrepreneurship by providing workspace, training, mentorship, and resources to aspiring entrepreneurs\textsuperscript{39}. The Forge@Mac is an arm of the Forge specifically for McMaster students, which gives out $105,000 in in grants to winners of their yearly competitions\textsuperscript{40}. In their winter Student Startup Competition, around ten students are awarded $5,000 to $20,000, totalling $100,000\textsuperscript{41}. The number of students receiving

\textsuperscript{30} “Entrepreneurial Training for Social Sciences,” McMaster University Faculty of Social Sciences, accessed November 2017.
\textsuperscript{31} “COMMERCE 4SE3 – Entrepreneurship,” McMaster University, accessed October 2017
\textsuperscript{32} “Engineering Management Program – Entrepreneurship,” McMaster University, accessed November 2017
\textsuperscript{33} Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. “Student Employment Policy Paper” (2016).
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} “The Forge@Mac,” https://theforge.mcmaster.ca/the-forgemac/
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} “Student Startup Competition (Winter),” https://theforge.mcmaster.ca/the-forgemac/
funding is a tiny fraction of McMaster's population, meaning that the majority of students do not have access to these opportunities. However, not many students even apply. In 2016, only slightly over fifty student-lead startups applied. Again, in contrast to McMaster's student population this number is shockingly low. McMaster should advertise the Forge@Mac so that more students interested in entrepreneurship are connected with the services McMaster supplies. However, existing opportunity could not possibly stretch to reach enough students. The Forge is funded by the Ontario Government, and the limit to their funding means they cannot give sufficient grants to the amount of students who are qualified. In 2016, they lowered their grant money from $25,000 to $20,000 per project because the applicant pool was so strong. Clearly McMaster students are enthusiastic and capable entrepreneurs, and McMaster should support them by increasing funding to the Forge@Mac. The City of Hamilton could also encourage local entrepreneurship by partnering with McMaster in funding student entrepreneurial projects, either through the Forge or a separate body.

Student services should provide a network for students to be given jobs at various startup companies for them to get first-hand experience. This arrangement will benefit both the company and the student, as it may be difficult for startup companies to find initial employees and for students to find jobs, therefore it produces a mutualistic relationship between the two parties. The University should run more events, including speakers with entrepreneurial experience, aimed at giving students a better understanding of what entrepreneurship is and cultivating a startup / entrepreneurial culture at McMaster. Through programs and speakers, students will obtain a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship motivating students to create an ecosystem of entrepreneurship and, in turn, motivating more students to pursue entrepreneurship.

**Experiential Learning Courses**

| Principle: There should be a better integration of experiential learning, self-directed learning, and interdisciplinarity in undergraduate programs. |

| Principle: All willing and qualified students should be able to access an experiential learning course, regardless of their program. |

| Concern: Some experiential learning opportunities are restricted to specific programs. |

| Concern: Some programs lack experiential learning opportunities. |

| Concern: Experiential learning classes are not explicitly labelled as such to students. |

| Concern: The cost of experiential Learning classes can create access barriers and deter students from pursuing this type of education. |

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42 “Spectrum Student Startup,” https://theforge.mcmaster.ca/2016/04/01/spectrum-student-startup-2016-results/
44 Ibid.
Recommendation: Programs and faculties should invest in creating more experiential learning courses that will best fit their students’ needs.

Recommendation: Where possible, faculty restrictions on experiential education courses should be removed and replaced with necessary prerequisites.

Recommendation: The Office of Registrar should create a section on the course calendar highlighting experiential courses.

Recommendation: The University should provide funding to offset the financial costs of taking experiential learning courses.

In Patrick Deane’s letter “Forward with Integrity” he states, “Experiential learning will thus be key both to the future quality and to the sustainability of our programs.” Furthermore, he encourages all units of the university to consider integrating more experiential, self-directed, and interdisciplinary learning, in order to follow his vision, facilities should prioritize these pedagogically sound methods of teaching.

Both the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel have recommended that every student have at least one EE/WIL opportunity in their post-secondary experience (PSE). Students who have engaged with some form of EE during their PSE generally rate it as highly satisfactory, as having enhanced their PSE experience, made them more equipped for the job force. Around half of students believe there should be more opportunities for WIL. All other factors considered, most students would choose a program with a WIL component over one without. Both provincially and federally, around half of students participate in some form of WIL, numbers which drop to around 1/3 in the OPSSS survey. However, only 25% of respondents at McMaster indicated that they participated in some form of WIL.

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46 Ibid., 14
47 “MAED’s Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning,” Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
48 “Building the Workforce of Tomorrow,” The Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel (2016)
and 43% said their program did not offer any WIL opportunities.\textsuperscript{56} Clearly, McMaster is not providing its students with sufficient opportunities.

Terms like WIL and EE do not have universal definitions, and are often used to mean different things by different institutions.\textsuperscript{57,58} McMaster should clearly define these terms and identify courses with WIL, EE, and interdisciplinary elements to ensure maximum clarity for students.

The only faculties with courses currently marked as “experiential education” or “experiential learning” are Arts & Science, Social Sciences, and Science. These courses are all faculty exclusive. As every student should have access to an EE course, the above faculties should make their EE courses available to everyone where possible. For instance, Arts & Science and Integrated Science offer one to three credit courses Interdisciplinary Experiences on a range of topics\textsuperscript{59}. These experiences could be expanded in partnership with or replicated by other faculties and offered to more students. In addition, faculties which do not currently provide EE courses should invest in their creation which are tailored to the requirements of their students. Some key elements of EE courses are relevancy to employment fields, capstone or independent projects, opportunities to build relationships with those currently working in the field, self-reflection, and interdisciplinary attributes, such as working with in groups outside one’s faculty or program.\textsuperscript{60,61,62}

The two largest barriers to EE and WIL participation for students are cost and time.\textsuperscript{63,64} EE courses should be financially viable (for instance, SOCSCI 2ELO is tuition-free)\textsuperscript{65} and not add time to your degree like a co-op program might. If an EE opportunities have inherent costs associated with them, McMaster should provide a bursary system to ensure all students can access them.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} “MAEDS’S Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning,” Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
\textsuperscript{62} “Building the Workforce of Tomorrow,” The Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel (2016)
\textsuperscript{64} “Work-Integrated Learning and Post-Secondary Education: What Students Think,” Abacus Data (2016)
\textsuperscript{65} “Introduction to Career Planning Through Experiential Learning,” Faculty of Social Sciences, accessed October 2017.
Municipal Engagement
Student Access to Engagement

Principle: Students who want to engage with the Hamilton community in a meaningful and respectful way should have the access and capacity to do so.

Principle: Students should be able to gain meaningful summer or part-time employment in Hamilton relating to their field of study.

Concern: The City of Hamilton has a limited number of summer jobs relating to students’ area of study.

Recommendation: The City of Hamilton should expand the number of jobs that provide students with valuable professional development experience.

Recommendation: The City of Hamilton should invest in the creation of part-time job opportunities throughout the year.

Recommendation: McMaster should create diverse and creative partnerships with organizations in order to expand the amount of opportunities for students in all fields of study.

The concept of increasing and enabling “Student Community Engagement” to be integrated into the academic institutions at McMaster is a key part of the Forward with Integrity Letter authored by Patrick Deane; and therefore part of the strategic direction of the university. President Deane states, “McMaster has demonstrated throughout its history that outstanding academic work can be an extraordinary force for the good of human beings, society, and nature; so our task in the future must be to consolidate and deepen that contribution... We need to integrate it [community engagement] fully and meaningfully into the work of the academy”

In this way, McMaster has a responsibility to ensure that students who want to engage with their community in a meaningful respectful way, have the access and capacity to do so. One of such ways to increase student engagement with the community is participation in meaningful employment opportunities in Hamilton that are relevant to their field of study. This is a reciprocal approach to engagement as students and the community both gain from the interaction: Students receive experience and training, and local communities are able to utilize University trained young workers. By allowing students to meaningfully contribute to their communities, McMaster will be facilitating growth in both parties, and establishing significant relationships for sustainable development.

The City of Hamilton has a limited number of summer jobs relating to students’ area of study. On their website where students may apply, they state: “The opportunities in this category [opportunities specific to a student’s area of study] are very limited. These positions are subject to change and are dependent upon budget availability.”

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This illustrates the lack of availability and resources allocated by the City in providing students opportunities relevant to their field of study. This reduces the amount of students who leave McMaster with work experience to help them find employment after University. Those who participate in apprenticeships tend to have improved employment prospects, higher income, increased job security, and further opportunities for training and development.\textsuperscript{68} In general participation of Work Integrated Learning, many students have expressed that participation in such programs helped them mature as a person, and improved their ability to get along with people in work situations.\textsuperscript{69}

To address these issues, action must be taken both on the part of the City of Hamilton, and McMaster University, to ensure that all students have equitable access to municipal engagement. First, the City of Hamilton should seek out and expand the number of jobs relating to students’ specific area of study. This will hopefully address the deficit of opportunities for specific students in faculties that are not currently addressed by the City. For this to be successful, the expansion of opportunities should contain a diverse pool of employment options. To accomplish this, student feedback on what opportunities are missing in their field of study could assist in the development of niche options, or at least to inform the City of where to explore future partnerships.

Of the partnerships that are created by the city to students, they generally benefit only one particular subset. Many partnerships may only be with one faculty on specific topics. For example, the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster uses community partnerships in their HTHSCI 4D09 or 4D12 Thesis in Engaging the City experiential learning course. This course connects student capabilities with community needs, and provides valuable experience to students while assisting community growth.

The City of Hamilton should also create part-time job opportunities throughout the year as current time constraints and summer opportunities that end in the fall are not accessible to many students. For some students who rent their Hamilton dwellings, summer opportunities are missed as they are required to be in their permanent addresses for the summer months. Without adequate options when they return to Hamilton for the school term, students are unable to find useful opportunities for professional growth. By providing more part-time opportunities throughout the year, this barrier will be reduced, and students will be able to find placement and engage in the community.

Partnerships between community members and McMaster University should continue to grow, and expand. Additionally, McMaster should be actively seeking other partnerships and ways to improve relationships. Hamilton Health Sciences in particular should further incorporate McMaster faculties into their partnership with

\textsuperscript{68} Munro, Daniel, Cameron MacLaine, and James Stuckey. 2014. “The State Of Skills And PSE In Canada”. The Conference Board of Canada.

the University. The more departments that are able to be a part of such partnerships, the more accessible these types of programs become to all students at McMaster.

With more and more students professing the importance of related work experience, income and relevant work experience are obviously a heightening priority for students in Ontario. For proof of this, the 2016 ABACUS survey that found a staggering 89% of current students and recent grads support more work integrated learning in programs. With this awareness, McMaster should better facilitate connecting students to opportunities in effective sustainable ways. The City should benefit from this increased demand for opportunity by creating more openings to take advantage of these passionate, educated individuals.

### Community Engagement Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students should be adequately prepared to represent McMaster University when working with community members.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The community has expressed concerns that students can be disrespectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Office of Community Engagement should create a tuition-free, non-credit online course open to all students on proper community engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Those who complete the training course should unlock new community engagement opportunities and job postings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Office of Community Engagement should expand the number of course offerings to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: McMaster should increase investment into organizations such as Citylab.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forward With Integrity committed that community engagement is a long held valued part of McMaster University culture, however, there is significant concern from students and community members that current efforts to create partnerships are not sufficient in effectively connecting these two parties. Several community members have complained about this issue and some have gone even so far to say they do not want students volunteering with them until they receive training. The inception of the Office of Community Engagement was a good first step in trying to establish a facilitator for organizing a network to connect students and community members, however, the office has not been able to sufficiently address the lack of training given to students who engage in research and activities in the community.

They have taken the first step and designed handbooks and training for those who will be interacting with the community, including instructors and student clubs. The in-person training is not yet well-delivered. Considering staffing constraints, it may be difficult to meet the demand of individuals who would benefit from this training. The Office of Community Engagement should thus adapt their current training into a tuition-free, non-credit online course delivered through a series of online modules. This course should be available to all students and documented on their official

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71 Consultation with the Office of Community Engagement.
transcript, similar to SOCSCI 2EL0. After they completion e, individuals should be able to show community members or their professors their transcript as verification. Additionally, after students complete this course, certain community-engaged job boards or opportunities should be unlocked to them. This will provide incentive for students to complete the module while also ensuring they are well-equipped to take on these positions.

For students who would like to deepen their understanding of community engagement best practices, they should be able to take classes on the subject. Currently, the Office of Community Engagement offers a foundational course on the subject (CMTYENGA 2A03) through the Arts & Science program. This course offers one core per term with a class size of 40 students. Students from any program are able to enroll, demonstrating its accessibility. To further increase its accessibility, more cores should be offered in order to fit into more students' schedules and to provide more students with this foundational knowledge. Additionally, for those who are keen on furthering their knowledge, they should be able to further explore the subject through upper level courses. The Office of Community Engagement should consider creating an upper level course where students will be able to apply their foundational knowledge. This course should provide students with a meaningful and enriching experience of working with the local community on a project the community deems a priority. This will provide an experiential learning opportunity to students who may otherwise not be able to access such classes.

**Provincial Legislation**

**Closing Loopholes in the Employment Standards Act (ESA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students pursuing internships should have equal rights to those of other working individuals under the Employment Standards Act (ESA).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The ESA does not apply to individuals interning with a program under their post-secondary institution due to consideration of the internship's purported practical training as further education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The provincial government should amend the ESA to remove the exemption of college and university programs under internships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 2015 Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey, published by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), about 9,200 undergraduate students were surveyed. Findings showed that two-thirds of the participants had never participated in WIL opportunities during their post-secondary education. Of those individuals who had, 84% were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, and 88% also reported that such an opportunity improved or significantly improved the overall quality of their education. It has also been reported elsewhere that students in co-op programs had a 92% employment rate six months following graduation, as compared

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to 87% for those who did not.\textsuperscript{73} Even more importantly, 93% of co-op students had full-time employment, while merely 79% of students without co-op experience worked full-time. Thus, these results point to the merit of WIL opportunities, such as co-op programs and internships, in improving the practical education that students receive, as well as potentially leading to better long-term job opportunities following graduation.

These long-term benefits, however, can be overshadowed by the disadvantages of a rising number of unpaid internships, which often exploit the capabilities of students rather than provide them with meaningful experiences to supplement their education. One of the greatest costs of an unpaid internship, in particular, is the opportunity cost of forgoing paid work elsewhere.\textsuperscript{74} Such costs can compound over time to thousands of dollars in lost wages. In fact, between September to December in 2015, the provincial government recovered almost $140,000 in wages for unpaid interns following a blitz at workplaces across Ontario.\textsuperscript{75} Of the 77 workplaces that had interns, almost 25% did not meet the requirements as laid out in the Employment Standards Act (ESA).

Another cost of unpaid internships is the monetary costs that students must often pay for transportation to the internship location, which also adds up over time. Furthermore, interns have historically often been expected to work as much and as hard as regular employees, but without the added benefit of a regular paycheque. This also has great implications for their mental health, with one report findings showing that many interns were found to face additional psychological stress as a result of their uncertain financial situation and the unreimbursed costs of daily expenses.\textsuperscript{76} In particular to students from the lower income bracket, they may additionally be working a paid job in order to compensate for the lack of money received at an internship. This can further add burden to one’s health due to the stress of balancing all commitments with academic needs simultaneously.

The ESA provides many employees with rights to minimum wage, leaves of absence, vacation pay, and benefit plans. This has the potential to greatly alleviate the negative impacts that students potentially face at internships. There are several exclusion criteria listed, however, including “a secondary school student who performs work under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled” or those individuals who


\textsuperscript{74} James Attfield and Isabelle Couture. “An Investigation into the Status and Implications of Unpaid Internships in Ontario,” School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/5294/Attfield_James_and_Couture_Isabelle_MPA_2014.pdf?sequence=1\&isAllowed=y


\textsuperscript{76} James Attfield and Isabelle Couture. “An Investigation into the Status and Implications of Unpaid Internships in Ontario,” School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/5294/Attfield_James_and_Couture_Isabelle_MPA_2014.pdf?sequence=1\&isAllowed=y
are training for listed professions, like law. Individuals are also not considered an employee, and thereby excluded from the protection of the Act, if they meet all of the following six conditions:

1. The training is similar to that which is given in a vocational school.
2. The training is for the benefit of the individual.
3. The person providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the individual while he or she is being trained.
4. The individual does not displace employees of the person providing the training.
5. The individual is not accorded a right to become an employee of the person providing the training.
6. The individual is advised that he or she will receive no remuneration for the time that he or she spends in training.

These exemptions of students from the ESA not only unfairly and unreasonably expose post-secondary students to exploitation by employees, they do so through the broad language used, as visible from the six conditions listed above. There is potential for misinterpretation of the conditions listed above in order to consider an intern as exempted, for instance. Other provinces like British Columbia and Quebec also include similar provisions for unpaid or underpaid internships, but the legal language used is much more specific than the one laid out here.

It is noteworthy that the government has made progress through other examples such as Bill-18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy, which was established in 2014. It offers those students participating in experiential learning opportunities greater protection under the Occupational Health and Safety Act by considering those in unpaid internships through a college or university program as “workers.” This does not, however, get rid of the potential for exploitation that students continue to face without amendments to the ESA.

In February 2015, the Minister of Labour began the independent Changing Workplaces Review, which focussed on reviewing and developing recommendations for the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the ESA. Of the 173 recommendations put forth, it was recommended that the clause excluding interns and trainees from being protected by the ESA be removed “for various reasons including the abuse that is apparent by some employers.” As such, McMaster should advocate for amendments to the ESA that lead to much more specific language. This would thereby prevent

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78 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
employers from drawing broad conclusions that could allow them to exclude interns who rightfully deserve to be treated as employees.

Even aside from these alterations to other sections of the ESA, McMaster should advocate for the complete removal of this exemption from Section 3(5), which excludes post-secondary students from attaining employee status.\textsuperscript{82} Students in unpaid positions such as internships regularly perform the same tasks as regular, paid employees, so they should be entitled to fair working hours and reasonable pay. This will greatly allow students to pursue WIL opportunities without the fear of additional costs or unfair work environments acting as barriers.

**Student Labour in Experiential Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students should not have to pay to provide services that would normally be performed by a paid employee.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Students taking experiential courses, offering unsalaried work to employers, still pay tuition for such courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: McMaster should reduce tuition fees for experiential courses to be reflective of the operational costs of these courses.</td>
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</table>

Patrick Deane’s Forward with Integrity open letter (2011), prompting the expansion of work integrated learning (WIL), has been met with new opportunities for McMaster University students to engage in experiential courses supplementing their in-class learning.\textsuperscript{83} Despite this expansion, limitations remain for many students on the basis of financial concerns. Considering Business/Higher Education Roundtable’s summary report, concluding the most commonly cited reasons among students not pursuing WIL opportunities to be logistical or financial, McMaster University has reason to revise the current guidelines informing tuition costs for experiential courses.\textsuperscript{84}

Currently, many experiential courses require a time commitment that exceeds the workload of a regular course. Additionally, there are often extra costs associated with such experiences, including uniforms and transportation.\textsuperscript{2} The tuition of these courses, however, has not been adjusted to reflect these costs, resulting in greater expenses overall, when comparing to conventional classroom learning. These costs become especially concerning when considering the many experiential courses requiring students to perform work under companies or organizations for school credit, receiving no compensation.


With important steps in the process to participating in WIL acting as financial barriers, McMaster University should consider reducing the tuition of these courses. These courses also incur relatively little costs, noting that much of the WIL takes place externally. Especially in situations where students are required to solidify their own WIL partnership, faculty and other administrative costs are significantly reduced. The pricing structure of these courses should therefore be modified accordingly, with the best interests of these working students in mind.

**Student Employment Funding**

**Ontario Public Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Government services such as Ontario Public Services should offer a wide variety of employment opportunities that cater to diverse skills and backgrounds.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: As a primary provider of public service jobs, Ontario Public Services is limited in opportunities, thereby failing to meet the needs of many of its applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Ontario Public Services should form diversified partnerships and employ greater numbers of university students and recent graduates.</td>
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</table>

The Ontario Public Service (OPS) cites itself as being “one of the largest employers in the province, employing more than 60,000 people.” This claim runs in stark contrast to the number and scope of opportunities offered on their website. Currently, the service presents as a missed opportunity, largely due to the lack of postings, rendering more effective aspects of their process like their email Job Alert system useless.

Students and others looking to pursue jobs in public service are well-informed in their decisions, noting all the merits accompanying such professions. Beyond enabling individuals to enact meaningful change in Canada, the public sector also allows for a good quality of life, faring better for employment security factors and benefits compared to private sector jobs. Analyses in 2013 revealed that government workers were less likely to lose their jobs, with a 0.7% chance compared to 3.6% in the private sector, and that a significant proportion of these individuals were covered by a registered pension plan. However, with unclear entry and no centralized resources for seeking out new jobs, individuals receive less information and guidance in securing these careers.

The disadvantages of current practice in updating and providing opportunities in public service may also extend beyond the individual. More generally, being necessary to operations of the government, upkeep of the public service industry matters and failures in doing so may present several consequences; “…[especially] in

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the globalization system ... one of the most important and enduring competitive advantages that a country can have today is a lean, effective, honest civil service.”

Also considering that public service is more large-scale and multi-leveled than any Canadian private sector organization, there needs to be greater effort, exposure, and organization when recruiting for such positions.

The government has noticed these needs and attempted to launch Public Service Renewal projects, through their Blueprint 2020, that have worked towards onboarding students into the profession. However, entry into the field, as mediated by services like the Ontario Public Service job board, has not significantly been helped. In the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) next-generation public service article, no amendments were made to account for the lack of postings on job boards.

As a recommendation, Public Service Ontario should try to consolidate efforts with other, similar boards for a more active, updated, and centralized system. Additionally, this service should continue to forge partnerships with various divisions of public service jobs to bring more opportunities to searching candidates. Particularly, there should be more student and entry-level positions available, as this makes up the majority of individuals using these sites.

**Federal Work Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students who apply for work positions should be regularly updated on the status of their application.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle: Students receiving financial aid for summer positions should be funded in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) is both disorganized and uncommunicative in its efforts of connecting students to jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The Canada Summer Jobs program opportunities are being unrealized due to delayed governmental grants and approval of employer funding applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The FSWEP Ongoing Student Recruitment Inventory should be replaced with a more timely application process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Despite the high volume of applicants in the FSWEP portal, random applicant selection should cease to exist, as it is largely unfair for its lack of consideration for all eligible students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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88 Privy Council Office. *Perceptions and Realities of Today’s Public Service.*
Recommendation: Rules should be imposed on the government to move up funding deadlines for the Canada Summer Jobs program.

The youth unemployment rate, as reported by Statistics Canada, has been steadily decreasing since the start of the year and reached 10.3% in September, a 1.2 percentage-point decrease.\(^9\) This is the lowest rate since comparable data on unemployment rate became accessible in 1976, suggesting a promising time for students to access employment opportunities as they get out into the workforce.

However, the problem still remains that many students do not end up finding positions in the field that they have completed their degree in or are currently studying. A Statistics Canada report suggests a substantial decline in the number of youth employed in full-time permanent jobs over the last 40 years.\(^1\) The report states, “From 1976 to 1978, the full-time employment rate—the percentage of the population with a full-time job—averaged 76% for men aged 17 to 24 and 58% for women in the same age group who were not in school full time. From the beginning of 2014 to the third quarter of 2016, the corresponding percentages were 59% for men and 49% for women.”\(^2\) This is a substantial decrease in a time when rising postsecondary costs make it necessary for many students to pursue job opportunities during and after their postsecondary education period.

This was also corroborated by the 2015 Ontario Postsecondary Student Survey, which showed that of the 38% of individuals who reportedly worked in Fall 2015 while studying, 32% of them had work positions unrelated to their field of study.\(^3\) The Government of Canada has been working towards improving job availability for students through programs such as the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) and the Canada Summer Jobs program. The latter is part of the Canadian government’s Youth Employment Strategy initiative, aimed towards helping young people overcome barriers to employment and gain the skills and experiences needed to successfully move into the labour market after graduation.\(^4\) These opportunities, while a good way of providing students with the opportunity to find positions potentially related to their fields of study, are not without their shortcomings.

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\(^2\) Ibid.


The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) is a year-round program that offers full-time students work opportunities in the federal public service.\textsuperscript{95} This program utilizes an Ongoing Student Recruitment Inventory, through which students can submit an application at any point and wait until they have been selected for an interview. However, there are nuances to the student selection process. As the website states, “When there are job openings, a search will be conducted in the student inventory. If your application matches the manager’s search criteria, you may be contacted\textsuperscript{96} for a test and/or interview.” The asterisk refers to the fact that in favour of a fair selection process, employers may use a random selection of applicants who meet the criteria for their job posting. This reduces consideration of a student’s eligibility and competence for that particular job to merely meeting all the requirements for the position, which presents a disadvantage to those students who may be more qualified over a candidate that was randomly selected.

Additionally, anecdotal evidence suggests that the FSWEP application itself is considered to be lengthy and complicated. For those students who do submit applications, they are often unsure as to the status of their application and are left wondering whether they will be receiving any offers for interviews at any point soon. The fact that the application process might take students so long to complete only to be left uncertain about even receiving an interview can be a stressful experience. For this purpose, the FSWEP is in great need of streamlining the process in a manner that allows students to submit their application in a more time-efficient manner and be updated on the status of their application periodically.

There are several issues with the Canada Summer Jobs program as well. For students, perhaps the greatest shortcoming is the fact that this program only applies to full-time students. This presents a problem in particular for those students who are part-time students simply because they cannot afford full-time studies. These are the students perhaps most in need of financial support through opportunities such as Canada Summer Jobs, so to be excluded from the application process represents a gap that must be addressed. Additionally, the Canada Summer Jobs program is required to review all applications for funding received from employers and inform them of the status of their application before students can be hired and begin employment. This also raises a problem because Service Canada normally informs employers of the approval or rejection of their application in April.\textsuperscript{97} For university students, this may lead to lost opportunities as many students aim to finalize their summer positions much earlier in the year. By waiting until April for a work position that may end up not getting funding approval, students’ summer job opportunities

are jeopardized. If rejected, students may not have any other opportunities available to them by that point.

Both of these programs have merits, but they also have their shortcomings. McMaster needs to advocate for its students to the government in order to bring improvements to both of these programs. For FSWEP, McMaster can better provide support to students through the application process while pushing the government to streamline the process. Similarly for Canada Summer Jobs, McMaster can work with local Members of Parliament to ensure that the approval process for employers is completed early in order to give students ample time to submit applications themselves.

**McMaster’s Work-Study Program**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle: Eligibility for work-study placements should be based on financial need.</th>
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<td>Concern: Students whose families do not receive OSAP funding are more limited in job opportunities than other individuals, despite often having the need for employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: McMaster University should amend the Work Study program eligibility criteria to include students with financial need who are not registered with OSAP.</td>
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The benefits of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) cannot be overlooked for those receiving financial aid for tuition. However, OSAP eligibility - due to issues of equity - does not consider individual debt, disqualifying students despite similar needs of funding. The provincial government’s Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development has echoed these concerns, articulating that “students who believe that their circumstances are not reflected in the standard assessment may request a review of their OSAP file by contacting their financial aid office and completing a review form.” However, appeals are only considered in extenuating circumstances, leaving many students unassisted.

At McMaster, this issue is further exacerbated through such systems as the Work-Study program, which exists to provide OSAP-funded individuals with work opportunities through the university. Work-Study, which may subsidize part of the salary paid by partner employees, incentivizes the hiring of OSAP individuals over non-OSAP individuals. Again, while the intention in doing so is to promote equity, OSAP’s inability to fund families comprehensively runs the risk of working against non-OSAP students' financial stability as well as professional development.

Acknowledging the limitations placed on non-OSAP students, the university should adjust for the inequality, extending a proportion of predetermined listings to these individuals as well.

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Policy Statement

Whereas: The Student Success Centre, along with Faculty Career, Co-op and Experiential Education services should adequately promote all services they offer to students.

And whereas: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should offer adequate training to students on essential career and academic skills.

And whereas: Job opportunities for students should be advertised in a public, streamlined manner.

And whereas: All students should have access to existing career opportunities related to their field of study.

And whereas: OscarPlus should be a quality resource for finding a wide variety of career-relevant job opportunities.

And whereas: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should prepare all students for a smooth transition from academia to the workforce after university.

And whereas: Students should have a voice in what services are offered through their faculty's Career, Co-op, or Experiential Education Office and the Student Success Centre.

And whereas: All students enrolled in a program with a co-op or practicum requirement should have the resources necessary to find one that suits their needs.

And whereas: McMaster University should provide access to high quality co-curricular learning opportunities for students.

And whereas: Students should receive recognition for skills and achievements they gain both in and outside the classroom that they can demonstrate to potential employers.

And whereas: All students, regardless of program of study, should have access to courses and experiences that develop entrepreneurial skills.

And whereas: Entrepreneurial learning opportunities should be experiential and involve forming connections with the Hamilton community.

And whereas: All willing and qualified students should have access to funding support for the purpose of exploring entrepreneurship opportunities in the City of Hamilton.

And whereas: There should be a better integration of experiential learning, self-directed learning, and interdisciplinarity in undergraduate programs.

And whereas: All students should have the opportunity to take an Experiential Learning class, regardless of program.

And whereas: All willing and qualified students should be able to access an experiential learning course, regardless of their program.
And whereas: Students who want to engage with the Hamilton community in a meaningful and respectful way should have the access and capacity to do so.

And whereas: Students should be able to gain meaningful summer or part-time employment in Hamilton relating to their field of study.

And whereas: Students should be adequately prepared to represent McMaster University when working with community members.

And whereas: Students pursuing internships should have equal rights to those of other working individuals under the Employment Standards Act (ESA).

And whereas: Students should not have to pay to provide services that would normally be performed by a paid employee.

And whereas: Government services such as Ontario Public Services should offer a wide variety of employment opportunities that cater to diverse skills and backgrounds.

And whereas: Students who apply for work positions should be regularly updated on the status of their application.

And whereas: Students receiving financial aid for summer positions should be funded in a timely manner.

And whereas: Eligibility for work-study placements should be based on financial need.

Be it Resolved That: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should better promote their services to students through a variety of media.

Be it Further Resolved That (BIFRT): The Student Success Centre should create an Avenue to Learn shell that advertises various academic, personal and professional resources.

BIFRT: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services and the Student Success Centre should facilitate essential academic and professional skill development events.

BIFRT: Any existing workshops that currently train students in academic and professional essential skill development should be better promoted to engage more students.

BIFRT: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should improve search filters surrounding applicants’ qualifications, academic programs, and interests.

BIFRT: The Student Success Centre should provide a centralized platform to combine existing job boards.

BIFRT: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services job boards should adhere to a standard of at least two weeks allowance between opening and closing job postings.
BIFRT: The Student Success Centre should actively create and filter partnerships with a variety of employers to offer students several job options from various fields.

BIFRT: The Student Success Centre should create a feedback mechanism to allow students to report on their experiences with jobs found through OscarPlus.

BIFRT: The Student Success Centre needs to better promote Career Fairs and improve access to all students.

BIFRT: The Student Success Centre should develop a conference early in the year focused on the transition out of university to prepare students for entering the workforce.

BIFRT: Career, Co-op, Experiential Education Offices and the Student Success Centre should implement a feedback model for their services where students can help pinpoint where gaps in knowledge can be filled through events, workshops, and outreach.

BIFRT: Career, Co-op, and Experiential Education services should better assist students and facilitate the process for finding co-op and practicum placements.

BIFRT: McMaster should continue to create partnerships in the community to create service learning opportunities throughout the year.

BIFRT: McMaster should promote volunteer opportunities in the community through a centralized board.

BIFRT: McMaster University should develop a co-curricular record.

BIFRT: MacPherson Institute should develop a robust badge system to document students’ skills and achievements.

BIFRT: McMaster University should create a Level I or II general experiential course focusing on building entrepreneurial skills.

BIFRT: McMaster should promote more Forge@Mac opportunities to increase the number of applicants.

BIFRT: McMaster should increase funding to Forge@Mac and other entrepreneurial opportunities to make it available to more students.

BIFRT: The City of Hamilton and McMaster should create a joint fund that student entrepreneurs can access when starting a business.

BIFRT: McMaster should remodel its intellectual property policy emphasizing transparency and students’ rights.

BIFRT: Programs and faculties should invest in creating more experiential learning courses that will best fit their students’ needs.
BIFRT: Where possible, faculty restrictions on experiential education courses should be removed and replaced with necessary prerequisites.

BIFRT: The Office of Registrar should create a section on the course calendar highlighting experiential courses.

BIFRT: The University should provide funding to offset the financial costs of taking experiential learning courses.

BIFRT: The City of Hamilton should expand the number of jobs that provide students with valuable professional development experience.

BIFRT: The City of Hamilton should invest in the creation of part-time job opportunities throughout the year.

BIFRT: McMaster should create diverse and creative partnerships with organizations in order to expand the amount of opportunities for students in all fields of study.

BIFRT: The Office of Community Engagement should create a tuition-free, non-credit online course open to all students on proper community engagement.

BIFRT: Those who complete the training course should unlock new community engagement opportunities and job postings.

BIFRT: The Office of Community Engagement should expand the number of course offerings to students.

BIFRT: McMaster should increase investment into organizations such as Citylab.

BIFRT: The provincial government should amend the ESA to remove the exemption of college and university programs under internships.

BIFRT: McMaster should reduce tuition fees for experiential courses to be reflective of the operational costs of these courses.

BIFRT: The FSWEP Ongoing Student Recruitment Inventory should be replaced with a more timely application process.

BIFRT: Despite the high volume of applicants in the FSWEP portal, random applicant selection should cease to exist, as it is largely unfair for its lack of consideration for all eligible students.

BIFRT: Rules should be imposed on the government to move up funding deadlines for the Canada Summer Jobs program.

BIFRT: McMaster University should amend the Work Study program eligibility criteria to include students with financial need who are not registered with OSAP.