Every year, all three levels of government along with major institutions go through their budget-setting processes. To ensure the process is democratic, they often listen to stakeholders and take their needs into consideration. Part of effective lobbying is ensuring your priorities are incorporated into the respective budget. Stakeholder organizations often release a “budget submission,” which outlines their priorities and the costs associated with them, with the hope that the budget managers will actualize those priorities.

Budgetary lobbying is about smart solutions that need the necessary investments to make them a reality.

For the first time, we have created a submission for the City - a municipal budget submission. Asking the City of Hamilton for budget investments is important, as students represent a large demographic in the city. Our priorities for this budget include: transit, housing, student employment, waste management, and by-law programs.

For transit, we are asking the City to invest in the 10-year transit strategy, as outlined by staff in 2015. Year three of this strategy was not honored last year, and we want to ensure that development of robust and rapid transit continues in the city. MSU members pay over $4 million into the HSR, and we represent 12% of the HSR’s revenue. As a major transit stakeholder, we also want to see prioritization of the routes we use the most, including the 51 University bus line.

Landlord licensing has been a priority for the MSU for numerous years. We have offered our support for the proposed pilot project that would cost $60,000. Licensing landlords would ensure compliance with legal standards and reduce the amount of student tenants that are manipulated or mistreated by delinquent landlords. This program could be run cost-neutral to the City with a $100 landlord licensing fee, per lease.

Budgetary lobbying is about smart solutions that need the necessary investments to make them a reality. To read the municipal budget submission, go to msumcmaster.ca/reports.