



REPORT

From the office of the...

Diversity Services Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Mijia Murong
SUBJECT: [MSU Diversity Services] Report [3]
DATE: [September 13, 2018]

YEARPLAN UPDATE

In the past 2 months, the service has expanded from a 2-person team to a 9-person family! We have hired and trained the execs, and as a team we have spent some time thinking and discussing our vision for the upcoming year.

With Mac transitioning from summer to fall-semester, Diversity Services engaged with Welcome Week reps and first years through the provision of AOP training, tabling at Club Fest, and advising welcome week programing. Although our engagement so far has been mostly what internal (i.e. we have yet to put out programming directed towards the broader McMaster community), we hope that the execs will change that with event planning and social political advocacy efforts within the next month.

SERVICE USAGE

We provided AOP to 300+ students over the past 2 months, including Horizons, rep-teams, RORs, ROAs and Spark.

After putting out exec hiring material, engagement with the services' Facebook posts escalated. Since August, exec hiring promotional material have been engaged with ~1000 times (clicks and reactions).

At club fest, 50 new students signed up for our mailing list and approximately 150 rave cards were given away.

We also opened up bridges; so far 1 student society has used the event-space to host a "Buddy night." We also have 10+ events lined up at bridges in the upcoming months.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

We hosted a meeting with Inter-Faith Council and made plans for interesting events with a faith-based focus.

We completed the Anti-Disruption Guideline commentary, and sent it off to the student.

We adapted creative new approaches to AOP training. We adapted problem-based and flipped-classroom philosophies of teaching the material when training MSU staff that are all-to-familiar with lecture based AOP (folks who have received the training multiple times, like Diversity Services Execs and ROAs). In these instances, we focused on coming up with new scenarios and asking “what would you do?”, or assigned nuanced concepts like “neuronormativity” and “Color-Blind racism” to students and asked them to research these terms and bring their findings to our training session.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

In the next month, we are looking to explore the topic of Voluntourism. Many students returning to campus spent their summer abroad, and inevitably some were volunteering with NGOs with a voluntourism focus. Furthermore, campus clubs that take a non-critical approach to the idea of “volunteering abroad” are promoting opportunities through club fest, MUSC tabling, and class visits. We’ve been approached by multiple students disclosing that these events make them feel frustrated and uncomfortable. We are currently looking into potential programming to address this issue, including: circulating resources, posting a statement condemning voluntourism, collaborating with faculty to host a panel discussion, etc. The goal is to change the culture at McMaster such that students rethink the intent vs impact of their volunteering efforts, and learn to center the voices and well-being of marginalized, colonized, or oppressed communities when they volunteer.

We are also planning a coffeehouse in bridges that will likely take place sometime in October. This event will hopefully introduce more students to the service, and also be an opportunity for us to engage with cultural and religious clubs on campus. The idea of a coffee house was further explored at the IFC meeting, and the spiritual and faith-based organizations on campus all expressed interest in such an event.

BUDGET

| ACCOUNT CODE | ITEM | BUDGET / COST |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| 6804-0317 | Exec Appreciation Lunch | 82.66 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 82.66 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 317.34 |
| 6103-0317 | Pangaea Tabling | 10 |
| | TOTAL SPENT IN LINE | 10 |
| | REMAINING IN LINE | 5990 |
| TOTALS | | |
| TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING | | |
| TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING | | |

REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

VOLUNTEERS

N/A – Volunteers will be hired by the end of September.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Looking for an Indigenous Affairs Executive continues to be a challenge. After receiving feedback from the Indigenous Affairs Executive from 2015-2016 term, we realized that the position is a tokenistic way of including the indigenous perspective into our programming. Since we are unable to mediate the dispute between indigenous groups on campus (nor is that our responsibility), and do not have the capacity to provide the Indigenous Affairs Executive with the support needed to navigate their role, we do not feel like we are in a position to hire for the position this year. Furthermore, having the “indigenous liaison” as a stand-alone role, outside of the “social political affairs committee” and “community events and planning committee” ultimately excludes the indigenous perspective from our regular programming and suggests that the other teams on our service do not have to have a wealth of knowledge in regards to indigenous affairs, which is simply not true. Instead, we hope to better integrate the indigenous perspective in our programming this year by providing in depth AOP training about concepts like decolonization and reconciliation, terminology when referring to indigenous peoples, and unpacking land acknowledgements and stating our personal positionality as settlers on this land, instead of simply reading the “script”.

The service has always had problems with volunteer and student engagement, and we anticipate that this year will be not exception. The exec team spent some time generating creative ideas for promotions and outreach – from tabling, to free give-a-ways, to ensuring that the language we use when discussing pertinent social issues is less academic and more accessible... I anticipate that the greatest challenge for this year is to promote Diversity Services as a service for EVERYONE, while making sure that we don't compromise the depth and nuance of our programming.

SUCSESSES

Exec hiring was a success. Not only is the exec team passionate and excited about the work ahead, they are also actively critiquing the services' past programming and showing great interest in the services' review and rebranding processes. The team also expressed great interest about partaking in PACBIC as well as contributing to the writing of MSU policy papers. Overall, I think we hired a team that is interested in going beyond their job descriptions in order to help the service fulfill its potentials.

We also managed to hold our very first event in Bridges. Although Bridges took longer than previous years to open up, the Bridges Coordinator and I were able to make the right contacts and acquire the right training just in time to open up the space for the first student group that had booked us.

We've received feedback that students find our AOP training sessions interesting and engaging. After the Spark AOP, some students came up to us and asked about how they can be involved with the service. We've also made a strong effort to incorporate more nuanced discussions about colonization and indigenous people in our training- which is a change that students who have received previous iterations of AOP responded positively to.

OTHER

We are wondering about how the service evaluation process will unfold this year. There are a couple of things that I am interested in changing about the service, and it would be fantastic to have a supportive team helping us to collect data on our current outputs and better understand MSU students' perception of us.