



REPORT

From the office of the...

AVP: Municipal Affairs

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
 FROM: Shemar Hackett
 SUBJECT: End of Year Report
 DATE: March 24th, 2019

Dear Members of the Assembly,

This report goes over all of the work my committee and I have done this past year. It was been a great learning experience for myself and I have through enjoyed working alongside all of you this past year. I'm very proud of the work my committee has done and I'm looking forward to how the future AVP: Municipal Affairs tackles this role!

Year Plan Objective	Description	Status
Prepare for Municipal Election	The Municipal election was in October and the MSU ran a MacVotes campaign to engage student voters.	<i>Completed</i> The campaign went very well, though there re improvements for next time. We should strengthen the events that occur throughout the month and have a bit more planning prior to election day. We had a 20% increase in voter turnout at Binkley United since the 2014 election, and we definitely believe it is due to all of our efforts this year. Shout out to my committee for volunteering that entire week and handing out buttons and walking students to the polls! Big shout out to Steph for driving around with me and putting up lawn signs!!
Rewrite the Student Housing Policy Paper	The Education team chose to rewrite the Student Housing policy paper to ensure we have an updated stance moving forward.	<i>Completed</i> This paper is great, happy to be an author on it. It was passed this semester and we got great feedback from the SRA members who attended policy con.

<p>Presence at Community Meetings</p>	<p>There are various local community meetings that I have to attend throughout the year to represent students within Hamilton.</p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p>Throughout the year I went to numerous AWWCA, AWCA, Hamilton Transit Alliance (HTA) meetings throughout the year. I also stayed up to date on city council by reading documents and following relevant stakeholders on social media. The interaction I received this year has been great. Even when individuals were complaining about student renters, they still applauded the MSU for having someone at the table to listen to their concerns which I believe is important. We are continuously being considered an important stakeholders within Hamilton and I'm happy to see various organizations and City Council informed on our advocacy work throughout the year.</p>
<p>Municipal Budget Submission</p>	<p>Every year the MSU writes a municipal budget submission to the City of Hamilton outlining our priorities for students.</p>	<p><i>Completed</i></p> <p>The budget submission process this year felt very weird. As council already released their budget in December, writing a budget submission in January felt out of place. For next year, the AVP should rethink when we write the budget and how effective that timeline will be in terms of getting our recommendations included in the city budget.</p> <p>Aside from this, the budget submission looks great! You can find it on the MSU website.</p>
<p>Student Engagement</p>	<p>Engaging students in our municipal advocacy is important in showing City Council that students care about the city and the choices they make.</p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p>I believe this could've been better this year and want the next AVP to prioritize this in their role. I tried to find ways to keep to students up to date on what I was doing and management them with municipal</p>

		<p>advocacy, but organizing campaigns, meeting city staff and managing a committee takes up a significant amount of time that student engagement wasn't as strong as it should've been. I reached out to interested students as much as I could and kept them up to date on the work the committee was doing and frequently had articles featuring our work in the Sil.</p>
<p>Municipal Advocacy Week</p>		<p><i>Completed</i></p> <p>This year I made changes to how advocacy is typically done by spreading it throughout all of second semester, rather than just having one targeted week to meet with multiple stakeholders. I found this to be effective overall as we got a chance to meet more councilors and gave my committee members multiple opportunities to attend meetings, in the case that they couldn't due to prior commitments. I have included all of my meeting summaries for lobby week at the end of this report.</p>
<p>Landlord Rating System</p>	<p>This is a project that the MSU has been looking into for years, providing students with an avenue to detail their experiences with landlords and bad student rentals.</p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p>After months of consultations and trying to find the best avenue, we finally have a landlord rating system!! We have consistently been promoting throughout the semester and are seeing significant traction on the amount of students inputting their stories with unsafe houses and predatory landlords. If y'all haven't filled out the website, please do!! Here's the link: https://yomes.com/feed/mcmaster</p>

Change Camp	Change Camp Hamilton was launched in March 2015 by the MSU to bring residents, post-secondary education institutions, community organizations, and the City of Hamilton together in a conversation focused on community, partnerships, and collaboration.	<i>Incomplete</i> This did not happen this year. We decided against having change camp again, solely because all of the work would be on the MSU to plan and pay for a majority of the conference. The Office of Community Engagement ran smaller events throughout January in which we promoted a few.
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Other:

Door Hanger Campaign

Steph and I had door hangers made at the beginning of the year in an attempt to raise awareness regarding bylaws in Ward 1. Due to a lack of volunteers, I had to go out into Ainslie Wood and put up door hangers by myself. We still have lots of door hangers and they can be used for this upcoming year to build upon our current initiative.

City Council Delegation

Delegating to city council was nerve racking, but so much fun. It was nice to have multiple councilors reach out to Steph and I afterwards highlighting their happiness with our recommendations and continued presence with local politics. Next year, I highly encourage students to attend public delegation day. It would send a strong message to council to have a large group of students show up and support the AVP speaking, or students can speak if they feel comfortable doing so, to illustrate to council that students have a vested interest with Hamilton.

Recommendation for next year:

Landlord Rating System

This website has been great thus far, but there still needs to be work put in to ensure the website doesn't disappear. We need to continue promotion and find innovative ways to get students to fill out reviews. This should be prioritized next year.

Municipal Advocacy Week

With the shift away from one week to an entire semester, I really felt that worked best for me and my schedule. There are benefits to having one singular week, as it's easier to plan and ensures the AVP is able to attend every meeting; I had to miss a few advocacy week meetings due to midterms etc since they were spread out over the semester. I think the following AVP should reevaluate what works best for themselves and their committee next year when determining when to have advocacy week or continuous lobbying.

Student Engagement

The next AVP should prioritize student engagement. I can't emphasize enough the amount of time I've been told students don't care about local issues and the only way to prove them wrong is to have students show up to council events, getting students to vote and being engaged in local events and meetings. We should be ensuring students have access to the information on what is happening within the city, which should be worked on for next year.

Community Partnership

One thing I took away from advocacy week is that there are a lot of organizations within Hamilton who are lobbying council in very similar, if not the same, priorities as us. Next year, I suggest working alongside other groups within Hamilton to strengthen our advocacy.

Municipal Advocacy Week - Meeting Summaries

Terry Cooke - CEO of Hamilton Community Foundation

Terry Cooke is the President and CEO of the Hamilton Community Foundation; Terry is also currently married to our recently elected Ward 1 Councillor, Maureen Wilson! His organization does a variety of philanthropic work in Hamilton in the attempt to better the quality of living for all Hamiltonians. This was a great meeting as Terry was very helpful in providing us with contacts in Hamilton who may be an important resource for us. Stephanie, Gian-Carlo, and I met with Terry to discuss potentially getting funding to sponsor delegates and ways in which we can incentivize students to stay in Hamilton after they graduate.

Student Engagement and Retention

- We discussed the ways in which our two organizations can collaborate on increasing the number of students staying in Hamilton after they graduate. We discussed how millennials do not want to stay in Hamilton for various reasons, a major deterrent being the lack of employment prospects. Terry suggested that we discuss our efforts with CityLab as they may be a better stakeholder for this point. Terry acknowledged the lack of employment opportunities for recent graduates, but HCF focuses on getting students engaged at a younger age as they feel that is more effective in the long term.

CLAY

- Our main talking point during this meeting was getting HCF to fund or sponsor delegates for CLAY. In 2015, Terry mentioned his interest for sponsoring CLAY, but we could not find any information as to if that happened or not. During our meeting, Terry stated that this is something they would be interested in and gave us the contact information of the individuals to speak to to get the ball rolling. Terry also gave us the contact information for Anchor Institution who is another stakeholder in Hamilton who may be willing to sponsor delegates. Gian-Carlo will be reaching out to them to discuss the possibility of doing so.

Action Items

1. Gian-Carlo will reach out to Anchor Institution to discuss getting funding for CLAY.
2. GC will reach out to Matt Goodman and Karen Charters from HCF to discuss potentially sponsoring delegates.

Esther Pauls – Ward 7 Councillor

Esther Pauls is the Ward 7 City Councillor and was recently elected to council for the 1st time in November. As she is new to council, we felt it was important to introduce ourselves and highlight our continued priorities for future years. Stephanie, Ikram and I met with Esther to discuss Student Employment in Hamilton, Transit and Student Housing.

Transit

- We discussed our recommendation for City Council to service the 51-University year-round; currently, the 51 only runs from September-April. She was receptive to the idea and agreed that busses should be running during the summer as well as the academic school year. We also discussed the elimination of area rating, which she was on the fence about. Seemed hesitant to balance out tax rates for her constituents, but we emphasized the need for a more integrated transit system in defence. We also discussed LRT a bit and how she is currently undecided, as many groups are pushing her to vote in favor whereas her constituents aren't in favour of the project. She highlighted the benefits of dedicated bus lanes and better bus service instead of spending the 1 billion on the LRT.

Student Employment

- We asked for her support in getting City Council to approve the Urban Fellows Program. She spoke to the importance of retaining graduates in Hamilton the importance in sustaining the future of Hamilton. She was interested in us writing a proposal, but would be in favour of a system to help students after they graduate.

Student Housing

- The landlord licensing bylaw is currently being drafted, but we still spoke to the need of having the pilot come to fruition. She spoke in favour of landlord licensing and emphasized how important it is to protect student renters.

Action Items

1. Wanted us to promote a “Winter Walk” she is doing later this month. This gives her constituents, any other Hamiltonians, to donate money to a local charity, meet her, and ask her any question they like. It is happening on February 17th and more information can be found on the City of Hamilton’s website.
2. Follow up to determine which specific city staff can assist us in implementing the Urban Fellows Program in Hamilton.

Hamilton Hive

Hamilton Hive is a local organization that looks to provide young professionals with career resources and networking opportunities. They currently have partnerships with various organizations and institutions in Hamilton and we wanted to discuss ways in which we can collaborate in the future. They tend to focus more on career development and providing resources to young people, but are open to doing more advocacy work. I will maintain communications moving forward and loop them into our conversations RE: student engagement.

They will be having an event on March 6th at the Library in downtown Hamilton. The event is for the launch of the millennial survey conducted by the HCF. They will also be having another event on March 8th. This is a women's day event, which will feature a panelist of influential women in Hamilton. The cost of the event is \$20 and more information can be found on their website!

Tom Jackson - Ward 6

Tom Jackson is the current councillor for Ward 6 and was very receptive in supporting students. Stephanie, Josh Yachoch (committee member) and I met to discuss Transit, Student Housing and Employment Opportunities.

Transit

- Was inquisitive as to why the HSR would stop service abruptly during the summer months. Said he would ask around to get more information but felt that if there are still students living in Hamilton then service should continue during those months.
- For area rating, he was a bit divided on the topic. Would have to convince him a bit more on the benefits of elimination when lobbying in the future.

Student Housing

- When asking for landlord licensing, he said he believes it will come to fruition. He acknowledged that landlords are predatory and do not maintain their properties putting students in a precarious position. He is fully in support of landlord licensing.

Employment Opportunities

- He was in favour of implementing an initiative to retain students after they graduate but wanted more information on the Urban Fellows Program. As it stands, he felt the program was expensive (but the projected costs discussed is the model Toronto is using, Hamilton can change the cost of the program).
- Mentioned there are initiatives such as CityLab that are a great resource, but all those opportunities are unpaid options.
- Overall, he was receptive to the point and seems to be in favour, he would just want more research and context on the topic.

Sam Merulla - Ward 4 Councillor

Sam Merulla is the incumbent councillor for Ward 4. We met with him to discuss transit, employment opportunities and improving lighting in Ward 1. Though he is not a direct stakeholder for a few of our asks, he provided insight into the budget process and is a valuable resource to maintain communication with.

Transit

- In regard to year round service of the 51-university, he said we should look into the amount of students who were not raised in Hamilton living here during the summer. It would be nice to know how many “outsiders” are choosing to stay here versus individuals who move up the mountain during the summer months to stay with family.
- The elimination of area rating is something he is in support of. He will be bringing a motion to the General Issues Committee this morning (February 28th) going over what that would look like. I have attached a picture of what the projected equalization of tax rates would look like in Hamilton

Employment Opportunities

- Agreed that it would be nice to see something done to incentivize youth to stay in Hamilton post grad.

Lighting

- Agreed there may be an issue with lighting in certain areas but said we should investigate mature trees in the area. Often trees have grown so big that they are covering light posts, so it may be easier to analyze trees as well and see how that may affect low-visibility areas off campus.

Overall Budget Advocacy

- Recommended that we send a letter to City Council next week, as that is when the 2019 budget will officially be passed. Anything we send in will be for the next budget cycle, as it will be too late to include anything currently.
- Suggested that we lobby councillors and staff on our recommendations from December 2019 to January 2020, if not earlier. When February rolls around, everything has already been finalized, so the earlier we reach out the higher the likelihood to have something included in the budget.

Closing Remarks:

It has been an absolute pleasure getting to represent students this past year and I will genuinely miss this role. To my committee members, thank you for being understanding and helpful while I figured out this new role, you all were such a big help this year. Applications for my job will open soon. Please apply!! It's a great opportunity and if you need any help or have any questions please let me know! As always, let me know if you have any questions or concerns and I'll be happy to help. Wish you all the best!!



Best,

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