



REPORT

From the office of the...
President

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Joshua Marando, President
SUBJECT: SRA Report 19E
DATE: July 21st, 2019

Dear Members of the Assembly,

It is with great pleasure that I write my first SRA report to you and update you on some of the work I have been doing throughout my terms thus far. The summer is a great time for members of the BoD to work through transition, get acquainted in the role, and begin meeting with stakeholders that will be pivotal in seeing through key points on our yearplan. I tried to use the summer thus far to plan for projects that would affect folks in the fall and re-visit conversation I had during my campaign period. I also have been trying to spend time better understanding the role, see where I fit within the structure that is the union, and within the structure of the university. My jobs description specifically, is very vague, and there is no template of what a “good” President looks like. Something that I have been grappling with is where is my time best spent, how to I see projects from platform to implementation, and who do I need to collaborate with to do that. I have also realized that I cannot do anything by myself. Each idea I had now needs careful consideration of who does this affect, who has the resources to do this, and is this a priority for everyone. That said, I would consider these past few months to be successful. I have been very fortunate in terms of finding common grounds with University and other partners and ensuring our year plans align with ours so that there are better outcomes when we are aiming towards enhancing student life.

I will now go into progress I have made on my year plan and some other work that has come up these past few months. I will focus mostly on the big picture ideas, and the work that has been done thus far. If you have any questions, or want to learn more about other areas I have not touched on in this report, please don't hesitate to reach out and ask.

PROGRESS ON YEAR PLAN

Though it has only been two short months, lots has been happening!

Supporting Our Student Leaders

Lots has been going on with regards to Welcome Week Support and that is largely due to the great work done by our VP Finance, Alex, and our WWFC, Raquel.

Repsuits

As soon as I got in office I knew I wanted to start addressing the issues of the bulk rep suit order, as repsuits are probably the largest cost associated with repping. Given our short turn around time, this has been a challenge, but it is very much worth as we have changed some things up to ensure our reps get even more savings. For context, through changes to the structure of the order we were able to save reps around \$20 from the initial quote using last years model, and some faculties are saving up to \$60 from the pre-bulk order repsuit price. Overall, there was some great work done on this and we are set to begin planning next years order with the Campus Store and solidify an MOU to ensure things are more standard moving forward. A challenge associated with this was the timing. Unfortunately as the project didn't start until May, we were unable to continue the repsuit bursary this year. However, this is a main priority of our continuing work and we will make sure to include a bursary for next year to allow reps to continue repping despite the costs of repsuits

Rep Breakfast

We are working with Lift Church again to bring pancakes to all of our reps. We are doing this very weekday of welcome week and will focus on our promotional strategies to ensure reps know that this is an option for them.

Clubspace

Clubspace renovations are well underway and Aditi, our clubs admin, and Stephanie, our assistant clubs admin have been doing great work with regards to that. The previous furniture has been moved out and the new furniture has been ordered. A challenge associated with this is the high cost associated with buying good quality furniture that will last the 10 years as outlined in the capital request. Aditi did a great job of ordering adaptable furniture and ensured hospital grade fabric is used to ensure everything is best suited to remain in good quality for the years to come. We will also be utilizing the current tables and getting some more chairs so there is desk space, but in purchasing furniture, the notion of it being an adaptable lounge and event space for clubs remained at the forefront.

Clubsfest

Clubsfest planning is going very well, and Aditi, myself, and Madison have created our own little clubsfest planning team which has been very fun. We are moving to a two day clubs fest, with half of the clubs going one day and half the other. This is to hopefully make it less overwhelming for students wanting to access clubs. We have also added a misting tent, food trucks, and a photo station. This is to help clubsfest become more of a true festival and act more as a promotional events for clubs as

well and to entice people to come and check out what clubs has to offer, even if they didn't come to university intending to join a club. Overall, things have been going super well with this.

Go Bus

Extended Welcome Week Go Bus Hours

This project has been completed and will be expanded on from last year. Last year we only extended hours on what we considered to be more high profile events, which made financial sense for metrolinx, but put students at a disadvantage when it came to participating all week. This year we were able to expand it to the Monday-Friday, with the same times as last year. We are working with the welcome week planning and implementation committee to ensure it is well promoted to reps and students.

Student Safety Off Campus

Off Campus Lighting, Bike Lanes, Sidewalk Snow Removal

Shemar and I had an initial meeting with Maureen Wilson, our Ward 1 City Council to talk about our main priorities for the year. At this meeting we talked about Shemars municipal advocacy priorities, as well as the priorities I highlighted in my election and yearplan. Maureen was very receptive and some great work has already been done

Off Campus Lighting

A lighting Audit has already been done in the ainslee wood and westdale area. Challenges that were found to be that many streets only have light posts on one side, making it difficult to bring more light there. They are currently investigating what the reasoning for that is and to see if there is a possibility of adding more posts on the other side of sterling and emerson. An additional concern, especially in the ainslee woods area is wildlife. There are certain regulations that need to be followed which has proved challenging in getting lights further down in ainslee woods, but options are currently being explored. We will be following up on off campus lighting throughout the year.

Bike Lanes

Maureen is a big advocate for increasing bike infrastructure surrounding campus. This is likely something that she would be a key partner in our advocacy efforts for. Challenges that she brought up is that with more bike lanes we are decreasing street parking for students who might utilize those streets, so more consideration needs to be done.

Sidewalk Snow Removal

We were told this is also a city priority with multiple groups raising this concern. There will likely be a group working on this and a pilot project being included in the next budget cycle. That said, the pilot project will likely not be in ward 1 and will more likely focus on a group with a higher population of older adults.

Revitalize MUSC

Third Floor Terrace

Alex and I have started initial work on this. It has been approved by SLEF and we are currently working with Lori Diamond, the MUSC Director, to determine what we want the space to look like a get quotes. Unfortunately, there has been lots of plumbing and

flooding issues in the basement of MUSC which has preoccupied a lot of Lori's time so this project is on hold until we have our maintenance figured out.

2nd/3rd floor Furniture

Again, through meeting with Lori we determined specific areas where furniture could be improved. We have identified the space outside of CIBC hall and outside of clubspace as the two areas where we would like to see upgrades. We will be likely modeling the 3rd floor in a similar way to the space outside the MSU office, and the area outside of clubspace will remain a space for collaborative seated work, though there will likely be some more hightops added for additional seating. Initial conversations have been had regarding this, though no confirmation, again things are put on hold due to the floods.

Initial Meetings

I have also been working to meet with individuals and talk about shared priorities. I'll do more brief summaries of these as they have been more initial conversations and I don't want this report to be 80 pages long. That said, if you do have any additional questions about any of these conversations please don't hesitate to ask! Key stakeholders I have been working with are:

Arig – AVP EIO: We have been talking about the university Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, McMaster Accessibility Plan, Restructuring of EIO and SVRC, and the University Sexual Violence Policies.

Chris – Director of Hospitality Service: We met to talk about food accessibility issues, \$5 meal initiatives, future of tax-free Tuesdays, as well as some of the work we have doing at 1280

Student Wellness Centre – We have met with the team over there to talk about our Mental Health Initiatives. There were some challenges and we are looking towards what our key objectives are and what we truly would like to see improved. Additional challenges they have faced is the PGCLL construction delay, which means they are still unsure of exactly when they will be moving spaces.

Sean – Dean of Students – We have been meeting to talk about a number of initiatives, from Ombuds to Welcome Week. I am meeting with him again in a couple weeks to really go through my platform and get advice on what some next steps could be

Gayleen – Chief IT Officer – We met to talk about student IT advisory committee, and other tech related issues on campus. We also talked about how to make maneuvering campus easier for students using technology advancements.

CUPE – Met with them regarding their labour negotiations and TA training and what that may look like

I have also met with a number of other people hoping to partner with the MSU on a number of projects or individuals looking for student input on projects they have been working on.

Upcoming Events, Projects & Activities

In terms of what's next, July and August seem like they will be very much practical planning months. With Welcome Week and Clubsfest fast approaching there will be a lot of booking, organizing, and logistics that will continue with that. Additionally, Alex

and I have been doing work with 1280, so we will see those changes really speed up in the next few months. Additionally, Alex, John, and I are still working on preliminary Org Chart discussions and that work will continue happening as we are in the midst of hiring for some full time positions within 1280 and underground that have been vacant for a while.

Current Challenges

Time – Balancing meetings, emails, supporting others, impromptu meetings, all while trying to remember to take care of yourself is a challenge. I tend to feel like anytime I am not doing something or any time I am not going from one meeting to the next I am not doing my job well. I am working towards having a better balance, taking time to care for myself, and ensuring I have time to get actual desk work done as well.

Jack of all Trades Master of None – I have come to realize people tend to come to me for a lot of projects, which is very nice and I do enjoy being included in such a diverse portfolio. That said, I have been having some challenges figuring out where I fit in all these projects, how much I can get involved, and what my actual role is. That said I am starting to get the groove of what my days can look like and have been trying to ensure I always have a tangible project on the go so I don't just spend my whole day in consultations.

MUSC Floods – Last week a pipe burst in the Silhouette Office, there was a leak in CFMU, and then another burst right outside campus events and avtek. Our staff have been all stars in working with this moving furniture and ensuring everything is safe. We are currently compiling a list of all the damage and coming up with a game plan to get that fixed. Again, I can't express how grateful we are for our stellar basement staff for helping us with this. If anyone has any questions feel free!

Best,

Joshua Marando
President & CEO McMaster Students Union
president@msu.mcmaster.ca