



REPORT

From the office of the...

Maccess Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Brittany Allan
SUBJECT: Maccess Report #8
DATE: March 24, 2020

YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Unfortunately, the year has not ended on the best note for Maccess. Prior to having to close the space when the University closed, we had to create signage that reminded folks that our space users include immunocompromised people and that anyone showing cold or flu-like symptoms should consider their space usage. This has been very hard on the Maccess community. Many space users and volunteers have reached out to me since Maccess shut approximately 2 weeks ago identifying their increase in disability-related symptoms and upset that Maccess has closed and feeling like “there’s nowhere to go”. We have continued to give peer-support via Facebook messenger and Instagram direct messenger. We have also recently decided to reinstate 3 of our peer-support groups (ADHD, Mood Disorders & Anxiety) through online video (Microsoft Teams) and will be releasing information on this by Friday, March 27th at the latest – as we have volunteers who are willing to provide these and community members who want to engage. We hope this will bridge the gap in our services.

In terms of our year plan, it does not appear that we will be able to fulfill our previously stated plan of holding our annual campaign “DisVisibility Week”. We are deeply upset by this, as it is the only week-long campaign that Maccess runs and we had already planned it, booked things, and ordered promo. While it feels like a failure, we also recognize that these are exceptional circumstances. The other two events mentioned in the original year plan were a “Disability DIScussion” and “Accessibility Forum” – both of which were scheduled to take place during DisVisibility Week (so obviously were also cancelled).

We were also set for in April to hold a volunteer appreciation event at the Grind, hold weekly Maccess study groups (in CATS) during exams, and have our semi-annual “Exam De-Stress” event with SAS. These are also all cancelled at this time.

SERVICE USAGE

Physical Space

Prior to Maccess closing our physical space, usage remained steady. The space was full or nearly full during regular services hours (11:30-4:30). Usage had increased since our last report in January, as we had found a cross-over of folks who regularly utilized the PCC and WGEN spaces decide to utilize Maccess (due to various reasons). There were often times that there was no seating available for all space users at any given moment and volunteers willingly sat on the

floor. Going forward, more seating (even a few plastic chairs) would be helpful if space usage continues at this rate when Maccess re-opens in the fall.

Support Groups

Support groups continued to run as scheduled prior to Maccess closing and we had higher than expected attendance, especially when compared to our groups during first semester. We were able to offer a few new groups: chronic illness, polycystic ovarian syndrome/endometriosis, and a disability in colour group in partnership with WGEN which ran bi-weekly starting the beginning of March. Our attendance on average has been as follows:

Monday:

Eating Disorders: 3

Tuesday:

Disability in Colour: 3

ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder): 3

Wednesday:

Anxiety: 8

OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder): 5

ADHD: 5

Learning Disabilities: 3

Thursday:

Chronic Illness: 5

Mood Disorders: 7

PCOS/Endometriosis: 3



Resources

Since September we had 10 books overall checked-out (and returned) in our Maccess library resource. We have also been able to give out Maccess rave cards (new to our service as of February 2020) that specify where our service is located, the communities we serve, and services offered. A goal for next year would be to implement an informational pamphlet collection that is Maccess-specific. As of right now, we have many informational pamphlets for different services on campus and in the greater Hamilton area, but this is not condensed, making it inaccessible for folks. However, we have given out over 20 of these informational brochures the past year (includes Good2Talk, AccessMac, Barrett Centre, SAS, LAS, CATS).

Social Media

Our Instagram is one major success of the Maccess promo team. We tried to consistently post our events and Maccess-related information on both our Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. We were able to engage with disability-related hashtags on Instagram, which helped to boost our

post likes. Since we started our Instagram in September 2019, we have gained 285 followers. We have also been able to share 'stories' of our events as they are happening and been able to ask users questions and engage with them more directly than before. We tried to produce engaging posts such as "Meet the Exec Team" and "Maccess Monthly Book Recommendation". Our Instagram also provides information about our events, how to use our resource library, disability-related events in Hamilton, and inspirational and educational quotes. We also provided short notice updates about the various snow closures this winter and real-time space updates through our Instagram stories. Our Facebook continues to be our most viewed and most trafficked social media account, gaining over 100 new followers throughout the year. We typically use this as our main site for event planning, creating campaign and event pages to gauge attendance and do the majority of our other promotions. This remains a successful strategy and we get a lot of engagement from a consistent audience, as well as consistent new followers. We did not use Twitter much this year, and typically get very low engagement on this platform. This has remained steady since last year.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

This year Maccess has held numerous partnered events with the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) in our series of 'Disability DIScussions'. These were largely successful. Our first one was October 10, 2019 facilitated by myself and Kate Brown (Access Mac), and Calvin Prowse (SAS Community Outreach and incoming Maccess coordinator) and focused on Navigating Higher Education for disabled students and was held in the Maccess space where over 15 people attended throughout the 2-hour period. Our next one took place on November 18, 2019 facilitated by me, PhD candidate and Maccess co-founder Sophie Geffros, and Victoria Brown (Kate's assistant at EIO) and was a closed event for folks navigating the identities of both disability and 2SLGBTQIA+ in a university context. Only 5 people showed up throughout the 2-hour period. On December 3, 2019 we were able to hold another Disability DIScussion in partnership with both EIO and the MacPhearson Institute at McMaster in Mills Library, which was facilitated by a student researcher on the topic of self-advocacy as a disabled student in higher education. This was very well attended, with over 20 people attending the 2-hour period. Our next (and final) Disability DIScussion was held in CATS (campus accessible tech space) in Mills Library on February 27, 2020 and was in partnership with EIO and LAS (Library Accessibility Services) on the topic of assistive technology for disabled students. This was our most successful DIScussion, with over 30 folks attending over the hour and a half time period. We had hoped to facilitate a final Disability DIScussion with the EIO and DJNO (Disability Justice Network of Ontario) co-founder Sara Jama on the topic of race and disability; however, while sorting out the logistics of this event to take place in March 2020 during our annual 'DisVisibility Week' campaign the university closed and this was unable to happen. Maccess had also partnered with EIO, LAS, the MacPhearson Institute, SAS, school of Graduate of Studies and the Crippling Grad School Collective for a series of four discussions (similar to that of our regular Disability DIScussions) which were supposed to take place March 12, March 18, March 25, and April 2 – all around different themes on accessibility, accommodation, and disability in grad school. However, due to the University closing these events were cancelled.

Disability DIScussions
Theme: Navigating Higher Education
Hosted by: MSU Maccess and SAS Transition
DATE: Thursday, October 10, 2019
TIME: 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
LOCATION: MSU Maccess, MUSC B111

Disability DIScussions
Theme: Navigating Queer and Disabled Identities
Hosted by: MSU Maccess and the Equity and Inclusion Office
DATE: Monday, November 18, 2019
TIME: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
LOCATION: MSU Maccess, MUSC B111

Disability DIScussions
Theme: Disabled Student Rights and Self-Advocacy
Event to commemorate the International Day of Disabled People/Persons with Disabilities
DATE: Tuesday, December 3 | 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
LOCATION: MacPherson Institute Classroom Mills Library Room 501 (access via elevator 2)

Disability DIScussions
A Chat in CATS
Theme: An Introduction to the Campus Accessible Tech Space (CATS)
Thursday, February 27, 2020
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Mills Memorial Library, Room 1212 (2nd floor)

Disability and Graduate School Discussions
MARCH 17 | MARCH 18 | MARCH 25 | APRIL 2

Disability & Real-World Reading Group: Disability in Graduate School
When: Sunday, March 17, 2020
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Where: MSU Library Conference Center (B112) 1st floor by the west entrance

Disability/Accessibility Graduate School, and Connections with Your Supervisor
When: Monday, March 18, 2020
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Where: MacPherson Institute Classroom Mills Library - 1st floor (Room #1 in Room #41)

Maccess has also partnered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) on two events this year: the 'Connect2U' informational sessions for incoming University students registered with SAS and our semi-annual 'Exam De-Stress' event. As mentioned previously, we intended to hold our second Exam De-Stress in April, but this has been cancelled. The Connect2U information sessions were successful, with over 5 attendees at each of the 3 sessions (they occurred in late August 2019). Our Exam De-Stress event in December 2019 (the day before exams started) from 3-5pm in MUSC was very successful. We had over 25 people attend throughout the two-hour time period. This event is well-attended each year and would recommend this partnership with SAS to continue into next year.

Please join us
Wednesday, December 4th
3:00 - 5:00 pm
Main Rooms, MUSC 2110/113
Anesthesiology Flr,
MUSC 302

EXAM DE-STRESS
WITH MACCESS AND SAS TRANSITION

Maccess has also held three of our own stand-alone events. Our first event was "Spooky Meet N' Greet" which was held at the Grind on Halloween which was a 2-hour event aimed for people who are already part of the Maccess community and those who wanted to know more to come and talk with current volunteers, executives, and group facilitators. The turn-out was less than expected, only 10 people came throughout the 2-hour window (as mentioned in previous reports, we feel this was due to last-minute promo). Our next event was "Maccess Hearts CATS" held the first week of January in coordination with LAS and CATS, in the CATS space – which was a huge success. We had over 20 people drop in during the 2-hour window and was a good way to start off second semester and welcome new students into Maccess. Our final event was "Maccess Movie Night" on February 13, 2020 where we showed a movie in CNH from 7-9pm and had popcorn and beverages for folks. This event was not as successful as we had hoped, we

had less than 10 people attend. Going forward, we would have been more successful if we planned this event outside of midterms.



We were able to have our social media digital campaign take place in February 2020 (the week before the spring break). This was the “Disability Language Advocacy Campaign”, which was aimed at students of appropriate language to use when discussing disability-related language and why language matters. We used Instagram as our main posting platform and shared all posts to Facebook. This campaign was hugely successful, with each post (there was 1 post daily for 5 days) getting 2+ shares on both Facebook and Instagram. We are very proud of the engagement we managed to achieve and would recommend a similar campaign (with perhaps a new theme) for next year.



UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

As previously stated, we have had to cancel all our upcoming events, projects, and activities (aside from our continued online peer support and hopeful online peer-support groups).

BUDGET

Here is our yearly budget check-in:

MACCESS				
EXPENDITURE				
ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST	PO SUBMITTED (DATE)	PO APPROVED
5003-0118	MACCESS - OFFICE SUPPLIES	60.00		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$60.00		

6102-0118	MACCESS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	2,000.00		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$2,000.00		
6402-0118	MACCESS - AWARDS & MEETINGS	350.00		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$0.00		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$350.00		
6501-0118	MACCESS - ADV. & PROMO	1,600.00		
	Exec Hiring	\$75.00		
	Volunteer Hiring	\$150.00		
	Groups Promo	\$200.00		
	30 Long Sleeve Maccess Shirts	\$580.06		
	The Grind Halloween Event	\$75.00		
	Button Making Event	\$75.00		
	CATS Event	\$150.00		
	Movie Night Promo	\$75.00		
	DisVisibility	\$275.00		
	Group Poster (Hard Copies)	\$11.10		
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1,666.16		
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$66.16		
6603-0118	MACCESS - SPECIAL PROJECTS	650.00		
	The Grind Halloween Event	\$450.00		
	Movie Night	\$31.18	MSU Visa (Shoppers)	
	Exam De-Stress	\$38.73	PharmaSave MUSC	
	Exam De-Stress	\$57.79	Dollarama	
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$577.70		
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$72.30		
TOTALS				
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$4,660.00		
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$2,243.86		
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$2,416.14		

VOLUNTEERS

Maccess had approximately 25 Safe(r) Space volunteers this year. We held 2 training weekend, one two-day weekend for all volunteers in September, and a one-day refresher training in January. Additionally, we hired a few extra volunteers for term two and trained them during a one-day training in January. We also had 12 Group Facilitators this year, who were given a half-day training on facilitating peer-support groups. All our group facilitators were also space volunteers, so they also received the full Maccess training in addition to this.

Maccess' Executive team was made up of 6 people this year. I think the executive team was amazing. They performed very well in their roles, fostering an inclusive space, improving our resources, running wonderful events and creating a noticeable online presence. But also, they become a loving and supporting community for each other. This team was truly an honour to work with and I can only hope WGEN has executive teams like mine in years to come.

CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge at the moment is continuing to support the Maccess community through online platforms. We had identified there is a need for Maccess to continue providing support and we are anxious for our online support groups through Microsoft Teams to be successful.

All of our major events for second semester were scheduled for the end of March/beginning of April – which in hindsight I wish we could have run earlier. We were unable to have any annual campaign, and we budgeted the majority of resources (and annual budget) to DisVisibility Week, which is hugely disappointing. We now have a surplus left-over in our annual 2019-2020 Maccess Budget.

Maccess was also supposed to have an athletic event held, which was identified in our last report as not happening. However, Wooder did reach out to the athletics department and there was interest in a potential discussion (hopefully leading to collaboration) with them on an event or something of the sort. Unfortunately, I have not been able to follow-up with this given the current circumstances. It is my recommendation that the incoming coordinator continue these discussions in their term.

SUCSESSES

We have had increased engagement at our Disability DIScussions (both in the amount we're able to offer and in attendance) and this has been a huge success for us. We have also instituted many changes in the space, including making our resource library system more accessible and user-friendly, adding another table to the space, and implementing a 'fragrance-free' policy. We also made an Instagram and as explained in previous sections, this was a major success. Finally, I survived as a PTM and I'm very proud that our service was able to accomplish what it did while we were able to remain fully operational.