



— the — PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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BUILDING A BETTER MSU

As Siobhan reflects on lessons learned in office,
David Campbell sets his sights on what lies ahead



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As this is my last submission to the President's Page, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as MSU President. I would also like to remind you that at its core, the MSU is for students, by students. This is a truth that makes me immensely proud. From my time at McMaster, I have come to learn that student life and engagement exist in cycles. Students have such a strong impact in shaping not only their own campus experience, but the experiences of others as well. Time and time again, I have heard stories of people inspired by the actions and enthusiasm of those who have come before them.

In terms of student engagement, there are some voices from whom the MSU most often hears. Generally speaking, these are the voices of those who are directly involved with the MSU or those who have the greatest knowledge of the organization. While it is great that some students know how to connect with their student advocates, I personally feel like there is a different group of students, who I hope will read this and feel like the MSU wants to hear about their experiences, both positive and negative. There has been a growing conversation in the organization about how the MSU communicates with its members. While we constantly look for ways to improve, we are interested in hearing from you about the ways in which you feel would be most effective in this regard.

The central focus of the MSU is providing services, advocacy and resources for undergraduate students. In doing so, we must realize that the goals, beliefs and individuals within the organization fluctuate with time. The MSU helps facilitate the complex nature of student life on campus and often interacts with you even if you don't realize it on the surface. Every individual is a part of the MSU and every voice does matter. Moving forward, we will only be able to build on the strengths of the organization through the continued enthusiasm and support of the student body. Please do not hesitate to share with your student representatives the ways in which you feel campus life can be improved. Communicate with us through our surveys, or call us, or message us, or visit us in person, or connect with the MSU through our social media channels. Every SRA member, service manager and Board member understands that they work for you.

Once again, I wish to sincerely thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as MSU President. As I begin to wrap up my term, I am certain that I leave this office in the very capable hands of David Campbell. I can say with confidence that David will serve you well in 2013/2014. To the students of McMaster University, thank you for inspiring me. And more importantly, thank you for continuing to inspire each other.



NOT ON CAMPUS THIS SUMMER?

NOT A PROBLEM.

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It's hard to believe, but another year at McMaster is coming to an end. This year saw a lot of amazing things, from the 125 Anniversary to a bigger Welcome Week; from a new lodge for off-campus students to a new peer-support line service. It has been an incredible experience being the VP (Administration) this year, but I also have the privilege of looking forward to another exciting year.

Recently, many people have been asking me what I intend to do next year. I rarely respond with points off of my presidential platform - I will certainly be pursuing these projects - but I don't think that's what these people are really trying to discover. Instead, I believe they are asking me what kind of President I intend on being. What vision do I want to inspire within the MSU?

Over the past several months, one of my roles as VP (Administration) has been conducting interviews of students seeking jobs within the MSU next year. In almost every single one of these interviews, the first question is: "In your own words, please describe the MSU." (That's right, there's a free hint if you ever have an interview with the MSU!) Now, there are two interesting things about the typical responses to this question. The first is that, regardless of background knowledge, almost everyone gets the question right on a basic level - the MSU provides advocacy for students on the one hand, and services to students on the other. The second interesting thing is the recurrence of a single word, "community".

Funny enough, this reference to community also appears in our constitution. The primary purpose of the MSU is to "draw into a true society all students at McMaster University." Or at least it was in 1964, when the constitution was first approved. And I believe these words still hold true today.

Of course, a "true society" could mean many different things - that's both the beauty and the challenge of this phrase as it pertains to the pursuits of the MSU. But to me, what it means more than anything else is building community. A community in which students support each other when they need it (which we all need now and then). One in which students find experiences together outside of the classroom. One in which we band together to lobby on our collective interests. More than anything, I would like to see us build a community which turns our time at McMaster University into the best experience of our lives.

So this is what I envision for the MSU next year - I want to see us, above all, building community at McMaster. We are fortunate enough to attend one of the best universities in the world, with some of the best students. The power in these facts is limitless, and I can't wait to see what we do over the next twelve months.



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