

# the PRESIDENT'S PAGE



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## Scrapping Summer Fees & Saving Students Money

During my election campaign, I said making summer fees fair for students would be a priority during my MSU presidency. As you may already realize, the MSU represents all full-time undergraduate students at McMaster. Each September, every student taking 18 units or more automatically pays a number of fees in addition to tuition. These fees support everything from the MSU to the Student Wellness Centre. What you may not realize is that if a full-time student takes courses part-time in the summer – anything between one and five courses – **those students are forced to pay a second time for some of these campus services**. Students pay two redundant fees; one to the McMaster Association of Part-time Students (MAPS) (\$7.00 per unit) and one to Athletics and Recreation (\$4.98 per unit).

I believe that these fees are unfair and I have been working hard to see them discontinued. Together, these fees cost \$11.98 per unit, or \$35.94 for a single summer class. **This means that approximately \$300,000 in redundant fees are being charged to students every year.**

The first of the unfair summer fees is paid to the McMaster Association of Part-time Students. Whereas the MSU represents full-time undergraduates, MAPS represents part-time students on campus. In 1986, shortly after MAPS was first formed, our two organizations signed an agreement which made summer students, by default, MAPS members. If students wished, they could transfer their fee back to the MSU and be refunded, though this rarely happened. Flash forward thirty years to the present day and the landscape of education is very different. **There is a significant population of undergrads taking summer courses as a complement to full-time studies.** Furthermore, the MSU operates 12 months of the year and facilitates many (if not most) of its services during the summer months. Advocacy efforts within and outside of the University remain constant, as the MSU pushes for course availability, improved services and a better quality of education for McMaster students. Also, our services (EFRT, TwelvEighty, Mac Farmstand, Underground Media+Design, Union Market, Mac Breadbin and the Health & Dental plans to name a few), are all available to keep campus life active, fun, safe and affordable for those taking summer classes. In recognition of these facts, **the Student Representative Assembly (SRA) recently voted 26-0-3 to rescind the agreement which forced full-time students to pay the MAPS' fee.** While three members of the SRA abstained from the vote, not a single member of the SRA opposed the motion and it passed unanimously. The fee in question has already been cancelled for the summer of 2014. This move by the SRA should eliminate the fee permanently. I am very proud to see the MSU uniting to eliminate this unfair fee on behalf of students.

The second of the unfair fees is the Athletics and Recreation fee. Each fall, every full-time student pays \$112.25 for a full-year of membership to DBAC and many of Mac's other athletic facilities. Even though this membership lasts for a full twelve months, **a student ends up paying a second time for these services if they take a summer course.** The University administers this fee. I have been in discussions with both the previous and current Dean of Students, and **the Office of Student Affairs has demonstrated a willingness to eliminate the fee for the next budget cycle.**

Making summer fees fair for students is just one example of what I'm working on this year. For another example, I hope you check out all the events happening for Homecoming weekend! In particular, come out to BSB lawn on Friday, October 4th for the Homecoming Expo. All afternoon we will have **food trucks, live McMaster music, and a ton of games and give-a-ways** for students. At 2:00pm, there will be a rally to kick off the weekend, hosted by myself and Coach Ptaszek of the Mac football team. It will be a great opportunity to celebrate our amazing school and I hope to see you there!

## by the NUMBERS:

21,025 Full-Time Undergrads  
were part of the MSU in 2012-2013

5904 Full-Time Undergrads  
took summer courses in 2013  
and were charged unfair fees

\$7/unit MAPS Fee



\$4.98/unit Ath & Rec Fee

= \$11.98 savings per unit  
OR \$35.94 per 3-unit course

Each summer student takes 4.1 units on average\*  
MSU members will experience

# \$289,993

in total savings

\*Based on information provided by McMaster's  
Office of Institutional Research & Analysis



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