Public transit in a small campus is a dynamic issue. Most recently, there has been growing concern stemming from both the increase in bus fares and the perceived instability of transit routes around campus. The MSU has been involved with these discussions for some time now and I feel that the student body should understand some of the most important developments to come up recently.

To begin, GO Transit attempted to remove half of the student body’s commission revenue in recent contract negotiations. Fear not - they weren’t successful, but we used to start thinking about how we’re going to integrate GO Transit into the longer-term transit scheme around campus. They already have a terminal, but there are rumblings about wanting to increase transit lines and capacity. McMaster. Such an event would indeed be a victory for McMaster students, but the question remains - who should shoulder the associated costs of these upgrades? I hope, as I’m sure you do as well, that the student body also called upon to ‘do our part’ when our part was accomplished long ago by contributing to our payment agreements.

On the local side of transit, just in case you haven’t heard yet, but fans in Hamilton are jumping up about 15 cents come January 1st, which means monthly passes – and our U-Pass by default - will see an increase in price next year. This is coupled with continuous discussion amongst university administration about removing buses from the core of campus altogether. So it is not unfair to say that McMaster students are facing the potential situation wherein we will see increasing costs associated with the student U-Pass, alongside decreased accessibility to campus.

The problem of accessibility extends way beyond the need to get as close to campus as possible though, as hundreds of students rely on city buses to get to-and-from work. In a year where we’ve seen the highest rates of student unemployment over the summer, it is unfortunate that we have to fight for the basic requirement to go to and from our places of work, if we are even lucky enough here, too. We must remain accessible and affordable to students if only because our livelihood depends on it. Our ability to have an accessible campus and easy transport to our places of work.

All is not lost though. Our contract with the HSR is up for renewal next year and there are calls for a reduction in price for the U-Pass. We can’t forget the plan to remove buses from the core of campus though and in my mind it is the result of these discussions and negotiations that will directly impact the tone around the table when we negotiate next year’s contract with the HSR. For a successful negotiation, the student body needs university administration to take discussions about a long-term transit solution seriously.

A real solution to the pending issues surrounding transit is one that will involve the university and the City of Hamilton, but in the end it is about what works best for students and their access home, campus and work - otherwise known as the pillars of university life.

Andrew Richardson VP(Administration)
vpadmin@msu.mcmaster.ca
ext. 23250

Andrew Caterine VP Finance
msupres@msu.mcmaster.ca
ext. 23885

Vishal Tiwari President
msupres@msu.mcmaster.ca
ext. 23885