
JOHN TAMBAKIS

VP Finance Platform

Responsible
Value
Experience



Preface

Dear SRA members,

Over the past three years, McMaster has given me a home, an education that has broadened my horizons, and friends that I care about deeply. In my second year I started to become involved with the MSU as a committee member, and through that experience I was able to see how much the MSU can positively impact the lives of students. Next, as an SRA representative I embarked on a number of actions that benefitted students, and became an executive board member. The position gave me a glimpse into how the MSU can use its money to fight for students needs, whether it be offering emergency bursaries to students, providing value through 1280, and more; the MSU plays a huge role in the experience of undergraduate students.

As a fellow student, I know how hard it is to get by every year; there is an astronomical tuition to pay, expensive on-campus food options, and mandatory coursepacks, all of which make being a student an extremely expensive investment. Students' money matters, and as an organization, the MSU needs to understand and reflect this in the decisions we make. In short, we need to maximize students' value, and that's what I'm here to do: to put students first by providing them with an excellent return for their money; helping them understand where their money is going; and working with the university to aid students by cutting unnecessary fees. Your VP Finance must be somebody that is willing to fight for you in order to give you greater value; I have proven myself capable of excelling in this role.

I have been an SRA member over the past year and, in that position, I have fought, advocated for and worked tirelessly on behalf of students. My experience on the Executive Board has given me a holistic view of the MSU where, along with the Board of Directors and three other SRA members, I have allocated money to the 22 services on campus, hired employees, and made critical business decisions. In addition to that, I campaigned to be MSU president, where I recruited and motivated more than 40 team members to help make this school a much better place, while also ensuring a large percentage of student's votes. Being a Commerce student, I have a deep passion for successful business, finding inefficiencies and making them better for customers. Having taken numerous finance and accounting courses I have the qualifications to be an incredibly fiscally responsible candidate.

I wouldn't be running for this position if I didn't think students would benefit greatly from the points that I am bringing forward. At the core of my message is my desire to put students first. I know that is often used as a cliché, but it is something that I firmly believe in – and my platform matches up with that sincerely held belief.

Thank you,

John Tambakis

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

McMaster Student Union Presidential Candidate

McMaster University September 2014 - Present

- Recruited, lead and inspired a team of 50 students, assigning roles and supporting volunteers to create a platform that inspired passion throughout the team and resulted in a substantial amount of voter support.
- Researched, and developed detailed plans for several platform points aimed at solving major student issues, then created an innovative branding strategy that advertised the platform to students.
- Demonstrated the ability to work within a budget of \$600 to plan events, and promotional activities.

Student Representative Assembly Member

McMaster University March 2014 - Present

- Elected by the McMaster Student Body to represent Commerce students at the highest level of student government.
- Worked to provide the best possible McMaster Student Union services and departments, representing and addressing the concerns of undergraduate students and lobbying the University to improve academic quality.

Executive Board Committee Member

McMaster University September 2014 - Present

- Elected by peers to work with the Board of the Directors of the McMaster Student Union to make hiring decisions, operational decisions and allocate money to the 22 different services on campus ensuring that they operate efficiently.

Camp Program Leader

Camp Highlife, North York, ON May - August 2014

- Planned and executed camp programming for 10-14 year olds using as much creativity as possible that provided opportunities for children to learn new skills in a safe, fun, environment.
- Acted as a leader, demonstrating a keen ability to relate to the children and being able to communicate with them effectively, making sure that each child had a fantastic week.

Residence Orientation Representative

McMaster University September 2014

- A member of a team that lead, planned and executed events for over 160 students living on residence as part of orientation week 2014.
- Creatively adapted to solve problems in changing circumstances; spoke clearly in front of large crowds of students, and collaborated with team to enhance the students experience.

Qualifications

MSU Rewards Card

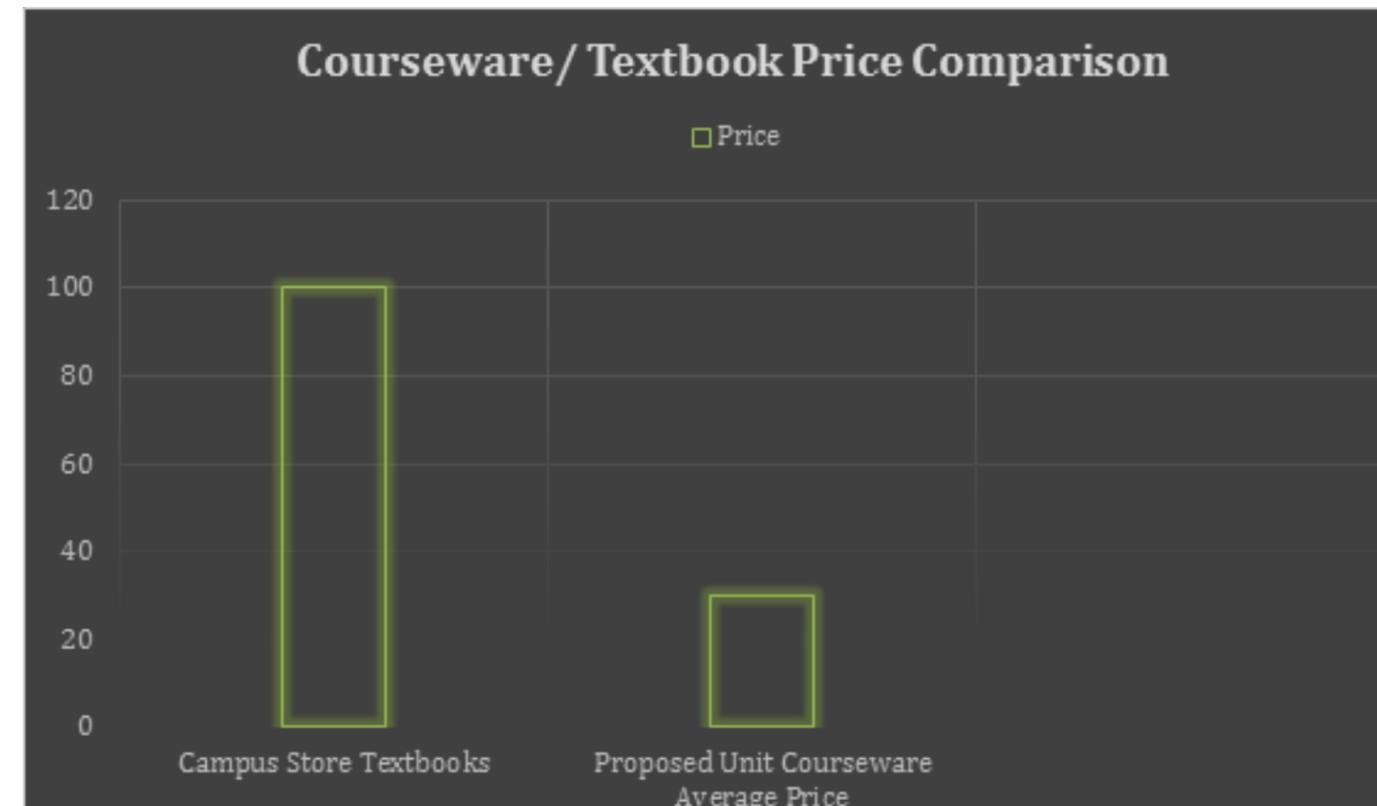
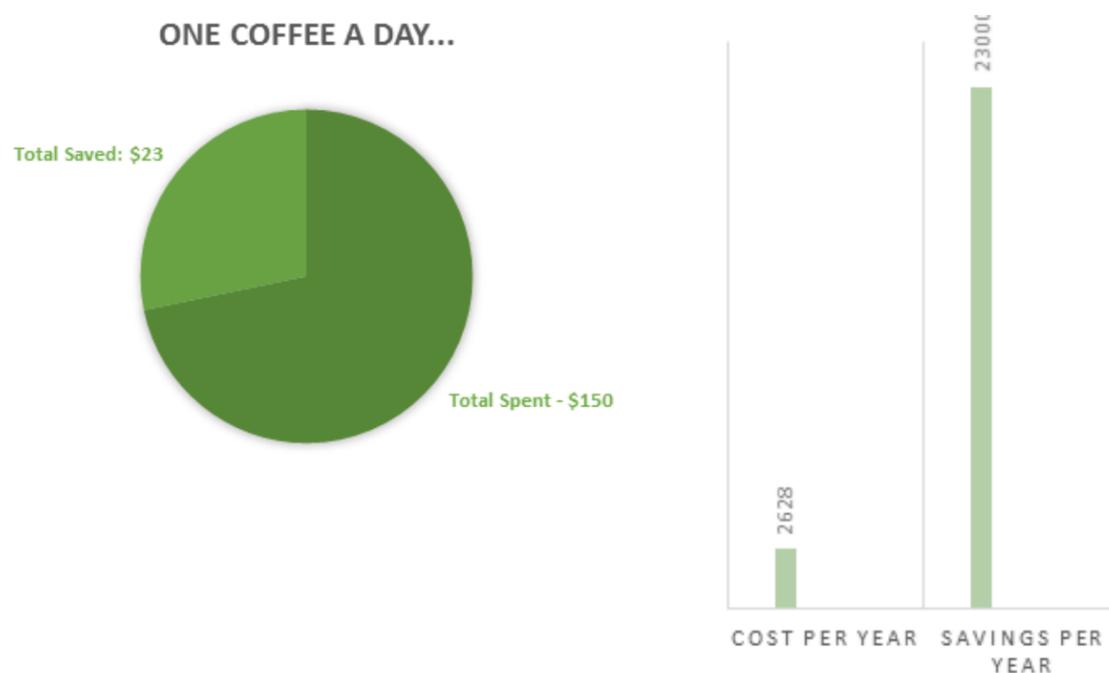


MSU, why not you?

As a student, I understand how expensive it can be to buy items on campus, and that is why I want to develop initiatives aimed at making life less expensive for students. If elected, I will introduce a Customer Loyalty Program that will reward students by offering discounts when they buy from MSU services such as 1280, Union Market, and Underground Printing. As an example: if you were to buy \$75 worth of items at Union market over the course of 3 months you would then get 15% off of future purchases. The HSR is no longer offering a sticker on the student card for the bus pass. It is now going to be up to the MSU to provide a bus pass for students. On this bus pass there would be a rewards card where purchases from MSU services can be tracked which contributes to the feasibility of this idea. Many students I have talked to who do not regularly buy MSU products say they would buy from the MSU if given the opportunity to get discounts. It is an opportunity for the MSU to pass savings on to students, while at the same time having a sustainable business initiative.

As part of researching for my platform, I contacted a rewards company -Vicinity Rewards- to get a quote on how much a rewards system would cost. They told me it would cost \$219 a month for each business unit to be equipped with the system, totalling \$2628 a business unit. I would phase in the system one business unit at a time, by starting with Union Market in January 2015. Upon starting with Union Market I plan to move on to 1280 the following year. This is an investment that will save students money for years to come. If a student were to get a coffee a day for 160 days that would currently cost students \$200, but by using the MSU customer loyalty program they would save \$23 on their purchases. If 1000 students were to use this program the MSU would pass \$23,000 of savings back to students.

ONE COFFEE A DAY...



Cheaper Courseware For Students

Taking printing into our own hands.

Textbooks are incredibly expensive for students, costing anywhere from \$500-\$1000 a semester. If elected I will offer students cheaper courseware through MSU's underground printing. In many courses courseware is the main course material and is considered a type of textbook. Over the past three years Underground Printing has printed and sold courseware for students-this year printing a total of seven. Each course they print courseware for, they are able to sell the courseware at a relatively low price- between \$35-75 and make between \$8,000-20,000, each courseware. Right now they are selling these courseware at a 40% markup to students. This means if a student were to spend \$75 on a courseware, underground would make 30 dollars. I want to reduce this markup to 15% so that students will get more value for their courseware. I would like to pass savings on to students, while still generating revenue for the MSU. If textbooks are being sold for \$100 and professors decide to use Underground to design a custom courseware that costs students \$30 this passes on \$70 of savings on to students. Printing courseware for 20 courses, with 250 students a course would pass on \$446,000 of savings for students. Having talked to Justin Monaco, the incoming student manager at Underground there is an interest in contacting every professor in the University to print more courseware. My goal is to aim to produce 20 coursewares over the course of the next year. This initiative aims to take a stand against the University's incredibly high textbook prices, illustrating to students that their student union will fight for them. This would give students the opportunity to have cheaper textbooks, which coincides with the President Elect's platform point of regulating textbook prices.

Operating Reserve Allocation

Redirecting overflow into student's pockets.

The MSU has \$3,100,000 in reserves that are not being used. In the operating policy that the SRA passed a month ago, it stated that surpluses within a specific amount were to be mandated to be used, with the minimum amount of operating reserves to be used is \$2,700,000. If elected VP finance, I want to make sure that a portion of this money is being allocated by SRA to benefit students. This is to be done through tasking committees such as services and the finance committee to garner student feedback and develop plans to spend the money in ways that could benefit students. There would be a mandate from the very top of the MSU to make sure that this money is being spent for student needs and projects that students have identified as noteworthy.

TOTAL RESERVES



Abilities Service & Accessibility Audit

Creating an abilities service.

This year an abilities service was proposed in order to give students with disabilities a community. Although Diversity Services has an abilities pillar and there is student programming in Student Accessibility Services, neither have the ability or the mandate to provide a community for students with disabilities. As VP finance, I am fully in support of establishing an abilities service and will commit to provide funding for an abilities service.

This past year the University Affairs committee went to every single lift on campus and took pictures of the lifts - many of which were not functioning properly. The university quickly promised to provide tens of thousands of dollars of investment into Limited Use Limited Access lifts. This project had been a year in the making and the university was not budging, but when there was photo evidence of the current lifts inability they made a major investment. I want to fund an accessibility audit where the University Affairs committee would go everywhere on campus to see if our campus is up to accessibility standards. Queens Student Union (AMSA) has done an accessibility audit with great results. The purpose of the audit is to hold the University to the standards put forth by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act.

Greater Transparency & Accountability

Always being in the know.

Students should always know where their money is going. This is critical in order for the MSU to truly be the accessible and transparent organization that they long to be. A big issue with the year end celebration was that students did not know where their money was going. I want to change that through the establishment of some initiatives. My plan is to work with the Finance Committee to design a policy stating that every MSU expenditure over \$40,000 (or a number decided upon by the SRA) has to appear on the President's page of the Silhouette. In addition to this, I will establish a constant stream of communication through social media. where I will regularly seek student feedback on MSU expenditures.

Based on the principle of accountability, I would like to create a clearly defined policy where the Board of Directors declare the gifts that they have been given over \$50. This will clearly show students that the Board of Directors are hiding nothing from them.

Investigating MSU Employee Compensation

MSU employees consistently complain that they are not being paid for the hours they work. For example, when a Part Time Manager is hired they are often compensated to work 8-12 hours a week, yet they consistently end up working anywhere between 16-24 hours a week. This is a practice that must be addressed as it is unethical to not pay employees for the work that they do.

Over the past few years, nobody has wanted to touch this topic, but I believe that a VP finance has to be willing to address the tough issues. There are two reasons why this issue must be addressed. First, two separate Human Resources professors have both deemed it highly unethical to expect employees to work numerous unpaid hours on a large-scale basis. The practice exploits students who feel compelled to put in the work required because they love the job. Second, it creates barriers to the job for underprivileged students who cannot afford to do a job where the expectation is twenty hours a week of work but they are only getting paid for ten.

This is a structural issue within the organization and it is going to take a large scale solution. Over my term I want to investigate this issue further through:



Additionally...

Financial Accessibility Booklet:

The president is elected to represent the student body and this year a main platform point of his was to talk tuition. I want to work with him to educate students about tuition and ease the burden that high tuition creates for students.

To educate students, I want to continue with the work that the McMaster Money center has done by working with them to create a reference booklet that highlights a full breakdown of tuition, a full breakdown of student's fees in easy to understand graphics, and a full breakdown of resources that students can use to save money. This booklet would also include a full breakdown of the fees that students pay to the MSU. It would make the information at money.mcmaster.ca fully accessible to all students.

Access Copyright Fees:

A company called access copyright owns the rights to the copyrights of a lot of different authors, and in 2010 they decided upon charging university's a standard rate of \$26 a student. The university's did not have to sign the agreement and 18 Canadian universities opted out. McMaster decided to sign this agreement, charging students \$26 fee for the copyrighted journals and articles that professor's use in their courseware. This fee is completely unfair towards students. The fee gets renegotiated this year, and I will fight for students and lobby the university to work towards cutting this fee.

Ath and Rec Pulse Bursary:

McMaster's Athletics and Recreation fees are among the highest in Ontario. Pulse memberships cost \$137 and I want to provide a way to make the gym fully accessible for students. If elected, I will work with the Director of Athletics and Recreation Glen Grunwald to establish a bursary for students who cannot afford to go the gym.

Thank *you,*

I would like to thank you for reading my Platform. This platform is a collection of points that I care passionately about and can have a real impact on students' lives. I took the time to meet with SRA members and incorporated their ideas into my platform because the VP Finance needs to be someone who will listen to you and work with you. I don't pretend to have all the answers in this booklet, but that is why if elected I look forward to listening to students. Ultimately, I decided upon running for this position because it gives me the opportunity to help serve students by meeting their financial needs. It gives me the chance to positively affect the life of a student who can't afford a gym membership. It gives me the chance to help the large number of students who can barely afford food on campus and struggle to pay the price of textbooks every semester. A lot of students struggle financially and I am looking to be a VP finance who puts their priorities first. Students deserve a VP finance who will listen to them, who will serve them and who will fight for them, and that is the VP Finance I strive to be.

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