

YEAR PLAN

MSU External Affairs Committee

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OFFICE OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

The external affairs (EA) committee is a place where any MSU member can get involved with the exciting world of advocacy and policy. Oftentimes, it is the place where many first gain their experience with the MSU and its role in education on a grander scale. For myself, my time on the committee last year was what inspired me to take on this role and I endeavour to keep my beginnings in mind throughout the year. In addition, one key person who stands out from this past year is our current VP (Education), who, at that time acting in his role as EA commissioner, engaged his committee members and encouraged all of us to be key players in the MSU's education department and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA). Working with him and the rest of the committee on OUSA blogs, policy, issue briefs, and events fostered growth for both the MSU and each committee member.

Students today have identified numerous issues in their post-secondary education. Past committees have already done phenomenal work in codifying, and advocating on those points and the fruits of their labour are evident in recent successes. The allocation of one billion dollars for the construction of a Hamilton light rail transit (LRT), six million dollars for accessibility services throughout the province, and the termination of McMaster's agreement with Access Copyright all highlight the great impact of the MSU on student life through involvement in university, municipal, provincial, and federal spheres.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I invite you to explore this yearplan and consider learning about and joining the committee if any element of it interests you. Together we can build on the successes of past committees and lay the groundwork for future students. Although this document highlights the projects currently on the docket for the committee, I cannot stress enough that any MSU member is welcome to contribute and engage the committee in a project of their own particular interest that is not discussed within. By working together, we can work towards a better McMaster for students, but a better Hamilton, a better Ontario, and a better Canada.

Kind Regards,

Saad Syed
External Affairs Commissioner
McMaster Students Union

GOALS

Objective 1	Policy Review Framework
Description	This objective is designed to make the MSU’s policy bank as up to date as possible and ensure document clarity for further work and review by future EA committees. Specifically, the EA commissioner will structure a document where each of our existing policies are named and their most recent year of review is provided alongside the next required year of review. Some of our policies are 4 or more years old and amending this is needed to add legitimacy and strength to our policy.
Benefits	Benefits for this framework are longstanding. Not only will they provide the committee this year with direction on what policies need immediate work, they will also provide future committees with a document to determine what they will need to address. Having this framework improves the professional appearance of our organization’s policy, ensures information is up to date, and ensures no policies slip through the cracks. This will also allow us to identify any gaps or redundancies we may have in our policies.
Difficulties	The major difficulty with this objective is that it’s real value is its ability to benefit the organization for years to come and so it must be ensured that all future EA commissioners are updating and referencing this document. To solve this, I hope to discuss the implementation of transition reports for commissioners in a similar format to what is done with part-time managers (PTMs) with the VP (Administration). The establishment of a transition report will ensure that this document, and any other helpful tips are passed down from years past.
Long-term implications	In the long term, this document will hopefully become a strong reference document for the EA committee. It will provide direction on what policies are up for update and thus add structure to the work done annually.
How?	The EA commissioner will review the last reviewed date of each policy paper (available at the bottom of each policy) and document this in an easy to read excel document that will also contain a future date of review. This will then be shared with the Board of Directors (BoD; including the VP Education), University Affairs (UA) commissioner and Operations commissioner because many policies under the general policies tab contain policies under their jurisdiction. After their approval, this document will be stored on the MSU servers for reference.
Partners	MSU BoD, UA Commissioner, Operations Commissioner

Objective 2	Policy Updates and Maroon Papers
Description	Since 2011, the MSU has been creating policies to outline its position on a number of issues. Last year’s committee began the process of

	both reviewing these documents and shortening them down to 1-2 page documents in a Principles, Concerns, Recommendations (PCR) format that summarizes the original, lengthier papers. This year's committee will complete the updating of these documents and the creation of the corresponding maroon papers.
Benefits	Completion of the work undertaken last year is key. It will ensure that all of our policies are easier to understand for the general student and that we can better communicate the organization's stance on a number of key issues.
Difficulties	One challenge is the ambiguity of the general policies webpage. There is not text explaining what the documents on the webpage are for or any organization of the documents into easy to understand clades (i.e. "University," "Provincial," etc.). Adding these details to the webpage will ensure the entire process of looking into the MSU's stance on issues is clear.
Long-term implications	In the long term, the hope is that these policies can be easily understood by students so they and the information they house can be utilized in everyday advocacy. These policy notes will also make it easier for us to present our asks to key stakeholders.
How?	Last year's education department already did much of the work on this, including splitting up the policies between EA and UA. So, this will require assigning small groups of committee members to each remaining policy paper and tasking them with completing improvements to them and writing the maroon paper. These will then be ratified by the SRA and posted on the website. To improve the website, the EA commissioner will work with the administrative assistants to add descriptive subheadings and a short blurb at the beginning.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), SRA, MSU Administrative Assistants, Provincial & Federal Research Assistant

Objective 3	Increase OUSA Presence and Awareness
Description	OUSA is an extremely important partner to the MSU and with the MSU's VP (Education) also doubling as OUSA's president this year, the potential for impactful collaboration exists. OUSA is an asset for provincial advocacy, PSE research, and awareness campaigns to highlight student issues. The challenge however is that despite all MSU students paying a fee for OUSA's representation, very few students know what the organization actually is, or what it does. Thus, our objective this year is to make students more aware of OUSA and its goals, and how their work makes a positive impact on our campus. We also hope to take this a step further and have many more MSU members hopefully writing blogs for OUSA. We plan to do so by having students write OUSA blogs, create awareness campaigns that involve OUSA (either as the central focus or an accompanying component), and shortening OUSA policy papers to OUSA maroon papers so that they are more readable for students. We can also have those documents on hand to distribute during any

	advocacy campaign held at McMaster.
Benefits	Numerous benefits exist. First, the MSU fee for OUSA becomes more transparent, and students do not feel like their money is going towards nothing. Second, this objective does not just promote OUSA, but also awareness of the post secondary education (PSE) sector in general. By promoting issues in post-secondary, students can learn more about the challenges that universities face in delivering the best education to students, and can take it upon themselves to become more active citizens in this sector. Third, this provides an asset to our advocacy team when we are running a campaign on a particular PSE issue.
Difficulties	The challenge of this issue is twofold. First, it will be incredibly difficult to permeate OUSA to the average student past those already involved with the MSU. To counter this, we can utilize our resources on hand and attempt innovative approaches to campaigns past the standard 'poster,' and 'social media post' style that is prominent throughout campus and thus just blends into the background noise for many.
Long-term implications	Because our involvement with OUSA may flow and ebb throughout the year, it is difficult to say what this will become in the future. However, the hope will be that future education departments continue featuring OUSA prominently throughout their work and that by engaging students this year, we can begin a cascade of information sharing that reverberates for future years. Furthermore, if the MSU is a strong contributor to OUSA blogs for an extended period of time, the hope will be that we as an organization will become more and more looked to as a source of quality PSE writing and thus allow us to garner further influence provincially.
How?	This objective has multiple facets. First, a campaign just on OUSA, likely coordinated with promotional material or a visit from OUSA will happen in coordination with the MSU, OUSA, and the Advocacy Street Team (with the Advocacy Director, Christine Yachouh). Second, the committee will work with the Advocacy Director and the VP (Education) to coordinate the creation of OUSA maroon papers with any planned and applicable advocacy campaign. Third, the committee will conduct extensive outreach within a variety of circles around campus to recruit MSU members to write about PSE at McMaster, either for OUSA or for the MSU.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), SRA, MSU Members (the more the better), Advocacy Street Team, Advocacy Director, OUSA, MSU Communications Officer

Objective 4	Municipal LobbyCon
Description	Currently, OUSA designates a week each December for intensive lobbying in which numerous meetings with stakeholders are scheduled at Queens Park to push student issues. This year, the committee will work to adopt this from OUSA on a municipal level and have a week late in term 1 where our committee and other

	student leaders meet with Hamilton stakeholders to advocate on student issues. Examples of stakeholders would include the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton’s Mayor, Ward 1 Counsellor, and MPPs in the Hamilton area. This project comes from last year’s EA committee and this year’s VP (Education). The EA committee this year would hope to take on a leadership role in the planning and implementation of this event. These meetings will be accompanied with briefs that we can then publicize if appropriate.
Benefits	The benefits are twofold. First, the MSU becomes aware of the priorities of Hamilton policymakers and business leaders. Second, these individuals in turn become more aware of student priorities. The ideal result is that our two bodies can work together to develop policy and projects that benefit the student body at McMaster.
Difficulties	A major challenge is that incredible time flexibility will be needed to ensure stakeholder attendance and participation.
Long-term implications	This will hopefully become a yearly event that the MSU runs. Longevity of the event will ensure that our issues are consistently at the forefront and are therefore addressed by local stakeholders so this event has the potential to push student asks more forcefully, tactfully, and constantly.
How?	Planning will involve the coordination of a number of individuals within the MSU, from the EA committee to the VP (Education) to the Community Engagement Coordinator. We will also need to integrate the availability of other student leaders in the MSU such as the BoD, SCSN, the SRA and the Advocacy Street Team. Issues currently being discussed for these meetings include student employment, transit, and student-family mixed neighbourhoods. Finally, to ensure that these meetings and their progress are documented for future use, reports compiling discussions will be created.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), SRA, UA, BoD, Advocacy Street Team, Advocacy Director, Various Stakeholders in the community, Community Engagement Coordinator

Objective 5	The Federal Election
Description	The next federal election is on October 19, 2015 and EA is hoping to build on the success of the provincial and municipal elections of the past year. The committee will work to promote the election and emphasize the need for students to vote (“If you aren’t at the table, you’re on the menu”). In addition, the committee hopes to conduct information gathering for party platforms as well as how, where, when and why to vote and then synthesize that information into easy to access forms.
Benefits	Ultimately we are looking to have an empowered, educated, and engaged electorate in this upcoming federal election. Our student body reaching these qualities is pivotal to putting students back in the minds of the government as more voters typically translates to more representation of those voter needs. Furthermore, the election may be an excellent area to stoke an interest in political involvement

	and education for the student population.
Difficulties	The election is the first day back from our reading week. This will mean that we will have to tailor our promotions strategy specifically to ensuring that students that are away from campus are still aware of going ons. Another challenge is ensuring that we are non-partisan in our representation of information. Extensive vetting of all information by the EA commissioner and the VP (Education) will occur to ensure this is the case.
Long-term implications	Another MacVotes campaign will strengthen the brand presence that already exists. Furthermore, we can work to ensure voting becomes a priority for youth rather than something they do in their later years.
How?	Numerous components exist to EA’s involvement in the federal election. First, the committee will be involved in creating party platforms of all the candidates as well as the information on how where and when to vote. Second, the committee will be writing blogs on the federal election leading up to it. These blogs are also open to any MSU member and we will be incorporating general student voice into them as much as possible. Third, we will be creating a promotional video for release leading up to the election. Fourth, and something that could integrate with blogs or the video, is the creation of a student platform for this election. Fifth, the EA committee will compile, synthesize, and promote key dates and information such as how student can vote at home if they wish, how they can partake in advance polling, where the polling stations will be and at what times, etc. We also hope to organize and provide resources/ opportunities where students can print proof of residence and other necessary components to vote.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), Advocacy Street Team, Advocacy Director, MEG, communications officer, Federal and Provincial Research Assistant

Objective 6	ChangeCamp Preview Day
Description	This past year, the MSU completed its first ChangeCamp in partnership with the university and the city of Hamilton at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. While the event was quite successful, last years Community Engagement Coordinator identified a need for greater explanation of what ChangeCamp really is to students. Thus, a preview day on campus would serve to act as a teaser for students and bring the results from last years report to a more publicised position while also allowing students to interact with many of the community members who will be at ChangeCamp.
Benefits	This will further strengthen the collaboration between students and the community. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to publicize past findings and really allow students to sample what ChangeCamp is about so that they are incentivized to attend. Breaking the gap that currently exists between ChangeCamp and

	the average student is vital to continued success and this event hopes to tackle that.
Difficulties	A difficulty of this event will be holding it in a key central location and time that is open to students. One way to address this is to hold it in the MUSC Atrium in a clubsfest style or a style similar to the actual changecamp, but on a smaller scale.
Long-term implications	Ideally, this would continue into the future and become a constant complement to ChangeCamp as a helpful refresher of the past year's conference and a taste of the possible connections and ideas that might come from the coming one. Both of these components will implement ChangeCamp. First, individuals will be able to frame ChangeCamp in the context of past years. Second, individuals will be able to enter ChangeCamp with ideas already flowing.
How?	As the Community Engagement Coordinator typically coordinates ChangeCamp, this preview day will likely be planned in collaboration with them. The committee will discuss and divide the work necessary to plan this event during the registration period of ChangeCamp and ensure that there are an array of community members present. Furthermore, a presentation of some manner will be developed highlighting findings from the inaugural ChangeCamp. To document what occurs during the day, attendees could be asked to document what conversations they're looking forward to at ChangeCamp.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), Community Engagement Coordinator, Network for Community-Campus Partnerships, City of Hamilton Partners

Objective 7	Entrepreneurship Conference
Description	EA will coordinate and assist the VP (Education) in the planning and completion of a conference to develop the entrepreneurial spirit at McMaster.
Benefits	This conference would hope to bridge entrepreneurship at McMaster and with its students with the greater Hamilton community. Furthermore, it will serve as a networking event for students to interact with Hamilton groups, MSU groups, McMaster services, and others with a shared goal and vision.
Difficulties	The major difficulty is organization at a venue to congregate all key stakeholders. Currently, McMaster Innovation Park is being discussed as the location to hold this conference as it will allow the MSU to extend to an area of McMaster it is less prevalent in. Furthermore, acquiring collaborations with various youth entrepreneur groups on campus and in the community will be a necessary challenge to tackle to holding this event.
Long-term implications	The hope is for this event to be the first of an annual series that allows the MSU to become a longstanding partner in the community on the topic of student entrepreneurship.
How?	This event could take the shape of a number of tables where students participate similar to clubsfest. This would provide an

	introduction to many key groups and to the topics at hand. This could then evolve into speaker series where the same groups at the tables are now speaking on more details about themselves and specific tools for students looking to get into business. We would accomplish this through connection with SPECTRUM, MIP, Hamilton HIVE, and any other relevant groups.
Partners	MSU VP (Education), Community Engagement Coordinator, MIP, SPECTRUM

Objective 8	Student Housing Campaign
Description	EA will coordinate a campaign on student housing in collaboration with SCSN. This campaign would have both an awareness component as well as behind the scenes work with the McMaster Off Campus Resource Centre on including tips for students on their ads page. In addition, EA will consider conducting a survey on student housing to better inform future campaigns if the need for one is apparent.
Benefits	This campaign would hope to ensure students are aware of their entitlements prior to signing a lease. It would also ensure that information beneficial to students is prevalent and easy available when they might be calling potential landlords. By educating students on their rights and their landlord's rights, students will be able to better protect themselves against illegal, unsafe, or predatory practices. It will also ensure that students have a more positive housing experience and Hamilton experience. The survey will also ensure that we have up-to-date information on student issues and needs.
Difficulties	The major difficulties with this project is twofold and sequential. First, the challenge is to ensure our message gets to the 'average' student who may just be looking for a place to stay and not to delve into Hamilton bylaws. This can be addressed by summarizing the information and providing it readily on the housing website. This leads to the second challenge however of collaborating with the university to see this change to the website made. If the Off Campus resource centre is unable to partner with us on this initiative, we will have to get creative with how we can ensure students are aware. To tackle this second issue, the committee can work with the centre to ensure that they also feel it is beneficial to engage in this change and that they are incentivized to do it as well. One last issue is ensuring we get an adequate response to the survey. Incentivizing participation with gift cards and attempting unique promotional strategies will ensure this.
Long-term implications	The hope is that changes to the website will impact student lives for years to come as every year students are on it and looking for housing. In addition survey results can be used by future years as well.
How?	This event takes the form of workshops run for either first year students (in collaboration with Spark) or larger seminars (possibly

	through faculty societies) where students can find out more about student housing. This event would also consist of meetings with the Resource Centre to work towards adding tips to the advertisements pages. The survey will be conducted through the MSU website and will require working with the student life development coordinator (SLDC) and the communications officer.
Partners	Community Engagement Coordinator, SCSN, Advocacy Director, Spark, Faculty Societies, McMaster Off Campus Resource Centre, communications officer, SLDC

Objective 9	Sustainability at Mac and in Hamilton
Description	EA will coordinate and conduct a two-part campaign on sustainability. The first part will consist of the compilation and creation of information about sustainability in Hamilton, the MSU's stance on those matters, and how students can have an impact on them (i.e. biking versus bussing, recycling/ composting, etc.). The second part will consist of an awareness campaign in collaboration with Macgreen and the Office of Sustainability to ensure students are aware of our findings about McMaster and the Hamilton community and to show students through workshops how they can integrate sustainable practices into their life.
Benefits	This objective will allow us to codify our stance on sustainability in Hamilton and develop information on how students can be more sustainable as well as how the city and university can as well.
Difficulties	The major difficulty is compilation of what is regarded as complex and technical information on the city of Hamilton. As well, ensuring our sustainability asks are well thought out, reasonable, and applicable to students is necessary. Finally, we will need to ensure that our strategies for students include passive changes that a busy student can integrate without much trouble. Possibly assisting with some changes through workshops could also be done.
Long-term implications	The hope is that the information we compile can be used in future lobbying or awareness efforts. In addition, future committees could build on this step by looking at the provincial and federal level as well in regards to sustainability stances.
How?	This objective will be carried out both in terms of research to compile and synthesize the information but also the collaborative creation of workshops or a campaign to inform students about findings and what they can do to be a sustainability advocate or to become more environmentally conscious themselves.
Partners	Community Engagement Coordinator, SCSN, Macgreen, Office of Sustainability, UA

Long-term planning

Overarching Vision (<i>what is the ultimate goal?</i>)	Completion of all OUSA Maroon Papers
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a maroon paper for all OUSA policies
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can more easily access the stances of OUSA
Year 1	50% of the OUSA General Policies will have a maroon paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each EA member will take on one OUSA General Policy • Maroon papers will be given to Communications Officer to be prepared for dissemination within the MSU.
Year 2	Remaining OUSA General Policies will be completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each EA member will take a remaining policy • Maroon papers will be given to Communications Officer to be prepared for dissemination within the MSU.
Year 3	A framework for review of our maroon papers that coincides with the updating of the OUSA policy papers will be created and followed for subsequent years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA Commissioner will create the framework • Each EA member will take on a policy after it is updated • Maroon papers will be given to Communications Officer to be prepared for dissemination within the MSU.
Partners	OUSA, Communications Officer, VP (Education)

GOALS

List 5 things that you would like to have prepared for the beginning of September

- Have completed the policy review framework and the changes to the general policy page of the website
- Have completed the update of the tuition policy paper and organized dates for focus groups
- Released blogs related to the federal election
- Began the compilation of information related to the election and creating the election video
- Engaged students in the opportunity to write blogs for OUSA or the MSU on PSE

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the fall term (1st)

- Planned and completed the MSU's first Municipal LobbyCon
- Completed the revision of remaining policy papers
- Completed the creation of any remaining MSU Maroon papers
- Planned the ChangeCamp Preview Day and the Housing Campaign
- Released all blogs, infographics, videos, and information surrounding the federal election

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the winter term (2nd)

- Planned and completed the first Entrepreneurship Conference
- Planned and completed the Sustainability Campaign
- Created OUSA Maroon Papers for 50% of OUSA policies
- Assisted in an OUSA campaign at McMaster
- Utilize revised tuition policy for the creation of infographics and documents utilized in a tuition campaign and advocacy effort at McMaster and in the province

Master Summary

July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of first draft of tuition policy paper revisions (all committee members) • Complete the policy review framework (Saad) • Engage students to write blogs about federal election (all)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin posting blogs on the federal election (all committee members) • Finalize draft of tuition policy paper (all committee members) • Assign work for federal election information gathering (all)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize and conduct focus groups for tuition policy paper (all) • Shoot federal election videos (Angela, Katie, Matt, Helen) • Assign remaining policy papers to update and create maroon papers to each committee members (all) • Assign blogs for semester one (all)
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan LobbyCon (all) • Have a successful Federal Election promotions campaign (all) • Plan ChangeCamp Preview Day (Matt, Saad) • Plan the housing campaign (Vicky, Helen)
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and hold Lobbycon (all) • Plan ChangeCamp Preview Day (all) • Present all remaining policies and maroon papers to SRA (all) • Plan and Complete the housing campaign (Vicky, Helen)
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign blogs for semester two (all) • Have a end of term social event (all) • Remind about any work to do over the break; exams (all)
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign OUSA general policies to each member (all) • Plan and conduct an OUSA campaign on campus (all) • Plan ChangeCamp Preview Day (all) • Plan Entrepreneurship Conference (all) • Plan Sustainability Campaign (all)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and hold ChangeCamp Preview Day (all) • Plan and hold Entrepreneurship Conference (all) • Plan Sustainability Campaign (all)
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create infographics on tuition policy (Angela, Katie) • Complete all assigned OUSA general policies (all) • Plan and do Sustainability Campaign (all)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term; finalize any remaining policies (all) • End of year social (all)