Welcome to McMaster and welcome home. I am Ehima Osazuwa, your 2015-16 McMaster Students Union (MSU) President. I am the CEO and chief spokesperson for the MSU. As President, I have the opportunity to work with the Board of Directors to lead the student body in governance and advocacy.

As full-time undergraduate students, you are all members of the MSU. One of the perks of being an MSU member is holding a 12-month, unlimited-ride bus pass with the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). The 12-month bus pass was achieved through referendum in January 2014 as an improvement over the previous 8-month pass. I feel that this service is extremely valuable to McMaster students.

Lower fees for students are central to my platform...

This year, the University decided to discontinue the issuing of validation stickers for student cards. Thus, the MSU lost the opportunity to piggyback the HSR pass as a portion of said sticker. The HSR now requires that students present both their student card and a separate bus pass upon boarding. Information about the change is available online at msumcmaster.ca/hsr. I encourage all students to stay informed.

Lower fees are central to my platform, and I am aware of the financial difficulty that the replacement fee may pose to many students. To be clear, the HSR has always been committed to reviewing each lost card on a case-by-case basis. That said, the MSU is still working with the HSR to determine a fair, workable system for assessing replacement costs, including a more affordable replacement fee structure. Our concerns are being heard, and I believe there will be a satisfactory solution in the near future.

Another aspect of my platform was visible this week at Clubsfest. Clubs have been an important part of my experience at McMaster. Since taking office, I have worked with the Clubs Administrator to support clubs in a number of ways.

There are now two Assistant Clubs Administrators rather than one, in order to answer questions and address needs in a more timely way. Clubs will now receive more funding thanks to MSU Dollars, which can be used at any MSU service. MSU Dollars will function in addition to all typical club grants. Therefore, all clubs will experience a net increase in funding. Over the summer, the Clubs Department upgraded email accounts, purchased new equipment, and adopted a new logo emphasizing the five categories of MSU clubs.

Clubs are a key part of a fabulous undergraduate experience. I encourage everyone to join a club. McMaster University is a wonderful place to call home.