

The McMaster Students Union

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



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President

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Could you summarize what the Leadership Summit for Women (LSW) is about?

The LSW is an annual one-day conference that aims to create a safe space for the diverse voices of women-identified individuals and their allies. The LSW is a partnership between the MSU, the Student Success Centre (SSC), the Alumni Association, and YWCA Hamilton.

The theme of this year's conference is "Make it Happen Hamilton". The aim is to develop delegates' leadership skills and to facilitate conversation about meaningful change. Our vision is of a society in which all people, irrespective of gender, have equitable leadership opportunities.

Why is the MSU involved?

Over the past couple of years, the MSU has played a very active role in this conference. When I ran for president, one of my platform points was *women in governance*. This conference is one of the many ways in which I plan on pushing for reform in this area.

The MSU should and will always play a role in conferences that foster a safe space. It is our responsibility as student leaders to empower women.

Could you describe your experience at the LSW in previous years?

Last year I attended the LSW for the first time. I was able to listen to community leaders and partners discuss the necessity of diversity in leadership. Everyone felt comfortable sharing their stories, perspectives, and visions. I was able to meet people who have continued to educate me on the importance of women in leadership positions.

How do you see the MSU's commitment to women in leadership continuing throughout the year?

Through the *MSU Wants You Working Group*, the MSU will continue its efforts to increase the representation of individuals from underrepresented groups. We will do this by host-

ing workshops, seminars, events and roundtables that encourage and empower people to run and apply for governance and leadership positions.

I encourage everyone to register and attend this year's LSW. It will change you for the better as a student, a citizen, and a leader.



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Who should consider attending the Leadership Summit for Women?

The LSW is a truly open learning environment. While this event obviously caters to women-identified folk, the LSW also welcomes transgender individuals and allies: anyone interested in a more equitable society.

Why is the LSW important to you?

As a woman in a male-dominated sphere, I constantly look towards my female counterparts and mentors for inspiration and guidance. The LSW reinforces the importance of making connections between women. It also encourages women to draw on those connections for the strength to challenge societal norms.

What aspect of the LSW is most important to you?

I think the most important aspect is the chance to connect with a diverse group of women and their allies. The partnership between the SSC, YWCA, and the MSU will enable high school students, university students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members to engage and connect with each other. Mentorship is essential for women striving to attain traditionally male-dominated leadership roles. The LSW opens the door for new mentorship opportunities.

What needs to improve for women in leadership at McMaster and in the MSU?

We need to increase the number of women in leadership positions. When you sit in Council Chambers and look up, you only see one past university president who is female, and that's isolating. Our current Board of Directors is only 25% female, even though women comprise more than 50% of our student body. However, I am encouraged by the progress that I have seen, especially through the *MSU Wants You* campaign and the fact that our Student Representative Assembly is approximately at gender parity. I hope that capable women con-

**LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
FOR WOMEN 2015**
Redefining Leadership

Date: **Saturday, October 24**
Location: **David Braley Health Sciences Centre, 100 Main St. W.**

Register now via msumcmaster.ca/lsw



The President's Page is a space sponsored and used by the McMaster Students Union (MSU) Board of Directors (BoD) to communicate with the student body. It functions to highlight the Board's projects, goals, and agenda for the year, as well as the general happenings of the MSU.



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