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| MSU-logo-2001. | REPORT*From the office of the…*First Year Council |
| TO: | Members of the Student Representative Assembly |
| FROM: | Aiman Dhiloon, First Year Council Chair |
| SUBJECT: | SRA 20I Report |
| DATE: | Tuesday, November 24, 2020 |

**PROGRESS ON YEAR PLAN**

Council is officially running events & initiatives in an online setting and is developing methods to gather student concerns. Consultation committees have commenced meetings and are discussing their respective yearly projects.

**PAST EVENTS**

Our first event, Marauder Mystery Night, was held last weekend. It was a Zoom scavenger hunt/escape room themed around Harry Potter and McMaster, where members worked in teams to answer trivia questions. Gift cards were awarded to the winning team, as well as some randomly selected attendees. Despite our previous concerns regarding turnout, the event was very successful and gave council a chance to personally introduce ourselves and meet some fellow students.

Furthermore, our three consultation committees have had two meetings thus far, during which we have introduced ourselves to various campus partners and discussed projects for the upcoming year. The first-year representative assembly has also been assembled and has had its introductory meeting, chaired by our Vice-Chair External (Charlotte Chan). Council attended our first meeting with the IT Advisory Committee last week.

Finally, council members and roles have been presented on our Instagram account through a series of posts. We have also each had the chance to do a story takeover, where we answered questions and interacted with first year students and faculty representatives. Presently, we are hosting a giveaway on our Instagram account in an effort to increase our follower count.

**UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

We are currently planning on hosting an exam de-stressor event on December 5 at 7:00 PM. It will feature various wellness activities, including colouring and meditation, as well as give first years a chance to interact with each other, council members and representatives from numerous faculties. Additionally, our PGCLL residence chair (Henry Laing) is running a weeklong holiday door decorating contest for students in residence, running from November 29th to December 6th.

Moreover, we are working on developing a survey to gather the concerns of first years. Though this idea is still being explored and discussed, our main goal is to determine what the most important concerns are so that we can work to mitigate them. Additionally, we have an upcoming meeting where we will be providing a first-year perspective for the MSU Mental Health Policy Paper, as well as a meeting with the IT Advisory Committee to provide constructive criticism on their projects.

**CHALLENGES**

Challenges faced largely revolve around the online setting of the year – not being present on campus has posed somewhat of a barrier for our consultation committees, as it is understandably difficult to provide input and initiatives for campus facilities when only one of our members is on campus. Certain campus partners have expressed that they aren’t quite sure where to head with the committees this year, however this is something we are actively working to overcome by providing alternative projects adapted to the current situation.

Aside from that, there have been several first-year students who have been reaching out to us to express concerns such as issues with online learning and reading week dates for second semester. To address this, we hope to effectively execute our survey to gather a large amount of data on how first years are currently feeling. We then hope to use this to inform and support our advocacy initiatives. To ensure success, we also plan on reaching out to resources such as our AVP University Affairs who provided us with excellent advocacy training at the beginning of the year.

**SUCCESSES**

Overall, our first event definitely qualifies as a success – feedback collected from attendees reflected that it was an enjoyable experience and has left us with a positive attitude for future events. Students have now been familiarized with council members, as our social media presence continues to grow. We have met with many key partners (McMaster staff, MSU executives and fellow first year representatives) and are beginning to lay out projects which will carry through the year. Council members have become confident in their roles, have been given access to Outlook email accounts and are functioning cohesively as a team!

Best,

Aiman Dhiloon

First Year Council Chair

McMaster Students Union

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