



RYAN TSE

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT (EDUCATION)

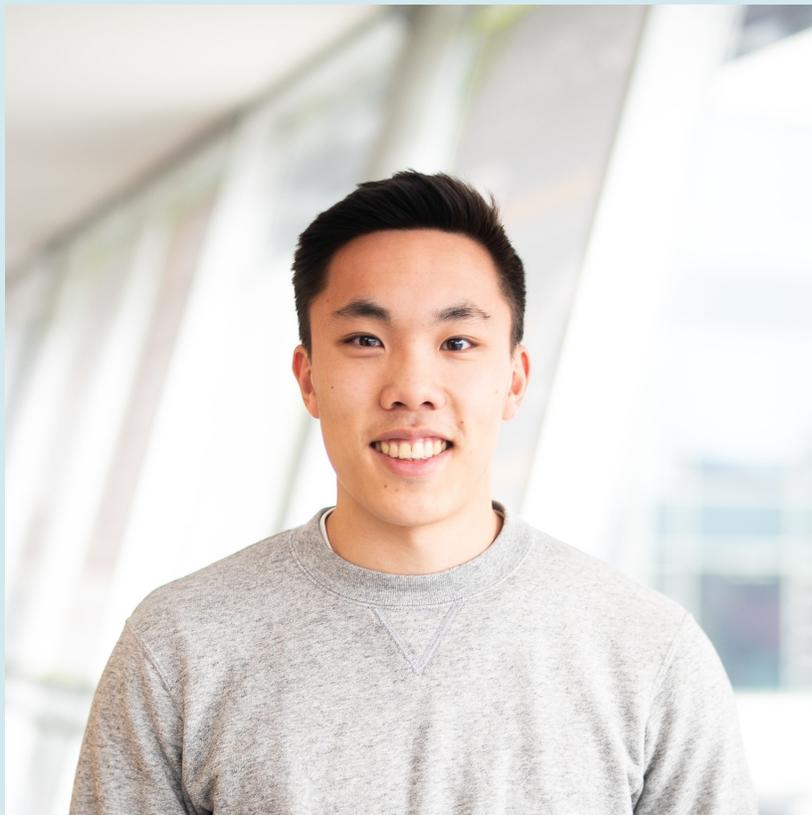


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INTRODUCTION

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY,

I am thrilled to be sharing my vision for MSU advocacy this year with you. These are unique and difficult circumstances for many students and for our society. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a severe risk to long-term public health. Students are not only faced with the health risks of COVID-19 - they also face the financial stress of post-secondary education made worse by the pandemic, in addition to significant academic uncertainty as classes move online. Further, over the past summer, we have seen society become more aware of the systemic racism in our government and educational institutions that BIPOC have experienced for a long time. We also live in the midst of a man-made climate crisis which poses a major long-term threat to all of humanity. In this season, **MSU advocacy must stand up for students, listen to those who suffer from systems of oppression, and continue to advocate for a safer, more sustainable, more accessible and more equitable university experience.** I hope I have the privilege of doing so this year as your Vice-President (Education).

There are three themes that I have centered my platform on this year, which form the foundation of my vision for the future of MSU advocacy. The first is **collaboration and consultation.** Advocacy cannot be done alone. We must continue to create long-lasting partnerships with organizations and individuals at all levels of advocacy who have similar goals so that we understand better what we are fighting for and how to best serve students. Advocacy is fundamentally an ongoing work of speaking up for marginalized voices, and we must work with those who have been engaged in that work for many years. The second is **accessibility.** No matter who you are, where you come from, or how much money you have, there should be no barriers to post-secondary education for those who want one. For current students, we must continue to build a student union and academic experience that works for all students. The third is **accountability.** The MSU must continue efforts to improve student engagement and facilitate ways for students to engage in student government and have their voices heard by student representatives.

Through consultation with students, I believe I have crafted a platform that represents what students need now and in the future. The platform will also strengthen the way we do advocacy and envision new ways to empower students and student leaders to be powerful voices for change. Further, I believe that platform is feasible and builds on the work set in motion by the previous VP (Education) and current advocacy team. I look forward to bringing my skills and experience into the role of VP (Education) this upcoming year.

Sincerely,



Ryan Tse



RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Associate Vice-President: Municipal Affairs **2019-2020**
 - Member of Education Team
 - Prepared policy briefs and lobbied city councillors
- Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: General Assembly delegate **Spring 2020**
- Board of Directors, Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) McMaster **2019-2020**

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY AND EXTERNAL EXPERIENCE

- Welcome Week Arts and Science Rep **2020-2021**
- Summer volunteer researcher for ABC Life Literacy Canada (non-profit literacy organization) **Summer 2019**
- McMaster Model United Nations Editor **2018-2019**
- News reporter for *The Silhouette* **2018-2019**
- Research Assistant for Population Health Research Institute **Summer 2018**

EDUCATION

- McMaster Arts and Science program, **2017-18 - present**

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PLATFORM HIGHLIGHTS

UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES

- Accessible, high-quality and secure online learning
- Tuition and affordability during COVID-19

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

- Sustainable transit and transportation
- Affordable and safe housing

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- International student support
- Financial assistance for students

MSU ADVOCACY

- Empowering SRA members
- Integrating MSU Advocacy and MSU Services

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UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES

ONLINE LEARNING

Accessibility

As classes are conducted online in Fall 2020 and potentially beyond due to COVID-19, we must ensure that the education students receive is accessible. Students may not be able to access live, synchronous classes due to technical issues, lack of internet access or other unforeseen circumstances. To make classes more accessible, I will advocate to the university and to specific faculties to **promote the use of recorded or podcasted lectures and the increased integration of asynchronous components in syllabi**. I will also advocate for **comprehensive adoption of closed captions for online lectures** across faculties. Simultaneously, we must continue to advocate the university to implement physical infrastructure that supports the Echo360 system and podcasted lectures so that the Echo360 system is more widely adopted when students return to campus.

High-quality

Online education must also be high-quality. I plan to conduct a **student consultation midway through first semester to hear directly from students on what elements of the online experience can be improved**, and advocate on student perspectives to the university. It is important that we hold the university accountable to their claim that the quality of education for students will not be affected because of the shift to online classes. In an online environment, students face unique challenges (for example, the impact of screen time and a more sedentary lifestyle) and the quality of education can suffer from differential access to internet and other resources. During this unique and difficult period, these challenges can be exacerbated if instructors overload the workload of students. I will advocate for **student-centric syllabi that accounts for the various stressors students face during this time** and does not unfairly over-burden students. Further, the MSU should continue to promote flexible marking schemes and alternative to traditional exam formats (especially those which require proctoring tools).

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Security

The MSU must also advocate for a secure online learning environment. In July, the SRA passed a statement calling on the university to use alternatives to Zoom due to concerns about security, censorship and privacy. Since then, the university has made instructors aware of security concerns but have not recommended against the use of Zoom. I will continue to **call on the university and all faculties to move away from Zoom for online teaching**. Further, I will **advocate against assessments that use proctoring tools**, many of which present serious security and privacy concerns to students.

TUITION AND AFFORDABILITY DURING COVID-19

Many Canadians have faced significant financial stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, with record unemployment rates across the country¹. This includes post-secondary students and their families. Many students were unable to find employment, making circumstances even more difficult for students. During this time, the MSU must work to relieve the financial burden of attending university for McMaster students. Currently, the MSU has reduced organizational fees by 10 per cent, reduced ancillary fees, and put on hold the student transit pass for the fall semester. The university has reduced the Athletics and Recreations fee by 75 per cent, but tuition has not been reduced for students. Moving forward, the MSU must advocate for **maintaining the reduced fee structure at a baseline and advocate for further reductions where possible** to ease the financial concerns of students, especially if the winter semester is conducted online. I will work with the Vice-President (Finance), the Associate Vice-President: Finance, and the finance committee to **continue evaluating where MSU fees can be lowered further in a responsible manner and reimbursed to students**. In the case that Winter 2021 is online, I will also **advocate to the university for exploring the feasibility of retroactive tuition rebates for students**. I will also work with the VP (Finance) to initiate discussions with faculty society representatives to explore how to better support faculty societies through fee reductions.

1. Staff. "Canada's Unemployment Rate Reaches Record 13.7%." Global News. June 06, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7029601/canada-may-unemployment-rate/>.

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SECURITY SERVICES

Over the past summer, it has become clear how systemic racism is built into the structures and practices of the government and societal institutions, including McMaster University. On June 18, the SRA adopted a statement expressing student concerns with the Special Constables program on campus and the continued employment of Glenn De Caire as Director of Security and Parking Services for the university². Students have consistently expressed concerns about De Caire and police presence on campus for many years³⁴. As VP (Education), I will **advocate to the University for the removal of De Caire and the discontinuation of the Special Constables program**. Students deserve to feel safe on campus. We must advocate for a safe, student-centric and non-policed campus that protects Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) rather than targeting them, and one that invests in health supports and resources and the uplifting of marginalized voices rather than turning to punitive systems. Further, as the University continues efforts to collect data on student interactions with University services, including security services, I will actively ensure that any University-administered survey is confidential, accessible and centers marginalized student voices. I will also work with the AVP: University Affairs to formulate a strategy for the MSU to **conduct an independent student consultation to hear directly from students on their experiences with security services**. This data will bolster our advocacy as we advocate for a re-imagining of campus security.

DECOLONIZING SYLLABI

Currently, the MSU is working with the Office of the Vice-Provost to devise a long-term Teaching and Learning strategy that will lay out plans to improve the McMaster pedagogical and learning experience. I will ensure the **MSU actively advocates to the university and to different faculties for this strategy to include a focus on decolonizing syllabi and incorporating diverse texts in courses**. This will improve the quality of education for students by increasing access to different knowledges and acknowledging and addressing the harmful legacies of colonialism that exist in Canada and around the world.

2. "Student Representative Assembly Adopts Comprehensive Stance regarding McMaster's Security Services." MSU McMaster Students Union. Accessed September 12, 2020. https://www.msumcmaster.ca/posts/1083?fbclid=IwAR3iXjKohYN1ah00aisjh0BD1F_V3A8-Wzl6bBBHpbB1_XxPz22_KIAL_go.

3. Arkilander, Steffi, and Andrew Mrozowski. "Students Call on McMaster for Accountability." The Silhouette. July 27, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.thesil.ca/students-call-on-mcmaster-for-accountability>.

4. Watkins, Amanda. "The Hiring and Requested Firing of Glenn De Caire." The Silhouette. April 06, 2016. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.thesil.ca/the-hiring-and-firing-of-glenn-de-caire>.

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

High-quality counselling and mental health support is crucial for students. One 2016 survey of Ontario post-secondary institutions found that 46% of students reported suffering from depression in the previous year . Unfortunately, the current amount of counselling and counsellors available through the Student Wellness Centre leaves many students frustrated with long wait times. I plan to advocate for **more counselling services to be added to the Student Wellness Centre long-term** in a manner that increases the diversity of counsellors. I also plan to work with the University Affairs team to **investigate the long-term possibility of the Student Wellness Centre partnering with external credentialed organizations** to expand counselling capacities. In the short-term, I will work with the AVP: University Affairs to review best practices for training counsellors in anti-oppression and cultural competence. Further, I will advocate for a **proactive mental health support model that better provides mental health education and resources to students, and streamlines the Student Wellness Centre reception process** to better triage students who need support. I will also work to improve communications to students about mental health support available through the MSU Student Assistance Plan.

PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY

It is important that both the physical and online university environments are accessible for McMaster students This year, I will work with university staff to ensure that **any renovations to the McMaster University Student Centre are made in accordance with the most recent accessibility audit**. I will also support the AVP: University Affairs in her ongoing work of improving the accessibility of the online Mosaic website and work with the Board of Directors to ensure that the new MSU website is accessible for all students. Further, I will be active the renewal of the MSU accessibility policy paper this year, including consultations with groups like Maccess.

5. "Post-Secondary Mental Health." More Feet on the Ground. February 22, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://morefeetontheground.ca/mental-health/post-secondary-mental-health/>.

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SUSTAINABILITY

We are currently living in a climate crisis that has severe, broad local and global negative impacts in the short-term and long-term if we do not act now. As organizations and citizens, we must make changes to create a better world for better generations. The MSU and the University must take concrete steps to become more sustainable organizations, educate students about the urgency of addressing climate change, and create opportunities for students and educators to research and innovate sustainability projects. I will advocate to the university to expanding the amount of SUSTAIN courses available to students. Through active participation and input in the long-term University Teaching and Learning strategy, I will promote the integration of a sustainability lens across faculties, to encourage a holistic view of the climate crisis and a greater understanding of how sustainability issues and solutions encompass many areas of life. Further, I will initiate discussions with the university in increasing opportunities for undergrad students to conduct research on sustainability projects, and I will push for the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to be centered in McMaster University President David Farrar's long-term sustainability vision for McMaster. I will also support the MSU Sustainability Education Committee in their ongoing research and advocacy campaigns.

FOOD SECURITY

Many students face food insecurity. This problem has been exacerbated by the economic impacts of COVID-19. The MSU must continue to promote initiatives and services that will support students in a meaningful manner. This year, I will review the Hungry for Knowledge study McMaster University conducted in 2019 and work with the Food Collective Centre to formulate long-term strategies for addressing food insecurity

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ACADEMIC ACCESSIBILITY

The MSU should continue to advocate for further flexibility in deferred exam dates. Currently, students who are unable to write an exam at the originally designated time have their exams deferred to the reading week of the next semester. This policy poorly accommodates students and creates multiple problems. If an exam is delayed a few months on the current deferral timetable, students may not be able to complete prerequisite courses or graduate and move on to the next chapter of their lives. Students may also incur additional living and academic expenses as a result of the delay. The current system is inflexible and harms students who may have missed an exam because an acute illness or one-time event but would otherwise be willing and want to write a makeup exam earlier. I will advocate to the university to **increase the flexibility of the current date**, which could include moving up the deferral exam period closer to the original exam date and implementing a “slip” date within the original exam period for students who need it.

I will also advocate to the university to **extend the current course add/drop dates**. The existing add/drop dates are very close to the start of classes and often do not give students enough time to experience a course. Students may not even have time to have had one class of a course before having to make a decision on dropping a course, especially if they have to modify their schedule after class starts or if there are other extenuating circumstances.

Students should not face financial barriers to quality educational resources, but the large cost of textbooks is often prohibitive for many students. Open Educational Resources are free academic resources and textbooks for students that can help address this problem. The University recently pledged \$50,000 in grants over this year and the next two to incentivize OER adoption by McMaster instructors⁶. In partnership with SRA members, I will advocate to faculties to **promote the further adoption of OER by instructors for the next two years**. During this period of great financial stress for many students due to COVID-19, it is more important than ever to promote free, accessible educational resources for students in all faculties.

6."Open Educational Resources (OER): OER Grant (McMaster) NEW!" McMaster LibGuides. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://libguides.mcmaster.ca/oer/grant>.

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The MSU must continue to create a safe campus from students that protects any student from sexual violence and provides survivor-centric and trauma-informed support for survivors of sexual violence. Currently, far too many students, often women and other marginalized groups, face sexual harassment and violence—the 2019 Ontario Student Voices on Sexual Violence report found that 64% of McMaster University respondents had disclosed at least one experience of sexual harassment. Last year, the Equity and Inclusion Office revised the University's Sexual Violence Policy with input from students and the MSU. This year, I will support the MSU Vice-President (Admin) to make sure that appropriate steps are taken by the University according to the revised policy, including **expanding and improving training for student-facing university staff where necessary and making sexual violence supports more known to students**. I will also work with the VP (Admin) to continue reviewing the MSU's Workplace Anti-Violence, Harassment, and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy to work towards policies that give survivors autonomy and control over the reporting process.

ANTI-RACISM

As we continue to grow more aware of systemic racism in our educational institutions and broader society that BIPOC have experienced for many years, we must turn awareness into action. Active anti-racism is a practice that must be incorporated into all operations of the MSU and the university to fight against the deep-rooted, historical legacies of colonialism and white supremacy that exist in our school and country. I will **adopt an anti-racist lens and center marginalized voices in approaching all areas of MSU advocacy**—for example, advocating for a non-punitive, community-oriented campus security system and evaluating student experiences with and access to the Student Wellness Centre. I will also **support the AVP: Provincial Affairs and AVP: University Affairs in ongoing plans for an Anti-Racism Month in November 2020**, where the MSU will host speakers, initiate discussions on racism within the university setting, and work towards concrete recommendations to advance anti-racism within the MSU and the University.

7. "Student Voices on Sexual Violence." Ontario.ca. October 21, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/student-voices-sexual-violence#section-2>.

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MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION

Convenient, reliable and affordable transit is integral to a sustainable city. Students rely heavily on public transit to access the city and contribute a significant amount each year to the Hamilton Street Railway budget through the HSR bus pass. A healthy transit system also removes cars from the road, easing congestion, increasing pedestrian safety and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Because of the financial losses associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the city paused investment into the HSR that was previously planned according to the city's 10⁸-year transit strategy . **I will advocate to the city to move forward with the 10-year transit strategy next year and beyond. In collaboration with the Hamilton Transit Alliance, I will continue the MSU's long-time support of the Light Rail Transit project in Hamilton**, which was cancelled by the provincial government last year but may again be reconsidered. . The LRT will be significant in bringing jobs to Hamilton and providing students with fast, sustainable transit. I will also advocate for an active and accessible multi-modal transportation network across the city. This means advocating for **pedestrian-safe sidewalks and robust cycling infrastructure, as well as working with the university and local stakeholders to find solutions for funding Hamilton's bike share system, as the current operating contract expires in Feb 2021**. Much of this work will be done through the MSU's active role on the newly formed Committee on Multi-Modal Transportation for Healthy Communities, which connects students, MSU representatives, the university and local partners.

AFFORDABLE, SAFE HOUSING

Landlord licensing and landlord/property rating.

The City of Hamilton has currently delayed the landlord licensing pilot project planned for Wards 1 and 8. While its status is unclear, I will continue to voice the MSU's support for landlord licensing as a way to protect students from predatory landlords and to ensure safe housing conditions. I will also provide input into the university's plans to implement a landlord/property rating system into the Mac Off-Campus Housing Website and make sure that the final product is secure and serves students well.

8. Mann, Ken Mann. "Hamilton's Transit Strategy on Pause Due to COVID-19 Uncertainty." 900 CHML. June 17, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7076280/coronavirus-hamilton-transit-strategy-pause/>.

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Affordable housing supply

Students should not have to worry about having access to safe and affordable on- and off-campus housing while they study at McMaster. Yet in recent years, it has become more difficult for students to find affordable housing, and with increasing first-year enrolment, first-year students are not guaranteed a residence spot. Further, while McMaster has plans to construct residence buildings off-campus, there is significant community concern about large developments and neighbourhood disruptions. The student demand for housing will only increase in the future, and a static supply means that students are more liable to pay more for housing and are more vulnerable to predatory landlords. I will work with the AVP: Municipal Affairs to **create a policy brief on the affordable housing outlook on campus and in student neighbourhoods** on which to base our future advocacy. Further, I will work with the AVP: Municipal Affairs to initiate discussions with Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson, and other community partners to discuss how to increase affordable housing for students, and how to protect vulnerable tenants from evictions and renoevictions.

SUSTAINABILITY

In March 2019, the City of Hamilton declared a climate change emergency declaring climate change an existential crisis. As the VP (Education), I will work with the AVP: Municipal Affairs to hold the city accountable to this declaration through meetings with councillors and public delegations. Sustainability is a lens that must affect all parts of city planning, including waste management (i.e. increasing waste diversion), transportation (e.g. cycling infrastructure) and physical infrastructure (e.g. higher-density residential units). I will continue our **discussions with Environment Hamilton and other local partners to promote city policy and budget decisions** that will improve the long-term sustainability of Hamilton.

9. Tse, Ryan. "Keeping up with the Demand for Student Housing." The Silhouette. March 13, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.thesil.ca/keeping-up-with-the-demand-for-student-housing>.

10. Walters-Vida, Hannah. "Where Do All the Students Go?" The Silhouette. February 01, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.thesil.ca/where-do-all-the-students-go>.

11. Samantha Craggs. "Hamilton Declares a Climate Change Emergency." CBCnews. March 19, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/climate-change-1.5061326>.

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ACCESSIBILITY

Last year, the MSU delegated to the City on **implementing a city-run city-wide sidewalk snow-removal service**. The current snow removal system passes the responsibility of snow clearing on to local residents and businesses, and is clearly inadequate, resulting in slippery, dangerous walkways in the winter. This is fundamentally an issue of accessibility and equity, as women, children and people with disabilities depend on cleared sidewalks to access the city. It is also an issue of health—without sidewalk clearing, some residents may be unable to get out of the house or may be forced to walk on the street. Many students depend on cleared sidewalks to walk to campus or access bus stops. We must treat sidewalks as valuable and sustainable transportation infrastructure, in the same way or even more so as we treat roads for cars. I will continue to make this a priority for municipal advocacy going forward, working with Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson and other local advocacy groups.

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Hate crimes and racism are an everyday problem in Hamilton. Hamilton had the highest rate of hate crimes in Canada in 2018¹² and a 2019 survey found that 79 percent of respondents had experienced or witnessed racism in the past year¹³. The city must take immediate action to fight racism. I plan to advocate for the re-opening of the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre with community-led governance, rather than city-run operations. I will also meet with councillors and local partners to discuss the possibility of **opening a support hub for marginalized communities in Hamilton**¹⁴. Additionally, I will support MSU advocacy efforts to **defund the Hamilton Police Services and re-invest in community supports and social services**. Hamilton Police Services received \$171 million from the city budget in 2020¹⁵, representing an increase, yet marginalized people in Hamilton do not feel safer, and HPS has a history of racism and racist policies—for example, carding¹⁶. It is time to create a new security and safety model for the city that supports and listens to marginalized groups, including BIPOC and homeless populations.

12. Dueling, Meagan. "Hamilton Has the Highest Rate of Hate Crimes in Canada: Report." CBCnews. July 23, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/hate-crime-statistics-canada-hamilton-1.5221663>.

13. Craggs, Samantha. "'This Is Happening': City Survey Results Show Frequent Racism in Hamilton." CBCnews. October 30, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/harrc-1.5340499>.

14. Mann, Ken. "Support for Multi-purpose Hub for Marginalized Communities Widespread, Hamilton Politicians Hear." 900 CHML. November 06, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6136648/hamilton-support-hub-marginalized-communities-widespread/>.

15. O'Reilly, Nicole. "Hamilton Police Budget..." HamiltonNews.com. July 02, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. [https://www.hamiltonnews.com/news-story/10056580-hamilton-police-budget-by-the-numbers/#:~:text=The net capital budget is,has a \\$25.8-million budget.1](https://www.hamiltonnews.com/news-story/10056580-hamilton-police-budget-by-the-numbers/#:~:text=The net capital budget is,has a $25.8-million budget.1)

16. Bennett, Kelly. "'Unjustifiable': Human Rights Commission Slams Hamilton Police on Carding." CBCnews. October 29, 2015. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/unjustifiable-human-rights-commission-slams-hamilton-police-on-carding-1.3294576>.

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PROVINCIAL AND 2020-2021 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

TUITION AND AFFORDABILITY DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the already difficult financial situation many students find themselves in. Students need more financial aid to afford post-secondary education and the rising cost of living, especially as students have lost employment during the pandemic and are no longer eligible to access the Canada Emergency Student Benefit in September. Canada. On a federal level, I will continue to work closely with the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) to advocate for **increased financial aid for students, including direct immediate assistance and greater investments in the Canada Student Grants program.** In 2018, the provincial government made changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) that decreased access for many lower-income students and shifted assistance from grants to loans. Through and beyond our membership withing the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), **I will advocate for those OSAP changes to be reversed and restructured into a more equitable, grant-based model** that helps more students. I will also advocate for an **extension of the current domestic tuition freeze and interest-free moratorium period on OSAP repayments**, working towards at least a 2-year grace period for repayment of provincial and federal loans.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Despite the large amount international students pay for tuition compared to domestic students, international student tuition has risen significantly over the past several years and is planned to continue doing so in the future. I plan to work with the AVP: University Affairs on our advocacy at both the faculty and provincial levels to **freeze international tuition increases immediately and implement a regulated cap on future increases.** On the federal level, current work-study permit regulations further hamper the ability of international students to afford school and other living expenses. As such, I plan to advocate for an **expansion of the number of hours international students can work under the permit.**

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OUSA: EQUITY FOCUS

The previous VP (Education) was successful in pushing forward an paper on this subject to OUSA this past year. OUSA will write a Racial, Religious and Cultural equity paper this year. I plan to continue her efforts by being active on the authorship process and ensuring that an **equity lens is used to advocate for issues at a provincial level and shape all policies and advocacy work the OUSA Steering Committee engages in this year**, including the other policy papers to be written this year.

INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUPPORT

Indigenous students in Canada and in Ontario currently face many barriers, including geographic, financial and technological obstacles. In Ontario, Indigenous students represent only 1% of university students . I plan to continue the efforts of the previous VP (Education) in advocating alongside UCRU to the federal government for **increased funding for the Post-Secondary Support Program (PSSP)**, which provides aid to students who want to study at a post-secondary institution. Based off UCRU's recommendations, I will also advocate for the government to **equalize federal funding between on- and off-reserve secondary and post-secondary student and for more funding to go towards creating Indigenous Studies programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions** ¹⁸ .

STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE

Currently, the provincial government has filed an appeal of the overturned Student Choice Initiative, a policy introduced in 2019 that significantly hampered the ability of ¹⁹ many student unions to provide essential services to students and was deemed unlawful . In the event the appeal is successful, I will lobby for a complete repeal of the policy.

17. Lam, Deborah. "Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance Releases Policy Paper: "Indigenous Students"." OUSA. November 9, 2017. Accessed September 12, 2020. https://www.ousa.ca/newsroom_indigenous_policy_paper.

18. Advocacy Week 2020. Report. Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU). UCRU, 2020.

19. .Goldenberg, Adam, and Solomon McKenzie. "The Ontario Government's "Student Choice Initiative" Is Heading to the Province's Highest Court." McCarthy Tétrault. January 8, 2020. Accessed September 12, 2020. <https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/blogs/canadian-appeals-monitor/ontario-governments-student-choice-initiative-heading-provinces-highest-court>.

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ADVOCACY

EMPOWERING SRA MEMBERS

Advocacy works best when people work together to fight for a common goal. The MSU and the VP (Education) often advocates on issues that matter to students, but students do not know how to get involved. Further, these issues can and should be advocated on multiple levels of government and the university. For example, decolonizing syllabi and lowering international tuition are advocacy priorities that is both relevant to higher-level university discussions, but also in large part determined faculty by faculty. SRA members are accountable to their constituents and often have a strong understanding of the particular dynamics of specific advocacy priorities at the faculty level. I plan to empower SRA members to advocate to their faculty administrators on issues important to their constituents by **scheduling regular monthly meetings with SRA caucus leaders**. During these meetings, we will discuss current MSU advocacy priorities, and I will **work with the caucus leaders to develop resources and strategies for advocating to faculties**. Further, I plan to **facilitate closer collaborations between SRA members and their faculty society representatives** to better understand the concerns of their constituents and strengthen faculty-specific advocacy.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The MSU advocates for many priorities that directly impact student lives, but students are often unaware of what the MSU does, how to get involved in the MSU, or even how to best engage themselves in local advocacy. I will consult the MSU communications team on a plan to **release resources, including documents and potentially a series of videos through the year, informing students about how MSU advocacy and various levels of government works, as well as how to get involved in lobbying and advocacy outside of the MSU**. I will also seek to **facilitate opportunities for students to directly meet government representatives at all levels**, so that the MSU can better and more directly represents the concerns of students.

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MSU POLICY PAPERS

Every year, the MSU advocacy team undergoes a year-long process to renew a number of policy papers by consulting students and updating progress on the policy priorities. This process culminates in the MSU Policy Conference, which takes place during second semester and provides a forum for students to give feedback on the proposed changes. However, these sessions are often poorly attended. I will **review the current strategy for engaging students throughout the policy paper renewal process**, including the Policy Conference, and **formulate a long-term strategy to increase student engagement**.

INTEGRATING MSU ADVOCACY AND MSU SERVICES

Many MSU services do important advocacy work throughout the year in addition to providing valuable services for students. I plan to **set aside time at least once a semester to meet with MSU Part-Time Managers** (including but not limited to MSU identity based-services, i.e. Diversity Services, SHEC, WGEN, Maccess and the PCC) who wish to discuss their advocacy vision for the year, current progress, and any feedback they may have for the current priorities of MSU advocacy. This is important in ensuring that the MSU is representing students well and advocating for all students, especially groups that have been historically marginalized. I will also seek to **facilitate connections between the Education Team and Part-Time Managers for MSU services**, where a partnership on certain advocacy goals may be helpful.

RYAN TSE

for Vice-President (Education)



BOARD PRIORITIES

TRANSITION AND CONTINUITY

Advocating for large priorities on behalf of students can take multiple years. However, the advocacy team for the MSU changes year to year, and as such, advocacy priorities can fall through the cracks. I hope to mitigate this by **working with the VP (Admin) to strengthen the transition process and centralize important advocacy documents**. This will strengthen MSU advocacy and better serve students in the long-term.

SUSTAINABILITY AND DIVESTMENT

Our society must take immediate actions to promote sustainability and confront the climate crisis at all levels. Beyond promoting research and individual lifestyle changes, this also includes examining how the financial decisions of organizations like the MSU and McMaster University promote practices that are harmful to the environment. I plan to **work with the VP (Finance) to ensure that the MSU leads by example in divesting from fossil fuel companies**. I will also work with the Board of Directors to **lobby the university to divest from fossil fuel companies**.

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THANK YOU!

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