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| MSU-logo-2001. | REPORT*From the office of the…*Vice President (Administration) |
| TO: | Members of the Student Representative Assembly |
| FROM: | Anika Spasov, Vice President (Administration) |
| SUBJECT: | SRA 20D Report |
| DATE: | July 7th, 2020 |

Hello everyone,

Hope you have all been enjoying some sunshine! I have not submitted a full year plan to the SRA, as it would be inappropriate given I will be leaving the role in the summer and want to allow my successor to personalize it. I have begun some rough documents, so as the incoming VP Admin does not need to start from scratch, but then is able to change it and incorporate their own ideas. Below, I have summarized everything I have been working on in the past few months, plus some upcoming tasks. Rather than an update on my year plan, I will give an update on my platform, plus other work. It feels as though this year, in particular, has been moving at lightspeed! I’ve had such a joy working with the entire Board and it is not going to be an easy thing to say good-bye. Everyone should be super proud of all the work they have accomplished so far, as we really have been dealt a challenging hand this year. If you have any questions for me, as always, please feel free to reach out to me.

**PROGRESS ON PLATFORM**

**Reintroduce PTM Clusters:** The AVP Services and I have brought back PTM clusters this year. It splits the service PTMs into two separate clusters. One is the Peer Support and Identity-Based services (SHEC, WGEN, Maccess, PCC and Diversity Services) and the other is Student Life (EFRT, FCC, Horizons, Elections Department [vacant], Spark, Macademics, SWHAT [paused], Maroons and FYC). Rather than just an hour of free time for open discussions, like it has been in the past, this year they are themed. For example, we had one on online planning for COVID-19 and have another one upcoming regarding managing peers. The AVP Services and I work together to draft up some prompts (I.e. how to rethink volunteer recognition online, training online, conflict between Executives …) which the AVP Services then sends out in advance and uses to help facilitate the discussions during the monthly cluster meetings. If questions come up during the meeting, the AVP Services sends me a summary afterwards and I re-circulate with any answers I can provide. This process has been met with positive feedback and some PTMs have actually asked for more frequent cluster meetings.

**Schedule Required One-on-Ones with PTMs:** This year I made the extra effort to meet with each PTM individually for an hour after they submitted a first rough draft of their year plan to me. This way, I could expand on the feedback I had sent back to them and also allowed me to see how they have been feeling in the role. I think this was really important, because since then I have seen a noticeable difference in PTMs feeling more comfortable approaching me with additional questions and supports. Historically also, there has been some mistrust between some services and VP Admin. I’ve made an intentional effort to repair these relationships, having some additional conversations as needed, and believe there has been exponential movement forward on that front.

**Hire Volunteers in the Summer:** I have instructed all PTMs to have all their service volunteers hired by September 14th, 2020. This has meant almost every service has needed to move up their hiring cycle, but I believe it will allow for services to begin running right at the start of September, but still allow services to hire first years/transfer students, if they’d like. So far, each service is well on their way of meeting this deadline and PTMs are excited to have their full teams! This deadline is also to help accommodate for the MSU-wide volunteer training which is being scheduled for this September.

**Write a New Sponsorship Policy for MSU Services:** As part of my platform and in response to some challenges we saw with SCI, I wanted to write an MSU-wide sponsorship policy. This would provide the framework for what companies and groups we would accept sponsorships from and what we are willing to market as part of these sponsorship packages. Since then, I have been in conversations with the VP Finance and Marketing & Communications Directors. We have now expanded the policy so it will include both sponsorships and donations, and explore how we can incorporate this through some Underground structures.

**Provide Sponsorship Training:** As the Sponsorship and Donations policy is still being written, with the help of the AVP Finance, I have not given training on sponsorships to the PTMs yet. This will be a part of their shorter end-of-summer training.

**Provide Hiring Training for PTMs:** This year, as part of the larger PTM training, I added in training explicitly around hiring volunteers and Executives. I went over different frameworks including, mock marking practices, standardized marking, appropriate interview questions, conflicts and interests and more. We also went over some of the biases that can occur during a hiring process. As a note, this is a separate point from the equitable hiring best practices & guidelines.

**EB Reporting:** Over the past two years, EB reporting has been a real challenge. Roughly 8 times a years, PTMs are expected to submit and report to EB, however, the past few years this has become a huge issue with reports consistently missing, submitted late, or self-plagiarized. This year, I had a very frank conversation with our PTMs during one of their training dates regarding the importance of EB and the responsibility they have to EB as their supervisory body for their jobs. Further, I changed the deadline of EB reports to be 4 days prior to EB, rather than 2, and also changed the template slightly to add a new component called “Currently Working On”. I am pleased to say, I have not had a single missing report yet and have been asked for an extension on two occasions, both of which were communicated to me in advance. Further, not a single PTM has missed their in-person reporting period during EB meetings. I am hopeful this is a positive trend and can be continued even as I leave the role.

**Provide More Comprehensive Disclosure Training:** I have been having ongoing conversations with Wil, from EIO, on the future direction of our sexual violence, by-stander and disclosure trainings. As Wil is new to his role, we have not trained the PTMs yet on receiving disclosures. Also, I am holding off on providing this training until the end of the summer, when the new Workplace Policy can be referred to as a resource. We have had ongoing conversations, along with the President, on what this new training will look like. There will be online component, which will allow folx to go through the material at their own speed and in a place where they feel comfortable, as they can be sensitive topics to provide training on in-person.

**Diversity Services Peer Support Space:** I have begun some preliminary conversations with the Diversity Services Director regarding this point. We also have been discussing how this may be coupled with a larger scope service rebrand and change in name/Operating Policy. These conversations are still ongoing, but it long has been established that the service needs a physical space to offer peer support, which specifically would be for BiPoC students. The service rebrand would then adjust the service so it is better meeting the needs of BIPoC students and catering the service specifically for those communities. I have also spoken about this with the President, so he can help in the search of finding a suitable space on campus for the following school year and support the rebrand, as necessary.

**Improve PTM Accountability:** I have briefly spoken with the Human Resources Generalist regarding PTM feedback surveys and, later on this year, sending them directly to service Executives rather than through the PTM as a proxy. Also, as PTMs were submitting year plans, I had multiple rounds of feedback and included some conversations surrounding PTM managerial responsibilities. In the past, we have seen varying levels of accountability across our PTMs. I’ve been talking with PTMs extensively about finding balance in their roles. It is important they take it seriously, as it’s a paid position, but still being understanding as they are students and life comes up. This comes from clear communication between the VP Admin and all the PTMs, and asking for extensions in advance, if needed. Not handing in reports or not responding to emails in unacceptable, which I have spoken about with all the PTMs on numerous occasions. I also told them, that if needed, there is always an option for a leave-of-absence.

**Improve Service Collaboration:** With the weekly PTM training this year, it has allowed PTMs to get more familiar with one another. I’ve also started hosting some fun virtual board game nights with PTMs, AVPs and other student staff. I think this has really helped create some positive relationships between PTMs, and consequently, I have seen an increase in proposed service collaborations in year plans. As part of my year plan feedback for PTMs, I also suggested some service partnerships, which I am excited to see come to fruition.

**MSU-Wide AOP and By-Stander Training & Increased Training Engagement:** This year, I wanted to organize MSU-wide training for all volunteers. This has since been expanded to also include accessibility training as well. The reasoning behind this was to help prevent volunteers from getting the same training 3 weekends in a row from different services, ensure all service volunteers are actually getting this important training, and also improve all around training engagement. While originally I planned on this being offered on two days in-person, I have now changed it to be split into a mixed-mode due to COVlD-19. Each training session will also have an online component for volunteers to review and complete in advance. The ‘in-person’ online training will then be situational, case-based and discussion-based. Volunteers will be split into smaller groups for facilitation, with calls not ranging longer than 90 minutes, and actively engage with the material. These live components will still be offered on two occasions to accommodate various schedules. I have also started looping the President on these conversations, as I’m aware this is a large thing for my successor to take on right away. Giancarlo will then be able to help offer some support during this process.

**Executive Team Training:** This year, I trained all the PTMs on some things to train their Executives on. I also had about 5 PTMs reach out to me additionally regarding my experience, as a PTM, on how to train and transition these volunteers. The AVP Services also then offered themself as a resource to help provide some of this training to service Executive teams, and about 5-6 PTMs did reach out about scheduling this.

**Schedule Regular AVP Meetings:** I am currently in the works of scheduling monthly meetings, similar to the cluster meetings, where the entire BoD and all 6 AVPs will meet together. These meetings will be used to provide portfolio updates and also offer some skill building sessions (i.e. how to manage a committee). This has been met with positive reception from the AVPs, so I am excited for these to begin shortly.

**Working Relationship between SRA Speaker, VP Admin and President:** I have been meeting frequently with the SRA Speaker, even weekly for most of the summer. I think this has helped establish a positive working relationship between us. I also helped establish some meetings between the President and the Speaker, regarding SRA supports and GA. Further, to help make the BoD more approachable for SRA members, each Director led a section of SRA training. During the upcoming SRA consultation training, the President will also be identified as a key support.

**SRA Caucus Leader Training:** The SRA Speaker, myself, Executive Assistant and Administrative Services Coordinator have begun some preliminary discussions surrounding Caucus Leader training to be held in August. We now have all Caucus Leaders confirmed and will continue forward with this planning.

**SRA Member Training:** This year was definitely a rockier year than usual for SRA member transition. I had hoped to have a video created of a mock meeting, but given the ongoing pandemic, this was not possible. Instead, we opted for sending some videos and Roberts Rules resources. We also added in some new training sessions including: year plan training, Roberts Rules situationals, finance training. There are also some upcoming training sessions which have not previously been offered to SRA members including: accessibility training, sexual violence training, and consultation training. SRA training has had its up and downs this year as we have tried to establish what training was still missing, how we can adapt to training online and still make some of the changes we had hoped to make. I am hopeful the other changes I had wanted to make, like the video and guidebook, will be carried through so they are available at the start of spring for next year’s assembly.

**Improve Document Access:** I am still currently working with the Administrative Services Coordinator and SRA Speaker to establish a Sharepoint for all SRA members.

**SRA Support:** As part of SRA training, the Speaker provided year plan training and later this month all members will receive consultation training and a guidebook. This will hopefully help identify some stakeholders for SRA members to contact to help fulfil their year plans. Further, we intentionally involved all of the BoD in training this year, to help begin a positive, supportive relationship with the SRA. We have had quite a few SRA members approach each of us for support and questions. I hope this continues across the year. I also am very open to feedback, and if there’s anything you think we can do to help improve this support, I would be happy to have these conversations.

**Offer More Online Support:** All of our services are online for the fall semester, so we have definitely jumpstarted on this! I currently am wrapping up a document outlining some parameters for online services regarding confidentiality, cybersecurity, online accessibility, scheduling etc.

**More Holistic Service Feedback:** I have worked with the AVP Services to completely reorganize our service review process. Historically, a service review has different sections. First is the research stage, where the committee looks at equivalent services and resources at other schools and what exactly happens within the MSU service. Next is drafting the questions for the surveys for volunteers and the general public. After this has closed is the data analysis stage. Then finally, is the report and recommendation stage. This has happened so that each service goes through this individually, one after the other. However, this has not been working well, as consistently each year there are 2-3 reviews which remain incomplete. This year, I have spoken with the AVP Services to revamp this. During the summer, the Services Committee will meet and complete all the research for all of the services under review. In September, the questions for the surveys will be drafted, then, rather than 6 different public surveys, there will be one. This will hopefully entice more students to respond to the surveys, so we get more outside perspectives. For example, someone may want to comment on EFRT, but they then have to answer all the questions about SHEC then too. Also, it then means we are spending less time publishing and promoting 6 separate surveys throughout the year. In late October, the data analysis will begin. Then the first three services will have their review written and recommendations brought forward. Then, the last 3. If time permits we also hope to host online focus groups. This will be the first year we are piloting this, but I am very hopeful it will help make the service review process more effective!

**More Transparent SRA Meeting Minutes:** The Executive Assistant, SRA Speaker, Administrative Services Coordinator and myself all met to speak about the rotating SRA responsibility for taking meeting notes. These then will be inputted into a Canva template to then be circulated by all SRA socials. This was generally agreed upon, and the SRA Speaker has since taken the lead and reached out to the Communications Department to create this infographic template.

**Improve Relationship with MUSC:** I have been in ongoing conversations with the President, who sits on the MUSC Board of Management, regarding our relationship with MUSC. Since, we have started conversations with Lori, changing how we distribute room bookings across our services, and also addressing the concerns of over-booking and lost keys. So far, these conversations have been super productive and I’m hopeful the challenges surrounding room bookings for our services the past few years will be on the road to be resolved.

**EFRT Advisory Board:** This year, with the ongoing pandemic and the upcoming EFRT review, it is integral that we establish EFRT Advisory Board meetings. I have had numerous conversations with the Medical Director at Sunnybrook, the outgoing EFRT Director and current EFRT Director regarding future directions for the service and establishing a stronger relationship between EFRT and the VP Admin. These conversations have been incredibly productive and we all recognize the need for a service review this year. Further, we met with the EFRT Advisory Board to come up with the official recommendation to keep EFRT off-call for the time being. We will be meeting again at the end of July to review this decision and I plan for the board to meet once a term throughout the year.

**Community Needs Assessment:** I have tasked our newly hired Admin Team Research Assistant to begin the Community Needs Assessment in January. This assessment will then be completed throughout first term and explore where the MSU can better support our students (I.e. accessibility, Indigenous student support, finances etc). Further, it has since come to light that the MSU does not have a policy outlining the process for a Community Needs Assessment. I highly recommend my successor looks at this concurrently and draft a policy, schedule and protocol for this.

**Continue Update of the Workplace Anti-Violence, Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy:** While I thought this would be a quick ‘update’, I came to realize there actually was less work completed on this project last year. Since then, the Admin Team Research Assistant, Human Resources Generalist and I have been *very* hard at work completing this. In the past month alone, we have gone through an incredible amount of research on workplace policies, students unions, Ontario safety laws and actual policy writing. I have to give a huge shout-out to Anjali and Maddison for all the work they have been completing on this, as it really is incredible how much we have gotten done in this period of time. We have essentially re-written most of the pre-existing policy and currently are at the consultation and feedback stage from our stakeholders. We hope to have the policy completely wrapped up by the time I leave this role, so my successor does not need to stress about it! There still likely will need an Operating Policy completed for this, however, the Workplace Policy is the priority, as it is required by law.

**Accessible Documents:** I had Kate Brown come in for the first time ever and provide accessibility training to all our PTMs. It was met with a lot of positive feedback, and focused on online accessibility and documents. I have also had some conversations with our AVP IG on accessible policy-writing and documents for when they are posted on the website. I also worked with the Communications Department to change our Underground Intake form. It now includes some required segments on accessibility information and accommodation contact info. This is to normalize adding accessibility information about our events/programming on all of our promotions.

**Peer Support:** I started having some conversations with Dr. Munn regarding our peer support services and establishing some best practices for them. I also will be reaching out to Taryn from the EIO regarding Living Works. I also added a new part to PTM training, specifically surrounding peer support, and the bottleneck of support our services have been facing. In doing this, we brainstormed some alternatives to address this (which also be a future cluster meeting) and I provided resources for volunteers to access to create a network of support, rather than a tier. I hope my successor will continue the work I have started on establishing some guidelines and best practices surrounding peer support for our services, as the model of support we are using now is unsustainable for our students.

**Equitable Hiring:** This is a vastly important point to help address the ongoing white-washing of the MSU and to establish better representation in all our leadership positions. How we hire our volunteers and staffed positions currently has a lot of flaws. It allows for nepotism in hiring and deeper-seeded biases, which contributes to the ongoing oppression of BIPoC and disabled students. Coming into this role, I had written on my platform to establish new equitable hiring best practices and guidelines. With the organization’s new commitment to centering BIPoC voices and repairing the harm done from past decisions, this platform point has only become more important. Our flawed hiring leads to the perception of the ‘MSU bubble’, but its important to note that this ‘bubble’ - when we visualize it – actively excludes Black and Indigenous students and staff. In the leadership position of VP Admin, I believe there is an obligation to addressing and combatting the ongoing discrimination within MSU and I sincerely hope this platform point is carried through by my successor. As it stands, currently my year plan was to include completing the Workplace Policy by the end of the summer, then move to the Equitable Hiring practices for first semester, then the Community Needs Assessment in January (all three of these points would be with the help with the Admin Team Research Assistant). These equitable hiring practices need to include changes to our hiring promotions (which often depict white or non-Black, non-Indigenous folx), hiring boards (which are predominantly white, particularly for paid roles), application processes and more. We also discredit ourselves as an organization by the lack of standardized application marking practices, some unblinded applications and conflicts-of-interest which are often left undeclared. Another issue, is that we often don’t see many Black and Indigenous folx applying to our leadership positions. It’s not from a lack of skilled and qualified individuals, its because we as an organization have made it so many of our Black and Indigenous community members feel as though the MSU is not the place for them. As an aside on all this, I have begun conversations with the Admin Team Research Assistant, EIO, the University’s AVP Equity and the MSU Human Resources Generalist regarding this platform point. I have currently been focusing my energies on completing the Workplace Policy, but once it is complete, this should be the next overarching priority.

**Welcome Week:** I have conjoined all my Welcome Week platform points, as due to COVID-19, the plans for Welcome Week have changed drastically over the course of the past few months. My advocacy point for parking options has become irrelevant, as Welcome Week is entirely online. However, I hope my successor continues the groundwork I laid for this, when Welcome Week 2021 planning begins in the fall. My point on Planner Equity is coming along as I am currently helping restructure the entirety of Welcome Week planning from the results of last year’s review. All services also now have access to WWSTAPC funds, however, this has been reduced this year by the ongoing pandemic. I am also *very* pleased to say that my point on advocating for a Welcome Week financial review has been moving along successfully. The VP Finance and I received some documents on Welcome Week budgets during conversations surrounding the reduction of the levy for 2020 due to an online Welcome Week. With the move for the changes to the organizational structure of Welcome Week, the SSC has agreed to a full financial review of Welcome Week, including costs and staff payment, in the fall once Welcome Week 2020 is complete. This is a *huge* success as this has been unsuccessful for the past few years and I hope my successor can help keep the foot on the pedal for this review!

**PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

Below I will outline some other things I have completed or are currently working on, separate from the platform points I outlined above.

**Policy Update Process:** I have been working with the AVP IG on our policy review process this year. One thing I wanted to solve this year, was the backlog of policy reviews which just need a simple update. For example, these are policies which are simply outdated and refer to an office which no longer exists, or a service by the wrong name (QSCC instead of PCC) etc. These are changes the AVP IG and I refer to as ‘non-functional changes’. In speaking with the Administrative Services Coordinator, we decided to create a memo template to be re-used for all such changes, then submit 5-8 of these minute changes at a time to the SRA to be passed via omnibus. All functional and larger scale changes will still undergo the regular approval process, but we hope this will quicken up the process for just changing brief non-functional updates on our policies.

**PTM Training:** This year, I have essentially redone PTM training. This was from me completely wanting to revamp the training, given my experience as a PTM and also the need to adapt in face of COVID-19. Typically, PTM training would occur on two weekends, one in May and one in August. This year, I didn’t want a 9 hour Teams call in May, as this would ineffective, and instead spaced it out so PTMs have been meeting for 2-3 hours almost each Thursday to get a different part of PTM training. This has been super effective and I believe it may actually have some long-term benefits. There still will be some training and recaps that happen at the end of the summer for PTMs, likely in a similar matter, but much shorter.

**AVP Training:** The whole BoD worked together to organize training in June for all the AVPs. It went well, despite some brief technical issues and allowed for some team bonding.

**PTM/AVP/Student Staff Socials:** I have been organizing some online virtual game nights and some likely future Netflix parties! With COVID-19 and no in-person trainings or socials, its definitely harder for folks to create connections and get to know one another. I’ve been putting together some fun socials online to help facilitate team bonding and just allow student staff to decompress during these stressful times.

**Weekly AVP Meetings:** I meet once a week with each AVP and also the WWFC. In addition I also meet weekly with the Human Resources Generalist and Administrative Services Coordinator. This is to keep everyone up-to-date and help solve problems as they come up. I also have some additional bi-weekly meetings with other folks such as the Admin Team Research Assistant and SSC Orientation & Transition Director.

**Online SRA Meetings:** A goal I had set for myself in May was to solve the issue of online live SRA meetings by June, and I managed to do it! We now have live SRA meetings broadcasted on Facebook for all students to watch in real-time, and it also has closed-captioning! A huge win!

**SRA Training:** The SRA Speaker, Executive Assistant and Administrative Services Coordinator and I met weekly for the months of May and June to plan SRA training for the June and July months. We next need to complete SRA Caucus Leader training for August.

**PTM Yearplans:** Every year, the VP Admin gives feedback to the PTMs, prior to them submitting their final year plans to EB. This year I had multiple rounds of feedback (to ensure the feedback was actually followed-through as needed) and one-on-one meetings to discuss the year plans. I think this has been great at establishing myself as a resource for PTMs (many appreciated the well thought-out feedback) and also setting the foundations for our services to have a strong year. Unfortunately, it is still impossible to predict second semester, so these year plans will need to be revisited as this information becomes more available.

**Welcome Week Levy 2020:** The VP Finance and I worked *very* hard to review the cost of the Welcome Week levy this year, given the online nature this year. We successfully reduced the cost and established some parameters for a potential future in-person event for the Class of 2024. A huge shout-out goes to Jess, as this was not easy work to be carried out!

**Welcome Week NODA Review:** Last year, Welcome Week was reviewed by NODA. I have been in some long discussions with folks from the SSC and Residence Life regarding the review and how we will respond to the recommendations. We just wrapped the decision-making regarding these changes and are now just moving to have these approved by WWAC and SSAC. I have asked for an additional SSAC meeting at the end of July, so I can present these proposals prior to the end of my term.

**Communications Policy:** Last year, there were some proposed changes to the Communications Policy from the VP Admin and AVP IG. The current AVP IG and I reviewed these proposals and have now changed it slightly. The Communications Policy in itself has now just undergone a general update and some other changes. Then, we are now changing the Employment Policy and adding a section regarding work outside the scope of Operating Policies.

**PTM and Service Support:** This year, PTMs have the challenging task of basically completely redesigning the service operations to be adapted online. Consequently, our services have definitely been needing some extra support and I have frequently been meeting with PTMs to discuss various options and ideas. Further, some PTMs had next to no transition from their outgoing successors. This has made for some rockier-than-usual transitions and I have been helping these PTMs fill in the gaps and offering extra supports, meetings and documents.

**EFRT:** With COVID-19, the decision was made to keep EFRT off-call until November 1st, when safety will be reevaluated. The service has needed some extra support, as we’ve navigated the changes for COVID-19 and had to meet with an assortment of stakeholders across McMaster and the GTHA. I also anticipate some larger changes to the services, with the SLEF funding approved last year and the review of both the service and their response protocol.

**Welcome Week Charitable Givings:** In January of last year, the Welcome Week policy regarding Charitable Givings was drafted in response to Shine being rescinded and the Maroons service review. I have been working with the Maroons Coordinator, Maroons Events Coordinators and WWFC on implementing these changes. It has not been super easy as it is all brand new, plus toss in a global pandemic! I am happy to say that the Maroons have selected the Official Welcome Week Charity 2020, which is Empowerment Squared, and they currently are planning the fundraising events for the Friday of Welcome Week.

**PCC Relations:** Last year, the relationship between VP Admin and the PCC was strayed thin, to say the least. Undoubtedly, there was harm done to our BIPoC and disabled 2SLGBTQIA+ communities at McMaster. I have been working hard to repair the trust between the PCC/PCC Execs/PCC space-users and the VP Admin. We have definitely been making a lot of large steps forward in establishing healthy working relationships, I just hope this will continue even when I personally am no longer in the role. The PCC is also making some larger scale Operating Policy changes, year plan changes, an upcoming statement and overall rebranding to help address the concerns. The team has been working really hard this summer and I want to commend them all for their dedication to supporting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Supplies Distribution System:** I have been having ongoing conversations with our services which typically distribute supplies to our students (SHEC, WGEN, PCC, FCC, Macess). Currently, the FCC will likely be partnering with the library curbside pick-up for the Godd Food Box (and continue Lockers of Love throughout first semester) and our other services are still exploring some potential options. They may be able to also partner with Mills Library, but this is unconfirmed. Some other ideas have also been tossed around, but I am awaiting official proposals by services, so I can read them over to ensure they are feasible and also are safe, prior to me approving these distribution systems.

**Naloxone:** Since early 2019, SHEC has been in the works of becoming an official Naloxone distributor and outreach program. I have played a bit of catch-up on this and now am happy to say we are super close to this being finalized. All insurance has been approved by the City of Hamilton and policies written. There’s just a bit more paperwork to be concluded. By the end of the summer, I hope the MSU/SHEC will be fully licensed and approved, and we can move onto procuring the naloxone and training our in-house trainer.

**Zoom and Otter AI:** We just now have access for all our PTMs for ZoomPro, which the University is actually covering the costs of. For our services which will be using Zoom, we are purchasing OtterAI accounts to offer live transcription services, similar to what Teams offers.

**Elections Department:** We contracted on our 2019/2020 DRO to help with some additional leftover tasks from the previous election year. They have been super helpful and are now helping us draft FYC elections rules while we are still in the process of hiring the 2020/2021CRO and DRO. While these remain vacant, the Administrative Serices Coordinator and myself are left to run the Elections Department, so it has been great to have the help from Stephanie!

**Admin Team research Assistant:** We hired our second-ever Admin Team Research Assistant, Anjali Behal. She has been fantastic to work with and has been integral at helping the Workplace Policy move forward.

**PPE and Return-to-Work:** I have been a part of some conversations with the President and MSU general Manager regarding return-to-work plans for the summer and fall, and guidelines for ensuring a safe work environment. This has included discussions surrounding PPE procurement, office hours and public health notices. The President also sits on the University return-to-work committee, which we will be strongly aligning with.

**Security Services Statement & Recent MSU Statement Regarding Institutional Racism:** The entire BoD worked together, in conjunction with some SRA members, to draft the SRA motion which was passed in June. Since, we have had some discussions on how we can explore and find alternatives for student safety in our services (EFRT, Campus Events etc) that do not involve Special Constables. After some other discussion, we also decided early on in May that we needed to address some ongoing issues within the MSU – namely racism. The BoD since drafted and posted a statement, alongside some action items, to be carried forward. These steps are definitely not enough to fully address the institution oppression; however, I think they are steps in the right direction and will hopefully ignite some long-term change past this year.

**WWAC and WWSTAPC:** I have continued co-chairing WWAC and WWSTAPC. WWSTAPC started later this year, due to COVID-19, so we are now currently making up time, but have established a new timeline for committee work which seems to be going well. The WWSTAPC fund was also reduced in half this year, due to an online Welcome Week. At WWAC, some of the large discussions we had surrounded Archway, the Welcome Week schedule and the levy. Myself and the co-chair for WWAC meet once every two-weeks to establish the agenda for WWAC and we’ve been able to communicate very opening, even if we disagree on some points at times.

**WWPIC:** I removed myself as a member of WWPIC, as this committee is mainly responsible for the nitty-gritty of events planning for Welcome Week, which the VP Admin does not need to be a part of. As much as I hold Welcome Week near and dear to my heart, it’s important to remember my responsibilities as VP Admin, and I don’t want to compromise my other roles when Welcome Week is not my main portfolio. It’s important to note that there is still MSU representation on WWPIC via Campus Events and the WWFC. I think this is a positive step forward from unburdening the VP Admin from some unnecessary tasks which have slowly been added onto the role over the past few years.

**Archway:** The University is piloting a new transition program known as Archway. I have been a part of a lot of discussions since May with Residence Life surrounding this program and offering insights on their training. I now also offer bi-weekly updates to Adam from Residence Life regarding upcoming MSU events and programming. This information will then be circulated to the Archway mentors to share to interested students. To help with this, I created a shared Outlook Calendar for all service PTMs, where they add all their upcoming events and programming every 2 weeks. This way I can easily keep track of them all, stay up-to-date and pass information along to Adam and other relevant folks.

**Welcome Week Statement:** I helped draft the statement regarding an online Welcome Week posted on McMaster Daily News in conjunction with the SSC and the help of our Communications Department. I also have been a part of the new Technology & Engagement working group for Welcome Week, where we have been making decisions surrounding cybersecurity, international student supports, Instagram and a new Welcome Week website.

**UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

**VP Admin Transition:** This is my most important upcoming task! I want to ensure a smooth transition for both my successor, and everyone involved. This will mean I will be flexible to the needs of the incoming VP Admin and be sure I am approachable. We likely will have a shadowing period where they join me in all my meetings and we call separately while I am just doing computer work. Once I am no longer in full-time, which my end-date has not been decided yet, I will likely be contracted on for 35 hours of transition work where the new VP Admin can contact for questions, support or any help!

**Caucus Leader Training:** As mentioned above, in August we will need to run training for all the SRA Caucus leaders.

**Hiring of CRO and DRO:** We are in the midst of hiring our CRO after we had to re-open applications. Once interviews are complete and a person selected, we will move on to DRO hiring.

**Proposed Welcome Week Changes for Approval:** The Welcome Week changes have been decided, however, they just need approval from WWAC and SSAC. This will all be done within the month, so my successor does not need to stress about this, but rather will then work with folks to implement the changes decided upon.

**Complete Workplace Policy:** I am hoping this will be complete by the end of the summer, so it can be approved and wrapped up by the time I am done in the role. This has been a huge undertaking and am very proud of the work that’s been done thus far.

**EOHSS:** It has come to light, that while the EOHSS portal was done at the start of the pandemic, there seem to be some new technical issues. I need to work towards solving these and also hope to change the approval system, so it is more efficient.

**Student Services Fair:** Later in July there is a Student Services Fair, which I will be helping with for our services and to answer questions regarding the Health & Dental Plan

**Student Panel:** I have been asked to host and lead a first-year student panel regarding student services. This will be happening July 17th and hopefully will be a great opportunity to also plug our services and MSU resources.

**MSU-Wide Volunteer Training:** I need to continue planning this and fine-tune the logistics of this. Once some SRA training has been wrapped up, I hope to focus more of my energy on the volunteer training.

**End-of Summer PTM Training:** I want to get some of the groundwork done for the final PTM training, so it is less of a burden for my successor.

**Miscellaneous:** Every day a new problem or conflict arises. I’ve started accounting for this in my daily scheduling and planning, opening up more ‘free’ hours for miscellaneous meetings or tasks as they come up. I’ve been really pleased many staff and volunteers see me as a resource they can turn to, but it has been challenging at times to keep up with the entirety of the workload.

**CURRENT CHALLENGES**

My main challenge currently has been adapting to COVID-19. There have been a lot of new challenges that have occurred due to the pandemic (adapting online services and training, procuring PPE, fee and levy changes, remote work environment etc.). This has added up a lot of time into my calendar and meant I have a harder time completing other tasks within the day. It has also meant for some creative problem-solving, along with some difficult decision making. Within my first 6 weeks on the job, I had to lay-off a staff member and make the decision to pause a service.

Another challenge has just been time in general. As the rest of the BoD can likely attest to, I am almost always in meetings. In the online world, there is no more scheduled travel time between meetings and start-times are stricter. There have been days where I have had 6 ½ hours of back-to-back calls which makes it very hard for me to stay engaged in conversations and also then limits my ability to do human things like eat and drink. I’ve since re-evaluated some of my standing meetings, making some bi-weekly and shortening every-single one by 15 minutes. I’ve also started adding to my calendar times for me to get certain tasks done, so I don’t end up getting booked for another meeting in that time. Still, I have managed to accrue multiple weeks worth of over-time hours. My time management has 100% been improving, but I still find it hard sometimes to step away from my computer at a work-from-home environment.

Now the elephant in the room. Another large challenge (albeit, still an exciting one) has been my acceptance to medical school. When I say I was not expecting to receive an acceptance in May, I genuinely mean it. I had only applied to two schools out of a whim and had some ongoing health issues this past winter/spring which meant my priority was completing all my classes to receive my full degree, not interviews. I also want you all to know, I truly did try my very hardest to be granted a deferral, but unfortunately my attempts were not successful. The decision to leave this role has not come easily to me. I’m deeply passionate about the role and have been genuinely excited by many of the upcoming projects. Plus, I’ve had the opportunity to work with some really incredible people. However, my premature exit from the role has meant there are some unique challenges, namely a by-election and transition. The BoD have had lots of conversations about this and have some plans to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone involved.

**SUCCESSES**

While these months have been nothing short of hectic, there have been lots of successes! I’ve established some really great connections with PTMS, AVPS and full-time staff. I was a little worried at first of establishing relationships online, but I really have made some strong working connections in these past few months. Plus, I’ve had the absolute pleasure of working with such an incredible BoD (and love our bi-weekly trivia nights)!

Some project-based successes have been the Welcome Week levy reduction for 2020 and the SSC commitment to a Welcome Week financial review in the fall. This has been something past VP Finances and VP Admins have tried for years, so I’m really pleased that Jess and I were able to accomplish this in such short time. Another was establishing online, live and accessible SRA meetings. This was something folks were struggling with this March and April, so I was happy to have come up with a solution.

Another success has been the number of services undergo Operating Policy changes. Some have been incredibly outdated (even 6 years outdated) and its been great to work with PTMs in completing some of this nitty-gritty work. It’s also been super rewarding to see all our PTMs and AVPs adapt to the current circumstances and have some really creative ideas for this online world!

Finally, another large success would have to be the work done on the Workplace Anti-Violence, Harassment and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy. This has been a huge thing to take on – I can honestly say I’ve learned so much about Ontario workplace and safety laws now – and it’s not been easy in the slightest. There have been some critiques I have had in the past of the MSU response protocol, so it’s been really empowering to be in the position to actually make these necessary changes and help ensure a safe(r) space for everyone within the MSU.

**OTHER**

These past few months I have whirled by so quickly. I can honestly say I’ve learned an incredible amount of information and skills in this short time!

Take care,



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