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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 20N Report |
| DATE: | Tuesday, February 2, 2021 |

**PROGRESS ON YEAR PLAN**

Council has made significant advancements in terms of advocating for first years, while continuing to collaborate with other MSU services to provide events and opportunities for students to integrate themselves within the McMaster community.

**PAST EVENTS**

We held our second event of the year near the start of January. It was a winter wellness night, giving students the chance to socialize in a virtual setting and participate in de-stressing activities such as online gaming and baking. While turnout was lower than we had hoped, those who did attend left very positive feedback.

Moreover, FYC has been focusing much of its efforts on first year advocacy. We have had multiple meetings with Brittany (AVP University Affairs) and Giancarlo (MSU President), during which they provided valuable guidance on advocacy and how to proceed with initiatives we are passionate about. The initiatives FYC has decided to focus on include rescheduling fall reading week, minimizing the number of online platforms, implementing a calendar system to help students keep track of assignments, reducing the workload/length of online classes and communicating the real-world applications of various courses. With the help of the feedback we received in our preliminary meetings, we were able to refine these thoughts and present them to Kim Dej (Vice-Provost Faculty) and Sean Van Kougnett (McMaster Dean of Students), who were very supportive of our ideas.

Finally, our Vice-Chair External, Charlotte Chan, has continued to lead the First Year Representative Assembly (FYRA), which has had a number of meetings in the past few months. Introductions for each of the first-year representatives were posted on the FYC Instagram account, in an effort to further connect them with first years. Council has been using our social media frequently, growing our following and hosting giveaways.

**UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

We are in the process of planning numerous events to help first years connect with each other, upper years and MSU services. One such event is a trivia night (a collaboration between Spark, Maroons and First Year Council) set to take place in early March. As well, we will be collaborating with the FYRA in February to host a speed-friendshipping night mixed with a virtual escape room for first year students, in an effort to promote cross-faculty friendships. We are also planning to host another event with Spark, sometime during late March. In terms of residence events, our PGCLL Chair, Henry Laing, is working with current community advisors (CAs) to distribute candy-grams for Valentine’s season. Residents will be encouraged to use a Google Form that will highlight who they wish to send their candy gram to. Henry will then compile this information onto small cards that will be cut out and paired with lollipops that CAs will deliver.

Furthermore, FYC will continue to pursue the aforementioned advocacy initiatives, with the help of Kim and Sean. Kim has also expressed that she would be interested in meeting with us again to further discuss some of our ideas. Additionally, we are looking forward to participating in the upcoming focus groups being organized by Giancarlo and Ryan to provide first-year perspectives.

We will also continue working with our consultation committees and campus partners – our student life committee has an upcoming meeting to discuss budgeting, while the hospitality committee is working on ideas such as improving the MacEats app and the community garden. Finally, our Vice-Chair Internal, Michelle Song, is compiling a list of resources regarding finding housing, which we plan to share with first years.

**CHALLENGES**

We faced a bit of a challenge with our last event, which had lower turnout than expected. Though many students signed up, not many ended up attending. As such, we were not able to run all the activities we had planned. This setback led us to collaborate with other services for future events, which will hopefully run more smoothly. Another challenge we are facing is that our PGCLL Chair is currently not living in residence due to the pandemic, which has made it a little difficult to plan and execute events for students who are still there. However, we are doing our best to mitigate this issue by collaborating with CAs who are on campus. He will be returning to campus next month so that will also be really great.

**SUCCESSES**

We have all been working very hard and have contributed a lot of effort to advocate for first year concerns. Refining our ideas and being able to lay the framework for them to come to fruition certainly qualifies as a success. Meeting with Kim & Sean was a great opportunity that required a lot of preparation and went very well, allowing us to solidify the initiatives that we have been diligently planning. It has also been amazing to be able to collaborate with so many different services and members of the McMaster community. Further, our social media accounts are thriving, and have grown significantly in the past few months. Lastly, both FYC and the FYRA are functioning as synergistic teams to make the best of a tough time! Both teams are working together wonderfully, and will continue to do so for the rest of the year.

Best,

Aiman Dhiloon

First Year Council Chair

McMaster Students Union

dhiloona@mcmaster.ca