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| . | MemoFrom the office of the…Vice-President (Administration) |
| To: | SRA Members and Committee Chairs |
| From: | Graeme Noble, Vice-President (Administration) |
| Subject: | Amend Operating Policies – Macademics & Awards |
| Date: | March 21, 2021 |

### Introduction

Dear Members of the Assembly,

For many years, the responsibilities for conferring awards have been scattered amongst four (4) different positions:

1. For half of the McMaster Students Union’s (MSU’s) student recognition awards, the MSU Speaker chairs and organizes the committees;
2. For the other half, the Vice-President (Administration) organizes them;
3. For teaching awards, the Macademics Teaching Awards Committee Coordinator organizes everything; and
4. For Valedictorian, the Vice-President (Education) organizes the meetings and doesn’t actually participate in any of them.

While I’d ideally like to address the decentralized nature of MSU awards in one fell swoop, the nuances of the Valedictorian award may make the McMaster Association of Part-Time Students (MAPS) a better candidate to take on that responsibility. Regardless, there are clear inefficiencies in how we distribute awards and the responsibilities for them.

In parallel to these issues, the MSU Macademics Service has just undergone an extensive Service Review by the Associate Vice-President (Services) that points towards areas for potential improvement of the Service that align with the centralization of awards. After approval of a new structure at the Executive Board level, I am proposing that we execute this approved vision to (1) better suit the needs of students, (2) reduce inconsistencies and decentralizations of awards processes, and (3) create a focussed approach for the distribution and celebration of the awards the MSU has to offer. I hope that, with these changes, we can help raise all MSU awards to the same renown and high standard as the teaching awards currently exhibit.

Since this proposal requires a substantial number Operating Policy changes, I’ve broken them down by clusters for ease of comprehension.

### Proposal

#### Operating Policy – Awards & Distinctions

Section 1 – Purpose: Minor changes to the use of language and phrasing were made to align to increase clarity and consistency with other policies.

Section 3 – Procedure: Specific examples of communications strategies were omitted due to their negative implications on the longevity of the policy. Minor language changes were made to increase clarity, flow, and consistency. Sections regarding the Selection Committee were taken from individual awards policies and pasted here to reduce redundancies. The Macademics Student Recognition Awards Coordinator executive position has been set as the chair for all student recognition awards, with a specific procedure set out for how they would be replaced on the Selection Committees in extenuating circumstances.

Section 4 – Conflict of Interest: This section was copied from individual awards policies with clarified language and flow of information.

Section 5 – Records Detention: Language was copied from individual awards policies and decluttered.

#### Operating Policy – J Lynn Watson Award for Community Service, Operating Policy – Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence, Operating Policy – MSU Spirit Award, Operating Policy – Honour M Award, & Operating Policy – MSU Merit Scholarship Award

Section 1 – Criteria: Language was clarified and reorganized for better flow.

Section 2 – Selection Committee: The Macademics Student Recognition Awards Coordinator executive position has been set as the chair for each of these Selection Committees with the Macademics Coordinator acting as a member of each to provide support. Language was clarified or moved to the **Operating Policy – Awards & Distinctions**.

#### Operating Policy – MSU Macademics

Section 2 – Operating Parameters: The Course Wiki was removed, since the Service no longer offers it. The promotions of Course Evaluations were also removed as those duties have not been the primary focus for the Service, nor are they quite as meaningful for the MSU to promote relative to when MSU Macademics was created. Additional collaborative University organizations were identified to clarify areas for educational advocacy at McMaster. Teaching Awards Committee (TAC) was removed from this policy entirely.

Section 3 – Personnel Structure: The Course Wiki Coordinator was removed while the Teaching Awards Coordinator was retitled and the Student Recognition Awards Coordinator was added. The Research & Resources Coordinator underwent minor changes to increase the generality of their role.

#### Operating Policy – MSU Teaching Awards

Previously this document functioned as an Appendix to Operating Policy - MSU Macademics. It has since been reformatted as its own fully fledged Operating Policy under the same structure as the student recognition awards policies. All information relating to TAC has been relocated to this policy. Just as before, the Selection Committees for each of the teaching awards are chaired and coordinated by the Teaching Awards Coordinator, but now with the Macademics Coordinator as a member of each group to provide additional support. As well, information surrounding the winners of teaching awards is now to be catalogued and archived in the same way as is already standard for student recognition awards.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns prior to the meeting.

Kind regards,

**Graeme Noble**

Vice-President (Administration) & Chief Administrative Officer

McMaster Students Union

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