|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MSU logo.jpg. | MEMO*From the office of the…*Vice-President (Education) |
| TO: | Student Representative Assembly |
| FROM: | Ryan Tse, Vice-President (Education) |
| SUBJECT: | Approval of the Bylaws of the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities |
| DATE: | March 25th, 2021 – SRA 21C |

**Dear Members of the Assembly,**

The McMaster Students Union has been informally participating in the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) coalition since 2015.

Here’s a brief excerpt from the UCRU website (<https://www.ucru.info/>) explaining its conception and mission:

“Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) is an informal coalition of student associations whose mandate is to advocate to the Canadian federal government for an affordable, inclusive and high-calibre undergraduate university education with opportunities for increased access to undergraduate research. Our coalition began in 2015 to advocate on issues that disproportionately and uniquely affect undergraduates from Canada’s U15 universities – which is what sets our strategic advocacy priorities apart from other student advocacy organizations at the federal level. We collectively represent over 250,000 university students across Canada.”

Currently, there are 10 member student associations that informally participate in UCRU, including the MSU. Being part of UCRU has been valuable for our federal-facing advocacy. Through UCRU, we have participated in lobby weeks over the past few years, where we’ve met with government representatives to relay student concerns. We’ve also worked on various campaigns and projects. This year, UCRU ran the Debt Free Degree campaign highlighting the need for student financial aid and UCRU began to develop official policy papers to guide advocacy efforts moving forward.

Over the 2020-2021 year, the MSU has collaborated with the other nine member student associations to develop official UCRU bylaws to formalize the organization. The process of formalizing UCRU as an organization involves creating a set of bylaws for all member student associations to agree to (this would be similar to our participation in the Ontario Undergraduates Student Alliance, the provincial post-secondary coalition of which we are formal members). The 2020-2021 President (Giancarlo), 2020-2021 Associate Vice-President: Provincial and Federal Affairs (Hasnain), and I represented the MSU in the bylaw development process. Over the last few months, we’ve also worked with the 2020-2021 SRA and the Board of Directors to provide feedback. Representatives from all UCRU schools have painstakingly reviewed the bylaws to ensure they are satisfactory. As of March 2021, the UCRU board completed the review process. As such, all that’s left now is for each member student association to formally approve the bylaws with the intent to join the organization based on the bylaws.

If the MSU approves the bylaws and later joins UCRU as a formal member, the MSU President, VP (Education), and AVP: Provincial and Federal Affairs will likely work with UCRU over the 2021-2022 year to establish the organization as a formal organization, including looking at developing a strategic plan. It should be noted that there is no fee required currently for the students of the member organizations. However, it is possible that the implementation of a fee could be considered in the coming years (possibly as early as 2022-2023).

I have attached the final draft of bylaws for you to review. One thing to note is that there is a very simple process for members to join and to leave UCRU. This is something all UCRU members have made sure to include in the bylaws so that members are not “stuck” as members if they wish to leave at any point.

Giancarlo and I believe the MSU’s approval of the UCRU bylaws with the future intention of joining UCRU as a Class A member have the potential to strengthen the MSU’s federal advocacy now and in the years to come. The final bylaws and the bylaw development process has been tremendously beneficial for the organization in determining what the member associations want UCRU to be in the future. We’re excited to see the MSU’s federal advocacy efforts continue to grow through the approval of these bylaws and future MSU formal membership in UCRU.

Please reach out if you have any questions at all.

Sincerely,

Ryan Tse

Vice-President (Education)

[vped@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:vped@msu.mcmaster.ca)