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| MSU-logo-2001. | REPORT*From the office of the…*Vice-President (Finance) |
| TO: | Members of the Student Representative Assembly |
| FROM: | Jeganiyah Jayachandran (JJ), Vice-President (Finance) |
| SUBJECT: | SRA 21E Report |
| DATE: | June 7, 2021 |

Dear Members of the Assembly,

I hope you are all doing well. I am very excited to provide my first of many updates this year. The past month has been an interesting learning opportunity for myself as I slowly transitioned into my role & gained a better understanding of MSU governance, services, and student needs. The previous VP Finance, Jess, as well as other long-standing members of the MSU, including John, have provided me with the support needed for me to grasp the reigns of this position. Catering to student needs & adapting to the environment to the best of our abilities has been an eye-opening challenge.

In terms of my year plan, I am still working on expanding on my proposed platform points by consulting with relevant individuals, both internally and externally, to produce feasible steps to accomplish these goals. Given the overlap of many of my finance priorities with the AVP Finance (Nathan), I hope to closely work in conjunction with him & the finance committee to promote financial transparency. Below I have highlighted most (not an exhaustive list) of the events, projects, and activities in which I have engaged in thus far, as well as ongoing activities.

I also encourage members to reach out with any year plan ideas in which you would like to collaborate on and/or receive support from myself and the board. As student representatives, you have many valuable ideas that will benefit the MSU & we are here to help you accomplish those goals. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at vpfinance@msu.mcmaster.ca – I am always happy to set up a meeting to chat.

Wishing you all the best,

Jeganiyah Jayachandran (JJ)

Vice-President (Finance) & CFO

McMaster Students Union

**EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES**

**Welcome Week Advisory Committee (WWAC):** Alongside the VP Admin, I am a member of WWAC. Through our bi-weekly meetings we have discussed possible schedules of campus events programming, transition & events for second year students (class of 2024), the use of Archway cohorts, residence life, etc. In the upcoming weeks, I hope to continue to work alongside WWAC members to plan for Welcome Week, provide training to the faculty planners, implement ideas for promotion of MSU services & overall, continue to adapt programming to the changing provincial COVID guidelines.

**Train WW Planners on WW Finances & Budgeting**:I will be working with Andrijana over the next 2 weeks to produce training materials for the Welcome Week faculty planners, as their training is scheduled for the first week of July. Budgets will be based on the cost per MacPass as outlined in the MOU – this information will be communicated with them as well.

**MSU Statement on BDS & Violence in Palestine:** I am very proud about the stance the BoD has taken regarding the time sensitive issue. The entire BoD worked in conjunction with the communication team, to draft an appropriate response that condoned the violence in Palestine & spoke out against all forms of Islamophobia & Anti-Semitism. We also worked together to determine which organizations we would make donations towards, to directly support the community. As an organization formed by students with the purpose of serving the student body, this was an important statement that continues to show that the MSU strives to voice student concerns, represent the interests of the community & provide a safe space for students of diverse backgrounds.

**Chair Silhouette Board of Publication (Sil BoP) meeting:** In the past week, I had the opportunity to chair my first Sil BoP meeting of the year! Alongside the Editor-in-Chief, Andrew, & members of the committee we were able to discuss changes to the summer print schedule, update the team on changes to the print design, return of some positions, etc.

**Finance Committee:** Chaired by the AVP Finance, this committee has met twice in the past month. Members pitched interesting ideas to increase student engagement with the MSU, promotion of services & blended (online & in-person) campaigns for financial transparency. I got the opportunity to see the Nathan’s year plan and provide support in objectives that overlap with mine. We will be meeting more often to plan out the integration of financial transparency and awareness to first years through Welcome Week programming and the summer mail-out.

**Budget trackers for MSU services:** Based on the approved operating budget for this fiscal year, I created up-to-date budget trackers/planners for all service directors to use. Directions on how to read account numbers, basics of understanding expense and revenue lines in the budget and tips for planning the budget were provided (as part of their financial training).

**Financial training to PTMs and Directors of MSU services:** I created an asynchronous training module & sent out various resources including budget trackers, purchase request forms and expense statement forms. The training module highlighted the fees that students pay to the MSU, a breakdown of funding towards services, processes for internal and external purchases, how to request to use the MSU credit card, submission of receipts as proof of purchase, etc. Over the past week, I have also been meeting with various PTMs to provide additional support or guidance in filling out any forms and/or addressing budget inquiries. The tentative date for budget plans to be submitted is July 9.

**Financial training to Clubs:** In the upcoming weeks, I will be working with the Clubs Accounting Clerk (Harleen) to create financial training for clubs. These modules will cover information regarding club finances – including bank account info, applying for funding, reimbursements, credit cards, etc. I hope to have these modules completed by August so they can be made available to club execs by early September (during their clubs training).

**Financial transparency – Guidebook in First-year mailout:** The comms team and the underground will provide support in designing the MSU org and financial information pages of the guidebook. The mail-out to first years will happen in late July, so I hope to work with Nathan in creating accurate operating fee breakdowns to incorporate into appealing graphics, that will be added to the guidebook.

**Update MSU Website – Your Money:** Many parts of the MSU McMaster website are outdated, including the graphics of student fee breakdown (i.e. how much each student pays towards a service). I hope to collaborate with the comms team to design new graphics and ensure that the information on the “Your Money” page is updated & displays accurate financial info, to ensure that we engage in financial transparency goals with the undergraduate student population.

**HUB:** This has been a very exciting project that I am personally very interesting as the HUB will expand student activity space on campus. I have attended meetings led by Laurie in which I gained a better understanding of the space, ideas for how the space may be utilized and tentative timelines for opening to the public. I have been looped into discussions surround Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that John has been receiving regarding use of spaces by external vendors – I am very excited for what the HUB will offer to students in 2022!

**EB training:** As of now, EB training is still ongoing – I have learned a lot about policies and the role of EB in the MSU via presentations from John (GM) and Denver.

**CURRENT CHALLENGES**

**COVID regulations & in-person programming on campus:** A very common question that I am constantly asked is whether I know what student activity will look like on campus and specific plans for reopening. Unfortunately, given the ever-changing environment and uncertainties of how regulations may change by September, I am only able to provide a vague response. I hope that by the end of the next month, university officials will be able to give us a solid reopening plan that we can update students and staff with. I am hopeful for majority of students to return to campus.

**Signing Cheques:** Due to working from home & COVID protocols on campus requiring booking ahead of time to enter the office, I am unable to sign cheques or reimbursement forms immediately. Kevin and the accounting team has been very accommodating by sending boxes of cheques to myself every 2 weeks, which I send back after signing. Although this is efficient, I am looking forward to lifting of COVID restrictions by the end of this summer, so cheques can be signed immediately & payment can be processed quickly.

**Student Choice Initiative (SCI) uncertainty:** Although SCI was deemed unlawful by the Ontario Divisional Courts, it is currently in courts as the Ontario government is appealing this. We are very hopeful that SCI and subsequent offering of opt-out by students (that led to a 32% opt-out rate in 2019) will not return this year; however, some PTMs have reached out regarding possible changes to their budget if SCI returns. I have been meeting with individuals to address concerns and provide support in terms of budget planning to ensure they are confident. I am looking towards a final decision by the government, so I can provide reassurance to PTMs.