

Transition Report

Vice-President (Administration) of the MSU

Chief Administrative Officer of MSU Inc.

*Graeme Noble*

2020–2021

(Submitted April 30, 2021)

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# Welcome

Congratulations on your new role! You are going to be so incredible and I am so excited to see all that you do. Each year is unique—though I doubt many will come close to the uniqueness of yours—so take this parting advice with a grain of salt. You may or may not come across what I did, but, if you do, I hope you find these words helpful.

## VP (Short-Straw)

Many of your higher-level employment-related decisions are made by Executive Board (EB) under your recommendations. When a decision is made, you get the opportunity to be the bearer of whatever news needs to be communicated, especially if it’s bad new (congratulations, you’re now affectionately titled VP [Short-Straw]). Just remember, that it takes a **minimum of** **five** **(5)** people to make a binding decision on EB: yet, **to others, you *alone*** made the call.

Lean on staff, EB, and other Board members to make sure you’re not in this alone. If you believe EB made the wrong decision, remember that you are your own person who shall ultimately have to face the consequences of the choice in one way or another.

*Welcome dissent, reflect, and discuss it again with EB. But remember,* ***you are their supervisor****—****not*** *their parent,* ***not*** *their caretaker, and* ***certainly not*** *their punching bag.*

Over time, this role has absorbed of emotional labor to students or staff and while it's important because it builds rapport; it can also be a stressful time for you to navigate your own personal stresses while navigating someone else's. What's going on with you is important to unpack because if there's something you're not taking care of in your personal life first, it could permeate into the workplace unknowingly.

Sometimes a 7-hour workday can feel like 17 hours if you're dealing with some particularly heavy issues. It’s okay to leave early every once in a while, and its okay to shut off your email. If you burnout, you won’t have the energy to support your team. It’s okay (and encouraged) to be kind to yourself.

## Managing the Managers

It’s different ball game. Your managers have their own teams, own appreciation events, and are consistently doing the most for their execs. I think you were able to see this year that our managers don’t always see themselves as a “PTM” or as MSU employees. Try to build a connection amongst PTM’s where they can find a community of support within each other.

## VP (Superhuman)

So many people you interact with will forget that you are a mere 20-something year old who recently graduated university. I often found myself forgetting this as well – and made myself feel as though I wasn’t allowed to take a break, admit that I don’t know something, or have feelings and experiences towards certain things. Remember that you are human you are allowed to tap out, to take a break and to ask for help.

The role of the VP (Admin.) is ridiculously overburdened and I know before leaving I tried to relieve some of the responsibilities so I hope you find this year smoother than I did. Thank you for all that you have done to support me and this union, and all you will end up doing in this role.

Remember, you accomplishment won’t necessarily be measured in projects completed like they may with other VPs, but that doesn’t meant that they are less important. Take a second to appreciate your hard work and the community I know you are going to build.

This job is thankless—but know that I am thankful for you.

Best of luck and be kind to yourself in this job.

Warmest Regards,

Graeme Noble

# MSU Structure

The MSU has such an odd and complicated structure. I’ll try to explain it here, but this is generally how it works.

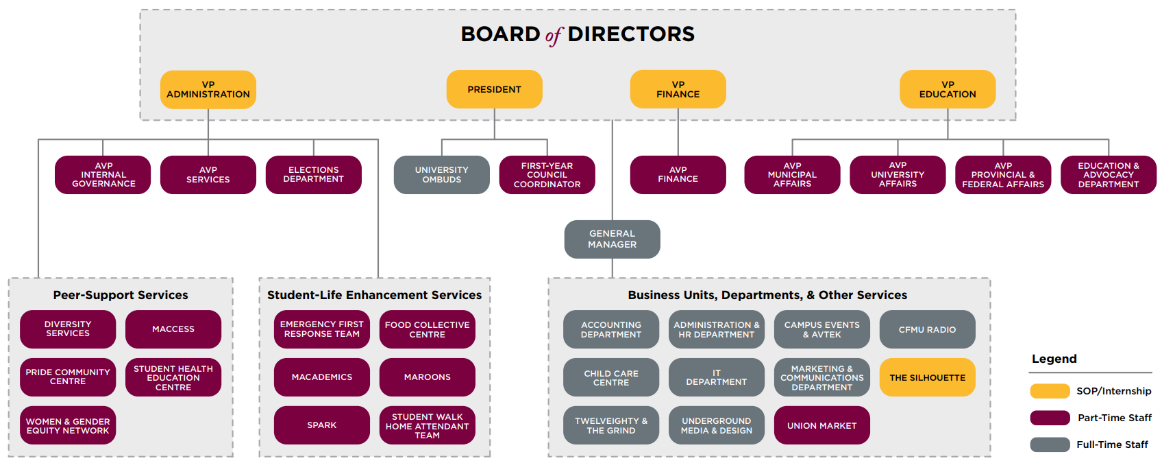
## Corporate/Not-for-Profit Structure

For starters, these two diagrams show an approximate description of how the MSU looks from the Corporate/Not-for-Profit (NPO) side of things.

As you can see, the Executive Board doesn’t really play a role in this diagram, but that doesn’t make them any less important to the functions of the organization.

## Managerial Structure

Here’s the pretty version of our managerial structure. It’s now posted on the website, but it’s missing a few key nuances about EB and the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), but it’s a pretty great guide regardless.



## Board of Directors (BoD)

The Board of Directors handles the executive decisions of the MSU, from high-level employment matters to legal disputes to fee discussions to almost every branch of the MSU in one way or another. Needless to say, there’s a lot of power and responsibility held by these 4 individuals and each plays an important role in keeping the MSU machine chugging along. Here are the relationships that I recommend you keep on top of throughout the year.

**Vice-President (Administration)**: Your relationship with yourself will undoubtedly shift throughout your term this year, but please remember these points as you navigate the process.

* **The MSU Wasn’t Built in a Year**:
* **Show Yourself Compassion**:

**President:** Your relationship with the President is outlined in the Corporate Bylaws and Bylaws, but it’s unique every year.

* **Right Hand**: If the President is absent or unavailable, you will chair their meetings and assume their role when they aren’t available to do it themselves. Be sure to present their perspective in the decision-making process if they are absent for only a short period of time. I would sit down with Denver and chat about how you plan to work together and hammer out your thoughts on contentious issues before they arise.
* **Remind Them to Take Breaks**: While you may feel like your job is guilt-ridden, remember that you and the President will always be in that boat together. Both of you will never be able to please everyone and it will always feel like an uphill battle, even if they don’t tell you that’s what their feeling. Be sure to remind him that, while he is President, he’s also human, and will need to take breaks *away from work* if he wants to (1) set a good example for staff and (2) survive the role without ending it feeling bitter about life.

If you find things getting too much, lean on the BoD and full-time staff for help. If they don’t have time, maybe you need to make a new role that does or reconfigure an old role to make it so. You also have two AVPs and an RA to directly support with projects; the President doesn’t have any direct student support for projects so be kind and help where you can (*not where you can’t*).

* **Line of Defence**: There should never be a situation where Denver gets caught off guard and is taking heat alone, especially if he wasn’t the only one to make that decision. Within the first few months, figure out what type of support each of you need—when it comes to public relations (PR), Wooder can assist with how to approach situations either publicly or in political settings.
* **New (Kinda) Service Management**: New this year, I handed off the First-Year Council (FYC) Coordinator role to the President since (1) GC already frequently meets with all of the same people that FYC would and (2) first-years would rather work with the President anyways, so why stop them. I piloted it this year and found it was great fit, but I’m excited to see where Denver takes it since he was a part of FYC back in first year. However, as part of this change, the **FYC Coordinator now reports to EB, making them the only Student-Led Service** (not really a Service under our policies, but whatever) **that doesn’t report to you**. Technically, FYC itself reports to the SRA, so the Coordinator would just report on what they, specifically, are doing/need help with, but try to offer Denver support in making things consistent for all the PTMs since this will likely be a very minimal responsibility on his plate while you’ll be living it.

**Vice-President (Finance):** Your relationship with the VP (Finance) is the most important, perhaps across any of the inter-Board relationships. You two are responsible for running the MSU—I’m not kidding. By the nature of your roles, you will spend a lot of your hours with them and it’s important to have a positive, healthy relationship if the MSU is to run smoothly.

* **Establish a Positive Relationship**: I’ll be honest, Jess and I didn’t always get along, but our communication channels improved as things went along. Normally, the VP (Admin) is a bit of a people pleaser and focused on maintaining relationships while the VP (Finance) is more forward and outwardly open when they don’t agree. I found that Jess and I didn’t really fit this archetype: both of us were very upfront when we didn’t agree and often quite determined to stand our ground when priorities weren’t aligned. I truly think this wouldn’t have been nearly as big an obstacle if the whole year wasn’t online and my transition wasn’t so haphazard, but *c’est la vie*.

**Keep Things Open**: Don’t get me wrong, the potential for conflict should never be a reason not to fight for what you believe in. Get together with them and write out your strengths and weaknesses so that each of you knows when you need the other and can strategically play out meetings (e.g., for Welcome Week). Really try to understand one another before disagreements and misunderstandings arise so you can better feel where they’re coming from. Conflict between both of your roles will make life difficult for the whole Board, but mostly for you.

* **PTM Troubleshooting**: Going through the VP (Finance) often seems like a method to get problems solved without having to admit they need help from their supervisor (something PTMs often have issues with). Because of your supervisory dynamic, PTMs may not be upfront with you about the issues they face, but that won’t stop them from reaming you out for not addressing them! Make sure you and the VP (Finance) have an open line of communication and are keeping each other in the loop about what problems come up and how best to tackle them.
* **Sounding Board**: Talk to them when you need to chat or run through something or just need someone to listen. She may be the most present and available to support you as the VP (Finance) role is typically in the office. Make sure to always ask if she’s open to listen because their day can be long as well.

**Vice-President (Education)**: Your relationship with the VP (Education) is minimal, although I believe there are two areas in which you rely/work closely with each other.

* **Team Management**: You and the VP (Education) both directly oversee the largest Student Staff teams.

Try to be there to support them if they’re experiencing difficulties in managing their team—you will likely have gone through some situations their is dealing with so try support each other through that if you can. It’s nice to have a Board member around that’s not completely invested in every single thing you do to provide a bit of an outside perspective. I always found Ryan acted as a great moderator when things got tough, so keep that in mind when you need a semi-objective opinion on something you’re working on/dealing with.

* **Service Advocacy**: Services like to make “statements” on their social media platforms to specifically discuss the decisions being made by the political bodies across the spectrum. **These** **statements** **shall not be made without first being reviewed by the Education & Advocacy Department**. They can post whatever they want on their personal accounts, but not their Service accounts. Keep the VP (Education) in the loop and talk about how you can work with Services to help deliver statements that still support their community while not hindering our other relationships.

Ryan made a point this year to consider whether we want Services to make Statements at all instead of just providing a stance for the Education & Advocacy Department for them to lobby for as a centralized MSU advocacy front. Personally, I agree about the importance of a centralized presence of lobbying efforts.

## Executive Board (EB)

Executive Board is a small portion of the SRA that handles day-to-day operations. In accordance with recent updates to OP – Services, all Services, including those led by Full-Time Staff (FTS) must report to EB on regular basis.

* SRA members will always need encouragement to speak during these meetings. Part of it is intimidation from the FTS present , but part is just from a complete lack of training/comprehension of the context involved in making decisions at the EB level. Remember to be encouraging and provide information ahead of time so they can contribute to the conversation as intended.

## Student Representative Assembly (SRA)

The SRA is the highest governing body within the MSU. You will likely need to make active efforts to prompt SRA members to voice their opinions on things by ensuring that they genuinely know what’s being discussed during meetings and care about what’s going on.

Overall, you’ll need to make yourself available and approachable to SRA members if you hope to see anything fruitful come of it. More often than not, they’re smart, passionate, and thoughtful individuals but if you keep them in the dark about what’s going on, you might as well disband the MSU altogether because you’ll be contributing to its demise on the precipice of its destruction.

In short, support the SRA and help them do their jobs; they are your bosses, after all.

# Welcome Week

One of the largest projects that you will endeavour to pull off with a multi-stakeholder approach and shared vision. Like everything the MSU touches, it changes substantially from year-to-year. Lots of things happened in the summer that I was never transitioned on, but I can do my best to offer insight on what I was present for or what I can recall from later discussions with colleagues over on the University side of things.

## Structure

Back in March–April 2020, a review of WW was conducted by an external review agency (Association for Orientation, Transition, & Retention in Higher Education; NODA). In the summer of 2020, the MSU, Student Success Centre (SSC), and Housing & Conference Services (HCS) drafted and approved their response to those recommendations and implemented various timelines to achieve them. One notable recommendation related to creating a centralized orientation structure. As you’ll see below, this is the pathway we’re currently on:

### Old (2017– 2020)

### Current (2021)

Think of this as a year of transition between the old and new ways of organizing WW.

### New (2022+)

As of January–May 2021, you will a new WW structure will begin to form. The following image has been approved at SSAC as of April 2021, but there’s still a bit to figure out as to how working groups will be chaired.

## Councils, Committees, & Working Groups

### WWAC

The Welcome Week Advisory Committee (WWAC) calls all the high-level shots in the WW structure. Well, anything that’s not so important that it needs to go to SSAC.

In each of the tables, I’ve written the names of people if the positions last longer than a year and the positions if they turnover annually. Also, bolded names are the chairs for those groups.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Members** | **Purpose** |
| **VP (Admin) (MSU)**  VP (Finance) (MSU)  CE Director (MSU)  **Jacquie Hampshire (SSC)**  Michele Corbeil (SSC)  Sean Beaudette (HCS)  Jennifer Kleven (HCS) | Oversees WW mandates, vision, and executive decisions.  Responsible for designing and implementing large-scale changes.  Manages the First-Year Orientation levy. |

### WWPIC

TheWelcome Week Planning & Implementation Committee does all the nitty gritty work to make WW tick. **Do not sit on this committee**: you have far better things to be doing than to attend these meetings that are already filled with fully qualified staff who know what they’re doing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Members** | **Purpose** |
| WWFC (MSU)  CEPC (MSU)  **Michele Corbeil (SSC)**  Sean Beaudette (HCS)  ROP (HCS)  Jennifer Kleven (HCS)  OCOP (HCS) | Oversees WW scheduling, event-planning, and communications strategies.  Responsible for coordinating with campus partners (e.g., Faculty Societies) to review/approve programming submissions. |

### WWSTAPC (Rescinded)

The Strategic Themes Advisory & Planning Committee (WWSTAPC) that is meant to oversee the development and creation of events and messaging related to our themes. This was a new committee to engage campus partners and student leaders more meaningfully by taking a holistic approach to the integration of the themes in WW.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Members** | **Purpose** |
| **VP (Admin) (MSU)**  WGEN (MSU)  SHEC (MSU)  PCC (MSU)  Maccess (MSU)  Diversity Services (MSU)  WWFC (MSU)  **Michele Corbeil (SSC)**  Wil Fujarczuk (EIO)  Connor Blakeborough (SWC)  ~~Taryn Sanders (SWC)~~  ROP (HCS)  OCOP (HCS) | Oversee WW Strategic Themes;  STAC responsibilities include idea generation for themes, review of past messaging, approval of messaging and theme events  Student Leader responsibilities to assist VP (Administration) in event development, administrative work, working alongside campus partners in messaging development (i.e., Ways To Wellness)  Student Planner responsibilities to develop communication strategy for coordinating first-year attendance |

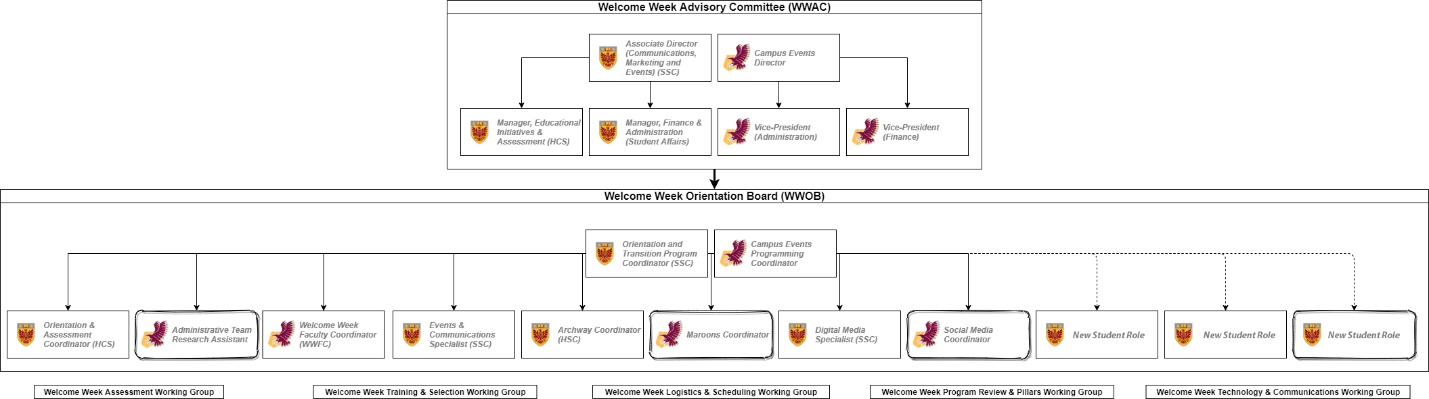
As you may remember from that one WWAC meeting in early April, we’ve amalgamated Strategic Themes and Strategic Priorities to form the meta-structure of non-strategic Welcome Week Values (a.k.a. WWVs or Values). I just made up that acronym, as I often do, but I’ve broken them down in the next section.

### WWOB

The Welcome Week Orientation Board (WWOB) is the newly created board that oversees pretty much everything from mid- to low-importance within the Welcome Week hierarchy. It likely won’t be in place until January 2022, but you’ll need to prepare for the wave of infrastructural changes that will be required on the MSU’s side to facilitate this change.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Members** | **Purpose** |
| **CE PC (MSU)**  Maroons Coordinator (MSU)  Admin. Research Asst. (MSU)  SMC (MSU)  **Michele Corbeil (SSC)**  Elizabeth DiEmanuele (SSC)  Jennifer Kleven (HCS)  Archway Coordinator (HCS)  2–3 New Student Roles (?) | Oversees WW mandates, vision, and executive decisions.  Responsible for designing and implementing large-scale changes.  Manages the First-Year Orientation levy. |

I’ve included the proposed structure here:



I love mind maps, so this was exactly my cup of tea. There’s an extended version I can share with you, if you’d like, but the working groups at the bottom are essentially to be chaired by any standing members from the WWOB (except for the New Student Roles).

**Proposed Timeline**

* Confirm new Orientation Board structure by April 2021 – recognizing there may be an interim structure until planner equity can be met and new portfolio-based student staff positions are created and hired
* Submit [proposal](https://mcmastersu-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/vpadmin_msu_mcmaster_ca/EXahefhL6-1NlmborvvEbu8BiiyqlkGFXDQD0g9ujyPr5A?e=y9HnVI) to SSAC for approval by April 2021.
* Dissolve WWSTAPC by May 2021.
* Develop criteria and finalize job descriptions for new portfolio-based student staff positions and determine supervisory structures and the development of an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the end of September 2021.
* Communicate new organizational structure to the Associate Dean’s Group (ADG), MSU Presidents’ Council, and other campus stakeholders in September 2021.
* Dissolve WWPIC by December 2021.
* Planner equity and rep recruitment will be reviewed as part of the next set of changes by December 2021.
* Hire all roles and complete Orientation Board, incorporating Recommendation #1 (Planner Equity) Response from the NODA review by January 2022.

Now we’re getting into **#TentativeTerritory** since nothing has really been finalized for who will be in these working groups and what they’ll actually look like, but there are a few ideas floating around that I’ve included for reference. Also of note, working group members may not always be required to attend every meeting, but that’s up for discussion.

#### Assessment Working Group

* Developing and implementing a yearly assessment plan to assess key elements of Welcome Week.
* Supporting assessment of each OB task (e.g., Training and Selection, etc.).
* Make recommendations for changes based on the results of the assessment.

WW could never improve if we didn’t know where we’re currently at. This year, the SSC conducted focus groups and survey samples of first-year students to evaluate individuals’ experiences with the virtual orientation experience. Even without a dedicated working group, assessments have been conducted for several years to evaluate future plans for how WW would develop. The purpose of this group would be to establish assessment as a critical component of how WW operates, as it currently plays an important role that a formal working group would assist with.

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| **Potential Members** |
| **Administrative Research Assistant (MSU)**  **Jennifer Kleven (HCS)**  Residence Orientation Planner (HCS)  Representative (EIO) |

#### Training & Selection Working Group

* Developing and/or reviewing selection guidelines governing the selection of all Welcome Week paid student staff and volunteer positions.
* Liaising with campus partners, including McMaster Human Resources, to ensure that selection guidelines are aligned with McMaster values and best practices.
* Disseminating guidelines to stakeholders, training stakeholders on guidelines, and ensuring stakeholders are accountable to the guidelines.
* Identifying the commonalities between various Representative (Rep) and Planner roles (e.g., Residence, Faculty, Maroons, etc.) and developing training on those commonalities.
* Liaising with campus partners to develop and support the training of Planners and Reps in relation to commonalities.

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| **Potential Members** |
| **Welcome Week Faculty Coordinator (MSU)**  Human Resources Generalist & Clubs Support (MSU)  **Michele Corbeil (SSC)**  Tara Roberts (HCS)  Jill Simone (HCS)  Residence Orientation Planner (HCS)  Representative (EIO)  *Administrative Research Assistant (MSU) or*  *Jennifer Kleven (HCS)* |

#### Program Review & Values Working Group

* Consulting with campus partners to review and adjust WWVs.
* Disseminate WWPs and oversee training on how to use WWPs to Welcome Week stakeholders.
* Reviewing all Welcome Week programming to ensure alignment with WWVs.
* Planning and executing centralized events related to the WWVs.

This group would be responsible for revieing all WW programming for quality and to ensure it all aligns with the WWVs. Those Values are:

1. Academic Preparedness
2. Health & Wellness
3. Indigeneity, Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (IIDEA)

It took a while to come up with the whole system, but I’ve included a detailed copy of the history of it all [here](https://mcmastersu-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/vpadmin_msu_mcmaster_ca/EWFWWTVoJ9ZCiWpu3prVoHkB78Bkm2Iz4Eg0auKeed8QSA?e=hskxX4).

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| **Potential Members** |
| **Maroons Coordinator (MSU)**  Clubs Administrator (MSU)  **Archway Coordinator (HCS)**  Jenna Storey (SSC)  Michele Corbeil (SSC)  Representative (EIO) |

#### Logistics & Scheduling Working Group

This group will essentially take on the bulk of the responsibilities currently held by WWPIC.

* Recommending Welcome Week schedule parameters (to be approved by WWAC).
* Scaffolding and scheduling all Welcome Week events.
* Liaises with Welcome Week stakeholders to finalize schedules and bookings.

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| **Potential Members** |
| **Campus Events Programming Coordinator (MSU)**  **Rachel Nelson (SSC)**  Residence Orientation Planner (HCS)  Representative (EIO)  *Administrative Research Assistant (MSU) or*  *Jennifer Kleven (HCS)* |

#### Technology & Communications Working Group

* Developing and executing Welcome Week marketing plan.
* Coordinating technological needs with UTS, Student Affairs, AVTEK, etc.

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| **Potential Members** |
| **Social Media Coordinator (MSU)**  Junior IT Technician (MSU)  Senior IT Technician (MSU)  AVTek Technical Coordinator (MSU)  AVTek Technical Manager (MSU)  Campus Events Marketing & Promotions Coordinator (MSU)  **Elizabeth DiEmanuele (SSC)**  IT Manager (Student Affairs) |

## During Welcome Week

You might be wondering: what goes on during the actual week? Well, I never really got to do most of this stuff because I joined a couple of weeks before Welcome Week happened and I pretty much just watched and tried my best to help out Campus Events and the WWFC however I could. So, here’s a ***[modified]*** version of my predecessor’s guide to in-person WW keeping in mind that lots of it will depend on how in-person things get:

Five things to watch out for are (1) Swag Bags, (2) Welcome Week Charity Committee, (3) Board of Directors, (4) Welcome Week Awards, (5) Presence, and (6) Self-Care.

### Swag Bags

You will complete online and in-person training to ride the golf carts [listen, I was ***so* pissed that I didn’t get to ride a golf cart on campus, you don’t even know**], the Board gets their own, in addition [**incredibly pissed**] to walkie talkies. We try to give out 5000 swag bags each year—Wooder will order them along with preparing material to put in them [we actually bought these, though I doubt you’ll be able to use them all this year].

* Packing these bags will be the Maroons’ responsibility—this was the bane of my existence and all returning Maroons will not be happy doing it again. Get the Coordinator to plan ahead in terms of when and how they wants their team to pack the bags—make sure it is **prior** to welcome week—scheduling it after their Maroons training was helpful. Oh, and offer to feed them.
* Book a MUSC room for packing! I booked out MUSC 206/207 for the week before WW so all the packing could happen there. This allowed the Maroons to go in whenever they wanted (and meant I didn’t have to stay late) and be as loud as they want.
  + Sidenote: Watch the noise leading up to/during welcome week. Student Staff will be in full WW mode and sometimes forget that there are full-time staff who are trying to get work done—don’t be afraid to give them a gentle [but stern] reminder.
* Get Maroons to assist in funneling the bags downstairs for give-away either during MacPass distribution, Faculty Fusion, or Monday Night Lights. Make piles of bags when people are leaving events and have Maroons handing them out—after the football game, Disco, Airbands—try not to be bringing them all over campus. We had a great system last year—ask Wooder about it!
  + The SSC will likely give you a booth in MacPass Pick-Up. Try and make this your central location for swag bag pick up. We ran a photobooth and an info tent there as well. Ask the new SSC Director if this is still an opportunity this year (Gina told me last year she would love to have us again, but make sure just to check in with her).

### Maroons

Obviously, not the most fun topic of discussion, but there are a couple of key things to note about the Maroons during WW.

* **Use Them**: Their busyness is very dependent on the PTM. If your Maroons PTM is lacking initiative, you may need to hold their hand a little more.
  + Don’t be afraid to tell the Maroons if you need help! They are your rep team, use them. I know it can be weird because you are not in a suit, but sit down earlier in the summer and chat with the PTM about what your relationship with the team will look like.
* Maroons helped with move-in last year (and parking)! Having them on the ground helping out did a lot to put them in a positive light. Make sure to chat with Jillienne Simone (HCS) early on in the summer to discuss move-in and the Maroon’s role. Jillienne is a move-in icon: trust her. Let her tell you what she needs from the Maroons.
* Last year Maroons, did not take on concert duty, instead they went home, attended concert without their suit, or operated as a campus presence. Maroons are students and should not be asked to act as security. Touch base with Trish early on about what her plans are for the Maroons—let her dictate what she needs from them.
  + **When Maroons-Staffed Concert**: Security Debriefs—there are countless negative experiences that Maroons have had with Security Services during the WW concerts specifically. Leading up to WW have multiple meetings with Joe Zubek (Security Services) and Trish to discuss the role of Maroons during concerts. **They are not security**, but they are eyes and ears and a friendly face for students who need it. Make sure you have a briefing prior to the concert with the Maroons and the special constables so everyone is on the same page and there are no miscommunications or altercations between Maroons and special constables.
* The Maroons did not have access to a golf cart last year, as they misused them in the past. Just make sure to offer to cart them somewhere if they are lugging a lot of supplies.
* There should be no Maroon missing training! Both SSC and Maroons-specific training. Now more than ever this needs to be emphasized.

### Welcome Week Awards

I actually wasn’t able to coordinate this because I came in far too close to WW to make it happen. Also, since all the events didn’t translate completely to the online environment, none of the previous grading rubrics made any sense. You’re going to want to prepare this in advance and ensure Planners get the memo on what you’re grading for if you want them to care. Regardless, here’s the downlow on what normally happens:

Refer to the OP for more guidance and in Sarah’s folder, you will find the excel scoring sheet, as well as guidelines for points breakdown for each event. Begin this early on by meeting with Campus Events, WWFC, ROP and the VP (Finance) to decide what the point system for each event will look like (meet with the respective people for each event—not all of them at once). Last year, the grading system changed to be more straight forward and to emphasize things other than your “typical” welcome week points (charity, cheers, spirit). Once reviewed, circulate the final copy to all Residence Advisors and Faculty Planners before July so they are aware of what to prepare for—they will continuously ask for the grading scheme!

During the week, you will need to attend all the events that are being judged and this can be cumbersome and time-consuming. Sarah didn’t judge each of the events—it’s not fair to you at all—use your Board or Campus Events staff and swap yourself out for one of them every once in a while. Check out Sarah’s folder to see who was assigned as a judge for each event and maybe go from there. Each year the scoring and criteria changes, so do what you think will be best and the fairest.

Find a way to communicate the scores to the reps. Sarah’s preference was posting photos of the judges for some events on the Rep Community Network Facebook page with an update on scores. They only did a “half-way” update and that was totally fine. Updating on Facebook is way more beneficial than updating our website, which no one reads.

My predecessor met with the committee about 15 minutes before each event to go over it and didn’t have any meetings prior to WW, though you definitely will if you’re creating the grading criteria from scratch. Then you can [maybe] just email them the grading sheet and the times of the events they were required to be at and go from there.

Tallying the scoring for the cups should be fairly easy if you reuse my excel sheet. All of the equations are in there to tally up the points and calculate the residence and faculty with the most points. The Residence and Faculty Cups are as serious as you make them—try and have fun with it. At the very least, don’t let it stress you out.

### Board of Directors

They are strictly around to support you; many of them will be your judges and will attend events with you, provide golf cart services to students or reps, create a presence on campus and support staff at concerts. In an online world, you may not need them to attend events, but they can definitely serve as a good venting body throughout the week when things go awry.

Finally, the Board needs to attend every opening ceremony. This is the best way to introduce the MSU to the first-year population. We each had a spiel of how our student union is the best in the world and allowed each of us to introduce ourselves. Get in contact with the ROP and create a schedule of when opening ceremonies begin and what time they are to expect you so your Board can attend each one. Due to their overlapping times, we did them all with a buddy (except for a few). It’s nice to have the whole Board at each one, but often if it’s adding to much stress to an already stressful time then it is definitely not worth it.

My predecessor created an outlook calendar schedule and colour coordinated it for each Board member so they knew when they **had** to be somewhere versus general things that they can attend and free time. Try to make sure at least 1 Board member is at each of the events with you for support (for in-person stuff, at least). You can also find the schedule they made in the 2019 Outlook calendar.

### Presence

Presence is the new WW website/app duo [though we didn’t get the app from the short notice we had to get it all up and running] that the University and the MSU decided to use before my term to fit the whole WW virtual experience together. I never really got all that much use out of it, but I’d recommend that you refer to Thalia as a resource since she and the University team will be experts by the time programming starts getting inputted into the site. The SSC used Presence throughout the year to run some of their first-year programming, so that might come up again as a way to incorporate first-year outreach through Spark and FYC, but they didn’t really bite when I asked them about it last year (though new PTMs might have different ideas/capacity).

* Try not to get involved in manually creating events on the platform. You might be asked by the WWFC or Thalia to assist with tech support for a Faculty or the Maroons, but just make sure that you do your best to prep them beforehand so that you’re not the only one responsible for the success of their events. Also, I’m sure you’ll have far less haphazard technical issues than we did this year, so good luck with everything!
* One point that I thought was an interesting opportunity was the use of points within the gamification components of the Presence website as a tool for deciding on the WW Awards. I highly recommend that you bring this up in early conversations about how folks plan to use the platform and start chats with Thalia to try and iron out what your proposal might look like. Otherwise, points just go towards prizes without a meaningful community vibe.

### Self-Care

This is a bible speech passed down from Admin to Admin, so read carefully, my friend. You will be the most exhausted a VP has ever been during Welcome Week. Here are some things you can do to take care of yourself in the process:

* It’s okay to not go to some night events (i.e., concerts).
* Meal prep or have snacks in the office because the lines are horrendous.
* Prepare a schedule for yourself and the Board so you are never late.
* Get sleep or the next day gets harder—maybe stay at the President’s place in Edwards to optimize the number of hours of sleep you get.
* Be prepared for when you’re asked to save the day—go with your gut. You are a problem-solver; you’re the most prepared human I know; you got this.
* You don’t have to say ‘yes’ to everything—some things aren’t your problem/you don’t have the capacity to solve them. Get comfortable saying ‘no’.
  + Relationships are important, so if you say ‘no’ then try to suggest another individual to contact if you can.

#### Shinerama/Welcome Week Charity

Charitable donations from WW have historically been redirected to the Shinerama fundraising initiative for Cystic Fibrosis. However, as WW has evolved, many felt that this approach didn’t allow for an equitable allocation of funds to other initiatives of similar importance that could also use the funds to support a charitable cause. Since Shinerama was rescinded, these charitable donations took on a new system that allowed for the reallocation of funds to various charities throughout WW. However, since this haphazard approach didn’t have the combined power of the unified approach, WW stakeholders will now propose a single charity whom WW charity events will redirect donations towards to create a holistic target for all WW participants and organizers.

Shinerama didn’t happen for WW 2020, but, in case you ever need information on it here it is. Due to COVID-19, I’m not sure how much the new charitable giving structure will be implemented for Welcome Week 2020 [it was a bit of a mess], but these points may be helpful when looking at implementation for Welcome Week 2021 (or Welcome Week 2022 at this point - who really knows [let’s aim for 2021]).

* We stopped doing Shinerama primarily because people were a bit tired of singling out one charity and wanted to share the love between other groups too. There might have been another reason to do with how the charity operates, but I don’t remember/wasn’t told.
  + Make sure you look over the new Operating Policy I made that goes over the new system!
* HCS and the rest of the University decided to opt out of our new charity process and focus on the University charity: United Way.
* Work with Maroons Coordinator and the Information Technology (IT) Department to set them up with a quick and accessible way of collecting funds online. When things go back to in-person, you might want to consider how that will be reflected in this system, but I wouldn’t worry too much about that for WW2021.
* Make sure the Maroons Coordinator communicates with Jay Barnes from the Accounting Department so everyone’s in the loop on where the money’s at.
* The Maroons should be having frequent communication/meetings with the Faculties, in conjunction with the WWFC–try to set up a Teams channel for quick comms.
* You definitely don’t need buses for Shine Day—mainly because it no longer exists, but also because I don’t think a replacement has been created as of yet. Save yourself the headache.
* The Welcome Week Charity should focus on raising awareness and collaborating with Faculties to engage first-years with fun events during the week—it’s not just about fundraising.
  + Sarah tried to get Faculties to focus on events that gave something back to the Hamilton community instead of just taking from them (e.g., grocery bagging, car washes, roadside coffee house, etc.). They raised less overall, but I think it left the Hamilton community with a better perception of us [which used to be a Strategic Priority under WWPIC].

## Recommendations

### Items

1. **WW Restructure**: With all of the changes set in motion this year, try to remember that the University’s plans to add new positions to the WWOB could be an excellent opportunity to boost current student roles already involved in WW activities. 2 new positions is okay but I’d recommend steering clear of the 3 positions that they wanted to make and instead funneling that money to support current MSU positions. It’s much less of a hassle that way and keeps the power dynamic relatively stable between the MSU and University stakeholders. Also, it’s critical to the structure that was approved at SSAC for the working group co-chairs, so I have no clue how you’d address that any other way.
2. **Annual Financial Review**: WW is going to change pretty substantially every year for the next few years. University folks agreed that it would make sense to review the finances of WW every year for at least the next little while to ensure we’re still providing appropriate programming that’s either useful, enjoyable, or both for first-year students.
3. **Return to Campus**: Try to be careful in how you approach the return to campus. It’s still a little uncertain how many people will be returning and the level of herd immunity that will be present by September. Either way, students will need to find ways to navigate campus and get tours or what-have-you and WW might be the key to that reintegration. Keep an eye out for public health guidelines and relevant science before making your decisions.
4. **Maroons Involvement**: Invite the Maroons Coordinator to relevant meetings. It is beneficial for them to have a good idea of the scheduling so they understand where decisions for timing is coming from and the rationale behind it. When the coordinator is not there, always keep the Maroons in mind. They are a team with a lot of heart and a lot of people power - a great tool to help support logistics. Make sure whatever you sign them up to do comes with a thought-out logistics plan. People love to ask the Maroons for help but then give them little to no direction and blame them when the event doesn’t work out - make sure people aren’t using them as scapegoats.

### Philosophies

1. **Be a Team Player**: Moving the needle will be difficult with this team. Get your MSU members (CE Director, VP [Finance]) involved with any changes you are making so you have a united front when you propose it to WWAC. Always try to find a way to integrate other partners into your program or project proposal so it can be presented more as a collaboration.
2. **Don’t be Afraid to Say No**: Remember that you and the VP Finance are the only folks around the table who will put the student and rep experience first. The two of you likely know what is best, so just make sure you communicate that clearly. Don’t be afraid to stray away from tradition—a lot of staff involved in welcome week have been in it for so long they are afraid of change. Make sure they see the changes as opportunities and you explain the benefit to students.
3. **Pick Your Battles**: You will not win them all and these are ultimately stakeholders that you have to continue to work with throughout the year. You do not want to be arguing with them, rather work towards a healthy relationship that’s beneficial for students. You will genuinely get exhausted by August if you fight every battle – weigh how detrimental or important the outcome is – and decide how you want to approach the meeting.
4. **Debrief with the Team**: You are one of the co-chairs of this committee, so try to reach out to committee members to check-in before or after meetings. Also, make sure you are reading the room and facilitating the discussion so everyone’s opinions are heard and no one is attacking each other: yes, even adults do this. Make sure you and Jacquie talk about what each of your roles will be and how you will work together to make sure the committee runs smoothly. We started the term where we alternated making the agenda, but I quickly became too busy and our agenda meetings just fell off. I liked having them because it became an opportunity to get to know Jacquie better, which served to make WWAC stronger and also help me get a graduate program reference.
5. **Fight the Monopoly**: Just ensure you are advocating for the scheduling of MSU events so they are not placed at 9 AM during a weekday when students are sleeping or that there isn’t an overload of “mandatory programming”—which means no one can plan events over them (i.e., IRIS or Mac Welcome). Students should have options and the SSC will sometimes try to monopolize on the best times in the schedule and make their events “mandatory.” This wasn’t really something I thought about this year with the new programming that they offered, but I’d recommend that you give it some thought with the new spread-out sparse event programs and just talk to Thalia about it a bit (since you won’t be on WWPIC yourself, unlike my predecessors).
6. **Take the Student-Advocate Stance**: Be an advocate for students in these meetings, so when you don’t feel a department is doing something that benefits first-year students in regard to an event or schedule timing—be unafraid to speak up and raise your concerns and use the phrases “on behalf of students…” or “students have mentioned concerns with…“ to hammer a reminder their way that you’re their representative and not them.

# Committee Meetings

There are several committees you are involved with. Make sure that you attend because it’s very rare that they ask for student input in major decisions. You and the board members will regularly be consulted in these meetings, so try to be present.

## Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC)

This committee oversees the Compulsory Ancillary Fee (CAF) Agreement, Student Life Enhance Fund (SLEF), Undergraduate Student Initiative Fund (USIF) and WW Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This committee is also the head of WWAC and can assist in final decision-making or direction that WWAC is unset on.

## Administration Consultation (Admin-Con)

The Student-Administration Consultation Committee occurs every two months with the MSU Board of Directors, MAPS, GSA and University Administrators (President, Provost, VPs, and AVPs when available). You probably won’t say much in these meetings, but it *will* make you feel very important to attend them, so I recommend that you go even for just that reason.

## President’s Advisory Council on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC)

A few PTMs will serve as advisors on different aspects of PACBIC. You don’t actually sit on the group yourself, but you’ll want to ensure that PTMs aren’t spending too much time contributing to this body in lieu of their regular duties.

## MSU Board of Directors

These meetings are whatever you want them to be; they can be opportunities for Board members to update each other on projects, to vent, to complain, to strategize, etc. We used these meetings because it was valuable for all of us to be in a room together for updates, brainstorming, sound-boarding and supporting each other.

I used these meetings to share updates on my projects, for the most part. We had “support circle”, which was mostly used by me. Use your discretion when identifying something as an agenda item, as oftentimes it may be better to discuss things with John in private in the event your complaint or staff advice is regarding a close friend of a Board member. Some general items that will be similar year to year include:

* Procedural items such as staff wage increases, request for course reimbursement, late health and dental opt outs (especially with COVID-19 promo making things more difficult to communicate to first-years).
* Discussions on topics coming to EB or SRA to get feedback or strategize on approach. I always gave the board a head’s up if I was adding a closed session item to EB so they weren’t thrown off guard and so we could be a united, if not at least an informed, front.
* Updates on each other’s projects, especially from Board members who are frequently out of office or have items that are long-term projects with regular updates.
* Human Resources matters related to full-time employment and significant part-time staff issues.

### Expectations

You will discuss this in your first few Board meetings regarding how you represent the organization and how critical it is for you all to be on the same page. Or, at least I think you will since I was never given any of this information during my non-existent skeleton of a transition. Some important things I recommend that you all discuss are:

1. **Work Hours**: What will be your business hours? What work environment are you building if you arrive to the [virtual] office after FT staff does? What is a sufficient reason to miss an SRA/EB meeting? How will you set a good example of work-life balance for each other and for other staff?
2. **Conduct & Professionalism**: You are a corporate officer of the Students Union—how will you be mindful of your actions and words outside business hours? How do you separate the times you are being yourself from the times you are being a corporate officer? What is off-limits to chat about in your office that is open-concepted and what is to be discussed behind closed doors?
3. **Lieu Time**: This is any hour worked outside of your usual rotation that you can claim later and take off (i.e., attending Welcome Week training weekends if you actually need to be there). How will you track them? How will the Board keep each other accountable to them? How will the Board ensure others are taking the time they’ve earned and setting a positive example for one another that doesn’t perpetuate an ableist workload standard?
4. **Email Response Time**: What can be Facebook/IG/Teams messaged and what should be emailed? What is your goal turnaround time for email responses? How will you balance social media messages and emails? I tried to get as many online conversations rerouted to my email as I didn’t like the pressure of my personal Facebook being used for work. I told people that I would never respond to Facebook messages but that if a PTM wanted to ask me something on Teams I would never be the first one to engage. I often responded pretty quickly, but the virtual office is something lots of people struggle with. You might want to test the waters a bit with what works best for you before coming to a final decision, but make sure your communication preferences are made *very clear* if you expect staff to follow them.
5. **Dress** **Code**: What is the expectation amongst the Board? Our Board kept it casual. On days consisting of important meetings, we still kept it casual.
6. **Background**: What background do you think will be appropriate for video calls? At one point, we all decided to get MSU-themed Service or Business Unit backgrounds for special occasions. We also all had a background with GC’s face on it. You might choose to pick a standard one for the four of you, but totally up to you and what your virtual setup looks like.
7. **Support**: How will you support each other? How are you asking for help? How will you ask each other what kind of support they need when they need it? How will you get delegate responsibilities when you’re overwhelmed? Ask the VP (Finance) for help on major projects and definitely don’t volunteer for too many things, even if you find them interesting: you can always provide insight at Board check-ins or meetings if you really want to be in the loop.

## Marketing & Communications Department

Wooder will set aside time every week to discuss communications issues and campaigns. Your initial meeting will be a Public Relations meeting that will test your ability to speak to reporters, how to respond to contentious issues and matters, and navigating difficult conversations. Or so I’m told, since I never had anything like this when I started, but whatever. Every meeting afterwards, Wooder will talk about the promotional schedule for the week and any hot topics in the comms team or just anything that’s relevant. Make sure you are putting different Service events on their radar to promote and bring up whatever you think they should be promoting better.

### State of the Union

This is a massive document that Wooder used to take the lead on to highlight the organization’s progress in your year. Your responsibility would normally involve getting a blurb from every service and department manager in addition to any other blurbs you may take on. Our Board didn’t do this and neither did the year before, but with the changes about COVID-19, it may be useful to bring back in one form or another. It’s a huge project that takes up a lot of resources, but it could be useful for student engagement if done effectively.

### Holiday Cards

These are super nice to do and every department really likes them. Create a vision and tell Wooder early on so he can sort out the best way to make that happen. Get Wooder to put your electronic signature on them and then divide up among Board members who will write a message to which department. We didn’t end up doing them this year because they’re normally done as cute get-together shot, but we couldn’t exactly do that. Something to think about.

### Hiring Promotions

Make sure you’re sharing your hiring schedule with the comms team when you have it finalized! I sent them so many different drafts of hiring schedules and there was even one hiring round at the beginning of my term that didn’t get promoted because I thought Maddison would handle it all (you know, because it’s an HR task at other organizations but not ours because #NoHRDepartment). Anyways, you’ll just want to make sure that stuff gets shared and the dates are correct. The new website is so ridiculously finicky and sometimes it will automatically close postings before they close, so just keep that in mind.

# Employment

Buckle in, because there’s a lot that happened with hiring this year that I’m about to cover.

## Hiring Committees

In the past, we’ve had issues where Hiring Committees have needed to change rather suddenly due to issues with members of the Committee, scheduling issues, etc. I took the liberty of making a point in removing Hiring Committee members from policies so that at least we wouldn’t have to violate our policies every year just to function. Instead, they’ve been compiled into an Excel document so that they can still be tracked internally and, ideally, posted on the website as an Appendix that can be approved by the BoD (as per **Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process**).

## Hiring Timelines

This year, hiring timelines were immensely delayed. Positions that are normally hired in late Fall are **still** being hired as I write this (end of April). Since you’re starting your role in May, I doubt this will be nearly as big of an issue for you. Hiring takes a lot of time out of your schedule, so try to space out hiring schedules so you’re not dominated by it.

## Hiring Practices

### Welcome Week

Refer to the approved NODA Review response on what’s going on with centralized hiring practices. It’s going to be a huge thing that encompasses all WW partners from Reps to Planners from MSU to SSC to HSC. Ask Jacquie and Jillienne (hehe, Jacq and Jill) from SSC and HSC respectively about how this will work. There’s a working group for this that hasn’t met in a while, but I essentially adapted their hiring system for the MSU this year and we collected ***a lot*** of feedback on ways to develop it.

### Everyone

Everyone, as of May 1, **shall use the new hiring system I put together**, as voted on by the Board. Make sure everyone actually does this (at least for the hired roles) and try to build the standardized question pools as you go so things don’t stagnate and you don’t have to reinvent situationals every year.

### Service PTMs

Hiring is spread out over both terms. Or, at least it should be (unless you’re me and decide to change JDs in almost every Service in a single year and have to wait forever for PTMs to get back to you about consultations but somehow get timely emails about how disappointed they are with your ableist, colonialist, and all-around oppressive hour tracking system that actually holds them accountable to their job descriptions, but whatever). How you divide up the positions is up to you—I recommend hiring the initial round of PTMs in October and save Assistant Directors till March. My hiring started in January and it’s been an absolute mess—don’t be like me.

* Set a meeting early with Maddison to divvy up responsibilities related to hiring and create a hiring schedule for the year.
* Strike Hiring Committees at Executive Board.
  + Victoria has copies of the motions and you can find them in my email. Get Victoria to do it: doing admin stuff for EB is like 75% of her whole job.
* Email respective PTMs letting them know that their position is being posted and a list of action-items you need them to do (e.g., create situational interview questions, take a headshot and fill out a blurb for promo, fill out their availability for application review and interview sessions/review).
* Double-check with Maddison that the job description is okay for posting and get PTM availability for training.
* Train the hiring panels asynchronously. Maddison already created a PowerPoint that just needs to be recorded and uploaded for EB members and PTMs. SRA members will need this for AVP hiring in April too.
* Office Clerks will coordinate interview scheduling (this saves you so much time, but make sure the questions and assignments are sent to them).
  + Use Daniela as a resource to gauge availabilities and determine hiring dates if there are no Office Clerks hired yet.
  + I sent out questions to candidates in advance— up to you if you would like too, different full-time staff have different opinions on this, but I do it because I prefer to assess candidates and how well they fit the role rather than their response times, their knowledge of the English language, and their ability to work on their feet (which is a pretty confounding factor for almost every position where none of that is important for their actual duties relative to the contents of the questions being asked).
  + I didn’t create and send assignments at all. I would recommend that you avoid this altogether unless you’re torn between two candidates—again, up to you, but assignments are very time-consuming to create and grade.
* You or Maddison will send out offers, post-interview rejections (doing this for all applicants is too hard), and feedback. Maddison will have templates for these and there are different templates available for sync and async interviews. I tried to get other people on the hiring panels to provide feedback and if they didn’t respond then I wouldn’t send any. It’s honestly just too much work.
  + If you require template e-mails for any form of communication, ask Maddison.

## Hiring Promotions

* Make sure you reach out to the Wooder *at least* ***one week*** prior to positions opening so you can get your promo assets. The Underground has templated a lot of this stuff already, but they need to know the dates and positions before they can advertise anything.
* Also, don’t be afraid to re-open a position if you feel it is necessary.
* A PTM can reapply for their position but, if they do, they must apply through the same process as everyone else and they must let you know in advance before they review interview questions with you.
* Find new and interesting ways to promote the PTM positions. Maddison and my predecessor hosted a Service hiring fair to help eliminate the barriers of applying for students not involved in the MSU. I found that the biggest issue with this mentality is that there are so many teachable things that we often note as requirements for candidates when we could just teach them those things when they come in. Of course, this would require our transition and training systems to be adequate, which they aren’t, which perpetuates the whole MSU bubble mentality.
  + Also, don’t feel weird about only interviewing folks previously involved in the Service—they are the most passionate and knowledgeable about the Service so it’s not a bad or unnatural thing to happen.

### MSU Hiring Fair

Maddison and my predecessor worked together to plan this event last year. They saw applications for PTMs increase by 40% overall (I know because I counted before I left), particularly from people who were not involved with the MSU applying for PTM positions, which is great to know that we are becoming a bit more accessible to people outside of the MSU Bubble. I think that this event would be great if we could standardize exec hiring timelines and promote those—some students can’t commit 12 hours a week to run a Service but they could commit 5 to plan cool events. Work with PTMs on this to communicate the value of the event and your expectations of them.

## Job Descriptions

Job Descriptions (JDs) take such an abominable amount of time to change. There’s such a significant amount of consultation required to amend or create JD for staff at any level (even volunteers). It probably doesn’t help that the old JD template had to be redesigned to make the document layout more accessible to visually impaired folks.

## Core Competencies

### Background

Core competencies are the backbone of any group, department, or organization. They guide all aspects of Human Resources from hiring to transition to performance reviews. That’s why a highly subjective set of core competencies can cripple an organization into stagnation, where the strategic vision can’t effectively translate into the practices of each employee and biases seep into the hiring process. The MSU’s core competencies were decided through market research but lack a metrical structure with which to implement them. As such, they don’t function as core competencies and rather as general adjectives to look for in applicants, which, I feel, misses the point entirely.

### Current Status

The Core Abilities Working Group (CAWG) did an excellent job working with the materials provided to create a robust rough outline of what core competencies the MSU should use to really lay the groundwork for all our HR functions and the direction of the organization. We had discussions about how different departments and roles require unique competencies, how ours might compare to the University’s, and the core attributes of all MSU staff. We’ve recently moved on to evaluating job descriptions to see how well the competency framework aligns with diverse positions across the MSU. Near the beginning of April, the CAWG disbanded as one of its members resigned and everything winded down.

## Transition Periods

### Background

Services love to start early. Well, I think we can all recognize that PTMs, more often than not, will begin work in their roles immediately after being hired. Of course, this creates a huge influx of uncontrolled overtime hours that sets a poor precedent for the rest of their employment and those of their successors, so I hoped to address that issue and that of inadequate transition, poor transition timing, and many other issues related to the transition process. Transition is generally a weak spot for our organization. Often transition packages are completely recycled or never completed, things are lost in translation, or folks disappear at the ends of their terms as they move on to the next stage in their lives, leaving incoming staff feeling confused and flustered. While this transitional error requires significant review across the MSU, PTMs experience this struggle to a similar level as do members of the BoD, but with much less full-time staff support and no paid overlap period during which transition can take place.

Our full-time staff transition requirements lack definition and structure. This inevitably leads to the loss of information and incredibly long adjustment periods, depending on how long one’s successor has worked in the organization and how useful their orientation was. Of course, this contributes to an overall cost-centre for the MSU, as new employees are paid their regular salaries to fumble around their positions with little to no guidance depending on the previous commitments of their supervisors. Overall, this system is inadequate for an organization of the MSU’s size and must be addressed as soon as possible.

### Current Status

All PTM transition periods and procedures have been drastically improved to include paid positional overlap, heavy reductions in unpaid work periods, increased transition report standards, and vastly superior training practices. All of this has been approved at the EB level for all Service Coordinators and Directors. Incoming PTMs phased gradually into their complete hour allocation to be fully inaugurated in their positions by April 1st. During the two weeks prior, they begin their on-boarding process in collaboration with the outgoing PTM to get a better feel for their roles.

Discussions have been had with the General Manager to identify opportunities for general job reflections or summaries to instil the same sentiment of a transition package while also making it more into a learning exercise.

## Confidentiality

You have three locked cabinets in your office to store hiring documents and other belongings. People stop by your office frequently [but not right now], so ensure that important hiring documents aren’t lying around despite being kept in folders. Your left computer monitor can be seen from a mile away, so view documents on the right screen when individuals are sitting in front of you. There is a shredder bin in front of the VP (Finance)’s office to toss out any documents. If you accidentally drop something in there, Victoria has the key to retrieve it. If you are archiving digital documents, don’t upload them to a public drive, as it has no restrictions on it and can be viewed by anyone. I’ve been working with Pauline on how to create better access management parameters in place for document storage, but that’ll have to be something you might want to figure out yourself.

With any HR matters or management issues, seek guidance from Maddison first, Board second, and John third. Regardless of where you go, hope you can trust them. There is a common practice of information leaking about staff and it is usually Board members, so set expectations with them from the beginning. I found myself to be the least secretive of the Board members this year, which isn’t ideal for this role, so maybe just be better than I was and make sure you only overshare with the appropriate people.

The MSU underwent a Full-Time Staff Review that led to the creation of Wooder’s and Victoria’s roles, plus others. I recommend that you ask John for a copy to read over to gain more historical context on what roles they previously filled and why they are in the positions they are in now. That said, you should **never** change the organization to fit the people, so just try to keep that in mind when people discuss organizational changes.

## Discipline

### Part-Time Staff Discipline

Like my immediate predecessors, I was far too soft on PTMs from a disciplinary perspective. This was mostly because I was too busy handling projects and administrative structures to bother with the petty grievances of staff who really just wanted to vent their frustration through their EB reports (rather inappropriately, I might add) and turn all their hatred towards me for the smallest things just because I was proposing solutions to decade-old problems that weren’t perfect the first time they were presented.

If you let one staff member take up all of your time, you won’t be available to support the rest of your team. At the end of the day, you are managing 20-something year-old adults. Yes, they are learning, but they should also be held accountable to ensure they are holding up their end of the bargain.

The process is simple—read **Employment Policy – Disciplinary Procedures** and examples of when staff were disciplined in the past (you can find all supporting documentation in your drive) to give you better context on when it’s appropriate or not to follow.

Here are a few examples for reference:

* Part-time staff who were repeatedly reminded to give an early notice of a LOA to ensure it didn’t impact the hiring schedule and coordination, but didn’t.
* Staff member who disciplined another staff member without authorization.
* An individual failing to submit multiple EB reports, budgeting for their service, and being non-responsive to communications from supervisor [this last one is critical in the online environment].

Executive Board is privy to knowing all disciplinary updates; give them an advanced notice when you are disciplining a staff member. I always take the teachable moment approach when disciplining someone after issues arising from correctable ill-behaviour, so the punitive measure is meant to help them improve as opposed to preparing them to be fired. That said, don’t be afraid to create clear deadlines for things and provide a tough-but-fair termination approach. When disciplining, try to keep the following in mind:

* Let EB know ahead of time and get their perspective.
* Ask Maddison to draft up a letter for you.
* Set up a meeting with the individual—let them know in the email what will be discussed so they aren’t caught off-guard.
* Have someone else (Maddison) there with you during the meeting.

### Full-Time Staff Discipline

If anything comes up with full-time staff, bring it to John and the Board’s attention immediately. Yearly turnover provides staff members a clean slate from which they can continue to build upon until the next Board arrives, so ensure that issues with behaviour and job performance are addressed in transition and are not lost in translation. Although it’s awkward to discipline staff who are much older, we must hold each other accountable. While they bring different perspectives, it’s also important to not be taken advantage of because you lack context and age. Remember that the MSU is run ***by students, for students***: you make the final calls and the buck stops with you. Sometimes people will claim something is the case because it’s “the way it’s always been done” but that’s probably the stupid rationale I’ve ever heard. That’s the sort of regressive reasoning that has been used for centuries and it makes about as much sense here as it did then; use evidence to shape your decisions and remember that *you were elected by students to represent them and not* “the way it’s always been done”.

John is not confrontational and has challenges with delivering news that may upset staff. In the same way that you are expected to have someone present when disciplining staff, ensure there is someone present when John is disciplining staff to ensure it’s *actively* communicated rather than passively communicated. It’s also just good practice not to put him in such difficult positions along when the message is often one coming from the Board: I always recommend getting the President to do this sort of stuff because you’ll be far too burnt out from all the times you have to do it with PTMs, but the VP (Finance) could do it too, depending on the dynamic.

## Recommendations

### High Priority

1. **Amend Peer Support Training & Development Coordinators JD**: A small oversight, I made so many changes this year with JDs for Peer-Support Services to do with the Directors and Assistant Directors that I forgot to make and approve the new JDs for the training and development execs that the ADs would oversee to help with training. This is also the only position on the exec that isn’t directly supervised by the Director, which gives the AD a bit of support but also acts as a bit of a buffer between the AD and general peer-support volunteers. I suggest that you get this JD to EB ASAP, either by email (preferred) or at the very first meeting. Directors have already posted the rest of their execs and will want this done very quickly, even though other things will come up. SHEC already sent me a proposal for it, so maybe just use that as a template for all the other 4 Services and send it out with a memo and an emailed pass-around motion to get folks to vote on it before you need to ratify it at an in-person meeting.
2. **Amend FCC JDs**: I didn’t include the FCC’s Director and ADs in the wave of JD updates, but so you’ll want to do that ASAP so that the AD can start on May 1st in a normal year and immediately during your term. It’s not that big of an expense, but it’s definitely great to keep as many similar-sounding roles consistent for their start dates and transition cycles to keep things easy for transitioning to your successor and communicating to PTMs and other staff members. Also, EFRT, SWHAT, and the FCC are what’s colloquially considered *Essential Services*, meaning that they normally operate through exam seasons due to the nature of the services they offer. You might want to consider adding Peer-Support Services to this category too, but definitely ensure that at least these 3 Services have this information incorporated into their transition periods in their JDs.
3. **Amend Macademics Coordinator** & **Speaker JDs**: I shuffled around the responsibilities for Student Recognition Awards away from myself and the Speaker to Macademics to provide a centralized awards Service that didn’t detract from the duties of the Speaker and, well, you. That said, I only overhauled the ~7ish OPs but never got around to fixing the JDs, so I guess you’ll have to handle that in the next little bit. Try to give the Speaker more responsibilities for SRA training and transition.
4. **Amend EFRT Director JD**: Check out the Service Review for EFRT this year to get more details, but I really just wanted to make this role into a Permanent FT one instead of the two PTMs we currently have. There’s just a real lack of support for responders in general and we can use the Service Review (albeit only a little bit, given the sample size) to leverage additional contributions from the University to support medical responses on campus. If you choose to do this, I suggest that you get a qualified paramedic to fill the role so that they have that first responder experience.
5. **Amend WWFC JD**: This role is constantly evolving and I was a little bit shocked to see that, after the previous WWFC accumulated >200 hours of overtime, additional responsibilities were added to the role before it was reviewed and actually downgraded for hours. I only agreed to it with the understanding that we’d review it again and probably try to have some sort of shared supervisory/financial contributory role with the University through the first-year orientation levy and the University’s HR would boost the wage substantially. Also, this would avoid complications where Faculty Planners who kind of report to the WWFC who would now be paid through University gradings could be paid more than the WWFC due to discrepancies in JD evaluation. The SSC voiced interest in making this change, especially when I showed them the Planner feedback which was less than positive about their relationship with the SSC relative the MSU. Sad for Michele, but happy for the opportunities to share supervision with Michele to make for a better and more unified system that supports Planners better.

### Slightly-Less-High Prority

1. **Amend Board of Directors JD**: These JDs are grossly out of date and in need of review. It’s not only an issue for performance review reasons, but also paints an inaccurate picture for potential candidates and general students about what the roles actually do. Try to get the rest of the Board to agree to a deadline in the summer to genuinely update their JDs to reflect what y’all genuinely do.
2. **Transition** **Periods**: Now that I’ve spent 8 months fumbling through the implementation of PTM transition options and potential timelines within a period of already-significant uncertainty, I hope that you can take a hard look at what does and doesn’t work with this system and leverage my failures to make the transition period work. I suggest that you create similar paid transition periods for the Speaker and the AVPs so that they can benefit from this refined system too. Oh, and you’ll definitely want to add in a transition period for SRA somehow too.
3. **Technology Reimbursement Extension**: I recommend that you make the workplace technology reimbursement that the MSU offered for its FTS this past year into a yearly allowance. It’s especially vital for SOPs/Interns who will still likely need to work from home for the most part, but it would be extraordinarily beneficial to keep that available for folks moving forward when discussing what office space might look like on campus as well as safety concerns that staff might have as things return back to normal. This could also be a clever way to navigate ways of incorporating communal workspaces for SOPs/Interns to allow for additional Main Office space for Permanent FTS.
4. **Part-Time Staff Benefits**: It’s been passed around a lot this year especially that PTMs don’t receive nearly the same level of benefits that FTS do. Of course, this is pretty common practice for many institutions, but there could be ways to extend some of the in-house benefits to these staff members should you so desire. You’ll probably notice that Services have benefits lines, but this really just translates to pay that PTMs receive during break periods. If you bring back the Technology reimbursement, I recommend that you at least consider extending that to PTMs.
5. **MSU Hiring Fair**: I think that this event would be great if we could standardize exec hiring timelines and promote those—some students can’t commit 12 hours a week to run a Service but they could commit 5 to plan cool events. Work with PTMs on this to communicate the value of the event and your expectations of them. Also, it might be interesting to consider making Service Assistant Director roles closed to only those who have not previously volunteered with the Service to bring in some fresh perspective and show students that we’re committed to bringing in voices outside of the MSU.
6. **Return to Campus**: You and the rest of the Board will have to decide on what parameters are appropriate for staff as you navigate a return to normal life. Generally, our Board was quite consistent and conservative (in terms of number of staff allowed on campus) throughout our terms to ensure that we didn’t have any confusion or safety issues cropping up. Sure, less time was spent socializing amongst staff this year, but the payoff of not being responsible for the death of a staff member or their relatives was definitely worth the precautions.
7. **MSU Core Competencies:** The CAWG should work to decide on which core attributes best align with the MSU’s mandates and how that will translate to a multi-level rubric for hiring. I helped to create and adapt a set of hiring practices with the SSC and HCS for MSU use and have been slowly moulding it to suit our organization’s needs and integrate feedback from hiring boards and new hires. Try to get the CAWG up and running again in the summer, or even in the early Fall (with HR support), with staff from all types of roles and staffing levels. Refer to my email for the CAWG’s past composition.

# Training

I’ve included a bunch of notes on what training stuff I’ve worked on and what next steps are currently on the docket. It’s pretty heavy, but perhaps one of the most important parts of the MSU. Enjoy!

## Centralize WW Training

### Background

Welcome Week (WW) reps and planners are historically required to receive a new round of training materials every year, often with only slight alterations, before they attend WW. Such procedures are often time-ineffective, redundant, inaccessible, and lack annual standardization. As part of the recommendations proposed by the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) and approved by the Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC), WW stakeholders were tasked with moving towards centralized training systems for all reps and planners. This item plays into this goal.

### Current Status

I’ve been meeting weekly with a working group of folks from the Student Success Centre (SSC) and Housing & Conference Services (HCS) to work on organizing a training program for this year’s reps and planners, as well as working to create a comprehensive framework for rep and planner training that aligns with McMaster’s Leadership Competencies and any additional core competency criteria that meets the needs of community.

## Learning Management System

### Background

A Learning Management System (LMS), like Brightspace (i.e., Avenue to Learn; A2L), allows for the MSU to expand the standardization, distribution, and quality control of training on a level the organization has never witnessed. This meant that we could increase accessibility through asynchronous videos, reduce workload for facilitators with recycled materials, and ensure a standardized learning program from year-to-year with the potential for simple and easy modifications to modules where appropriate. This platform also allows for the use of simple assessments to ensure training has been completed to a certain standard before work begins. Given the flexibility of modular training infrastructure, this new system allows for the MSU to easily collaborate within and across Services/Department to reduce redundancies both in time and space. And for free, might I add.

### Current Status

Over the year, I’ve worked with the HR Generalist & Clubs Support, as well as the Administrative Team Research Assistant to devise a comprehensive curriculum for all Part-Time Managers (PTMs). As we wrap up a number of other projects, we’ll continue to develop training materials to suit the needs for the completion of the framework. Previous materials have been reviewed and are currently being adapted. At this point, I’m unsure how much of this curriculum will actually be implemented, but at least the framework is in place now should any remaining items fall to my successor.

As well, the Administrative Services Coordinator, Executive Assistant, Speaker, and I are working to develop training materials for the incoming SRA and EB to improve on older systems and identify opportunities for a blended educational approach. There’s currently a stellar line-up of topics and items to share with the incoming SRA and I just hope it doesn’t become another one of those cases of recursive temporal sabotage where it gets rushed this year and next year and the year after and nothing ever gets better. I often lament that the current structure of the MSU intentionally keeps the SRA in the dark so that its staff can run it as they see fit without the nuisance of students who dare to participate in their own union, but then I remember that the MSU is much too dysfunctional to have that sort of malicious vision, so who am I to say for certain.

One part of training that I’m particularly proud of comes from the work I’ve done with the Clubs Administrator. Jenna Courage, after only one year in her role as a permanent full-time staff member in that position, took all my rushed educational suggestions in her stride back in September and has truly set an example for every other Department of the MSU on how training needs to be done. I am genuinely thrilled to see where she takes the Clubs Department in the future as she pioneers new ways to empower students to pursue their passions with likeminded individuals.

I’ve been working with community partners to bolster our learning repository. I’ve included a list below as just a few notable examples of the folks I’ve met with to create/craft this content:

Here are some of the non-MSU partners I’ve worked with so far:

* McMaster University Equity & Inclusion Office
* Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health
* Hamilton AIDS Network
* BodyBrave
* Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Overall, organizations have been splendid to work with and many have provided their own educational modules for us to use, frequently at no extra cost. While not all materials will be mandated for each Service, the vast majority will be made available for use by volunteers and staff members across the MSU and will hopefully address many of the MSU’s issues related to educational access to necessary training.

## MSU-Wide Volunteer & Executive Training

### Background

For the first time in MSU history, all Service volunteers were presented with training in Accessibility & Disability Inclusion, Anti-Oppressive Practices, and Sexual Violence. While this was admittedly a bit of a mess this year (since I organized the training over the course of the month that I was also transitioning into my role), it sets a precedent for the level of training the MSU should come to expect for its staff at any level of the organization and serve as a reminder that if our volunteers can reach that standard, no paid staff has any excuse not to dedicate their time to learning about these important concepts.

### Current Status

Recorded sessions are now on A2L that cover the basics of the previous training, but only Accessibility training has its own asynchronously designed module content.

## Accessibility Training Module

### Background

Kate Brown from EIO not only facilitated 2 sessions for all Service volunteers and executives but has also continued to offer Service-specific training sessions on an annual basis as a supplement. That said, she has already developed a complete curriculum of brief videos that make up a full module of accessibility-focused content.

### Current Status

I’ll use Kate’s video series as a foundation for the construction of a module-based accessibility course that attempts to mandate the basics with opportunities for additional learning.

## Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) Training Module

### Background

AOP training has often been developed either by the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) or MSU Diversity Services. However, contracting this training out multiple times per year for different groups requires a lot of coordination and often results in high time-demands for PTMs, paid staff, and volunteers.

### Current Status

Kate’s assessments were pretty stock. I recommend that you try to incorporate new assessment items into a question pool, remove inappropriate questions based on language use or discrimination indices (basically just stats lingo), and group topics into shorter videos that are easier to consume.

## 2STLGBQIA+ Training Module

### Background

In a given year, the PTM for the Pride Community Centre often delivers Queer Competency training in one way or another for various groups on campus. Such traditions are costly to the PCC’s operations, as they take time away from Service operations. However, this training is still valuable for community members and thus deserves to be addressed regardless.

### Current Status

The 519 and Peer-Support Services have been unavailable to dedicate time to training development due to the hectic year at hand.

## Sexual Violence & Disclosure Training Module

### Background

Sexual Violence & Responding to Disclosure training has been a consistent part of our staff preparations for a number of years. However, it was never offered on a such a broad scale as was done this year for Service volunteers.

### Current Status

EIO offered this training this year and they mentioned that a potential PhD. student had offered to create a McMaster module to cover this topic. No updates have come forward since.

## WW Rep & Planner Training Course

### Background

WW reps and planners are historically required to receive a new round of training materials every year, often with only slight alterations, before they attend WW. Such procedures are often time-ineffective, redundant, inaccessible, and lack annual standardization. As part of the recommendations proposed by the NODA and approved by the SSAC, WW stakeholders were tasked with moving towards centralized training systems for all reps and planners. This item plays into this goal.

### Current Status

I now meet weekly with a working group of folks from the SSC and HCS to work on organizing a training program for this year’s reps and planners, as well as working to create a comprehensive framework for rep and planner training that aligns with McMaster’s Leadership Competencies and any additional core competency criteria that meets the needs of community.

## Health at Every Size (HAES) Training Module

### Background

Body empowerment has been a priority for MSU Diversity Services and the MSU Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) for several years. That said, policies and educational materials that directly concern this content are not updated or available to students.

### Current Status

The module was approved by all parties, videos and questions were created and reviewed, and now it just needs to be put on A2L and it’s ready to go.

## Course Developer Training Course

### Background

Course development is an entire discipline unto itself, but that doesn’t mean we can’t try it out for ourselves. Excellent courses require the application of evidence-based practices for content organization, video creation, and apt assessment development. However, resources already exist that can be used to supplement this incredulous task.

### Current Status

I’ve added resources to this module that I’ve collected from the Educational Developers Caucus. Very little else has been done to explain the process for course development protocols.

### Future Goals

I hope to get these guidelines and resources in their rough draft by the conclusion of my term and make them available through their own Avenue course.

## SRA Training Course

### Background

Generally speaking, SRA members often receive a single round of training that is seldom adequate to allow for proper and appropriate guidance throughout their terms in office. Such standards for education are inaccessible, ineffective, and frankly unacceptable.

### Current Status

I worked alongside the Board of Directors, Administrative Services Coordinator, Executive Assistant, and Speaker to create materials for SRA members to serve as a comprehensive resource to promote discussion, advocacy, and engagement from the SRA. Some are ready; some aren’t.

## SRA Caucus Leader Training Module

### Background

Historically, SRA Caucus Leaders have received minimal guidance and training that prepares them for their ambiguous roles. Such conditions often amount to students feeling underprepared, and thus unsure what to do, for their roles.

## Data Collection & Analysis Training Module

### Background

Data collection and analysis in this organization has notoriously fallen flat when it comes to scientific rigour. However, when we expect individuals to come into their roles with the tools to conduct appropriate data analysis as undergraduate students, we fall short on the accessibility and quality of all the research positions we have. If we continue down this path, we will inevitably make more and more decisions based on spurious correlations and false assumptions.

### Current Status

Various tools already exist for simple data collection and analysis. I hoped to develop a playlist of these tools by the end of my term. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case.

## Data Communication Training Module

### Background

Data communication and report delivery will essentially define how accessible our research will be for the general student body. Currently, we have no standards for education or presentation for data communication in the MSU.

### Current Status

I know of individuals in the School of Interdisciplinary Science and of various video courses available to students that can be compiled for this project.

## Event Planning Training Module

### Background

Often the responsibility for delivering event planning training varies on a yearly basis and is shared by various positions. With staff yearning for additional guidance on how to deliver events in person and online, there is a definite need for a consistent resource that’s accessible throughout the year throughout the hiring cycle.

### Current Status

Event planning resources are available throughout the internet and MSU staff structure. I hoped to speak with various event planners throughout the organization to identify key learning objectives to incorporate into this module, but it didn’t exactly happen that way with the Campus Events Director gone until October on maternity leave.

## Promotions, Marketing, & Communications Training Module

### Background

Every year, student staff receive promotions training from the Marketing & Communications Department. While student feedback is generally quite positive, I often receive questions about promotional procedures on an ongoing basis. This suggests the need for ongoing resources for staff to refer to when needed.

In general, the Marketing & Communications Department delivers their training via in-person sessions which often adapt to the needs of the trainee. However, much of these sessions boils down to content that is generally similar across recipients that could be more easily wrapped up in a module with well-designed graphics, animations, and everything lovely we’ve come to expect from the department. As well, there’s room to create videos to teach members of the department how to operate equipment, record videos, and assist with transition when most of the team inevitably turns over at the conclusion of their contracts.

### Current Status

Since training was already delivered on this topic when I started, I reached out to the Marketing & Communications Department, as well as the Underground (as you witnessed), to devise appropriate content to deliver this training.

## Sponsorship & Donations Training Module

### Background

Very little is clearly defined for Services, Clubs, and other areas of the MSU as it relates to requisitions and terms for sponsorship acquisition and implementation. This has led to confusion and uncertainty for many MSU groups and has undoubtedly cost us a lot of opportunities to collaborate or receive financial or service support from external organizations.

### Current Status

The next steps require some correspondence with the Underground to get a better picture of what standards have been used in the past and what we should suggest for MSU groups for the future.

## Technology Competency Training Module

### Background

As it stands, the MSU has a weak internal infrastructure particularly within the realm of Informational Technology (IT). This has subsequently bled into training and transition processes, leaving incoming employees and volunteers confused and overwhelmed with the intricacies of our internal network and the technological instruments which we often rely on for support. Given the diversity of technological experience amongst users, even relatively simple tasks for some will inevitably appear as insurmountable tasks for others. This barrier creates an environment of inaccessibility that requires significant dedication to troubleshooting rather than actually working on the projects at hand, despite how easy it is to address.

## Recommendations

1. **WW Training Framework**: Further consultation is required, but the beginnings of a framework will be in the works for next year or so. However, a new curriculum will be in place for this round of planners and reps, including our very own MSU Maroons and Welcome Week Faculty Coordinator. You’re going to want to discuss things with Michele Corbeil to ensure the relevant MSU folks are included in these conversations. This learning framework has the potential to become so large and wide-spread that it encompasses all of the MSU’s and University’s HR infrastructure within a single multi-dimensional model for hiring and training, but that’s yet to be seen. It could be spectacular, but it could be create lots of restrictions for MSU folks since we wouldn’t have the capacity to upgrade the framework and it could require significant consultation to make changes if it’s so far-reaching.
2. **MSU-Wide Volunteer & Executive Training**: AOP and Sexual Violence training should be created as asynch content. You might not be able to get this from EIO, but there are lots of resources they can refer you to if you ask them. I don’t recommend that you use asynch as a replacement for synch sessions, but as a supplement to more applied sessions with EIO reps.
3. **Queer** **Competency** **Module**: Follow up with potential community partners before moving forward with curriculum development.
4. **SRA Module**: Don’t leave this to last minute. Talk with the Speaker, the SRA, and rest of the BoD to build this training as you go along. You might even want to do another synched training session in August/September to remind folks how things work.
5. **SRA Caucus Leader Module**: This module would likely need to be incorporated as a small portion of the general SRA training module that would be otherwise optional for other members. Generally, caucus leaders are heavily underutilized, so feel free to take this opportunity to better equip them as resources for their fellow caucus members.
6. **Data Collection & Analysis Module**: I recommend that you put together resources for this through collaboration with the School of Interdisciplinary Science for any researchers, surveyors, or analysts in the MSU. We have a data-hoarding problem with little analytical resources to use it effectively.
7. **Data Communication Module**: Ditto above. Only it’s more relevant for individuals who are creating reports/infographics. Even a fundamental understanding of basic stats can be a huge benefit for meaningful data comms.
8. **Event Planning Module**: This one is a little less necessary, but definitely something that would be helpful for PTMs and SRA members at the very least.
9. **Promotions, Marketing, & Communications Module**: You should probably request the creation of a module that addresses topics related to recording techniques, basic infographic submission, criteria for requests, and other critical marketing information that’s often relayed as part of individual training sessions. While synched sessions will likely still occur under this new framework, they will instead be directed solely towards the catered/applied portions for the trainees in question.
10. **Sponsorship & Donations Module**: As the Finance Committee comes to propose a guideline for how we go about accepting sponsorships and donations, we’ll get a better picture for how to craft this module.
11. **Progressive Training & Development**: Keep training on-going. Last year, PTMs had refresher training in September, but I just did the MSU-Wide Volunteer & Executive training instead which only covered the material from EIO. Try to offer them more spaces to discuss and troubleshoot things with and without you present. I recommend taking a largely async approach to handling this issue.
12. **PTM Budget & Advocacy Training**: Work with the VP (Education) and VP (Finance) to create thorough training sessions for PTMs. Budgeting should be the largest focus, as it is the newest thing to every PTM and the most complicated/inaccessible. Make sure you work with JJ to ensure the training is suitable for PTMs and still engaging. Jess made some training this year for SRA that could be helpful as a starting point, but she didn’t make it subject-based like I asked her to and she didn’t update and record modules for PTM training like she said she would either, so you’re sort of stuck with what you got, unfortunately. Most of the Services have an advocacy pillar and it is important to explain what that may look like in relation to the Education & Advocacy Department. Try to create an educational advocacy training session that is more tailored to Service-related advocacy, emphasizing how to advocate to the University (or simply when at the table with University partners, as they often are) and how to host an educational campaign.
13. **Technology Competency Training**: While we move to reshape the IT department, there are tons of freely available videos that folks can use to get a better understanding of the nuances inherent to the MSU’s networks and software. These should be added to the appropriate Avenue courses as they are identified to create a resource for those looking for additional assistance. Pauline has some training and so will Michele from the SSC about how to better use MS Suite, so I recommend that you leverage those resources and anything you find helpful from LinkedIn Learning (while we still have access to it).

# Space Allocation

Every three (3) years, the Space Allocation & Audit Committee (SpAAC) convenes to review the use of space throughout the McMaster Students Union (MSU). SpAAC operates as a specialized audit group out of the Executive Board to ensure all MSU assets are used to their fullest potential. In a normal year, SpAAC would have the opportunity to survey staff and spaces with a similar level of scrutiny. However, given the limitations of COVID-19, no in-person space audits were conducted as would be required for a thorough report. As well, the vast majority of staff members were required to reflect on their experiences within MSU spaces that were either (1) dependent on their most recent memories of the space, months prior to the submission of their responses or (2) limited to whatever minimal experiences they’ve had in their workspaces prior to their employment or the onset of the pandemic.

With this in mind, the committee took a very selective approach to the areas under review with the hope that those chosen would receive sufficient analysis to prove useful upon the return to campus. this year’s SpAAC targeted three (3) specific areas of the organization based on perceived needs of the MSU in the coming years:

1. Clubs Department
2. MSU Main Office
3. Student-Led Service Space

All staff involved with the above 3 areas were mandated to complete, though all staff were given the option to provide input of their own accord.

After leaving the SpAAC survey open over the course of several weeks, we collected responses from thirty-three (33) staff from Part-Time Manager (PTM), Part-Time Non-Supervisory, Student Opportunity Position (SOP), Full-Time (FT) Supervisory, and FT Non-Supervisory staff classifications, receiving feedback from close to every employee within each of the three (3) identified areas of focus along with staff from a few other areas of the MSU.

## Recommendations

The following section speaks to the recommendations brought forward by the SpAAC to increase functionality and efficacy of space usage within and across the MSU. Each recommendation categorized by the spaces themselves, rather than their Departments or Services, to speak to how each area could be best repurposed to suit the complex topological needs of the MSU. Recommendations took careful consideration of the multitude of spaces inhabited by the MSU and any potential expansions to that list within the near future (e.g., the Hub) to provide a holistic picture of how the organization may optimize its use of space in a prudent manner. Each recommendation has also been grouped within either a high or low priority category to reflect the combined importance and urgency affiliated with that particular course of action within that space.[[1]](#footnote-2)

### The Hub Space

#### High Priority

1. Consider relocating Campus Events and AVTek to the Hub to address issues with size, location, technology, maintenance, and all other reported issues.
2. Investigate consistent bookable meeting areas for Services through the Hub to facilitate private conversations for community groups and provide additional executive or volunteer meeting spaces—especially for Services without a permanent space of their own.

#### Low Priority

1. Investigate the potential acquisition of spaces that can be used for meetings with clients of Campus Events and AVTek to showcase equipment, staging, capacity, expertise, or any other aspects of either Service.
2. Investigate the use of the Hub for permanent housing of Services’ operations, including those of:
   1. SHEC, to increase its proximity to the new Student Wellness Centre (SWC) location in the Peter George Centre for Living and Learning and increase storage capacity for their health supplies and related services; and
   2. Diversity Services, to increase its proximity to the designated interfaith space and opportunities to collaborate with diversity-based services in the new facility.
3. Relocate FCC to the community kitchen space, as this space would ameliorate many of the problems brought forward regarding infestations, lack of refrigeration, and overall storage shortages.
4. Investigate health and safety considerations for the community kitchen space (e.g., training required for use, collaborations with other Services like Spark).

### Main Office Space

### **High Priority**

1. Reallocate closed office space to accommodate the needs of HR & Accounting privacy above the wants of other Departments.
2. Investigate the efficacy of all board and committee rooms to ensure an appropriate balance between bookable office meeting space and the need for private offices.
3. Consider the introduction of additional closed office spaces through formal renovations in corner offices (e.g., Communications Officer, Compass Manager, Network Administrator).
4. Investigate the potential for a shared Student Opportunity Position (SOP) community work area with dedicated storage space for each employee to facilitate the needs of the growing Permanent Full-Time Staff infrastructure, the idiosyncratic return-to-work schedule, opportunities for community-building, and overall workflow.

### **Low Priority**

1. Introduce new network port to facilitate infrastructural maintenance and developments from IT.
2. Investigate options for sound suppression within various areas of the Main Office, perhaps through a rotational bookable single-occupant space, to facilitate work done by the Communications Officer and other media production staff.
3. Investigate the possibility for a permanent working space for the Assistant Clubs Administrator, potentially through a shared Part-Time Staff and volunteer workspace.
4. Investigate opportunities to catalogue inventory within the Main Office, including the server room and the file storage area in the back of the office, to better serve the needs of staff in need of that storage space.

### ClubSpace

### **High Priority**

1. Investigate logistics for providing bookable private meeting areas for Services through ClubSpace offices.
2. Investigate the use of the Clubs Department space (incl. Assistant Clubs Administrator office space) to house:
   1. Diversity Services to increase its proximity to the chaplaincy, diversity-based clubs activities, and central campus life; or
   2. The Clubs Accounting & Accounts Receivables Clerk, to provide them with their own individual space that still connects them with a supervisor outside of the Main Office.

### Compass Space

### **High Priority**

1. Investigate the use of the Compass front of shop (MUSC Room 102A) for use by external vendors, Club/Service promotions, and other potential short-term rentals.
2. Research options for the continued use of the Compass front of shop for information-sharing through a kiosk system.

### **Low Priority**

1. Install clearer signage with relation to accessible service counters at the Compass front of shop.
2. Investigate the use of the Compass Office (MUSC Room 102) for EFRT staff.

### Student-Led Service Spaces

### **High** **Priority**

1. Work with the MUSC Board of Management to ensure AODA compliance in Service spaces, in line with the 2019 MUSC Accessibility Audit.
2. Work with Part-Time Managers (PTMs) to make improvements to Service spaces that don’t require significant renovations.
3. Investigate opportunities to provide a clear division of space in the EFRT Office Space for decontamination and treatment of patients vs. privacy and recreation of volunteers.
4. Coordinate with the MUSC Board of Management to renovate the flooring of the EFRT Office Space to reduce the potential for retained contaminant particles within the floor material.

### **Low Priority**

1. Investigate wayfinding (i.e., accessibility improvements to entrance/exit, clear signage) as it relates to the PCC.
2. Request quotes for the installation of wider doorways so that spaces are accessible for those with mobility aids.
3. Consider options for perishable & non-perishable food-storage at the FCC prior to their relocation to the Hub.
4. Request quotes for renovations to Peer-Support Service spaces to replace carpet floors with an alternative flooring medium.
5. Request quotes for the installation of non-fluorescent lights and/or light-dimmers in Peer-Support Service spaces.
6. Investigate ideas to introduce additional shelving and/or storage space for Services to house their inventory.
7. Coordinate with the MUSC Board of Management to evaluate the possibility of adding a dish sink to the EFRT office space.

### Business Unit Spaces

### **High Priority**

1. Investigate possibilities for providing accessible service counters at TwelvEighty, The Grind, Union Market, and the Underground.
2. Install visual indicator strips along the retail outlet glass walls and sliding doors at Union Market.

### **Low Priority**

1. Investigate wayfinding (i.e., accessibility improvements to entrance/exit, clear signage) as it relates to TwelvEighty.

### Ancillary Operation Spaces

### **High Priority**

1. Investigate opportunities for improved ventilation at the Chatime coffee shop to prevent accessibility issues arising from scent-related allergies.

### MUSC (General)

### **High Priority**

1. Work with the MUSC Board of Management to prioritize capital expenditures required for AODA-compliance.

### **Low** **Priority**

1. Work with McMaster’s Security Services and University Technology Services to assess the feasibility of a centralized campus access card system to prevent wasteful magnet card redundancies.

### Bridges Space

### **High** **Priority**

1. Investigate the potential for storage options within the current FCC space for office supplies upon FCC’s relocation the Hub.

### **Low Priority**

1. Investigate the potential of purchasing mobile humidity and/or temperature control units to mitigate food spoilage and infestation frequency.

### Campus Events & AVTek Space

### **High Priority**

1. Work with the MUSC Board of Management to request repairs to address any potential leaks that may lead to significant asset damage.

### **Low Priority**

1. Investigate the potential of purchasing mobile temperature control units to mitigate technological damage to expensive assets.

### Ombuds Office Space

### **High Priority**

1. Investigate space options to effectively facilitate the addition of staff member within the Ombuds Office.

### CFMU & Silhouette Space

### **High** **Priority**

1. Investigate areas for easy space optimization within the current space available through equipment relocation, small furniture purchases, or equipment reconfiguration in the CFMU space.
2. Investigate opportunities to bridge the CFMU and Silhouette offices into a joint work area to better suit the needs of both organizations to increase dedicated workspaces, improve communications, facilitate discussion, and reduce inefficiencies for shared staff members.

### **Low** **Priority**

1. Investigate opportunities to increase collaborative work/meeting areas within the CFMU space to facilitate community-building and overall collective workflow.

# Volunteer Appreciation Events

So, since I didn’t do any of this stuff, here’s a slightly amended version of what I was given:

## Eggnog & Sangria

Just because we’ve done things year after year, doesn’t mean they can’t change. Last year, they changed up Eggnog to make it less club-y and decided against drink tickets. They tried to emulate those Instagram photo exhibits (think Happy Place) and Trish did a great job of executing. For Sangria, they planned to give away a small gift to all volunteers and host a study session from them in the Grind, including a free beverage.

The budget line is under Campus Events, so you will need to involve Trish in these conversations. Last year, my predecessor also relied on Trish to plan it, as December is a lot quieter for them. They sat and chatted budget, capacity, timing, and theme and then she let Trish run with it.

How to plan it (just in case):

* Contact Campus Events Director to confirm event name, theme, details – and she will book the photo booth and AVTek for Karaoke and Twelve Eighty event space.
* Figure out catering. It’s going to have to be different than the last time with how things are with Twelve Eighty.
* Forward event information to the Underground to design a digital invitation.
* Circulate digital invitation to all part-time and full-time staff or the *All MSU Users* contact list.
  + Remind them periodically to invite their staff and volunteers.
* Show up early to the venue and help Campus Events with set up.

## Student Recognition Night

In the past Maddison, took the lead on this but last year they transition it to Trish’s role (rather sensibly too). She will do most of the heavy lifting and planning re: the invite list, sending invites, booking the venue, writing the minute by minute, etc. You are responsible for the following:

* Going over table-seating to ensure what is best.
* Contacting President’s office and Alumni for donations.
* Support Trish wherever she needs and extra hand—but Maddison and Daniela are also there to help her, so take a step back where possible.

Regarding awards, you and the Speaker are no longer responsible for dealing with these and they instead fall to Macademics. You’re welcome.

## Space Bookings

I recommend that you get more information about this from Victoria or simply contact the Registrar to learn more about it. I’m sure their procedures will change with everything returning to campus, so look out for that.

# Document Management

I made it a priority to try and address the issues within the MSU relating to atrocious record-keeping and general lack of consideration for the retention of documents from year to year. Here’s a bit about that and a few others.

## Online Document Retention Strategy

### Background

The MSU server is an absolute mess of files that are both inaccessible and useless in their current state. This means that even the BoD, whom ought to know where previous archives, contracts, and other important documents are, often haven’t the slight clue as to where they might even begin to look for them. This creates a clear transitional problem that frequently leads to, among other things, the duplication of proposals, misinformed approaches to work, and complete reliance on the use of full-time staff guides to acquire any information that they have every right to access and reference of their own volition without permission from those whom they supervise. Even despite the obvious potential for conflicts of interest and informational cherry picking, this is a broken system in need of a comprehensive long-term solution.

### Current Status

For months, I’ve met biweekly with the Human Resources Generalist & Clubs Support, the Administrative Services Coordinator, the Network Administrator, the Executive Assistant, and the VP (Finance) to help relocate all updated drafts of administrative documents to a new and improved filing system within the OneDrive. Progress has been excellent so far, though I understand that this side project requires full-time support from an IT team and the help of staff that aren’t currently employed due to COVID-19 (e.g., Office Clerks) for the project to really take off. However, I’m very excited with how things have gone and the potential for the future. We’ve recently incorporated the Accounting and Education & Advocacy Departments into the conversation.

## Mail & Voicemail

Apparently, you can call your office phone to get voicemails from home. Who would have figured. I never checked my voicemail throughout my term, so you might have some gems in there. Also, you have a mailbox in the office that will often get forwarded to you if you can’t access it on a regular basis.

## Redesign Templates

### Background

Documents within the MSU are often put together in haphazard, nonuniform, and creative ways. Unfortunately, this leads to the unintended consequence that our memos, reports, transition documents, and various other professional articles are not as accessible, engaging, or effective as they could be. However, there’s no possible way that we could address this issue and actually improve these documents without an updated template that demands a standardized approach and allows for continuous development.

### Current Status

So far, I’ve worked with others in the MSU to create templates for:

* Job Descriptions
* Service Reports & Year-End Reports
* Hour Trackers
* Budget Trackers
* Social Media Trackers
* Service Reviews
* Service Transition Reports
* Memos

## Recommendations

1. **Online Document Retention Strategy**: I planned to have all updated administrative documents from this year (e.g., JDs, minutes, agendas, memos, policies, etc.) on the OneDrive as part of this new system by the end of my term. I hope that they will work with full-time staff to fix this ongoing problem. I also hoped to have a rough outline for the operations of this system in writing with relation to naming conventions and organization by the end of my term, but no promises on updating **Operating Policy – Document Management** since it may be too soon to do that appropriately.
2. **Create & Review Templates**: I’ve received a lot of feedback about my new templates this year, largely because they weren’t even a topic of discussion until I got my hands on them and started fooling around with them. Honestly, there’s just a lot of stuff that the MSU does that can be made to be more efficient and more accessible and templates serve as a pretty great way to make that happen. Unfortunately, this required that I become a bit of an MS Word whiz in the process, meaning that you need to reach an inaccessible level of skill to operate the software to make it more accessible, but I’m totally open to showing you the ropes when you need a hand with it.

# Budget

Of course, most things in the world do cost money. There are a couple of types of budget lines that exist: operating lines (for continuous costs) and capital lines (for one-time or infrequent costs).

The most likely lines that you’ll want to use are under EXEC and ADMIN. If you are ever unsure of how to complete purchase orders, ask the Accounting Department and they’ll give you a hand. Double-check with the VP (Finance) if this is how she wants you utilizing the budget, as he may have a different strategy than previous VP’s. If you are ever unsure, just ask which line would be best to put it under—however, ***remember that you don’t have to ask permission to use your budget***, it’s just a clarification. Here are the budgets that you’ll likely find most relevant to your work:

**Exec 6147-0305 – Volunteer Recognition:** Student Recognition Night and PTM socials generally go through this line. You might also want to consider using this for Committees.

**Exec 6303-0305 – SRA Special Projects:** Let SRA members know that this is available, but it is up to the discretion of the BoD (in particular, the VP [Finance]) what it gets spent on. Make sure you set up clear criteria for how this gets used and remind folks throughout the year that they should use it. I recommend that you coordinate with the Speaker to confer what uses might be useful to improve our abysmal SRA retention.

**Exec 6402-0305 – Awards & Meetings:** Use this for any of your meetings where food or beverages is involved. You can use this line if you’re taking your AVPs to lunch or you and the Board are treating a university member to something.

**Exec 6405-0305 – Exec Meetings:** Executive Board (EB) transition meetings. My successor didn’t really deal with this as it falls under the portfolio of the President and the Administrative Services Coordinator.   
**Exec 6802-0305 – Transition Training:** This is used for paying for BoD transition.

**Exec 6801-0305 – MGMT Training:** This is for all your PTM trainings, food, stay and/or any keynote or outside training you’re hiring to come in.

**Exec** **6603-0305 – Services Special Project:** This is for PTM’s to access if they have a “new” idea that the Service hasn’t done in the past and, therefore, wasn’t an expense accounted for when creating the Services budget. Make sure you talk to the VP (Finance) to see where Services are at with their budget – if they have room for it, then save this fund for those who need it.

**Exec 6603-0305 – Special Projects:** The catch-all page for the BoD, this line is used for any of the projects the BoD may take on that need to be paid for. Vision Conference funding comes out of this budget and any other random expenses that may crop up.

**Exec 6615-0305 – VP (Admin.) Expense Account:** Your personal expense account. Use it to pay for conference/event fees you may attend, buying dinner for late night work, thank-you cards or flowers for campus partners, your police check, etc.

**Exec 6901-0305 – Travel – BoD:** The line where you would pay for any travel you may do (i.e., gas reimbursement if you need to drive somewhere) or if you choose to go to a conference.

# Internal Governance

The internal governance of the MSU is by-far the most overlooked and underappreciated domain of the MSU’s operations. That means that our internal operations are also the least efficient, essentially just leading to perpetual wastes of everyone’s time. Of course, it’s also one of the least accessible parts of the MSU: an issue I’ve tried to tackle for the past two years with little success.

## Important Policies

Here’s a list of all the important Corporate Bylaws, Bylaws, Operating Policies, and Employment Policies you should know for this role. I’ve bolded the critically important ones for your reference.

### Bylaws

[**Bylaw 1 – Definitions**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-1-Definitions.docx)  
[**Bylaw 2 – MSU Membership**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-2-MSU-Membership.docx)[**Bylaw 3 – Student Representative Assembly (SRA)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/02/Bylaw-3-Student-Representative-Assembly-revised-20N.docx)  
[**•**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-9-Fee-Appendix-20-21-updated-w-adjusted-fees.docx)[**Bylaw 3/A – Assembly Procedures**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-3A-Assembly-Procedures-.docx)[**•**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-9-Fee-Appendix-20-21-updated-w-adjusted-fees.docx)[**Bylaw 3/B – Standing Committees of the SRA**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-3B-Standing-Committees-of-the-SRA.docx)  
[**Bylaw 4 – Board of Directors & Speaker**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Bylaw-4-Board-of-Directors-Speaker-revised-20Q.docx)  
**•**[**Bylaw 4/A – Executive Remuneration**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Bylaw-4A-Executive-Remuneration-revised-20Q.docx)  
[**Bylaw 5 – Executive Board**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-5-Executive-Board.docx)  
[Bylaw 6 – General Assembly](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-6-General-Assembly.docx)  
[• Appendix A – General Assembly Special Procedures](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-6-General-Assembly-Appendix-A.docx)  
[Bylaw 7 – Elections](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-7-Elections.docx)  
[• Bylaw 7/A – Electoral Procedures](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Bylaw-7A-Electoral-Procedures-revised-20P.docx)  
[**Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Bylaw-8-Policy-Approval-Process-revised-20Q.docx)  
[Bylaw 9 – Financial Affairs](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-9-Financial-Affairs.docx)  
[Bylaw 10 – External Representation](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-10-External-Representation.docx)  
[•](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-9-Fee-Appendix-20-21-updated-w-adjusted-fees.docx)[Bylaw 10/A – Delegate Selection](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-10A-Delegate-Selection.docx)  
[Bylaw 11 – McMaster University Student Centre](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Bylaw-11-McMaster-University-Student-Centre.docx)  
[**Bylaw 12 – First-Year Council**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/01/Bylaw-12-First-Year-Council-revised-20M.docx)

### Operating Policies

[Communications Strategy](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Communications-Strategy.docx)  
[Education & Advocacy Department](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Education-Advocacy-Department.docx)  
[Interfaith Council](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Interfaith-Council.docx)  
[MSU Governance & You Committee](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-MSU-Governance-You-Committee.docx)  
[MSU Sustainability Education Committee](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-MSU-Sustainability-Education-Committee.docx)  
[Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-OUSA.docx)  
[President’s Council](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Presidents-Council.docx)  
[Promotions & Advertising](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Promotions-Advertising.docx)  
[Role of the MSU during Labour Disputes](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Role-of-the-MSU-during-Labour-Disputes.docx)  
[Role of the MSU in Federal, Provincial, & Municipal Elections](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Role-of-the-MSU-in-Elections.docx)  
[Sponsorships & Donations](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-Sponsorships-and-Donations.docx)  
[**SRA Communication & Outreach**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/AO-OP-SRA-Communication-Outreach.docx)

[**Awards & Distinctions**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-Awards-Distinctions-revised-20Q.docx) **•**[**Honour M Award**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-Honour-M-Award-revised-20Q.docx) **•**[**J. Lynn Watson Award for Community Service**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-J.-Lynn-Watson-Award-for-Community-Service-revised-20Q.docx) **•**[**MSU Merit Scholarship Award**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-J.-Lynn-Watson-Award-for-Community-Service-revised-20Q.docx) **•**[**MSU Spirit Award**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-MSU-Spirit-Award-revised-20Q.docx) **•**[**MSU Students of Distinction**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-MSU-Students-of-Distinction.docx) **•**[**Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-Rudy-Heinzl-Award-of-Excellence-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Teaching Awards**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Awards-OP-MSU-Teaching-Awards-created-20Q.docx)  
[Valedictorian Selection](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Awards-OP-Valedictorian-Selection.docx)  
[**Welcome Week Awards**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Awards-OP-Welcome-Week-Awards.docx)

[Ancillary Operations](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Ancillary-Operations-revised-20I.docx)  
[Business Related Expenses](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Business-Related-Expenses.docx)  
[Food & Beverage Services](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Food-Beverage-Services.docx)  
[• The Union Market](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-The-Union-Market.docx)  
[• TwelvEighty Restaurant & Bar](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-TwelvEighty-Restaurant-Bar.docx)  
[•  TwelvEighty All-Ages Policy](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Twelve-Eighty-All-Ages-Policy.docx)  
[•  Guest Policy](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Guest-Policy.docx)  
[Retail Services](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Retail-Services.docx)  
[• Underground Media + Design](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Business-OP-Underground-Media-Design.docx)

**Accessible Customer Service Plan (AODA Policy)**  
[Bereavement](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Bereavement.docx)  
[**Central Support Services**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Central-Support-Services.docx) **(Accounting Department, Administration & Human Resources Department, & IT Department)**  
[**Document Management**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Document-Management.docx)[Elections Committee](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Elections-Committee.docx)  
[Elections Department](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Elections-Department.docx)  
[**Information Systems Committee**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Information-Systems-Committee.docx) **(IT Advisory Committee)**  
[Internal Document Distribution](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Internal-Document-Distribution.docx)  
[Key Access](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Key-Access.docx)  
[**Marketing & Communications Department**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Marketing-Communications-Department.docx)  
[Room Bookings](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Room-Bookings.docx)  
[**Space Allocation & Audit Committee**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/GA-OP-Space-Allocation-and-Audit-Committee.docx) (Next Session: 2023-2024)  
[**Vice-Presidential & Speaker Elections**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/GA-OP-Vice-Presidential-Speaker-Elections-revised-20Q.docx)  
[**Welcome Week Charitable Giving**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/03/GA-OP-Welcome-Week-Charitable-Giving-revised-20N.docx)

[**Campus Events**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Campus-Events.docx)[**• Campus Events – Charity Ball Committee**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Campus-Events-Charity-Ball-Committee.docx)  
[Child Care Centre](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Child-Care-Centre.docx)  
[• Child Care Centre Advisory Committee](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Child-Care-Centre-Advisory-Committee.docx)  
[**Clubs Operations**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Clubs-Operations.docx)[**• Clubs Advisory Council**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Clubs-Ops-Clubs-Advisory-Council.docx)[• Clubs Financial Procedures](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/03/Services-OP-Clubs-Ops-Clubs-Financial-Procedures-revised-20P.docx)[**• Clubs Status**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/03/Services-OP-Clubs-Ops-Clubs-Status-revised-20P.docx)  
[**MSU Diversity Services**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-Diversity-Services-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Emergency-First-Response-Team-EFRT.docx)[**• Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) Advisory Committee**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-EFRT-Advisory-Committee.docx)[**MSU Macademics**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-MSU-Macademics-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Maroons**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Maroons.docx)[**MSU Food Collective Centre (FCC)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-MSU-Food-Collective-Centre-FCC.docx)[**MSU Maccess**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-MSU-Maccess-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Pride Community Centre (PCC)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-MSU-Pride-Community-Centre-PCC-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Spark**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-MSU-Spark-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Student Health Education Centre (SHEC)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-Student-Health-Education-Centre-SHEC-revised-20Q.docx)[**MSU Student Walk-Home Attendant Team (SWHAT)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Student-Walk-Home-Attendant-Team-SWHAT.docx)[**MSU Women & Gender Equity Network (WGEN)**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-Women-Gender-Equity-Network-WGEN-revised-20Q.docx)[**Service Creation & Review**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-Service-Creation-and-Review.docx)[**Services**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Services-OP-Services-revised-20Q.docx)  
[The Silhouette](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-The-Silhouette.docx)  
[• The Silhouette Board of Publication](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/12/Services-OP-The-Silhouette-Board-of-Publication.docx)

### Employment Policies

**Accessibility Standards**[Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/01/EP-Anti-Discrimination-and-Sexual-Harassment.docx) (Old)[**Disciplinary Procedures**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/01/EP-Disciplinary-Procedures.docx)[**Employee Conflict of Interest**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/01/EP-Employee-Conflict-of-Interest.docx)[**Employment Wages**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/01/EP-Employment-Wages.docx)[**Full-Time Staff**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Employment-Policy-Full-Time-Staff.docx)[**Occupational Health & Safety Policy**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/10/2019-MSU-Occupational-Health-And-Safety-Policy.docx)[**Part-Time Staff**](https://msumcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/EP-Part-Time-Staff-revised-20-29.docx) **Violence, Discrimination, & Harassment (New)**

Yes, that *is* all of them. Since you oversee the AVP (Internal Governance), you’re going to want to know a bit about policy. The Board will also likely refer to you when policies are being referenced or changes proposed, so try to get yourself acquainted with them in one aspect or another. **Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process** also has a definition (finally) for what delineates different types of policies and their approval procedures.

Also, at the time of writing this (April 28, 2021), these policies haven’t even been update to reflect changes made to Departments and IT stuff as of SRA 21C which happened a few days ago (so I’ve put the new titles in parentheses). Something that will be important to keep on top of when Daniela or Victoria forget to ensure out public documents are updated to the updated drafts.

## Recommendations

### Items

1. **EP – Violence, Discrimination, & Harassment**: This comes as a huge change to better the lives of students and staff experiencing violence, discrimination, and/or harassment in the workplace and on campus. The main shift is moving towards using the University’s resources to perform our investigations and essentially all intake procedures relating to those issues for all levels of staff. When someone submits a formal complaint, we don’t have a body who can determine what the next steps are—the University has an entire assessment team to do that. Essentially, the MOU has just been approved to read that whatever recommendations that they have for our student staff shall be followed and for our non-student staff shall be up to our discretion, for the most part. It’s been 2–3 years in the making, so just make sure you don’t forget to finish up our side of the policy stuff that explains the centralized intake process and refers to what the MSU offers relative to the University.
2. **OP – Accessible Customer Service Plan** & **EP – Accessibility Standards**: The former hopes to tackle any accessibility standards as it relates to customer service and how the MSU interacts with external parties while the latter focuses more on what approach the MSU will take to provide accommodations for its volunteers and staff. The Employment Policy is in the final stages of review while the Operating Policy is slightly behind that. I’m leaving you with the long-awaited second round of feedback from EIO’s Kate Brown, so I recommend that you work on this with your ARA and maybe even AVP (IG) to finalize in the next month or so.
3. **Occupational Health & Safety Policy**: Honestly, this policy is just out of date and I didn’t even notice it was a thing when I reorganized everything because it’s not even named the same way as everything else. Just make sure it gets fixed and updated, at the very least.
4. **EP – Disciplinary Procedures**: Our disciplinary procedures just need to be reviewed a bit to reflect changes in other EPs that establish factors that result in immediate termination. I’d recommend that you submit this, along with any final EP draft, to HR and legal for review before you set in in motion.
5. **OP – Service Creation & Review**: The Service Review process needs a bit of love. I suggest that you work with the incoming AVP (Services) to discuss what systems might be worth continuing and ways that the overall process can be improved or at least become more reflective of what’s codified in the OP.
6. **MSU Branding**: I recommend that you try to incorporate the letters *MSU* at the beginning of any Service OPs to ensure that the language communicates that the Service is of the MSU wherever possible. Far too often, there’s confusion about what’s University vs. MSU and sometimes it’s not enough just to have an MSU OP: you have to put MSU in the OP title as a reminder for the members of those Services and those who interact with them. Use at your own discretion with all policies.
7. **Organizational Chart Updates & Postings**: Our organizational chart has never been up to date ever since it was created for the first time (to my knowledge) last year. Since this serves as such a simple and helpful tool for organizational review and subsequent reform, I felt it necessary to update. I have been in conversations with the Underground to make org charts clearly available on the MSU website for individual Services and as part of a holistic graphic. Please make sure that the org chart remains up to date with all org changes so at least someone in the MSU knows who we employ and how the MSU actually functions.

### Philosophies

1. **Better, not Perfect**: Update policies to make them more accurate and increase their longevity. You don’t have to overhaul every policy every time you touch it and you *certainly can* edit a policy more than once throughout the duration of your term if you need to. Some policies need lots of love and if you had to fix every last part of a policy every time you wanted to update a part of it, nothing would ever get fixed and we’d be left with decades of backlogs. Oh wait, that’s what happened. Also, no one had a clear guide for how to change policies until this year, so use Bylaw 8 to your advantage.

# Services

I must admit, Services weren’t that big of a focus for me this year. Honestly, they generally need to be given more autonomy in how they function, but within a structure that provides support and administrative oversight. It’s definitely not an easy balance to achieve, but an important one to strike nonetheless.

## PTM Meetings & Check-ins

My predecessor held 2–3 full staff meetings per term, an individualized formal check-in once per term, informal check-ins regularly, and the AVP (Services) should hosting cluster meetings. I, on the other hand, asked explicitly for monthly check-ins and most Services started ignoring me by January, if not sooner. This, of course, is completely unacceptable and really should have been made more explicit.

Attendance will be an issue despite asking for their availabilities ahead of time because things just come up. Try to make PTM meetings less you-talking and more of a space for them to connect and support each other. My predecessor gave minimal updates, then brought up different topics of conversations around challenges they were experiencing and how they have overcome those challenges. This can be a great space for PTMs to ask each other how to approach a problem, no one will understand their challenges better than each other so give them the space to support and learn from each other. It can be hard to get PTMs to see value in these meetings, and it can be like pulling teeth sometimes to get them to engage. Try different facilitation styles; having snacks always helped too. I never held one because I was far too busy just trying to survive and address their problems from over the summer (or the last few decades, when talking about hour tracking) and it really soured things.

Socials were hard [I never even tried it], but my predecessor mostly did dinners or socials on campus to make is easily accessible. Remember that you are working with a wide range of individuals so make your socials flexible enough to cater to all individuals. Also, reach out to them to see what kinds of things they would like to do so you’re not just left guessing (even though many won’t respond to your request).

## Performance Evaluations

Digital evaluation forms are accessible through your OneDrive [though I can’t remember where they are—that’s what the search function is for]. Circulate deadlines for these evaluation forms ahead of time, albeit providing a one-month notice was not sufficient enough for my staff. Your responsibilities are as follows:

* Digitize 2-3 anonymous forms: Supervisor Evaluation (for PTMs to evaluate you), Part-Time Manager Evaluation (for executives to evaluate PTM), and Self-Evaluation (for your PTM to reflect on themselves)—I didn’t have PTMs do a self-reflection (or a performance review at all, because I didn’t have the time or the working dynamic to pull it off, but you do you).
  + Maddison should collect the Board evaluations and sit down with each Board member to go over them. We never did these this year.
* Circulate links to forms with one (1) deadline for all.
  + Try to set it before the end of the Fall term, so that you can consolidate data into graphs over the break and prepare notes to talk about it during the Winter term.
* Consolidate feedback and input into the summary evaluation form that Maddison created—review this with PTMs during your one-on-ones. Not sure about the Board stuff though, so maybe just try that at your leisure.

### Year Plans

Executive Board expects a year plan from each PTM and they must be approved prior to the school year. You are responsible for the following:

1. Send PTMs their year plan template and set a date for a draft to be emailed in.
2. PTMs send in their draft and you take a week to review and provide feedback.
   * I got Victoria to review all YPs, TRs, and Reports this year, which really saved me a lot of time.
3. PTMs send you a final copy of their year plan.
4. You submit their year plans to get approved at EB.
5. Regularly check on year plan progress in your individual meetings with PTMs.

This goes for the AVPs too. The SRA and Board of Directors skip step 2 and 4 and submit their year plans to the SRA for approval. Be sure to have EB thoroughly read the reports to critically set the direction for Services .

## Executive Board Reports

Reporting to EB is important, as it is the only way we hold PTMs accountable from a governance perspective. The purpose of our Services is to fill a gap within the University sphere where these reports are meant to ensure we are doing the work we’re meant to do, as well as leave a paper trail behind for historical context. You are responsible for the following:

* Create the reporting schedule alongside Victoria—double-check that every Service appears the correct number of times. Here’s my recommended schedule:
  + Spring/Summer: 2 Reports & Year Plan (3)
  + Fall: 2 Reports & Rough Transition Report (3)
  + Winter: 2 Reports, Year-End Report, & Final Transition Report (3.5)
* Certain events come up during Service operations at a particular date, so be flexible in providing extensions so PTMs can include said events in their reports.
  + If a report is late, just move them over to the next meeting and **make sure they know** that it’s due for that date.
* Whenever EB has follow-ups, write them down as a note and stay on top of things even though it will be hard to keep up with all the discussions and action items.
  + If a PTM is not present, summarize the report on their behalf and note down questions to email the PTM for follow-up.

## Summer Services

Due to COVID-19, you won’t have many Services operating events in the summer. Make sure to check on EFRT and FCC, as they typically operate in the summer and may be at a loss of what to do due to COVID-19, though the former will likely be training and prepping for whatever news you’ll be brining them about the Fall term. I would also suggest getting all Serivces to start making contingency plans for the fall if things move back in-person; at least, plan for an in-person Winter term (in my opinion).

## Peer-Support Services

Good luck—make sure they are working to support each other and try to check in on all of them throughout the year to **ensure they are not going over their hours**: you know what to do.

### Peer Support Training

I have no clue what this is talking about, but here’s a note about Peer Support Training:

It should be better organized by whoever it is and incorporate a schedule that delivers generalized training first and specialized training after.

* There needs to be a good balance of centralized training and PTM’s creating and planning their own aspects of training. PTMs may try to get out of training session that they will ‘cover themselves’. Stand your ground—if you believe the training is good for everybody to receive, let them know they need to attend.

This year, I never offered this training, so PTMs designed and implemented it themselves on the Service level and, perhaps unsurprisingly, it led to lots of overtime accumulation.

## Welcome Week Services

Check-in with Maroons, and the WWFC periodically as their star moments are approaching in four months. Have a couple of meetings leading up to Welcome Week all together to discuss communication with you, expectations, support they will need, and peak times they anticipate needing your help during the week.

## Service Offerings

Every year there will be someone with an idea for a new Service [perhaps before my year]; just be critical of whether the idea is “unique” and fundamentally needed to be provided through the MSU instead of being offered by a University department. Be critical of the Services we have and of the Services we could have. You will know better than anybody where our Services are lacking and where they need to go. Don’t be afraid to prune Services to allow for more overall growth. Remember money is not endless—every dollar we spend is a dollar a student gave us. We can’t endlessly expand so don’t be afraid to clear the way for new ideas down the road. That said, we’ve cut around 50% of our Services over the past few years along, so try to use that as a last resort. That also said, don’t try to fit a square peg into a round hole when you notice that a Service could be altered to fit a new mandate.

## Director & Assistant Director Influx

### Background

JDs across the MSU require some serious updates. It would then come as no surprise that folks who don’t have accurate JDs often experience occupational drift, wherein they take on whatever responsibilities they feel best suit their skills and interests rather than those that the position was made for and the duties they’re expected to fulfill. Of course, this has a tremendous impact on organizational functioning, policy accuracy, and workload management, particularly for PTMs.

For many years, the PTM hour overage issue has plagued PTM workloads and often resulted in a large sum of work hours that haven’t received any form of authorization or compensation. Of course, this long-standing system is obviously broken and must be fixed. So, naturally, I took a stab at it.

### Current Status

The vast majority of PTM JDs have been updated and approved, with new Assistant Directors added for all the Peer-Support Services and MSU Spark (to supplement the rescindment of MSU Horizons).

Hour tracking systems have been beta-tested this year, but clearly lack the sophistication and optimization that multiple years of review may lead to. However, after further investigation, I’ve come to realize that the hour approval system across the entirety of the MSU lacks structure, consistency, and clarity—despite the clear need for a better system that encapsulates the diversity of roles and fluctuating hours that its employees work.

## Awards Committee Structure

### Background

Currently, the awards committee structures and responsibilities have involved the Speaker for quite some time. However, award committee processes would be better off delegated to members of the BoD since they already interact with these people on a regular basis, making it much simpler to strike the committees.

### Current Status

Recent Service Reviews have brought interesting possibilities to light that may address major issues with our current system in several clever ways.

## Student Crisis Protocol

### Background

Volunteers in various levels of the organization, though particularly focussed within Peer-Support Services, often receive disclosures or experience traumatic events before receiving little to no professional support. This is an unsustainable and amoral trend to let continue, as it puts students’ mental health on the line to ensure Services can operate and it allows for PTMs to bare a significant portion of that burden.

### Current Status

The SWC doesn’t seem to think this is a priority, so we’ll have to try and address this in other ways or continue to push for this to happen through University support. That said, their feelings about it seems to shift every time I speak with them, so I’m not sure how to proceed with this.

## EOHSS

Health and safety approval needs to happen for all events and activities hosted by all Services. This includes, but is not limited to:

* Meetings
* Community Support Groups
* Drop-In Peer-Support Sessions

So long as the space is open, virtual or otherwise, they need to get it approved. If it’s medium-risk or lower, it just needs Victoria’s approval. Otherwise, you’ll need to do it too. Before this year, the AVP (Services) did it instead of Victoria, but I feel this system makes a lot more sense given the portfolios for both roles. Also, since you can blanket book activities for multiple occurrences, PTMs need to be getting approval for everything. Use this system as a monitor for all Service events and **never give retroactive approval**: don’t encourage bad behaviour.

## PTM Management

Find a balance between being friends and being a manager with your PTMs—it will be challenging, but remember—at the end of the day, they are *your* employees. Remember that we are an actual real-life company—people should show up on-time for what’s required of them, abide by our operating parameters, respond to your emails, and do good work. Asking them to do those things is not just you *being mean*, it’s you having normal expectations that any other employer would and should have of someone who’s paid to do their job and do it well. Always be compassionate but stand your ground—students are paying for and depending on these Services. Our PTMs have a responsibility to ensure that we are spending students’ dollars appropriately on a Service level—**that’s on them, *not you***.

## Recommendations

1. **Director & Assistant Director Influx**: I suggest that you do another review of all these JDs at the end of the year to see how things go. They were all graded as brand new JDs and part of our wage review process evaluates on whether or not individuals in the role go over hours and by how much (which is completely ludicrous when you think about it).
2. **Service Sponsorship Policy & Guidelines**: Very little is clearly defined for Services, Clubs, and other areas of the MSU as it relates to requisitions and terms for sponsorship acquisition and implementation. This has led to confusion and uncertainty for many MSU groups and has undoubtedly cost us a lot of opportunities to collaborate or receive financial or service support from external organizations. Try to figure out a system that allows PTMs to seek out external sources of funding so they’re not just left arguing with the VP (Finance) and yourself about how much you’ve trapped them in financial prison.
3. **Student Crisis Protocol**: Try to open dialogue with SVK, Rosanne, Arig, and/or SAS to see how you can create better ways to support volunteers and PTMs so they’re not stuck with no mental support and you’re not left as the final funnel point for dealing with peer-support trauma.
4. **EOHSS Approval & Itinerary Templates**: PTMs have gotten away with not getting approval for events, which leaves the MSU open to substantial liabilities. This goes for meetings as well, even in a virtual environment (you never know). Also, I wanted to create a template for itineraries as part of this submission process but never got around to it. Ensure that PTMs are submitting itineraries with their events if they want them to get approved so that you actually know that they know what they’re doing and you can see what the event’s actually about.

# Employment & You

## Payroll

You get paid through payroll on a biweekly basis, as coordinated by Kevin from Accounting. However, new this May, we’ll be migrating to a new Human Resources Management (HRM) system called Always Developing People (ADP). Apparently, it’s going to be a messy onboarding process, but you should still be paid just fine. There’s supposed to be an app, embedded overtime and vacation requests, and a bunch of other stuff in the new system that I’ll never get to see, but good luck!

## Time Off

### Lunch Time (1H/D)

No employee may work more than five (5) consecutive hours without scheduling a one (1) hour meal break. Don’t forget to include this in your lieu hour calculations. Also, **take lunch breaks**! **Schedule *around* them, *not* *through* them**. Oh, and tell the other Board members to do the same.

### Break Time (1H/D)

Employees are entitled to a fifteen- (15) minute break after any two (2) consecutive hours of work, which is included in the normal hours of work. Keep this in mind for your lieu hour calculations and also for SRA meetings for the sake of AVTek staff and the Recording Secretary. In a regular 9–5 work day, this amounts to one (1) hour of break time.

### Appointment Time (8H/Yr)

You get a total of eight (8) hours leave per calendar year to attend personal appointments. Try to mark this down separately in your lieu hour calculations.

### Lieu Time

The MSU, by nature of its current structure across a multitude of positions, discourages healthy relationships between its employees and the work they perform. While not exclusively problematic for Student Staff, they often get hit the hardest as individuals who are new to the workforce. For PTMs, this means a host of issues; for you, an excited and passionate student leader coming into a role with tremendous power and opportunity, this means you will need to put your foot down: like, a lot.

First off, you don’t qualify for lieu time in the conventional sense, nor do you have a conventional supervisor to approve it even if you did. This means that you don’t get paid out for them if you get too many and they’re pretty much just awarded to you as a “courtesy”, since it really amounts to a 12-month averaging agreement across the entire term but you don’t get paid for overages (it’s an Employment Standards Act thing, but I wouldn’t worry too much about the semantics here).

Instead, you and the rest of your Board will likely just track your own hours and mark down all the hours that you work over the regular 9–5. You’ll likely then send each other requests when you’re using larger periods of lieu hours at once (e.g., I took a week off in December) or just mark it down in your calendar if it’s just a brief period.

*Track diligently. Use frequently. You’ll likely earn the most hours and need to spend them more than anyone else to make up for that time and energy. Whatever you do,* ***don’t stockpile them; set a lieu hour limit, stay within it.***

You’ll need to set clear boundaries with work to thrive in this role without giving it your soul. Turn off Teams on weekends, limit work Facebook/IG chats, set clear and firm expectations for peers and those who you supervise. You’ll thank me later.

## Days Off

### Personal Days (10D/Yr)

You will earn up to ten (10) personal days throughout the year that you can use whenever you wish to. They’re like sick days, only more general and you don’t need any proof or anything to take them. If you decide to use your lieu time instead for time off, you can get paid out for $30/unused personal day at the end of your term.

### Vacation (1.25D/M or 15D/Yr)

You are eligible for up to three (3) weeks’ vacation, I didn’t use mine and chose to get paid out (at my regular rate) instead because of the sheer lieu hours accumulated.

We set summer hours for the staff and I recommend you take advantage of early closures on Fridays. Take a break or get ahead; summer is the best time to get things done because students aren’t around.

## Benefits

You have full-time employee benefits and **don’t hesitate to use them**. There is a package from Manulife for you, which explains your benefits package and how to access health, dental, vision, etc.

1. **Expense Accounts**: You receive $600.00 for your personal expenses and there is flexibility in how you spend it. That said, it entirely depends on your Board. My transition report mentioned how they used it for computer repairs but my Board declined that request. You’ll probably use this for a police background check, appreciation stuff, and maybe a meal or two if your Board is like mine was, but who knows.
2. **Manulife Benefits Package**: Maddison will provide you with a booklet of all the benefits you’ll get through insurance. On the plus side, it’s pretty extensive and lots of the benefits reset at the end of the calendar year (so you can use them up to December and they reset) or they have stuff coverage for things that are normally afforded every 2–3 years (e.g., glasses) that you can get in your one year in the role. On the downside, you only qualify for Manulife benefits after 3 months of employment.

You often pay out of pocket and claim the amount online. It’s exceptionally easy to set up once you receive your Manulife card with the account details. These benefits extend one month after your term, so if you’re too busy – use it then.

1. **Full-Time Staff Educational Reimbursement**: You essentially get up to $400 to go on whatever educational venture you want. It can be used for professional courses, GMAT courses, etc. I used it for a year-long subscription to DataCamp and Duolingo, GC used it for either GMAT or LSAT, and Ryan used it for his uni courses. Whatever floats your boat, if that’s something you were interested in.
2. **4% RSSP** **Matching**: You can contribute 4% of your salary to RSSP and the MSU will match it, which is absolutely worth it if you are currently using one. Personally, I store my savings in a TFSA and manage my own investments so I didn’t find it exceptionally useful for me, but lots of people do it so maybe talk to Kevin from Accounting or a personal accountant to see if it’s worth your while. Might be more worth it if your wage goes up, since it acts similar to a tax deferral.
3. **Interest-Free Technology Loan**: You can update your computer (or other applicable tech stuff) but payments will come out of pay cheque in instalments. You can loan up to $5000 at a time, but I’d recommend that you check out **Employment Policy – Full-Time Staff** before making a purchase.
4. **Cell Phone Reimbursement**: You receive $80 per month for cell phone bills but will receive the lump sum every four months. Don’t question it.
5. **Full-Time Staff Health & Wellness Reimbursement**: This used to be a Pulse membership, then it was gym equipment equivalent to the cost of a Pulse membership, now it’s pretty much a universal health and wellness reimbursement equivalent to the cost of a Pulse membership (~$315). There’s a form I made with Daniela this year to outline what qualifies, but it’s pretty general. We discussed that it can also be used to supplement Manulife benefits, but they’re all reviewed by Daniela so you could always ask her if you’re curious.
6. **Subsidized Day Care Costs**: Unless something dramatically changes for you in 12 months, you won’t need this, but Full-Time Staff get subsidized day care services at the MSU Child Care Centre.
7. **Business Cards**: Not incredibly valuable, especially in the online world, but at least they serve as a reminder that you actually do stuff and you’re super professional. Keep them with you for events, lobby meetings, and give them away when/if things are in-person.

If you have any further questions regarding staff benefits, reach out to Maddison (for Manulife) or Daniela (for MSU) and they’ll give you the scoop.

# University Contacts

Here’s a list of notable University contacts for your refence:

**AVP (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students:** It is valuable to build a relationship with Sean to update him on the changing needs of students, or what emerging needs may exist based on service reports to EB. He is willing to help you in any way, and when you run into issues with departments (i.e., RezLife and their violation of our WWMOU), Sean is the person to go to because he oversees them.

**Office of Student Case Management:** Allison Drew Hassling (Director) helps with complex HR issues as well as mental health issues. Ensure your managers are aware that Allison exists as a support for them. I utilized her to get advice on various HR situations and also to make her aware of any students I think her office should check in on. Allison understands the balance between peer support and university institutional support – so, go to her.

**Alumni Advancement**: Karen McQuigge (Director) is the most efficient woman I know, she is involved in SLEF projects as she is interested in pushing forward student projects, such as Community Kitchen or the Ice Skate Rink although don’t mention this one, it was the bane of her existence. She is super helpful to reach out to if services are looking for support or additional funding.

**Director of Student Wellness Centre:** Rosanne Kent puts her all into decreasing wait times and is the first to advocate for more resources. Despite being seen as “the University administration that is not doing enough,” she pushes through. She acknowledges the needs of students and wants to improve her department so support her in doing so rather than accusing her of not doing enough. She will ask you at times to sit on the hiring board for a student perspective, and you work with her on one of the SSAC consultation committees for mental health.

**Student Wellness Educators:** Taryn will support you during Welcome Week for the themes, but don’t be shy to ask them for more assistance in training development or debriefing cases with PTMs.

**AVP, Equity and Inclusion:** Arig’s role is new but is an amazing addition to the university. Include her in higher level conversations when it comes to improving equity within the organization or policy related questions. Work with her to build a relationship where we can utilize EIO for HR support when needed.

**Hagar Prah:** This role is exceptionally helpful in giving advice and with planning Welcome Week. I went to Hagar for guidance quite often and she was always willing to lend a helping hand but also just to offer support for me when I needed it. Look for the folks that can support you in the University.

**Jacquie Hampshire:** Jacquie is the Marketing Director for the Student Success Centre, and she Chairs WWAC with you. She is very kind, but is also very new to WWAC’s high-level view of Welcome Week. She is rather collaborative, so don’t be afraid to disagree with her on a WWAC direction.

**Michele Corbeil:** You already have a great foundation with Michele which is great, as you will be working with her quite closely. She get’s the short end of the stick from WWAC and WWPIC and takes a lot of heat for decisions the committees make—be a listening and compassionate ear when you can and remember to congratulate her on all of the fantastic work she does. She can be talkative, but she generally just needs to be asked what support she needs and what the committees can do for her to move on to the next step in whatever she’s working on.

# Closing Remarks

Christina,

I hope you find this transition report helpful and easily accessible compared to past reports. It’s definitely not short, but you told me you’d read it all so I’ll hold you to that! Unfortunately, though, a lot of this role can’t be transitioned: how you support your PTMs, how you handle HR-related situations, and how your Board supports each other are not something I can give you a how-to-guide for and send on your merry way. However, I am completely confident in your ability to fulfil this role, to make informed decisions, and to support everyone that has the pleasure of interacting with you. This job will be one of the most challenging but rewarding years of your life. I know I was very vocal about how excited I was to be done and to leave and never look back, but, in reality, I’m glad that I pushed for the things that I did so that you and the rest of the VP (Admin.) lineage don’t have to.

If you take anything away from this report, remember this:

1. **You can’t (and won’t) please everyone**: People will be unhappy with your decisions but that doesn’t mean you made the wrong one.
2. **Ask for help**: You genuinely cannot do this job alone, so don’t try. You don’t have to be the one constantly supporting everyone, let those around you support you, but don’t assume they will – ask.
3. **Take time off**: And don’t feel guilty doing it. The MSU can function without you—sorry to say. Take days off when you can, go on vacation, take half-days **every week or two**, schedule self-care appointments; you are no good to anyone if you’re not taking care of yourself!
4. **You are human**: You are allowed to feel and get affected by situations you are facing or things people are saying. I cried so much in this job, I got upset, I was offended and hurt – and you are allowed to feel those things.
5. **Trust your judgement**: You are going to be a great VP Admin, make the call and trust your gut – looking for reassurance is totally okay but you know what’s best and you are in this job for a reason
6. Never let anyone tell you that you aren’t good at your job—you are.

During the ups, cherish them. During the downs, remember that you are doing your best and your best is **absolutely** **good enough**.

Always here when you need it. Call me, beep me, if you wanna reach me,



1. Please note that these recommendations significantly depend on the ability of the MSU to navigate its return to campus effectively within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation strategy and timeline for these suggestions may thus transform as new information comes to light surrounding all areas of the MSU and how they are each uniquely impacted by the pandemic and any restrictions that may follow. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)