

Year Plan

Maccess Director

Emunah Woolf

2020–2021



(Submitted Date)

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### 

# Introduction

I am beyond excited to be stepping into the role of Maccess Director for the 2021/2022 school year. Maccess has played such a pivotal role in my experience as a McMaster student. I signed up to be a peer support volunteer before I ever took my first class and have remained engaged from then, moving on to becoming a Social and Political Advocacy Executive, and now into this role. I have loved watching the community grow and change with each new director and new circumstances.

This past year Maccess has operated from somewhat of a “crisis mode”, reconfiguring all our services and events to fit an online environment. While this has been crucial to maintain safety and connection for our community members, it also reduced the “extra” things we could work on beyond the day-to-day necessities. Now that I have been part of Maccess as it operated both in-person and online, I hope that I can build off the amazing foundations left by previous coordinators and begin pushing Maccess’ boundaries and expanding what we are able to focus on. This is also the first year that Maccess has two paid positions, something I hope can be leveraged to maintain the frequency and quality of our peer support services while also allocating time and resources to other projects.

I’m hoping to focus on themes of disability pride, centering of the most impacted, and advocacy in our events, programming, and services this year. This year plan serves as a broad template of what I hope to accomplish in each of these areas as guided by my vision for Maccess. I also hope that we can dedicate time to helping executive team members and volunteers feel supported with training, skill-building, and leadership opportunities. This will further help Maccess reach its programming goals by allowing members to take the lead on projects the full team might not have capacity for. For this reason, some of what is outlined here is vague – I want to ensure that the events and campaigns Maccess runs are determined by what the community needs and what the executive team is passionate about.

I so look forward to seeing what this year will bring and all the amazing peer-support, community building, and advocacy Maccess will offer disabled McMaster students over the next 10 months.

With care,

Emunah Woolf.

I am looking forward to working as Maccess Assistant Director for the 2021/2022 school year. My experience as a peer support volunteer for Maccess has allowed me to find disability community at Mac. Prior to that, being a space user in Maccess I learned more about disability and felt a part of a larger community. Within my role, I intend to ensure volunteers feel supported through training which is thorough and intersectional as well as through support from myself, the Maccess Director and executive team. I also intend to return back to the basics of peer support and highlight that it is mutually beneficial. I am passionate about being celebratory of disabled folks and using art as a form of resistance and coping. I want Maccess to be a place disabled folks can find friends, mentors, and to not only exist, but to be celebrated.

Maccess has been a major part of my undergraduate experience at Mac and I look forward to ensuring Maccess aligns with the three pillars of advocacy, community and peer support.

Kind regards,

Susan Attaei

# Vision for Maccess

As mentioned, last year Maccess was in a bit of a “crisis mode”. Now that we have had experience figuring out the service both in person and online, I hope to use this year to move past base service delivery and accomplish some goals that various past Maccess Directors had been unable to accomplish. To assist in determining if projects are within the overall vision of Maccess I have developed five main guiding statements for the year.

1. **Focus on disability pride as opposed to disability awareness or inclusion.**
   1. In the past, Maccess has worked hard to make the disabled student experience visible on campus and to be included in various other projects and services. I believe that Maccess should move past this base-level goal and push for an understanding of disability as a positive factor people can be proud of as opposed to a deficit that needs to be accommodated.

Actions: Disability Pride and Mad Pride Weeks instead of DisVisibility Week, shift in language on promotional material, focus on disability pride as the theme for events and social media campaigns.

1. **Increased focus on intersectionality within the disability community, specifically around BIPOC, queer, and low-income disabled students.**
   1. In all the years Maccess has run, our Coordinator has been white, myself included. This leads the planning and visioning of Maccess to centre the white disabled experience. I hope to focus on shifting this and centreing multiply marginalized disabled experiences while doing my best to hold Maccess accountable to the harms it has caused in this area in the past.
   2. Maccess, along with other disability and mental health related services on campus, sometimes prioritizes the needs of some students over others, creating something of a disability hierarchy. I feel as though in the past few years, the needs of Mad students, specifically those who experience highly stigmatized mental health concerns such as psychosis, have been neglected in program creation. I hope to recentre these identities and experiences that are often deprioritized in disability spaces.

Actions: Hire diverse executive team and volunteers, confront missteps from past years, include questions about these topics in interviews, explicitly discuss through training, focus on developing/acquiring resources from these perspectives, collaborating with other MSU services.

1. **Stronger advocacy focus alongside peer-support and community building.**
   1. Maccess began through strong disabled student advocacy but since it has become an MSU service, the focus on advocacy has somewhat fallen off our plate. I hope to work towards continuing higher-impact advocacy work while not sacrificing the important focus on providing peer support and opportunities for disability community building.

Actions: Hire executives who are passionate about advocacy, begin brainstorming collective concerns for action, connect with other offices and groups on campus to work toward advocacy goals, invest in relationship with PACBIC to make progress on goals.

1. **Increased communication between and across various Maccess community members.**
   1. This past year due to the online environment, many executive team members expressed that they did not feel connected to the volunteers or community members. In past years, community members have complained that they did not feel as if they knew who was in charge and making decisions for Maccess. I hope to begin to rectify this and increase communication across these groups.

Actions: Creation of volunteer bubbles (groups of volunteers assigned to each exec member to develop smaller community), creation of biannual general executive meetings open to the whole community, opportunity for volunteers and community members to work with the executive team on skill-sharing workshops, creation of 1:1 check-ins with volunteers mid-semeter, increased usage of social media to communicate Maccess goals (as opposed to only events).

1. **Leadership and skill-development opportunities for executives and volunteers.**
   1. While being a part of Maccess is a fulfilling and enjoyable experience, I recognize how for volunteers (and especially executive team members) it can also become a large amount of free labour, done specifically by marginalized students. While I don’t have the ability to pay Maccess members, I hope to focus more on leadership and skill-development opportunities for the volunteers so that the time commitment is worthwhile and folks can develop job skills and experience to take into the workforce later.

Actions: 1:1s asking about opportunities they might want, flexibility within roles to allow people to try a new skill, skill-sharing workshops discussed above, offering reference letters to those involved, setting aside time and resources for executive member passion projects and allowing each member to take the lead on a self-conceptualized event or goal for Maccess.

# Projects/Events

## Continuous Activities

**Drop-in space**

* I am currently planning for the Maccess drop-in space to operate over Discord for the fall semester due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the particular population that Maccess serves, with a high number of immunocompromised individuals.
* This will involve everything it did last year with a text channel, audio/video channel, co-working channel and a resources list.

**1:1 peer support**

* We will have peer support volunteers on shift at all times that the drop-in space is open so that community members can request a 1:1 peer support within Discord. We will also have a Microsoft Form on our linktr.ee linked in all our social media bios where folks can schedule a peer support meeting and will be connected to a volunteer. This will hopefully reduce some of the anxiety involved with messaging somebody you have never met over Discord by allowing us to set them up with somebody to talk to instead.

**Resources**

* Maccess has an extensive lending library in MUSC. We are trying to navigate student access to these resources while Maccess is functioning online and will hopefully come up with a plan for students to be able to view and borrow these books. Additionally, we are hoping to expand the kinds of resources offered – both physically (fidget toys, canes, other disability support items) and virtually with the development of an online resource library including ebooks, audiobooks, podcast recommendations, zines, and others. We are also hoping to turn some training materials we develop this year into accessible resources available through our lending libraries.

## Repeating Projects/Events

**Community groups**

* These generally begin the second month of the semester and function like informal support and community-building groups. Topics are determined by volunteer and executive interest, keeping in mind that we need two volunteers to facilitate each groups. Generally, groups meet based on identity (Queer and Disabled, Disability in Colour), disability experience (Mood Disorders, ADHD), or discussion topics (Disability and Dating).

**Skill-sharing workshops**

* This is a new initiative, discussed within the executive team last year but not yet rolled-out. Essentially, this would provide community members and volunteers with the opportunity to get involved in creating a workshop event for the Maccess community where they can teach a skill. Interested community members would fill out a form with their idea, have a 30 minute meeting with an executive to discuss logistics, and then the executive team would determine if it is feasible. At that point, we would connect back with them to determine a time and the executive team would plan the logistical side (getting supplies, creating promo, setting up registration, etc.) while the community member would create the workshop. We would be able to offer those delivering these workshops small honoraria for their time and knowledge and provide attendees with the supplies necessary to learn the skill.

**Social media posting/interacting**

* While Maccess has used social media throughout its existance, we have not utilized it to its full potential. Last year in second semester we began to see social media as an effective tool to connect people in a very disconnected time. We began a series called Maccess Mondays, posting an Instagram story about disabled artists each week. I hope we can continue to create weekly social media content over Instagram and that we can expand to other platforms as well. Hopefully this will allow us to engage with our community members outside of the Discord space.

**Exec bonding**

* As mentioned above, folks have found it hard to feel in community in a virtual world. Hopefully, by adding more unstructured and unproductive time with the executive team, folks will feel more connected to one another, improving the team dynamic overall. Sometimes executives feel as though they can’t access peer support from our volunteers so I hope that these informal connections will allow us to support one another without having to navigate a complicated power dynamic. Ideally, these will happen 2-3 times per term.

**Volunteer bubble meets**

* As explained earlier, I hope to connect each executive with 5-10 volunteers, forming a “bubble”. This will allow the volunteers to get to know each other better and have direct access to a member of the executive team with whom they can build a relationship and take any concerns they may have. Hopefully, this can also begin to address the intersectionality goal by allowing students to request that they be selected with an executive member on the basis of shared identity. I’m hoping that each bubble could plan to meet at least once a month to connect about Maccess or anything they wanted!

**Collaboration with McMaster offices**

* In the past, we have run events with the EIO, SAS, SWC and SSC. I hope to continue these partnerships to maintain these relationships, show community members the supports available on campus, and reduce the logistical planning time asked of my executive team.

## Annual Projects/Events

**Campaigns**

* In past years, Maccess has hosted one campaign week. This year, I hope to have two: Disability Pride Week and Mad Pride / History Week (titles subject to change based on executive interest).
* These will include external speakers, workshops (including a skill-sharing workshop), movie nights, disabled entertainers, art as activism events, community building events, social media components, and various forms of community engagement.

**Off-season access**

* Before the 2020/2021 year, Maccess has only run groups during the Fall and Winter semester. Last year we incorporated summer groups and three winter break drop-ins to address some of the isolation the community was experiencing during these times. I hope to bring back a summer community group and hold the winter break drop-ins again.

**Training**

* Each year, the MSU hosts a training for all the executives and volunteers and Maccess creates additional in-house trainings. We have received feedback that there are some gaps in this training (specifically as it relates to dealing with crisis). While we will continue to develop training for the executives and volunteers, we hope to hire external people to facilitate optional additional training throughout the year based on volunteer needs and interests.

## Other Projects/Events

**Volunteer appreciation**

* I hope to create a volunteer appreciation event or package in both Fall and Winter semesters to thank them for their involvement in Maccess.

**Various events**

* I would like to host one-off events that are unassociated with campaign weeks. The topics of these will be determined with the executive team but some ideas have been outlined in the month-to-month breakdown below. Some of these will be run in collaboration with the other MSU services.

**Social media educational campaigns**

* Following the theme of better utilization of social media, I hope to do some educational and advocacy work over our social media, creating week-long campaign style posts dissecting a topic, one-time infographics, or sharing other disability-related content. A way to possible include the community in this would be to host a discussion event about the topic, and anonymously crowdsource perspectives and tips for the social media post.
* Some ideas include:
  + Hallowon't - a campaign about dressing up for Halloween in ableist and sanist ways.
  + Long covid and acquired disability - to highlight the ways that many people have acquired disability over the pandemic and the grief associated with this.
  + Dating and disability - our most popular community group and Disability Pride Week event from last year.
  + Disability language – highlighting common words or phrases that have ableist or saneist origins.
  + Self-worth and academic success – many students conflate their self-worth with their academic success and may need a reminder to reflect on this connection and how it may be harmful.

**Exam de-stressors**

* During both exam seasons we will host a fun, low-energy event or giveaway to allow community members to reduce stress during exam season. We will hopefully also have exam-time study Zooms for people to be able to quietly study with one another, something that can be really helpful to neurodivergent students who have difficulty focusing on their own.

**Executive passion projects**

* As mentioned earlier, I hope to work with each executive member to come up with a passion project or event they can lead during the year, mostly independently. This can help them build skills, take some work off the whole team’s plate, and feel accomplished by whatever it is they create. It will also ensure that Maccess is coming from a number of perspectives, instead of solely being run by my vision, which is limited by knowledge, experience, and identity.
* This may include working on the peer support guidebook, creating long-term training materials, larger-scale advocacy efforts, partnering with community groups, social media content creation, etc.

**Disability Studies Minor**

* My main advocacy goal for this year is to work toward the creation of a Disability Studies minor at McMaster. This has been worked towards formally and informally over the year but always ends up falling off the priorities list. I believe this would be a huge step towards legitimizing disability on campus, allowing disabled students to build mentorship relationships with professors, and teaching the broader campus community critical perspectives on Disability and Madness. This would involve withing with PACBIC DIMAND, the EIO, and other various campus stakeholders. I do not expect this to happen this year but if Maccess focuses on beginning the conversations to work towards this, I think we can get the idea back on the table.

While I am aware that there is a very limited amount of time and resources within my term as Director, I have outlined some hopes/ideas below that could be worked on during times in the year where there is less to actively manage (outside of hiring, training, set-up, and campaign weeks, I’ve found that there are chunks of time in the year where the executive does not have much to work on). What we choose to work on will be determined by the executive team interests and capacity.

**Partnering with the Hamilton community**

* Building relationships and co-hosting events with Hamilton community organizations during campaign weeks and beyond.

**Mutual aid / community care Discord channel**

* As the idea of mutual aid and community care become more mainstream, I think it would be a wonderful idea to begin an anonymous community care request form and post the requests in the Discord channel, allowing community members to support one another and organize on a higher level than emotional support. There are a number of barriers to this projects success so I have put it in this section pending further thinking and discussion with the executive team.

**Peer support guidebook development**

* Over the past couple years, Maccess has begun working on a peer support guidebook. I hope to continue working on this as a resource for volunteers and beyond.

**Conference presentation**

* Depending on time, interest, and capacity, there is the potential for the executive team to propose the creation and delivery of a conference presentation about doing disabled-student run disability work at a postsecondary institution. If this plays out, we would hopefully hold a conference ticket giveaway for a couple Maccess community members to be able to attend.

**Maccess rebrand**

* For a few years we have questioned why the Maccess logo is of an archway. If the executive team is interested, we may work towards choosing a new logo and rebranding Maccess in an attempt to better centre our disability justice, disability pride, and intersectionality focused vision.

# Project/Events Timeline

1. **Plan**
   1. Discuss logistics for implementation
   2. Outline key performance indicators
   3. Coordinate all involved partners/community members
2. **Achieve**
   1. Execute the plan
3. **Review**
   1. Debrief on outcomes
   2. Document ideas for consideration and areas for improvement
   3. Record thoughts on potential future directions

## Spring/Summer Term

May

* Onboard AD
* Executive team hiring
* Build relationships with other Directors
* Training

AD

* Executive team hiring
* Training

June

* On-boarding / team building exec team
* Year plan
* Budget plan
* Develop executive training

AD

* Develop executive training
* Meetings with Training and Development Coordinators and other Execs

July

* Training exec team
* Brainstorming online service provision
* Begin summer drop-in groups
* Begin work on peer support guidebook
* Begin thinking through advocacy goals

AD

* Training exec team
* Begin work on peer support guidebook
* Begin summer drop-in groups

August

* Hire peer support volunteers
* Finalize platforms for service provision
* Plan exec on-call system
* Establish connection with other Ontario university disability student groups

AD

* Hire peer support volunteers
* Plan exec on-call system

## Fall Term

September

* Opening event (Pet and Plant Appreciation)
* Meet the Services event with other PTMs
* Disability Discussion with EIO
* Volunteer training and on-boarding
* First volunteer social
* Set up volunteer bubbles

AD

* Volunteer training and on-boarding
* Set up peer support space

October

* Begin community groups
* Social media campaign
* Begin skill-sharing program
* Begin planning for DisVisibility Week
* General meeting open to community
* Low-effort event (games or movie night)
* Trauma and Survivorship event with WGEN

AD

* Begin community groups
* General meeting open to community
* Maintain peer support space

November

* Disability Pride Week
* Run event with other Ontario disability student groups
* Culture, Religion, and Disability event with Diversity

AD

* Disability Pride week
* 1:1 Meetings with all volunteers to provide feedback
* Maintain peer support space

December

* Exam de-stressor (movie night)
* Social media campaign
* Volunteer appreciation event
* Winter break / holiday isolation drop-ins
* Hire second semester volunteers
* International Day of Disabled People

AD

* Volunteer appreciation event
* Winter break / holiday isolation drop-ins
* Hire second semester volunteers

## Winter Term

January

* On-board second semester volunteers
* Meet the Services pt.2
* Additional training opportunity
* Welcome back event (Community Art Circle / Spoken Word Workshop)
* Hamilton community resources fair
* Skills sharing workshop
* Resume support / looking for summer jobs with SSC CAPS

AD

* On-board second semester volunteers
* Additional training
* Welcome back event
* Maintain peer support space

February

* Begin planning Mad Pride Week
* General meeting open to community
* Disability discussion (Graduation and grad school)
* Valentines event (Dating and Disability / Disabled People Fuck) with SHEC
* Social media campaign (Rare Diseases Day)
* Black History Month speaker

AD

* Beginning planning Mad Pride Week
* Maintain peer support space

March

* Mad Pride / History week
* Disabled Day of Mouring
* Hire new Maccess Director
* Run event with other Ontario disability student groups

AD

* 1:1 Meetings with all volunteers to provide feedback
* Maintain peer support space

April

* Volunteer appreciation
* End of year event / exam de-stressor
* Transition service to new Director
* Hire new Assistant Director

AD

* Volunteer appreciation
* Hire new Assistant Director

# Finances & Equipment

## Budget Projection

My budget projection will be outlined in my budget plan, to be submitted by July 9.

## Inventory

As I have not been in the Maccess space for over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I cannot give a comprehensive inventory. However, last year we acquired Maccess lanyards, many books for the lending library, and Disability Art as Activism zines. From what I remember, in the space we had books, tea and a kettle, a manual wheelchair folks could borrow, a mini fridge for storing medication, and a futon in the back.

## Contacts

# Promotions

## Service Webpage

## Social Media

## Merchandise & Apparel

## Contacts

# Onboarding & Administration

## Hiring

### Part-Time Manager(s)

### Executives

### Volunteers

## Training

### Part-Time Manager(s)

### Executives

* Created in-house training
* MSU training
* Suicide prevention training
* Potential for other training as requested / needed
* Within campaign weeks, workshops offered that could act as a form of training
* 1:1 convos may lead to other training opportunities – suggest through EIO, LinkedIn Learning, etc.

### Volunteers

## Year Plan

### Executives

## Reports

## 

# Miscellaneous

# Appendix

## Full Contact List

Name:

Title:

Email:

Name:

Title:

Email:

Name:

Title:

Email:

Name:

Title:

Email: