



Year Plan

2021–2022

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Introduction

Hello,

My name is Sofia Palma Florido, and I am elated to be taking on the responsibility of being the Director of Diversity Services this coming year. The existence of Diversity Services has been a beacon of light in my undergraduate experience. It has guided my growth and learning (and unlearning) as a racialized woman and leader. The role that the Service plays in the greater McMaster community is something I have always wanted to partake in since the beginning of my time at the university.

The Service's heart for advocacy and change is guided by its "by us, for us" structure. Its events, campaigns, workshops and programming are created by those with lived experience in the matter. This ensures that everything that we do and put out into the community is intentional and relevant. For this reason, it is my goal to rebrand the Service to represent what it is with specificity and intentionality.

The plan below is merely a skeleton of what we expect the Service to be for the year since our team is still incomplete. I am excited to hire a team that will bring a new and sharper meaning to what the Service is and stands for.

I look forward to a year of growth and healthy change.

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Sofia Palma Florido



Vision for MSU Diversity Services

Our vision for the diversity services is for it to be a space of intention and place within McMaster University. Further details will be fleshed out when our executive and volunteers are hired. We want to leave as much room as there can be for each of their creative drives to guide our year. With that said, our year will focus on three pillars, specificity, place, and advocacy.

“Diversity”, as a term, lost its meaning at least half a decade ago. Therefore we wish to rebrand our service. We want to be intentional about our work, who it is by and who it is for. The mandate of Diversity Services is one for racial and religious justice. Within this falls the fight for spaces of equity for those commonly “othered” cultural, ethnic, racial, faith, spiritual, and religious backgrounds. We want this to be clear.

Diversity Services is a place that will advocate for change in the name of the marginalized populations at McMaster and that will hold the institution accountable for spearheading and enacting those changes. It will also hold the university accountable for doing so collaboratively with the students affected. We understand that as a student-run service the Director and Assistant Director, as well as the incoming executives and volunteers, hold a great power to make change – we “share a seat at the table”. However, we also understand that we cannot and should not be tasked with building the table.

Everything outlined in this document can and will only manifest with the support and enablement of the MSU and McMaster University. However, while having these events, seminars, and collaborations planned and executed, we will continue to hold the university and student union accountable for their role in making and keeping McMaster University spaces safe and equitable for all McMaster community members. This is all to say that the existence of Diversity Services is not an absolution of the responsibility that the university and the student union have to its racialized and marginalized populations.

Projects/Events

Continuous Activities

Service goal/ objective: Updating vision and branding.

Purpose to ensure intentionality and accuracy.

Challenges time and unanimity

Partners Underground, MSU Communications

With the support of the MSU communications team, our promotional team will conduct a multi-phase plan to rebrand the service. This will include changing or expanding on the name, as well as modifying the logo to present a more updated overall look. The recently hired executive team has begun brainstorming names and the promotions coordinators, Kaitlin and Ronnie, have detailed a plan for in-team consultations. These phases will be communicated and updated during the Executive Board meetings with the intention of receiving feedback and keeping the Board in the loop.

Service goal/objective: Food Justice Guide

Purpose Informational

Challenges Working with the UG to produce a cohesive theme.

Partners Underground, McMaster Food Collective Service

The Food Justice Guide is a project that the last resources and research executive begun and that the new executives have eagerly picked up. This guide is meant to be a resource for Service users on food justice as well as a point of collaboration with McMaster Food Collective Service. We are fortunate to have a portion of it already completed by the previous executive.

Repeating Projects/Events

Service goal/ objective: Community Circles

Purpose Pilot peer support

Challenges Training, logistics, branding, promotions

Partners WGEN, PCC, SHEC, Maccess, Underground

This year we will be introducing peer support for the first time in the form of community circles. Community circles are virtual and physical (this option will only be available starting the winter semester) spaces for individuals to seek community support facilitated by Community Events Planning volunteers. These volunteers will be trained in

peer support and are part of the Community Events Planning committee. The plan thus far is to have two weekly recurring community circles closed for intersecting identities (example: black men & mental health, Muslim women, interracial & interreligious love-focused community circles). We plan for three volunteers to be present at each community circle and if the case is that we do not have enough volunteers of the identity we seek to support, we will work in collaboration with volunteers of identity groups on campus. This will be an opportunity to connect more directly with service users as well as connect with the many identity groups on campus.

Annual Projects/Events

Service goal/ objective: Training material update

Purpose Accuracy and relevance of training materials

Challenges Scope, relevance, accuracy

Partners EIO

The Assistant Director, Ilziba, is excited to be going through the training material and updating it with new, relevant resources for the volunteers. One of the goals with updating the training material is to better equip the volunteers to do their jobs and be great representatives of the Service within and outside of their roles. Since we will also be starting to offer peer support for the first time this year, a goal is to also have our Community Events Planning Committee volunteers trained in peer support and anti-oppressive practices.

Service goal/ objective: Non-Western approaches to healing and wellness seminar series

Purpose Build inclusivity

Challenges Scope, accuracy, finding speakers.

Partners SHEC

A large event we want to host in collaboration with SHEC this year is one presenting Non-Western approaches to healing and wellness. This will be a seminar series with 3 different keynote speakers discuss various approaches to healing and wellness outside of the normative Western practices. This is an important collaboration to validate other practices that are often stigmatized and marginalized; many of which are commonly practiced by racialized and systematically oppressed folks. Special projects funding will likely be necessary to subsidize some of the cost although a portion of our annual campaign budget has been set aside to fund this project (\$1,400).

Other Projects/Events

Service goal/ objective: Liaison with different community partners

Purpose Building relationships

Challenges Non-response

Partners McMaster Indigenous Health Movement, PANGEA, OPIRG, Blackspace McMaster, ACFAM McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA)

A key part of our foundation for this year has been reaching out to identity-based groups on campus to identify areas in which the Service is falling behind and areas in which it is having a positive impact. It is important for Ilziba and myself to feel connected to the communities we are serving. We reached out early in the summer to the leaders of all of these groups, introducing ourselves and asking to meet for an introductory conversation. This has allowed us to build rapport with the student leaders and receive feedback. All in all, this creates a relationship in which students and student leaders can hold us accountable to the mission and vision of the Service.

Project/Events Timeline

Spring/Summer Term

Service goal/ objective: Hiring

Purpose Team formation

Challenges Not enough applications

Partners Underground, Human Resources

We will be hiring an executive team of 8 and foresee two committees of 7 people each - all to give us a 24 people team for the year. Hiring will be promoted on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter two weeks prior to the application deadline. Application review and interviews will be carried out two weeks following the deadline. We foresee having a full team of volunteers by August 25th.

We will make every effort to set up our new team with a strong foundation for the year. This entails having one-on-one meetings early on to

Service goal/ objective: Training material update

Purpose Accuracy and relevance of training materials

Challenges Scope, relevance, accuracy

Partners Equity and Inclusion Office

The Assistant Director, Ilziba, is excited to be going through the training material and updating it with new, relevant resources for the volunteers. One of the goals with updating the training material is to better equip the volunteers to do their jobs and be great representatives of the Service within and outside of their roles. Since we will also be starting to offer peer support for the first time this year, a goal is to also have our Community Events Planning Committee volunteers trained in peer support and anti-oppressive practices.

Service goal/ objective: Liaison with different community partners

Purpose Building relationships

Challenges lack of operation in the summer = no contact

Partners McMaster Indigenous Health Movement, PANGEA, OPIRG, Blackspace McMaster, ACFAM McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA), etc.

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these groups, introducing ourselves and asking to meet for an introductory conversation. This has allowed us to build rapport with the student leaders and receive feedback. All in all, this creates a relationship in which students and student leaders can hold us accountable to the mission and vision of the Service.

Fall Term

September

Service goal/ objective: Meet the Services.

Purpose Introduce MSU Services to the new students.

Challenges Engagement

Partners With other peer support services

During welcome week, Peer Support Services (Maccess, WGEN, SHEC and PCC) will host an interactive zoom seminar hosted by the directors and assistant directors for students to learn about the Services and the types of supports and resources they offer. Engagement is planned to be optimized with incentives like prizes won through a remote Kahoot game. A portion of the event is to be funded using a special projects fund and/or from our annual campaigns budget.

October

Service goal/ objective: Cultural garb breakdown

Purpose Highlighting issues surrounding cultural appropriation.

Challenges Engagement

Partners N/A

This campaign is meant to dive deeper into the “why” of cultural appropriation. We foresee this being a virtual campaign that incorporates all our executive team members. Our research and resources executives will support the social and political committee put together information and infographics on the significance of cultural wear and specific cultural and religious clothing pieces. Our community events planning committee will facilitate conversations on cultural appropriation during their community circles as the promotions executives promotes these on our social media platforms. We have budgeted \$350 for the infographic.

November

Service goal/ objective: Diversity, Culture, Faith & Disability campaign

Purpose To explore and discuss the intersections of identity amongst disabled religious/faith-based/spiritual people.

Challenges Engagement

Partners Maccess and InterFaith Council

This will be a virtual campaign for which \$600 of our promotional budget has been set aside for the degree of content we want to put out with this campaign. The campaign will be a way of showcasing how disability is perceived and accommodated for across faiths, religions, and degrees of spirituality. Often, disability is addressed with severe ignorance and treated as a burden rooted in sin; this campaign will be a way of debunking myths relating to disability, religiosity, spirituality, and secularism. We will take the direction and act in more of a supportive role with maccess and the student interfaith council.

December

Service goal/ objective: plan for in-person programming

Purpose To be prepared.

Challenges Logistics

Partners N/A

We want to take the entire month of December to finalize the foundation for in-person programming. That means setting up and decorating the physical safe® space, hiring a bridges coordinator, optimizing, and guaranteeing the accessibility of Bridges (there were notes left by the PTM of two years back that this was an issue). We will be needing the support of permanent MSU employees who have knowledge of in-person features of the services have operated in the past.

Winter Term

January

Service goal/ objective: Disability in Colour Campaign

Purpose To highlight racialized disability justice activists' work.

Challenges Engagement

Partners Maccess

A big event we have allotted \$1,400 of our annual campaigns budget to is this. Our wish is to collaborate on a virtual campaign. The event will be in collaboration with Maccess and host racialized disabled speaker to discuss an intersection of identity that is not often discussed but is essential in the discussion of intersectionality. We foresee there being three keynote speakers along with AOP training accessibility workshops happening during the week. This will be our Diversity Week theme of the year.

February

Service goal/ objective: Black History Month outreach & support

Purpose To support Black-focused student groups on campus

Challenges balancing multiple types of programming during the month

Partners ACFAM, Black-focused student groups
(e.g. BSA); WGEN

We will reach out to partners to offer support in programming during Black History Month. Support can look like financial support, volunteers designated to supporting BHM programming for the month, promotional support, etc.

March

Service goal/ objective: Non-Western Approaches to Healing and Wellness

Purpose To explore health and wellness from a non-western perspective.

Challenges Accuracy and scope

Partners SHEC

A large event we want to host in collaboration with SHEC this year is one presenting Non-Western approaches to healing and wellness. This will be a seminar series with 3 different keynote speakers discuss various approaches to healing and wellness outside of the normative Western practices. This is an important collaboration to validate other practices that are often stigmatized and marginalized; many of which are commonly practiced by racialized and systematically oppressed folks. Special projects funding will likely be necessary to subsidize some of the cost although a portion of our annual campaign budget has been set aside to fund this project (\$1,400).

April

Service goal/ objective: Transition into new AD & D

Purpose To ensure that the new AD & D will be comfortable in their roles.

Challenges Applications and availability

Partners EB and Hiring Committee

The month of April we want to have several semi-structured meetings with the incoming Director and Assistant Director. There were multiple gaps left by our predecessors that set the Service back weeks because a lot of time was spent finding documents and tracing back questions that clear and early communication would have answered. So, we want to spend April leaving a good foundation for the new Service leaders to settle comfortably into their new roles.