



REPORT

From the office of the...

MSU Maccess Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Emunah Woolf
SUBJECT: MSU Maccess Report #3
DATE: October 6, 2021

Yearplan Update

We have been actively checking back with our Year Plan and our stated Vision for Maccess as we have been working on volunteer hiring, training, opening the space, and beginning to run events. We believe that we have embodied the value of Disability Pride, especially in our interview questions and training for volunteers. As per our efforts to focus more on intersectionality, we asked specific questions about BIPOC disabled folks in our hiring process and are working on private Discord channels specifically for BIPOC disabled and 2SLGBTQ+ disabled students. As we continue to make communication within Maccess simpler, the Directors have been holding 1:1 meetings with the executive team, we have developed an Exec on Call system to ensure the executives are engaging with volunteers and community members, and we are working toward creating Volunteer Bubbles – groups of volunteers assigned to execs to create smaller communities. The executive team passion projects as well as our sourcing external crisis management training help us work toward skill-building opportunities for executives and volunteers.

The biggest development in our year plan is the opening of our Discord space and beginning to offer formalized peer support with our volunteers. We are beginning to plan community groups, to be launched after reading week. We continue to collaborate with other McMaster offices and MSU services on upcoming initiatives and events. As elaborated below, we are fulfilling our stated desire to create volunteer welcome packages in lieu of a volunteer welcome event. We hosted a Zoom launch party as our first formal Maccess event and overall have been making incredible progress on working through our stated goals in the Year Plan, despite some challenges with budgeting, accessing our space, working overtime, and having unanswered questions.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

We finished our summer drop-in groups and have recently launched our Discord Safe(r) Space. There are around 30 people who are part of our Discord server.

At the time of writing this report, we have been open 6 hours a day for a week, with an average of 3.5 people using the space each hour. Some hours are slower than others, and some have been quite lively.

Projects & Events: Welcome Week Events (Complete)

As part of Welcome Week, Maccess was involved in two events. First, we participated in the Meet the Services event in collaboration with SHEC, PCC, WGEN, and Diversity Services. This served to promote and explain the purpose of each peer support service to first year students. It resulted in a recorded version of the event for students who could not attend and a write-up in the Silhouette providing further information for each service.

Maccess also ran our own event, a trivia night focusing on disability in pop culture. This event was attended by 7 people and we were able to give Campus Store gift cards to the winners of the trivia game. It served to provide more information about disability representation in the media and introduce Maccess to first year students in a fun and engaging manner.

Projects & Events: Pet, Plant, and Pals Party (Complete)

As part of the Maccess Discord Safe(r) Space launch, we held a Zoom launch party. This served as a place where volunteers and community members could come together at the end of the first day of the Discord space to talk, laugh, and show off any pets, plants, or art that they had around. It was a relaxing and enjoyable environment with 7 attendees.

Projects & Events: Volunteer On-Boarding (On-Going)

At the time of writing this report, we are wrapping up volunteer hiring and on-boarding. Our hiring process included a written application (reviewed by executive team members and Directors) and an interview conducted by two people on the team (always including a Training & Development Coordinator or Director). We completed hiring in two rounds.

Volunteer training was created by the executive team, with most content created by the Directors and Training & Development Coordinators. All other executive team members except one also produced training material in areas they felt knowledgeable in. It was important to us to make training accessible so we ran it in 5 hours, including a 1 hour break in the middle and two 10 minute breaks near the beginning and end. We also recorded the training and had it available asynchronously. For volunteers that chose the asynchronous option, we held a mandatory 1 hour Zoom call to discuss any questions or concerns and go over situational questions to ensure training was watched.

We are also planning to bring in some external training in the form of a Suicide Intervention workshop rooted in peer support and community care values. We have received feedback from past years of volunteers that not having access to crisis intervention training made them worry about their responsibilities and we believe that volunteers should have access to this material before engaging in their roles. While Maccess is not a crisis intervention service, it is undeniable that a peer support service aimed at folks experiencing mental health concerns will at some point come in contact with a community member in crisis.

Lastly, we are sending out Volunteer Welcome Packages over the next few weeks to thank our volunteers for their time and welcome them to Maccess. These will include a letter written by the executive team, a button reading “Accessibility > Accommodations” with the MSU Maccess logo, and a Maccess info card. We found this to be important in a year where it is difficult to get to know and adequately thank our team for the time they dedicate to Maccess.



Projects & Events: Disability Discussions (Upcoming)

We are currently in discussion with Kate Brown at the Equity & Inclusion Office to begin planning a Disability Discussions session. These have historically been run a few times a year to give space for Maccess community members to discuss disability-related issues on campus. Notes from the session are then written up and processed through the AccessMac program of the EIO. These sessions are both practically and emotionally helpful to students and are one of the only ways students feel like their stories can have a direct impact on accessibility policy and procedure on campus.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

The Welcome Week events we ran and participated in were a huge source of outreach in this reporting period. We also facilitated a session about accessibility for the Spark team leaders, promoting Maccess to them and hopefully to their teams. On our Instagram, we completed our Meet the Execs story series, highlighting each executive member during volunteer hiring to put faces to the Maccess team. Lastly, we asked other MSU services to share our social media posts about our Discord launch, bringing engagement to our social media pages and the Discord itself.

Promotional Materials

Maccess Safe(r) Space Launch!

To join the Discord, visit:
linktr.ee/maccess

Available 10am-4pm, Mondays to Fridays
 Opening September 23

Join us at our Zoom launch event -
 Pet, Plant, and Pals Party

Thursday, September 23 at 4pm

Email maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca
 with any questions, comments, or concerns

MSUMaccess
 MSU_Maccess

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021
 4 - 5 PM

TRIVIA NIGHT 2021

DISABILITY IN POP CULTURE TRIVIA

HOSTED BY MACCESS
 ON ZOOM
 OPEN TO EVERYONE!

DIRECTOR

they/them

Emunah Woolf

Emunah

Important to who I am

- Sephardic Jewish, queer, chronic pain, neurodivergent

Hobbies

- Cooking, crafting, magic, hanging out with bugs, building community

Favourite bugs

- Aphids, net winged beetle, cobalt blue tarantula

Fun fact

- My name means faith and is an anagram for "humane"

Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Instagram

← **Insights** ⓘ

Custom ▾ Aug 16 - Sep 29

Insights Overview

You received **+73.9%** more content interactions compared to Jul 2 - Aug 15.

Accounts Reached	1,095	+49.7%
Content Interactions	299	+73.8%

Your Audience

Total Followers	739	+10.1%
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Content You Shared

4 Posts

← **Reach** ⓘ

Custom ▾ Aug 16 - Sep 29

Top Stories

Based on reach

211	192	189	185
Sep 23	Sep 23	Sep 23	Aug 17

Impressions

vs Jul 2 - Aug 15

20,651	+408%
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Profile Activity

vs Jul 2 - Aug 15

Profile Visits	762	+133%
Website Taps	158	+90.3%
Email Button Taps	0	0%

← **Interactions** ⓘ

Custom ▾ Aug 16 - Sep 29

regions. [Learn More](#)

299

Content Interactions

+73.8% vs Jul 2 - Aug 15

Post Interactions	280	+65.6%
vs Jul 2 - Aug 15		
Likes	183	
Comments	1	
Saves	84	
Shares	12	
Story Interactions	19	+533%
vs Jul 2 - Aug 15		
Replies	9	
Shares	10	

← **Reach** ⓘ

Custom ▾ Aug 16 - Sep 29

1,095

Accounts Reached

+49.7% vs Jul 2 - Aug 15

Followers and Non-Followers

Based on reach

471 Followers | 624 Non-Followers

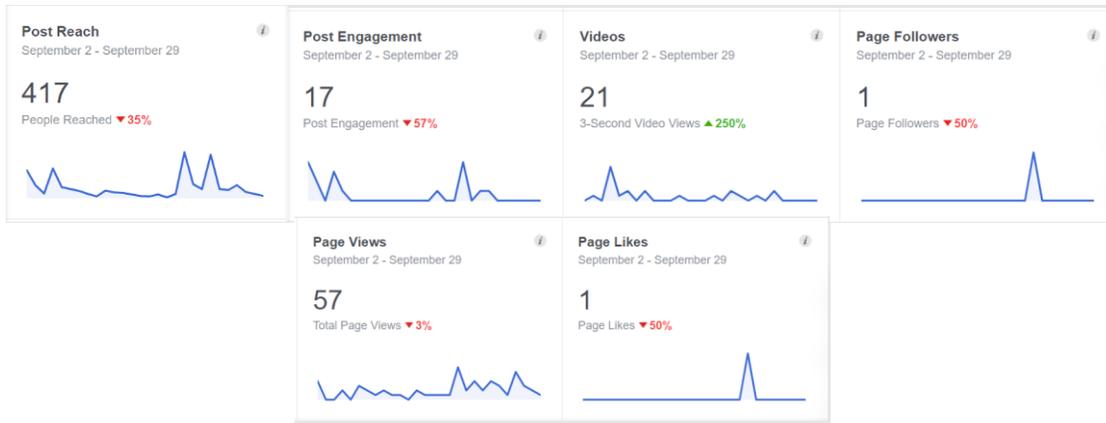
You reached **+82.9%** more accounts that weren't following you compared to Jul 2 - Aug 15.

Content Type

Based on reach

Posts	1,347
Stories	457

Facebook



Twitter

28 day summary with change over previous period



Top Tweet earned 1,738 impressions
 Maccess is hiring peer-support volunteers!!!

Want to get more involved with MSU Maccess? We're hiring Peer Support Volunteers! No experience with peer support or facilitation is necessary

We welcome self-diagnosis. Applications open August 15 and close on August 29!
pic.twitter.com/xR7J6Ay8oK



Top mention earned 8 engagements

NEADS
 @myNEADS - Aug 13

Meet Emunah Woolf, our representative from @MSU_Maccess. They'll be speaking on our NEADS Access For All Panel next Friday at 12pm EST!
twitter.com/myNEADS/status...
pic.twitter.com/BnbyYfPqtQ



Top Tweet earned 1,751 impressions

We're excited to announce that the Maccess Safe(r) Space is launching on September 23! Our drop-in space will be hosted on Discord. There will be opportunities for 1-on-1 support from trained volunteers, group discussions, accessing resources, or fun light-hearted chats!
pic.twitter.com/yVq4FmKaPP



Finances

Budget Summary

Thus far, our budgeting has gone according to plan. We have been wondering about where to take money needed for resources such as mobility aids and books for our library and have inquired about this. Unfortunately, we have not received a response despite multiple follow-up emails, other than information about larger costs such as furniture for the physical space.

Another budgetary constraint we encountered was regarding training. As mentioned, we feel that it is necessary for our volunteers to be trained in crisis intervention. Unfortunately, we only have \$500 in our training budget line and most mainstream trainings are much more expensive than this. The training that we did find would have been \$900 and capped at 16 participants but we were

able to work it out with the creator of the training by planning to show the volunteers a prerecorded webinar version of the training and hiring the facilitator for a 1 hour question and answer session afterwards for \$260. That being said, we urge the MSU to incorporate crisis management in the mandatory volunteer training for all services in future years or expand each service's training budget to account for important gaps.

ACCOUNT CODE		ITEM	COST
6494-0118	MACCESS - VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION		\$750.00
	Volunteer welcome package pins		\$70.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE		\$70.00
	REMAINING IN LINE		\$680.00
6501-0118	MACCESS - ADVERTISING & PROMO		\$1,700.00
	Volunteer hiring promo		\$125.00
	Discord space launch promo		\$125.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE		\$250.00
	REMAINING IN LINE		\$1,450.00
TOTALS			
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING			\$6,600.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING			\$320.00
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING			\$6,280.00

Executives & Volunteers

The executive team seems to be in good spirits. While there were some uncompleted responsibilities over the first few weeks of school, we embodied accessibility and flexibility and shifted tasks or extended deadlines as needed. During hiring and training season, the Training & Development Coordinators were under some level of strain, but we developed open and trusting paths of communication to ensure that everything got done even when one person was feeling at capacity. Everybody was very excited on the day that the Discord space launched and are continuing to work on their passion projects, developing interests and ideas that I am confident will come to fruition later in the academic year. We have begun planning an exec bonding event to further develop our

community and create space to get to know one another that is not focused on task completion or brainstorming.

Volunteer hiring has been going well and the second round of volunteers was sent hiring emails today. Hiring and training season is ongoing, but we have hired 26 volunteers across two rounds of volunteer hiring. 13 volunteers were hired each round with a total of three applicants who interviewed were not accepted for the position. There was some more additional discussion about whether certain applicants should be hired during the second round of hiring. This was approached using open communication and ensuring everyone on the hiring team was comfortable with decisions. The Discord space is now open from 10am to 4pm and the signup sheet is filling up on certain dates and times. Therefore, we have added a spot for a third volunteer to be on shift and are thinking of extending the hours of the space. Volunteers are familiarizing themselves with the role and I have been checking in on the text-chat periodically to ensure things are running smoothly. There are no apparent challenges in volunteer dynamics at this time as it is quite early on as volunteers assume their roles. The Assistant Director plans on addressing any concerns with the volunteers as they may come up. We are also planning on sending welcome packages to the newly hired volunteers to showcase volunteer appreciation. These welcome packages will include a Maccess pin with “Accessibility > Accommodation” written as well as a letter welcoming everyone to the team. This is so important to ensure volunteers feel like Maccess is a space for them and that their work doesn’t go unnoticed or without being appreciated. Furthermore, volunteers can develop important skills like collaboration through being a part of the volunteer team. The creation of volunteer bubbles will also hopefully allow them to learn from Execs as well as building community. These volunteer bubbles allow volunteers to make connections professionally and socially.

Successes

Although at times we expected to have to delay our hiring and launch timeline, we ended up opening on time as expected with adequately prepared volunteers. As I continue to work with my team of executives doing what the Disability Justice movement calls “Mixed-Ability Organizing”, I am consistently impressed at what we accomplish by being accessible, flexible, and caring for one another. We are all disabled and it makes our service fantastic – we know our strengths and needs and can communicate them in an effective manner to be able to support one another and create community for others. Although it would be okay for us to work on a different timeline and flex as needed, the way that the execs stepped in to support myself, the Assistant Director, and one another is astounding and I am so thankful for the team we have become.

Current Challenges

1. Referred to Closed Session
2. Responses to emails

It is very difficult to obtain responses to emails. I and my Assistant Director have found that emails to VP Admin and VP Finance in particular often require follow-up emails and long periods of waiting. This is frustrating, especially when we are operating on tight timelines before an event or program.

3. Discord Difficulties

As neither the Assistant Director or myself are very technologically savvy, we have experienced some difficulties with our Discord. Issues (volunteers not being able to lock and unlock the space, invite links not working, etc.) have all come up over the first week of the space being open. We are working together and consulting Google and friends to try and troubleshoot but sometimes must do this during space hours to ensure the continued functionality of the server.

4. Access to Space

As we continue planning our service provisions for the year, we worry about our ability to provide physical resources without consistent access to our space. Maccess has historically been able to provide short-term offerings of mobility aids which are a specific priority for our service. As we hope to continue to focus on low-income and BIPOC disabled community members, offering these vital tools for survival at the university is important to us. We also have been hoping to open our Disability and Mad Studies lending library to community members to promote Disability Studies as an academic pursuit and give people access to academic literature about themselves. The current process to be granted access to our space is long, bureaucratic, and difficult in a way that makes it impossible to coordinate offering resources. If we could be given a standing day and time to access our space, we could promote a weekly drop-off/pick-up time and outdoor location to safely transfer items to our community members.