



# Memo

From the office of...

## The Vice President (Education)

---

To: Members of the Student Representative Assembly (SRA)  
From: Siobhan Teel, Vice President (Education) & Corporate Officer  
Subject: MSU Advocacy Policies  
Date: October 5, 2021

---

To the Members of the Assembly,

I hope the first month of the school year went well for each of you and you're adjusting to the hybrid school year.

This fall has been incredibly busy with ongoing concerns around COVID-19 safety and prevention, the federal election, and fake homecoming. Within the Education and Advocacy Department, I have noticed that many people have reached their capacity to contribute and take on projects both within the MSU and across campus however there are also many people who have decided not to engage at all. Most recently, there has been a disconnect as the authorship teams for MSU advocacy policy papers do not meet the standards stated within the [Education and Advocacy Department Operating Policy](#) under Section 5.4.2 which states that;

- 1.1. At least one (1) representative from each of the following standing committees, who shall act as authors and participate in the writing of the policy:
  - 1.1.1. The SRA University Affairs Standing Committee;
  - 1.1.2. The SRA Municipal Affairs Standing Committee;
  - 1.1.3. The SRA Provincial & Federal Affairs Standing Committee

With this memo, **I am reminding SRA members on these three committees that it is your responsibility to represent not only the committee but also advocate for your constituents through these policies.** I have already invited members of the University Affairs Committee, Municipal Affairs, and Provincial and Federal Affairs to join policy authorship teams however only 8 of 23 committee members were willing to join a policy team. In an effort to increase this number, I sent a reminder email, offered to schedule times to talk, asked AVPs to set aside committee time to go over the policy options, and had the RAs introduce themselves to each committee. Since the policy authorship teams are greatly reduced this year, the RAs will need to consider reducing the scope of each paper while also increasing the time frame for the writing period. While it's important to set boundaries and decline projects that are too demanding, it's also critical to reflect upon how you fulfill your role as an SRA member. In this position, you represent around 25,000 students that have chosen you to advocate on their behalf for issues

like off campus housing, academic success, and international success. I know there are a number of SRA members who have gone above and beyond over the past few months and I'm now reaching out to others for support and participation as requested.

To ensure the success of the policy papers, **I am also asking for MSU members who would be interested in being policy authors to reach out to me ([vped@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:vped@msu.mcmaster.ca))**. I am more than happy to arrange a time to talk with you and the RA leading the policy you are interested in. The MSU advocacy papers are a great opportunity to gain experience with policy writing and get your foot in the door for future opportunities in the organization.

Additionally, **I am proposing a motion to waive the previously mentioned requirement within the Education and Advocacy Department Operating Policy as well as section 10.1.3.2 of [Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process](#)** which states

- 10.1.3.2 At least three (3) representatives from any one of following standing committees, who shall act as authors or consultants in the writing of policy;
- 10.1.3.2.1 The SRA University Affairs Standing Committee
- 10.1.3.2.2 The SRA Municipal Affairs Standing Committee
- 10.1.3.2.3 The SRA Provincial and Federal Affairs Standing Committee.

Furthermore, **I am also proposing to waive subsection 10.1.2 of Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process** which states;

- 10.1.2 Any policies written in the Fall term shall be presented to the SRA no later than the meeting penultimate to the winter break,”

The Education team needs time to devise alternative methods to completing the current three policies and since it is not my, the AVPs, or the RAs responsibility to manage SRA members commitments or time, there are no other options. I understand there are problems with representation, and I would encourage the previously mentioned standing committees' members to reflect at this point.

Thank you for reading over this memo and I welcome any questions,  
Siobhan

Siobhan Teel  
Vice President (Education)  
[vped@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:vped@msu.mcmaster.ca)