



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

## AVP University Affairs

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TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly  
FROM: Hargun Kaur, Associate Vice-President University Affairs  
SUBJECT: SRA 21I Report  
DATE: October 16, 2021

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Dear Members of the SRA,

I hope you have been enjoying your reading week and some well-earned time off school. I have had an exciting past couple of months in my role as Associate Vice-President University Affairs (AVP UA). The committee has done excellent work so far and is gearing up to split up into project groups as we finalize our projects, campaigns, and advocacy this semester. I will outline our activities and other work I've been up to below.

### Progress on Yearplan

- **International Student Task Force**
  - We recently held our first introductory meeting with the International Student Task Force to gather interest and insights for the year. We will be having a larger task force meeting in the next few weeks to begin developing a list of projects for this year and creating a terms of reference to ensure this committee will continue beyond.
- **MSU/Okanagan Mental Health Collaborations**
  - I have been collaborating with the Okanagan Committee and their Mental Health Task Force since last year. They recently released their immediate and short-term recommendations to improve mental health and psychological wellbeing across campus. Committee members recently had a meeting with Lynn Armstrong, the administrator of the McMaster Okanagan Committee, to chat about possible collaborations for this year and will be having a follow-up meeting with progress updates in a few weeks.
- **SUSTAIN 3S03: MSU Services Inventory**
  - Dr. Kate Whalen (Senior Manager: Academic Sustainability Programs), Siobhan Teel (VP Education), and I have been working closely to develop a project championed by the MSU for the SUSTAIN 3S03 course. The student group has developed a project plan, conducted consultations with 2/5 MSU services and is planning to finish the conversation summaries by October 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - **Course Description:** The McMaster Students Union (MSU) has a goal to enhance sustainability of its services and operational units, with a focus on intersectionality, environmental, accessibility, and financial components of sustainability, as demonstrated in their Sustainability

Operating Policy. To support the MSU's sustainability goals, SUSTAIN 3S03 students will consult with approximately 5 MSU services and 5 operational units, as identified by the MSU and guided by the MSUs Sustainability Operating Policy, to identify the current progress and goals for the current year to further enhance sustainability in key areas across the MSU. The key deliverables will include a report of the MSUs current progress in relation to their Sustainability Operating Policy, a list of SMART goals for each service and operational unit, and a presentation to the MSU Student Representative Assembly. The outcomes of this consultation will be shared with SUSTAIN 2SS3 students in the Winter semester to report on progress made and advocate for further enhancement.

- **Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Collaborations**
  - I have had regular meetings with Allison Drew-Hassling, Director of Student Accessibility and Case Management, regarding concerns brought up by students and committee members. These conversations have contributed to various outcomes including an audit of the SAS website to increase accessibility, increasing outreach to high schools about the accommodation process, contributing to a first year orientation program for those registered with SAS, and being on the hiring committee and steering committee of the Student Urgent Response Team.
- **Student Census/Experience Survey**
  - We are actively collaborating with Arig al Shaibah, AVP Equity and Inclusion, and others at the Equity and Inclusion Office to discuss the dissemination and use of last year's student census/experience survey.

#### **Past Events, Projects, & Activities**

- **[Peer Support Services Video](#)**
  - In collaboration with SHEC, Diversity Services, PCC, Maccess, and WGEN and the MSU Communications team, we created a resource to increase awareness and simplify resource navigation of the MSU Peer Support Services. This was shared during Welcome Week events and the MSU Facebook pages. We are currently looking to disseminate this resource through other campus and community partners.
- **Orange Shirt Day Campaign**
  - Members of the University Affairs committee, in collaboration with the Provincial & Federal Affairs committee, found resources for and contributed to the MSU's Orange Shirt Day campaign to raise awareness of residential schools and indigenous ways of being.
- **Second Year Welcome**
  - Committee members were involved with the development and planning of the Second Year Welcome, led by Denver Della-Vedova (MSU President) and the presidents of each faculty society.

#### **Upcoming Events, Projects, & Activities**

The following are projects that have been started and are currently being further developed by committee members. Many projects are championed by a small number of committee members, with opportunities for others to contribute as they'd like.

- **Indigenous Student Representation in the MSU**
  - Inspired by conversations with a faculty member, a University Affairs committee member brought up the idea of increasing Indigenous representation within the MSU (e.g., through a standing committee, an AVP, or VP position). We have since had meetings to brainstorm with Siobhan and are also in the process of setting up meetings with Indigenous student groups and Indigenous Student Services.
- **Showcase of Literature on Sexual Violence Prevention and Response**
  - An idea that arose from a conversation with Wil Fularczuk, Coordinator of Sexual Violence Prevention Education at the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office, committee members came up with a possible idea of highlighting literature on the topic in the library. We will be connecting with the libraries at McMaster about the feasibility of such an idea.
- **MSU/McMaster Academic Accommodations & Mental Health Resources**
  - In collaboration with Dr. Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost (Faculty), the MSU is working on creating a joint communication on the academic accommodation process beyond the first MSAF and mental health resources around campus to increase awareness of supports for students in need.
- **iCent Application: MSU Information**
  - Committee members, in collaboration with the communications team, are working on updating the information about the MSU on the iCent application. This is an application for all international students to help orient them to McMaster and surrounding communities.
- **Echo360/Transcripts Resources**
  - Following an initial meeting with Joey Ricottone, Audio/Visual and Information Technology Specialist at the Library Computing & Campus Classroom Technology, on the installation of Echo360 in classrooms, members of the University Affairs committee are hoping to work on collaborating on the creation of resources to increase student awareness of the full functionality of such technologies in aiding academics.
- **Proctoring Guidelines**
  - Following a proposal from Denver, the University Affairs committee members are looking forward to developing guidelines on when proctoring can and should be used in classrooms as well as alternative methods of assessment in cases where proctoring must be used.
- **Menstrual Equity Campaign**
  - The Menstrual Equity project is being run by SRA members on the University Affairs committee. They have proposed running a campaign on this project later this year to increase awareness of this work to further menstrual equity across campus.
- **Disability Pride Campaign/Podcast with Diversity Services & Maccess**
  - A University Affairs committee member proposed holding a joint campaign with Diversity Services and Maccess on disability pride. We

have had an initial meeting with Emunah, the Maccess director. We are looking to have a follow-up conversation with members of their executive teams and other interested committee members.

### **Successes**

There have been many successes over the past few months in the role. Some key areas include engagement of committee members in bringing new ideas and taking the lead on projects, active collaboration with the Board of Directors and other AVPs, as well as building and strengthening relationships with community and campus partners.

### **Current Challenges**

One of the current challenges has been scheduling meetings with university stakeholders at mutually convenient times. As committee members have become increasingly involved with the advocacy projects, I have been bringing them along to consultations with university management. However, given everyone's evolving schedules, it has been difficult to find a time at which everyone will be able to make it. To alleviate some of these challenges, I am working on setting up a more robust and accessible location for meeting minutes to ensure everyone can stay in the loop.

### **Volunteers**

I would like to thank Olsen Chan, Lindsey Zhang, Callista Liu, William Pereira, Simran Dhindsa, Maya Mabalay-Bynoe, Ezra Nadler, Rebeena Subadar, Aisha Baig, and Dione Leung for their contributions to the work of the University Affairs Committee. They have all been eager and excited to contribute ideas and time to the committee's ongoing projects. Since July, we have been meeting, and many members are taking on increasing responsibility to be involved with consultations, advocacy meetings, and preparing materials for campaigns. They have all been a pleasure to work with and I'm looking forward to our continued work together.

Best,

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