



REPORT

From the office of the...
Maccess Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Emunah Woolf
SUBJECT: Maccess Report #4
DATE: November 3, 2021

Yearplan Update

The projects that Maccess has been working on continue to align with our stated vision. The community groups we are launching next week have an increased focus on intersectionality, with many collaborative and identity-focused groups being offered. We have engaged in multiple research and policy conversations to uphold our goal of having an increased advocacy focus. As well, our plans for December 3rd events are connected to broader advocacy work we have been doing. Our volunteer bubbles initiative also tackles the creation of intersectional spaces within Maccess, and the goal of increased modes of communication between and across Maccess. The suicide intervention training we offered as well as the conference ticket giveaway contribute to our efforts toward offering volunteers and executive members leadership and skill building opportunities.

In terms of continuous activities, the drop-in space and 1:1 peer support has been offered daily, outside of reading week. Our community groups are set to launch next week. We have been posting and interacting on our social media pages and have just planned an executive team bonding activity. We launched our volunteer bubbles and have continued to collaborate with other McMaster and MSU groups. Volunteer training and welcome packages have been completed, and we began planning our first social media educational campaign. SHEC also reached out to us for early stage planning and financing of our exam care program. Our advocacy work regarding the Disability Studies minor has continued, and we have collaborated with various other groups on campus to plan an event focused on Disability Studies. All in all, we have been making tremendous contributions to the disability community at McMaster, even though we have had to shift some goals in order to truly embody accessibility for our team in this difficult time.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

According to our Discord server usage tracker, there was an average of 4 people active each hour that the space was open, with a maximum of 10 people accessing the space at once. Community members have been providing positive

feedback and alongside the general text chat they have been making use of the “lighthearted” channels, such as places to show plants, pets, and memes.

Projects #1: Community-Based Suicide Intervention Training (Complete)

[Carly Boyce](#) was hired to provide community-based suicide intervention training to the executive team and volunteers. The team was provided with an asynchronous webinar and zine to work through at their own pace, as well as an optional watch-together Zoom session. Afterwards, Carly came and facilitated a one hour Q&A and discussion. I received overwhelmingly positive feedback about this training, with folks saying that all MSU services should hire Carly, and that we should invite them back in future years. It seemed to address an important gap in training identified by previous and current volunteers.

Project #2: COVID is Spooky Social Media Campaign (Ongoing)

The Maccess executive team is working on a 5 day social media campaign about the impacts of COVID-19 on disabled people. The first day will focus on it’s impact on folks with social anxiety and neurodivergence, discussing the mental impacts. The second day will cover immunocompromised people. The third will nuance the idea of vaccines as “the answer” or the end of the pandemic. The fourth will explore the danger of reduced flexibility and accommodations as school returns to in-person. The final day will have a more positive tone, exploring how disabled wisdom and knowledge has positively impacted the pandemic. The team has been enjoying researching and pulling together this content, and discussing what we have found during executive meetings. We hope to post this mid-November.

Project #3: Community Groups (Upcoming)

We are just about to launch our community groups. This year, we are offering 7 community groups:

- Depression & Anxiety
- ADHD chats
- Dating & Disability (with SHEC)
- Queer, Trans, Disabled (with PCC)
- Disability in Colour (with WGEN and Diversity Services)
- First Up (with WGEN) – for disabled first generation immigrants
- Disability in Grad School (with GSA)

They will each be offered over Zoom for one hour every week in the evening. This list of groups is in line with our community’s desire to move away from more medicalized ideas of disability, and from focusing only on diagnoses for community topics. It also aligns with our desire to focus on intersectionality and to collaborate with other groups on campus.

Project #4: International Day of Persons with Disabilities Events (Upcoming)

We are in conversation with various other disability-related groups on campus in planning McMaster’s celebrations for December 3, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

We hope to run our own event in collaboration with the Equity & Inclusion office on December 2 focusing on food and accessibility (specifically discussing financial accessibility, anaphylaxis and food sensitivities, and religious dietary requirements). This might look like a presentation open to the public accompanied by a discussion closed to disabled folks to discuss food and accessibility more privately. Anonymized notes from this discussion will be taken up by the EIO and Facilities to work on larger-scale change on identified themes and concerns.

We are also co-sponsoring an event with PACBIC DIMAND, AccessMac within the EIO, the Employee Accessibility Network, the School of Social Work Disability Action Group, the Office of the Vice President Research, and the MacPherson Institute to bring together a symposium on December 1. This will take the format of [“flash presentations”](#) – 5-15 minute presentations focused on Critical Disability Studies, Deaf Studies, Disability Justice, Mad Studies, Neurodiversity Studies, Critical Autism Studies, Critical Access Studies, and/ or interrelated areas. This is part of our larger efforts toward bringing a Critical Disability Studies minor at McMaster by demonstrating the work already being done in this area, and bringing together a group of interested stakeholders to support this effort.

Outreach & Promotions

Summary

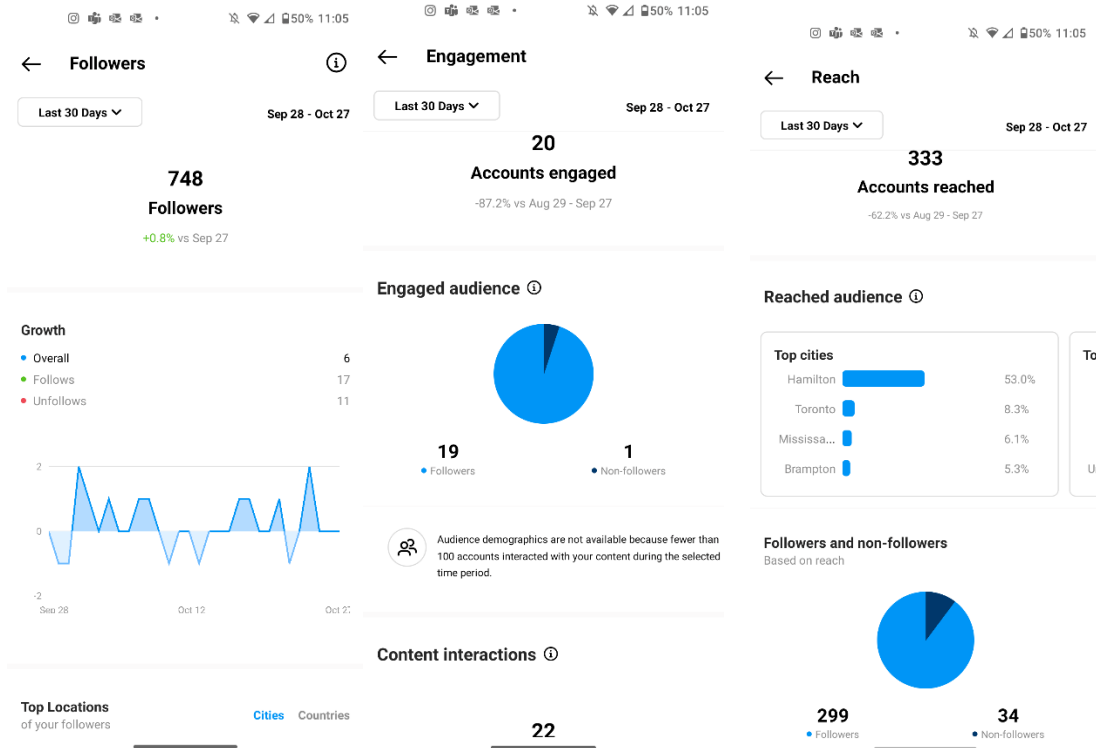
We have continued to utilize our Instagram story to bring engagement to our page and share interesting external events and disability-related information. Because we have been collaborating with other groups, cross-promotion has been useful for our Facebook and Twitter engagement. This was a fairly quiet time for promo, due to ensuring the first month of the space went smoothly and focusing on supporting our new volunteers.

Promotional Materials



Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Instagram



Twitter

Top Tweet earned 368 impressions

Call for flash presentations!

Access, along with the Employee Accessibility Network, Disability Action Group - School of Social Work, PACBIC DIMAND, Office of the Vice-President Research, AccessMac Program - @EIOMcMaster, and @McMaster_MI invite you to submit a proposal.
pic.twitter.com/uBbMWFrQwB



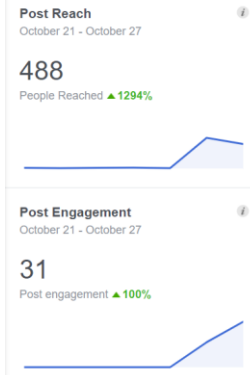
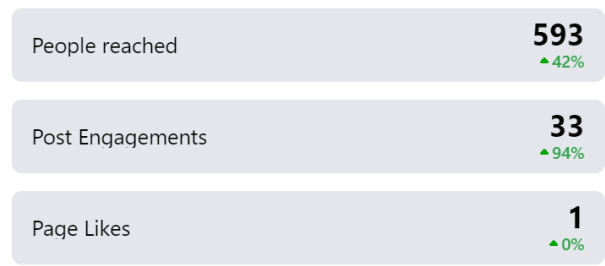
1 reply, 3 retweets, 4 likes

Facebook

Insights

[See All](#)

Last 28 days: Sep 30 - Oct 27 ▼



Finances

Budget Summary

Our costs have been mostly focused on volunteer welcome packages and supplementary training this month. We also received funding from the Student Wellness Centre along with SHEC in preparation for our annual collaborative Exam Care Packages. Cancelling one of our campaign weeks has loosened our budget plan and allowed us to think about alternate places that Maccess needs the money we had originally allocated to those events.

ACCOUNT CODE	ITEM	BUDGET / COST
6102-0118	MACCESS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS	\$2,800.00
	Welcome Week event prizes	\$50.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$50.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$2,750.00
6494-0118	MACCESS - VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION	\$750.00
	Volunteer welcome package pins	\$70.00
	Volunteer welcome letters	\$3.92
	Volunteer welcome tea	\$10.05
	Volunteer welcome stamps and mailing	\$41.58
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$125.55
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$624.45
6804-0118	MACCESS - TRAINING EXPENSE	\$500.00
	Carly Boyce training	\$260.00
	Conference tickets	\$80.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$340.00
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$160.00
6501-0118	MACCESS - ADVERTISING & PROMO	\$1,700.00
	Volunteer hiring promo	\$125.00
	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		\$765.55
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$5,834.45

Executives & Volunteers

We have mailed out our volunteer welcome packages and folks are just beginning to receive them. This project was logistically much more complicated than we had expected, and we are reconsidering our idea of future volunteer packages, even though they are being greatly appreciated.

We have just launched our “volunteer bubble” system, where a small group of volunteers are assigned to an executive team member to get to know one another better, build connections, and allow volunteers to feel heard by the executive team. There are two groups for neurodivergent volunteers and execs, one for BIPOC volunteers and execs, and four general groups. These will hopefully be utilized by everybody involved and smooth over some communication gaps we were foreseeing.

I have almost completed one-to-one midterm check ins with each executive team member to address any concerns, collectively reflect on their time at Maccess so far, and brainstorm project ideas they have. These have helped align service goals with how we spend our time, make meetings more accessible, and allow me to connect executives with others they have not had a chance to get to know yet. The executive team is having a Halloween bonding movie-night next week to get to know one another on a more informal / non-productive basis.

The Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health reached out to Maccess and offered a discount on tickets to their upcoming virtual conference. We still could not afford to send the entire team, so we created a giveaway for one volunteer and one executive team member to attend, the exec being there to learn and to support the volunteer through any difficult content. Unfortunately, none of the executive team felt able to take on that role so I will be attending along with a volunteer, who is very excited for the opportunity.

Successes

The Maccess team was clear that we wanted to hire somebody to facilitate suicide intervention training that is in line with Maccess values. Any crisis intervention training is incredibly expensive, and the one we found was \$900 and capped at 16 participants. However, we were able to work with the facilitator to come up with a solution and offer the volunteers a pre-recorded version of the training as well as a zine, and then a one-hour Q&A with the facilitator. This ended up costing \$260, which fit into our budget much better and enabled us to

offer volunteers this important information. However, if the MSU does not offer crisis intervention training to volunteers in the future, I would recommend that Maccess' budget be expanded to allow for more options.

Current Challenges

The Maccess executive team seems to be operating at capacity lately, with many project ideas being pushed off or reimagined. This is mostly due to being a group of disabled, unpaid students in midst of midterms and a pandemic. However, it has prevented us from offering the frequency of events and programming we had hoped to run. Unfortunately, although we had hoped to run a full campaign week in both semesters, we are not going to be able to run one this term. The social media campaign will happen in it's stead, and we are excited about being able to be flexible and acknowledge what is possible within the constraints of our team, while still offering something to the broader Maccess community.

Miscellaneous

Maccess has been given some opportunities to engage in disability research and policy work lately. We participated in the National Educational Association of Disabled Students' study about COVID-19's impact on the services universities offer their disabled students. We were also asked by the Chair of the AODA Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee to review and offer feedback on their [initial recommendations](#) that will inform the government's work on proposed accessibility standards for postsecondary education. Some executive members and myself looked over the recommendations and met with Tina to offer feedback and have our voices heard on a provincial level. Both of these opportunities were greatly appreciated by the execs, who felt like they were finally able to have a larger impact and engage in broader disability advocacy work.