



REPORT

From the office of the...

Maccess Director

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Emunah Woolf
SUBJECT: Maccess Report 5
DATE: 24 November 2021

Yearplan Update

We have continued to adhere to our Year Plan, fulfilling most of what we set out to do, with the exception of the cancelled campaign week and a modification of an event.

Events, Projects, & Activities

General Service Usage

On average, there were 3 people utilizing the Discord space each hour. Folks have been enjoying chatting and getting to know one another, and talking through accessibility worries regarding the return to campus. Volunteers have started asking fun polls in the Discord throughout the day to increase engagement with folks who might not feel comfortable starting a conversation on their own.

Projects & Events: Queer & Disabled Art Circle with PCC (Complete)

Maccess collaborated on the PCCs 2STLGBQIA+ History Week through a Queer & Disabled Community Art Circle. The PCC provided paint, brushes, a canvas, and a palette to whoever needed, and a representative from Maccess and from the PCC facilitated discussion and a calm space to paint or craft. There were four people in attendance, and good feedback following the event.

Projects & Events: Volunteer Bubbles (On-Going)

We have continued our volunteer bubbles, where small groups of volunteers are matched with an executive member as a first point of contact and, hopefully, somebody to build community with. Executive members are reporting high engagement and enjoyment with this system, noting that it is filling the gap between execs and volunteers that arose in the online environment.

Projects & Events: Community Groups (On-Going)

Our community groups have continued as well. Engagement is somewhat low, with a maximum of 4 and minimum of 1 attendee at groups, but we know that this

is a busy time of the semester and hope for higher engagement and better promotion in the new year. The Disability in Grad School pilot group has been received well, with 8 grad students signed up to attend when they can.

Projects & Events: Return to Campus or Return to Ableism? (On-Going)

Maccess is in midst of our social media campaign, “Return to Campus or Return to Ableism?”, focused on the impacts of COVID-19 and the return to campus on disabled folks. The executive team worked together to collect information for the campaign, and the Underground provided the graphics. Thusfar, it has been received incredibly well with many students sharing posts to their Instagram story, commenting, and engaging with polls and question boxes on our Instagram story. This is the highest engagement we have received on social media all year. The following is the insights on the first post of the campaign:



Projects & Events: December 3 Events (Upcoming)

We have confirmed all three days of events in celebration of December 3, the International Day of Disabled Persons. On December 1st, Maccess is co-sponsoring a day of flash presentations about Critical Disability Studies. There will be 13 presentations throughout the day from faculty, staff, and students. This both highlights the disability-related work being done on all levels of the university, but also helps to push forward our ask for a Disability Studies Minor. An executive team member and a volunteer are both presenting as part of this symposium.

On December 2nd, the Food Collective Centre, Equity & Inclusion Office, and Maccess are collaborating on “DISability DIScussions: The 3 Fs of Food (In)Accessibility”. This event will include a 30-minute presentation exploring the nuances of food inaccessibility and insecurity for McMaster students through an intersectional lens focusing on financial, faith-based, and food allergy barriers.

The presentation will provide some context and stories of lived experience and is open to all. Then, we will open the floor to a guided discussion closed to those experiencing disability and/or food inaccessibility. Notes from this discussion will be anonymized and taken up by the EIO for further action. Everybody who attends the guided discussion will receive a gift card to Uber Eats or the grocery store to begin to combat food inaccessibility of attendees.

Lastly, on December 3rd there will be a panel of folks who use Assistive Technology. They will discuss their uses, and the importance they have had on businesses and broader society, demonstrating how some of their AT works. The Maccess team is not involved in this presentation, but is excited to attend and be involved in the other events, and for the fulsomeness of celebration we will be having for this important day.

Projects & Events: Winter Wonder Care (Upcoming)

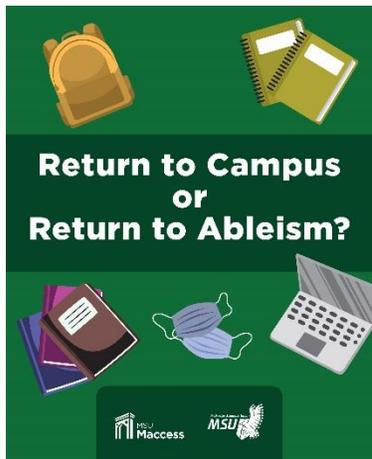
Maccess and SHEC are collaborating on an upcoming exam care package giveaway. We will be giving away some large prizes, such as an Amazon Echo and a SAD lamp, as well as smaller prizes including fidget toys, fuzzy socks, and gift cards. We hope that this will bring some joy to our community members and provide tangible support in taking care of oneself and one another during a busy and stressful time of year.

Outreach & Promotions

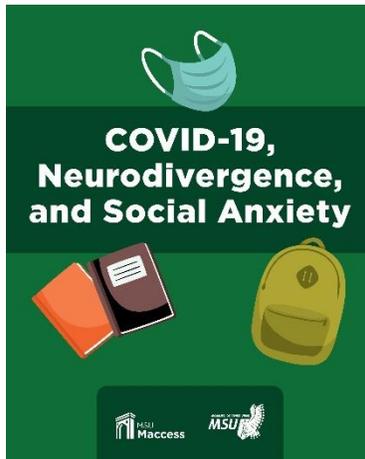
Summary

This month most of our social media activity has been around our campaign. Engagement has been incredibly high. We also posted our community group launch.

Promotional Materials



Return to Campus or Return to Ableism?

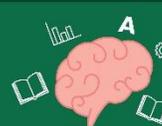



COVID-19, Neurodivergence, and Social Anxiety



What is neurodivergence?

- Neurodivergence (ND) is an acknowledgement that different brains work in different ways and none are more "normal" or "better" than others
- People who are ND may identify with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and a whole bunch of other mental experiences



How neurodivergent people were impacted by COVID-19

- A recent study showed that ND people were more likely to worry about jobs, pets, access to food and medication, and safety during COVID than the rest of the population
- Many ND people have trouble with unexpected change. COVID has created many changing guidelines that cause additional stress. Getting pushed back to in-person is another thing to adjust to
- Some ND people experience sensory difficulties that impact their ability to wear masks, leading to further isolation. When overstimulated or highly stressed, this can manifest in both emotional and physical pain
- Some ND people find working from home more accessible, where they can control their environment and routine. Others have had difficulty building structure into their day alone



What is social anxiety?

- Social anxiety refers to a fear of social situations, including meeting strangers, going to the store, and interacting with friends
- Social anxiety can manifest physically by causing sweating, palpitations, and/or panic attacks in addition to emotional distress

How folks with social anxiety are being impacted by return to campus

- Coming out of lockdown can be hard for people with social anxiety, who have grown accustomed to being home throughout the pandemic
- They may have lost their coping mechanisms or exposure to social environments that was present before COVID
- Being pushed back to in-person schooling before they feel ready can create heightened stress and impact their physical health, emotional wellbeing, ability to complete coursework, and relationships with others

Recommendations for universities to support neurodivergent and mentally ill students

- Create options for hybrid and online learning
- Give adequate warning and clear guidelines around any changes
- Remove barriers to and stigma around coping mechanisms such as stimming, doodling, fidgeting, and other sensory seeking actions
- Invest in peer support services
- Hire more mental healthcare workers
- Offer financial support for students with mental health challenges and neurodivergence
- Listen to disabled student voices
- Use this as a moment to reflect on how the university approached COVID related accommodations vs. disability accommodations

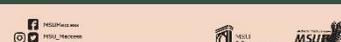


Maccess Weekly Community Groups

MONDAY 6pm-7pm DISABILITY IN GRAD SCHOOL 7pm-8pm FIRST UP 8pm-9pm DEPRESSION & ANXIETY	WEDNESDAY 6pm-9pm QUEER, TRANS, & PRIDE DISABLED THURSDAY 6pm-9pm ADHD CHATS 8pm-9pm DISABILITY IN COLOUR
TUESDAY 7pm-8pm DATING & DISABILITY	FRIDAY 7pm-8pm FOOD WAGENT

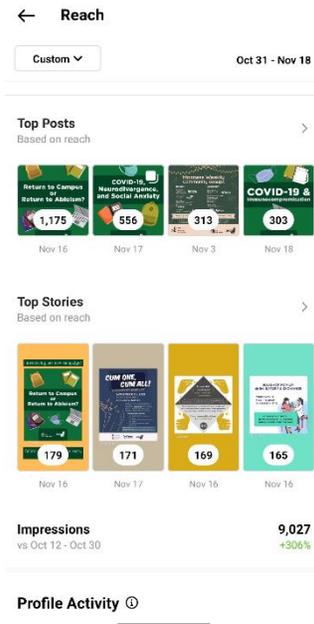
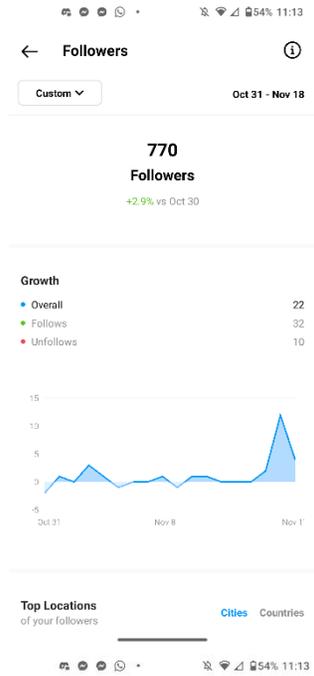
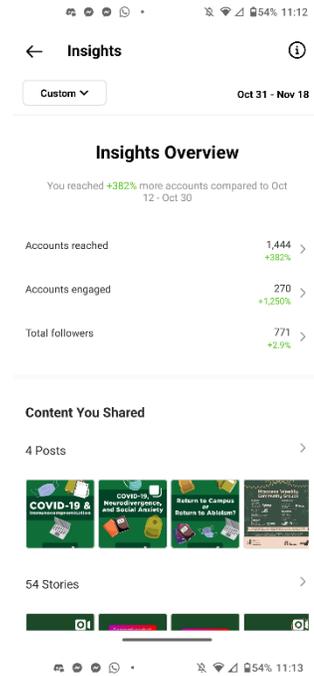
Sign up to get access to the Zoom links and join our wonderful, peer-led community groups for folks in the Maccess community! No diagnosis or disclosure required to join.

For more information or any accessibility concerns, please email maccess@mcmaster.ca or DM our social media accounts

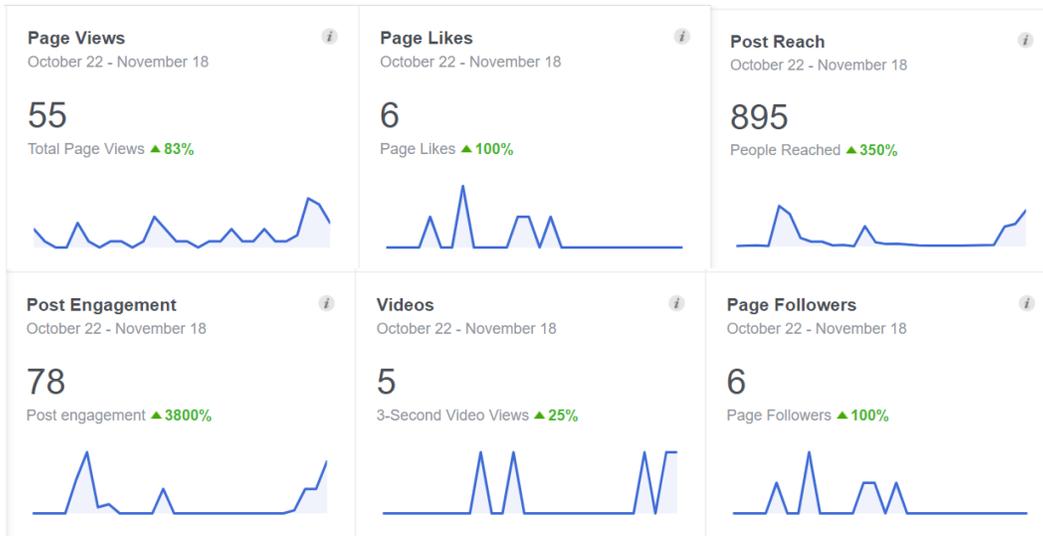


Social Media Engagement since the Previous Report

Instagram



Facebook



Twitter

28 day summary with change over previous period



Top Tweet earned 385 impressions

It's here! Maccess is starting our community peer-support groups. You can sign up now at linktr.ee/maccess. Many of these are in collaboration with some other wonderful services on campus ❤️
pic.twitter.com/tRnRpej81y



1 2 3

[View Tweet activity](#)

[View all Tweet activity](#)

Top media Tweet earned 282 impressions

Maccess presents: Return to Campus or Return to Ableism?

Over the next 5 days we will be exploring how COVID-19 and the upcoming return to campus impacts disabled, neurodivergent, and immunocompromised students.
pic.twitter.com/R0y1ieNvzy



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Finances

Budget Summary

Our budgeting is going well thusfar. We ran into challenges with our December 3rd event because somebody requested CART captioning which is quite expensive. However, once we connected with FCC and EIO we were able to cover all expenses for the event. I would recommend adding an accessibility

costs section of the budget in future years to encourage MSU services to budget for CART and ASL, at least when requested.

ACCOUNT CODE		ITEM	BUDGET / COST
6102-0118	MACCESS - ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS		\$2,800.00
	Welcome Week event prizes		\$50.00
	IDPD CART and event costs		\$330.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE		\$380.00
	REMAINING IN LINE		\$2,420.00
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
	Community group promo		\$125.00
	COVID social media campaign		\$440.00
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE		\$815.00

REMAINING IN LINE	\$885.00
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TOTALS	
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$6600.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$1660.55
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING	\$4939.45

Executives & Volunteers

I attended the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health virtual conference with the volunteer who won our giveaway. They said that it was a valuable learning experience, and they appreciated the ability to discuss and debrief with me throughout and after the presentations.

I have personally gotten to know a lot of the volunteers while covering for the AD role through discussing shift coverage, setting up community groups, and providing some volunteer support. I have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know volunteers on a 1:1 basis, and am extremely proud of the Maccess team.

Executive morale was low mid-month, due to our cancelling of Disability Pride Week and burnout associated with the extended leave of absence of our Assistant Director. However, I created space within two of our executive team meetings to discuss how everybody was feeling, what our capacity is moving forward, and how to meet our goals while ensuring nobody takes on too much work. In the past week, feedback from executives has been positive, and some have noted that they feel closer as a team now that we created space to openly discuss any difficult feelings and experiences.

Successes

I am incredibly proud of the upcoming Food (In)Accessibility event. This collaboration truly allows each of the three groups to fulfil their mandate in a cohesive event. Maccess will be creating community by facilitating a closed discussion and providing accessibility by hiring CART. The FCC will be practically supporting access to food through gift cards and providing education about financial barriers to food accessibility. The EIO will be working toward equity and inclusion on campus by providing educational information and taking the notes from the discussion higher up to be acted upon. The executive team, as well as supporting members from the FCC and EIO are all so excited to see what the uptake on this event is and how it benefits various students.

Current Challenges

Since the AD has taken a step back from Maccess, it has been challenging to fulfil all of our duties. I have taken over many of the day-to-day logistical tasks that she would usually cover, leaving little room for larger planning. Luckily, once we cancelled Disability Pride Week, there was room to focus in on our social

media campaign, and we were able to partner with any other groups on campus to ensure a lovely celebration of December 3rd.