



Transition Report

Vice-President (Education) of the MSU
Corporate Officer of MSU Inc.

Siobhan Teel
2021–2022

Foreword

Hi Elizabeth!

Congratulations again on being elected to the VP (Education) role and welcome to the MSU! You're off to a great start and I hope you're excited to take on the year:)

In this report, I'm going to try and merge both my own thoughts with insights from Ryan, Shemar, and a number of other VP Educations. We're all here to support you and although it can be challenging to reach out and talk about not knowing something, everyone you'll meet in this role will have gone through a similar experience.

To start off, here are my top five tips;

1. Always tell people you appreciate their time especially when they are doing something you've asked them to do
2. Set your boundaries and stick to them whether it's blocking time off or you don't have the capacity to do more
3. Ask for help and accept it from the people around you
4. Pick your battles – not every issue can be at the forefront and your going to need to decide where you want to put your time and resources
5. And from Shemar's transition report to Ryan;

Shemar: "Read the Hamilton Spectator, the Academia Top Ten, Alex Usher's blog, whatever CASA is posting [Ryan's note: we are now part of UCRU], every OUSA blog and University Affairs article, anything you see on the Daily News. You don't have to know everything, but you have to know something about everything. Reading is the first step to that. You will soon come to realize how incredibly busy your day to day can get, so all of this may seem like too much reading. But when you're on the bus into work, waiting in line to get a coffee or in-between meeting, skim through an article on an interesting topic related to PSE. Trust me, it will be helpful down the road! To add to that, go to random events. Strike up a conversation with random people. Listen to podcasts (let me know if you need some recommendations). They too will teach you things you can't find in books or articles. You never know when your knowledge will come in handy and being well versed and up to date on a wide variety of topics will only serve to make you a more effective advocate."

Ryan: I'm not sure it's actually possible to read everything, but Shemar (the 2019-2020 VP) is right in saying that you should be open to reading and learning about anything and everything that might be related to your portfolio. It's important to prioritize, but it's also important to be open to learning at all times. Being open to new opportunities (even if you feel like you're not ready) is a great way to learn and to grow. You have so many opportunities in this role, and you should take some of them.

It's looking like McMaster will be back in person for September which means you will be allowed on campus! I did my entire term from BC and only saw the office twice so I hope you're able to go in more than I was. Although being online had a lot of flexibility, it was a bit isolating and it was hard to get to know folks I didn't work closely with. I would really encourage you to go in throughout the summer and meet John, Wooder, Daniela, Victoria, and the office team but also bond with your Board.

From Ryan's transition to me;

You are now one of the four leaders of this organization as a member of the Board of Directors. Take care of it and own your decisions, but please remember to use the team around you – including your Board, John, the other Full-Time Staff, and the Education Team. You're not in this alone; you don't have to shoulder everything.

Wishing you a successful year but also feel free to reach out whenever you need to!

Siobhan

Yearplan

The year plan template as well as a couple other documents that will be helpful for planning and preparing for SRA meetings are in the “Transition” folder I created under your name. Take a look through and consider what events will be repeating (OUSA GA, lobby weeks, etc) so you can start putting together the document. In my year, all SRA meetings were online so everyone had to read through things ahead of time. It’s really up to you how long you want this plan to be but I think it should encapsulate projects you’d like the AVPs to do with their committees as well as any passion projects you have.

The MSU

Operating Policies and Bylaws

From Shemar and Ryan;

*** While you have a lot of flexibility in your role in terms of the projects that you can complete throughout your term, there are also a lot of rules and by-laws you need to follow. Nobody will remind you to do so, which makes it even more important for you to stay up to date on what they are. Mark things in your calendar or add them to you monthly to do list in order to help you keep on track. I will outline most of the important dates in this report, but you should double check everything in the policies.*

As a Board of Directors member, it is important you know all the policies and bylaws. But here I will advise the ones you should know intimately and make note of the specific tasks in them. You can find them on <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/governance/bylaws-policies>. Sometimes the website not up to date, so make sure you ask Daniella or Victoria to verify if there are any more updates that need to be uploaded to the Governance page.

Constitution

Bylaw 1 – Definitions

Bylaw 3 – Student Representative Assembly

Bylaw 3/A – Assembly Procedures (Read this, though you already have SRA experience, this will be beneficial)

Bylaw 3/B – Standing Committees of the SRA (Especially important for you to properly support your AVPs, knowing what they need to do)

Bylaw 4 – Officers

Bylaw 6 – Executive Board

Bylaw 7/B – Academic Affairs Council

Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process : a new bylaw we approved this year, and a pretty important one – it talks about all the different sorts of policies/statements that the different committees and teams of the SRA and MSU (including the Education Team) can bring forward.

Operating Policy – MSU Macademics (VP Ed previously supervised this role – Sarah and I had conversation about bringing this role back to the Ed team. Regardless of what you decide, good to know this OP as they ask for your support numerous times throughout the year) Ryan here: our BoD changed the mandate of Macademics this year to place all the MSU awards underneath it. Operating Policy – Education & Advocacy Department

Operating Policy – Delegate Selection

Operating Policy – Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)

Operating Policy – Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (this has been rescinded, but still good to know. Once UCRU passes the Terms of Reference for formal membership, you will need to create and approve an operating policy for it. This will serve as a good template.) Ryan’s note: we approved UCRU’s bylaws on Apr 25th, but we will need to formally join UCRU. Ask Victoria for a copy of this old OP to work off of in creating a new UCRU policy.

Operating Policy – MSU Sustainability Education Committee

Operating Policy – Role of the MSU in Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Elections

Operating Policy – Valedictorian Selection

Operating Policy – Employment

Operating Policy – Employment Wages (and Appendix A)

Shemar;

The Role of VP Education

The VP Education role was established in 1999, with Basil Alexander being the first person in the role in 1999-2000. The role has shifted over the past ten years, with many changing responsibilities while many staying the same. When you go through old reports, you will notice that we are still focusing on a lot of the same issues – teaching evaluations, tuition, bursaries, challenges with the registration system, etc. It is good to note this and go back and look through old documents to have an understanding of the historical context and how to improve your advocacy. You will notice the role has become more externally facing, moving away from a focus on students' academic concerns on campus. This is likely due to a number of factors including the growth of the university making it harder to have a pulse on issues, faculty societies and SRA members taking on more of the academic advocacy, and the president having a closer relationship with university stakeholders while also taking on more advocacy roles.

Board of Directors

The entire Board was elected at the same time this year (with the exception of the President) so you should have a good idea of their goals for the year. I think this will really help the four of you work together and share information. Board meetings are typically once a week and you'll go through the set agenda for updates and decisions with John (General Manager) and Daniela (Administrative Assistant) taking minutes. These meetings are a good opportunity to formally approve and discuss anything related to long-term objectives at the full-time staff level of the organization. We discussed a lot of the day-to-day operations at these meetings or any major issues we were facing. This is also a good place to make sure you and the Board are aware of any projects or changes you hope to present to Executive Board or to the SRA so that you are all on the same page. Since a lot of your role is more external, I wasn't super active during Board meetings unless I wanted to confirm a public stance for OUSA or at the city level. That being said, it's important to be at the meeting in case someone asks for your help or wants to take a moment to share something.

From Shemar to Ryan; Your role is very externally facing and you do not collaborate as much with the board as the other three do. It can be lonely at times. Also, it can be frustrating when others do not recognize the hard work or value you, UCRU or OUSA is doing because they do not have the whole picture like you do. It is important that you take the time and explain things to them and take the time to answer questions that they have. This will help them best support you in your role and for them to be more connected to you work.

This has been passed down in every VP Education Transition Report for 12 years or so, so I feel the need to include it to outline the importance of talking to your Board about your job:

What you see: "Oh man, I'm so excited! I have this conference in Ottawa to attend where we'll be meeting with MPs and actually influencing change. How often do we get an opportunity to interact with the people that can take our policy and put it into action? This is going to be awesome." [End of the week hits] "Man, that week was awesome. Got to meet with the Prime Minister's Office, and the Finance

Minister on issues related to the Canada Student Loans Program! It's Sunday night, and I'm exhausted – I think I'll take tomorrow off, maybe even two days just to recuperate from the long week I've had."

What other people see: "Oh man, Shemar [or Ryan or Siobhan] used to be so diligent, but now all he does is go on trips. He really is the VP Travel and Tourism. He's never in the office, and whenever his conferences are over, he takes days off. What is this? I heard all he does is meet with some people and drink the rest of the time. How come he can't be like the rest of the board? Why did we even elect him?"

While dramatized, this is the perception of the VP Ed at times, since even your own Board members can sometimes admit to you that they don't particular have much of an understanding of what you did in a given week. It is important to explain it not only to your board, but even in casual conversations with staff or at full-time staff meetings so they understand what you are doing and that you are advocating for them. Christina, Denver, JJ, and I were pretty good at meeting weekly and at least doing a touch base which was always helpful. Evidently as VP Education, you're not going to be directly involved in the inner workings of the MSU so ask questions when you need to however you need to make sure to at least skim whatever John and Daniela send beforehand. One thing I would note would be keeping the conversation moving when possible by answering John's questions on direction quickly because he can't do his job without your input and approval. It's your time so use it wisely and if you need to, I'd recommend wrapping up conversations that aren't going anywhere so you can get back to your own projects and managing your team.

This year we decided to do some brainstorming and goal planning sessions that helped us keep focused on our yearlong objectives. We got pretty busy during the winter semester and didn't end up having one for a while and I really fell out of touch with restructuring the Education department. These were really good times to talk about how to go about the process and who else to get in touch with (especially around finances and the MSU's constitutional limits)

Executive Board

The Executive Board consists of the Board and five elected SRA members, as well as John McGowan, Michael Wooder (Director, Communications & Marketing), the AVP Services, and Victoria Scott (Administrative Services Coordinator) (see operating policy for full details). In the summer, EB meets bi-weekly, and in the year it meets weekly. You'll need to read over materials ahead of time and make sure your in the loop about what Services are up to. In the past couple of years there has been some tension between PTMs and Executive Board (with a lot of frustration aimed at the VP Admin and VP Finance) as funding and hours are predetermined. From my experience, the answer is to listen to their concerns and ask if there's a specific way you can help. Since the VP Education does not oversee Services, there is only so much you can do so try and walk the line between supporting your Board members and also understanding how challenging it is to run a Service. There is always a need for more money, staff, and space but at the end of the day, you can really just congratulate them for their wins and let those directly involved deal with ant conflict.

From Shemar to Ryan;

As well, more and more of our services are starting to do advocacy, and EB is a great place to ask PTMs questions and ensure all our advocacy is aligning. Remember – even they have to follow our policy statements, PTMs can't make up their own advocacy stances. It's also important for you to know which stakeholders they might be meeting with so that you are not taken off guard. Our university and external stakeholders see the MSU as one entity, so make sure you're up to date on everyone's advocacy.

I would also caution our services from making too many statements. This will be challenging in the climate we are in and it will be difficult to say no if it is something you agree with. We have implanted the social media guidelines/policy, so hopefully that will mitigate too many issues from arising throughout the year. However, I worry that our spaces will become inaccessible to those who are apolitical or have different views. You have to find a balance between making statements about issues that impact students and ensuring we are representing the interests of all individuals.

From Ryan to me;

Please spend some time considering whether/how/in what capacities should PTMs and Services make advocacy statements. My personal belief is that advocacy should mainly be done through the Education & Advocacy Department to ensure that our advocacy is effective strategically, united, and accountable to students (the VP Education is an elected position). MSU Services are officially affiliated with the MSU, and when they make a statement, students will probably see it as a statement from the MSU. I believe Services should primarily exist to provide services and not to do advocacy, but I understand those two things are intertwined, and advocating for students is part of the mandate in broad terms according to some of the Operating Policies. One possible solution is to have any advocacy that is done to have to go through consultation with the VP Education and the Education Team and be limited mainly to on-campus issues. However, spend some time talking about this with the Board and make sure whatever you decide is reflected in the Operating Policies and communicated to PTMs in their training. Consider also how advocacy statements benefit or harm a Service's ability to serve students.

Student Representative Assembly

The SRA consists of the 4 BoD members, and 31 elected academic division representatives. The SRA is the highest governing body of the organization other than the MSU General Assembly, and so passes resolutions on a variety of topics including Services, Operating Policies, Bylaws, and General Policies.

From Shemar to Ryan;

Don't make a big deal about something that doesn't need to be a big deal – with 34 other SRA members that often all want to have their say on a specific topic, discussions quickly get circular. Try to avoid bringing new ideas to the Assembly without first discussing them at BoD and EB. Don't use the SRA for long discussions – use it to make decisions, and bring evidence for your ideas if you have them.

From Ryan;

Sometimes it's helpful to have a discussion at SRA, e.g. I did this when we were working with the University in March 2021 to plan a return to campus and we needed student feedback on a short timeline. However, I agree it's not usually the best place to have informal discussion.

During my year, I found that SRA was pretty quiet and went with the flow. I'm not sure if this was related to burnout or if SRA members were just pursuing their own projects. I found that some people were super interested in working on their year plan and would ask for help, for instance the Menstrual Equity Project was spearheaded by a number of SRA members and ended up with SLEF funding. When I was approached about working with this group, I told them I could be a backseat support but wouldn't be able to lead the project and the team was fine with that. I think this worked really well because I was able to

pass along information from OUSA and other networks without taking on a large amount of work that wasn't in my year plan.

From Shemar to Ryan;

Choose carefully when you want to engage in a debate. Present factual evidence or points that have not been raised yet. Talk to your BoD before the meeting if you feel really strongly about any of the agenda items. Personally, I think it looks strange if Board members are debating each other on the floor. You can have those conversations beforehand and reach an understanding.

All BoD members report 4 times, but the VP Education only reports 3 times. You will need to include information on OUSA, UCRU, city delegations, and any other advocacy efforts you're involved in. I think it's always nice to give kudo to the people involved in the project so they feel included and appreciated (not just SRA members but also AVPs and staff members). Try to be straight to the point and give the necessary details but I found that SRA members were only skimming and not doing in depth reading so I tried to cater to that and come off more approachable. It's up to you how you want to appear to SRA but remember that a lot of folks are going into second year and may be a bit intimidated by you. This can impact how many people do the surveys for OUSA, apply to be delegates, and become involved in your committees.

From Shemar to Ryan;

You need to report to the SRA every time you go to a conference. This can be tedious, but the reports don't have to be long (and probably shouldn't be so that people read them). Just use reports from previous years as templates. Don't take it personally if someone gives you a hard time on Assembly – always answer with professionalism and take the high road. Always be respectful of SRA members – however, make sure that other people are being respectful and use your influence if necessary to make sure that people don't feel silenced or demeaned. Don't let "Board" vs. "SRA" become a thing - be approachable, humble, and willing to take criticism from them in both informal and formal settings. Involve them in decisions you are making, ask them for feedback. The SRA sometimes sees the board not as SRA members, but as Board members sitting on the SRA (which in reality is the case).

From Ryan;

Very much agree with this point. Remember that Board members each only have one vote, just like any SRA member. The SRA represents the student voice, just like the Board, so listen to them. Just try to be approachable and get to know SRA members. Maybe check in with them outside of the meetings when you can to see if there's anything on their minds and if they have any thoughts that would be helpful to your portfolio or to the organization more generally. Ask other people questions – if SRA members are doing advocacy, see how you can support them and how meetings they have go. I would try my best to engage with SRA members when they said they wanted to work on OER's or municipal advocacy and connect with them outside of meetings. Ask them how they are progressing on their year plan. If you want to restructure committees, it will also be good to have a dialogue at the SRA for their feedback.

Education and Advocacy Department

The Education Department has 3 AVPs (University Affairs, Municipal Affairs, Provincial and Federal Affairs), 3 Advocacy and Policy Research Assistants, 1 Project and Campaign Coordinator, and 1 Sustainability Education Committee Chair.

The Education team met for around an hour a week over Teams and truthfully it was really hard to convince people to unmute and talk amongst themselves. A lot of the time I felt like I had to pry updates from them even though I already knew them since I was meeting with them individually each week. I tried to make this time more communal so people working on the same projects could quickly give

updates and if needed, decide to have a follow up meeting. I set up an agenda and minutes schedule so that calling for agenda items and taking minutes rotated around the group and it didn't fall solely on me. Some people really got the hang of it and others continually forgot but I think using Outlook's calendar could be helpful for reminders but this is something you can think about.

From Shemar to Ryan;

The Education Department structure was overhauled in 2016-2017 (Blake wrote a 35 page report on it, I strongly suggest you read it. There are copies in her folder on the server. If you decide to make changes, it's important to know the context for previous changes so you don't reinvent the wheel).

I put this in the transition folder as well as Ryan's work, his correspondence with John, and some other materials.

From Ryan;

It's a good idea to keep the Ed Department involved in what you're doing. They can sometimes provide pretty valuable insight on something you're working on. Also try to provide opportunities for them to work on things beyond their portfolio if they're interested. For example, two RAs this past year ended up being policy authors for UCRU.

I took Ryan's advice and ended up with a lot of the Education team writing policy for OUSA, being delegates, and returning for another year! You'll find where people excel and it will make life easier:)

Try to organize socials and fun events when you can. Make it fun to be part of the team!

Associate Vice Presidents

Hiring

I decided to hire the AVPs before I was finished my term and you were pretty looped in during the hiring process. Once you've done hiring a few times, you'll get the hang of it and know what your looking for in candidates. Typically, I started the process six weeks ahead of the start of their contract but it can be condensed if your really in a pinch and organized.

Week 1: Work with the PCC to submit and intake form to the Underground for hiring graphics and ask HR to add the relevant information to the job post board on the MSU website (usually for 2 weeks)

Week 2: Post the graphic on socials and open the hiring post

Week 3: Place holds in the hiring panels calendars for one meeting to go over top applicants, a few hours of interviews, and one meeting for the final decision

Week 4: Monitor the number of applicants and prep interview questions

Week 5: Close job posting, go over applicants, meet with the hiring panel to select top candidates

Week 6: Conduct interviews and select final choice

Once you've selected the final candidate(s), let HR know so you can email the new person their contract but also let the unsuccessful candidates know. Remember to thank them for their time and encourage any questions! You can lean on Rene and Daniela for help organizing and support throughout the process but also remember to go over the Education Department Operating Policy since it will outline hiring panels and duties of the job.

From Ryan;

You'll probably work the closest with your AVPs on a day-to-day basis. It's really important to cultivate a good, open relationship with your AVPs. Care for them as people and students and make sure to support them. Be clear in how you want to communicate with them: do you want regular check-ins? How often do you want them to email you? When do you want them to email you vs Teams message you? What needs to be approved by you and what can they do on their own? All the expectations for these sorts of supervisor-supervisee relationship dynamics should be clearly laid out.

I cannot stress how important it is to delegate things to your AVPs. Again, please read Blake Oliver's 35-page report from 2016 to get a wider context and some background on these roles – what I learned from her view (and of course it's just one view) is that AVPs should be doing a lot of primary research because you won't have the time to do that stuff. You should be able to rely on your AVPs to provide you with research and recommendations, but of course you are always responsible for setting the direction of projects and speaking out on behalf of MSU Advocacy as the elected leader of advocacy for the MSU. However, while I say that it's important to delegate, it's really important to have a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of your AVPs so you know what to delegate and what to take on on your own. Delegate smartly—but make sure you do. Sometimes, you have to trust your AVPs, and in that process, you'll see them grow more and you'll learn more about them and what they can handle in the future. You'll get a better understanding of them naturally as the year progresses, but take time to periodically reflect on how your AVPs are doing and whether you can/should delegate more or less, and how much oversight they need individually.

From Shemar to Ryan;

Your AVPs will be your biggest support in all the aspects of your portfolio. Delegating was always a bit of a challenge for me but it is important to do so. It will take a lot of pressure off of you and you will see how your AVP flourish in their roles. Make sure you build strong relationships with them throughout the year. Try to empower your AVPs and provide them with opportunities. You might find it easier to do so as the year goes on – for me, in the second half of the year, I began to give AVPs more leadership opportunities now that I had a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (e.g. I allowed AVP: PFA to lead OUSA GA training for the Spring). Tell your AVPs to empower their committees in turn and provide opportunities for them.

This year, I learned a lot about managing other people but also went out of my way to implement strategies to minimize micromanaging. I used project and hours trackers that everyone used to monitor themselves and keep a running log of everything we were working on. This really helped me organize each portfolio but I think it also helped with accountability since each week I would meet with the AVPs one on one and go over updates. Instead of questioning why something wasn't finished, I was able to ask if they were over their hours or if they needed me to put them in touch with relevant stakeholders.

I ended up having some problems with one AVP who was ghosting me and missed a couple big deadlines. This was tricky since I had to take over a lot of their projects and ended up neglecting other areas where folks needed support. If you are having issues with anyone on your team, I would suggest keeping a log of missed deadlines and communications so you can ask HR for support. Obviously, the worst case is when our partners, like OUSA, are negatively impacted but you are not alone in deciding how to go forward. Rene (HR) is very understanding and was a huge help to me when I was figuring out how to manage the situation.

Associate Vice-President (University Affairs)

The University Affairs portfolio can cover a lot of different issues, campaigns, and groups on campus so it's really important to use the year plan. The AVP and yourself should take time to reach out and consult

with the relevant offices and groups on campus. This role will be your right hand when working with the university administration so it would be a good idea to do some introduction meetings over the summer. The previous AVP University Affairs, Hargun, is not the AVP Provincial and Federal Affairs but she's a great resource if you or Will need a hand or some direction.

Associate Vice-President (Municipal Affairs)

This year is an election year so once the provincial election has wrapped up, you'll need to hone in on the city election, especially considering there will be a polling station on campus. It would be worth it to talk with Mymoon, the AVP Municipal Affairs both this upcoming year as well as last, about some projects we worked on this year that would be good points to bring up during any meetings (rental licensing, the budget submission, etc). In the upcoming months, there will also be a lot of conversation around a possible bylaw to prevent street parties (similar to London) so this is definitely somewhere the AVP MA should be keeping you informed.

From Ryan to me;

Over the past two years, we've tried to build stronger connections with groups that can be allies for us, like Environment Hamilton, the Hamilton Transit Alliance, the Youth Steering Committee, the Ward 1 Office, and Mohawk Students Association and Redeemer Student Senate. My view is that municipal advocacy is much stronger when we work with partners, and often the things we push for are already being advocated for by local partners who have probably more knowledge and experience than the VP Ed and AVP: MA. Use the access we have in the city to stakeholders and partners to build coalitions in fighting for student priorities.

Expand the portfolio but find a few key things to focus on, especially for the municipal budget submission.

Associate Vice-President (Provincial & Federal Affairs)

This position will work a lot with OUSA, possible as the student author, but also helping you to organize delegate hiring, training, and support during OUSA's GA. With the provincial election coming in June, it's going to be a mix of you and the AVP PFA completing tasks, meeting with Wooder, and organizing social media strategies. You can also meet with them to determine how involved they would like to be with UCRU with the possibility of chairing a subcommittee. Both would be good initial conversations so you can really establish your own workload and also see where they are most interested in being involved.

From Shemar to Ryan about in-person conferences;

Try and find provincial and federal Professional Development opportunities for your AVP, since it's the hardest for them to interact with their portfolio. This AVP doesn't usually get to go to federal or provincial lobby week. As they are a student, taking a full week off from school isn't ideal. [The AVP: PFA] went to UCRU's lobby week in Ottawa. The benefit was the MSU had more people on the ground and we were better represented in Ottawa. Since UCRU was so small, it also made it possible for the whole group to schedule more meetings. However, as we grow and try to formalize, we may want to better define who comes to lobby weeks and sits in on calls. I'll elaborate more in the UCRU section. I advise that [the AVP] doesn't attend, beyond class conflicts there is also the financial cost that will add up to be a significant amount of money when bringing more people. OUSA's lobby week only allows one additional delegate (aside from yourself), so that should be [the President].

Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants

This seems to be an area that is really hard to do as it's a bit of a longer process however it's definitely doable! I was very intimidated by this during the first few months of my term and then things with COVID-19 got a bit intense in the fall and winter so this took a backburner which is one of my bigger regrets. I'd suggest going through the folder on this in the transition folder, meeting with Renee and John, and also looking at how the Sil added their Executive Editor position. Also, feel free to ask other OUSA SC members about their full time support staff to get a baseline for merging these three part time student roles into one full time person that will hopefully be more reliable. You can also mirror the OUSA RPAs but adjust the role to be a bit more support oriented.

From Shemar to Ryan:

From my perspective, they have been underutilized for a number of years. First off, most of their time is eaten up by policy. They spend a lot of time editing and writing sections when authors drop off. I think that you will be able to decrease this amount of time by only doing three policies and requiring all the writing to be completed in one term. Hopefully this will free up the RAs times to do other projects that collect primary data or research reports.

From Ryan to me;

The first is to combine these three part-time roles into one full-time Student Opportunity Position role. We actually used to have a full-time researcher. Go to the "Ed Team Research Assistant Proposal" folder in my OneDrive to see the job proposal I was working on and different resources that I used to make it. The pro to this is that it will provide more full-time support for your position. I envision this role being a sort of right-hand person for the VP Ed. The VP Ed lacks full-time support, and to some extent lacks continuity year-to-year in the different projects. There's little institutional knowledge that is passed down from year to year, and with the two-year options in the SOP positions, this could help with that. However, it would just generally offer more support to the VP Ed's role in terms of communication and research. Wooder is great in terms of providing communication and GR support, but he's stretched thin across different departments. Some other student unions (e.g. Western USC, WUSA) have full-time supports dedicated to advocacy. The other benefit to this proposal is that it would provide consistency in support. The quality and commitment of RAs varies across the three RAs we have in the role normally and between years. Some are better than others. If we have a full-time person dedicated to the role, it's likely they would have better qualifications than our RAs and more likely that they would perform their job well. One other benefit to this proposal is offering more hours of support, i.e. from approx. 24 hours combined between the three RAs currently to one 35-hour full-time employee. This would be a huge help and would mean they could do more than just MSU Advocacy Policies. The downside to this proposed position is the increased cost, which isn't insignificant. However, I think the increased productivity and support would be worth the upfront cost. If this position were to be implemented, there would also be considerations of office space as well, but you could work that out with the FT staff.

Project and Campaign Coordinator

This role saves you a ton of time and energy coordinating AVPs with Comms so I really appreciated all the work Kiran did. The baseline for this position is to create intake forms for graphics, plan posting schedules, organize OUSA's campus visit, and help with any on-campus events taking places. This role requires pretty consistent communication with the rest of the team so try and ask if there's any way you can lend a hand with that or follow up with anyone specific. I coordinated some training sessions with AVPs and the PCC with Wooder from Comms where he went over all the basics so this could happen as soon as you hire this role. Once that's wrapped up, I gave the PCC full access and they were able to post whenever and whatever they had planned and we touched based weekly to make sure everything was going well.

Since I wasn't in-person, this role might be different for you but I think as long as you're both on campus, it can really work anyway you need it to. This person could go to GAs and Lobby Weeks if you think it would be helpful or just stick to social media and campus events.

From Ryan;

What worked was having Tabitha create a weekly/monthly excel schedule to track everyone's campaigns. We did this for second semester and it made campaign planning much more organized and smooth. At every Ed Team meeting, I would pull up the schedule to see what was happening the next week, and see if anybody had anything they wanted to add or run by Tabitha.

I had a hard time getting the AVPs to plan anything in advance and I didn't think it was fair to have the PCC chase people around but if you can, I think planning in advance like Ryan is mentioning is always a better option.

From Ryan to me;

My last suggestion for this role is to have them work more on planning campaigns with AVPs and to connect them with our partners like OUSA and UCRU to coordinate campaigns. Because we were figuring out the role as we went along, what happened in practice was that AVPs planned campaigns, and then pitched them to Tabitha and asked her to execute the logistics. What would be better is to have the PCC work with the AVPs earlier in the planning process (maybe even meet with them regularly in the summer) for any campaigns. It would be nice to give this person more opportunity to plan campaigns, not just execute them. You should also connect this person to contacts at OUSA, UCRU, and any other partners that run campaigns. I see a lot of potential for this role to work directly, for example, with OUSA's Operations Coordinator to see how the MSU could amplify and work off of OUSA campaigns throughout the year.

President

Based on the Operating Policy, the President is on the team but it's really up to you and Sim to determine what projects and level of involvement there will be. For a while I let Denver come to Education team meetings but I found that it sometimes derailed the meetings so I leaned towards setting up smaller meetings if there was a project he was also involved in. It's up to you whether you want to extend an invite but it's not really the norm to include the President.

Technically, the President sits on the team based on the operating policy. However, I didn't invite GC to

Full Time Staff

Michael Wooder, Director of Marketing and Communications

I really liked working with Wooder and I talked with him more than any other full time staff member when I needed help. There's a lot of overlap here as Wooder organizes a lot of the government relations aspects of the MSU so this relationship is a priority.

Communications Officer: My Board had a weekly meeting with the Comms team and the Communications Office was always there. During my year it was Betta and she was really great at all things social media. Don't be afraid to ask their opinion and brainstorm with this role and the PCC because they have a lot of training!

John McGowan, General Manager:

I didn't work with John a lot but he was always in our Board meetings so I got to know him there. John is really lovely and has great knowledge of the MSU and McMaster administrators so if you need a contact, he's a great place to start.

Daniela Strajcer, Executive Assistant:

Daniela takes minutes during Board meetings but also is a huge help when organizing interviews or doing online purchases.

From Shemar to Ryan;

You can ask her to book a hotel, flight, rent a car, or paying invoices. She can also schedule lobby meetings, but politicians might be more receptive if you are the one doing the initial outreach (especially if you don't know them).

Victoria Scott, Administrative Assistant:

Victoria's role is meant to provide administrative support to Executive Board, the SRA, services, health & dental, and key cards. If you want to make changes to an OP or by-law, consult Victoria and she can also find you the editable versions. She, alongside the AVP Internal Governance, can help you with the language and historical context for changes you want to make to the MSU through the Ops and Bylaws.

Underground Staff:

The Underground is a great group of people but I found that the PCC worked a lot more closely with them than I did. I managed the Education team budget so I did a standing purchase order so that I didn't have to approve the purchase of every since graphic. You can talk to Sarphina and the accounting team to do this and then let Paula from the Underground know the code.

Renee McIntosh, Director of Human Resources:

Renee started with the MSU during my term but picked up on the flow of things really quickly. You can reach out to her about any conflicts or if you're struggling to manage any team member. Also, any time I needed a job posted (OUSA delegate, RA, Advocacy Coordinator), I would ask Renee to do so.

Pauline Taggart, Director of Information Technology:

Pauline will be able to help you with any issues with your computer, email, and the website. Also, if you have a question about literally anything, Pauline probably has the answer. She has the most historical knowledge in the office. She's super friendly and likes to chat. I didn't get a chance to work with her in the office, but please drop by and say hi every once in a while if everyone is back in the office!

Macademics

Every year, the MSU has to submit an instructor in March/April to win the OUSA Teaching Award. Right now, there's no criteria for the award, so basically the VP Education just gets to choose. Truthfully, I forgot this was run by the Macademic Director and was running super behind when they sent over their top two choices and really saved me! You can touch base with the Director in the winter term to make sure this is happening but it was super smooth this year.

Academic Council

The VP Education is responsible for chairing the Academic Council which consists of VP Academics or roles similar to yours within faculty societies. With everything online, I found attendance to be spotty but I tried to just make it an open meeting for people to bring up questions and concerns. We talked a lot

about housing and return to campus and I did my best to follow up with people. There's an opportunity for this to be more engaging and I wish I had leaned on the PCC and AVP UA a bit more to help plan and run these. The President will chair the Presidents' Council so you can always touch base with Sim to see if there should be overlap or merge the meetings.

Valedictorian

From Shemar to Ryan;

So, 100% VP Eds agree this is the worst part of the job. Thankfully, I've made some progress on making it not part of your job. I spoke to Rachel Huang in the Registrar about transferring responsibilities to another office. I connected with Karen from the McMaster Association of Part-Time students and she expressed interest in taking over the work for valedictorian. Every time VP Eds voice their concerns with the valedictorian process we aren't taken seriously, so I emailed Rachel and Brad and explicitly told them that our role will no longer be organizing valedictorian and there needs to be a conversation about shifting the responsibilities otherwise there won't be anymore valedictorians in the future. They finally agreed and said we should start the onboarding process with MAPS. Follow up with Karen and begin the onboarding process!

From Ryan to me;

I had a similar experience. It wasn't too frustrating, but it took up a lot of time to coordinate between all the faculties, and it's basically all admin work so it's not really something you should do in your portfolio. I emailed Rachel and connected with Karen Richmond from MAPS this year about transferring the responsibility. Connect with Karen and Rachel in the summer to figure this out.

I ended up meeting with Karen from MAPS and it was not particularly helpful because she seemed very confused about taking on the responsibility of valedictorian. When I brought it up at Board, Denver felt strongly about keeping it within the MSU. That being said, the process was a bit tedious and truthfully has nothing to do with us so I'm not sure why it falls on the VP Education. I have a file with all the work I did on it however reading over the Operating Policy and also the nomination package on our website will give you the basic information.

From Shemar to Ryan;

In December, start thinking about Valedictorian. Decide on when everything is due for valedictorian nomination packages. There are guidelines for this in the Operating Policy. I had them due the beginning of March. As per Stephanie's advisement, this was earlier than in previous years. I suggest you continue this especially since even though I did it earlier, some faculties still were incredibly late in getting me the names of valedictorians.

Email these dates to each faculty's Associate Dean Academic, remind them to set up their committees, and ask them if they would like the nomination packages to be dropped off in the same location this year. The locations are in the nomination package. I suggest also asking who applicants should contact if they have questions – I got a lot of questions about very random things. Update the information in the "Valedictorian Nomination Package" found on the server and in my folder with the new dates and locations if they are changed. Add the contact information of the faculties here to defer most questions from your inbox and answering machine.

Find an SRA member to sit on each faculty's committee and convey this to the faculty contact.

Get the comms officer to start designing graphics. Email the Underground that you want an ad in the Sil for the amount of time listed in the by-law (I believe 2 weeks before and then every week while nominations are open).

I am assuming you will open applications in January, like I did. You could probably open it a bit earlier if you get everything listed above done in December. Your next steps are:

When nominations open Have Wooder or the Comms Officer put the package up online at msumcmaster.ca/valedictorian, and print out copies for the front of the MSU office.

Email the promotions materials to every faculty. Also advise them to inform all of their students that nominations are open. Have it promoted through the MSU social media every week. Maybe make a video. In Ryan's year, they did UM coffee cup stickers – also consider doing that. Have the SRA promote it and recommend it to their friends. Tell the Academic Affairs Council and tell Josh to tell President's Council. Also think of more ways to avoid further sassy remarks about lack of promotions.

Congrats! You are mid way there. February should just be answering emails. Then we get to March or late February depending on your timeline:

When nominations close, email faculties to let them know. Tell them they should be reviewing the packages and then conducting interviews in the next four weeks. Remind them of the deadline. Tell them if they can't meet this deadline they need to tell you.

Email the faculties close to the deadline and make sure things are going well.

Follow up with faculties who don't give you names by the deadline and ask when you can expect them.

Forward the names to the Rachel / the Registrar as they come in.

Congratulations! You are done! When you have the names of the valedictorians, ask Wooder to write an article for you on the MSU website OR have the McMaster Daily News do it, and send the information to Rachel Huang, Patrick Deane, Gord Arbeau, and the School of Graduate Studies. This must be sent to them by the date indicated in the Operating Policy.

I used a document called "Valedictorian Information and Details" to organize myself. Some of the FAQs I answered are there. Ryan made the decision to allow Graduate Students to be eligible for Valedictorian in his year. Most of the Faculties didn't differentiate, and it made the most sense given that there is GSA representation on the committees. People should know this now but make sure to remind the GSA.

If you do this, just make sure you're organized and remind the faculty contacts of the deadlines periodically. Check my emails to see how I dealt with coordinating the whole process.

Finances

Sarphina should send you a budget tracker early on but if she doesn't, make sure to follow up as it's easier to input spending as you go instead of last minute! Make sure that anything the Ed Team wants to buy is first approved by you. You then fill out the Purchase Order and send it to accounting. This process can be confusing – ask Sarphina if you have questions.

OUSA Membership Fee (5905-0126)

Our annual OUSA fee is approximately \$3.24 per student which equates out to roughly \$80,000 a year. Once in the fall and once in the winter, you'll need to update OUSA (probably Irum) the number of MSU members. Look up "Eric Amaral" in Outlook and you'll be able to find the last email I got from them which was more accurate than the number given by the Registrar. You will also need to forward the response from Eric to Eddy/Irum for their audit trail. You are going to need the updated number of students that are currently enrolled.

Once OUSA sends you the invoice, fill out a purchase order and email it back to Kevin, CC'ing the VP Finance. Sarphina will have to put her signature on the form and give her approval and once that is completed, Kevin will essentially pay it from there!

OUSA GA Expenses (5906-0126)

Both Ryan and I had online GAs so expenses were pretty minimal. Since GA can be long and delegates aren't paid, I budgeted \$120 (which was like one meal a day) for UberEats/Tims/anything from giftcards.ca to be sent to each delegate.

From Shemar to Ryan;

This line is pretty self-explanatory, anything related to OUSA GA will go through this line. If you rent a car, hotel costs as well as delegate fees will all be going through here. I budgeted roughly \$5000 per GA for this line. Granted, I saved costs on rooms and we had cars for GA and didn't need to rent for semester 1 – all of this to say, your costs may be a little more than what's in this line. If that is the case, exhaust this line fully and any remaining fees can go into Ed Team Campaigns. Check-in with [JJ] though as she may have a preference on putting additional costs in a different line.

Ed Team Campaigns (6305-0126) - \$8500

My term was online so the majority of our expenses were related to social media promotion, Avtek support, and spending was pretty minimum. I found it hard to budget each committee since we weren't sure if winter semester would be fully in person but hopefully this is easier for you!

From Shemar to Ryan;

This is the code you'll use for just about everything. You will share this with your AVPs, Advocacy Coordinator, and general your education team. All surveys, food for focus groups, OUSA related campaigns can go into this line! Sean sends out monthly updates on the budget, so aside from tracking the budget on your own, cross reference with his list and that will be more updated than your own. There were times Education team members or other staff put things through the line without my knowledge, so keep a good eye on it!

From Ryan to me;

I didn't end up using anywhere close to the full amount this year – around 5k. You'll probably use more if you're in person. I recommend sitting down with the Education Team at the beginning of the year and letting them know they can use a max of approximately \$2000 per committee (including Sustain Ed Committee). That way, they can roughly plan out their campaign expenses as they go and not run out of money. Again, that wasn't a problem at all this year but it could be in the future.

Election Awareness

Since it's an election year, there will be a budget for this! You can split it evenly for both but I would emphasize that the provincial government has a larger impact on post-secondary students. Anything from graphics to in-person events that have snacks, speakers, etc will come from this line.

Ed Team Travel and Conference (6901-0126) - \$5000

Neither Ryan or I got to travel with the team so this line remained pretty stagnant but hopefully you'll get to!

From Shemar to Ryan;

Use this line for provincial and federal lobby week. OUSA has a fee cap for all conferences, so you will be charged a couple hundred for WelCon, StratCon and Lobby week. Since many of these will be virtual, these costs won't be high for your year but will be accurate for subsequent years. Essentially any

conference you or [Denver] and you go to, you can put it through this line. All food for those conferences, accommodation and transportation costs can also go through here!

Training (6804-0126) - \$500

I had a conversation with the Education team about doing some training but I should have brought it up again later in the year. We didn't end up using this line but I think there could be some flexibility here if you wanted to do something a bit different with committees or SRA.

Purchase Orders

I did everything online so I've kept this note from Shemar to Ryan;

1. *Internal. Use this for your standing order at Underground, when you fill up your Presto at Compass to go to Toronto, when you take your staff out to TwelvEighty for lunch, or anything else internally. You can also use it for McMaster departments if Accounting has a code to do an internal transfer to them. The white sheet (on top) gets filed in accounting. I kept my own folder of white sheets, and at the end of the year I gave it to accounting. The yellow sheet goes to accounting, and the pink sheet goes to whichever business unit is being paid. You also use this when you need the credit or debit card. Make sure you tell Kevin several days in advance when you will need the card, and how much you plan to spend on it so it doesn't get maxed out. Don't forget to keep all the receipts when you make purchases using the card. If I went out with the Board, the VP Finance usually held onto the card. Keep in mind that your Advocacy Coordinator and AVPs have PTM-level budgetary authority over 6604-0305.*
2. *External. This is a PDF online. I would use it if I ever needed to pay someone outside of McMaster. For example, I would fill out an External PO if Waterloo Feds billed me something for UCRU, or to pay our OUSA membership. When you fill out an External PO, send it to Kevin and Alex.*

We also have an Uber account. Ask Daniella to set this up on your phone. This will be necessary for Advocacy Weeks, OUSA GAs, travel to City Hall if you are short on time, etc.

Reimbursements

When the Board went to SUDS in Vancouver, I used this to reimburse my ferry home and some other things that I paid for out of pocket. The blank form is in your OneDrive folder but once you've filled it out, make sure it goes to the VP Finance.

Policies and the Policy Conference

Policy Conference happens once your RAs have completed all phases of their policy writing and you would like to have the papers passed by SRA. The conference lets SRA members ask questions and give feedback so this year I held it through Teams and offered a Microsoft Forms (through the PCC positions account that you can ask Pauline to give you access to before you hire this role). Since my team of RAs struggled we didn't meet the deadline to have the three papers passed before my last SRA meeting but sometimes you need to put people before deadlines. Although it was frustrating to miss this, I understood that the RAs were doing all that they could and there was a lot of burn out among authors and SRA members.

I would really appreciate it if you could motion to pass the three policy papers in your OneDrive folder under “MSU” and then “Policy Papers”. To do this, you’ll need to send a motion to either Daniela or Victoria by the deadline to add agenda items, and just explain that they’re overdue but consultations were done thoroughly. You can text me about this if you have any more questions!

There is an entire Operating Policy that outlines this process so take a peak and walk through but if you are seriously considering merging the 3 RA positions into one, this OP would need to be updated to fall under this roles responsibility. If you do this fairly quickly, the RA role could mimic the OUSA RPA positions and create research packs over the summer, hold think tanks, and help facilitate writing during the fall and winter semesters. At the end of your year, or whenever you choose to have Policy Con (this could be at the end of each term or just the end of the year), Bylaw 3 states that it’s mandatory for SRA members to attend so make sure to tell them this as well as the date well in advance. I would suggest working with the PCC to organize this and also use some of the budget to get refreshments, etc to make the experience pleasant.

To determine which policies will be worked on during your term, just go to the “Bylaws & Policies” page of the MSU website and see which papers have expired recently or will be expiring soon. Talk to your Board about which resonate with them and also the Education team and committees as these folks will be your authors. You will need two SRA members from each committee per paper so work with the AVPs to motivate people to sign up. Once your teams are established, work backwards from the Policy Con date to establish deadlines and milestones for the authorship teams to meet. Take into consideration things like Comms formatting, time to consult with campus and community groups, and edits from yourself. After the timeline is established, you can also plan promotions to encourage feedback but this would be a great area to touch base with Wooder and the Comms team.

From Shemar to Ryan on in-person Policy Con;

From here onwards, the Advocacy Coordinator took the lead. Make sure you’ve talked to Rick from TwelvEighty about how many people you estimate will be coming (around 40), and AvTEK to ensure they can set up a screen, projector, and microphone. You also will need to book a space to hold policy con. I used 1280 event space and the MSU board room. Try to have everything in the same room for all three days as it keeps things simple. You will need the codes for the projector, so make sure you have those in advance. Again, I’d assign this to your [Project and Campaign] Coordinator to coordinate, in advance of registration.

This is the old timeline Ryan suggested to me. I’m just going to leave it here in case you choose to pass policies first and second term. I will create a new structure below based on if you only pass the policy papers in second term.

If writing policies over two terms and passing in second term, you have a few options for Policy Con.

MacVotes

When I worked on the federal election campaign last September, I had to keep everything online because of the pandemic however I’m hoping that both the provincial and municipal election have more in-person elements. I’ve started a folder for you on the OneDrive and under “Provincial and Federal Affairs”, you’ll find the election plan I’ve been working to keep updated. Hargun can pick up from the previous AVP PFA’s work and keep information on registration, the May at Mac polling practice, and possible SRA

presentation but I'd really encourage you to be creative with these events and see if people are asking questions online. There will also be promotions from OUSA so keep an eye out for opportunities there!

From a previous VP Education Spencer;

In 2015, the MSU worked with a club to host a professor panel discussion in Gilmour Hall to discuss election issues, had a 1280 election social, hosted a live airing of an electoral debate in Clubspace, and hosted an election after party in 1280 where students could watch the election results live. These are all events that were planned with the use of Avtek, room bookings, food purchases, and social media promotion. They were all also very successful and well-attended.

In addition, the MSU held its standard all-candidates debate in the MUSC atrium. The debate was attended by the Conservative, Liberal, and Green candidates (NDP dropped out last second), and consisted of students and the MSU asking questions to the candidates and live streaming the debate.

The MSU's promotions strategy was very successful, as it was extremely multi-faceted. The MSU had their MacVotes website, which contains information on candidates, the MacVotes campaign, and polling times and locations and what students need to bring. The MSU releases several promotional videos, hundreds of rave cards, Infographics, student blogs on why they were voting, hundreds of lawn signs, MacVotes t-shirts, and lanyards. All of this material was labeled with information on when, where, and how to vote, and helped solidify this information to students. In addition, they supported all of this with consistent social media promotion, broken down platforms, interviews in local media, and were even picked up nationally by the CBC.

Finally, on voting day itself the MSU promoted the polling station that was located at Les Prince Hall. Again, it was unfortunate that the only polling station on-campus was located at one of the farther locations from where students usually are. We still have over 500 students vote at this location, as we positioned student volunteers to count the number of students. In addition, they also worked with the university to make it easier for students to change their address on MUGSI (now MOSAIC) so they could easily print of the necessary information they needed to vote.

From Stephanie to Shemar;

Provincial

The Education Team ran a #MacVotes campaign and through OUSA, the #OUSAvotes campaign. Since the majority of students were not on campus, we placed most of our efforts into an online campaign, which included platform summaries on our website, videos encouraging students to get out to vote, and regular social media posts about the election. Leading up to the election, I was interviewed on the Hamilton radio station CHML and quoted in the Toronto Star, giving the MSU and OUSA campaigns a boost!

Additionally, we hosted a local candidates debate on campus that attracted approximately 150-200 people and had a number of people tune into the livestream. We invited the PC, Liberal, NDP, and Green candidates.

Ikram and I were also invited by the university to attend meetings with the candidates running in Hamilton and Burlington from the PC, Liberal, and NDP parties. With the university, we began to develop a relationship with the candidates, demonstrated how McMaster University was an asset to the community and province, as well as raised student priorities to the candidates.

Municipal

The Education Team ran a strong MacVotes Campaign for the three weeks leading up to the election. We started with a social media posts during reading week about the MSU's stances on transit and near campus neighbourhoods. Then, we tabled the week back, handing out buttons, stickers, and rave cards. We informed people about the election and answered any questions they had. I also invited Metrolinx to table separately to provide students with information about the LRT project. Finally, on October 22nd, we tabled from 10:30am to 4pm. We went around to inform students that voting was today, offered to walk students to polls, and provided them with the paperwork they would have to fill out at the polls, which Hamilton's election department provided to me ahead of time to speed up the process of students voting. As well, I took over the Instagram story for the day, posting updates throughout the day. Unfortunately, I did not provide external training to volunteers due to time constraints – however, they did an excellent job throughout the month!

Outside of the MacVotes campaign, Ikram, you, and I collectively meet with all 13 of the Ward One candidates. We sat down with each of them to get to know their vision for Ward One and Hamilton and informed them about our priorities. While at times this felt tedious, I saw it to be of great value since it continues to establish the MSU as a major stakeholder in Ward One. As well, it helped us build relationships with those who might be our potential councilor.

The Ward One All-Candidates Debate occurred on October 16th. All 13 candidates participated, making us the only ones to have a truly all-candidates debate! (Only 11 showed up to the Cable 14 debate and no other community association held a debate). It was certainly challenging holding a debate with 13 people, though our new format worked incredibly well. Instead of asking general questions, we asked each candidate 2 targeted questions to their campaign, which were prepared by the municipal affairs committee. This allowed us to ask candidates more challenging yet insightful questions. As well, we had a section of the debate where candidates could ask each other questions, which provided some fun debate. We received great feedback from the attendees of the debate about the structure. Several local media sources covered the debate and many local residents attended, demonstrating that we run strong, well planned debates that the city is interested in. Congratulations to Shemar, who did the majority of the planning of the debate for running such a successful event!

The MSU also received a lot of media coverage during the election. We were featured on Cable 14 twice, interviewed for CBC Hamilton, the Spectator, and Raise the Hammer. The Silhouette also did great cover of the municipal election and our campaign!

The night of the election, I went to City Hall where citizens and media were watching the results come in together. I met many of the elected candidates, where I congratulated them and told them the MSU is looking forward to working with them. I received a number of comments from people who said we ran an excellent campaign and they noticed more students voting this election! We do not have the poll by poll data for Ward One to see if turnout was higher in Ainsle Wood and Westdale. However, voter turnout was up 2% in Ward One! So that is a promising sign. I will update you once this data is released.

For the VP Education the year before the election (your successor's successor), you should lobby to the municipal government for a polling station. I feel like they already have it on their mind and Maureen will suggest it, but you need to talk to the Elections department to make sure it happens.

We will be having a polling station on campus this year which is super exciting! Once you've got a good grasp on the provincial election, talk to Wooder, Mymoon, and the PCC role (if it's filled) to touch base about how you want to promote the municipal election. I never did in-person campaigns so I'm a little out of touch with how this would work so hopefully the above isn't painfully long but Stephanie was super

informed so feel free to pull pieces and use what you want. Also, you have access to multiple years of VP Education's OneDrive files so if you want to copy anything she did, go take a look and see if there's anything you want to refresh.

University Advocacy

President's Advisory Council on Building Inclusive Community (PACBIC)

During my year, Denver sat on PACBIC and I didn't go to meeting however the peer support services are all members of PACBIC so it's a good idea to ask for updates from Sim. A subgroup of PACBIC was the December 6th Planning Committee that Hargun and I were apart of. I found that the group had a strong vision for how they wanted to run the event which was easy enough to go with however I did struggle to translate their promotional materials into MSU content. We typically rely on Instagram but they leaned toward PDF flyers so be prepared for that but everyone involved was nice.

University Administration

I found some admin to be wonderful to work with and others really challenging but one thing I tried to do was communicate boundaries (what I could do and how much time I had to commit) and also listen to what they were trying to tell me. I found that sometimes I was asking the wrong questions and folks were really trying to guide me which was sometimes helpful and sometimes frustrating!

David Farrar, President

I almost never worked with David however we were in the same meetings fairly often and he was quite kind. You might find that Sim works and meets with him more but you should consider joining in once and a while to say hello and pass along any updates.

Esme Davis, Advisor to the President

Since I didn't work with David very often, I really didn't meet Esme but my predecessor Ryan had a good relationship with her so don't be shy about reaching out.

Susan Tighe, Provost and VP Academic

I found that Susan was always friendly, very prepared, and willing to share information with me. That being said, I would stick to presenting fully formed ideas and clear messages to her since she is pretty busy.

Debbie Martin, VP University Advancement

Mary Williams used to be in this role but left McMaster this year and I'm not super familiar with Debbie. Before this role, I think she oversaw Facility Services and apparently she was big on recycling but that's really all I've heard! This office is above the Government Relation department so you might end up in some of the same meetings but I would guess rarely.

Alex Lawson, Executive Advisor on Public Affairs

I really liked working with Alex, Joe (federal), Greg (municipal), and the rest of their team and wish I had reached out to them more! I think there's a great opportunity to set up monthly meetings between AVPs and their relevant counterparts even if there doesn't seem to be a lot of updates.

Dr Karen Mossman, VP Research

I never met with Karen one on one but I'll leave Shemar's description on this role;

If you're interested in pursuing more research opportunities for undergrads, he would be the person to go to.

I think it would be interesting to try and connect UCRU priorities here and see if there could be more communication!

Sean Van Koughnett, AVP Students & Learning and Dean of Students

I liked working with Sean at Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC) and he oversees SWC, SAS, Athletics and Recreation, and the SSC. Sean also oversees Indigenous Student Services (ISS), International Student Services, Ombuds, and sits on OSCA. I found Sean to be pretty open to ideas and good at getting back to people from the MSU. This year we decided not to do subcommittees and instead were trying to brainstorm ways to include more student feedback across the four subcommittees. Arlene Dosen, also on SSAC, will probably bring this up and I hope your Board is open to some changes! During Shemar's year, the Student Choice Initiative was detrimental to a lot of services and Sean was very open to helping out and really supported the MSU.

Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost (Faculty)

I liked working with Kim however I found that the AVP UA met with her a lot more than I did since I leaned into the provincial advocacy front. This doesn't mean you shouldn't meet with her and I wish I did more! It might be worth it to set up a monthly or even bi-weekly meeting with Kim, Sim, Will, and yourself to give updates. Kim's role is to support faculties but she is still incredibly open to feedback and the student experience. She played a big role in our plan to return to campus and was super receptive to concerns from both students and faculty.

Sean Beaudette, Manger, Educational Initiatives & Assessments, Residence Life

Sean works with Residence Life as the Manager, Education Initiatives & Assessment. He is pretty involved with the Archway program and very willing to work with the MSU.

Dave Heidebrecht, Director of the Office of Community Engagement

I didn't work too much with Dave but he is really passionate and dedicated to community work. Feel free to reach out if you have ideas about the MSU and the community.

From Shemar to Ryan;

Dave oversees the OCE. The projects we work on with the office change each year but they are great supports and really care about student feedback. You, your AVP MA, and Off-Campus Community Educator should meet with him early in the year to determine some shared projects. Have the Educator go to the OCE meetings and work with him and the office on any student facing events. All in all, he is really passionate about his work and does a phenomenal job at the OCE.

Karen McQuigge, Director of Alumni Advancement

Karen attends SSAC meetings and although other board members will work more closely with Karen than you, she is a great person to chat with if someone points you towards her door.

Rosanne Kent, Director of the Student Wellness Centre

Roseanne attends SSAC when reporting on the SWC and was friendly enough in those meetings. I had a couple meetings with her outside of SSAC and found it very difficult to relay concerns and try to make plans to do promotional work or events (like a vaccine clinic).

From Ryan to me;

I would advise coming up with a plan and a tangible discussion item before meeting with her or reaching out.

From Shemar to Ryan;

Roseanne is very nice, and I appreciate all the work she does on-campus but she can be a bit defensive at times and doesn't always take criticism well. Sometimes we would be discussing improvements and she would go on about the great things that are being done without acknowledging the areas of improvements. She frequently talks over other people in a meeting and will cut you off mid speech. Don't be afraid to interrupt back and stand your ground, as she will find a way to run a meeting off its course!

Allison Drew-Hassling, Director of Student Support & Case Management

I never met with Allison however I heard good about her from other Board members and the AVP UA.

I'll leave this note from Ryan about her;

Allison is very busy, but so nice and passionate about her work. She is very supportive of students and would always listen to our ideas about mental health support. She was also great in giving feedback on OUSA papers. I had a really great relationship with her – I would encourage you to get to know her. She's very knowledgeable about the struggles of students, the cases that come up, and Student Accessibility Services.

Kevin Beatty, Director, Housing & Conference Services

I worked with people in Kevin's office to implement a rental rating system however it was a bit slow going so I'm not sure if our work is on their website yet but the experience was pretty positive. I think it was great to keep communications going between this office and the AVP UA as well as the AVP MA since a lot of first year students in residence will be moving to the neighborhoods surround McMaster's campus. When I was in meetings with Kevin I found him very approachable and willing to work with us and First Year Council members to make changes.

I think Ryan worked with him a little more so I'll leave this note here;

Kevin is awesome! He is very supportive of students. He worked with us to quickly develop a roommate connector program (McMatch) and he pushed forward the rating system for the Mac Off-Campus Housing Website.

Union Relations

I only worked with MUFA a couple times during the year but I did set up a couple meetings with their President and another member. I found it helpful but I was mostly trying to gauge how instructors were responding to return to campus and a few other projects so I wasn't really asking anything of them. I also participated in the MUFA Teaching Awards Committee which was a minimal time commitment and fairly straight forward. I would recommend connecting with group closer to the fall and then again in the winter to share updates and see if there's any information that needs to be passed along.

I didn't work directly with CUPE but Shemar left this for Ryan;

Blake's year, CUPE 3906 and the University re-did their collective bargaining agreement this year (in the fall). She had pushed for three hours of paid TA training to both the University and CUPE 3906, unfortunately it was not realized in the agreement. I met with CUPE numerous times throughout the year

to discuss the upcoming agreement. They were able to get paid TA training which includes pedagogy and AOP training for all TA's. they also got a number of other priorities included in their agreement which is great! May be useful to see how this gets implemented and take note of any issues TA's may be raising with the new agreement. Keep in mind we don't directly represent TA's, but we do have undergrads who are also TA's.

Student-Administration Consultation Committee

This committee is fairly relaxed and really high level since there are representatives from the university, MAPS, and GSA. We held our meetings online but in previous years they've been in the MSU boardroom and chaired by David and the MSU President.

Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC)

This was previously mentioned in the University Administration section but hopefully this is more broad so you get a better understanding. SSAC is the entire MSU Board as well as John, and then Sean Van Koughnett (although he had to step back from it half way through the year), and folks from Ath and Rec, SWC, and SSC. Before your first meeting, you should try and go over the CAF agreement and read up on the provincial governments guidelines for ancillary fees. In previous years, there have been subcommittees for the three with student representatives on each however our Board members just filled those seats and the subcommittees ended up reporting during general meetings. In the year before mine, GC had started reviewing the CAF agreement and this is something that your Board might want to consider. This committee also oversees WWAC which makes all Welcome Week folks accountable to SSAC however you'll find that Mitchell and Sarphina will be more involved than you. SSAC also oversees SLEF and USIF but this will be handled by Sarphina and Sim.

University Library Advisory Council

I wasn't part of this committee and neither was Ryan but Shemar and previous VP Educations have been so if it could be a good idea to touch base with Vivian Lewis to ask about their priorities. There is a separate OER Committee (below) that aligned more with my goals so you can also delegate this to an AVP.

From Shemar to Ryan;

ULAC is a good place to go to hear about what the library is up to and provide a student perspective. It is chaired by Vivian Lewis, the University Librarian, and I felt this year had a lot more items related to undergrad students compared to Ryan's experience.

University Budget Submission

We didn't end up doing a university budget submission this year after we lost a lot of files from last year but I'll keep Ryan's notes and add some of what I learned when meeting with folks. There will be notes on the AVP UA OneDrive and I'd recommend going through Hargun's work as well as the previous AVP UA's folder for a full picture.

You and your team will need to set priorities in the summer before meeting with university AVPs. Once you have a game plan, reach out to Comms and ask them to start drafting a brief to bring to your meetings. When you start meeting with university AVPs to lobby them to include funding on those priorities into their submitted budget proposals for the following fiscal year in the fall. During Ryan's year, they met with Sean Van Koughnett and SWC to recommend that they allocate more funding in their proposed budget to hiring more counsellors. The submission needs to be in conjunction with the

university AVPs and their offices as they are the ones who actually have influence over the budget. A great person to reach out to early would be Dee Henne (hennedl@mcmaster.ca) as she will be able to explain some more nuanced pieces of the process and also how funding within the university works. Before reaching out to her, it's a good idea to read over the OUSA "Accountability and System Vision" paper that I worked on last year to better understand how the province funds institutions and what measures are in place to keep them accountable. You can also ask Malika from OUSA a bit about this as she's super knowledgeable!

I found this blurb from Ryan really helpful

I'm going to paste Dee Henne's advice to us that she sent in October. Look up this email and read it – the subject line is University Budget Submission and Dee's email is.

Dee:

"The individual leads for each area will actually request the additional funding through a submission to our Budget Committee, it is key that you work with them on the plans that address your concerns and that you ideally provide them with a sense of support for their budget request. Your support of their proposals should be highlighted in their submission. I can assist also by ensuring that the Budget Committee is made directly aware of the requests that you support. Hence, I encourage you to continue to collaborate with them, understand their plans and their associated funding requests. I will ensure that the VPs and Budget Committee are made aware that these are your current priorities during this funding cycle. Ultimately, the budget committee will receive a number of new funding requests and these "asks" go onto an unfunded priorities list to be cumulated and voted on. The leads can provide you with updates on their requests once the process is completed for this cycle."

Open Educational Resources Working Group

I was fairly involved in this with Hargun, Fraser from SRA, and also Sim this year as we ran two surveys to gauge interest in OERs from both students and instructors. Both surveys are under the "Shared" tab on your Microsoft Forms but it would be great to have them formulated into a final report. I think Fraser and Sim had started on this but it could be a great way to continue the work with this committee (and also possible use it within the university budget submission). This committee is chaired by Olga Perkovic, a librarian, with Joanne Kehoe from the MacPherson Institute as an important member.

There are basically two things we need to do to advance OERs:

Joint Indigenous-Administration Consultation Committee

I wasn't involved with this committee and had a hard time getting in touch with folks from Indigenous Student Services but I would still recommend reaching out just to say hello and offer your support.

From Ryan;

This is a committee that is chaired by the Provost. It includes the VP Research Rob Baker, Vanessa Watts (Director, Indigenous Studies Program), Chelsea Gabel (Chair, Indigenous Education Council), Rick Monture (Interim Director, McMaster Indigenous Research Institute), and Shylo Elmaman (Director, Indigenous Student Services). This committee mostly updates the provost on what is going on, discusses funding, hiring more Indigenous scholars, etc. Some of the things that have come out of it are: entrance scholarships for Indigenous students, a promise to hire more Indigenous faculty, and the creation of a graduate program in Indigenous Studies.

Sustainability Education Committee

Early on in my term I met with Kate Whalen from the Academic Sustainability Office and a couple of her team members to talk about this committee. There are a lot of sustainability related committees and clubs on campus and we agreed that this was a bit redundant considering that the work is being done elsewhere. I decided to run the committee anyways and set up weekly meetings however I found that attendance was really poor and committee members were not really interested in doing campaigns or bringing their own ideas so I ended up cancelling our meetings to focus on other projects. I'm not sure if this was specifically related to the pandemic and burn out but I didn't have time to micromanage this committee. In other years there was a chairperson however no committee member wanted to take on this responsibility.

I wasn't super worried about this committee since I was working with the ASP Office to offer two MSU projects within in SUSTAIN 2SS3 and SUSTAIN 3S03 to do an audit and report of 5 business units (the Sil, Underground, 1280, Union Market, and the Grind). I found that the students involved with these courses were kept accountable since they were being graded but also a lot more keen. During fall semester, Hargun took a more active role and in the winter semester I was the contact. The final reports can be found on the ASP website and I was really happy with the final results. I would suggest reaching out to Kate at some point in the summer and putting some thought into another possible project.

Just in case you do decide to run the committee, I'll leave this note from Ryan;

This committee is made up of the project and campaign coordinator, a BOD member, the AVP UA or the RA, 2 SRA members, 2 MSU members, 1 rep from Outdoor Recreation, 1 from Office of Sustainability, and 1 from Facility Services. For the non-student roles, check past emails to see who attended and see if they would like to again.

I think Shemar also found this committee wasn't super impactful so it might be worth it to look into changing the Operating Policy to be more flexible toward doing SUSTAIN course projects instead.

Return to McMaster (i.e. return to campus)

Throughout the year the university admin met with the MSU and also held Town Halls for students and faculty however we didn't have a lot of formal meetings around this. There was some pushback on #BacktoMac but the majority of students surveyed by the university wanted to return to campus. That being said, Denver and I made sure to always talk about the importance of hybrid models and flexibility for students who needed more time. I'm assuming this will look a lot different for you than for Ryan and I but if you're ever wondering about some of the planning behind this, feel free to go through Ryan's One Drive and ask Sim to look in GC's One Drive

International students

This year we had a pretty good relationship with International Student Services and they even gave the MSU some space on their app, iCent. I would recommend asking your Board for some of their priorities and meeting with Wooder to plan a quick update so international students are kept up to date on changes within the MSU.

Beyond the app, I think this group will have distinct needs in the coming year so it might be worth it to work with ISS to set up some sort of advisory group to hear directly from international students about the challenges they're facing and what the MSU can do to support them. This could be delegated through the AVP UA and even SRA could be helpful in reaching out to their constituents.

Indigenous students

I mentioned this earlier but I had a hard time getting in touch with the ISS team but there were conversations between Hargun and Dr Tracey Bear about creating a position for Indigenous students to be more involved in MSU government. This would be great for representation but it might take some brainstorming to figure out where this role fits within the scope of either the Education team of the MSU overall.

Archway Program

I think Denver was a lot more involved with Archway than I was but I'm going to leave this note from Ryan because I was minimally involved;

We had some discussions late in the year with both Seans about incorporating more professional mental health support and proactive screening/connecting with students through Archway. We originally thought a position might be able to be funded through SLEF, but we didn't end up proposing something. One possibility that we discussed with Sean B was making another (pilot) position similar to Bridget Cowe's position with Archway this past year. She is a social worker who works in case management who worked with Archway but is going back to the Student Support & Case Management office. However, SVK also said we could look at using funding to provide better training for mentors and coaches and/or integrate the Student Navigator program more fully into Archway. Feel free to pursue these ideas if it's something you want to do.

Associate Deans Group

I didn't really take advantage of this group because I found smaller, more direct meetings were more helpful but I know Ryan and GC sometimes went to this group! It's essentially just a high level meeting where updates are given but there are a lot of people here so it can be helpful.

Municipal Advocacy

Mohawk-McMaster-Redeemer Student Advisory Group (formerly HPSAG)

I met with Mohawk and Redeemer throughout the summer but things fell off the calendar when Mohawk's Student Association leadership changed. Prior to that we had talked about some shared priorities like lighting, bike lanes, and improved transit. Even though they were pretty unresponsive during the latter half of my term, I think it's still a good idea to meet with them and see if those are still issues that we can work together on.

Even if you don't having any luck with getting this group together, MP Philomena Tassi's office will reach out to you in the fall and winter semesters for a meeting. During my year, I worked with Wooder to put together a brief of our priorities, usually based on UCRU's lobby points, and sent them over beforehand. It's usually at least you, Wooder, and the President from the MSU but you can always invite the AVP MA if they're available. I always found this to be a fairly easy meetings as we were always the most prepared and had clear requests whereas Mohawk and Redeemer are a fair bit smaller and don't work as closely with the federal government.

One option that I read in my transition report from Ryan was to invite other local politicians like Fred Eisenberger, Sandy Shaw, Andrea Horwath, John Paul Danko, Maureen Wilson, and Nrinder Nann among others. This could be like a mini lobby meeting and might be helpful to hear a lot of different perspectives all at once but I definitely think there would need to be a clear agenda.

Light Rail Transit

The LRT was paused for a while when it was unclear whether the province or city would fund the construction as well as the operating costs. During my year, it was determined the province would fund the construction and then the city passed a motion to fund operating expenses which was really great. This is an expensive project however there will be a stop at McMaster and the tracks will cover a lot of Hamilton which will make commuting within the city and beyond even easier. This is something you'll need to keep an eye on and it's defiantly an area where the AVP MA can provide updates.

HSR

Since most students weren't in Hamilton during the fall, there was a bit of backlash from students who had the pay the mandatory fee however this should be less of an issue for you. I found that the people working for the HSR weren't as communicative as I thought they should be and there was one instance where buses going through campus were cancelled and no one reached out to us. It's important to keep in mind that the MSU is a major stakeholder considering how much we pay to provide passes to each student. When things get closer to normal and students are more active on the HSR, it will be worth it to look into Hamilton's 10 year plan to advocate for student needs being considered and for progress to be made. Since I didn't do a lot of work around this, here is Ryan's note;

Year 5 of Hamilton's 10-year HSR plan was paused last year. While it's important for us to advocate on specific issues (e.g. 51 service on weekends), we're not even back to pre-COVID levels of transit (e.g. the 51 isn't even running at all!). We need to focus on pushing the city to continue investments in public transit as a part of COVID recovery.

Municipal Budget Submission

I asked the AVP MA to work on this with the MA Committee however I did not monitor progress closely enough and ended up doing a lot of the editing myself. I would start planning the priorities you would like to include over the summer and then meet with Wooder and the AVP MA to plan out a timeline for drafting the submission. Usually the city's budget meeting is in February and you and the AVP MA would delegate so you can plan backwards from then to give yourself enough time to put materials together but also consult with councillors. I did this a bit later than I would have liked but I was still able to send our budget pre-submission to each councillor. You might want to consider sending it community stakeholders and meeting with them before to see where your priorities overlap. This is required within Bylaw 3 so it's important to keep this in the back of your mind!

From Ryan to me;

Meet with groups like the Hamilton Transit Alliance, Maureen Wilson, Ian Borsuk from the HTA and Environment Hamilton, and Mohawk Students' Association and Redeemer Student Senate to see what their priorities are and how you can partner with them on certain advocacy points. Sometimes our partners in Hamilton will bring up important points or point us to helpful resources to use in researching and writing our budget submission.

Student Housing

Over the summer, the AVP MA and I delegated with ACORN Hamilton and a few other groups in favour of a rental licensing pilot and there was a motion passed to support the costs. This should be starting at some in 2022 so keep an eye out for this. I think each VP Education takes a different approach to protecting students off campus and I thought this was the best way to do it during the pandemic. With more students moving to Hamilton, this might look different for you but take a read through Mymoon's work as well as the materials I have under the MA folder. Prior to being VP Education, I was on the MA Committee so I was pretty familiar with the previous AVP MA, Maanvi's, work however there is a report that might give some insights to private development around campus in the AVP MA OneDrive. This year, one of our Advocacy Policies that you'll need to motion to pass at the first SRA meeting was on off campus housing so this should also be helpful.

Working with Maureen

I had a hard time getting in touch with Maureen but whenever we were in the same meetings, I found that she was very supportive and kept students in mind. Ryan and Maanvi used to meet with Maureen and her team (Stephanie Hilson) fairly regularly and I think this would be helpful consider that we've strengthened our community ties a lot over the year.

Property Rating System on Mac Off-Campus Housing

I continued Ryan and Shemar's work on this however it seems to have stalled out a bit recently so this might be something you'll want to reach out to Kevin Beatty, Kim Zarzuela and Laurie Ham about for an update. This would be really cool to build upon each year and is one way the admin can support students off campus but I think they need to be pushed.

Hamilton Transit Riders' Union

The MSU hasn't really been involved with this group in the past couple of years especially considering out transit usage is really low at the moment. That being said, the MSU Advocacy twitter account follows them and they are doing a lot of important work.

Hamilton Transit Alliance

There are a lot of local groups (YWCA, IWC, HTRU, Chamber of Commerce, Environment Hamilton, SPRC, Mohawk Student Association) that work within this alliance so it would be great if your AVP MA went to these meetings. During my transition, Ryan mentioned taking a more active role within this group and I think that would be great but it really depends on both your and the AVP Mas capacity to do this. During the first few weeks, I'd recommend going over which groups you both want to be actively involved with and go from there.

ACORN Hamilton

We worked with ACORN to prepare for our delegation in favour on rental licensing along with Mohawk and Redeemer. I found them a bit intense, and I think they expected a lot from us however I tried to manage their expectations since the MSU has a much broader scope. That being said, they are really passionate and committed to supporting people's right to safe and accessible housing.

Provincial and Federal Advocacy

Provincial Advocacy

OUSA

In the past, VP Educations have considered leaving OUSA however I found the work OUSA was doing was very aligned with MSU priorities and the Home Office staff to be a huge help. Each year OUSA publishes 6 policies as well as a few other publications like Habitats. Since the OUSA fee is around \$3.24 per student (totalling close to \$90,000 for the MSU alone), it was really important to me to attend meetings and be involved whenever possible. I took on the VP HR role and found it really helped me immerse myself in OUSA's projects and campaigns. I also decided to sign up the MSU to write two policy papers which may have been a little overzealous but you can also delegate more if that's the path you want to take.

OUSA – Home Office

I never went to an in-person meeting but I think you'll get to!

From Shemar to Ryan;

Home Office is located at 26 Soho Street in Toronto (get off the Subway at Osgoode). It is an office building, and we're on the third floor, all the way at the back on the right. It is a small but inviting office. You'll come here for SC meetings, Think Tanks, and you can always drop in whenever you're in Toronto!

Eddy Avila – Executive Director

Eddy is super friendly and helpful so feel free to ask him questions and for support. If you decide to run for an Executive position, you'll work more closely to him. He started as the President of Western's USC before being hired as a political staffer at Queen's Park, then going to OUSA as an RPA, and now he's the Executive Director!

The ED is meant to oversee the full time staff at the home office, meet with government officials, especially non-political staff, oversee the day-to-day operations of OUSA, maintain government relations, and help SC with lobbying. Our SC got updates pretty often through Slack so make sure your keeping up and also stay tuned in the SC groupchat (I think Austin told me you were added but let me know if you need to be connected to any previous members!).

Irum Chorghay – Operations & Communications Director

Irum will reach out to you about paying the MSU membership fee as well as anything related to events, social media planning, or campaigns so keep an eye out for their emails!

Malika Dhanani– Research & Policy Analyst

Malika is so lovely and incredibly smart. I worked with Malika more in the fall but she is very good at her job and always willing to help.

Shemar Hackett – Research & Policy Analyst

Shemar was the MSU's VP Education the year before Ryan! After his term, Shemar did a Masters in Political Management at Ottawa before working at a private firm. Shemar was hired a couple months ago but I think he's settled into this role really well.

Steering Committee

Steering Committee meetings are usually once a month so try to make it to everyone but if you can't, let Eddy know as soon as possible. I found that our meetings were pretty proactive and everyone knew what was going on however people were always quick to ask questions when they didn't know something. Different schools are doing a lot of different things so you might just be a bit out of perspective!

All of the relevant materials are in the Steering Committee dropbox so take some time and go through the resources and documents. Soon after you get into office, you will get some calendar invites for Welcome Con and Strat Con so keep an eye out for those. Welcome Con will be for you and the President however you'll attend different meetings. Strat Con will be when you decide what papers you're going to be writing so make sure to go over the materials ahead of time so you can make an informed choice.

Running for OUSA President

I was elected to be in this role a couple of days before OUSA elections so I didn't have an opportunity to run for President or VP Finance however I did run (unopposed haha) for VP HR and really enjoyed it. Ryan was also elected late so he didn't run but here are Shemar's notes just in case you want to!
There is a folder in Stephanie's OUSA folder about running for president. It includes her platform and some she notes had made. It is important to consult all SC members, the Executive Director, and the past OUSA President. Your platform shouldn't be focused on lobbying ideas since that is decided on by SC. Rather, it should be on how the organization be more effective and a leader in PSE advocacy. Also, talk about why you are the best person to be the face of the organization and how you can balance representing the MSU and the interests of OUSA. Steph did almost win, tying the first round. She didn't think her chances were that great with Danny attending basically 6 GAs, being from Western, and the past OUSA intern. But that just goes to show, even if you don't think you are as qualified, you probably have a good shot!

General Assembly

I didn't have GA in person so the following sections are from Shemar;

Hotel

As soon as the Operations person emails you, forward to email to Daniela and ask her to book four or five hotel rooms. Work with Daniela on this and be patient as it will be her first time helping with logistics for GA.

Promoting Applications

It's always hard to get applicants for GA, because not a lot of students know what OUSA is or can commit to an entire Thurs – Sunday away. Make sure, like Policy Con, you talk to Wooder and the comms officer a couple weeks before you intend to open applications. The comms officer will have the template for application promo, ask her to update it or design a new one. Get creative with a strategy to promote, and make sure you're targeting students who will be directly impacted by the policies or who have experience in the area.

Opening and Closing Applications

At the beginning of the term, ask the Irum what the last possible date is that they'll need the names of your delegates, and open registration at least three weeks prior to that. You'll need 2 weeks to keep applications open, and at least a week to interview candidates and select the final few.

Number of Delegates

Based on our size, the MSU gets 9 delegates. I took 9 delegates both terms however it was tricky to fill those seats since the roles are a lot of work and also unpaid. You can try and promote the positions to SRA members and committee members but if it comes to it, you can also directly ask people and forego interviews.

Interviews

You can refer to the AVP Hiring section for a timeline on hiring because it's the same for delegates. There are questions in my One Drive folder but feel free to change them!

Training

Training is pretty straightforward and there's a powerpoint in my One Drive that you can update and add to. A lot of what I focused on was just the basics of OUSA, who Home Office is, and then went over the papers. I tried to focus on how to give good feedback and what to expect on the day of but never went over a couple hours.

A few notes from Shemar to Ryan:

As we've talked about, modify training to talk more about respectful behaviour and arguments. Tell delegates not to shame others for their ideas. If they have a problem with delegates, tell them to tell you and you can address it with the Steering Committee members. Going to GA is not like going into battle. We are all on the same side and we all want to improve life for students. Address people who do not believe this. The adversarial relationships that our delegates have had in the past with others needs to end if we are going to be a productive organization.

SRA

You have to ratify the delegates at SRA prior to attending. Make sure to add it to the agenda before you go.

Travelling to GA

I didn't travel to I'm leaving this from Shemar;

Depending on how many people you have, you'll need 2-3 cars to get to GA. Definitely work out in advance who will be driving in case you end up needing to rent a vehicle. Make sure you calculate your travel time so everyone knows when they need to leave McMaster by.

General Assembly at McMaster

The next General Assemblies will be at Queen's and then Trent Durham but this note from Shemar can help future VP Education's or if there's a sudden change;

I have a folder with all my information from General Assembly so that the VP Ed who has to plan it in the future can look back on it. I won't go into detail here because there are a lot of specific logistics, which may not be relevant in 4 years. However, plan early and try to get a full-time staff in the MSU to help you plan.

Campus Visit

For in-person visits:

At some point, the Ops person will contact you to set up your campus visit. I suggest you download most of these tasks to your Advocacy Coordinator – booking a table, booking lunch, etcetera. We had a table in MUSC this past year, which was successful. Ryan had it in Mills, which was also popular. You will also need to set up some meetings for home office. Do this in advance as much as possible, otherwise you won't get many meetings. This is something you can ask Daniela's help with. Home office will be clear with you about who they'd like to meet with while they're there. It's also a good idea to promote that OUSA is on campus so individuals can take the time to go and speak to them if they have questions or concerns.

If it's online, you can ask your Project and Campaign Coordinator or Daniela to help coordinate Teams/Zoom meeting times if necessary. Reach out to Kim Dej, Sean Van Koughnett, Susan Tighe, and David Farrar to see if they would be available to meet with OUSA representatives during the campus visit week/day.

OUSA Campaign

This year my SC decided to do "Stop OSAP Clawbacks" as our campaign and it was mostly organized by Irum. This will be something your SC will decide at StratCon so feel free to do some touch bases with your Board and the Education team to see if there's something the MSU feels strongly about. Since this will be very social media heavy, it would be a good idea to connect Irum with the PCC role when they're hired so the planning and work can be a bit more streamlined.

Federal Advocacy

Here are not notes from Shemar to Ryan on CASA and CFS;

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

The MSU left CASA in March 2015.

This is from Ryan's report: In July 2017, Chukky, Urszula, and I attended CASA's Policy and Strategy Conference in Banff, Alberta. Based on this conference, as well as my interactions with BUSU (who remains a member of CASA), I cannot in good faith suggest CASA as a viable organization with which to do federal advocacy. Unless they greatly change their structure, they will not be an option for us. I wrote a detailed review on CASA and submitted it to the SRA, so give that a read. I would not suggest attending any CASA conference this year. The only good thing that came from attending the conference for us was the networking with other SU. It would be a much better idea to attend a conference like SUDS for that purpose. At the CASA conferences, all you'll find are SUs that love CASA and aren't looking to leave.

That being said, keep up to date on what CASA is doing. Definitely read their budget submission and anything else they put out. CASA has a lot of good ideas, but unfortunately their organizational structure makes them unable to execute.

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)

I would not recommend joining the CFS, for a myriad of reasons. If you are interested, please see "Solidarity for Their Own Good" by Titus Gregory. I would also suggest not partnering with them – they are not well respected by most people in government and university administrators. If you partner with them, there is a strong possibility it will impact the MSU's or OUSA reputation as well. While I understand the whole "we are in this together," our battles look very different.

Undergraduates of the Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU)

I was elected after UCRU's Board was elected so Denver ended up doing a lot more work with UCRU than I did so it's worth a conversation between you and Sim to see who will take on a leadership role here. The MSU was one of the founding groups of UCRU in 2015 and its essentially a lobby group for U15 schools. In the past couple of years, UCRU has become more serious about becoming a formal organization similar to OUSA with home office staff and research based recommendations presented during lobby weeks. The SRA approved the bylaws on April 25th, 2021 at SRA 21C so feel free to look back and make sure it's still accurate. Ryan submitted a memo however from my understanding GC was on the UCRU Board during his year so it might be a good idea to ask Sim to look through the One Drive from that year. Once the fee structure for UCRU is established, you'll need SRA approval again however it's a good idea to meet with Victoria and the accounting team to determine where the funds will come from and whether the MSU will be a Class A member.

Lobby Week

I was the MSU representative for Lobby Week this year as the President was on an LOA at this point. Most of the briefs were organized by Western's team however our PCC did put one together so feel free to offer MSU resources (this could also be Comms but make sure to ask them about their capacity ahead of time). This year lobby week was held online through Zoom so I'm going to leave notes from Stephanie to Shemar;

To schedule meetings, we had a list of every MP in Canada. We split up the MPs by area and asked different members to email all of them. McGill programmed something to send all the emails at once in a personalized way. I don't know how to be honest but try to see if you can do that again. Find out what riding every member who is going to the Lobby Week is in. That will be helpful when politicians ask if our groups include any of their constituents. Make sure they go to those meeting. Nick Soave did all the personal schedules for the week and stayed at the hotel with the UMSU staff member to handle any last minute changes. Hopefully they do that again. Emma [Daniela] could possibly do this as well so if they can't ask her.

As to who goes to lobby weeks, make sure you talk about it with the group about who is coming and who is lobbying. Make sure staff members aren't lobbying. You think that would be intuitive but it wasn't. Have a form go around to track who is coming, where they are staying. Considering booking a block in a hotel so you can all be near each other. Do that very early – Ottawa books up fast.

Final thoughts

When I got my transition report it was almost twice as long so I've tried to cut it down and be super direct with information so I hope that was helpful! A lot of your learning curve will be through meetings and conversations with people so ask questions and do your research. It's okay to not know everything all the time and ask for help but people will be so much for accepting when you've made an effort first. I think a lot of people in student government are over achievers and so willing to work overtime and say yes to helping but I'm not convinced that's actually feasible! During my first few months, I really struggled to delegate and felt so burned out by the end of the summer. Remember to log your hours and let people know when you are stepping back from projects you don't have capacity for. It's totally fine to have a couple hours of free time to check in with yourself and breathe – you don't need to pack your calendar to do a good job.

I hope you and your Board are able to bond and work together this year. This is something I missed out on and I felt a bit isolated at times but remember that the team (and even my Board) is just a message away! It's going to be a crazy year with a lot of ups and downs but I am confident that you'll look back at the end and be super proud of yourself.

Good luck and all the best!
Siobhan