



REPORT

From the office of the...

President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Simranjeet Singh, President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
SUBJECT: SRA 22D Report
DATE: Sunday, June 26th, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone, I hope you are well! In this report I will outline my activities so far and progress that has been made within my role. I will also summarize plans for the upcoming weeks. This is the first report I have done in my role as President, making it a hallmark event representing the end to my introduction to the role. From my experiences thus far, the role of President has already been an amazing opportunity to learn of the wide, diverse, and complex array of communities, students, initiatives, and events which exist within the McMaster sphere. While I am still investigating the many avenues in which I can hopefully achieve my campaign (and now year plan) goals, it has been enlightening experience, nonetheless. This report will mainly summarize the conversations I have had with a wide variety of stakeholders, it will outline new relationships, connections, and collaborations I have formed, and will also mention some new initiatives that I have adopted which were not a part of my initial platform.

PAST EVENTS AND TIMELINE OF CONSULTATIONS

This section will provide a roughly chronological summary of major events and successes which took place during the first several weeks of my term and formed my introduction to the role of President. To begin, I had the pleasure of starting my transition well before my official entry. This transition involved meetings with the previous President, Denver Della-Vedova, and shadowing of his attendance to various stakeholder meetings. This allowed me to become more knowledgeable regarding the various bodies, pre-existing University committees, internal MSU structures, and other facets for which my familiarity is vital to my success. This was aided by my receipt of the previous President's transition report, which was sufficiently detailed.

A notable task in which I took part within the first few weeks of my term were conversations with McMaster's Department for Government Relations. Through this body, I gained insights into how the institution conducts advocacy regarding university topics to the various levels of government. We were delighted to have formed a strong collaboration as well that allows MSU representation and gives opportunity for direct student advocacy as well. An example of this became apparent in consultations held with Ontario provincial election candidates for all Hamilton area ridings of most major political parties. Here, the MSU was able to directly support student perspectives in relation to topics as varied as housing support, mental health action, equitable education resources, and sustainable infrastructure development. Ideally, with continued advocacy in a similar vein, all levels of

government will provide further resources needed to improve quality of life for students at McMaster. This initiative, combined with further connections made with McMaster to collaborate on community relations has created a positive foundation that I hope to continue to foster so as to ensure progress on shared objectives. One of the many areas we hope to collaborate is regarding adequate opportunities to have early, on-campus voting for students in the upcoming Hamilton municipal election in October of 2022.

Furthermore, on May 7th to May 8th, VP Education Elizabeth Wong and I had the pleasure of being invited as speakers to the Youth Mental Health March, an event led by a first year McMaster student to further highlight struggles faced by students regarding mental health and the need for greater, more concerted effort to have progress on mental health supports and advocacy. We both also had the privilege of being able to interact with a sizeable number of Ontario provincial election candidates, and in-passing, the Federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

The Campus Master Plan Steering Committee is another group I have had the pleasure of being involved in. Through this group, I have had access to discussions about how McMaster aims to evolve its various campuses and connection to the Hamilton community to be more walkable, environmentally-friendly, and inviting to diverse communities. A core element of this is also to ensure the institution is able to achieve its goals for net zero emissions by 2035. Through my role, I hope to continue to advocate for enhancements to the plan to ensure it is in keeping with shared goals between students, the university, and other stakeholders.

Further, I have been able to form strong working relationships with a variety of University partners who I hope to be allies with whom I will work to achieve particular goals. This paragraph gives a summary of notable partners. Firstly, Student Affairs is a group with which I will closely partner. The Student Wellness Centre, Athletics & Recreation Department, and Student Success Centre are all under the purview of Student Affairs, therefore my goals regarding Student Wellness, Equitable Education, Career Development, and some Hamilton Community related goals will be done in collaboration with Student Affairs. Sean Van Koughnett, the Associate Vice President (Students) is a head of student affairs and has been a noteworthy collaborator, specifically in regard to consultations with the local Hamilton community. Arlene Dosen (Director of the Student Success Centre) and Rosanne Kent (Director of the Student Wellness Centre) are figures of note with whom I share a wide scope of initiatives.

Aside from the Student Affairs Department, there are several other groups with whom a strong relationship is being fostered. The McMaster Libraries immediately come to mind as well. Within this institution, there are several individuals who I have met and will be working closely with. Anne Pottier, the Associate University Librarian, Joanne Kehoe, a Lead Educational Developer, Olga Perkovic an Open Education and Scholarship Librarian, and Karen Pavao, a Library Assistant, are all people with whom I will likely work this year. I will also be working closely with the MacPherson Institute, over which the Director Lori Goff, and the Associate Vice President (Teaching and Learning) Kim Dej will be collaborating closely with me. Notable goals of mine within the scope of education, specifically regarding LinkedIn Learning, Open Educational Resources (OERs), and Information Literacy all will be done in collaboration with the Libraries and MacPherson Institute. In the scope of Community relations, Andrea Farquhar, Assistant Vice-President, Public and Government Relations, Greg Iarusso, Public Affairs Officer, and Alexandra Lawson, Executive Director of Public Affairs are further collaborators, especially as the Hamilton Municipal Election is upcoming in October 2022.

Setting aside the above groups with whom close communication has already been established, there are many others with whom I have had the pleasure of being acquainted, and I will likely work with all in increasing capacity throughout my term. Examples of individuals and groups include the Okanagan Committee, Office of Community Engagement, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policy Review Committee, Alumni Office, Metrolinx, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Steering Committee, McMaster Sustainability Activity Committee, President's Advisory Committee for Community Relations, President's Advisory Committee for Natural Lands, eCampus Ontario, Open Educational Resources Committee, among others. I look forward to future summaries of my activities and collaborators between reports evolving as my term continues.

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES + SUCCESSES

This section summarizes the progress I have made on the vast majority of year plan goals and any changes that have taken place. Furthermore, I will quickly re-iterate collaborators, future plans, and timelines if there is a concrete schedule for completion in place. This section will likely evolve significantly over the course of my term, especially the miscellaneous section, which includes new year plan goals I either did not initially plan for when I ran for President, or those I chose not to classify in one of the five themes which defined my campaign.

Theme 1: Student Wellness

Goal 1: Increasing Collaboration between Student Wellness Centre and student groups

- This project has been initiated through initial conversations with SWC. Currently, in planning phase of determining what such increased collaboration would look like, and the degree of involvement of student clubs, MSU Services, student societies, and other partners.

Goal 2: Advocating for increased SWC counseling and group session hours

- Meetings are planned in the coming weeks to begin conversations regarding this goal.

Goal 3: Unified marketing campaigns and expansion of Thrive Week

- The topic of Thrive Week has been brought up on numerous occasions thus far. There will be strong collaboration with partners other than SWC as well, such as the Okanagan Committee (specifically mental health initiatives developed through it) which can allow for Thrive Week to exist at a much more expansive scale than in previous years.

Goal 4: Prominent Addition of Student Assistance Plan and MSU Resources to SWC website

- Conversations regarding this, the nature of the changes, the prominence of MSU resources, and other aspects will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

Goal 5: Working with insurance provider ClaimSecure to broaden services offered under the Health and Dental Plan

- As of now, this initiative has not been broached, though it will be at a later date.

Theme 2: Building a Stronger Hamilton Community

Goal 1: Working with Metrolinx to expand busing during Welcome Week and re-introduce express busses

- Preliminary conversations regarding expansion of busing during Welcome Week, changing of bus times to accommodate demand at McMaster more appropriately, and the reintroduction of express GO buses to select, high traffic destinations have taken place. Currently, the MSU is in the process of working with relevant partners to gather and share pertinent information which will allow for planning to occur on the part of Metrolinx. The organization is also going

to gauge response based on projections of increases in demand, an aspect in which the MSU will be a key consultative body.

Goal 2: Conducting a study to determine the average rental prices, availability, and demand in regions of Hamilton near McMaster Main Campus

- Introductory conversations are happening with a similar study being launched by Housing & Conference Services. I am in the phase of understanding how the MSU can take part, support the process, and ensure student voices play a key role in informing the study's scope, design, and actions resulting from the findings.

Goal 3: Conducting advocacy campaign to inform students of provincial and municipal elections

- This is a two part initiative focused on the two main elections taking place during my term. As the Ontario provincial election took place barely one month into my term and during the summer, the information and advocacy campaign was quite limited. As the municipal election will take place during the traditional school year (October 2022) and the Board of Directors will have months to prepare, we hope to have a large scale and widespread information campaign which can motivate students to vote.

Goal 4: Working with local Hamilton Businesses to introduce increased rebates and discounts for students

- This initiative is currently paused pending further review within the MSU as we are currently determining efficacy, feasibility, and potential methods to ensure either this initiative or one with similar output can be done efficiently, especially considering limitations on social capital.

Theme 3: Environmental Sustainability

Goal 1: Waste Management Initiative to better understand and reduce waste production at McMaster facilities

- This initiative may potentially transform into an observational study of sorts, and will be done in conjunction with McMaster Sustainability Activity Committee and Okanagan Committee among other partners. Ideally, it will give a better understanding of waste production and insights as to how it can be reduced.

Goal 2: Information campaign to help promote sustainable waste disposal and management in student housing

- This goal is a direct follow-up to the earlier, and thus will be done after its findings are completed.

Goal 3: Work with Faculty to develop more sustainable lab practices.

- Currently working with a laboratory administrator to assess methods to reduce waste generation, potentially through the use of more sustainable gloves. In addition to this, promotion of pre-existing international standards for sustainable research are being researched to advocate for their inclusion at McMaster. This will ideally help create a more environmentally-friendly laboratory environment for students.

Goal 4: Choose to Reuse Container Program

- Conversations are taking place with potential external partners/suppliers, with the Office of Sustainability, and with Hospitality Services regarding how this initiative will be brought forward.

Theme 4: Equitable Education

Goal 1: Work with Libraries to promote Information Literacy

- Conversations being had with Libraries regarding incorporation of information literacy more deeply within courses, with a potential pilot project being planned to serve as a model.

Goal 2: Increased adoption of OERs to reduce or often eliminate textbook costs

- Collaborating with Student Affairs, OER Committee, and Libraries to plan how to promote increased adoption of OERs, increase funding for development, and create incentives for professors. I am in the stage of interviewing various professors and staff at McMaster and other institutions to gain insights.

Goal 3: Introduce research assistant opportunities in which students may work to develop OERs in collaboration with professors

- This goal is tied directly to Goal 2, and is progressing simultaneously.

Goal 4: Promotion of UN SDG integration within courses

- Conversations being had with Libraries and a professor regarding incorporation of such concepts more deeply within courses. Project may evolve to no longer explicitly refer to UN SDGs but principles within McMaster's Teaching and Learning Strategy. This will likely be done in conjunction with Goal 1.

Goal 5: Increasing Experiential Learning Opportunities

- Conversations regarding this with the Office of Community Engagement and Student Success Centre will begin in the near future.

Theme 5: Career Development

Goal 1: Increasing career development supports for students

- Will be beginning conversations with faculties and Student Success Centre regarding this initiative shortly.

Goal 2: Helping foster a greater number of networking and occupational education opportunities

- Will be beginning conversations with faculties and Student Success Centre regarding this initiative shortly. Collaboration with Office of Community Engagement to further this initiative is beginning.

Goal 3: Increasing internship and work term opportunities

- Two pronged project, with one aspect tied directly to OER-related work. Second aspect will begin shortly through conversations with the Student Success Centre. Tied in large part to Goal 1.

Goal 4: Working with The Forge and Student Success Centre to increase entrepreneurial supports and opportunities for students

- Initial conversations focusing on this project will be beginning in the coming weeks.

Miscellaneous

Goal 1: Re-orientation and expansion of First Year Council purview

- Working with FYC Coordinator to update Bylaw 5, introduce new volunteer positions, update job descriptions, and reposition the council to be more impactful, while also giving more opportunities for first year students to take part in a more diverse and varied array of activities and initiatives.

Goal 2: Collecting more data regarding student perspectives

- Have begun conversations with various partners, ranging from the Equity and Inclusion Office, Institutional Research Analysis, Student Affairs, and the Okanagan Committee to understand

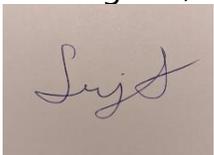
how a more standardized, replicable, and continually applied method of widespread surveying and data collection can be implemented. The purpose of this is to have more robust data and insights regarding student perspectives on a wide range of topics (housing, sustainability, career opportunities, mental and physical health, quality of education, safety, financial stability...) which is more comprehensive.

Goal 3: MSU Information Technology Infrastructure and Services Review

- Am working with internal MSU partners, - specifically the Information Technology Department, to review the state of the MSU's IT infrastructure, scope of services offered, and understand what are the most cost-effective solutions to existing issues.

I would like to thank VP Administration Mitchell German, VP Education Elizabeth Wong, VP Finance Sarphina Chui, General Manager John McGowan, Administrative Services Coordinator Victoria Scott, Director of Information Technology Pauline Taggart, Human Resources Generalist Renee McIntosh, Executive Assistant Daniela Stajcer, Clubs Administrator Nardos Tedros, and Director of Marketing and Communications Michael Wooder, as well as all the other full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff of the MSU for their support. In addition, I would like to thank all McMaster University, Hamilton community, and other more wide-ranging partners for their willingness to collaborate and assist in my initiatives. Thank you for reading my very first Presidential Report! I hope it was an insightful opportunity to learn of the projects I am completing, and how I hope to progress in the coming months. You are more than welcome to ask my questions via email or in the SRA meeting.

Best regards,

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Suj S'.

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