



REPORT

From the office of the...
Vice-President (Education)

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Elizabeth Wong, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: SRA 22D Report
DATE: June 20, 2022

Dear Members of the Assembly,

I am delighted to bring forth my first report to the Assembly in my role as VP Education. I am so excited to be working with you all this year and to get the opportunity to meet with you all. This year will be an exciting one with the return to on-campus programming and events!

I have spent the past few weeks since my election transitioning into this role with the help of the previous VP Education, Siobhan. I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know many of the full-time staff in-person as we have been able to be in-office. The Board of Directors has also been meeting with various university stakeholders such as McMaster Alumni, Student Success Centre, and University Advancement during this transitional period.

As a Board of Directors, we have also taken this transitional time to get to know one another and to begin to understand our different working styles. We have been able to build a good working relationship with one another and have created a positive working environment amongst us four. This has allowed us to help one another when we are facing challenges and to gain different perspectives from each of our respective portfolios. I believe that this team dynamic will be a key factor in our success this year.

Since the start of my term, I have attended OUSA's (Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance) Welcome Conference and Strategic Conference. At Welcome Conference, the Steering Committee voted for Jessica Look from Western Ontario as President, Stephanie Ye-Mowe from University of Waterloo as Vice-President Finance, and Ana Tremblay from Laurentian University as Vice-President HR and Administration for the upcoming year. OUSA is also looking for authors for blog posts – if you have any interest in writing a blog post please let me know. The blog posts can be about anything relevant to OUSA – if you are interested but are not sure about ideas we can work together to find something you may feel passionate about as well.

The Steering Committee determined when policy papers would be authored this year. (If any of these papers interest you – please let me know.) I will be an editor on the Student Employment paper and an author on the Student Accessibility & Disability Inclusion paper.

The policy papers that OUSA will be authoring this coming year are:

- Fall Term 2022
 - Student Employment (Editor)
 - Tuition
 - Ancillary & Incidental Fees
- Spring Term 2023
 - Teaching & Assessment
 - Student Accessibility & Disability Inclusion (Author)
 - Two Spirit & LGBTQ+

I recently attended OUSA's Strategic Conference which was held at home office in Toronto. I spent two-days in Toronto meeting with the Steering Committee and OUSA home office staff to determine OUSA's Advocacy Priorities for this year. We also started conversations around OUSA's 2022 Bettering Report which outlined how the organization is doing well as well as shortcomings of the alliance. Strategic Conference being in-person gave the Steering Committee the opportunity to meet in-person and get to know one another. We started off Strategic Conference by completing MBTIs and comparing them to the rest of Steering Committee. It was a great icebreaker, and we all learned a lot about one another's working styles and habits. In the coming weeks, I will be deciding to join either Strategic Planning Committee or Bettering Report Working Group.

The Steering Committee voted to shortlist the following Advocacy Priorities:

- Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response
- Rural & Northern Students
- Affordability
- Sector Sustainability

In terms of our involvement in our other main advocacy channel, the Undergraduates of Canadian Research Intensive Universities (UCRU), I have decided to take the lead. I am the main contact and voting member at UCRU. As the President and I have many intersecting goals and platform points, Simranjeet will be attending UCRU when possible as a non-voting member. UCRU Elections for Executive Roles were done right at the beginning of my term. Erin Co from University of British Columbia's Alma Mater Society was elected as Chair, Armaan Singh from University of Ottawa's Student Union was elected as Co-Chair, and Jessica Look from Western's University Students' Council was elected as Secretary-Treasurer.

We had our UCRU introductory meeting where we got to meet each other for the first time over Zoom. It is likely that all of our meetings will be held virtually considering the geographic distance between many of us. We recently elected our Committee Chairs for UCRU. Lia Storey-Gamble from University of Saskatchewan was elected as Advocacy Committee Chair, Chelsey-Lynn Rousselle from University of Ottawa was elected as Bilingual Committee Chair, and I was elected as Governance Committee Chair. We will be having our next Board of Directors meeting soon.

I have been flushing out my year plan which lays out all of the projects, activities, and initiatives I will be working on for this year. I am excited to collaborate with the SRA on some of these projects and activities. If there is anything of interest on my year plan that you would like to work on or collaborate on with the Education Team, please reach out!

Past Events, Projects, & Activities

The Education Team wrapped up a successful MacVotes Provincial Campaign. I would like to take this report as an opportunity to thank the previous Education Team and Communications Team in all the work they put into the campaign. The President and I had the opportunity to meet with provincial candidates from the NDP and Conservatives. We collaborated with the university in the meetings and spoke about issues experienced by students and what we hoped to see from the incoming government. We spoke about financial aid & affordability, financial accessibility of post-secondary students, and mental health resources.

The President and I were guest speakers at the Youth Mental Health "March." We had the opportunity to participate via Zoom in an event that was based around youth and mental health. We expanded our messaging of financial aid & affordability, financial accessibility of post-secondary students, and mental health resources. The people in attendance were community members, MPs, MPPs, City Councilors, and the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

To acquaint myself with other university's student unions, I took a few weeks to meet with my "counterparts" within other universities. I took the opportunity to discuss their transitions into the role as well as the structure of their education teams. I was able to gain a lot of useful information which will be used in improving the transition of future board members as well as gathering more information for development within the Education Team. These meetings were a great opportunity to not only gain information but to establish relationships with other student unions.

Events, Projects, & Activities

The President and I have ongoing discussions and projects that are ongoing with university stakeholders. We have been in communication with the Office of Sustainability, university stakeholders involved with Open Educational Resources, the Privacy Office, and UTS. We continue to have recurring meetings and have started the brainstorming process for different projects and collaborations.

The VP Administration and I are working on a project together to create a Rep Wellness Lounge as a token of appreciation from the board to Welcome Week Reps. The premise of the Rep Wellness Lounge is to create a chill space for Welcome Week Reps to take a breather and relax from the chaos of WW. The Rep Wellness Lounge would have refreshments, snacks, and care items. We are in the process of drafting an outreach letter for partnerships. We are hopeful that we will be able to get some sponsorships and have started our preliminary planning process for this project.

Current Challenges

I am currently in the process of hiring AVP University Affairs. The application was opened a second time, but I am hopeful for the second round of hiring. This could have been more challenging but with the help of Daniela and Renee, this process has gone smoothly thus far. I am looking forward to interviewing the candidates and filling another vacancy on the Education Team.

I am also currently working on amalgamating the Policy & Research Assistant positions into one full-time position. This is an ongoing project that was proposed by a previous VP Education. I have been consulting with various universities on the structure of their Education/Advocacy Teams and the roles of their full-time staff. The development of a new position takes a lot of review and research which is why I have listed it as a challenge.

Successes

The Education Team has hired two AVPs thus far: AVP Municipal Affairs, Mymoon Bhuiyan and AVP Provincial and Federal Affairs, Kiran Bassi. I am very excited to be working with both of them this year! They both have started their work on their year plans and we have established weekly touch-base meetings.

I am excited to report that I have been elected as the Governance Committee Chair for UCRU. I will be working with the Governance Committee to develop a stronger governance structure for the organization. I will be working on improving the internal structure of UCRU and helping them to create a stronger internal foundation.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Wong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Elizabeth Wong
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