



MEMO

McMaster Students Union

TO: Executive Board
FROM: Sarphina MSU Vice-President (Finance)
John McGowan, MSU General Manager

SUBJECT: Compass Space Use
DATE: July 18, 2022

Background

Since the opening of the MUSC in 2002, the MSU operated Compass Information Centre in the atrium of the building. Evolving from an information centre, operating costs were subsidized by commissions from transportation tickets sales. While volumes of sales peak at over \$1 million a year annually, the service operated at a small net loss or net revenue most years.

With the growth of on-line and kiosk purchasing of fares through Presto, the commissions at Compass were greatly reduced. The result was the service became a large cost centre of the MSU. From 2018-19 the MSU explored other business models for the space. There was no opportunity found for partnerships and MSU found not viable alternative use. Then services were shut down due to COVID.

With the return of students for the upcoming 2022-23 year, we feel this is the perfect time to develop a strategy for the upcoming year.

Options

While this list is not exhaustive, here are some of the options explored

A – Relocate SWHAT

Currently SWHAT utilizes the MAPS office beyond regular business hours to deliver their service. Previously the service shared an office with the SRA (now currently WGEN) and before that shared space with EFRT in EFRTs current location.

The benefits would be that this would provide SWHAT permanent, designated space.

The challenges would be that the space does not provide enough of a lounge environment for volunteers to hang around in between walks. In addition, as an organization we may not get the best utility of a very prominent space on campus. Lastly, there would be not off-setting revenue to the cost of the operation of the service

B- Clubs Space

Currently Clubs work with MUSC to book vendor tables. The thought would be to provide space to MSU Clubs and Services to promote their activities.

The benefit would be that clubs would have more opportunities to get space in high traffic areas and the MSU could build organizational capacity for promotion.

The challenges are multifaceted. The high counters may be act as a barrier to interactions and may congest an already busy area (not sure if folks recall how busy that is). Also, we imagine we would not want to charge clubs, therefore there would be no off-setting revenue. Lastly, if the club wishes to pop on the other side of the desk, they will have to walk around, through the door which may create logistical issues without renovations. It would be VERY difficult to complete renovations at this time.

C – ComMSUnity Connexion

For the upcoming year, provide the space to the MSU and broader McMaster community to book on a weekly or monthly basis.

The benefit would be that we can test different concepts before a long-term commitment is made coming out of a two year shut down. In addition, we would generate revenue from non-MSU services to off-set the cost of MSU services utilizing the space.

The challenge is that we are foregoing a natural welcome centre to the MUSC, MSU and campus. In addition, the activity would have to be managed by a service or MSU designate.

Recommendation

After reviewing options and soliciting feedback from stakeholders, we recommend Option “C” be implemented for the 2022-23 year.

The space would be coordinated through the MSU Main Office. MSU services (such as SWHAT and Campus Events) and clubs would be given the opportunity to book the space, along with community members. Community members would be charged fees that would offset the operational cost of the space for the MSU. We imagine rates would be similar to what the MUSC charges. The balance of MSU and Community would be based on needs and financial benefits to the MSU.

In addition, we recommend the direction be re-evaluated in and around January 2023 with the goal of Executive Board developing a long term plan for the space for May 1, 2023 and beyond.