



# REPORT

*From the office of the...*

## AVP University Affairs

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TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly  
FROM: Simran Dhindsa, AVP University Affairs  
SUBJECT: SRA 22N Report  
DATE: February 12, 2023

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Hello everyone,

I am happy to bring forward past and upcoming projects/campaigns that fall under the university affairs portfolio. We are looking forward to and have been able to contribute to greater student representation in conversations around university infrastructure development, inclusion, and sustainability.

### **Progress on Year plan**

Sustainability, Inclusion and Accessibility were a major part of my year plan. Inclusive and sustainable infrastructure planning is important for current and future students and having greater advocacy in the field has allowed recognition of student voices and concerns. University stakeholders have been supportive and receptive to student concerns, aiming to optimize their services, infrastructure, and communication methods to cater to student needs.

### **Past Events, Projects, & Activities**

With Kate Whalen and Simranjeet Singh, and the rest of MacSustain's team, we have been able to streamline signage for compost across campus to ensure accuracy in waste disposal. Additionally, MUSC administration and the MSU are aiming to have compost at the MSU office for staff accessibility and encourage students to continue being mindful of their waste disposal habits.

The menstrual health equity project was piloted this year and has been received very well by students, staff and faculty. There have been conversations around expansions and funding, as the Okanagan committee has been advocating for funding to be eventually allocated by the university. There are conversations regarding a streamlined process rather than differences across buildings. But the period equity project has been doing amazing with leadership from the Okanagan committee and student leaders from the faculties of health sciences and art and science.

The December 6 event to commemorate The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is set to take place on February 14 with a march in solidarity. In addition to the event, the red dress project brings awareness to the injustices against indigenous women, encouraging advocacy for the cause.

### **Upcoming Events, Projects, & Activities**

In addition to conversations regarding inclusive bathroom designs, keeping in mind the COVID-19 response, I have been meeting with the Sustainability, Urban Design and Space Planning Manager to bring paper towels back! Allowing better hygiene and subsequent waste management via composting, a streamlined design would allow better pandemic preparedness and student wellness. Additionally, the barrier-free committee is developing AODA guidelines for future infrastructure and hoping to have greater student representation in an advisory manner, something which I hope to support as an alumnus for the continuity of inclusive infrastructure advocacy.

Open Education is coming up (March 6-10) and with the OER committee, there have been brainstorming efforts for events, advocacy, and engagement. While still refining the details, MSU hopes to have a student engagement event to increase awareness of open educational resources while allowing them to engage with stakeholders regarding the importance of such resources. Other events include recognition of professors engaging in OER use and further advocacy for increased funding for the OER project.

After continued consultancy for the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty with environmental groups, especially Environment Hamilton, who has been supportive of the research process. While the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty is quite symbolic, it's an important step for sustainability beyond McMaster, as we encourage the city of Hamilton to innovate the steel industry and step up in its actions in our current climate environment. The proposal will be submitted to the council by the end of March.

As we wrap up the year, we are hoping to author and update policy papers, specifically Environmental Sustainability for the UA committee with the education team also working on the Tuition and Student Financing of Post-Secondary Education and Student Engagement and Retention policies.

### **Successes and Challenges**

With a role in advocacy, as many may be aware, translations of ideas into policies and change don't occur immediately. The UA committee members have been able to make progress on their own portfolios as well as communicate with university stakeholders to ensure student concerns are heard and solutions are supported.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Elizabeth Wong, Simranjeet Singh and Mitchell German for always being supportive and a. I would also to thank the members of the university affairs committee, Olsen Chan, Justine Rodriguez, Taaha Hassan, Michelle Middaugh Cifuentes, and Francesca Caputo for all the support.

**Kind regards,**

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