



**Transition Report**

Vice-President (Education) of the MSU

Corporate Officer of MSU Inc.

*Elizabeth Wong*

**2022–2023**

## **Letter**

### **Hi Abigail!**

Congratulations on your successful election as VP Education! Welcome to the absolute chaos of the MSU and External Student Union life. This role is the MOST fun of the 3 VP roles at the MSU – don't let anyone tell you otherwise. This report is mostly written from my POV (sorry its a bit long but you can use it to refer to different projects etc as a resource). I have merged some thoughts from past VP Eds as well to give you a better idea of different projects and events.

You will be in and out of the office but always remember to thank those around you for their time and when they've helped you out. We are all awful at this but remember to set your boundaries and stick to them. To be honest, I often found my life and work blurring together but it's important to have a separation of work. Remember to ask for help, our staff are so helpful and staff at membership organizations are so helpful as well! Don't be afraid to recognize when you are about to reach burnout and ask for help! You won't complete everything on your year plan and that's ok, put in your all and get what you can done!

This year will be unlike any other year you've experienced thus far and yes, that is dramatic but it is totally true. You will be opened up to a whole new world and get to experience all these new and amazing things. Soak it in and immerse yourself in all the different opportunities that are coming your way! But if I can leave you with a thought, remember this role is one year so soak it in but remember that is not forever and that there is an end date to the year.

Take advantage of the pathways and doors this role will open for you! You will be able to do so much external work and meet different people (doesn't matter if you don't wanna go into politics) in different professions. They will offer so many amazing perspectives and life experiences. Get to know your external team and get close to your SC and your federal friends! You have the privilege of meeting people across Ontario and Canada, which is such a privilege but so much fun! (Maybe this is my extrovert advice coming out!) I made some of my best friends this year through my external work and I am so happy that I met them!

If I can give you another piece of advice, this role can be extremely frustrating at times. You will see the people around you completing projects and completing areas of the year plan while you may feel like your advocacy initiatives have not had much movement. This is normal. Advocacy is a long game and sometimes takes several years for us to see any wins. This does not mean that your work is somehow lesser but it means that you are part of a bigger team that has spanned across many years! Welcome to the external world and welcome to politics!

Enjoy your time at the MSU because I know it will be an unforgettable year for you! Wishing you all the success in your year and please reach out if you ever need anything!

Elizabeth :)

## **Yearplan**

Your year plan will be a template of what you want to achieve throughout the year. This can be an overwhelming task but use your platform as the guiding basis for developing your year plan and feel free to go through past years and add some ongoing projects to your year plan. Advocacy is a long game so it is normal to have similar objectives and projects from other years. There are many events in your year plan that will be annual events such as OUSA General Assembly, Lobby Weeks, Municipal Budget Submission & Delegation, etc. (I would go through my old year plan for a structure.) It really is up to you as to what you want to include on your year plan. I would include all of those annual events and any projects you want the AVPs to complete during the year. I wish that I met with my AVPs in the summer to flush out ideas around any projects and passion projects that they want to do themselves or in their committees.

I would highly recommend that you start working on this document ASAP. The BOD delayed this task in the summer and the SRA year plan crept up every quickly. I would recommend that you slowly complete this section by section so it does not get overwhelming and you'll have the time to consult different stakeholders as well.

I would also recommend that you sit down with the rest of BOD (including John) to flush out some of your ideas. There is absolutely the recognition that you are completing a year plan while still learning the role so it is helpful to bounce ideas together. I would encourage you to see what areas you can collaborate with other board members. You may see some overlapping ideas and it will be helpful to chat through it because you'll have a better idea of how you can actually bring these ideas to life.

Keep in mind that when you present this to SRA there is the expectation that they have read the document in advance. You will just be giving a summary at the meeting. Your year plan is a living document so you can add to it later! (I didn't but you can.)

## **The Role of VP Education**

This paragraph is from Shemar (past VP Ed from 2019-2020): 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.

## **The MSU**

### **Operating Policies and Bylaws**

Keep in mind that you probably have the most flexibility to do projects in your role but there is a lot of rules and by-laws you need to follow. When making any internal changes ensure that you are checking

operating policies and bylaws. No one will remind you to do this so make sure you familiarize yourself with them.

As a Board of Directors member, it is important that you have a good understanding of the operating policies and bylaws. Here is a link to all the bylaws and policies.

<https://www.msumcmaster.ca/governance/bylaws-policies>. I would highly recommend meeting with Daniela and Victoria if you have any questions around the bylaws and policies. I leaned on Victoria a lot for historical information on bylaws and policies. Victoria is a great resource on all things bylaw and policy focused as she has been in the MSU for a long time.

Here is the list from my transition report that I got from Siobhan. I have bolded the bylaws and operating policies I referenced the most this year. (Keep in mind that I was Speaker many years ago so I already had a good understanding of the internal operating policies and bylaws).

*Bylaw 1 – Definitions*

***Bylaw 3 – Student Representative Assembly***

***Bylaw 3/A – Assembly Procedures***

***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 – 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)*

**Executive Board**

The Executive Board (EB) 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. In the summer, EB acts as the SRA so any motions or policy changes will go through EB. You'll need to read over materials ahead of time and make sure you're 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.

This year, EB was generally positive and it was obvious that PTMs had a good relationship with the VP Admin and VP Finance. The meetings were not combative and more acted as an avenue for Services to share updates and to seek support from the BOD and full-time staff. Be present and listen but recognize that it may be difficult to offer support as you don't directly work with services.

I would say there is an opportunity for the VP Education to collaborate more with services. EB is a good opportunity to see what Services are doing in terms of advocacy. You can ask PTMs questions about some of their projects and always offer support through your team. I had the chance to collaborate with SWHAT and WGEN this year which was so rewarding. We can have a Housing Hinge event with SWHAT and took WGEN to a post-secondary forum on GBSV. I would recommend getting to know the PTMs and seeing where you can do events or campaigns together!

This next piece is from Shemar: 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 implemented 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.

In terms of statements, we did not have Services releasing statements this year. I personally do not believe in Services releasing advocacy/political statements. I think that the Advocacy Department exists to fulfill this role. Services should be focusing on service delivery over advocacy but they are intertwined. I do think there is opportunity for a service to release a joint statement with the Advocacy Department if there is an appetite for it. For this type of issue, I would discuss implications with Wooder.

### **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.

I would recommend reading through the SRA bylaws to get acquainted with the rules. I would also get acquainted with Robert's Rules if you don't have prior experience using them in meetings. I was Speaker in 2018-2019 so I was much more involved in SRA in comparison to past VP Ed's.

This past year, the SRA were relatively complacent and were not as engaged as we would have hoped. I think this year's SRA has already shown that they are here to make some change. Even though they are new, they are shown that they are not afraid to ask tough questions but they also still need some help and encouragement. I think an important thing to keep in mind would be to pick your battles and what hill you want to die on. Debates in SRA often go circular so it can be frustrating. As a BOD member, you should pay attention and just be aware of how you can help move conversations along or to add relevant

information to the discussion. If you are bringing anything to SRA, I would suggest discussing them at BOD first or even EB. This gives you the opportunity to get on the same page as your team so that they have your back in SRA and to get a sense of what questions people have may on your motion. If you feel strongly about a certain idea, talk to BOD beforehand to get on the same page so that you can reach an understanding. Keep collaboration top of mind and don't let the mentality of BOD vs SRA develop.

One of your ongoing tasks throughout the year will be to report your year plan progress to the SRA. I did refer back to my year plan but to be honest I just reported on what I was actually doing. I would go through my calendar to pick out events and projects to report on. Everyone has their own way and style of doing reports, you can always see everyone's old reports in the SRA minutes and documents on the website. One of the more tedious tasks is reporting to SRA every time you go to a conference. These reports don't need to be long, you can take a look at my old reports and use them as a template.

*This is from Siobhan: 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.*

I think there is an opportunity to collaborate more with SRA. Pay attention to their reports and see if there's any projects they are hoping to achieve and if they are advocacy based, reach out and see if they would be interested in collaborating. The SRA have good ideas but they don't have the resources or connections to see them brought to life. Remember you are in a position of power so it is on you to try and reach out to collaborate. Keep in mind that if you collaborate with SRA, you will be taking on more work as you are FT and they are still students. Using the AVP UA would be helpful as many of the SRA's initiatives are campus-based.

### **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 Advocacy Outreach and Logistics Coordinator and 1 Sustainability Education Committee Chair.

I would suggest doing a mix of individual/block meetings weekly with your team. This year I did all individual weekly check-ins and tried to do a few full ED team meetings. I did not like this structure as it took up as a lot of time and the team felt disjointed at times. Here is what I think an ideal structure for ED team meetings would be for next year. I would recommend finding a time to meet at least bi-weekly or monthly as an entire team (it will be hard to find a time but it will be worth it). You could have each team member share updates from their committees and any work they are doing. I would recommend setting an agenda and even taking down minutes. Your team would be aware of what everyone is doing. I would recommend setting up weekly meetings with all AVPs, weekly meeting with the RAs, and a weekly check in with the Advocacy Coordinator. It is so important to stay in-tune with your team. I wish I spent more time trying to connect the team together.

I ended up texting my AVPs a lot but I recommend using Teams for next year. Texting is good for informal things like informing each other to cancel or to notify the other person being late. Texting turned

into work texting which wasn't the worst thing but it hard to scroll back for info. I would recommend direct teams messaging and creating an ED team group and sub groups to stay on top of work.

I was not clear on the sustainability committee so I did not actually have a sustainability committee this year. I would reach out to Wooder if this is of interest to you. I didn't work on sustainability as much this year, Sim was more interested so he took on more sustainability projects.

*From Shemar; 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 in fact did not read this report in-depth but if you have time I wanted to include this just in case you were interested.*

### **Associate Vice-Presidents & Hiring Process**

Hopefully the AVPs will all be hired before I finish my term. I think hiring came on a bit later than anticipated this year. I wanted to start the hiring process for the Ed team earlier as we have the largest number of AVPs. I think it would be a good idea to sit down with Renee and then go through hiring timelines so you aren't scrambling. Siobhan recommended starting six weeks ahead and I think that is a pretty good timeline.

To be honest for AVPs, I think we did a large general recruiting post and graphics through the main account. I did not request graphics because Wooder handled that and Renee monitored applicants applying. Renee confirmed when she opened the posting and then sent links to the resumes and cover letters.

Once you have the list of applicants, you and the hiring committee members (current AVP, elected SRA member, and Wooder) will go through all the applicants and short list 3-4 candidates from each AVP pool. I would recommend setting up a meeting with the committee to discuss which applicants you want to finalize for interview offers. It is hard to coordinate this as people are busy with exams. I finalized lists with Wooder because we were on a time crunch – we met and went through all the pools and finalized the final candidates for interview. Wooder and I blocked off hiring blocks in our calendars (to be honest we prioritized our schedules as we are on a time crunch and interviews can be recorded for the other members of the committee).

I sent out interview offers and then booked in people for their interviews. I decided to make these interviews online through teams because many people were going back home after exams and it was just more convenient. Each VP has the power to choose how they want to do this, I know Mitch made his interviews all in-person. You can look through my old emails to see the emails I sent and what information I added. You could copy and paste and just change the dates and times. (I usually use the Office Clerks for interview scheduling but it was easier for me to do it myself for AVP Hiring.)

Remember to go through the interview questions to update or make any changes you want to the questions. Ed team hiring questions are usually based on things we did in the current year so some of the scenario based questions can be outdated. Make sure you have updated your questions before having your interviews. I revised the questions and then I went through them with Wooder.

As we had some overlap in the candidates we wanted to interview, we made the decision to hold combined interviews. So what this entails is that we combined questions from two interviews into one longer extended interview. You will be able to see these documents in my files and what these combined interview questions looked like. We made this decision to save time and felt that it was unnecessary to

ask candidates the same questions twice as a good chunk of the interview questions are repeated across all the positions. Looking back, I'm not sure if I would have done this again, maybe I would have done like a second shorter interview time with reduced questions. We already ask a lot of questions so it could be more stressful to the candidate.

I'm only going to give some general info on the AVPs for the next section. I would recommend that you read through the AVPs transition reports. Focus more on the portfolios closer to the end of the report.

### **Associate Vice-President (University Affairs)**

The University Affairs portfolio can cover a lot of different issues, campaigns, and groups on campus. The AVP UA should be your connection to advocacy on campus. The AVP and yourself should take time to reach out and consult with the relevant offices and groups on campus. This year we worked with the Okanagan Charter, Sustainability, and Teaching and Learning. 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.

I think the UA committee should get back into doing surveys and service reviews of different services such as health services on campus. There are old files in the AVP UA drive that detail older publications that we used to release. I think the issue with the advo team committees is that they are so broad but you need projects with tangible tasks that committee members can do or they start to lose interest. Set projects and tasks for the AVP each semester. Set a services review or set a survey and get the RAs to support them in achieving these projects. Connect them with the AOLC to handle logistics for tabling or booking rooms etc.

### **Associate Vice-President (Municipal Affairs)**

The MA portfolio was essentially filled by myself and Sim this year. This is a very fun portfolio with a lot of potential for collaboration and opportunity with the city. This from Ryan: *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.*

There is so much opportunity for this portfolio next year! I detailed a bit more of the "political" committee that you could develop and strike during your year. I really recommend again having projects that committee members can directly work on such as the creation and release of a survey or drafting of a letter to council or a delegation they want to give. I blame myself a lot for the underutilization of this portfolio but it just comes down to not knowing how to delegate properly. You can see the most results from working municipally as well. We also spoke about possible opportunities to partner with councilors and to do shadow days with councilors and students which I still think is a very good idea.

### **Associate Vice-President (Provincial & Federal Affairs)**

From Siobhan: *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].*

The AVP PFA is probably the busiest of the 3 AVPs because there is constant projects from OUSA. The committee cannot help with writing but they can offer a lot of insight into gathering feedback. I think the committee is underutilized in gathering feedback and budget submissions could be a good idea for expanding committee duties and having a project that can be submitted.

### **Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants**

This year, I went back and forth on whether or not to rescind the part-time positions and create a full-time position to replace the 3 RAs. If you are interested in doing this Ryan has some files (Ed Team Research Assistant Proposal) on this and I would recommend having a conversation with John who was involved in these conversations. I was also preparing my own document so you may find some from my files as well. A big reason why past VP Eds wanted to combine the positions for a full-time position is because the VP Ed does not have a full-time staff support like VP Admin and VP Finance. I honestly felt this burden throughout the year and often times found myself struggling because I had no one to turn to for logistical support. Other SUs like Western and WUSA have a FT support, I did consultations at the beginning of my term on what these roles look like – definitely check out that doc.

I personally decided to keep the part-time positions because I found value in keeping paid part-time positions for students. I think there's a lot of opportunity to expand them beyond just being policy writer. They should be doing general research for all the AVPs and doing surveys. They should be research gatherers not just paper writers a few times a year. I also think that RAs shouldn't be paper leads and that AVPs should be leads and RAs are a support.

*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.*

### **Advocacy Outreach & Logistics Coordinator**

This role is meant to be a logistical support to the VP Ed and the overall Ed team. They will be managing the Instagram and are supposed to be helping with coordinating any campaigns or events the Ed team wants to run. 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 place. 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 did schedule training for this position with Wooder. I think you should have your person create a month to month schedule of different campaigns etc to keep things organized. I would recommend chatting with Wooder on how the ideal person would work in this position. I didn't have the greatest time with my person this year because they did not work well alone so I didn't see this role fully utilized.

### **President**

Based on the OP, the President is on the ED team but it's up to you and Jovan to determine the level of involvement and projects you want to have together. The President comes with you to lobby weeks, CASA conferences, OUSA conferences, etc. It is important to have a good professional relationship and to be constantly communicating with each other. I wish that Sim and I did weekly check ins. Sim was very much interested in advocacy so it wasn't hard to get him interested in projects and to get help. Use them as a logistical support for conferences if you can.

### **Full Time Staff**

I have made an extensive list of the full-time staff here – it includes more people than past reports but it does not include every single staff. Even though you will be working externally, it is very important to have a good rapport and relationship with full-time staff. I often got comments this year that this is the first time a VP Ed has built a relationship with full-time staff. It helped a lot with team dynamic in the office and just creating a positive office culture. This list may be long but it will be helpful for when you are navigating the organization as a whole.

### “Operations”

#### **John McGowan, General Manager**

John is like the dad of the BoD - he is very supportive and offers a lot of historical background on the MSU. He sits in on all our the board meetings and is a member of the board. Get the chance to know John he is super lovely and he is your go to person for anything internal MSU related. He supervises most/all of our full time staff as well.

#### **Daniela Stajcer, Executive Assistant**

Daniela is the executive support to the Board (President, VPs, and John). She takes minutes during board meeting and is also one of the recording secretaries of the SRA. You can reach out to Daniela when organizing interviews, booking rentals, booking hotels, purchasing things online, etc. (Anything logistical). Just be mindful of her time and be sure to always thank her for her help! She also oversees the Office Clerks - she encouraged us to use the office clerks for general research (like cheap hotels), scheduling interviews (I would ask them to schedule some of my bulk interviews for OUSA GA hiring) but not for uni admin. She also helped us to schedule lobby meetings.

#### **Victoria Scott, Administrative Services Coordinator**

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.

### **Renee McIntosh, Director of Human Resources**

Renee is the head of HR (the only HR person currently) and handles all hiring, firing, etc in the MSU. You won't work together too frequently unless you're hiring, someone has quit or an HR matter has arisen. Make sure you connect with Renee when you want to open a position (you'll need to do this for the AOLC and the RAs). You will also need to connect with Renee for OUSA delegate hiring! Renee has a lot of insight into HR and can help with any questions you may have about HR.

### Communications Department

#### **Michael Wooder, Director of Marketing and Communications\*\***

Wooder will be your person - you are the only VP that does not have direct FT staff support so Wooder ends up fulfilling this role. I worked with Wooder the most out of all the FT staff and Wooder handles PR and GR on top of his Communications duties. Wooder is highly intelligent and will be a huge help and resource - I basically ran to him whenever I had an issue or just needed to brainstorm thoughts. He's been with the organization for a long time and he will be very helpful in problem solving and giving historical context.

#### **Will Dang, Communications Officer** (SOP but he is returning)

So as a BoD it is kind of weird because of your communications and graphics will be prepared by the communications team or underground - depends on the situation. The comms officer will help in a lot of areas related to PR and general MSU projects you'll be working on. Get the comms officer and the Advocacy Coordinator well-acquainted so they can work on projects for the ED team insta. This person will be doing your headshots and alot of the videos you will be filming during the year.

### IT Team

#### **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! Pauline and I also talked about easing certain procedures etc., I would recommend chatting if you have any project ideas that involve any IT support.

#### **Gang Wang, Senior IT Technician**

Gang is a new member of the team! He is very nice and helpful - he can also show you how to fill out the IT ticket helpdesk system form for any IT support. There is also a junior IT person who is an SOP on the team as well.

### Underground Staff

#### **Paula Scott, Creative Director and Manager of Underground**

Paula manages the entirety of the Underground and is a newer person to the MSU but she gives alot of good perspective on this business unit. I really enjoyed getting to know Paula this year - she was very helpful and helped with alot of last minute projects. When you're submitting underground requests you

will always CC Paula and she will direct your email to where you need it - you can also chat directly on teams if there is an urgent project as well. If you want to do any merch orders you would order them through Paula as well - you can chat with her on what this looks like. You can set up a standing order for the Ed team with the campaigns budget line.

### **Dan Sabada, Underground Senior Designer & Rene Andrade, Underground Designer**

Dan and Rene are the designers at the Underground and have now been around for a year or so. They are both super cool individuals and you should take the chance to go and get to know them. They will be the ones doing any intake forms or graphics for the Ed team. I've never done intake forms and usually just ask them for what I want in terms of graphics. They have also been very helpful for last minute things I needed done!

### Accounting Team

The accounting team is made up of Sean Duncan, Director of Finance, Jason (Jay) Barnes, Accounts Receivable & Cash Supervisor, Kevin O'Mara, Accounts Payable & Payroll Supervisor, Accounting Clerk (was Jaycee Zhou – she may she be employed when you start) and the Clubs Accounting Clerk.

I didn't get alot of chances to work with Sean - moreso looking for historical context for the advo line. I worked with Kevin and Jay pretty often. Kevin handles payroll and Jay handles invoices. Anytime you're looking to make a purchase and any time you're traveling you need to submit a PO form for approval. The Accounting Clerk can help you with this when you're doing it. Any invoices you need paid just send them to Jay and CC the VP Finance.

### Campus Events

#### **Thomas Saab, Campus Events Director (Trish Vardon is on leave)**

Thomas used to be the Programming Coordinator is taking on Trish's position while she is on mat leave. The Campus Events Director handles all big programming like LUTN, WW, and Winter Market. If you have any cool projects or ideas for programming this would be the person to talk to - remember that this is a department under the MSU so you can give direction for events you want them put on.

#### **Anthony (Tony) Scime, AvTek Technical Manager**

Tony is directly under Trish but AvTek very much runs as a separate entity to Campus Events despite being a branch. Anything AV related you can email Tony and ask for advice. For example, if you're hosting a debate and need mics and speakers you would need to go to Tony for help.

### CFMU

**Sandeep Bhandari, CFMU Program Director & James (Jamie) Tennant, CFMU Administrative Director** run the CFMU which is the Community Radio run by the MSU. I didn't work with them much this year other than for hiring. Since you're so external, you are the only BoD that doesn't go to their meetings. Feel free to go if you are interested but it is not a requirement.

### The Silhouette

#### **Andrew Mrozowski, Executive Editor of the Silhouette**

The MSU has had a rollercoaster of a relationship with the Sil over the years. I am very happy to say that it is on good and respectful terms now. Andrew's position is pretty new to the MSU as there was not

always a FT position for the Sil that wasn't an SOP. Andrew played a big part in mending the relationship between the BoD and the Sil along with Denver. Good to stay updated together but always maintaining a professional relationship.

### **Macademics**

Macademics used to be under the VP Ed but got moved to the VP Admin - I only found this out near the end of my term. I also realized that a lot of what Macademics does is advocacy based but they often miss out on the connections the VP Ed has in advocacy on the university level. I would highly look into getting this service under the VP Ed again because there is so much potential and it makes much more sense from the advocacy side rather than admin side. Siobhan mentioned that she got the OUSA teaching award winner from Macademics, I didn't do this but it makes sense to get the award from this side.

### **Collaboration with Services**

Something new that I did this year was to try out collaborating with services. The biggest collaboration we had was during Wellness Week where I collaborated with SWHAT. We put on the Housing Hinge event where students came and learned about renter rights and also got to meet new people who could possibly become their new housemates for the fall. This was a huge success! I also later took the WGEN Director and AD to Toronto for an open post-secondary forum. The advo line also funded some graphics for DEN. You can see where you can take collaborating with services next year and I think there's some opportunity to collab with clubs as well.

### **Academic Council**

Siobhan mentioned in her transition that academic council was pretty difficult to meet with - I didn't even attempt to meet with them and just passed things onto Sim for President's Council to be shared. I wish I did make the effort but I had no idea this was a thing until much later in my term and figured it would be too much to try and throw it together haphazardly. You should try and strike this council next year.

*From Siobhan: 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**

So, the valedictorian responsibility is a bit of a contentious topic among VP Eds. Many agreed that it doesn't make sense in this portfolio and have tried to move the responsibility to other offices. For historical context, valedictorian packages used to be sent to the MSU office and the VP Ed would deliver them to the Registrar's office. This is all digital now. All the VP Ed does is refresh the nomination package, update the website, release graphics, open applications, and inform the faculties that applications are open. I would do all the graphics and refresh prep in December and release them in January. Connect with Wooder about timelines and he can help you out. You wanna have it promoted weekly (share to story). Some years this did physical materials which I wish I would have done as well. You get to choose the timelines, I would suggest start earlier and give students enough time to submit applications and for faculties to conduct their selection process. You will have to send a few follow-ups and just expect that not all faculties will be on time.

You will also need to provide the student representation on the committees as well. I just reached out to SRA and asked them to pick among themselves or pick a student in the faculty who would not be running for the role.

The tedious piece of this task is just following up with faculties but honestly it wasn't that bad. You don't collect anything other than the final names so it is alot easier than past years. You only handle the Spring convocation - fall is handled by Catherine Maybrey.

## **Board of Directors**

### **Corporate Officer**

Part of your responsibility of being a VP is being a Board of Directors member which means that you are now a Corporate Officer of the MSU. This means that on top of your portfolio you are responsible for the organization as a whole. You will be making decisions that will affect the organization as a whole and you will be making decisions that will affect all of the staff of the organization. This is an immense responsibility and it is your responsibility to put your staff and the organization first and foremost.

It is weird to go from being a student to now running a multi-million dollar organization. If I can give you one piece of advice it would be to recognize that you are now the boss but that it is important to remain grounded and humble. It will be easy to shirk away from the power and responsibility but it will also be easy to let the power get to your head. Remain grounded and let this role become your identity.

### **Board Meetings**

Board meetings are held weekly and you will go through a set agenda for updates and discussions with John (General Manager) and Daniela (Administrative Assistant) taking minutes. These meetings are a good opportunity to discuss anything related to long-term objectives, topics related to full-time staff, and any top-level organizational ideas or changes. I really loved board meetings because this was one of the only times where we could work and collaborate as a team. It is also a very chill environment which is confidential and private so you can share any concerns with your team without being scared that information will be shared elsewhere. It is designed to be a safe place for the BOD. I think I prioritized being involved in internal operations when I could because it was important for me to balance being present internally and externally.

In board, we discussed a lot around day-to-day operations and issues that any of the BOD was facing in their roles. A lot of the issues that get brought up are usually related to VP Admin's portfolio due to the nature of the role. I found that since this role is so external, I wasn't bringing up many agenda items at board. I would confirm public stances related to OUSA, city level documents that would have the MSU's name attached or any document that we may want to sign onto. These are a priority – it is very important to stay engaged with your board and to stay updated on what is going on in the organization.

I would suggest that for your first board meeting or even a few weeks in discussing what the purpose of board meetings are and how your team wants to use board meetings. I found that we had points of conflict in the year where some team members felt that board meetings should be more update based rather than discussion based. There was a lack of clarity and communication as to what everyone expected from the meeting. Discuss what you all expect from the meetings so that you are on the same page and members don't feel like they can't use this meeting as a place to share thoughts etc.

### **Board x Communications Meetings**

BOD Comms meetings are held weekly and we never really had an agenda. This meeting is designed to connect the BOD with the communications team. This is where you can discuss anything related to social media, communications, and public relations. We planned these meetings to be after board meetings because there may be areas of the board meeting that you would want to discuss with the comms team. I found that these meetings turned into the BOD consulting Wooder time rather than actually discussing communications. Once again, have a discussion around your intentions for the meeting and what each group wants to achieve from the meeting.

There is an MSU Advocacy account which will be run by you and the Advocacy Outreach and Logistics Coordinator. I am not a social media person so I really struggled with keeping engagement up on the account. I did a few engagement items such as the airpods giveaway and I also did vlog style stories for when I was away traveling. I would say that there is a huge opportunity here for getting students involved in advocacy but I definitely did not take that opportunity.

### **Board of Directors Team**

You will be working very closely with the BOD so its important that you communicate with each other and stay on the same page. You want to be on the same page and be aware of each other's goals because everyone else will be looking to you for guidance. It is important to remain a unit and to be a team because everyone else in the organization will be looking to you. The stronger you are as a team, you can get through any issue.

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.*

Your role is very external facing so you will not collaborate with the board as much as the rest of the team. It can be lonely at times, frustrating at times, and even isolating. It is extremely frustrating when your hard work is not recognized and you don't feel valued. It is important to touch base with the BOD and explain things to them and to answer any questions they may have so that they can understand your role and why you don't work internally. To be honest, I struggled with this a lot this year and I found myself holding back frustrations in the name of keeping the team dynamic. This made issues worse because we never addressed these problems. It is inevitable that you will miss some internal meetings like SRA but it is not your fault as many meetings are predetermined. Remember that your role is important

and that it is the nature of your role to not always be present internally. It is ok to be tired after traveling and you should not feel guilty about taking time to recover. I had many moments where I pushed myself close to the edge and it took me days to recover. Take care of your physical and mental well-being.

## **Finances**

The VP Finance should send you a budget tracker (I cannot remember if I got one or not) but you will be able to see the operating budget which will have an advocacy tab which is your budget line. You will be managing the advocacy line and you will be able to use the executive line as well. Rule of thumb for me is I would always dip into the advo line first and only dipped into executive when we traveled as a BoD like for SUDs. Try and keep track of your purchases - I was really bad with this and needed constant reminders about this but keep on this because things are more expensive now and you want to be able to accurately predict what you need for next year.

If you want to make a purchase you need to fill out a purchase order. There is an electronic or paper version of these sheets. I used to just fill them out when I was in-person in the office. You can approve up to \$2000 but anything over will need the approval of the VP finance. Make sure you touch base with VP Finance and the Accounting Clerk about this process so you know how to do it properly. When sending in a PO, CC Kevin, Accounting Clerk, and VP Finance.

When you travel, be sure to grab the exec card before you leave. But keep in mind that there is a huge chance that the card will bounce on you and you may have to pay out of pocket and request a reimbursement afterwards. After the card failed on me too many times, I just used my personal card and submitted for reimbursements later. If this isn't feasible for you - I believe that Jovan will be there for any big conferences and may be able to assist. I have brought up concerns around this and have asked if the VP Ed can get a credit card - John wasn't very on board but I think it would be a good idea. The reason why the card bounces is because the limits don't get paid off and so many people use the cards as well. I would push for a credit card again if I was you.

## **OUSA Membership Fee (5905-0126) \$93500**

The annual OUSA fee used to be \$3.24 and is now \$3.44 per student which equates to roughly \$90000 a year. Once in the fall and once in the winter you'll need to update either the Operations person or the ED about the FTE (full-time enrollment) numbers. You can ask John, Victoria, and Kevin for help on getting this number. When OUSA sends you an invoice, fill out a PO and email it to Kevin, Accounting Clerk, and VP Finance. Once it gets the approval signature, Kevin will make sure the invoice is paid - do the same for GA delegate invoices as well.

## **OUSA GA Expenses (5906-0126) \$11000**

This line is pretty self-explanatory; anything related to OUSA GA will go through this line. If you rent a car, hotel costs, delegate fees will be paid here. I asked for an increase to this line - TBH it probably won't be enough for this year even with the increase. I got multiple discounts that you likely won't this year and things are much more expensive than before. Exhaust this line and you can dip into ED team Campaigns.

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

*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!*

I really underutilized this line. Focus on in-person campaigns this year - I often got that people didn't want to see in-person advo efforts but I think its worth a chance this year.

### **Election Awareness (6306-0126) \$500**

This line was bigger my year because we had the municipal election. This line is also self explanatory but there shouldn't be an election coming up so you likely won't be using it.

### **Training (6804-0126) \$500**

We didn't touch this line much, I think I pulled from it for our first team meeting at the Phoenix and paid for food. Definitely chat with your team on what type of training they'd like to do because this line is underutilized every year.

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

Everytime you travel for OUSA and it is not GA related, you can use this line. (WelCon, Strat Con, OUSA meetings in person etc.) You will also use this line for lobby weeks and any other conference travels. You will use this line for the President as well. Any food, travel, parking, or accommodation costs will go through this line.

### **Policies and Policy Conference**

To be honest, I really dropped the ball on this and condensed it into a full day. I didn't plan enough in advance so definitely plan and organize earlier on in advance and prioritize the papers. There are still papers from Siobhan that have yet to be passed if that is something you want to take on.

*From Siobhan: 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 burnout among authors and SRA members.*

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 Compass people (Luke) 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.*

## **University Administration**

### David Farrar, President

I did not work directly with Dr. Farrar but we were in bigger university admin meetings together. He is very kind and is quite supportive of the MSU. The President has bi-weekly or weekly meetings with him so you can always consider joining this meetings if you so choose. If you are bringing a certain topic make sure its flushed out. Esme Davis is his advisor and past VP Eds have had a good relationship with them - feel free to reach out if you choose.

### Susan Tighe, Provost and VP Academic

I really enjoyed working with Susan because she has always been friendly but honest when sharing information or giving an opinion. If you are bringing any ideas to her be sure that you’ve flushed out your ideas and that you have a clear message. She has also been very receptive to taking meetings with the MSU and our external partners.

### Kim Dej, Deputy Provost and Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

I really enjoyed working with Kim as she is extremely supportive of students. She is someone who would be great for the AVP UA to work with and get close to for projects and initiatives. I wish I met with her more cause I saw her more often during the Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee. Definitely get your ideas clear and researched before bringing ideas to her as she is extremely busy. Sim worked with Kim alot and even had weekly check ins with her so you can always set those up as I’m not sure this is a “President” meeting or a Sim meeting as they worked on OERs together.

### 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! UCRU is trying to rebrand back to the U15 identity so there may be an opportunity to reconnect here.

Alex Lawson, Executive Advisor on Public Affairs

Alex works for Mac's GR department and I did collaborate with her this year but earlier on in the year. We typically don't work with GR unless there is something going on - we chatted a lot during nuisance party bylaw time. Wooder usually keeps an open line of communication with GR. We also worked together during the municipal election (I'm not sure who the new MA person is on the Mac GR side).

Andrea Farquhar, AVP Communications, Marketing, Public Affairs

Andrea oversees Mac GR and Communications. You likely won't work together but will bump into each other at events etc. She is very nice and communicative but if you're working on projects you'd likely be working with Alex. I know Sim had a good relationship with her as well.

Karen McQuigge, Director of Alumni Advancement

Karen is super awesome to work with. She is very supportive of MSU initiatives and you may not work with her directly but she's a great person to get to know. You'll often be around each other at events, she has awesome energy and a lot of historical knowledge of Mac. She gave us a nice donation for the Rep Wellness Lounge initiative that myself and Mitch worked on this year.

Debbie Martin, VP University Advancement & AVP and Chief Facilities Officer

I interacted more with Debbie at the beginning of our term but not as much at the end. Debbie is very kind and very receptive to chatting about new ideas and working with students. She has many hats and is busy so again if you are bringing ideas make sure you have a clear idea.

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

Sean is one admin that you'll be working a lot with during the year. He is the head of Student Affairs at Mac. I liked working with him because he really respects the MSU as a partner and is very honest with comments he is sharing on initiatives we may propose. He oversees the Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC), SWC, SAS, Athletics and Recreation, SCC, Indigenous Student Services (ISS), International Student Services, Ombuds and sits on OCSA. We started up sub committees this year again but I do think that a sub committee calendar needs to be created. Each sub committee had different frequency of meetings so I think it would be important to set the meetings once these committees are struck.

Arlene Dosen, Executive Director and Assistant Dean of Student Success

Arlene works under Sean and she will always be present at SSAC meetings. She is so fantastic to work with and is very supportive of the MSU. This is her first year in this position and she is very open to student ideas and feedback. Her and John have a recurring weekly check in and you are free to hop onto those meetings as well. She is very supportive and receptive to taking meetings with the MSU.

Roseanne Kent, Director of Student Wellness Centre

Roseanne also attended SSAC meetings when reporting on SWC. She has a lot of knowledge but I found that she was not very receptive to feedback from the MSU. We shared concerns about lack of mental health support and she wasn't very receptive to the idea of expanding services and adding in more digital

health services. She is very nice but can be a bit defensive if you do bring up any SWC criticisms, don't be surprised if you get cut off mid sentence. Just remember to stand your ground.

Kevin Beatty, Director, Housing & Conference Services

I didn't work very closely with Kevin but in the meetings we had together I thought he was nice and receptive to feedback. I know Siobhan worked on a rental rating system with him but it was a slow project. I think connecting Kevin to the AVP UA and MA would be helpful in completing projects next year. Overall, I found him supportive of students and willing to work with the MSU.

Shylo Elmayan, Director of Indigenous Student Services

Shylo oversees Indigenous Student Services and you will see her at SSAC, JIACG, and SAC meetings. She is very nice and has expressed interest in working with the MSU. It is a unique relationship because there are issues she is working through such as transit from the reserve to campus that are more unique to Indigenous students. I had a few meetings with her to chat about shared priorities and they were good meetings but definitely go into them with an agenda and certain items you want to achieve. I would recommend introducing yourself and chatting about issues and shared priorities.

Wil Fujarczuk, Manager, Sexual Violence Prevention Education and Lenore Lukasik-Foss, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response / Anti-Oppression Programs

Wil has been an absolute joy to work with this year. If you have any GBSV related advocacy initiatives or projects you want to do, I would reach out to Wil if you would like to collaborate. Keep in mind that if you want to collaborate make sure you flush out your idea and logistics beforehand. Lenore is super lovely as well but I didn't work them as much as I did Wil. They are very much willing to work with the MSU and often collaborate with the services.

Kate Brown, Manager, Accessibility Program

I didn't work with Kate too much individually but did work on the Accessibility policy with her and other university admin. She is very open to working with the MSU but isn't always the quickest emailer. When you do have some time with her she is very supportive and very willing to work with the MSU and to provide training as well.

Renata Hall, Manager, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Education

I didn't work with Renata very much personally but did attend some of the sessions she ran throughout the year. She does these lunch and learn events that would be a great event to attend if you have the time - I learned a lot at these events. Renata has given training to different services at the MSU as well. Great resource if you ever want to plan any anti-racism advocacy events.

Dave Heidebrecht, Director of the Office of Community Engagement

I didn't work with Dave this year but I think there is some opportunity for this next year.

*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.*

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

I never met with Allison, however I heard good things 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.*

#### Associate Director, Content, Megan Bieska

I worked with Megan several times throughout the year. This usually came about during areas we worked in with Mac GR. I typically didn't work with Megan directly but when we worked with her as a board. She is very nice and supportive, we have created a respectful and transparent relationship between the board and Mac PR.

#### University Advocacy

##### **Union Relations**

I did not work with MUFA this year as there was no outreach from them but later learned that Siobhan did attend a few meetings. I think it would be a good idea to see what instructors are thinking and feeling. I also participated in the MUFA Teaching Awards Committee and it wasn't a huge time commitment either. I would recommend reconnecting with them in the fall. There was a TA strike this year but we did not release any public statements.

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.*

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

I did not participate in this committee but I know Sim did. The peer support services are also members of PACBIC. You can ask for updates from this committee from Jovan.

##### **Student-Administration Consultation Committee**

We only had one meeting together but I would recommend meeting more frequently.

*From Siobhan: 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) and SAC**

SSAC is the Student Services Advisory Committee which is compromised of the MSU board, John, Sean Van Koughnett, Arlene Dosen, Ath and Rec, SWC, and SCC. 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. If you are interested in the mandate of the committee, I would reach out to John for those documents. This committee also oversees WWAC which makes all Welcome Week folks accountable to SSAC however you'll find that Vits and Craig will be more involved than you. SSAC also oversees SLEF and USIF but this will be handled by Jovan and Craig.

### **SSAC Sub Committees**

There are three SSAC sub committees: Student Success, Student Wellness, and Athletics & Recreation. There is room for two students (usually board members) on each of the committees. I only ended up sitting on the Athletics and Recreation Sub Committee as other board members felt more passionately about other committees. I actually really enjoyed being on ath and rec because I learned a lot about an area I was unfamiliar with on campus. Trish, Shawn, and Keenan were so fantastic to work with and we had a lot of good conversations around wellness and collaboration. I would recommend getting involved in whatever you are interested in!

### **University Library Advisory Council**

I wasn't part of this committee and neither was Siobhan or 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 did not do a university budget submission this year as we hired the AVP UA late in the year. I would recommend scouring the AVP UA drive and reading through past files and consulting Wooder. I am assuming that we would pull from our policy papers and create a submission based on the priorities we choose this year.

*This is from Siobhan: 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 here, 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 fund 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'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 accumulated and voted on. The leads can provide you with updates on their requests once the process is completed for this cycle.”*

### **Open Education Resources Working Group**

I was not involved with this working group because Sim took on this advocacy initiative and really took the lead on it. ). This committee is chaired by Olga Perkovic, a librarian, with Joanne Kehoe from the MacPherson Institute as an important member. I would reach out to Sim on this project as I was not involved.

### **JIACG (Joint Indigenous-Administration Consultation Group)**

I was very involved in the JIACG committee and really enjoyed the work we did here. This committee is chaired by the Provost. It includes Karen Stephenson (Director, Research Platforms Support - delegate for VP Karen Mossman), Jerry Hurley (Dean of Social Sciences), Rob Innes (Chair, Indigenous Studies Department), Savage Bear (Director, MIRI), Bernice Downey (Associate Dean, Indigenous Health, FHS), Loris Davis Hill (Executive Director, Indigenous Health Learning Lodge, FHS), Dawn Martin-Hill (Associate Professor, Social Sciences, Academic Co-Chair, IEC), and Mark Hill (Community Co-Chair IEC). The committee updates the provost on what is going on in the respective groups and communities on campus and discusses different projects they would like to see funded on campus as well. 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. In my term, we are currently working on getting a VP of Indigenous Affairs. We also did the planning for truth and reconciliation week which will likely be an ongoing task with this committee. Through JIACG I was able to meet with ISS (Indigenous Student Services) and other Indigenous knowledge keepers on campus. This is an extremely valuable committee which should be prioritized. I think there is opportunity to create an Indigenous student position on the MSU (could be a topic for discussion) but keep in mind that the Indigenous student leaders on campus are run very thin because everyone is looking for their involvement and feedback in projects.

### **Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee**

This committee is composed of people from across the campus and a big part of what this committee does is provide feedback and participate in creating the teaching and learning strategy. I believe the digital learning strategy was recently released as well. So this committee is under the Office of the Provost but is chaired by Deputy Provost and Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning, Kim Dej. Christine Yachouch is the Project Manager under Kim and is actually a former PTM of the MSU! I really enjoyed sitting on this committee because I've always found Kim to be very forthright and always shares information.

This committee is a good way to provide direct feedback on teaching and learning. I found that it was helpful when we shared the student experience and how different suggestions and policy changes would affect the student experience. Sim also was invited to these meetings and often joined. I would also bring Simran (AVP UA) to the meetings as well.

### **International Students**

I didn't work with international students too often but I think Sim had more communication (I was never involved on any email chains etc.). I know that the MSU was invited to speak to first year international students but I'm not sure if Sim went beyond the collaboration. Siobhan mentioned that she had more involvement with them so I would say contact them and see if you want to set priorities together or work on any projects. We did chat briefly with the GSA about international student pickups from the airport as a project.

### **Sustainability Education Committee**

I did not end up meeting with this committee as sustainability was more of Sim's initiatives and I think he met with Kate Whalen alone. There is a lot going on with sustainability on campus and if you are interested I would recommend having this committee meet. 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. Siobhan noted that involvement in the committee was quite poor as the sustainability initiatives on campus are quite disjointed. Here is a note from Siobhan on projects: *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.*

If you are interested, I would recommend going down the project route and even reaching out to the sustainability office to start projects. Honestly, committees are not always the most effective way to get students involved.

### **Archway Program**

I don't think we had much collaboration with Archway this year. Sim may have been involved as it was more university facing. I would chat with Wooder to see what this relationship looks like.

### **Associate Deans Group**

I didn't know this was a group - this could have been something Sim attended but I don't think so as I didn't hear about any meetings. I'm not sure if we still get an invite to this table but you can always reach out individually to their offices to set up a meeting. I find that individual meetings are easier to get projects and initiatives completed.

### **Municipal Advocacy**

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



We met as a group after Minister Filomena Tassi's office reached out to us before the federal budget submission. Sim and I used the UCRU brief as the foundation for lobbying to the Minister and we sent them beforehand. The people included in the meeting from the MSU side are usually you, President, Wooder, and AVP PFA. These meetings always went well as we were very prepared and had clear asks from our briefs. Redeemer did not come to any meetings but Mohawk was present and they gave good perspectives as well. I think their shift in leadership has been positive and their current President will be coming back as well.

This is an idea that has been passed along from other VP Ed's but I think it would be a perfect year to actually implement. This group should be further expanded to involve other politicians in the city such as Andrea Horwath, Sandy Shaw, Sarah Jama, Maureen Wilson, Cameron Kroestch, Nrinder Nann, Tammy Hwang, John-Paul Danko, Jeff Beattie, Mark Tadeson, Craig Cassar, Alex Wilson, Ted McMeekin etc. It could become a smaller lobbying meeting but really reinforce the importance of student voice on campus. It would be a great meeting to bring in general students but there should be a clear agenda and clear asks before planning a meeting of this size.

### **Light Rail Transit**

I didn't hear much about LTR as we did not get any updates and there generally was not news on any updates. This is from Siobhan's report: *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 definitely an area where the AVP MA can provide updates.*

### **HSR**

It's important to keep in mind that the MSU is a major stakeholder considering how much we pay to provide passes to every student. Our referendum passed for the new fee but it was very close as we almost did not reach quorum for the vote to count. You will likely not be involved in HSR conversations but can work on advocacy on the city council side. We have brought concerns about the frequency of buses, availability of buses (namely the 51), weekend service, summer service, and commuting students who travel from around Hamilton (students on mountain take 1 hour to get to campus despite it only being a 15-20 min drive). HSR sometimes does not treat us as the best partner so its important to play hardball with them because we contribute a significant amount to their revenue (think around over \$6mil).

### **Municipal Election - Macvotes**

We did have a Municipal Election this year so we had lots to do in terms of planning and executing events and overall engagement! We did a lot of online engagement and used a mix of MSU graphics and graphics from the city to promote the election. We also had a polling booth in MUSC so we had meetings early on in the summer with the university and city staff on what this would look like and how it would be implemented. We provided a lot of feedback and Wooder sat in on those meetings with me.

Later in the summer like August into September, I would reach out to Mayoral candidates for the mayoral debate on campus. I did this late and wasn't able to get attendance from all candidates. Wooder can help you with strategy on this - its hard to balance actually picking a date and securing the candidates. We are usually their last priority. We did have a good debate, Sim prepared the questions and moderated the

debate. Overall, students seemed to like the debate and enjoyed asking questions during the open question period.

We had a lot of online presence with the online Macvotes campaign and even videos that I filmed with the comms team for elections awareness. We posted multiple insta posts and were consistently sharing to the story. We used physical posters from the city as well and had graphics on our screens across MUSC. We also have macvotes tags for volunteers on the day of the polling booth. These volunteers had rave cards and encouraged people to go upstairs to the third floor and vote. These volunteers came from SRA and the services!

### **Municipal Pre-Budget Submission & Delegation to City Council**

As I did not have an AVP MA at the time, Sim and I worked on the submission ourselves with Wooder. Sim greatly helped on creating the submission and we picked the priorities together. I would say start this early in the summer so you have time to bring it to the MA committee (the AVP MA for next year is very strong). The city's budget meeting is in February and you and the President or AVP MA will delegate to City Council at the General Issues Committee on the submission you are submitting. Before your delegation, you will also be meeting with councillors in individual lobbying meetings. We actually got a lot of meetings this year as we had many connections with council. You can also meet with community stakeholders beforehand to see where your priorities overlap. *This is from Ryan: 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**

So this year, we did not delegate to council on student housing directly but it was part of our pre-budget submission. We did do a few initiatives/projects on renters rights on both the advocacy instagram and the main instagram. During our lobby meetings we spoke a lot on the rental licensing pilot and we hope to see more advocacy in that area. Student housing renter rights is something ongoing and there should be files for Kiran for a housing rights campaign. She may have submitted things to underground already that you can use.

### **Ward 1 Councillor – Maureen Wilson**

I did not reach out to Maureen but she did accept our lobbying meeting. I think it's important to meet with Maureen and her team (Stephanie Hilson) regularly as there is a lot of trust that needs to be rebuilt here. I don't think Maureen has anything against the MSU but she has faced a lot of challenges due to HOCO and community dissatisfaction with the Mac student community. Keep that in mind as she deals with these issues often and has to listen to public complaints. She is generally in support of supporting students but there is definitely some hurt between her connection with students.

### **Property Rating System on Mac Off-Campus Housing**

I didn't hear about this so I think it may have died.

*From Siobhan: 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 Alliance**

*From Siobhan: 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**

I believe Sim has kept up a line of communication with ACORN. We generally have the same outlook as ACORN and are supportive towards each other. This is from Siobhan: *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 Advocacy**

### **OUSA**

I won't bore you with what OUSA is etc - you can google it and dig through their website for mandate etc. In the past, VP Educations have considered leaving OUSA due to cost and return of value. I found OUSA to be very helpful and aligned with MSU priorities. I was frustrated by poor campaign planning this year and expressed many frustrations with not getting well made campaigns out of the organization. Each year OUSA publishes 6 policies as well as a few other publications like Habitats. Since the OUSA fee is around \$3.44 per student - next year (totalling close to \$90,000 for the MSU alone), it was really important to me to attend meetings and be involved whenever possible. I did not take on an exec role because I just didn't like the positions but if you're interested I would encourage you to do so. Siobhan was VP HR and she really enjoyed it. I only signed up the MSU to do one paper this year but Siobhan did two. I would only recommend one for you next year and ensure that you pick a fall paper because writing a paper while planning and running a GA will be a nightmare (quote from the last GA planner who did this). OUSA will likely require a referendum for a fee increase soon - may be your year or the next.

### **OUSA – Home Office**

OUSA recently got rid of its home office so meetings always go to different places. We've already had meetings in different spots so make sure you check your invitation before you actually travel to any meetings. This will change where we send cheques for payments so keep that in mind and communicate with accounting and OUSA ED before sending payments. I would highly recommend setting up a wire transfer account with them for this year.

I would recommend getting HO to do policy writing training for your RAs.

### **Malika Dhanani - Executive Director**

Malika is a current ED and she was hired this year as ED! She is very friendly, helpful and collaborative. She is still finding her bearings but has done such a fantastic job so far. Malika was an RPA before applying and being hired as ED. Malika comes from a social work background.

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 (It's on FB I'm not sure if its made yet but I will check in to make sure you get added.)

### **Tiffany Li Wu - Operations & Communications Director**

You have probably already received some emails from Tiffany regarding the upcoming WelCon. She will reach out to you about paying the membership fee, about events, social media planning, campaigns, etc. Tiffany is fresh and was just hired about a month ago - she will likely still be easing into the role when you start working with OUSA. Tiffany comes from queen's (can't remember her past title) but she helped planned the last Kingston GA.

### **Research & Policy Analysts - Octavia Andrade-Dixon & Ananya Gupta**

Both the RPAs are relatively new but Octavia has a few more months on Ananya. They are both so kind and patient - they are very helpful when writing publications. I worked more closely with Octavia because I authored a paper with them and they were so helpful and patient throughout the process. Ananya I haven't worked with as much but have really enjoyed the times where I have been able to chat with them.

### **Steering Committee**

Steering Committee meetings are usually once a month so try to make it to everyone but if you can't, let Malika 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! Don't be afraid to ask questions during meetings and to really get critical - remember we pay a pretty penny to be part of the organization. I say be critical because we questioned alot of the finances this year and how funds were used towards organizations. Be respectful of HO but also recognize that you have a fiscal and corporate responsibility to the MSU.

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.

Make a "work" gmail account to access OUSA files as we are under microsoft. I can go into depth more if you need more info on what this looks like but it will make your life so much easier. Also, I had a lot of trouble accessing the dropbox and files so I always asked other SC members to help me out and to send agendas etc. I love SC they are some of my best friends I've made this year so I hope you have an amazing experience working with them!

### **OUSA Executive Positions**

#### OUSA President

This is from Shemar on OUSA President: *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!*

I can connect you to the outgoing President if you're interested.

### OUSA VP Finance

OUSA's VP Finance oversees the creation of the budget, ensuring that budget is being used properly, and anything related to money. If you're interested in numbers and finances you might be interested in this role. I can connect you with the VP Finance from this year.

### OUSA VP Administration & Human Resources

If you are into human resources and administration you might be interested in this role. I know that accommodations can be made if you aren't able to take meeting notes. They also do performance reviews on HO and are always involved in hiring for OUSA. If you are interested, I can connect you with Siobhan who held this role last year and the outgoing VP HR.

### **Ontario Undergraduate Student Survey (OUSS)**

The OUSS is a survey that OUSA releases yearly and each institution is responsible for gathering survey respondents. The MSU has pulled some of the worst numbers per capita for this survey for a few years now (our engagement is very low on campus). The gift card prizes this year for the OUSS were honestly not a huge draw to students so I would say push against that type of prize if it comes to SC. The graphics for this survey were also not great either, not engaging at all and quite dull. I recommend touching base with Wooder and creating a social media strategy and then possible tabling in MUSC with a giveaway to get people to fill out the survey. You can touch base with HO to see when the survey will be released.

### **OUSA's Policy Papers**

OUSA writes 3 policy papers per term and each paper has a total of 4 student authors (typically, but can differ usually if there's an identity based paper on the table). When you write your paper choice, you get to bring on one student author (is AVP PFA). These papers have been chosen already. All you have to do is pick which topic you want to write about. You will all go through summer school to learn about the paper writing process. You will also have a think tank session for the papers. The RPAs will reach out about deadlines etc to keep you on track. If you write a paper you will play an active role at GA and will lead breakout sessions with the RPA and will defend your paper at plenary. These papers are ratified at GA.

### **OUSA General Assembly**

General Assembly happens twice, once in the fall and once in the spring. The MSU is allowed to bring 10 delegates including: yourself, President, AVP Provincial and Federal. You will need to hire 7 student delegates. OUSA's GA schedule for next year has MSU hosting the Spring GA, which means you would be planning Spring GA at Mac. General Assembly is the highest governing body of OUSA and this is where you pass policies, go through breakout sessions, and picks the focus of the organization. It's a great time to

### **Promoting Applications**

I had trouble getting applicants for the Fall GA, but I think part of it was due to the fact that GA was in Sudbury. We did less promotions for Spring GA (in Kingston at Queen's) but got more applicants. Talk to Wooder and Comms Officer maybe two or three weeks before applications are supposed to be open to get graphics updated (honestly the graphics are boring so I would suggest revamping). The comms officer has all the templates etc so they just need a refresh but like I said I highly suggest revamping. You likely won't do physical promotions and the promotions will stay online through insta.

### **Opening and Closing Applications**

At the beginning of the term, ask Tiffany what the last possible date is that they'll need the names of your delegates for registration and open the applications 3 weeks before that because you'll need 2 weeks to keep applications open, and at least a week to interview candidates and select the final delegates. Once you get the date, touch base with Renee about open and close dates. You will need to send her the dates of the GA as well.

### **Number of Delegates**

The MSU is allowed to bring 10 delegates including: yourself, President, AVP Provincial and Federal. You will need to hire 7 student delegates. Promote through your internal channels such as through SRA and committees. The policy is gray on hiring so that if there are not enough applications, you can just directly ask people and forgo the interviews. We actually skipped some interviews for second term because we had some really fantastic candidates who had been to GA the term beforehand and were just exemplary so you can make that call as well. Remember you are fostering the advocacy pipeline here!

### **Interviews**

I actually greatly reduced the number and difficulty of the interview questions. I wanted to make this volunteer position more accessible to all students at Mac. The old interviews used to be very rigid and intimidating which I thought was unnecessary for a volunteer position. The questions and answers are in my onedrive folder so you can access the questions there. I would say you could probably stand to add one or two questions if you so please. My main focus was seeing if they are passionate about student politics and if they were passionate about any of the topics that would be covered at the GA. I only looked for minimal prior experience and put a lot of focus on how much effort they put into their cover letter. Remember they are volunteers so they don't need to be the most accomplished individual to ever apply.

I made an email template and sent the emails of the candidates I wanted to interview to the office clerks and had them schedule meetings. There's a lot of interviews so it is so tedious to schedule by yourself so definitely use the office clerks. I scheduled meetings virtually because it was way more convenient that way. I ran interviews with the AVP PFA, if Kiran couldn't make it I would either record or just give her my notes.

### **Delegate Training**

I have a powerpoint in my drive for delegate training. Each year's onedrive has a OUSA delegate training that you can refer to or adapt into your own. I focused on basic of HO, OUSA, decorum, papers, and some of the nuanced topics like editing. The training I did took less than 2 hours, you can buy food if you want and expense it through the training or GA line.

I wanted to add something from Shemar because there were instances of bullying that happened this year at GA. *From Shemar: 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.*

### **Delegate Feedback Period**

The delegate feedback period is before GA and is the opportunity for delegates to review papers and give initial edits to the first drafts of the paper. The RPAs will send out MSU specific documents that you will send to the delegates and ask them to submit any edits. Training would be a great time to go over some papers and to do edits together so that delegates know what to do. I would utilize Jazz alot because she's been through this process as a delegate and knows what is expected of a delegate and how to edit the papers.

### **SRA Ratification of Delegates**

You have to ratify the delegates at SRA prior to attending. Make sure to add it to the agenda before you go. I remembered for the fall but forgot for the spring. It's a very simple memo - you can find this in my drive.

### **Hotels**

As soon as you get the email from Operations, you can forward the email to Daniela and ask her to book 5 rooms. I actually booked all the hotels myself because I found it easier to do it. Daniela is a great resource that I did not utilize enough for logistics support. Because you have 10 delegates you should book 5 rooms so there is only 2 delegates to each room. I didn't have a problem with delegates not wanting to share so I didn't book an extra room but you can do this as a precaution but it is probably being overly cautious. If you end up taking another person as a driver, you'll need another room. Sim, Sarph, and I shared to save costs but we did this by choice and no one forced us to do this. Once you have the rooms, you can let the delegates choose their roommates - take down who has what room for safety reasons.

### **Logistics (Accommodation, Travel, Food)**

#### Travel & Rental Cars

Check in with the President to see if they can drive (I believe Jovan can and the conference you'll have to drive to is only in Waterloo so it's not that far). If you can drive that is awesome too (you'll need a minimum of 2 drivers) but if you can't either see if your AVP PFA can drive, if not then ask either the VP Finance or VP Admin if they can accompany you as logistic support (check in with both and see who has capacity - remember it's just a work thing it's not that deep just pick whoever has capacity). DO NOT allow a delegate to drive unless they are an SRA member etc., keep in mind you are liable for the safety of all your delegates! The drivers must have a G2 at a minimum.

We have a business account with Enterprise so make sure you touch base with Daniela when you are booking the cars. I did the bookings myself because I liked to pick the pickup times but it would likely be easier if you had Daniela help you with this. (You'll need the account number and code - two different numbers). ONLY order rentals from the Enterprise Downtown, the Dundas location does not have as much availability. I would suggest booking larger cars such as 2 vans for more space and comfort. Call maybe 1-2 days in advance to check on your reservation before you pick up - for our last GA I ordered 2 vans and when we went to go pickup the cars they gave us one singular pickup truck and it was a

nightmare. ALWAYS set your pickup for midday/early afternoon the day before so that you can deal with any logistical hiccups. When you do your pickup for the cars, ask them to put every single piece of insurance on the cars - safety first always. Be sure to either pay for gas with the card or keep receipts for reimbursement.

Calculate your travel time in advance so everyone knows when they need to leave Mac so you aren't late when you reach GA. We had troubles for the past two because they were both either 4 or more hours away from us so we had to leave at maybe 7am each time. You'll have an easier time with this.

### **Managing Delegates**

Managing delegates can be tough because there are many of them and they will all have different needs. Take the opportunity to get to know them and introduce them to different opportunities that MSU has to offer them. Remember that you can be their friend but you are also there to ensure that they safely enjoy the conference and safely go home afterwards. Safety is your number one priority.

Make a whats app GC and a facebook GC. The FB GC is good for plenary chatting and the whats app group is good for general texts and sharing info. Most info you'll share through email but the whats app group is good for like hey meeting at 8am in hotel lobby etc. We had a lot of trouble with tardiness so be sure to be more stern and stress it during training.

You will be in charge of ensuring that all their meals are taken care of - OUSA provides some meals with the delegate fee but not every meal. These should be indicated on the calendar but you should also check with the planner at SC so you can plan for meals you will need to cover. Make sure you check in with the delegates to ensure that they are not hungry. I brought snacks, juices, and water that they all had access to just in case certain sessions took longer. Keep a running list of any allergies or intolerances to foods they may have and be mindful when looking for restaurants. Be sure to review the Business Expenses Operating Policy.

### **OUSA Plenary**

Plenary is basically a fancy word for the final meeting of the conference where we officially vote and ratify the policy papers and any other business. Plenary is very long - usually 8 hours from morning to night and last GA we didn't even finish and had to continue online. Be very supportive of your delegates during plenary - we don't force them to vote a certain way but encourage them to have fulsome chats during the morning amendment session as an MSU delegation. TBH it is very embarrassing to see delegations fighting with each other on the plenary floor. (This is not us)

The day before plenary, we would meet together as a delegation in the morning before amendments were due so that we could go over each paper and put forward final amendments for plenary. I would highly recommend continuing this practice. We would go through each paper together and go through what final amendments we wanted to put forward and we helped the delegates to draft amendments.

### **General Assembly at McMaster**

The fall GA will be held at Laurier in Waterloo but the spring GA will be at Mac so you will be planning. I suggest you start planning early in the fall and get all the necessary room bookings once you get the finalized GA dates. Shemar's drive should have a folder that has information on how to plan GA and what specific logistics you need to work out. In the fall, schedule meetings with both Daniela and Wooder to help you plan, you should also include Tiffany in some meetings as well. Once you have the dates, I would say reach out to hotels around Mac and see if you can get a block book going as well.



One of your tasks as a GA planner will be to find a Chair for plenary - this is usually an MSU alumni who would be able to chair the meeting. I would recommend touching base with Wooder to see who we could reach out to and who would have the time to devote a Sunday to chairing a meeting. Do this early as well once you have the dates.

At the fall GA, take lots of notes and observe what Vivien does and what types of rooms they picked. Look at certain features and the needs of each room. Think about where plenary can be held because that will be the greatest challenge.

DO NOT write a paper in the spring!! You have to write at least one paper so pick a paper for the fall because writing a paper while planning will be horrible. Sahiba planned Kingston GA and was also an author and was essentially a zombie during and after the conference. Focus on planning and running the conference.

Do not take on this burden yourself, use the President and make sure they help you along the way. Do not try to take all the responsibilities of GA on your shoulders and communicate with HO and stay in touch and on the same page. This happened this year and it was disastrous for the planner, HO, and delegates. HO has now done two in-person GA's again, so they will be much better equipped to support you in planning.

### **OUSA Campus Visit**

At some point, the Ops person will contact you to set up your campus visit. When they visit you can set up tabling for them in MUSC where they can interact with students. We didn't have enough time to set up a table so we did not do this because our university admin meetings were scattered. You will need to set up meetings with HO and university admin - do this advance or you won't get meetings. You can ask Daniela to reach out to their offices to request a meeting. Ask Daniela to book meetings with Kim Dej, Sean Van Koughnett, Susan Tighe, David Farrar, and Arlene Dosen. I grouped the meetings by Student Affairs and Academics.

*From Siobhan: I suggest you download most of these tasks to your Advocacy Coordinator – booking a table, booking lunch, etcetera. 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.*

### **OUSA Campaigns**

This year my SC did "GSBV" and "Housing" as our campaigns and it was organized by Irum (former Ops and Comms). Your SC will decide which campaigns you want to do at StratCon so touch base with your board and Ed team to see what priorities they want to see this year and if there's anything they feel very strongly about for provincial politics. This will be very social media heavy so connect Tiffany with the AOLC so that they can directly connect. Chat with Wooder to see what graphics we should ask for (moreso for sizing for screens etc).

I already said this earlier but I was very disappointed with how the campaigns turned out this year. I think that when SUs ask for campaigns they should be getting whole campaign packages that have graphics, briefs, and physical giveaway items included so that SUs can table on campus. Our campaigns were literally a few slides on social media that our insta shared and that was it. I thought it was such a waste and missed an opportunity. Push for campaigning packages where leaders can actually bring the campaign to campus and connect with students. Ask for corresponding merch items that you can give out

with the campaign and other materials like brochures etc that you can use to table. Ask for regular sized stickers too!

## **PiHED OUSA**

This is the Partners in Higher Education Dinner which is essentially a fancy dinner where post-secondary stakeholders come together to celebrate great teaching faculty from across Ontario. OUSA puts this gala on yearly and this was the first time back since COVID. It was a very fun event - Jovan was there so he can tell you all about it!

You get a lot of flexibility to pick the winner. Sim selected the faculty that won this year but I think we've went through Macademics in past years as well. There is nothing in policy that really outlines this process so its up to what you want to do.

For tables, I ended up purchasing two tables but one was MSU and the other was university admin. I invited the Student Affairs team and Academics. The invites were sent later because we did not get the ticket earlier so some university admin couldn't make it. Overall we did get a nice turnout from both tables and the university tickets were later charfielded through Daniela so that we didn't have to pay the whole amount for two tables. It's up to you how you want to run this - you absolutely should pay for the award winners ticket and a guest for them. Here's who I invited - Sarph, Mitch, Sim (he is a given), John, Daniela, Wooder, Kiran (AVP PFA), Simran (AVP UA), Jovan (last minute fill in). From SA we had Sean, Arlene (had to cancel), Melissa, Roseanne (no show), and Vivian Lewis (librarian). It's a fun time to get the whole team there but I think maybe only you and President should go from exec next year and then you should expand to more of the Ed team to give students more opportunities.

## **Student Advocacy Conference (Provincial Lobby Week)**

This is a week long conference where you will be put into a lobby team and will do lobbying with MPPs at Queen's Park. It is such a fun time and you will have a blast. I was at first very intimidated but I really enjoyed this time and it made me want to get into politics! You will be at lobby week with the President but you won't be on the same team. You will get training beforehand but if you are nervous chat with Wooder and get a training sesh before you leave.

OUSA will be doing all the outreach and setting up the meetings, they may ask that you reach out to your local, MPP Sandy Shaw and some around you like Sarah Jama, Monique Taylor etc if they haven't secured a meeting with them yet. You and SC will have picked out the briefs at this point and HO would have given you briefs. You want to get to know one section very well as that will be your main section in your lobby meetings. Bring a notebook - we have MSU notebooks so ask Wooder or John to help you grab one before you leave. You do not bring laptops into the meetings, phones are silent, you will be taking notes via handwritten notes. You and your team will decide how this works. Be sure to do pre meeting prep and search up the politician beforehand so you can strategize your meeting.

## **Provincial Budget Submission**

The MSU does not release a provincial budget submission individually but does it "under the umbrella" of OUSA. I just wanted to add this section here so that you're aware of this but that other institutions also release their own provincial budget submission. I think it would be a good idea because the MSU doesn't have a strong provincial background without OUSA so it might be a good idea to build this portfolio more around the MSU as an org.

## **Federal Advocacy**

## **Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)**

The MSU joined CASA Observership this year to see if CASA has changed and if it would be a viable federal group for the MSU again. CASA's influence in the federal realm has grown with them getting over a third of lobby meetings for their lobby week as well as advisor status on multiple bills and getting multiple meetings a year with the PMOs office. The new ED has done a fabulous job at cleaning up the org and bringing it back to influence. So far, they have really shown good structure in terms of how they complete their work and create policy. There still remains the issue of the one school one vote but I would recommend chatting with the ED Mackenzy Metcalfe and gaining this perspective as she is a past USC exec. Be sure to take detailed notes when you attend conferences and be critical of everything CASA does at these conferences. As observers, you don't need to go to every conference.

I wanted to include this piece about why we left CASA cause its important to look back at the history of it and to understand that the organization has changed since then.

*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.*

Just don't do it - you can also talk to Wooder about how this will poorly affect the MSU.

## **Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities**

I was the Board of Directors representative on UCRU from the MSU. Sim was the alternate Board member. I was the one that attended all the UCRU Board Meetings and participated, I was also the Chair of Governance and the Chief Returning Officer. *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.*

To be honest, since then UCRU has been on the struggle and most organizations do not feel very passionately about putting money into UCRU. One of the reasons why we sought observership on CASA was because UCRU was just not stable anymore and I wasn't sure if the org would be able to recover. The main event of UCRU is federal lobby week and it was a mess even though we were able to secure

meetings later on - there was so much miscommunication. We did host a last minute AGM as a last ditch effort to revive the organization. I believe that if we really give it a try and have people approve the new exec positions, UCRU will be able to come back and be more than just a lobby week org.

### **Federal Lobby Week**

Prior to lobby week, the MSU helped to prepare one of the briefs with Western. Honestly these briefs could have been stronger and we unfortunately did not have translated french briefs for french MPs.

Sim and I went to Ottawa for UCRU's federal lobby week. Going into the week we knew that we didn't have many meetings so we ended up calling MPs less than a week before once we found out how low the numbers were. We were able to secure a few more meetings so that was pretty awesome because we were able to expand the MSU meetings.

This from Stephanie to Shemar but I think its helpful: *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. Daniela could possibly do this as well so if they can't ask her. Considering booking a block in a hotel so you can all be near each other. Do that very early – Ottawa books up fast.*

We thought that Waterloo would handle contacting MPs and this kind of fell through and we didn't find out till later. We tried doing this later on but obvious it was a bit late to be trying to schedule meetings but we did get some last minute ones.

### **Federal Budget Submission**

We did not prepare a new federal budget submission, we readapted the UCRU briefs that we used during lobby week to prepare a new document for Minister Filomena Tassi. Minister Tassi really values student voice and reached out to consult before the budget. These documents should all be in your drive. I believe we cut a few areas from the UCRU briefs but overall kept most and then delegated to the Minister in our joint meeting with Mohawk. We also submitted our document to her. You could look into developing a federal budget submission for the MSU etc. Wooder will be very helpful in this process as well.

### **Final Thoughts**

Well, that's a lot of reading but this is shorter than transition reports of the past! I cut down the report and wanted to be very concise with all the information. I hope that this can be a resource that you can refer to throughout the year. You will learn a lot this year about politics and about yourself. It is ok not to know everything and it is ok to ask for help and to lean on the MSU team. Ask questions, do your research and always be the most prepared!

The curse of being a VP Education is that we have generations of terrible delegators, myself included. I went through so many periods of burnout because I didn't ask for help and I didn't delegate to my team when I should have and you have an amazing superstar team for next year! It is ok to step back from projects and to take a breather and to come back to them later, try to stay organized and start things earlier to give yourself wiggle room. Do not feel the need to pack your calendar full of meetings because a full calendar doesn't mean a good job.

Take the opportunity to get to know your board and bond with each other. Please take my advice on retreating and communicating with each other. It is so easy to push aside issues and to not prioritize your relationship with the board but they're your team. You have to work for your relationships and you have to work to be a team. Lean on each other and share your concerns because no one else will understand you like they will cause y'all are on this insane ride together.

Like I said at the beginning of this report, take it all in and enjoy every moment. Take all the opportunities you can to network and get to know university admin, office staff, and external partners. You have the privilege to meet so many amazing people, so take that opportunity and run with it! Be confident and bold. You are so deserving of this position and I cannot wait to see what you will achieve in this role. Remember to be proud of yourself to celebrate every accomplishment, big or small. It's going to be a crazy year with a million ups and downs but I hope it will be an unforgettable experience for you. Slay queen <3

Good luck and signing off,

Elizabeth