



REPORT

From the office of the...
MSU President

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Jovan Popovic, President
SUBJECT: One, We Are From Mac
DATE: September 10th, 2023

Progress on Year Plan

Welcome Week

I can't truthfully say I ever expected to be this busy... There is no free time during WW. I say this while actively writing this report during WW. I'm happy to say that thus far (halfway through), it appears to be a resounding success. Campus events appears to have the first years very happy and very engaged. After faculty fusion, countless students began approaching me to ask questions about the MSU and are recognizing me regularly. They are enjoying the programming, they are showing up, and appear to be the most engaged group that we've seen at McMaster since pre-pandemic. Campus events has done an incredible job in becoming an access point to the student body, and overall engagement is quickly increasing as a direct result of this. I am extremely pleased.

Continuing to work towards another platform point of mine, after the first day of move in, all first years were directed to the football game. A&R described the football game as one of the most well attended in years. As someone who personally attended, it was a packed stadium, and students really seemed to enjoy it in what was literally their first taste of McMaster.

Artificial Intelligence in Education

“Unless otherwise stated, students should assume use of generative AI is prohibited.”

McMaster university has banned the use of artificial intelligence. Despite our heavy efforts and lobbying of the GAI Task Force, and several smaller wins along the way, we were unable to force their hand in the making of this disappointing decision. We will continue to lobby university administrators to rethink this decision and intend on pulling other student leaders in along the way to aid in this debate. This has been and will continue to be a top priority going forward.

Parking Services Bus Route

The receptivity of parking services to student feedback has been phenomenal this year. Early in the year I held meetings with the new senior manager, who asked to hear out as many pain points as possible for students regarding parking. One of the key issues mentioned was the ineffective bus routes. As of mid-August, the routes have officially changed, now bringing students all the way to the student center. An additional bus has also been added to the route for further consistency, as well as to lower wait times with this new expanded route.

Metrolinx

With students remaining on campus late into the night with Welcome Week, I was in contact with Metrolinx regarding later bus times to help get students home safely. While discussions on the Welcome Week front were underwhelming with Metrolinx refusing to adjust, there was some positive change on a separate front. Beginning September fifth, GO buses will increase the number of trips available on routes 15, 41 and 47. As well, new express options on routes 41 and

47 will also be available. With McMaster having such a large commuter population, providing easy access to and from school is significant, and going right back to a platform pillar of mine in a focus on commuter life.

Homecoming

Very exciting development here. A vast majority of university administrators have signed off, all necessary departments have been made aware and are ready to support. The current (tentative) plan is a full day of programming on September 16th during the football game against Guelph. While this is different than in the past with the MSU being the sole host (compared to McMaster hosting in previous years), this will still be a big day for the student body as we continue to work towards my platform point of adding more staple events into the course of the school year to continue reigniting student engagement and the overall enhancement of student life on campus.

Food and Beverage

Compass Chartwell is out and the MSU is officially back in with TwelvEighty, The Grind and Union Market. While it remains unlikely these services will be open for the start of the school year (I guess we'll know by time the meeting comes around...), the vision is to have them opening by late September at worst with mid-September as the goal. Hiring staff in mass and selecting food providers continue to be the biggest challenge when it comes to providing a timeline, but there don't appear to be any substantial barriers. Kitchen manager is next on the list of hiring with interviews beginning this week! We will undoubtedly have someone by time this meeting rolls around.

I am looking forward to rejuvenating yet another major service to student life on McMaster, while offering quality, and affordable food for students.

Clubs Hiring

Clubs administrator has been hired, and Omer Choudry has officially succeeded Nardos. Omer appears to be excelling early on, and the board remains excited about clubs with the year ahead, especially with the newly doubled clubs budget from \$90k to \$180k. All eyes are currently on Clubsfest as Omer takes on his first major challenge. The board will be there to support him through and through, as this is traditionally one of the most important events of the year for the MSU in regards to student engagement.

BUSU Visit

On August 4th, the MSU drove out to Brock University to attend a one-day event hosted by BUSU, the Brock University Students Union. All OUSA schools (as well as UTSU) were invited, and approximately eight attended (don't recall exact number, that's an estimate) with their entire boards, the furthest traveler being Laurentian. While the event itself wasn't of much substance, it offered a fantastic networking opportunity (and I don't say that lightly), where we came out with many new connections. The student unions from Western and Toronto ended up spending the rest of the night with us in Niagara Falls, and our relations at this moment in time remain incredibly strong. We thank BUSU for hosting this event.

Missing SLEF Courts

Very brief update: One court is up and ready for students! The other court will follow shortly, but one of the poles was badly damaged and needs to first be repaired. Once again, this is to no expense of the MSU. The university will cover all expenses after having wasted student dollars on this project back in 2017.

Upcoming Priorities

Early Year Event Planning

I said in my platform that I wanted one staple event per month for students to be drawn to campus and am actively working towards those goals. Homecoming should be the first of them to come, but there are many others in the works. Of course the winter marketplace, as well as light up the night continue to be in the works, but that's only three events for an eight month school year. More will come, and as I continue to work with stakeholders such as Campus Events, Athletics and Recreation, Avtek and others, my understanding will only improve, and I will get more done.

Generative AI Task Force

Unexpectedly, artificial intelligence has become a huge priority for my board and I as the university continues to be at the forefront of AI in education, internationally speaking. It is critical, especially with our limited understanding of AI as it continues to be such new technology, that we approach this field with caution. Students should be allowed to be curious and experiment with how they can use these tools to improve in the classroom without fear of penalization, and our focus is to make sure that can happen as policies continue to come forth and be finalized heading into the fall term. There are a few more meetings left with the Generative AI Task Force before these changes are brought forth to the senate. We need to be as vocal as possible before that happens to make sure our students are put in a position to thrive.

Best,

Jovan Popovic

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