



REPORT

From the office of the...

Vice-President (Education) and AVP Provincial and Federal Affairs

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Abigail Samuels, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: SRA 23L, OUSA Student Advocacy Conference Report
DATE: Sunday January 7th, 2024

Hello SRA (take three),

Student Advocacy Conference (SAC) is the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance's annual, week-long advocacy initiative. Based on the divisions of power between the different levels of government, the bulk of education falls under the provincial sector and presents a large opportunity for advocacy work. Advocacy week is a unique experience because it creates an opportunity for government officials to understand the reality of the challenges and barriers students face while pursuing their education. Conversation in these lobby meetings included suggestions for integrating student needs into housing and transit projects, supporting mental health services through a racial equity lens, enhancing on-campus food bank initiatives, and increasing government funding to universities.

Jazzlyn Abbott (AVP Provincial and Federal Affairs), 16 delegates and I met with various Members of Provincial Parliament, public servants and stakeholders to press for improvements to Ontario's post-secondary education system. Due to the cross-ministerial delegation of education, OUSA meets with politicians from a variety of different purviews & political parties. Jazzlyn and I had a very busy week where we met with;

- **MPP Sandy Shaw (NDP)**: Critic for Environment, Conservation and Parks
- **MPP David Smith (Conservative)**: Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
- **MPP Chandra Pasma (NDP)**: Critic for Education
- **MPP Lise Vaugeois (NDP)**: Critic for Seniors, WSIB and Injured Workers
- **Associate Minister Michael Tibollo (Conservative)**: Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
- **The Office of Minister David Piccini (Conservative)**: Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
- **MPP Doly Begum (NDP)**: Critic for Immigration Services and International Credentials
- **MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam (NDP)**: Critic for 2SLGBTQ+ Issues
- **MPP Ernie Hardeman (Conservative)**, Chair for the Sanding Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
- **MPP Chris Glover (NDP)**: Critic for Democratic Reform and Technology, Critic for Development and Innovation

- **MPP Jill Andrew (NDP)**: Critic for Culture and Heritage, Critic for Women's Social and Economic Opportunity
- **MPP Rudy Cuzzetto (Conservative)**: Parliamentary Assistant to the President of the Treasury Board
- and **MPP Lorne Coe (NDP)**: Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier.

Notable highlights of the week included:

- Speaking live on CBC Toronto, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Kitchener-Waterloo, London and Sudbury about SAC and the challenges students currently face.
- Hosting a breakfast reception with Mrs. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities.
- Securing a letter of support from MPP Lise Vaugeois to Minister Dunlop (see attached – it was a massive win!).
- Having the back of my head featured on Minister Dunlop's LinkedIn page.
- Receiving invites to the Members Gallery & having the MSU recognized by ministers on the legislative floor.
- Lots of photos and 0.5x selfies!

Should you take anything from this report, let it be this:

*Your voice matters. Your lived experience *matters*.*

Having experienced the thrills & whirlwinds of advocacy week, I would highly encourage getting involved in student advocacy at some point in your university experience. Try Elected officials need your experience and stories to advise them as the change the shape of the province we learn, live and work in. Please feel free to talk to myself or Jazzlyn should you have any further questions about provincial advocacy.

Before we get to the photos, I'd also like to thank Daniela, Jazz, OUSA home office staff for their support and making SAC such a fantastic experience. You guys rock ☺.





Top Row: MPP Chris Glover, Associate Minister Tibollo

Bottom Row: MPP Jill Andrew, MPP Vauegius

Yours truly,



Abby Samuels and Jazz Abbott
Vice-President (Education), Associate Vice-President Provincial and Federal Affairs
McMaster Students Union
vped@msu.mcmaster.ca, avpproved@msu.mcmaster.ca