



April 2024

RE-ELECT

Adam F. El-Kadi

Vice-President (Administration)

Platform 2024-25

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DEAR SRA,

As I reach the end of my tenure as Vice-President (Administration), I am filled with a deep sense of reflection and gratitude for the year that was. The past year has been a journey of great personal and professional growth for me, filled with great memories and learning experiences that I will forever cherish.

Starting my term in September precluded the possibility of creating a detailed year plan in the traditional sense and creating a vision for the year. I found myself working mostly in retrospect and reactively. Yet, I have been able to adapt, learn, and achieve significant milestones that I am proud of. **However, I believe there is more to be accomplished.** My time in the role offers me invaluable insight into how the MSU works and how to make change happen. After eight months in the role, **I find myself uniquely positioned** to make needed, significant changes that no other VP Admin could make as a result of my background knowledge.

I am seeking re-election with a commitment to not only continue the work I started but also bring the MSU to new heights. My aspirations are not rooted in personal ambition but in a genuine desire to contribute to this organization that I have come to call home. With your vote, I am excited by the possibility to be back for another year.

As I traditionally do with my SRA reports, I leave you with a quote, "It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting," *The Alchemist*. I cannot promise the road to change will be easy, but that is precisely what makes it so interesting.

I look forward to election day.

Warm regards,



Adam F. El-Kadi

Vice-President (Administration)

Relevant Qualifications

List of prior experiences and qualifications relevant to this position.

Within the MSU

Vice-President (Administration) & Chief Administrative Officer

Within McMaster

Co-Founder of Lorax, MSU Clubs, McMaster

Member and Club Representative, Student Sustainability Ambassadors Program, McMaster

Fourth Year Representative, Bachelor of Health Sciences Society, McMaster

External

Clinical Projects Coordinator, Dr. Gregory Curnew Cardiology Clinic

Education

Bachelor of Health Sciences, Specialization in Child Health, McMaster

Services

The theme for this year is GROWTH.

★ = Major platform point

Guidance

Help our Diversity + Equity Network transition into a peer support service ★

One of the recommendations brought by the Services Committee this year in their service review for DEN was to “Continue the transition into a peer support service by incorporating peer support volunteers into the team.”

Historically, DEN has struggled to transition into a peer support service, there are many questions about what peer support looks like within DEN and how to go about it. I hope to work with the DEN leadership team early in the year to begin consulting with stakeholders and experts and help answer this question; ultimately, with the hope of developing a comprehensive vision and training. I hope this year to determine whether DEN should continue this transition into a peer support service or not.

Services

★ = Major platform point

Implement more regular check-ins with PTMs

A big part of being a VP Admin is to be a sober second thought as well as a “coach” for the PTMs on HR, logistic, or organizational matters. I began to check-in more regularly with PTMs towards the latter half of the fall; however, many are already well into the year and are in “the thick of it” and find it difficult to commit to something else. Implementing regular check-ins early in the semester would help rapport and proactively tackle problems rather than the usual retro-work VP Admins tend to have to do.

Resources

Addressing food insecurity ★

In light of the current global economy, food insecurity is a clear priority for our students, and by extension for us as a students union. A big focus for me next year is to ensure that our Food Collective Centre (FCC) is adequately supplied and that students know about the resources available to them.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Addressing food insecurity ★

Our model, as with many food banks, relies on community donations. This has proven to be a challenge for our team to ensure that our shelves are stocked for students. The way I aimed to alleviate the burden was to advocate for an FCC budget line specific to supplying our own shelves. Over the next year, I'm looking to build and establish relationships with community organizations to ensure a consistent supply of food. Organizations like Food For Life stand out as examples. I'm looking to also partner with local grocery stores to discuss setting up donation options at checkout. Similarly, on campus, we can partner with Hospitality Services to do the same on POS systems.

In recent conversations with the Graduate Students Association (GSA), the GSA is also willing and interested in supporting FCC monetarily. This is due to knowing that grad students have expressed using our services, and want to ensure we can support them. This will be a conversation I continue to have with the GSA over the next year.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Addressing food insecurity ★

Earlier this year, MSU President Jovan Popovic ran a referendum that promised free soup and bread everyday during the school year for a \$5 increase in operational fees. We missed quorum by 0.5% (that's 100 students), and that's after him and I managed to gather an extra 100 votes ten minutes before the 5 pm deadline through word of mouth. An overwhelming number of students voted in favour; which tells me not enough students knew about the initiative and that it would have benefited our student body hugely. As such, I would like to continue working with the president to re-run the referendum next year.

Outreach

Breaking down the 'MSU Bubble'

Over the years, people in the MSU have noticed what we coined the "bubble", wherein we find that the same people tend to repeat in multiple positions or throughout services. Though that's not inherently a bad thing, as naturally you will always find those who resonate highly with an organization and its mandate, as a students union, we should aim to open up more to our students. I find that many students still don't quite know what we do, what we offer, and how to get involved.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Breaking down the 'MSU Bubble'

My goal to address this is two fold: an opportunities fair and clubs collaborations. In the beginning of the year when our services are hiring, we can benefit highly from a Clubsfest-like event for our services where we can promote the MSU, the SRA, our services, and how to get involved. This type of engagement event can repeat throughout the year to make students aware. Secondly, clubs are the first point of contact for students trying to get involved. Increasing collaborations between MSU services and clubs can not only make students more aware about our services, but also serves to improve our reach significantly. This is a vision that can be communicated to services early on in the summer to help prepare in advance for the year.

Wellness

Make Wellbeing Week the Welcome Week of second semester ★

Wellbeing Week was, for all intents and purposes, a big success this year. I'm thankful for the impressive passion and commitments of the PTMs and their teams in taking part. Not only did our students notice, but so did the university.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Make Wellbeing Week the Welcome Week of second semester ★

I have had university partners reach out asking to collaborate the next time around and fund our events monetarily as well as collaborate. I intend to build university partnerships and make Wellbeing Week an official collaboration between the MSU and the university and make the ‘Welcome Week of second semester’; while Welcome Week is a welcome to Mac week, Wellbeing Week is our welcome back to Mac week with wellbeing and mental health at the forefront of the messaging.

Furthermore, the Okanagan office has asked my interest in sitting on some of their committees such as Thrive Week and MacMoves week. Both initiatives aim to also address something dear and important to me—mental health. Sitting on committees such as these will help us deliver our student voices and advocate for student priorities and what they might need, so I intend to take on that partnership.

Reducing burnout on EFRT

With regards to EFRT, historically it’s always been an area of conversation on how to reduce burnout.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Reducing burnout on EFRT

Specific to executives, this year, the leadership team and I have worked closely to address two identified problems: the high workload placed on the EFRT executives and the struggle to attract enough applicants, as a result.

What we're bringing to Executive Board over the summer are the following: EFRT will hire 14-15 new responders per year, which will increase the team size to 45-50 responders over the next 2-3 years; a new executive position will be created in the year 2024-25, increasing the number of executives to seven, which will directly decrease executive workload, coupled with moving forward an eighth position will be hired for 2025-26, and again in 2026-27 if deemed necessary; an honorarium of \$750-1000 per semester will be offered to incentivize applicants, given that EFRT receives a significantly lower number of applicants for exec positions compared to other services. We're hoping these changes coupled with working on reducing overall team burnout will ensure the sustainability of the service for the future.

Services

★ = Major platform point

Training

Restructure our peer support training and services ★

Our current peer support training is service-specific and delivered by the PTMs or training coordinators of each service. Though this may benefit volunteers by providing what is needed for their service, it leaves lots of variability in how this training is delivered and what it contains; leading to gaps in knowledge and ability to offer peer support.

I aim to tackle this by creating a full-time staff position called 'Peer Support Coordinator' under the VP Admin that is tasked with overseeing peer support training and operations. They will also be tasked with creating peer support training and resources for our volunteers, working closely with the PTMs and their services. This person will need to have a background in mental health.

Professional development courses for PTMs ★

When we onboard our PTMs, we expect them to have a base of core competencies of leadership. However, many of us forget that this is a student opportunity position, and that PTMs are students first looking to learn.

Services

★ = Major platform point

(cont.) Professional development courses for PTMs ★

I want to empower their learning journey and make this experience not only fulfilling from the experiential side but also the theoretical, and ensuring they learn about leadership. One of the core skills that I feel PTMs could benefit from is how to have difficult conversations. This includes workplace and interpersonal conflict, differing opinions within the team, etc. However, some PTMs might find difficulties in managing service finances, so we can help there too.

Harmony

Cluster meetings to improve inter-service collaboration

Drawing inspiration from successful past practices, one of the initiatives I ran this year was 'cluster meetings'. Services are split into two clusters: peer support and student life enhancement. The goal of meeting as a group is to promote PTM peer support and encourage cross-service collaborations, and hope they will serve as a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing best practices, and addressing challenges collectively. This year they proved very popular and were appreciated by PTMs. I'm looking at having them once a month, or twice depending on the time of year and what is going on.

SRA

Initiatives for the Assembly.

★ = Major platform point

Interfaith council ★

The Interfaith committee of the SRA was created with the intent of bringing together representatives from student faith-based associations at McMaster and address issues of common concern for these communities. This year the interfaith council has not met as far as I know. This seems to me to be a missed opportunity to bring together diverse opinions and understand the priorities and issues facing communities at McMaster. Furthermore, the goal would be to encourage dialogue and facilitate religious dialogue as well. I hope to work with DEN and the members of the committee to support the work they do and ensure they meet.

Services and SRA collaboration

In my consultations, there was interest in promoting collaboration between the SRA and services. I hope in my capacity as VP Admin to promote these collaborations as well as be a point of contact. At the beginning of the year, I want to speak to the SRA caucus and understand their priorities and look for any places where we can align SRA and services agenda.

SRA

Initiatives for the Assembly.

★ = Major platform point

★ @msu_mcmaster SRA Instagram takeover

I hope to give SRA more coverage next year and to promote it more to the student body. In an attempt to do so, we can have people sign up (as individuals or causes) to give an update summary on @msu_mcmaster stories, as a takeover. This can include a selfie-like recording of what happened during the meeting, agenda items discussed, what SRA is working on for the next bit, upcoming priorities for your caucus, next meeting date, etc.

Board of Directors & MSU Priorities

★ = Major platform point

MSU Organizational restructure ★

In many consultations with staff at the MSU and working at the many levels of the organization, I have developed an understanding of how the organization works; in addition to the inefficiencies, gaps, and duplications of efforts that exist in our organizational structure. With the opportunity to return, I know I can address them and how to do so. I'm reminded of the quote, "***you don't rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems,***" and I'm excited by the opportunity to make big and important changes that ensure this organization is fit for the current and future needs.

Examples include: the IT department, our Senior IT has been promoted to Director, with that we have the opportunity to re-envision the Senior IT role to include specific skills we're looking to bring into our IT department such as website development; in Communications, with myself and the current Board's vision for more frequent social media content, there are opportunities to review what positions need to be created to support that; and finally, but perhaps most important, with our General Manager's (GM) leaving us after 22 years, looking into the role of the GM role and finding the right person and skillset.

Board of Directors & MSU Priorities

★ = Major platform point

TwelvEighty

With this year being our first year in self-operation, there were a lot of lessons taken. Looking into the next year, I will continue to work with our Food and Beverage team as well as the MSU Board of Directors to support our staff, expand our operations, and ensure success.

MSU Clubs support in increasing efficiency

Our Clubs department currently supports over 300 clubs. Though we are happy to support our clubs, this has increasingly become a challenge from human and financial resources. I want to work closely with our Board of Directors and Clubs department to look at what people support is needed to better manage Clubs and better support our students by extension. Changes will include clubs funding model, ratifications, and application reviews. With options to create two ratification cycles per year, so that students can begin club activities within the same year rather than waiting for another year before beginning. Also, a more streamlined and better way to handle club complaints and issues, which will include new committees and rethinking positions.

Board of Directors & MSU Priorities

★ = Major platform point

A new and improved MSU website ★

In the digital world we live in, a website serves not just as a portal to information but as a dynamic hub of engagement and community building. Our current MSU website, with its static nature, falls short of meeting the evolving needs and expectations of our student body. In numerous consultations, it has become abundantly clear that there is a pressing need for a comprehensive overhaul of our online presence. Students are calling for a modernized, user-friendly platform that can truly serve as a one-stop shop—a place where every resource, event, and piece of information can be accessed with ease and intuitiveness.

The existing setup feels more like a repository of links rather than an interactive and engaging community space. I envision a new MSU website that not only effectively communicates with our students but also fosters a sense of belonging and inclusivity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their familiarity with the MSU's inner workings, can find exactly what they need, when they need it.

As a final point, our current website is hosted by the university, which does not make sense for us as a separately incorporated students union.

Board of Directors & MSU Priorities

★ = Major platform point

Advertising & Sponsorship packages

To secure the financial sustainability of the MSU, there's a pressing need to explore innovative revenue streams. Implementing advertising and sponsorship packages might just be that solution. Representing a strategic opportunity to not only increase our funding but also to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses and organizations. These packages can offer targeted visibility to our partners while providing essential support for our events, programs, and initiatives. It's a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

Student Engagement

Exactly what it sounds like.

★ = Major platform point

Homecoming ★

With homecoming being a major priority for the MSU next year, I not only envision taking a strong involvement in the process, but also see a large opportunity to promote our services. Working closely with services like Maroons, we can come up with fun, theme-appropriate charity events to raise money for local foundations. In this way, taking control of the narrative surrounding homecoming and building a brand that will only work to promote it further into the future. I also see us working closely with our other MSU services to set up booths and promote hiring, events, etc. Services such as SWHAT could benefit greatly from setting up more walkers on that night to accommodate service usage in the context of the night concert.

More BoD events on campus

Early in the year, I hope to arrange for more class talks where professors allow. Classes are a venue where people are attentive by nature of the context. Dissimilar to regular engagement events where people are passerbys, you can specifically garner attention in a classroom and deliver information that promote the MSU more effectively. Regular engagement events also have their place in visibility. I hope to continue them into the future more regularly for students to learn *who* the Board of Directors are and what we do.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the following people who have helped me in the consultation process. Note: some of the people on this list are proactively listed due to scheduling conflicts. These meetings were scheduled ahead of the due date for this platform.

Jovan Popovic, President

John McGowan, General Manager

Michael Wooder, Director of Marketing & Communications

Pauline Taggart, Former Director of IT

Gang Wang, Director of IT

Sunday Ajak, USC President

Bianca Gouveia, USC Vice President Student Services

Mike Asquith, Food & Beverage Manager

Wesley Chaplin, TwelvEighty Kitchen Manager

Andrew Mrozowski, Silhouette Executive Editor

Kevin Hu, SRA Engineering

Olivia Dodd, SRA Humanities

Grace Chan, SRA Humanities

Isaac Begun, SRA Science

Simon Batusic, SRA Social Science

Kashish Modi, SRA Social Science

Isabella Bolca, SRA Kinesiology

Maxwell Schuab, SRA Kinesiology

Larissa Long, SRA Health Science

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