

Declan Sweeney
VP Finance Full Platform

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Consult List

1. Sefa Otchere - VP Finance
2. Maheera Choudhury- AVP Finance
3. Jovan Popovic - President & CEO
4. Adam El-Kadi - VP Administration
5. Paula Scott - Underground Creative Director & Manager
6. Sean Duncan - Director of Finance
7. John McGowan - General Manager
8. Craig Dawdy - Former VP Finance
9. Omer Choudhry- Clubs Administrator
10. Michael Wooder - Director of Marketing & Communications
11. Tony Scime - Campus Events Technical Manager (Avtek)
12. Brian Junaid - Campus Events Technical Coordinator (Avtek)
13. Mike Asquith - Food & Beverage Manager
14. Andrew Mrozowski - Executive Editor (Silhouette)
15. Nancy Marcos
16. Fezan Khokhar- EFRT Program Director
17. Thomas Saab- Campus Events Programming Coordinator
18. Jason Barnes- Accounts Receivable Supervisor
19. Kevin O'Mara- Accounts Payable Supervisor/ Payroll Administrator
20. Sandeep Bhandari- CFMU Administrative Director
21. Andrijana Olaizola
22. Max Schaub- Incoming SRA Representative Kinesiology
23. Malaikah Ahmad- Current SRA Representative Kinesiology
24. Isabella Bolca- Current SRA Representative Kinesiology
25. Olivia Dodd- Current SRA Representative Humanities
26. Grace Chan- Current SRA Representative Humanities
27. Parth Arora- Current SRA Representative Science

Platform & Personal Information

My name is Declan Sweeney, I am a fifth-year Commerce Student and am looking to become the next VP Finance for the McMaster Students Union (MSU). I have

had fantastic experiences during my time with McMaster with many of my favourite moments being through different clubs including Greensuits, DeGroot Ambassadors, and the McMaster Sports Business Association. Throughout these experiences I have been able to learn valuable lessons and take on leadership and advocacy roles such as with the Greensuits Health and Wellness Committee which came out with the First-Year Health and Wellness Guide in 2021. This was an important milestone for me as creating a guide on physical and mental wellness for students who were on their own for the first time after a year of isolation was a way to ensure support remained after Frosh Week.

The other significant factor throughout my McMaster experience has been with the McMaster Varsity Baseball Team. Over my four years with the team, I met some of my closest friends and was mentored and was able to mentor many people. This experience instilled in me the importance of time management, working towards a collective and individual excellence, handling and giving constructive feedback, giving back to the community, and the importance of marketing ourselves as we are a team that was self-funded. These experiences while not in the MSU have given me considerable connection to understand the different needs for undergraduate students and is why I want to create a lasting legacy to ensure students are able to have an experience that was as transformational as mine and I believe the MSU is the best possible way to leave this impact.

Core Tenets

The first key tenet I want to create if I were to be elected to the VP Finance position would be transparency, both with clubs and the SRA. I would like to continue the implementation of Financial Transparency Week but also create more information

available on the Clubs tab of the SRA. This would include a Frequently Asked Questions Section and updating the Clubs Handbook to ensure that Omer does not have to handle frequent questions especially during extremely busy periods. Along with this I would like to meet with each separate caucus either in-person or virtually once a month to have discussions about the programs and planning that each caucus has for the future and also any inquiries they currently have.

The second key tenet is growth, currently with the introduction of the Hub and the referendum on the bike share program, we have an increasingly engaged student body who wants to shape their community. Providing the financial resources for clubs and services to reach students is a priority in this role. The need for consistent growth as we continue to adapt to student needs is important to ensure that the MSU is not caught flat-footed.

The third key tenet is efficiency, as having efficient practices both in the practical application and long-term planning will ensure a stronger support for students. One of the key areas for increasing the efficiency of the MSU as an organization will be avoiding burnout and excessive turnover. This is a financial issue as replacing full-time staff often means they do not fully get up to speed until 3 months after starting. This along with trying to reduce overlapping responsibilities will reduce the day-to-day responsibilities and allow our services to focus on bigger picture thinking.

The final tenet is flexibility, as ensuring the other tenets will require the adaptability to the challenges which are coming and being willing to work cross-functionally to ensure that the goals of the SRA are met. This means that change within the organization or our structured plans are to be expected and to be able to pivot

based on the information we have. Overall, these tenets are the key guiding principles for my planning for my platform to ensure the best possible success.

Restructuring Clubs Funding and Increasing Information Sourcing

Assumptions

For the process of restructuring clubs' funding and increasing information sourcing, the main goal is to become more scientific with the process and create a more transparent practice going forward. The assumption that I am making is that changing quorum is a non-starter for the Clubs Advisory Committee (CAC). To ensure that the CAC can meet the needs of clubs we must ensure that we can consistently have the minimum necessary to reach quorum.

Planning

The first part of planning for the restructuring of clubs funding would be to create a Clubs Review Committee (CRC), this would be a five person committee which would give non-binding resolutions to the CAC. This would streamline the responsibilities of the CAC. The CRC would review 20 clubs every two weeks to see if they are using their allocated budget and membership. This would mean over a semester that this committee can analyze 140 clubs meaning almost all clubs could be reviewed over the course of a year. The other process for the CRC would be to be the first complaint board for any clubs specific issue, this would move the process originally away from the Clubs Administrator. This would allow the Clubs Administrator to focus more on the funding allocation process and filter out to only higher-scale issues. The CRC would reduce the

strain on the CAC and ensure that the larger CAC not reaching quorum on occasion would not be as significant a detriment as the CRC recommendations would still be available.

The second part will be trying to build a better information sourcing for clubs through increasing the information on the website including a Frequently Asked Questions section (FAQ), updating the Clubs Handbook, and holding a January ClubsFest in the Hub to discuss financial aid available to clubs and allow clubs who wish to receive it a 2nd recruitment opportunity. The information sourcing of adding additional information and a FAQ section to the website will ensure clubs have the ability to immediately get answers for questions which are regularly asked leading to less email communication back and forth and quicker results. This will also allow clubs to see on the MSU website the different opportunities which the MSU can offer them such as the Sponsorship and Donation Committee, allocated budget, and any other crucial information that either usually has to be sent by the Clubs Administrator or other high profile information which may not be easily apparent after clubs training. The other process is offering a 2nd ClubsFest in January utilizing the Hub in which we have a revised meeting about the current funding and opportunities available and then also give clubs a chance for Winter and early 2025-2026 recruitment. This will allow face to face communication and further transparency to ensure we meet our goal of utilizing the full budget allocation for clubs.

The final process will be to continue to look into synergies between clubs to ensure that we do not have significant overlap. This would mean merging similar clubs if they offer much of the same programming and have the same directive to ensure these

clubs can host larger events and receive more significant budget increases. This would also ensure that clubs management would be able to categorize and open up the potential for more clubs to be ratified without budgetary constraints through this process. Overall, this process of continuing to analyze clubs for potential merger opportunities will enrich the McMaster club's experience and offer the opportunity for larger club events.

Overall, these three areas in which we restructure the CAC and create the CRC will ensure that we can keep growing and focus on best optimizing our clubs planning going forward, that the information sourcing will ensure greater understanding from our clubs on opportunities and bylaws, and lastly that we can work towards greater event planning through analyzing whether clubs can be merged or optimized to ensure greater accountability to meet the clubs budget.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of these changes to the clubs process would likely lead to the clubs budget line being used more significantly, which would create a greater level of satisfaction with MSU support by individual clubs and the students within them. This would mean we would be less likely to have as large a surplus as we are projected to have this year. This would be important as it would ensure that we can more accurately assess going forward how to potentially optimize our clubs budget for the future.

Key Performance Indicators

The first key performance indicator (KPI) will be on the usage of clubs funding, the goal that I am setting is for over 70 percent of clubs funding to be spent. This will show that our continued financial transparency actions, 2nd ClubsFest, and increased information sourcing has had a positive impact on the organization. Currently, only 69,000\$ has been spent which only equals up to 46.23 percent of the allocated budget. This means Clubs are missing out on over 50 percent of their allocated budget, we need to close the gap over the next year to ensure the supports we are putting in place are utilized.

The second KPI will be about the CAC, it will be about how many clubs they are able to critically analyze. On average, the CAC due to the work that the CRC would do should be able to review 30 clubs per month. This will ensure more oversight with the SRA getting the CRC report and being able to distinguish the important insights provided ensuring a quicker resolution time.

The third KPI will be about the overall number of clubs, currently we have just over 315 clubs. There is significant overlap and some clubs which are non-active but have not been de-ratified. The goal will be to look into merging and potential de-ratification down to 290 clubs with the opportunity for more to join at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. This will ensure that we have analyzed clubs over the past year and are able to structure to ensure the budget is properly allocated.

Supporting On-Campus Events

Assumptions

After consultations with many of the internal MSU staff, I am assuming that the planning for a large homecoming event will pass through the SRA. I will assume that based on the McMaster Football schedule that the best available date will be October 5th against the Western Mustangs as the other home dates are either before the second week of the semester or during the reading week. This along with the updates being made to 1280 ([1280 Revenue Generation](#)) will increase its ability to hold events of 70+ people on campus. This will mean that club events with the increased patio space and removal of the dividers will lead to a greater event experience.

Planning

The first planning aspect will be for Homecoming, I believe that to make Homecoming viable on campus it will need to be a full week affair. I would like to start the week by reaching out to CFMU and The Sil to see if it is possible to do personal interest stories for the football team and other sports. The planning would begin Friday with local bands playing either at 1280 or another on-campus venue site. This would be free entry and create a group on campus who would then be open to going to either an exhibition volleyball or basketball game. This would be an opportunity to distribute merchandise for homecoming and also offer promotional 5\$ off coupons as after this event we would have a 1280 Club Night. This would then lead into the Saturday planning which would be based around the Football game against Western at 1:00 PM and the evening concert in front of BSB. To keep students on campus, I would also

recommend day programming that involves usage of 1280 including discounted drinks and potentially a “beer garden” or tailgating experience in the parking lot behind Alumni field. This would offer an alternative party experience then creating a public nuisance off-campus, and allow for a controlled environment which EFRT and Campus Events can monitor. This along with whichever artist we get for the live concert on Saturday night will ensure a multi-faceted experience which will enrich the McMaster experience. The final part of the Homecoming plan would be to have either Soccer or another sporting event and some type of wellness programming on Sunday. This would offer a lower and less intense event to end the weekend for any student who may be anxious or not enjoy large crowds but still wants to connect with the Homecoming experience and make sure large programming is not the only thing offered. Overall, I believe that extending homecoming to a weekend with varied programming will ensure the greatest possible acknowledgement and enrich the student experience.

The second key factor for supporting on-campus events would be to ensure that the event spaces on campus are able to meet the needs of club events. This would focus on communicating with clubs and understanding any hurdles for their usage of 1280 or Bridges. Although not all events can be held on campus, there are many events which I have seen scheduled for 50 or less people which happen off-campus without much thought. This is important as the multiplier effect of holding events on campus would increase revenue and ensure increased funding for future years. This means that offering incentives for on-campus events as well as trying to understand where we can improve the amenities will be a key goal for the upcoming year. The incentives I would like to offer would be creating a 1280 catering system for both 1280 and Bridges that

would be discounted for large groups, meaning clubs would not have to spend as much on catering and can focus expenses elsewhere. Overall, these are the two major aspects for supporting on-campus events along with ensuring that we have the ability to support our Campus Events department in both large and small-scale programming throughout the year as it is one of our most important touchpoints for the MSU to connect with our undergraduate community.

Financial Implications

Based on the demands which I believe would make Homecoming the most accessible and provide the greatest value, we would be looking at a budget in the range of between 450,000\$ and 500,000\$. This would mean that it would be extremely important to acquire significant sponsorship for all events with a special emphasis on branding such as creating for example, "Red Bull End Zone (Tailgating Event)" to make sure that we can sufficiently fund these events and it not be our only major event for the year. This will be a process which would be within the purview of the new external sales and advertising role which would be a key part of the summer planning for this event. Along with this there will need to be a budget available for any suggestions from clubs for the major event spaces we have listed, I would earmark around 10,000\$-20,000\$ to ensure we could accommodate those changes with likely not all the funds being utilized within the year. The goal of this capital utilization will be to re-build the reputation for on-campus events and hopefully within the process be close to being net even and build goodwill for the organization.

Key Performance Indicators

The first KPI for supporting on-campus events will be around Homecoming participation, for the two main sporting events that are on Friday and Saturday would be to have over 80 percent attendance and most of those tickets to be purchased by students for free as part of the Homecoming experience. Making the tickets free for the sporting events this weekend will help entice students to choose an alternative to the usual homecoming practices and begin the process of changing the culture of Homecoming. This will also likely support other business units on campus such as 1280 and Union Market.

The second KPI for On-Campus Events will be to see if more clubs are accessing and using Bridges and 1280. This would be important as it would ensure club events are more accessible and also have discounts available on large scale catering to entice clubs to choose a MSU on-campus space.

The final KPI will be on overall club satisfaction after events receiving feedback about improving the experience to better cater to the needs and assessing the viability and validity of the feedback to ensure we best utilize to serve the highest percentage of clubs and undergraduate students. This will ensure we can assess going forward how we are developing this process.

McMaster Accessibility and Beautification Planning

Assumptions

After discussions with Nancy Marcos about the Student Life Enhancement Fund (SLEF) and its potential usage, I believe that with the assumption that the fund will increase equivalent to expected inflation from last year's fund, it was sitting around \$139,500. With an increased estimation of 3.4 percent for the fund will be 144,243\$ with a reserve available but unlikely to be used with the considerable capital tied into the previous year's SLEF project to bring an outdoor sports complex to Campus. This project will assume that the accessibility option will be fast-tracked and use MSU funding. The other SLEF ideas will be submitted in October 2024 and would then be planned to hopefully be completed by March 2025. All quoted rates are previous estimations and will be assumed higher than necessary as costs will rise as last quotes for these services was pre-pandemic according to my consultations.

Planning

Using the MSU reserve and SLEF fund to initiate improvements in the accessibility and beautification planning will have multiple steps, the first will be fast-tracking the accessibility of the 1280 Patio, this would open up the area further for events and with the planning of other capital expenditure to increase the student engagement with the patio ([1280 Revenue Generation](#)). Without this improvement, clubs will have to rent out the entire 1280 bar even if their event could be held outside. This is a project I believe should be fast tracked due to the multifaceted impact it will have. Sadly due to the need for this to be completed before the beginning of the year

this cannot be paid for by SLEF but if the SRA decides it is better to be used for SLEF funding it would only be completed Summer 2025. An area of concern would be the placement for this ramp as the need for 12 inches of length for every inch of rise. This means that working from the inside would force the current entrance for 1280 to be impacted. I would prefer to use a separate entrance, with a personal preference to build from the bottom steps up. An area of concern with this placement is that it would require accessing 1280 through the basement level.

For the beautification process, I will be looking to implement furniture to areas which have been under maintained. The first focus will be the ClubSpace and work towards modernizing the furniture and atmosphere there. I believe this is an important first step as making the ClubSpace a more aesthetic design will ensure that clubs can use the space and create an area to decompress from the stressors that come from club management. The second focus would be on DBAC as currently the couches on the upper floor are in a state of disrepair and need replacing, this would require working with the A&R department for what they want to replace this old furniture. This will likely cost anywhere between 6,000\$ to 10,000\$ dollars but with this being an area with healthy eating options would likely see increased engagement if modernized. Lastly, having some SLEF funding available for any furniture currently unavailable in The Hub. The Hub has already been a success but as its identity will continue to develop after a year. There will be a need to adapt to ensure that we continue to capitalize on the student engagement. Most likely, bookmarking 20,000\$ for any additional beautification needs such as additional couches for upper levels or more arcade style games after consultations with students within the Hub. The key point for the Hub beautification

funding will be ensuring adaptability to how students want to use the space to best serve our undergraduate community.

Financial Implications

Based on the consultations and quotes for the implementation and materials needed for the ramp, it will likely cost between 15,000\$ to 25,000\$ barring no setbacks. This project will ensure accessibility for students and increase the opportunity for this to be an event space. After this the funding to make some beautification changes to ClubSpace should be estimated at around 10,000\$. This combined with the most aggressive estimates for DBAC and The Hub combined being 35,000\$. Overall, this plan at a maximum would come out to a total cost of 70,000\$. This means that if this funding is approved by SLEF, there is additional funding available to either increase the scope of these projects if my plan is not sufficient to increase the appeal and utility of these areas or if changes need to be made. Likely, the beautification changes will not be seen until the tail-end of the 2024-2025 year.

Key Performance Indicators

The main KPI for the accessibility portion of this plan will be whether the accessibility of the patio increases the number of times that events are held on the patio or rented out by clubs. This will show whether the money spent has increased the overall viability of the area. A key issue to overcome will be to correctly market to clubs that the space can be rented out separate from 1280.

For the beautification aspect, this will be a collaborative process for all spaces, the likely way to measure it would be through student feedback and surveys. This could be an issue as there is an overall “survey fatigue” but receiving feedback will be able to ensure we are accurately assessing the needs of students. Overall, ensuring this process is transparent and student driven will be important to its overall success.

1280 Revenue Generation

Assumptions

1280 Bar and Grill is one of our most important front-facing business units within the McMaster Students Union, it is difficult to estimate the expected net loss for this year compared to the previous year with it being third-party licensed compared to being solely run by the McMaster Students Union. Based on consultations it is likely that 1280 for the current year will lose over six figures although this cannot be considered a normal year as they opened late, losing out on what is the most important time for creating connections within the business. The goal for next year for 1280 will not be to be in the black but to increase sales to the point where the loss is more manageable and build a greater positive influence to increase customer retention.

Summer Planning

For 1280 to be successful we will have to begin with capital planning for the summer, the goal would be the accessibility ramp (Cost calculated in [McMaster Accessibility and Beautification Planning](#)) and the introduction of three speakers and outdoor lighting. Two of these speakers would be positioned outside in the Patio near

the Arts Quad as one of the key issues I want to address is the lack of “pull” to draw students from outside through the patio to the restaurant. After discussion with AvTEK this cost should be between 8,000\$ and 10,000\$ for purchase and installation. I believe that by having music playing is a way to combat the poor acknowledgement of students towards the restaurant due to the location of 1280. The third speaker would be positioned outside *The Grind* and would play music from outside at a lower volume to draw from the basement towards the coffee shop. To make the patio setting more friendly for night events, I also believe including a budget of up to 1,000\$ for patio lighting will be a low-cost environmental setting which will increase the potential for the patio to be used in the fall and spring. All together these speakers would be able to be installed before the end of August and would at a maximum cost under 15,000 dollars and increase customer acknowledgement, hopefully leading to greater student interaction with 1280 and be versatile for other events such as the Holiday Market.

The second part of Summer Planning for 1280 would be to understand when we will be able to have staffing as it is essential to have a crew available for Frosh Week to ensure that first-year students can become aware of 1280 through some sort of event. An example we could potentially launch is in 2019 when I was in first-year they had a “Marauder Buffet Breakfast.” and then incorporating an MSU services scavenger hunt to get first-year students aware of other services and the Hub. Another option would be as the home opener for McMaster football falls on August 24th which is move-in day offering a free meal for all first year students and Welcome Week Reps and then trying to build a connection between 1280 and on-campus sporting events. This is an opportunity to build a positive connection between the restaurant and first-years and

can offer something like a free drink voucher for use to bring them back at a separate time to spend money. The final part of summer planning for 1280 would be to remove the dividers. Currently, the dividers limit the event space inside 1280 and significantly impact the ability for large group events.

Fall Planning

The main goal for the Fall will be data collection from the current operating hours for 1280. A common concern I hear from students is that 1280 not being open after 6:00 PM limits their ability to fully take advantage of 1280 especially when it comes towards the deals including 4\$ Pints. This process will look into whether the optimized time period for 1280 to remain open is both during the lunch hours and dinner rush by closing between 3:00-5:00 PM to ensure staff does not need to work longer hours but remain open from 5:00-10:00 PM. Another potential opportunity would be through creating an online ordering portal for First-Year students which would allow them to use their flex dollars and not have to actively access the 1280 location. This will need further information on students' desire for this program as it will increase staffing costs, if the cost-benefit analysis to determine student enthusiasm and shows that the revenue generated by this program will cover the additional costs of staffing, it would be a worthwhile investment. Along with this, consider specialized food programming for certain times when students are less likely to consider sit-down eating options. Three key periods I would like to highlight would be during both exam seasons offering discounted pizza pies that could be ordered directly in front of *The Grind* and then partnering with the McMaster Muslim Student Association to partner during Ramadan to

offer quick halal food for pick-up as the other food services in MUSC are often closed by the point in which they break their fast. These actions would provide a service for students and also be able to capitalize on periods where revenue is unlikely to be high. The final planning step is to focus on putting some outdoor games and entertainment such as Cornhole and Ladder Toss to the patio to begin with and then through later student consultation see what can be added for Spring 2025. Another avenue would be looking for live music options for weekends. This would make the patio another activity space for the start of the year and build interest during the most important time for interactions. Overall, the goal for the Fall should be creating interest and with other options such as different discount days should be focusing on creating a more engaged student base who enjoy not only dining at 1280 but spending their time there.

Long-Term Planning

For long-term planning, I hope at some point to put aside some additional money to potentially spruce up the design of the restaurant and patio, with some initiatives to look into would be to reach an agreement with Athletics and Recreation as they are likely re-turfing the Ron Joyce Stadium within the next two years. If we could get the mid-field turf with the Marauder logo at a discounted rate it could be a good callback from when 1280 used to be called Gridiron Bar & Grill which the interior was painted to look like a football field. Along with this, I am hoping that through the data we collect in the 2024-2025 fiscal year we can establish the best operating time for 1280 based on data and then continually tweak based on sales data, staffing availability, and consumer feedback. Lastly, will be positioning 1280 as a “third place” for students separate from

the pressures that come from school and as a potential workspace. This is a more aspirational goal and is difficult to define but it is about separating 1280 from being just another spot within the university but its own individual brand. These plans are not one-year programming and would likely be recommendations on my end for the next VP Finance if we are able to incorporate the summer and fall planning that allows for larger scale thinking.

Financial Implications

Firstly, the financial implications of the speaker system and lighting will likely be at a maximum cost around 15,000\$ to ensure the patio space can become a viable option for students early on in September 2024 and hopefully get 8 weeks in the fall and 6 weeks in the Spring for key utilization. As well, this lighting and speaker system can be used for the Holiday market.

Secondly, the financial implication of better understanding when 1280 is best utilized will likely mean that hours worked may need to be increased to better understand when our best revenue generating times are. This while being an upfront cost will provide essential data for understanding the best possible time to run the business. Another area where wages may increase is if we decide to go forward with a digital ordering app and offer an on-campus delivery service as we would need 1 or 2 delivery personnel to ensure that we satisfy the student's needs for quick and convenient delivery.

Lastly, for long-term planning I want to assess whether the current design and furniture of 1280 can potentially be transitioned to establish a greater identity but this

would likely be a future project which would be focused on once we have the current financials for 1280 within a better situation.

Key Performance Indicators

The first KPI will be to limit our potential net loss for 1280 next year. As we are looking to implement many future plans there will be additional costs to improve the atmosphere to position the bar better for more students to utilize. The goal would be to cut our losses by 30 to 35 percent.

The second KPI would have to handle establishing proper hours to ensure we most meet student needs. Currently, with 1280 closing most nights at 5:00 PM we might be losing out on potential revenue. The goal would be to survey students on when they are most likely to use 1280 to confirm whether a potential mid-afternoon shutdown and re-opening from 5:00-10:00 PM would be a more sustainable option moving forward. Using student surveys and sales data to understand if there is a correlation between students' assessed belief and the actual financial numbers.

The third KPI would be whether the accessibility upgrades and overall design upgrades makes the patio a functional and revenue generating spot for 1280. This would be student engagement with the area and would likely be assessed qualitatively by Mike Asquith and other 1280 staff. This would show whether the changes in the overall design were worth the investment and would also let us know if future development there could bring students by replacing the bus or providing more patio furniture.

Future Proofing MSU Business Units

Assumptions

The current financial implications of the International Student Cap by the Federal Government will likely cause significant stress within the MSU beginning in the 2025-2026 Academic Year. Currently, McMaster University has 32,174 Undergraduate Students with 17 percent being International Students this number includes part-time students. This means that International Students currently make up approximately 5,470 students. There is a significant concern that enrollment will drop significantly as International Students are funding domestic students due to the cuts by the Provincial Government. This means that there is a significant chance that the multiplier effect of this cap will impact a larger number of students. From consultations, there is a belief that enrollment in the 2025-2026 year could drop from between 4 to 7 percent. I will assume that enrollment will drop by 5 percent over one year but there's a chance that it is a more gradual decline. Assuming the organization fee remains the same and inflation is not factored in, if enrollment drops by 5 percent we will see a decrease in the organization fees by 245,839.11\$. This decrease will mean that our business units such as 1280, The Underground, Campus Events, CFMU, and The Sil will need to increase efficiency so that 12 months from now we will be better positioned to transition into a situation with less available funding.

Planning

There are three main things I think should be focused on with these business units: synergy, efficiency, and data.

The first thing I would like to work on is creating a synergistic advertising approach to attract sponsors. Currently, we have each individual business unit go to market with only their individual advertising space and product offering, we need to create a “yes and” system which includes a collaborative media package including Campus Events, the digital screens which Underground handles, Sil advertising, and any other multimedia packaging we have or can create. An example of improvement that we could make is in the 2022-23 media kit, which only includes The Sil, Underground, and CFMU, and has no discounts for multiple services by different organizations. The MSU can capitalize through offering discounts for every additional product service included in a similar discount package as mentioned for The Sil. A current issue with this plan is that by looking at revenue individually, we could unfairly judge an individual business unit. This means we must analyze all current advertising and sponsorship revenue and come up with a collective goal. This does not mean we will not analyze underperforming business units but that it will be more of an audit than an inquiry.

The second key idea behind future-proofing is efficiency. This will be done by ensuring that we focus on prioritizing people’s skills within the organization. I believe that having an internal person responsible for handling advertising and sponsorship is the best way forward, as mentioned in some of the internal consultations that currently we have people in positions in which they have to divide their effort between the actual work which best utilizes their skillset with also trying to sell their product. By offering a main person responsible for advertising and sponsorship sales we can off-load these responsibilities to someone who we can have meetings about how to pivot to meet

outside consumer demand. Another area for efficiency is ensuring that we have convenient access for students for services. I would like to move a scan to pay printer from the Underground to the Hub as I believe by moving one or two of these printers we will likely see an increase in usage due to the convenience of the location. These are the areas where I believe we can find efficiency within the organization to better prepare for any macroeconomic shocks that could come in the future.

Lastly, I want us to become data-driven in our pursuit of these objectives, I want to focus on collecting data from external sources to build into our internal planning. This should include purchasing preference (e.g. Does Red Bull prefer to only do campus events or what discount swayed them to include Sil Advertising), Customer retention (Are we seeing a significant percentage of last year's advertisers, advertising this year), and any other information which can better ensure that we are equipped to make strong fiscal choices based around advertising. I would also like to with the implementation of The Hub to begin looking into On-Site Marketing Activations which would provide a benefit for students through giveaways and bring in additional funding. This will need to be handled carefully as we do not want to take away from the essence of what makes the Hub so important. Overall, with the new infrastructure available and building a data pipeline we can ensure year over year growth and make more knowledge informed decisions going forward for future Vice-Presidents for Finance.

Financial Implications

The financial implications with this strategy would increase our expenses through the creation of the new position of an External Sales and Advertising Role which would

likely require a compensation package starting at 50,000\$ and capped at 95,000\$ after performance bonuses. The break-even point on this salary can be changed through either beginning at an extremely low starting salary and having an uncapped commission or a 60,000\$ starting salary and a capped commission of 85,000\$. This would be the key financial commitment to future-proofing the MSU. This position would have a difficult possibility of breaking even within the first year but the collected data for the future would ensure better positioning for advertising and sponsorships going forward. This means that the goal would be seeing a greater level of sponsorship and advertising as well as ensuring the person within this position has a long-term plan to entice advertisers or sponsors who have not been a part of the MSU advertiser space over the past five years.

Calculations

Current Undergraduate Enrollment: 32,174

MSU Operating Fee: 152.79\$

Total: 4,915,865.46\$

2025-2026 Expected Enrollment: $32,174(0.95)= 30565$

MSU Operating Fee (Assumes it will remain the same): 152.79\$

Total: 4,670,026.35\$

Difference: 245,839.11\$

Key Performance Indicators

The first KPI will be whether we are seeing external companies purchasing more services than currently for the 2023-2024 year. This KPI will ensure that our services

synergy is working and that there is demand for a multimedia package which we are now offering.

The second KPI will focus on the data that the new sales role will receive from external customers. The focus of this KPI will be more qualitative but the point would be creating an eventual “Bible” of information related to the sponsor or advertiser so we could begin determining what they need to ensure greater retention and commitment.

The third KPI would be focused on long-term planning, the goal would be to begin the process of building a plan to entice two large-scale clients through Homecoming and other services. The goal of this would be to attract a large-scale yearly sponsor for Campus Events and other business units through the new offerings for the MSU. Getting a new large scale client will help mitigate any loss that can be seen through the loss in enrollment. This would be a key evaluation point for the new role created as it would show that this position creates revenue which the MSU would have been locked out of without it.

Cost Of Living Advocacy

The role of the VP Finance has not usually been focused on advocacy, but with the current state of affairs and this becoming a greater point of interest for McMaster students means that supporting the VP Education is essential. This will include reviewing the Municipal Budgets to understand how we can best incorporate McMaster Student needs with the city of Hamilton. Along with this the main tenets will be on increasing financial literacy by working with the Student Success Centre (SSC) on early-September panels, re-establishing the upload of some services with the city of

Hamilton, advocating on behalf of students to McMaster Hospitality, and increasing Open Educational Resources that the university gives to the students.

The first issue is increasing financial literacy. Currently I have attended some of the workshops which the SSC runs and believe that they provide a significant service but by partnering with them we can potentially hold some events in larger spaces than Gilmour Hall. This can increase engagement and be a service which would promote the partnership, creating a lasting partnership for future endeavors.

The second advocacy issue would be to look to upload services which were previously provided by the city. This issue is important as an example of how this impacts the budget was that previously the City of Hamilton provided feminine hygiene products and protection to SHEC but abruptly stopped. This meant that more of the budget had to go towards these important services. By providing consultation and working with the VP Education to build a relationship with current city councilors we can attempt to see if there is an opportunity to recommence this relationship. While I believe it is unlikely it is an area where we can look into continuing the conversation on this issue.

The third advocacy issue will be about food affordability, although sadly the referendum for the food accessibility initiative did not pass. I believe that we should run the food accessibility referendum again, as it has the opportunity to be extremely impactful. I believe that we should move to advocate for ensuring that McMaster Hospitality does not cut the Student Meal Plan year over year. I believe this is a task which could be implemented if the MSU and SRA are able to put significant pressure on the University to remove these cuts.

The last advocacy issue will be petitioning the university to open up more Open Educational Resources. Currently, many students are not able to afford supplemental information such as textbooks and mandatory information such as case studies or Connect learning. My goal with this advocacy issue would be to increase the conversation about any material which is directly correlated with marking such as Connect or other testing material that needs to be priced into the tuition pricing, to ensure that there is no “sticker shock” for essential parts of the course. This will be a continuation of the Open Educational Process Motion passed unanimously by the SRA on April 16th, 2023.

As our goal of serving the McMaster undergraduate community the need to advocate to reduce the unnecessary costs which are impacting the quality of life for all students and create opportunities to reduce stress on students must be handled by the student union to use all institutional power to reach these goals.

Conclusion & Contact Information

I want to thank all of the people that I have consulted with as without their insights to the specific challenges and opportunities for growth. I wanted to conclude with my excitement about the possibilities for the upcoming year and the opportunities to increase transparency within the MSU, foster growth, establish efficient practices through pursuing data-driven decisions, and being flexible to pivot to meet the changing needs of students. Along with this I wanted to leave my contact information for any SRA representative who wanted to reach out for clarification on any ideas or issues which they have with this platform.

Contact Information

Email: sweend1@mcmaster.ca

Phone Number: 905-330-3056

Instagram: declan.sweeney16