

Jaycee Zhou  
for VICE-PRESIDENT  
(FINANCE)

**2024-2025**

# Financial Clarity and Community First: Jaycee Zhou's Vision for MSU



Dear Members of the Assembly,

As I campaign for the role of VP of Finance at MSU, my platform is driven by a deep commitment to enhancing our community's financial landscape. With a background as an MSU Accounting Intern and experience in various operational and leadership roles, I've gained insights into the financial intricacies of our student union. My journey has equipped me with the skills to not only identify areas needing improvement but also to implement effective solutions.

My platform is structured around key goals that address both the immediate and long-term needs of our student body. From simplifying financial processes to ensuring accessibility to essential services like menstrual products, my aim is to create a more inclusive and efficient financial environment. Enhancing financial transparency remains a priority, ensuring every student understands how their contributions are utilized for their benefit.

Supporting the president's agenda and working collaboratively across departments will be crucial in achieving these objectives. Initiatives like the introduction of an opt-out option for the bike pass program underline my approach to respecting student choice and promoting fiscal responsibility.

In this election, I present a vision not just of financial management, but of a student-focused, transparent, and innovative financial strategy that will benefit every member of the MSU community. Your support will enable us to embark on this journey together, shaping a future where financial clarity, efficiency, and student well-being are at the forefront of our union's priorities.

Best,

*Jaycee Zhou*

Jaycee Zhou  
Vice-President (Finance) Candidate

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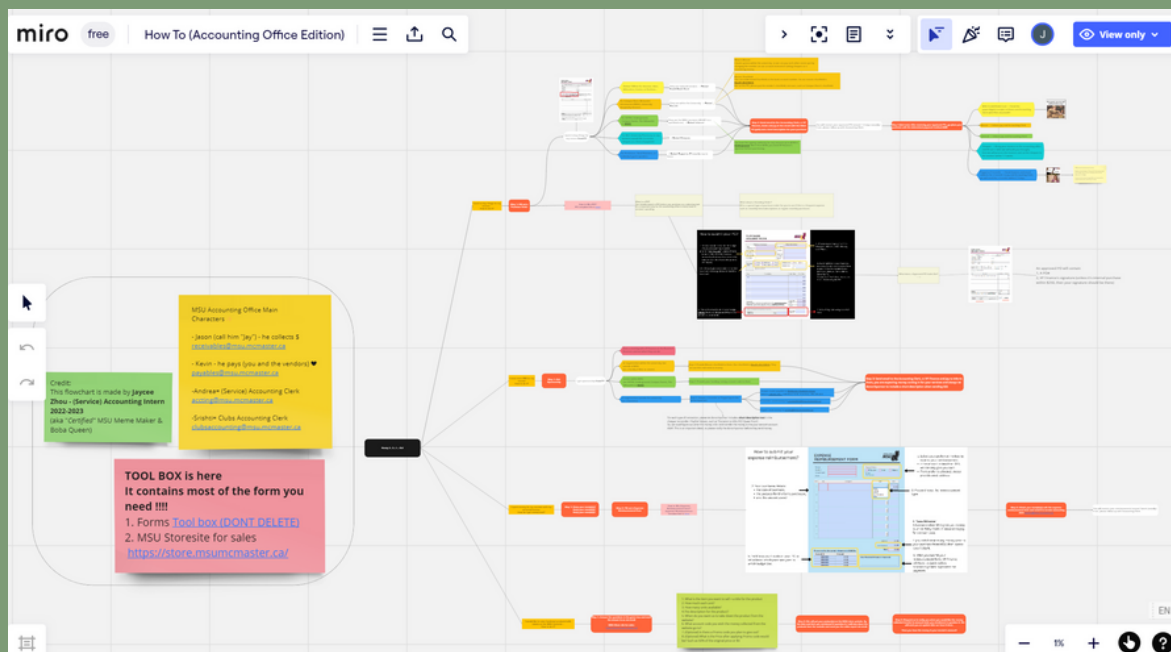
## 7. Thank You!

# About Me

## MSU Accounting Internship (May 2022 - May 2023)

### Achievements

- Honoured with the nomination for **Internship Student of the Year 2023**
- Pioneered the creation of a groundbreaking **digital flowchart** for Accounting Standard Procedure, revolutionizing support for Part-Time Managers (PTM) and Full-time Staff
- Captivated audiences with a comprehensive Training Presentation, seamlessly integrating the innovative Digital Flowchart to empower new part-time managers



[Miro - Accounting Digital Flowchart \(Link\)](#)

# About Me

## MSU Accounting Internship (May 2022 - May 2023)

### Achievements (Cont)

- Collaborated closely with **MSU VP of Finance** to streamline and enhance routine accounting tasks, optimizing efficiency and accuracy
- Managed full-cycle accounting duties, expertly managing accounts payables and receivables with precision and diligence
- Remodelled Excel templates for Procurement Card Reconciliations and Child Care Center's Billing Control and Payment Tracker
- Achieved a **45% reduction** in completion time for routine tasks with remodelled templates



Picture taken during the end of the internship with the accounting office, Director of Finance and Saphina Chui (VP Finance 2022 - 2023)



Certificate of Achievement - DeGroote Internship Student of the Year Nominee

# About Me

## MSU Underground Assistance Service Manager (January 2024 - April 2024)

### Achievements

- Managed **invoice processing** for both internal units (ex: MSU clubs, MSU student-run services, Campus Events) and external clients (ex: McMaster Recreation, Faculty Departments), ensuring accuracy and timeliness in financial transactions
- Implemented streamlined procedures to efficiently handle a high volume of invoices, averaging between **80 to 150 per month**, resulting in improved operational efficiency
- Maintained financial integrity by meticulously overseeing weekly cash closing procedures, ensuring smooth cash flow and adherence to established financial protocols

## MSU Customer Service Representative (September 2023 - December 2023)

### Achievements

- Handled payments with cash and credit cards of 25 transactions an hour
- Provided customer-facing computer assistance and support spiral binding to enhance customer service delivery

# About Me

## By-law 9 Groups Experience -

Business Lead at McMaster Solar Car Project (2020-2023)

### Achievements

- Secured \$5,000 in cash and \$40,146 in material sponsorship for technical teams by effectively reaching out to potential sponsors
- Designed a comprehensive mind map to encapsulate years of experience and knowledge of the project, which led to a great transition between Business Leads
- Managed reimbursements of over \$20,000 each year in expense reimbursements, ensuring the club's strong financial position
- Initiated and organized team merchandise offering to members, resulting in boosting team synergy and members' motivation

## Business Case Competitions

1. DeGroote Accounting Association Debit & Credit Case Competition (2019) - 3rd place in Junior Category
2. McMaster Chinese Commerce Association Business Strategy Case Competition (2020) - 3rd Place
3. University of Waterloo Accounting Conference (2020) - Participant
4. RBC x DeGroote Case Competition - Personal & Commercial Banking (2021) - Participant
5. DeGroote Finance Investment Council's Private Equity Competition (2021) - 4th Place
6. IBM Case Challenge (2024) - Participant

# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes

## Foundation for Financial Efficiency: My Internship Journey

During my time as an Accounting Intern at the MSU Accounting Office, I spent a year evaluating the internal financial systems. I uncovered inefficiencies, outdated methods, and potential areas for technological enhancements. Within my role and the authority given, I improved the day-to-day operational tasks by updating Excel templates and models, which improved efficiency. A significant accomplishment was the redesign of the Bank Reconciliation Excel template, as well as enhancements to the MSU Daycare Billing Control and Tracking System.

In addition to my responsibilities, I took the initiative to implement a tracking sheet to monitor MSU credit card transactions and also developed an accounting standard operating procedure (SOP) in a user-friendly digital flowchart format. This endeavour streamlined complex processes and facilitated the training of over 20 student-run services and all full-time staff at MSU.

My impact at MSU was well-rooted, leading to my recognition and nomination as Intern of the Year by my managers, recognizing my ability to drive substantial improvements. Building on this experience, I am well-prepared to enhance financial efficiency as VP of Finance. With increased authority, I aim to rebuild and improve MSU's financial processes, ensuring a more streamlined and efficient operation that serves our student community better.



# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes (Cont)

## #1: Enhancing Financial Agility: Streamlining E-Transfers for MSU's Dynamic Needs

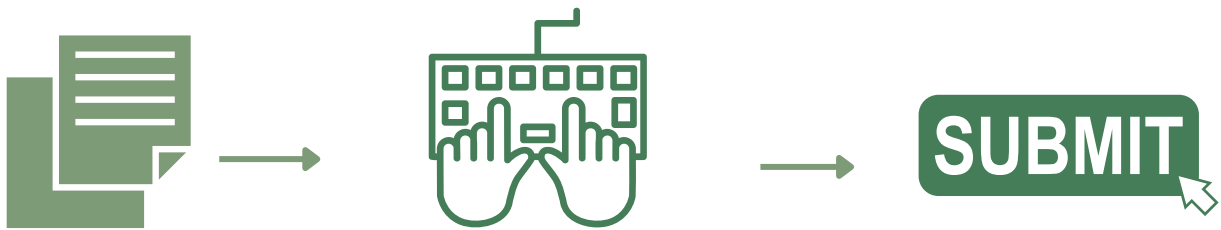
E-transfers play a vital role in the financial framework of the McMaster Students Union (MSU), particularly for students managing club or service expenditures. These transactions are essential for enabling quick reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses. With club budgets having doubled recently, the need for efficient e-transfer processing has become more pronounced. This necessity points towards an enhanced system that can handle the increased volume of transactions.

In response, as the upcoming VP of Finance, I am committed to implementing a bulk e-transfer processing system facilitated by CIBC. This system will significantly improve our capacity to manage the growing number of e-transfers, ensuring that students can receive reimbursements promptly and securely. My experience as an accounting intern at MSU has equipped me with a thorough understanding of our financial mechanisms, positioning me to effectively oversee this important upgrade. Incorporating CIBC's bulk e-transfer solution will streamline our financial operations and support the bustling activities of our clubs and services, thereby bolstering the financial agility of MSU's vibrant student community.

# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes (Cont)

## #1: Enhancing Financial Agility: Streamlining E-Transfers for MSU's Dynamic Needs

### Steps of processing an E-transfer in MSU:



1. Prepare documentation (Purchase Order, receipts etc...)

2. Details of an E-transfer entered by the Club Accounting Intern or Service Accounting Intern (**one by one**)

3. Save data entered and submit for approval



4. Save data entered and submit for approval Sean Duncan (Director of Finance) or Jason Barnes (Accounts Receivable Supervisor) approve e-transfer

5. The E-transfer sends out to the recipient

### Reasons E-transfers get delayed would be included but are not limited to:

1. Manual Data Entry
2. Wrong input (such as wrong email address) leads to re-entering
3. Technical glitches on the CIBC website
4. People don't understand the accounting procedure when submitting initial documentation, which leads to more time spent on communication and waiting for new document submission

# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes (Cont)

## #2: Credit Card for Each Department: Enhancing MSU Operations

Currently, MSU operates with five main credit cards: one each for Campus Events and AVTEK, MSU clubs, Welcome Week, the executive team, and a general-use card utilized by over 20 student-run services and various departments. This setup, particularly the heavy reliance on the general-use card, leads to bottlenecks and complicates expense tracking and accountability.

In conversations with Sean Duncan, Director of Finance, and Paula Scott, Underground Creative Director & Manager, the need for a decentralized approach became apparent. **Offering individual credit cards to each full-time led departments**, such as CFMU, MSU Day Care Centre, Underground, The Silhouette, and the communications department, was identified as a key strategy to streamline procurement and improve transaction efficiency, enhancing overall productivity.

To manage this transition, I plan to initially set low credit limits and mandate frequent check-ins by the accounting office to monitor transactions and prevent fraud. Each department's card will have limits tailored to its specific needs, allowing for more precise budget management and financial analysis.

# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes (Cont)

## #2: Credit Card for Each Department: Enhancing MSU Operations (Cont)

This approach not only relieves the pressure on the general-use card but also **enhances financial transparency and operational efficiency** across MSU. My experience as an accounting intern revealed the difficulty in attributing purchases to specific departments, a challenge that individual credit cards will address, enabling better data analysis and future budget planning. While the dialogue with Sean and Paula has significantly influenced this policy direction, ongoing refinement and consultation are necessary to perfect the system, propelling MSU toward becoming a model of effective financial and operational management.

# Goal #1: Simplify Financial Processes (Cont)

## #3: Financial Training for Welcome Week Coordinators

Welcome Week, held every September, is a crucial university event requiring extensive planning and financial transactions by nine faculties and societies. These activities are critical for the event's success but often suffer from inefficiencies due to the lack of standardized financial training for coordinators and representatives, particularly affecting bank reconciliation and financial record accuracy.

To remedy this, we propose a **specialized financial training program for Welcome Week Coordinators**, focusing on budget management, procurement, transaction handling, and financial documentation. This program aims to improve their financial management capabilities, ensuring efficient handling of the event's finances.

The training will feature interactive workshops, flowchart-based introductions to standard procedures, and an overview of Mosaic, the university's financial system. This practical approach is designed to equip coordinators with the skills needed for accurate financial management and smooth post-event reconciliation.

Implementing this financial training initiative is key to preparing Welcome Week Coordinators for effective financial oversight, contributing to the event's success and setting a standard for future academic events, ensuring they are not only memorable but also financially well-managed.

# Goal #2: Menstrual Product Accessibility Initiative

## Supporting Menstrual Product Accessibility at McMaster University

In partnership with the McMaster Okanagan Office of Health & Well-being, we are driving an initiative to provide free menstrual products to students, staff, and faculty at McMaster's Westdale Campus. This effort, in its pilot phase, aims to install bins and dispensers in select washrooms, improving accessibility and promoting health and well-being.

The project currently faces financial constraints that limit its expansion. We plan to secure funding from the **VP Finance's Special Project budget line, the Student Life Enhancement Fund (SLEF)**, and seek contributions from the university and the McMaster Alumni Society to overcome these challenges.



In addition to recognizing that menstrual products are integral to supporting health and well-being, the project also aims to address period poverty, or the inability to access menstrual hygiene products due to financial limitations.

In a 2018 Plan International Canada study of 2,000 women, nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of all surveyed, and a third (33 per cent) of women under 25 reported struggling to afford menstrual products for themselves or their dependents.

Eighty-six per cent of respondents also said they have been unprepared when their period started.

"Some students have told us it's been very helpful," says Dhanvanthry. "If they forget pads or tampons at home, there are some here and they don't need to go buy a whole box of them."

**Source: [Pilot project puts free menstrual hygiene products in washrooms on McMaster's campus \(Link\)](#)**

## Goal #2: Menstrual Product Accessibility Initiative (Cont)

My collaboration with the Okanagan Office is fueled by their commendable work in providing free menstrual products on campus. As a woman in leadership, I am dedicated to supporting this initiative with all available resources. Conversations with Lynn Armstrong, the Administrator at the Okanagan Office, have underscored our belief that menstrual products are a necessity, not a luxury, akin to the availability of toilet paper in washrooms.

To bolster this initiative, we will collaborate with **Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) and Women & Gender Equity Network (WGEN)**, leveraging their resources to promote the project and enhance campus-wide awareness. This approach ensures that menstrual products are readily accessible to everyone on campus, reflecting our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment. This project is a vital move toward normalizing and addressing essential healthcare needs in our university community.



### Additional Information:

[Menstrual Product Locations on Campus \(Link\)](#)

The McMaster Okanagan Office of Health & Well-being distributed over 30,000 pads and 20,000 tampons across the McMaster Westdale Campus from May 2023 to February 2024, emphasizing the need to continue and expand the Menstrual Product Support Program.

# Goal #3: Enhance Financial Transparency

I would like to uphold and enhance MSU's financial transparency during my tenure as VP of Finance. Drawing from my experience as an accounting intern, where I learned from **Sarphina, the MSU VP of Finance for 2022-2023, the value of student trust was emphasized**. Sarphina highlighted the critical need for maintaining and improving financial transparency to foster a deeper understanding of MSU's finances among students.

Although MSU's budget is accessible on its website, this alone has not sufficed for full transparency, as students often find it challenging to access or engage with the financial data provided. To bridge this gap, it is imperative to make our financial operations more transparent and accessible to the student body.

Reflecting on initiatives like the Finance Transparency Week from previous years, I plan to integrate and expand upon these efforts to promote financial clarity. We can achieve greater transparency through the following strategic approaches:

## 1. Engage and Educate: The MSU Finance Myth-Busting Quiz Challenge

- Introduce a "Fact or Fiction" quiz on social media to debunk myths about MSU's finances and improve student understanding.
- Offer instant feedback on quiz answers to educate students on how their fees are used.
- Link quiz completion to a lottery, incentivizing participation with gift card prizes.



# Goal #3: Enhance Financial Transparency

## 2. Engaging Clarity: Financial Transparency Week Video Campaign at MSU

- Create and share short, targeted videos on key financial topics during MSU's Financial Transparency Week, based on pre-researched student interests.
- Engage students with interactive elements like Q&As and quizzes alongside the video campaign.
- Analyze engagement data post-campaign to refine future transparency efforts.

## 3. Campus Finance Tour: Bridging Gaps in Financial Transparency Week

- Diverse Location Strategy: Set up booths across campus to reach students in various buildings beyond the Student Center to cater to diverse routines.
- Maximize Engagement: Use booths to distribute information, host interactive sessions, and engage students directly. Offer incentives like giveaways or prize entries to boost participation.
- Brief Schedule
  - Day 1 at McMaster Student Center
  - Day 2 at David Braley Athletic Centre
  - Day 3 at Thode Library
  - Day 4 at Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery
  - Day 5 at BSB Field

# Goal #4: Supporting President's Agenda

## Reviving HOCO with Financial and Security Enhancements

The return of the Homecoming (HOCO) party to our campus is a thrilling development, thanks in large part to the efforts of Jovan Popovic, serving as President for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 terms. As the VP of Finance, I am eager to support Jovan by managing the financial intricacies of the Homecoming celebration. This involvement will extend beyond budgeting and financial oversight, ensuring that every aspect of the event is well-funded and economically viable, from logistics and entertainment to safety measures.

In addition to the financial responsibilities, I recognize the importance of security and safety at such a large-scale event. Therefore, I plan to collaborate with campus safety teams to ensure a secure environment for all attendees. The **Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)** will be on standby to provide immediate medical assistance if needed, while the **Student Walk Home Attendant Team (SWHAT)** will be available to ensure students can safely return to their residences or get home after the festivities.

By focusing on both the financial and security aspects of HOCO, we can ensure that the event is not only a memorable celebration but also a safe and inclusive experience for all students. This dual approach demonstrates a commitment to both the enjoyment and well-being of the student body, embodying the spirit of unity and care that HOCO represents.

# Goal #4: Supporting President's Agenda

## Revitalizing TwelvEighty Bar & Grill: A Strategic Plan for Engagement and Diversity

### **1. Modernizing the Space:**

TwelvEighty Bar & Grill needs an updated decor to attract more students and rejuvenate the ambiance. The renovation should aim to create a fresh, modern vibe that aligns with current design trends and student preferences. This revitalization will not only enhance the visual appeal but also transform TwelvEighty into a more welcoming and lively spot for students to gather, dine, and unwind.

### **2. Diverse and Seasonal Menus:**

Acknowledging the multicultural fabric of McMaster University, TwelvEighty's menu should offer a variety of culinary experiences, with special pop-up menus inspired by global cuisines like Thai, Balinese, and Mexican. This approach not only caters to the diverse tastes of the student body but also introduces them to new flavours and dishes, enriching their dining experience. By regularly updating the menu with new, themed offerings, TwelvEighty can keep the dining experience exciting and inclusive, encouraging repeat visits and culinary exploration.

# Goal #4: Supporting President's Agenda (Cont)

## Implementing an Opt-Out Feature for the Bike Pass Program

As a candidate for VP of Finance, I am committed to crafting a transparent and accessible opt-out process for the upcoming bike pass program at McMaster University. Recognizing that not all students will require this service, it's important to offer the flexibility to exclude themselves from this fee if they see fit.

The creation of the opt-out mechanism will involve:

- 1. Clear Communication:** Ensuring all students are informed about their ability to opt out of the bike pass program with straightforward instructions on the process.
- 2. Simple Opt-Out System:** Establishing an easy-to-use process on Mosaic, where students can indicate their decision not to participate in the bike pass program without unnecessary complications.
- 3. Defined Opt-Out Period:** Setting a specific period during which students can opt out, with adequate notifications to prevent any missed opportunities.

This approach will guarantee that students have the autonomy to decide against the bike pass if it does not align with their needs, aligning with our commitment to respect student choice and financial independence.

# Goal#5: Supporting Advocacy

- 1. Holistic Decision-Making:** Involving all board members in decision-making processes allows for a comprehensive understanding of the organization's objectives, resources, and potential impacts. Each member contributes unique perspectives and expertise, enriching discussions and leading to more informed, well-rounded decisions. This collaborative approach ensures that all angles are considered, aligning decisions with the organization's strategic goals.
- 2. Diverse Expertise:** The board's diverse expertise strengthens advocacy initiatives. While the VP of Education (Advocacy) possesses specialized knowledge in advocacy strategies, other members, like the VP of Finance, offer crucial skills in financial management. As the VP Finance candidate, my role involves **managing budgets, tracking expenditures, and analyzing the financial interactions** with government and university stakeholders, thereby supporting advocacy efforts through sound financial oversight.
- 3. Shared Responsibility:** Advocacy efforts demand significant resources. Distributing responsibility across the board ensures that these initiatives are not solely reliant on a single individual, but are a collective effort. This shared approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among members, enhancing the drive to achieve the organization's advocacy goals.
- 4. Enhanced Accountability:** When advocacy is part of every board member's responsibilities, it ensures continuous monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives. This collective accountability facilitates regular assessment of the advocacy's effectiveness and the implementation of necessary adjustments, keeping the organization's advocacy efforts focused and proactive.

**Thank you to everybody who took the time to consult with me and share their MSU knowledge, experience and expertise.**

Abigail Samuels (VP Education 2023-2024)

Hannah Shouldice (SRA Member 2023-2024 & Clubs Accounting Clerk 2022-2023)

Jason Barnes (Accounts Receivable Supervisor)

John McGowan (General Manager)

Jovan Popovic (President 2023-2024 & 2024-2025)

Kevin O'Mara (Accounts Payable Supervisor/Payroll Administrator)

Lynn Armstrong (McMaster Okanagan Office of Health & Well-being Administrator)

Michael Wooder (Marketing & Communications Director)

Mitchell German (VP Administration 2022-2023)

Paula Scott (Underground Creative Director & Manager)

Sarphina Chui (VP Finance 2022-2023)

Sean Duncan (Director of Finance)

Sefa Otchere (VP Finance 2023-2024)