

1. Could you share the reasoning behind the increase in spending for action groups from \$3,000 last year to \$20,000 this year?

In 2023-24, we budgeted a total of \$7,000 for Action Groups (\$6,000 with an additional \$1,000 Special Projects Fund available to Action Groups on a needs basis) as we were aiming to incubate 3-6 Action Groups. I am a bit unsure where the \$3,000 figure is in reference to (please do let me know). As of July. 31, 2024, our total expense related to Action Groups was \$4,849.86.

Allocating expenses between these two budget lines, Action Groups and Special Projects Fund, was tricky, so when budgeting for 2024-25, we decided to merge them into one Action Groups budget line. This Action Groups budget line for 2024-25 is budgeted at \$10,000 (a \$3,000 increase from 2023-24) and then a new budget line Action Group Media Services has been allocated \$10,000. As students are engaging again with OPIRG resources in a similar manner prior to covid, we set a larger target of 7-8 Action Groups this year (currently there are 7 student groups in the incubator as outlined in our OPIRG Presentation to the SRA - Summer 2024). Though we set aside \$1,000 to each Action Group, it is difficult to predict how much each group will spend as their level of impact is not necessarily correlated to spending. For example, Students for Bike Share had a large impact on campus last year, but only requested \$680.98 in reimbursements.

OPIRG conducted interviews with our Action Groups during the 2024 summer and the most impactful resource OPIRG provides is our Media Services. OPIRG Media Services is a group of paid McMaster students (mostly in the media studies faculty) contracted to carry out the entire media strategy for our Action Groups. For example, the TikToks and Instagram reels that Bike Share posted to convince students to vote for the bike pass last year were scripted, directed, filmed, edited, and produced by Media Services students. OPIRG McMaster decided to allocate \$10,000 to Media Service contracts. Though it is difficult to estimate how many videos and how much time Media Services will spend on each Action Group, we want to support the Media Services team in being creative and engaging with students on campus, all while earning a living wage!

2. Would you mind elaborating on the \$8,000 allocated for volunteer appreciation? What activities or items are included in that amount?

Over 100 students volunteer at OPIRG over the course of the year so once each semester we host a volunteer appreciation event to thank them for volunteering their time. These events include games, contests with prizes, a dinner and acknowledgments for students that made significant impact in the McMaster community. Our Winter 2024 volunteer appreciation event in TwelveEighty was held on the day the MSU counted the votes for the Bike Share referendum so we acknowledged and celebrated all their hard work! This constitutes a large portion of this budget line, but we also provide small honorariums (around \$250) for students that have volunteered at OPIRG like our resource centre or free store.

3. Could you provide more details on how the \$8,000 for the board advisory will be used?

Yes! This is a budget line that we are very excited about. An issue OPIRG has historically faced, similar to any student organization, is student turnover due to graduation. We often find ourselves trying to solve issues

that may have already been solved by previous boards. To address this, we are engaging past OPIRG board members, in order to build our institutional memory. We initially tried to ask previous board members to volunteer, but without much success. Even though our past board members are still passionate about supporting our Action Groups, we found that our past board members struggled to allocate their limited free time (most are in medical school) to volunteering with OPIRG. Therefore, this budget line would be allocated to honorariums for the past Chairs that will sit on our Advisory Board, and to organizing events for current, prospective, and past board members to meet and discuss how OPIRG can better support McMaster students. OPIRG has traditionally relied on staff for institutional memory, but since we are a student-led organization and recently made the switch to one-part time staff member (who joined in July 2023), we are looking forward to relying on students to build our institutional memory. We think this improved consistency in the organization will lead to a much improved relationship between OPIRG and the MSU/SRA as well!

4. When is the summer documentary expected to be released, and will it cover multiple years or focus on a specific timeframe?

OPIRG is currently helping incubate two documentary projects. One is focused on the history of student activism at McMaster and the other is a jubilee style video that focuses on current student activism. Both are in the post-production phase and will be released in Fall 2024!

5. Could you please include the audits from 2023-2024 for reference?

Our year end is August 31, so our audit engagement begins in October (when we hand all our books to them) and then it takes awhile for the auditor to do their work. We would be happy to forward our 2023-24 audit to the SRA once it is completed. It will also be posted on our website for students to review as soon as we receive it.

6. The internship expenses exceeded the projected amount by \$13,000. Was there a particular reason for this variance?

The OPIRG McMaster Experiential Learning Program sets up internships for students with community partners that would not traditionally be able to employ undergraduate interns (nonprofits, service providers, etc.). OPIRG sets these internships up to accommodate student workloads by requesting asynchronous projects for students that can be completed over an agreed upon timeline (for example, 50 hours of work to be completed over the course of first semester). OPIRG set up internships with The Hub, World Change Media, Disability Justice Network Ontario, and the Community Legal Clinic during 2023-24! Though we found that students found a lot of value in this program, the program took up a considerable amount of the OPIRG budget. For 2024-25 we decided that we would allocate staff time to grantmaking so that we can continue the program, while using less student fees (reduced to \$6,250.00 for 2024-25). Please note that our part time staff member has been on leave since July 2024 so we have put the Experiential Learning program on pause and will resume once our staff member returns to work.