



REPORT

From the office of the...
Vice-President (Education)

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Maya Hobbs, Vice-President (Education)
SUBJECT: Vice-President (Education) 24I Report
DATE: October 20th, 2024

Dear Members of the Assembly,

It seems like it has been forever since my last report! A lot has happened since then – Welcome Week, Homecoming, MSU Conference, etc. In the following report I have outlined what has been happening in the world of MSU advocacy.

Summary

- Government Relations Analyst
- Education Team Hiring
- Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy Group
- Breaking Barriers Event Planning
- Youth Mental Health Fund Submission
- Our Future Hamilton Summit
- Your City Survey
- Food Security Event
- Open Educational Resources (OER) Campaign
- MSU Policy Papers
- Student Accessibility Advocacy
- Collaboration with SSC
- OUSA Updates
- CASA Updates
- UCRU Updates
- Meetings with University Admin/Staff
- University Committees
- New Faculty Orientation Panel

Government Relations Analyst

As a part of our organizational planning, I have been putting together a job description for the Government Relations Analyst. This role will be responsible for

overseeing alumni relations, assisting with research & policy, as well as general support for the Education Team. I hope to have this approved as soon as possible to fill the role before the new year.

Education Team Hiring

Since my last report we have officially hired the full Education Team. All three Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants have been hired and have been working on policy papers and research projects. Please welcome Ella Pataki, Mohlil Imran, and Aroni Nur Ahmed! Now that we have a full team, we had a meeting where everyone met each other and had an opportunity to give an overview of their respective portfolios.

Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy Group (HPSAG)

I have had regular meetings with the Mohawk Students' Association (MSA) for the Hamilton Post-Secondary Advocacy Group. During the first meeting I pitched the vision for the partnership. The vision is to create a unified group to advocate to the City of Hamilton by promoting collective impact. The goals for this group are as follows: SHARE municipal advocacy ideas, opportunities, and campaigns; COLLABORATE on municipal advocacy projects to maximize impact; UNIFIED voice for municipal advocacy; EFFECTIVE advocacy; Increased ACCESS to city officials. To achieve these goals, the group will be collectively working on three major projects – a municipal campaign, collaborative pre-budget submission, and organized lobby meetings. The group has been focusing on the pre-budget submission and lobby meetings. We have highlighted three joint priorities, those being Housing, Transit, and Food Security. To amplify these priorities to the City, we are organizing lobby meetings on November 14th and 15th to meet with various city staff that are involved with the creation of the City's budget. We will then have a second phase of lobby meetings in December/January with city councilors before we delegate to council on January 16th.

Breaking Barriers Event Planning

Planning for our *Breaking Barriers in Politics* conference is well underway. We met with the USC Vice-President External Affairs to discuss their *Women in House* conference. We gained a lot of inspiration for how we could best plan our conference from that consultation. The current plan is to facilitate a 2-day conference hosted at McMaster where we will provide professional development sessions, a social, panel with politicians, networking, etc. We are currently working on budgeting for the event, reaching out to politicians & stakeholders, preparing delegate registration, as well as organizing the professional development sessions.

Youth Mental Health Fund Submission

To supplement our continuous advocacy on mental health, I completed a submission on behalf of the MSU to the government to provide feedback on the draft plan for the Youth Mental Health Fund. This submission highlighted the need for accessible & affordable mental health care for students and the need for mental health professionals of diverse identities for youth. Other recommendations included urging post-secondary education (PSE) campuses to be recognized as 'third-party providers' under the new funding model, consider the increased population of students in regions with post-secondary education campuses when calculating funding, and directing funding for PSE institutions to hiring additional counselors.

Our Future Hamilton Summit

As stated in my previous report, Kerry and I attended a meeting with various other stakeholders in the city to discuss the Our Future Hamilton Summit. Since that meeting, the event has been postponed. I will update if there are any new developments, but for now we will focus our attention on other municipal opportunities.

Your City Survey

The Your City Survey is near completion and almost ready to launch! Survey construction is almost finished, and we have developed a plan for promotion with the Communications Team. Please keep an eye out for the survey and share amongst your networks as this survey will help tremendously with data collection to better inform our municipal pre-budget submission and MSU policy papers.

Food Security Event

On September 26th we hosted a Food Security event in collaboration with the MSU Food Collective Centre. The in-person event took place in the Hub where we shared resources, educated students about food insecurity, and handed out snacks. For this event, we created a resource guide that highlighted food discounts for students and local food banks. We also shared these resources and statistics through an informational social media campaign.

Open Educational Resources (OER) Campaign

On September 10th we held an MSU OER event where we had programming all-day in the Hub, including presentations from E-Campus Ontario, a McMaster Library OER Workshop, OER Showcase, and special performances.

Regarding continuing OER work, I met with the University's OER Committee for the first meeting of the year where we discussed MSU's contribution to OER work, grant updates, and OER reporting. Furthermore, Declan and I will continue to meet

with the Library to organize the other programs and events that were outlined earlier on in the term.

MSU Policy Papers

Revitalizing the MSU policy bank is crucial for setting the foundation for ongoing and future advocacy work. Since the Advocacy & Policy Research Assistants have been hired, we have facilitated training, consultations have been conducted, and volunteer authors from the committees have been working with the RAs to update the papers. To ensure that these papers are representative of the student voice we have a variety of avenues available for student input. The first being a Policy Forum that will be made available on our MSU Advocacy Instagram in the next week to allow for students to voice their ideas and concerns on the paper topics if they so choose. On November 10th we will be hosting an MSU Policy Conference that is open for students to attend and provide input on the papers for this term. Details for this conference will be sent out to SRA members shortly as well as advertised on our social media.

Student Accessibility Advocacy

Recently, Maccess raised concerns about changes to Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation processes and lack of communication to students/faculty. Some of the issues included the closure of the volunteer notetaking system and the change to test bookings. In response to this information, we met with the Director of Student Accessibility Services, Mei-Ju, to gain insight into the processes and share areas of concern. I am confident that progress is being made on addressing these concerns and Maccess will now meet regularly with Mei-Ju and Sean Beaudette to maintain a channel of communication for student perspectives and issues on accessibility.

Collaboration with SSC

In collaboration with the Student Success Centre (SSC) and Spark, we have organized drop-in mentoring & academic support sessions for first year students. The sessions will take place on October 28th and November 25th for this semester. Another project we have been in discussions with SSC on is an informational campaign on artificial intelligence. We are hoping to organize this project for the new year.

OUSA Updates

On September 16th, OUSA's Home Office and President came to McMaster for a campus visit. During their visit, a booth was set up in the Hub for students to learn about OUSA and we had meetings with Kim Dej, Faith Ogunkoya, Clare Warner, Arlene Dosen, Sean Van Koughnett, and David Farrar. During these meetings we

discussed OUSA's 2024-2025 advocacy priorities: Investing in Post-Secondary Education, Food Insecurity, Responses to Hate-Motivated Attacks, & Housing.

Other OUSA updates include VP Administration/HR tasks such as organizing performance appraisals and professional development sessions. This includes setting up a new lobby training for delegates prior to the Student Advocacy Conference in November. I have also been working with the EDIA Working Group on implementing changes within OUSA in regard to accessibility and delegate recruitment.

Lastly, OUSA's Fall 2024 General Assembly will be taking place on October 24th-27th. The policy papers/reports that will be voted on during this conference are Environmental Sustainability, Student Financial Aid, and Responding to the Blue Ribbon Panel Report.

CASA Updates

Since my last report, I attended CASA's Policy & Strategy Conference where member schools voted on the priorities for the year. Next month I will be attending CASA's Lobby Week that will take place in Ottawa. While in Ottawa, I also plan on meeting with MSU Alumni as a part of our goals to build an MSU alumni network.

UCRU Updates

There has not been any progress on UCRU since my last report. We are currently waiting for a meeting to be scheduled by the UCRU chair.

Meetings with University Admin/Staff

I have been continuously meeting with different university admin and staff to discuss student concerns, areas for partnerships, and new projects. Most recently, I have met with Arlene Dosen (Executive Director and Assistant Dean of Student Success), Dr. Kim Dej (Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning), and Dave Cano (Director of Sustainability).

University Committees

The VP Education often sits on a number of committees within the University. I recently have had meetings for the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (SVPR) Task Force, Open Educational Resources (OER) Committee, AI Expert Panel on Teaching and Learning, Enrollment Management Team (EMT), and the Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC).

New Faculty Orientation Panel

On August 15th, I was a panelist for the New Faculty Orientation where I was able to share the student perspective with new McMaster faculty. It was a great

opportunity to give advice on how to better support students in their educational experience.

Until next time,

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