McMaster Association of Part-time Students

Helping part-time students navigate success

March 2015

Room 234 | McMaster University Student Centre
(905) 525-9140 x22021 | maps@mcmaster.ca
Executive Summary

2014 was MAPS’ 35th anniversary and the first full year of operations under our new governance and management structure. Our focus for 2014 was simple: show the university community that MAPS is back and demonstrate that the faith placed in us by our members was justified.

In early 2015, an independent Monitoring Committee reviewed how well MAPS was working within its new structure. Their report, which is attached and available on line, confirms that MAPS operated within its new structure in 2014.

In recognition of MAPS fulfilling the requirements set out by McMaster University, the suspension of our fees was lifted and funds previously being held in trust were transferred to the Association. Going forward, our fees have been reduced by approximately $200,000 annually due to the university’s decision to stop collecting student fees from summer students who were MSU members in the prior academic session.

We engaged our campus partners to rebuild our relationships and to see how MAPS could help. We have been working with faculty academic advisors, student services, student financial aid and scholarships, student accounts, and others to increase awareness of part-time student issues, reduce administrative burdens, and promote financial aid options for our members.

We re-established our relationship with the McMaster Students Union (MSU) through a president to president dialogue. MAPS and MSU staff met subsequently and were able to collaborate to provide MAPS members an option to buy in to the health and dental plan sponsored by the MSU.

We have regularly and frequently engaged our members – from informal suggestions on how to improve the lounge through to a survey on course accessibility and availability.

We are reaching out to our members through email, our website, Facebook, and LinkedIn to ensure that we are communicating effectively and have many different ways of hearing back from our members. Where needs were identified by our members, we responded by finding services or solutions to address them including having the MAPS office designated as a Campus Store pick up location, and the launch of our peer mentorship program.

We produced the 2014 MAPS Course Access Report; detailing the issues and challenges faced by part-time undergraduate students in getting the courses they need.

We entered into discussions at the university’s request to review how compulsory ancillary fees are applied to part-time students and undertook a municipal advocacy campaign to build support on Council for discounted fares for part-time students.

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2014 In Review

*When the rubber hit the road...*

2014 marked our 35th anniversary, and was our first year operating under the new governance structure our members approved in late 2013. It was a year dedicated to building the organization, improving services and advocating for our members. Over the last year, MAPS:

- Improved membership participation by successfully running our first electronic referendum to conduct the Association’s corporate business (instead of having an Annual General Meeting).

- Conducted research:
  - To better understand who our members are so that we can serve them better.
  - On how McMaster sets its courses.

- Engaged our membership by surveying them about course accessibility experiences.

- Engaged Hamilton municipal candidates regarding improving transit fare options for part-time students and obtained commitments to work with us on the issue from 10 of the 15 candidates elected to city council.

- Set out strategic goals for the Association and then used those goals to develop and implemented our first Operating Plan – which sets out how we plan to achieve our strategic goals in 2014-2015.

- Continued to honour our members for their academic, volunteering, and personal commitments; improving themselves and their communities.

- Officially re-launched our newsletter *The Link* as an email newsletter as well as expanded our communications ‘reach’ to members through regular email messages, up-to-date website information and the continued expansion of our social media presence.

- Had the MAPS office designated as a Campus Store pick-up location.

- Provided information sessions to our members on Avenue2Learn and the OSAP and Bursary application processes.

- Negotiated a buy-in option for members in the MSU’s Health and Dental Plan

- Entered into cooperative agreements with OfficeTeam and AccounTemps to provide support to members looking for employment in the administrative or accounting areas

- Continued working with campus partners to advance our members’ interests.

March 2015
Who is MAPS?

In 2014, there were over 5,500 part-time learners at McMaster – about evenly split between students attending the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and undergraduates taking less than 18 units between September and April. Undergraduate members come from all across the university, with the top three faculties being Social Sciences, Engineering, and Humanities.

MAPS members come from all undergraduate and certificate programs with CCE, Engineering, Social Sciences and Humanities representing almost 80% of the membership.

To be an effective voice for our members, we undertook research on enrolment data to get a demographic snapshot of who our members are. This is a first step in a longer-term plan to better know our members so that we can better advocate for them.

**Highlights from enrolment data review (six year average):**

- Engineering is tied with Social Sciences as the undergraduate faculty with the largest percentage of part-time students.
- Liberal Arts and Business students represent 26% of our members, Science and Engineering represent 27% and Certificate and Diploma students represent 47%.
- The majority of part-time undergraduate students are between the ages of 21-28, while the majority of certificate and diploma students are between the ages of 25-40 (see graph on next page).

MAPS also surveyed our members to hear about their experiences with course accessibility. The results of the survey were release in November 2014 and are available online [LINK]

**Highlights from the 2014 Course Access Report:**

- **There are barriers for part-time students to get preferred classes.** 69% of part-time students reported having problems when trying to enrol in their preferred classes due to the course not being offered, offered at an inconvenient time, or limited course space.
- with full-time students given the first chance to enrol in courses (exclusive SOLAR registration days)

- Part-time students are more available to take evening and weekend classes. Part-time students are generally more available to take courses after 6pm during the week and on weekends (less than 1% of all undergrad classes are offered on weekends – and 90% of those are in the B.Tech. Program).

- The fewer trips to campus, the better. Part-time students prefer to have a single 3 hour class per week rather than three 1 hour classes, and would benefit from having tutorials and labs scheduled for them at times that are reasonably close to their class times. These two changes alone significantly reduce the number of times part-time students need to be on campus.

Based on these two research projects, and our ongoing engagement with our members, we are building a ‘snapshot’ of who our members are and what they want. What we can say so far is that our members:

- Are generally older than full-time undergraduates
- Have work and other priorities that supersede school
- Are less intense users of campus services and in some cases may never visit the main campus
- Are very job and career focused

MAPS will continue to learn all we can about our members so that we can knowledgably speak to the issues and concerns of our members and be a trusted resource to our partners in the university community.
Strategic Goals & Operating Plan

In the summer of 2014, the Board conducted a strategic planning session to identify goals for the Association. Strategic goal setting is valuable as a tool to focus the attention and energy of an organization on a set of shared goals. The Board arrived at the following:

What we do

The McMaster Association of Part-time students helps you successfully navigate your part-time student experience

Making it easier to be and stay a part-time student

How we do it

- Getting informed about part-time studies gets easier
- MAPS is known for high quality services and excellent customer service
- The part-time McMaster experience is easier to navigate
- MAPS is an acknowledged campus planning partner
- MAPS is a trusted resource for members, staff, and faculty

What we expect to come of our work

Based on these strategic goals and priorities, the Association developed its first Operating Plan (Op Plan), which was approved in July 2014. The Op Plan sets out a series of projects and activities which are expected to move us closer to our strategic goals. The Board approves the Op Plan and regularly reviews how the Op Plan is coming along. In January 2015, the Board received a semi-annual report on the Op Plan’s progress. All projects are proceeding as planned and all metrics are being achieved.

The Operating Plan is available for download on our website at:
http://www.mcmaster.ca/maps/OperatingPlan.html

March 2015
Board of Directors & Corporate Officers

Members of the Board of Directors are normally elected for two-year terms, unless filling the unexpired term of a member who has resigned. MAPS Board of Directors in 2014 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Director</th>
<th>Status in 2014</th>
<th>Status in 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline (Jackie) Arlen</td>
<td>Last year of elected term</td>
<td>Re-elected for 2 year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Belovari</td>
<td>Interim appoint in Nov 2014</td>
<td>Re-elected for 2 year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Cerantola</td>
<td>Last year of elected term</td>
<td>Did not seek re-election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijana Govorcin</td>
<td>First year of two-year term</td>
<td>Resigned March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Huber</td>
<td>First year of two-year term</td>
<td>Resigned September 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Hill-Smith</td>
<td>First year of two-year term</td>
<td>Second year of two-year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassandra Lo</td>
<td>First year of two-year term</td>
<td>Second year of two-year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erick Merlos</td>
<td>Last year of elected term</td>
<td>Did not seek re-election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Moore</td>
<td>First year of two-year term</td>
<td>Second year of two-year term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Board elects, from among its members, the president and vice-presidents of the Association. The elected officers for MAPS for 2014 were:

- **President**
  - Jacqueline (Jackie) Arlen

- **First Vice-President**
  - Erick Merlos

- **Second Vice-President**
  - Jeff Huber (to September 2014)
  - Cassandra Lo (from November 2014)

- **Vice-President Finance**
  - Emily Cerantola

*The Board appoints two non-voting officers to the Board of Directors.*

- **Executive Director**
  - Kyle Johansen (appointed July 2013)

- **Corporate Secretary**
  - David Moore (appointed June 2013)

*With our thanks and appreciation...*

We extend our thanks and appreciation to board members who left the board in 2014 or recently completed their term of office and did not seek re-election: Emily Cerantola, Jeff Huber, Erick Merlos and Marijana Govorcin. Unlike other student governments, MAPS Board members are unpaid volunteers, so the commitment shown by them is worthy of high praise. In particular, we thank Emily for her unswerving support over the past two years, during very turbulent times.

March 2015
Services to Members

The most visible way MAPS supports our members is through our front line staff. Our information assistants and executive director are committed to providing superior member services and creating a safe and comfortable environment. In 2014 the MAPS team began compiling a list of the questions we are asked by members and what responses we provided. As part of our commitment to continuous quality improvement, we will be using low volume periods to communicate with university staff to see how good our answers are, and if there is more we can do to provide better answers in the future.

_No pinballs!_ One of the comments we hear most often from students is that getting information from the university makes you feel like the ball in a giant pinball machine. The MAPS team follows the “no pinball” approach to helping people; which means we won’t refer you somewhere else unless we know that is the next/last place you need to go to get what you need.

_Office and Lounge Services:_ In our office/lounge, members have access to low cost printing and photocopying (5 cents each, single or double sided, colour or black and white), free scanning, access to three state of the art computers workstations, coffee or tea (at cost), as well as a desk, sofas, and chairs, with electrical outlets and USB charging stations within easy reach.

_One-on-one Assistance:_ Our staff is dedicated to helping our members navigate their success. Very often this means helping to fill in knowledge gaps for members regarding the university’s on-line systems, policies and procedures, and general information regarding financial aid and bursaries.

_Mentorship Program:_ Launched in November, the program started with five mentoring pairs with a mentorship coordinator in place to provide guidance and support. Mentoring provides members with access to a peer from whom they may seek guidance, advice, and support.

_MAPS Handbook:_ Each year the Association produces a 48 page handbook and calendar (electronic and hard copy) for members. Each year it is updated to ensure that it provides the latest information regarding our services, campus services, financial aid, bursaries, and other information; provided to members free of charge.

_Campus Store Pick Up Location:_ MAPS arranged to be a pick-up location for purchases made online at the Campus Store in response to concerns raised by members about getting to campus during the Store’s normal operating hours. Using this pick up option, members can bypass the Campus Store and collect their purchases from us at their convenience. The service came online in late September.

_Opt-in Access to the MSU Health and Dental Plan:_ As of September 2014, MAPS members have the option to join the MSU Health and Dental Plan.

Late in 2014, we accepted an invitation from the university to discuss what student services our members use (or would like to use) as part of a larger conversation on realigning student services fees so that they are fair for everyone. What we discovered is that no one has good information on what campus services part-time students use; or if there are needed services
that are not provided. We expect that the question of student services will become an important question for our members in 2015.

**Where would we be without our team**
The MAPS Team are a group of highly motivated and friendly individuals who understand the importance of helping our members, as most of them are part-time students themselves. The Board of Directors would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the MAPS team and welcomes members to acknowledge them when you next visit.

- **Executive Director**
  - Kyle Johansen

- **Bookkeeper**
  - Felice Gilpin

- **Coordinators**
  - Gifty Warval (Social Media)
  - Div Jalan (Mentorship)
  - Anne Van Dyk (*The Link*)

- **Information Assistants**
  - Malanie Dani
  - Chris Talbot
  - Gifty Warval

We also acknowledge and thank Kim Pastrak, until recently our longest serving employee, for her considerable work during her eight years with us and for her work on the 2014 Annual Awards Dinner.

**Bursaries, Awards and Recognition**

**Bursary**
Since 1988, MAPS has contributed over $1.2 million to bursaries and bursary endowments to support part-time student financial assistance. In 2014, MAPS completed a $505,000 multi-year pledge to support bursaries for students taking courses through the Centre for Continuing
Education. Administered through the Student Financial Aid & Scholarships Office, our bursaries provided more than $60,000 in financial aid to our members MAPS in 2013-2014.

**Awards**

Each year, MAPS recognizes academic, professional, and personal achievement through a series of awards. The 2014 MAPS Award recipients were:

- **Michael Diggins** and **Andrew Norgate** (both Bachelor of Technology) recipients of the [MAPS Gold Medal](#), presented by the Chancellor at Convocation to the graduating part-time student(s) with the highest cumulative area average

- **Salman Ahmed Khan** and **Derek Pollock** ([Centennial Awards](#))

- **Jim Turner** ([Instructor Award](#))

The MAPS/CCE Awards of Excellence are presented to the graduate in a CCE program with the highest academic standing. The recipients for 2014 were:

- **Karen Delo**
  Certificate in Advanced Accounting
- **David Hall**
  Diploma in Accounting
- **Derek Pollock**
  Addiction Careworker Diploma
- **Candace Kikkert**
  Addiction Studies Certificate
- **Diane Millian**
  Certificate in Business Administration
- **Ryan Peters**
  Diploma in Business Administration
- **John Ayers**
  Certificate in Case Management
- **Adrienne Ziemer**
  Certified Clinical Research Associate Certificate
- **Jennifer Cozzitorto**
  Diploma in Health Informatics
- **Harmeet Singh Aneja**
  Diploma in Health Information Management
- **Sarah Cameron**
  Diploma in Human Resources Management
- **Jennifer Fess**
  Diploma in Management Studies
- **Shelby Murphy**
  Diploma in Marketing
- **Hongtao Liu**
  Certificate in Metallurgy
- **Andrew Jacob Saraiva**
  Diploma in Police Studies
- **Saima Somani**
  Certificate in Public Relations
- **Satinder Heir**
  Diploma in Public Relations Management
- **Renata Zaprucki**
  Certificate in Web Design and Development
- **Amaar Afzal**
  Diploma in Web Design and Development
- **Julia Thomas**
  Ogweho:weh Language Diploma, Mohawk

Award recipients who attended our 29th Annual Awards Dinner
Membership Engagement

Membership engagement is vitally important to any student organization where advocacy is a primary function. Being able to clearly express who you represent in discussions demonstrates competency and issue currency. Regular input from the membership ensures clarity of purpose and a deeper understanding of the ‘whys’ behind the ‘wants’.

Larger student organizations, like the MSU and GSA, have an assembly of students from each faculty who serve as a bridge to their members, as each representative came from the ‘grass roots’ of the membership.

MAPS was designed to operate in a more business-oriented manner. As a result, MAPS employs different strategies to communicate and engage our members.

Communications – the information ‘push’

With more than 5,000 members at a university of over 25,000 undergraduates and CCE students, part-time students are in classrooms scattered across campus and online, making in-person communication (for example speaking at the beginning of a class) both impractical for us and annoying for the majority of students in the class for whom the information is meaningless.

In 2014, we focused our attention on how best to provide information to our members. The easiest and most reliable way to communicate to the members is through email. MAPS receives a membership list each term and employs this list to send out email communications to our members regularly. Our goal for 2014 was to find the right balance between providing up-to-the-minute information against the risk of being accused of ‘spamming’ our members.

The Association developed a privacy and anti-spam policy that distinguishes information that members can opt out of receiving and information that they need to receive as members of the Association. The Association has purchased services from MailChimp, which supports powerful email newsletter designs and member-controlled opt-in/out list management, making unsubscribing for optional materials easy for members to do. A copy of the policy is available online.

With the appointment of a social media coordinator we are keeping our Facebook page current and have expanded with a company page on LinkedIn as well as a group page (McMaster Part-time Undergraduate Experience). Both sites have had reasonable and steady growth in following.

Engagement – the information ‘pull’

The Board of Directors agreed in 2013 to embed engagement into our by-laws as part of the Association’s planning cycle. MAPS is required to survey the membership once every two years to ensure member-organization alignment. In 2014, the Association conducted the following engagements:
• In May 2014, members were asked to vote on the appointment of the external auditors. With this single question on the ballot we received a response rate of 4.5% (the minimum required was 3%).

• Based on survey results from 2013, the Association surveyed members about course accessibility and availability. 3,163 members were surveyed with an overall participation rate of 14.6%. The data collected from this survey was used to create the 2014 MAPS Course Access Report; which will be used as a major advocacy tool in 2015.

• In addition to these engagement efforts, the Association conducted informal surveys of our members who use the office and lounge, including an ‘idea jar’. All ideas are reviewed and members are informed of how we can employ each idea in the operation of the Association. All members who make a suggestion are entered into a monthly draw for a $100 gift certificate at the Campus Store.

• We also offer $25 gift certificates to members who provide us with a story idea or contribute to our newsletter.

Research and Advocacy

As noted above, the Association recently completed a survey of the Membership regarding course access and availability. Additional research was conducted to discover how course offerings were determined, by whom, and how class sizes were set. All of this information was included in the 2014 MAPS Course Access Report. The report was sent to senior administration, deans, and the CCE director and the findings were presented to Admin-Con.

MAPS also conducted basic demographic analyses on aggregated enrolment numbers for the past six years. Our goal was to gain insight into the main age cohorts of our members; the faculties in which they were enrolled; and the average enrolment numbers. The data was used in presentations, included in reports like this one, and used to support reasonably accurate predictions of our fees going forward; which was of significant importance in 2014.

During the recent municipal election, MAPS communicated with all candidates and asked if they would ... “support the City of Hamilton working with [MAPS] to improve transit fare options for part-time university students”. As a result of this email campaign (which included over 60 of our members contacting their local candidates, we secured the support of 10 of the 15 councillors elected in October. MAPS intends to leverage this overwhelming support to engage the HSR in discussions on how improve transit fare options for our members.
Additional advocacy efforts in 2014 included engaging the Associate Vice-President (Institutional Research & Analysis) to re-open nominations for a part-time student on the university fees committee; 100% attendance at Admin-Con meetings; regular liaison with the Dean of Students regarding issues pertaining to our members; engagement of academic advisors and Student Success Centre to promote cooperation and support for part-time students; collaboration with CCE regarding the annual CCE graduation and our Awards Dinner and liaison with other services like the Business Office, Student Accessibility Centre, Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Chaplaincy, Ombuds, Campus Store, and others.

**Significant issues, changes and challenges**

Challenges exist for every organization and MAPS is no different. Our work in 2013 and 2014 demonstrated to the university community that MAPS was once again a value added campus partner and a legitimate voice for part-time students. This good work could only go so far, as we continued to experience negative impacts into 2014.

Our experiences over the past two years has demonstrated to us the importance of understanding risks. In 2015 the Association will be producing a risk management assessment report so that we can better assess and mitigate any risks we face.

**Fee related issues**

**Summer session fees stopped:** In January, the University decided to discontinue collecting MAPS membership fees from summer session students if they were MSU members in the prior fall-winter academic session. Since 2012, the MSU had taken the position that the summer student fees were effectively double-charging students for representation, and the university agreed with this view. In September 2013 the MSU’s Student Representative Assembly voted to unilaterally cancel the 27-year old agreement it had with MAPS that set out the fees.

MAPS accepts the fact that these fees are gone, but process and trust questions linger. The MSU’s decision to simply ‘tear up’ the agreement was not legal and would not have withstood a court challenge. The university administration would not get involved in any negotiations, but stopped the fee based on the MSU’s vote; enabling them to enforce a decision they supported without having any culpability for it.

There were two significant impacts from this issue:

1. Our fee revenue was reduced by approximately $200,000. A new budget was developed in response to this decision that enabled the Association to maintain current operations and services. Going forward, any new services that cannot be accommodated within this new budget will be taken to the membership through a referendum question to adjust our fees appropriately.
2. Relationship rebuilding. We believe that MAPS and the MSU can rebuild a strong and collaborative relationship, if the positive and cooperative working relationship we experienced with the MSU executive this year is carried on by their successors.

**Membership fees collected from CCE students during fee suspension:** In the 2013-14 fall-winter term, MAPS fees were collected from CCE students despite a decision by the University senior administration to stop collecting fees until MAPS had met the university’s required organizational changes. As a result of negotiations with MAPS, the university agreed to our request that these fees be contributed to part-time student bursaries and counted towards our multi-year funding commitment.

**Fee collection resumed:** In May 2014, the University resumed collecting MAPS membership fees (which had been temporarily suspended since September 2013) after determining that MAPS had satisfied the University’s requirements for governance and financial reforms.

**Representation Issues**

**Withdrawal from Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA):** In April, the Association withdrew as a member of OUSA. The decision was made after an evaluation of MAPS’ priorities compared to OUSA’s was completed, an assessment of the ‘fit’ between OUSA’s internal governance structure and that of part-time student associations, and an appraisal by the Board of how well the issues of part-time students were being advanced provincially. The Association left the option open to partner with OUSA or any other student government to advance the interests of part-time students.

**University Conducted Survey of CCE Students:** In March 2014, the University sent CCE students a survey that asked three questions about their knowledge, interest in, and desire to continue to be MAPS members. Despite a clear negative bias to the questions, a majority of CCE students indicated that their support for the Association.

**Part-time student representation on University search committees:** The university involves students and representatives from student governments in policy reviews and occasional management searches to ensure students’ perspectives are heard. Over 2014, there were instances where a part-time student ought to have been involved, but was not. The concern has been raised with the university senior administration and we anticipate increased opportunities going forward.
Operations

MAPS is staffed by a full-time executive director who employs part-time staff (generally Association members) to provide services including Information Assistant (3) bookkeeper (1) and Coordinators for the newsletter, mentorship, and social media.

The headcount of staff increased significantly with the introduction of service coordinators. The coordinators are paid a modest monthly stipend to provide leadership within their respective areas. The positions will be evaluated in Spring 2015 and a go forward recommendation made.

The Association hired Kyle Johansen as executive director on a permanent basis. Kyle was originally hired for this role on an interim basis. His appointment ensures increased stability as the Association continues to rebuild.

Ensuring the office runs smoothly and is accessible to members is a high priority. In order to achieve this, the Association ensures that the office and lounge are well maintained, clean, well lit, and offer a safe and comfortable environment. All staff provide friendly and high quality customer service to anyone who calls or enters the office.

The Association’s 1994 Personnel Policy was replaced with a Human Resources Policy that outlines a process and criteria for salary increases for inflation and merit, dispute resolution process, and our expectations of our employees with respect to their conduct.

Salary ranges for all positions were approved by the Board and were posted on our website.

The Association continued to employ electronic tendering to ensure that purchased services were being procured at the best possible price. Tenders in 2014 including banking services and the purchase and installation of tempered glass doors for our main entrance.

Monitoring Committee

Our by-laws require the Association, in consultation with the university, to appoint an independent monitoring committee. The Committee’s purpose is to evaluate how well the Association is functioning under its new structure. This is the first of three years of mandatory review.

The Monitoring Committee had its first meeting in January 2015 and reviewed all aspects of the Association and was able to provide its report the Board of Directors in early March. The Monitoring Committee’s report is available online.

The Monitoring Committee confirmed that MAPS is meeting its obligations under its by-laws. Their recommendations were primarily future-oriented and focused on continued engagement with the membership and other stakeholders and keeping risk management assessment a regular part of planning.

March 2015
Audited Financial Statements

Grant Thornton LLP were appointed by the membership as the external auditors in May 2014. The audit was completed in the third week of February 2015. The Board approved the audited financial statements at their meeting on March 11th. A copy of the Audited Financial Statements are attached and are available online here.