McMaster Association of Part-time Students

Presented at the 2014 Annual General Meeting
McMaster University

March 25, 2014
2013 In Review

Over the course of 10 months in 2013, the McMaster Association of Part-time Students (MAPS) moved from an organization in desperate need of organizational renewal to a fully transformed entity that is a leader in financial and operational accountability, operational transparency and membership engagement.

The state of the Association in early 2013 was the result of a slow but steady decay in leadership and governance. From 2008 – 2012, the size of the Association’s Board of Directors dropped from 18 members in 2008 to 3 in 2012; its operational and financial controls were degraded; key documents were removed from public access; and absolute and unaccountable control of the Association resided with the few remaining Board members. This culminated in a series of inappropriate spending decisions (as reported The Hamilton Spectator) and prompted McMaster University to initiate a review of MAPS’ governance and financial practices; concurrently placing MAPS membership fees in trust and later suspending collection of membership fees.

By the end of 2013, the university confirmed that MAPS had addressed the concerns it had raised, and the current Board of Directors secured a commitment from the university to start collecting our fees again, as of May 2014. This 10-month turn-around was achieved by an entirely new Board of Directors, elected in February 2013, who led this change and found the right people to help them make this rapid change happen.

This report highlights the steps taken to restore MAPS as a credible student advocate and steward of its members’ resources.
The Board of Directors set three main goals for the 2013 fiscal year: Address the concerns of the university regarding financial controls, ensure that the university agreed to resume the collection of part-time student fees, and to secure the return of funds held in trust by the university. The Board was 100% successful in achieving these goals. In the fall of 2013, the university confirmed that the Association had substantively addressed its concerns. In December 2013, the university agreed to resume fee collection as of May 2014. In March 2014 the university provided the Association with over half of the funds held in trust.

**Summary of Major Activities**

In order to achieve the rapid change required to demonstrate that the Association was accountable to the university and our membership, the Board took several proactive steps in 2013, which included the following.

- **By-law re-write** – A complete overhaul of the Association’s by-laws, standing resolutions, and administrative controls was completed and approved by the Membership in the fall of 2013.

- **New Board Policies** – that compliment the Association’s by-laws created a practical and functional framework for Association management. The policies strike a good balance between management autonomy and the Board oversight.

- **Obtained external expertise** – including:
  - Appointing former MAPS president and Board member David Moore as corporate secretary. With over 11 years experience as a MAPS Board member from 1996-2008, Dave has provided considerable experience and in depth knowledge of the Association’s original goals and mandate.
Hiring Kyle Johansen as acting executive director to lead the development and implementation of operational and financial policies and controls that met or exceeded the University’s requirements. Kyle achieved these changes in a short period of time thanks to his experience in accountability and performance management in the broader public sector. His contract was originally for three months (Aug.-Oct.), but was extended to the end of 2013.

Hiring Glenn Harkness as acting general manager, on a part-time basis for March 2014, to help the Association prepare for the AGM and assist the Board in developing a job description for a permanent senior manager. He is the executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Hamilton. He also teaches organizational development in non-profits at Mohawk College and McMaster University.

• **Validated our changes** by recruiting independent and well-respected members of the McMaster and Hamilton communities to review and comment on our changes.

• **Re-engaged our membership** – through
  o regular e-mail communication
  o posting of Association documents online
  o implementing electronic polling and balloting systems.
  o initiating an unprecedented outreach to members including regular email notifications, regular updates to our Facebook page and web site, and periodic ads in *The Silhouette* and on electronic display Boards operated by the MSU.

• **Contributed to McMaster policy development**
  – MAPS made a significant contribution to the redevelopment of McMaster University’s policy regarding how nearly 20 student organizations would be held accountable for funding received through mandatory fees. Our contribution strengthened the policy and helped make it clear and understandable.
In addition to this important work, the Board maintained the Association’s commitment to recognize excellence through:

- **Recognition the Achievements** of:
  - Leo Eikelman (Bachelor of Technology) MAPS Gold Medal recipient, which is presented at Convocation to the graduating part-time student with the highest cumulative area average.
  - Glyn Wide (Martin W. Johns Award)
  - Shannon Mackay and Diana Enriquez (Centennial Awards)
  - Glenys Causton and Jeff May (Instructor Awards)

Which were presented at our annual awards dinner on November 29, 2013.

**The recipients of the MAPS/CCE Awards of Excellence in the following areas:**

- Felice Gilpin
  Certificate in Advanced Accounting
- Megan O’Connor
  Diploma in Accounting
- Kerry-Anne Cameron
  Addiction Careworker Diploma
- Valerie Fitzpatrick
  Addiction Studies Certificate
- Caroline Knuckey
  Certificate in Business Administration
- Daniel Parsons
  Diploma in Business Administration
- Megan Arppe-Roberton
  Certificate in Case Management
- Donna Yin Yin Hou
  Certified Clinical Research Associate Certificate
- Agatha Joanna Weglewski
  Diploma in Human Resources Management
- Nicole Levy
  Diploma in Management Studies
- Diana Sarai Massimi
  Diploma in Marketing
- Caitlin Kennedy
  Diploma in Police Studies
- Holly Unruh
  Certificate in Public Relations
- Laura Lawson
  Diploma in Public Relations Management
- Matthew Crack
  Certificate in Web Design and Development
- Brian Lloyd
  Diploma in Web Design and Development

In February 2014, MAPS’ former acting executive director, Kyle Johansen, was nominated for the MSU’s Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence for his leadership in establishing a framework for renewal to position MAPS as a leader in effective non-profit governance.
These activities resulted in the achievement of our strategic goals. Additionally, the Board demonstrated fiscal prudence and responsibility by undertaking operational reviews of all existing activities and reducing costs, where possible. This resulted in costs savings for the association of approximately $20,000 annually.

The Board also implemented competitive bidding processes for all major purchases and the use of e-bidding services to ensure maximum participation by potential vendors (auditing services and upgrades to the computers available for members’ use in the Lounge).

**Ongoing Association Activities**

The Board maintained its commitment to Student Financial Assistance through its bursary program, administered through the Student Financial Aid & Scholarship Office. Since 1988, MAPS has contributed over $1 million to bursaries and bursary endowments at McMaster. Our bursaries provide more than $40,000 in financial to MAPS members every year.

**Significant issues, changes and challenges**

**Wrongful Dismissal Claim** – As reported in The Hamilton Spectator and The Silhouette, MAPS terminated the employment a former executive director in January 2013. In May, that individual filed a wrongful dismissal claim in which MAPS, five former Board members, and McMaster University were named as defendants. MAPS’ insurance company has retained legal counsel to represent both the Association and the individual respondents. McMaster University has its own legal representation. As this matter is presently before the courts, we are unable to make any further comment on the matter.

**Wilson Building Funding Pledge** – in 2010, to recognize the need and welcome the commitment of resources in Humanities and Social Sciences, MAPS made a 10-year, $1 million pledge to support construction of McMaster’s new liberal arts building. In recognition that the Association’s resources were better invested in services for its members, and noting that Ontario prohibits the use of student fees to support the construction of academic buildings, the Association and university
administration agreed in July 2013 to cancel the balance of this pledge.

The future of representation of students at the Centre for Continuing Education — has been challenged by the university administration. The university continued to collect MAPS student fees from CCE students in 2013-14, despite confirmation by the Board of Governors to suspend collection of the fees. The university has indicated that it does not want to provide these funds to the Association; but would prefer to use the funds to offset cost pressures of the Centre for Continuing Education. Additionally, in early 2014, the university issued a survey to CCE students that, in the Board’s view, was negatively biased. The Board continues to work with the university in the hopes of a fair resolution to these matters.

Audited Financial Statements

The audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, were prepared by Grant Thornton LLP, Chartered Accountants and are attached to this Annual Report. A copy of the financial statements will be posted to www.mcmaster.ca/maps. Members will be notified that the statements are available by email.

Appointments to the Board of Directors

Elected Board of Directors

Alamin Berhanu (Board Member 2/13 – 3/14)
Jeannie An (1st Vice President 2/13 – 3/14)
Jacqueline Arlen (Vice President Finance 2/13 -)
Emily Cerantola (2nd Vice President 2/13 -)
Jeff Huber (Board Member 10/13 – 3/14)
John Liauba (Board Member 2/14 – 3/14)
Michelle Macfarlane (Board Member 2/13 - 9/13)
David Moore* (Board Member 3/14 – 3/14)
Victoria Rozman (Board Member 2/13 – 2/13)
Andrew Smith (President 2/13 – 2/14)
Carolyn Smith-Hill (Board Member 10/13 – 03/14)

Executive Officer appointments in 2014

On February 5, 2014, Andrew Smith retired as president and as a Board member. On February 11, the Board elected Jackie Arlen to succeed Andrew as president.

Appointed Non-Voting Board Members

*David Moore, Corporate Secretary (06/13 - )
Kyle Johansen, Executive Director (07/13-12/13)
With our thanks and appreciation

It is with thanks and sincere appreciation that we acknowledge the service of Board members who are retiring at this AGM: Jeannie An, Alamin Berhanu, and John Liauba. Andrew Smith, who served as president from February 2013 until a few weeks ago, has our special thanks for the hundreds of hours he contributed to rebuilding MAPS; leading the Association during the most challenging period in our history.

Unlike student leaders in the MSU, MAPS Board members are not paid for their work. They serve the Association as unpaid volunteers. Your Board, in addition to managing their schoolwork, careers, and family commitments, make the time to contribute to the leadership and governance of MAPS. They do this in the true spirit of service and the belief that part-time students benefit from a voice at the decision-making tables at McMaster.

Going forward...

2013 has not been easy. MAPS was in a very bad place and many thought it would not survive. While the Board had a role in addressing this, we would not have gotten very far without the help of our staff. Kim Pastrak, Karen Wilkinson and Felice Gilpin have gone above and beyond to provide excellent service, a friendly smile and encouraging words for everyone who passed through our doors. Words fail to express our appreciation for their commitment and resolve.

We look forward to hearing more about what you want MAPS to do for you. Your feedback will help us build our strategic plan and become even more responsive to your needs while continuing to be an effective advocate for you.

We can now turn the page on 2013, and focus our attention on better serving our members and continuing our quest to be a leader in effective non-profit governance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline (Jackie) Arlen
President
On behalf of the Board of Directors