ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Friday April 23, 2010
Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall Room 111
5:30 pm

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Highlights of the Major Events & Issues From 2009-2010

Annual Spring Retreat
The MAPS Board was provided with a day-long retreat that focused on strategic leadership to ensure MAPS Board members understood their fiduciary responsibilities towards the organization and the students they represent based on “Managing a Nonprofit Organization in the Twenty-First Century” by Thomas Wolf and “Good Governance for Nonprofits” by Fredric L. Laughlin and Robert C. Andringa.

MAPS-MSU Transferability
Currently in its third year, the number of students transferring between MAPS and the MSU is now over twenty. This past year marks the first time that two MAPS members have been able to stay within MAPS despite being enrolled in 18 units, thus saving nearly $1,800 in student union fees.

University 101
MAPS continues to host a half-day (Saturday) workshop for MAPS members which includes sessions on time and stress management, effectively using McMaster’s libraries for research, essay writing, effective note-taking, campus safety and security, and developing a career edge. Unfortunately, despite an e-mail to over 3,000 students via the EDL, turn-out was low (approximately 20 part-time students). Nonetheless, for those in attendance, the workshop was truly valuable, and as such, the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) will be emulating our workshop for their members.
Fun-in-the-Sun Barbecue
This event continues to be a popular one and the addition of live, summer-themed music was a big success this past year.

Go Bus Passes
Again this year, members of MAPS who had a disability and were registered with the Centre for Student Development (CSD) were eligible to obtain a GO Student ID Pass, similar to members of the MSU. Students with the GO Transit ID Pass received discounts of approximately 10% - 30% on the adult 10-ride ticket price and adult monthly pass.

Skills Development Workshops
Essay research and essay writing workshops continue to be one of the most popular and sought after service of MAPS. Feedback from these workshops continues to be overwhelmingly positive.

Website
Despite delays from University Technology Services (UTS), MAPS was able to have more and more ownership of the MAPS website. New this past year was the addition of 28 on-line academic skills workshops.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)
MAPS has not traditionally been involved with government advocacy except for a brief stint with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) from January 2002 to February 2004. This past year, MAPS became an observer of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). This involved various activities including attending CASA’s annual lobby conference in Ottawa where MAPS helped advocate for the elimination of the 10% and 15% price premiums on imported textbooks, the need for a balanced copyright regime, the removal of stipulations on Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding, and the promotion of a student financial aid system with increased accessibility. MAPS met with representatives from the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP). As a result of these inroads, MAPS has been consulted on various occasions by CSLP staff in regards to communication strategies for part-time students, not only at McMaster, but across Canada. As such, MAPS was aware of changes to financial aid for part-time students before staff working at the Office of Student Financial Aid & Scholarships. Of most significance, MAPS supported two key changes to part-time student financial aid: increasing loan limits from $4,000 to $10,000 to more accurately reflect the increased educational costs and prolonged study periods for part-time students and offering part-time students the option of deferring loan repayments until six months after their studies have ended resulting in greater cash flow for family or work expenses.
**On-Line Learning Report**
MAPS prepared a comprehensive document that effectively replaced the on-line learning roundtable given a lack of interest amongst senior University administration. The report, which is available in the MAPS Office, is an extensive research document analyzing on-line learning from a pan-Canadian perspective.

**Convocation Fee Reduction for Part-Time Students**
As a result of a meeting with University Registrar, Richard Levin, this mandatory $40 fee payable by all graduating students during their graduating year in order for them to attend Convocation will be reduced to $30 starting in 2010-2011 for part-time students enrolled in three-year degrees. Ultimately, the Registrar’s Office has experienced various problems with the Convocation Fee, including procedural inefficiencies in assessing the fee, negative public relations, incorrectly assessing the fee to students who do not graduate, and errors associated with partial or full refunds of the fee for those students who do not attend Convocation and either pick up their degree in person or have it mailed to them. As such, the Registrar’s Office lobbied MAPS to add the $40 fee to Administrative Services Fee. Currently $1.06/unit, the Administrative Services Fee covers a myriad of administrative costs including free transcripts for life and the administering of deferred examinations, and was negotiated between MAPS and McMaster University in 2000. As such, any change in the Administrative Services Fee requires consent from MAPS. In order to achieve this consent from MAPS, the Registrar has agreed to prorate the $40 Convocation Fee over 120 units, for a per unit (incremental) fee of 33.3 cents. Put another way, this amounts to $1.00 per 3-unit course. Therefore, for degree students taking 120 units, this totals $40. However, and most importantly for MAPS members, the Registrar has agreed to the same per unit (incremental) fee of 33.3 cents, meaning that degree students enrolled in 90-unit programs (which comprises the overwhelmingly majority of MAPS members) will only have to pay $30 as opposed to $40, a net savings of $10!

**MAPS Office Renovation**
By far, one of the more noteworthy developments this year was the extensive renovation of the MAPS Office. Indeed, MAPS’ commitment to the MUSC as an original founding donor has been tangibly rejuvenated by an unprecedented upgrade and refurbishment of the MAPS office. The new look of MAPS on campus has buoyed staff in their work for part-time students and is facilitating advocacy and representation for part-time students, all the while providing a place of great pride for MAPS members. Moreover, MAPS’ physical space stands as a constant testament to all who enter the office, be it students, staff, faculty, administration, and alumni, that the part-time student experience is different than the traditional undergraduate experience. The MAPS Office has received nothing but overwhelmingly positive compliments from students that indicate the office is much better, and that it serves as an oasis on campus for
them where they truly feel recognized, accommodated, and at home. Of particular note, the smart and stylish boardroom provides sophisticated gravitas to MAPS' with its advocacy agenda. Although my role dealt with detailed coordination of the renovations and décor, all this would not have been possible without the vision, leadership, and commitment by MAPS' President and the Board.

**Technology Upgrades**

Given the large office renovations, it was fitting to also update various technologies in the office including an LCD TV for scrolling announcements, a colour printer for office use, a Blackberry Smartphone to increase the accessibility of the Executive Director, and Microsoft Office 2007 and Windows 7 for students.

**Gift to the Campaign for McMaster University**

Without a doubt, the most substantial accomplishment of the 2009-2010 MAPS Board of Directors is the record-breaking gift of $1,000,000 to the liberal arts building under the auspices of The Campaign for McMaster University, named in honour of Dr. Peter George given his support of part-time students on the occasion of his retirement from McMaster University after 45 years of service!

**Art History**

In recent months, rumours of the phasing out of the Art History program within the faculty of Humanities were confirmed when Art History students were informed by instructors and Humanities administrators that after this year, students could no longer begin the process of obtaining a degree in Art History, and that the discipline would be phased out over two or three years. Understandably, any time there is a program closure within the liberal arts MAPS endeavours to determine if the closure is simply semantics coupled with the opening of a new and improved program with similar content or if the closure is an outright closure. In the case of Art History, this would be a closure, full stop. Given that one-third of the 66 students were part-time (a disproportionately high number compared to other programs containing part-time students), this became an advocacy issue for MAPS. The official position of MAPS was that part-time students currently enrolled in Art History be allowed to complete their degree (which would require more than the two or three years referred to with the closure) and that at the very least a combined Honours degree in Art History be retained. MAPS took on a leadership role by quarterbacking and facilitating meetings with various relevant stakeholders including Art History students and alumni, the McMaster Students Union (MSU), the McMaster Humanities Society (MHS), Humanities representatives on the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), Senate, Undergraduate Council, the Art & Art History Society, and other interested parties such as former MSU Presidents, and MSU President-Elect, Mary Koziol. In addition, MAPS attended various meetings relating to Art History including an open forum organized by the Humanities and Social Sciences
representatives of the SRA and Undergraduate Council meeting, the latter which amended the phasing out to only begin taking effect after the 2010-2011 academic session (so as to allow students who have applied and been accepted to McMaster University, to study Art History). MAPS received good media coverage on the issue including The Silhouette and The Hamilton Spectator. MAPS also met with the Associate Dean of Humanities, Dr. David Wright, and ultimately after a long delay, the Dean of Humanities, Dr. Suzanne Crosta and the Provost, Dr. Ilene Busch-Vishniac. Ultimately, MAPS was assured both verbally and in writing that Art History courses will be offered until the final part-time student has graduated, however, with respect to the combined Honours degree in Art History, despite proactively attempting to address the obstacle of funding cited by Dean Crosta by brokering prospective donors with the University, the Dean and Provost made it very clear that they would decline such funding. In the end, MAPS and the aforementioned student groups spoke against the closure of Art History at the Senate. As a result of MAPS’ hard work, the motion to close Art History failed!

**Tuition And Supplementary Fees for Seniors**
Currently, students aged 65 or over are able to pursue higher learning at McMaster University without paying tuition or supplementary fees. MAPS is currently opposing a policy recommendation that would have these students pay full tuition and supplementary fees by a letter campaign involving the University Student Fees Committee, the University Budget Committee, the University Finance Committee, and the Board of Governors. At this time, the only (small) victory to report is that the policy recommendation has been amended to not take effect until September 2012 as opposed to September 2010. Obviously, this only (partially) addresses one of the issues raised in MAPS’ letter about sticker shock and the need to financially plan accordingly. Two years may seem like a long time for full-time undergraduate students who graduate in three or four years, but it is a very small window of time for part-time students who typically take a decade or more to complete their higher learning studies. Ultimately, MAPS does not believe that there is any good time to introduce this policy change and requests that Board of Governors considers denying this policy change.