Introduction
The monitoring committee was created with membership approval of a new set of Association by-laws in late 2013. By-law 3 1(c) states:

The Board shall appoint, in consultation with the university administration, a monitoring committee, comprised of members of the university community who bring knowledge and experience in organizational transparency, ethics, organizational and financial accountability. The term of the committee shall initially be three years (2013 – 2016), and its purpose shall be to periodically evaluate how well the association is adapting to its new by-laws and board policies. It shall make an annual report to the Membership which shall be released concurrently with the Audited Financial Statements of the Corporation, and be posted in its own Section on the Corporation’s website.

Committee Membership Selection
The Committee’s Terms of Reference was approved by the Board of Directors at its November meeting and potential candidates were submitted to the Dean of Students for input. All candidates were acceptable to the university and all candidates accepted the invitation to service on the committee for a term of at least one year. The Monitoring Committee consists of:

- **Paul Bates**, Assistant Professor of Leadership at Divinity College, Certified Public Accountant, former President of Charles Schwab Canada and the former Dean of the DeGroote School of Business.
- **Gina Robinson**, Assistant Dean of Students and a Chartered Professional Accountant.
- **Jeff Wyngaarden**, former MSU Vice President (Finance).
- **Kim Pastrak**, Chaplaincy Leader (Interim) Assumption College Catholic Secondary School. Kim previously worked for MAPS as an information assistant and membership liaison officer for eight years.
• The Association’s President and Corporate Secretary are ex officio members of the committee. The Association’s Executive Director serves as the Committee’s resource person.

Review Process

The Committee was also asked to consider the Association’s compliance commencing with the approval of the by-laws in October 2013 – a period of 15 months rather than 12.

The Committee received an initial compliance report from the Association, noting where it had met, materially met, or had not met its obligations under by-law or policy.

The Committee, as empowered under its Terms of Reference, determined that additional materials were needed. The Committee reviewed the following documents:

• By-laws 1 – 4
• Board Policies 001 – 013
• Operating Plan & Semi-Annual Update
• Report to the Monitoring Committee on requested issues
• Financial statements
• Risk Management Report
• Insurance Policies (current year)

The Committee conducted its work with two goals in mind.

1. Ensure that the Association was meeting its obligations; and
2. Identify potential risk areas to the Association.

The Committee believed this approach would lend additional value by highlighting potential areas of concern for the Board of Directors; enabling pro-active responses. The Committee felt that this approach would complement the evolution of the Association, as it continues to acquire expertise in its operating framework.

The Committee conducted its review and discussions within a series of categories that it identified as being important elements of the Association’s mandate.
The remainder of this report details the findings and recommendations of the Committee.

**Findings - Summary**

- The Association is materially compliant with its obligations as set out under By-law.
  - The Association experienced some time delays in the implementation of its commitments, but the delays were reasonable.
  - The Association has not yet designated individuals to be members of any Dispute Resolution Tribunal.
- The Association should continue to build its relationship with its members to ensure it has a current understanding of members’ needs and priorities as this will ensure relevance to the membership and increase the value of the Association to members.
- The Association should periodically validate that its strategic goals are aligned with the membership through membership surveys. Similarly, the Association should ask the membership to evaluate how successful the Association has been at advancing those goals.
- The Association should continue to promote the lounge and available services to members with the goal of improving utilization.
- The Association should continue to work with other campus partners to expand services available to members; where and as practical.
- The Association should ensure that risk management approaches are employed in its work; particularly:
  - Securing written memoranda of understanding regarding any cooperative arrangements negotiated with campus partners.
  - Liability relating to its activities and services are fully understood.
  - Ensuring that any events or activities follow the university’s risk management protocol.
- To ensure ongoing fiscal viability, the Association should consider having its membership fee automatically adjusted for inflation in a similar manner to the McMaster Students Union.
Overall, the Committee noted, based on the information available, that the Board of Directors and Association management appear to have fully embraced the new operating framework. The degree of change already implemented, done in a clear spirit of collaboration with their members and the university community, suggests that the Association has turned the corner on the dysfunctional corporate culture present in 2012.

**Support Services to Members**

**Demographic analyses:** The Committee supports the Association’s efforts to better understand its membership through demographic analyses. This activity is of significant importance for the Association to ensure that it both understands who it represents and what their interests and service needs are. This is information that has not been historically collected and should support the Association’s work in better defining what its members needs are.

**Member Engagement:** The Committee encourages the Association to continue to research the needs and priorities of its members to improve its advocacy work and to provide services, and recommends that the Association periodically validate strategic planning goals through input provided by the membership using surveys and other methods.

**Social Media:** The Association is moving in the right direction by implementing /expanding popular social media platforms and engaging members through these social medial sites.

**Front office services:** A core strength of the Association is its highly customer-focused orientation. Members and others who contact the office in person, by phone or email receive friendly service from all staff. The implementation of a ‘no wrong door’ policy reinforces the primary goal of our front line staff: provide excellent and relevant services.

**Lounge Services:** The existing lounge, computer, printing and other services in the lounge are valuable, but appear to be underutilized. The Association should continue to find ways to promote these services to members. Traffic and utilization statistics should continue to be maintained to assess the effectiveness of any promotional work.

**Cooperative Agreements:** The Committee supports the ongoing work of the Association to broaden service availability through the development of shared
agreements (like the MSU health plan). The Committee recommends that the Association formalize these arrangements with memoranda of understanding that outline the terms of the cooperation. Where members may be attending events or functions of another association, confirmation of liability for any incidence should also be outlined. Specifically where part-time students are provided the opportunity to participate in MSU clubs and their activities and programs.

Membership Engagement

The Committee believes that the Association is moving in the right direction with respect to its commitment to membership engagement and the steps taken so far to engage with the membership.

The Committee believes that the Association leadership should regularly survey the membership to validate if organizational strategic goals align with what members think the Association should be doing, seek input on additional strategic goals, and seek an assessment on how well the Association is achieving those goals.

The Committee supports the Association’s intent to survey the membership regarding service demands and the types of support members want in career development, counselling, medical and mental health services prior to any changes in the Compulsory Ancillary Fees going to referendum.

The Committee agreed that continuing effort should be made to improve the number of candidates for election to the Board of Directors. This should be done in concert with other engagement and communications activities.

The Committee supports the strategic goals of the Association and the first Operating Plan. The Committee believes that as the Association becomes more comfortable with this planning and reporting structure, the strategies and plans will be more specific in nature.

Research and Advocacy

The Committee supports the initial work of the Association with respect to course availability, transit fares, and its work with the university regarding compulsory ancillary fees. The Committee anticipates that the Association, now that it has successfully integrated non-profit best practices into its operations and reporting, will be able to focus more attention in this area going forward.
Human Resources
The Committee reviewed and supported the changes made to Human Resources policies. The Committee also discussed how the Association is ensuring that the Board of Directors understands its governance role in relation to the management role of the executive director. The Committee was satisfied that the arrangements in place for the Executive Director are reasonable to ensure that governance and management roles are maintained.

Issues and Complaints
The Committee noted that the Association has not yet designated individuals to serve on any dispute resolution tribunal; and this should be done as it is outlined in by-law. The Committee also confirmed that the DRT’s were only for internal MAPS disputes, and has no involvement in any other organization.

Operations & Risk Management
The Committee, upon review of the Association’s operations, believed that greater emphasis should be made on employing consistent risk management approaches including:

The use of memoranda of understanding between the Association and other organization for shared services, providing access to members to other organization’s events or clubs, and assumption of any liability association with this access.

Commencing the process with the University and the membership to have the MAPS membership fee be linked to inflation in a manner similar to that of other student associations.

The Committee notes supports the Association’s use of an Annual Risk Management Assessment and Report.
As the Association continues to expand services and events, it will be increasingly important that the Association be fully conversant regarding the university’s risk management protocol.

The Committee also encourages the Association to provide brief, periodic updates on its operations and goal achievement to the Senate and Board of Governors, to ensure that university leadership is aware of the progress being made.

**Next Review**

The Monitoring Committee will next review the Association in late 2015 or early 2016 to confirm that the Association continues to operate within its structure and to assess progress made regarding the findings in this report.