MAPS
Operating Plan

Helping you navigate success

McMaster Association of Part-time Students
Purpose, approach, and outcomes

WHAT WE DO

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

HOW WE DO IT

We make it easier to be and stay a part-time student

- **Advocating**, to ensure that the university administration, its faculties and its departments are aware of our members’ issues and needs
- **Engaging members**, to fully understand the unique issues of part-time students
- **Wayfinding**, supporting our members to efficiently navigate university procedure and policy, and to connect our members with the right person/office to get the information they need
- **Being visible and speaking out**, to keep our members informed and aware
- **Recognizing members’ contribution** to McMaster University
- **Celebrating members’ achievement**, both educational and extra-curricular
- **Engaging faculty**, to facilitate knowledge transfer and improve and maintain the relationship between faculty and part-time students
- **Creating community**, to enable part-time students to learn and get support from each other
- **Value-added services**, which are not provided by others and are geared to part-time students
- **Research**, to know who we represent
WHAT WE EXPECT TO COME OF OUR WORK

- **Getting informed about part-time studies gets easier**, through our work with campus partners, university administration, and collecting and providing timely and accurate information.

- **MAPS is known for high quality services and excellent customer service**, by committing ourselves to having value added services, the right information, and the right people.

- **The part-time McMaster experience is easier to navigate**, with MAPS being a ‘one stop information resource’.

- **MAPS is an acknowledged campus planning partner**, as we will provide consistently thoughtful comment that fairly represents the needs and concerns of our members, as well as the broader student body, where those interests align.

- **MAPS is a trusted resource for members, staff and faculty**, by demonstrating a commitment to improving the part-time student experience at McMaster while working cooperatively with all campus partners and stakeholders.
How we are moving forward in 2014

1  REPRESENTATION

MAPS advocates for the unique issues and needs of part-time students to the university administration, sister student governments, academic faculties, and university departments. Where a community issue exists, MAPS will advocate to the community directly, or in concert with other student associations or provisional organizations, where interests align.

The Association has representation on many university governance bodies and we ensure that our appointees maintain a constant presence at these decision-making tables.

Metrics

MAPS ensures that its appointees maintain at least an 80% attendance rate at meetings.

MAPS identifies and showcases one issue each academic term that is important to part-time students by providing education on the issue to members through its communications program and by raising the issue and discussion options to address the issue with the relevant university group.

Work with the university to present tuition and compulsory supplemental fees as an ‘all in’ charge. Determine how many members are adversely affected by the fee segregation.

2014 Focus

Course quality and availability

Quality of Part-time Student Experience

Improving access for Campus Store pick-up (year round)

Creating benefits for our members

Working with the university to better describe compulsory fees on student statements
Part-time students very often have families and full-time jobs to balance along with their studies. MAPS recognizes the sacrifices and dedication of its members throughout each year through the following activities:

**Bursaries:** Over $60,000 is granted to part-time students annually through bursaries created and funded by part-time students, for part-time students.

**CCE Graduation:** As part of its annual budget, MAPS contributes $5,000 towards the graduation ceremonies for students at the Centre for Continuing Education.

**Awards:** MAPS has established awards for academic performance and personal achievement of part-time and CCE students, as well as for teaching excellence and community contribution to the part-time student experience.

**Awards Dinner:** Award winners, university leadership and distinguished guests attend a dinner to celebrate members’ achievements.

**Incentives:** We are introducing incentives and promotions to improve member engagement with respect to story submission, assisting with communications, providing ‘navigational tips’ for members and other items of interest.

**Metrics**

Members are made aware of MAPS bursaries and how to apply for them.

We continue our commitment to CCE graduation.

We ensure our non-academic awards are well-publicized so that at least two nominees are submitted for each award and represent a broad cross-section of the membership.

**2014 Focus**

*Increase awareness of MAPS’ contribution to part-time student recognition*

*Ensure public recognition of sponsorship of CCE graduation*

*Increase / ensure effective communication of opportunities for members regarding bursaries / awards*

*Investigate further improvements to the awards dinner*

*Find additional ways to recognize members’ achievement at graduation*
Our most visible and value-added contribution to the part-time student experience is the support we provide our members each and every day. By maintaining service excellence and introducing new and needed services, we ensure our members have what they need to succeed at McMaster.

Wayfinding: We provide friendly and excellent customer service for anyone who comes through our doors. Knowing the campus, its faculties, departments, and services, we provide direct information on how things work and the fastest route from an issue to its solution.

By maintaining a log of members’ questions and the best responses, we have a repository of knowledge that makes us second to none when providing help.

One-on-one Assistance: Part-time students can be 18 to 80, first time learners or seasoned students, extroverted or introverted, foreign or local, or any combination. We do our best to provide all members with personal one-on-one assistance, based on their needs and knowledge. That includes demonstrating how to use Mac’s online systems, helping find resources on the internet, or showing members how to use the computer and printers available in our Lounge.

Our commitment is simple: If you need to know it, we’ll will know it too.

MAPS Lounge: Because not everyone is comfortable studying the same way, MAPS provides space for its members to use for reading, studying, computer/internet use, printing and copying, and quiet conversations. Arrangements can also be made to use our meeting room for silent study space.

The Lounge is equipped with three state-of-art computers and each has internet access as well as access to black and white and a colour laser printer. Printing, copying, and hot drinks are available to members for a nominal fee.

Campus Store pickup: To assist part-time students who are not able to visit the Campus Store during normal operating hours or who would prefer not to stand in line, the MAPS office is designated as a “Campus Store Pick up Location” when ordering course materials on line. With photo identification, orders can be picked up from our office during our operating hours, or outside of normal hours, by appointment.

Mentorship: Our members possess business and life experience which is unparalleled compared to full-time students coming to McMaster directly from high school. And part-time students who have been pursuing their degrees for a few years...
have amassed considerable knowledge of how part-time studies work. MAPS would like to leverage this experience by bringing together students with knowledge and the desire to share their experiences with newer students who would like a ‘leg up’. We will be introducing a mentorship program in the fall of 2014 to achieve this.

On line community: To assist part-time students, especially those who take courses on-line, the Association will investigate members’ interest in creating a unique part-time students online community, where members can share information, ask questions and meet fellow students. Based on feedback, we will issue an RFP to engage a professional consultant to create the necessary technology platform.

Educational sessions: This year, we will be providing educational sessions on the most common subjects raised by our members; or areas of importance that members should know about. These will be focused sessions, timed to fit into evening schedules.

Metrics

Assistance: MAPS staff will create a dynamic FAQ book as a staff resource to ensure members receive the best answer for their questions.

MAPS staff will provide one-on-one assistance to members, upon request (or by appointment – within four days of a request). Members’ assessment of our services will consistently be high to very high.

Services: The MAPS Lounge will be open 95% of advertised hours of operation between September and April each year. The Lounge will be open 85% of advertised hours of operation during the summer.

Campus Store pickup will be available for members in August-September 2014. Utilization statistics will be maintained and reported to the Membership in the Annual Report.

A mentorship program will be designed and launched between July and October 2014. A report on the program’s progress will be made in the Annual Report.

Educational sessions will be held twice in the fall and again in the winter term.

A proposal for an online community will be reviewed by the Board of Directors.

2014 Focus

Staff FAQ book (Quality Assurance)
Course Material Pick Up Service
Investigate online provision of courseware materials
Mentorship Program
Online community Investigation
Communications

The most visible way to demonstrate accountability and to ensure relevance to our membership and stakeholders is through regular communications. Communications include providing notices of meetings, calls for nominations and appointments to committees, notifications of online voting and referenda, requests for volunteers, and providing information regarding issues, surveys, and events of importance.

We communicate with our members through our website and social media site(s); posting notices on our bulletin boards and partnering with the MSU to put information on their electronic displays; purchasing ads in campus newspapers; distributing notices to McMaster University Public and Government Relations, getting members’ input through meetings, voting, surveys, and send directed emails.

The Association will also re-launch The Link – the Association’s newsletter – in an online digest format. The Link will allow members to click on stories of interest and find out in depth information about things that matter to them.

The Association will also conduct a pilot of regular podcasts for members updating them on current events as they pertain to part-time students.

We will also produce, electronically or in hard copy, brochures, handbooks, and other materials which are deemed to be ‘value added’ to our membership.

To promote increased interest in the Association’s publications, and to bring new people into the Association, we will begin offering honouraria to members who take on coordinator roles in the production of communication materials.

Metrics

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<th>Notices:</th>
<th>MAPS will have notices issued and posted as required by our by-laws and policies on time and in the correct form 95% of the time. And will ensure that any errors or omissions captured in the 5% margin are minor or immaterial.</th>
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<td>Volunteers:</td>
<td>MAPS will ensure that timely and regular invitations are made to the membership to volunteer with the Association or submit their name to the candidate pool for possible selection / appointment to committees. The Association will ensure that there is at least one nomination for each open position; and ideally will have each election contested.</td>
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The Website and social media sites will be updated as often as required to reflect news or recent events, including notices and any special communications.

MAPS staff will consistently receive high to very high marks on the online membership services survey available on our website.

The Association will produce a MAPS Handbook for 2014, relaunch *The Link*, and pilot a series of podcasts. The Association will produce materials describing new services offerings as they become available.

2014 Focus

**Creation of a members’ candidate pool**

**Creating value-added publications**

**Develop a podcast Pilot**

**Continue to engage our members to better understand their needs**
5 RESEARCH

The best and most effective way for the Association to understand and anticipate the needs of our members is to know as much about our members as we can through direct interaction and research on who our members are and what they need to succeed at university.

Based on a survey conducted in December 2013, the Association will conduct research into the availability of courses for part-time learners during the 2014 summer session. Based on the success of this work, the program may be expanded to cover all three academic terms. This work will be completed primarily through direct surveying of summer students and review of the summer course calendar and course availability.

The result of this research will enable the Association to report back to our members and the university on what courses are a high priority for part-time students in the summer session, and eventually enable the Association to report on high demand courses that should be provided in night classes in other academic sessions.

The research should also allow us to provide data on how many part-time students are able to enroll in necessary courses (and how many attempted to enroll, but were denied/unable to be enrolled), and if there is a need to provide special access provisions to part-time students for courses based on where they are in their academic program.

Eventually the Association would like to commence course evaluations. Exploratory work will be conducted on this in 2014, with an expectation that a pilot can be launched in 2015.

The Association will also conduct demographic analyses on its membership based on data provided by McMaster University, with a view to establishing:

- The average course load of a part-time student, per academic term
- The frequency that a part-time student may switch between full-time and part-time studies over the course of a degree
- The percentage of part-time students by age, in 10 year age cohorts
- Part-time student geographic distribution

In support of the University Senate’s investigation into the future of non-honours 3 year bachelor degrees, the Association proposes to seek the opinion of our members regarding their preferences regarding 3 versus 4 year degrees, and additional information that the Senate and the University Administration may find instructive in their ongoing consideration of the future of baccalaureate programming at McMaster.
Metrics

Surveys: MAPS will conduct a survey of members on their experience with summer course availability; particularly focusing on what courses our members were able to enroll in for the summer session and what courses they wanted to enroll in but could not because they were full/not offered. This survey may be retrospective in nature.

Engagement MAPS will engage our members to determine their opinions regarding three versus four year degree programs. This engagement will take the form of a series of public meetings (in person or online), and follow up surveys.

Demographics MAPS will create a demographic analysis of who we serve and describe major demographic distinctions.

Reporting MAPS will produce reports that detail the findings of our research.

2014 Focus

Engagement

Summer course availability

Future of Three Year Degree Program

Demographic Analysis of members

Create Part-time Student “Snapshots”

Determine how many members obtain tuition reimbursement from their employers (to advocate for improvements to student financial statements)
6 OPERATIONS

As with any organization, there are some costs that are incurred to ‘keep the doors open’. The Association is committed to keeping the operational costs of the Association reasonable and in keeping with acceptable standards for similarly sized organizations. The Association is further committed to leveraging all of its assets – human and physical – to ensure that members receive the best possible value for the fees we receive.

7 BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY AREA OF FOCUS

8 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information regarding this plan or any other aspect of MAPS, please feel free to contact us at the following coordinates:

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<th>VISIT OR MAIL</th>
<th>McMaster Association of Part-time Students</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUSC 234, McMaster University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1280 Main Street West Hamilton L8S 4S4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHONE</td>
<td>(905) 525-9140 x22021</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMAIL</td>
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Approved by the Board of Directors July 15, 2014