

KALIA



AKKAD

FOR VP FINANCE

Hello,

First and foremost, I want to thank you, Assembly Members, for sparing so many hours during this exam period for what will be a long meeting, all for ensuring that the goals of the McMaster Students Union (MSU) are met, and all for the students.

This past year, I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the MSU and how it operates through my involvement on the Finance Committee. Throughout my undergrad, I have had a variety of wonderful experiences and have worked on projects that enhanced student experience, a goal I hold dear to my heart. I wanted more and that led me to accept the President-elect request to manage his campaign. Seeing Ehima win the votes of the students in the highest voter turnout in MSU history was inspiring, and managing that campaign was an accomplishment. My knowledge of the organization coupled with my unmatched passion for student development drove me to run for the position of VP Finance.

The majority of the work the VP Finance elect will be able to accomplish will not be possible without the support of the assembly. As Vice President of Finance, I assure you I will work with you every step of the way to bring together our collective vision as students, to facilitate a greater student experience.

As your next VP Finance, I will be working on five main points that I strongly believe are necessary to enhance student life. These points come from my belief that we, the students, are the core of the this organization.

The rest of this document provides a more detailed explanation of my platform. However, I firmly believe that the position of the VP Finance does not only revolve around platform. It also takes leadership, passion and communication skills to bring about the change that students deserve. For those reasons, I have included an "about me" section.

- 5 POINTS**
- OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
 - TRANSPARENCY
 - STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
 - VISION ALIGNMENT
 - TRANSITION

I wish to inform you that I am always free and glad to have a chat or answer any questions you have. I will be looking forward to working with you all.

Sincerely,

Kalia Akkad

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LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF.

EDUCATION

CHEMICAL ENGINEERING & MANAGEMENT



WORK EXPERIENCE

various: teaching, research and technical

- o Headstart Teaching Assistant, McMaster University, Summer of 2012
- o Automation Intern, Suncor Energy, Summer of 2013
- o Research Assistant, McMaster University, Summer of 2014

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

- o Ehima's Campaign Manager (still dons the stickers!)
- o Finance Committee Voting Member, MSU, 2014/2015
- o Volunteer Tutor, Frontier College, 2014/2015
- o Redsuit, WW 2014 (one, we are from Mac...)
- o Peer Mentor, Engineering Faculty, 2013/2014
- o Mentorship Program Co-Chair, SELECT Leadership Training Program, 2013/2014
- o Ambassador Team Chair, SELECT Leadership Training Program, 2013/2014
- o Engineering Outreach, Faculty of Engineering, 2011-2013

INTERESTS



Cycles, goes the distance (no, not a scooter)



Avid fan of English Premier League (c'mon Arsenal)



Strong believer in social justice and human rights



Makes bucket lists, gets things done



Enjoys representing McMaster at competitions! (aka enjoys being put under pressure)



LEADERSHIP

TEAM PLAYER

ANALYTICAL

FAST LEARNER

PUBLIC SPEAKING

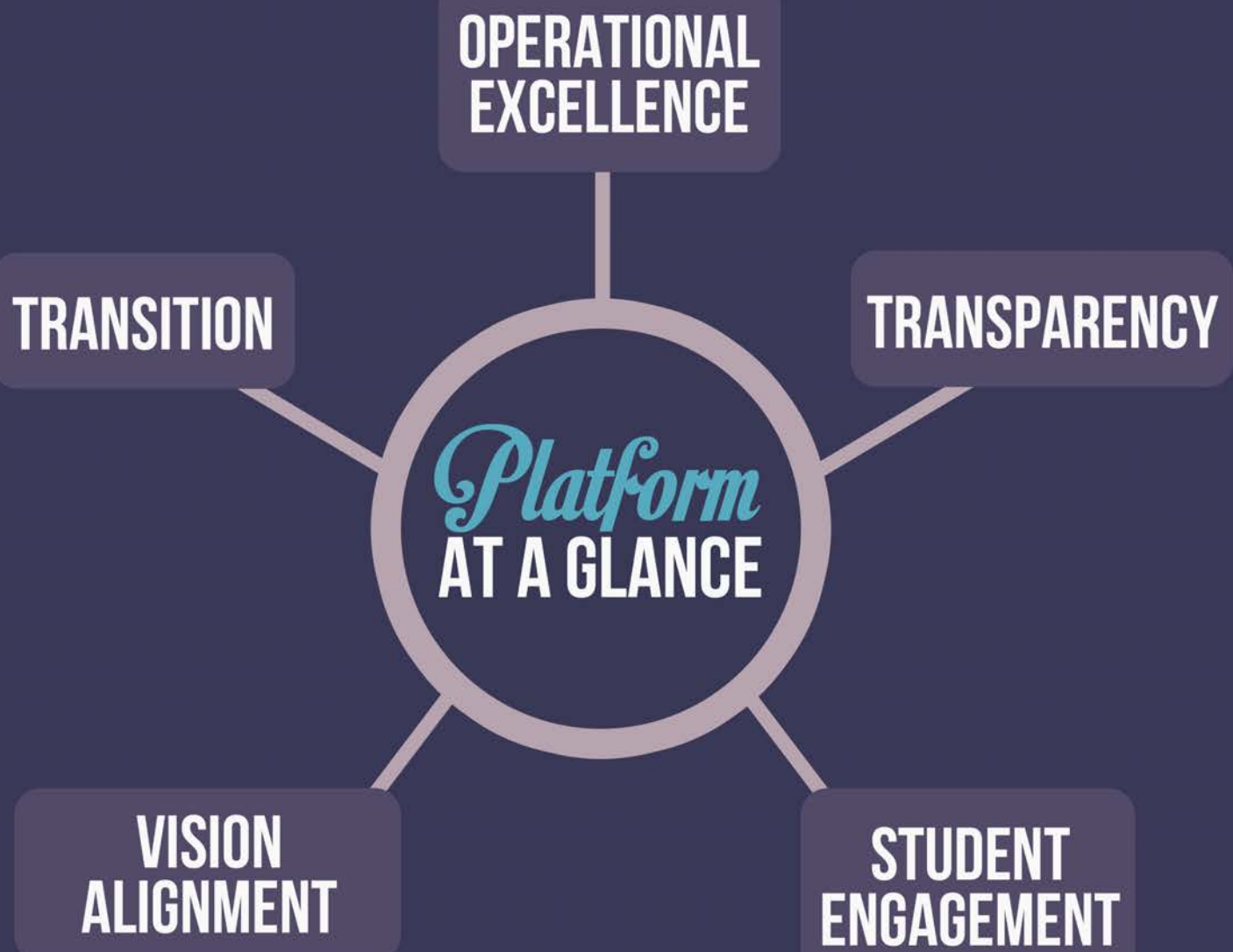
TIME MANAGEMENT

AWARDS



- o Dean's Honours List
- o Recipient of NSERC research grant
- o First place winner of Monsarrof Student Paper Night competition

BELOW are the core elements necessary for success of a unique organization like the MSU. We must ensure excellence in our *operations*, we must be *transparent* in how we operate and interact with stakeholders, and we must collaborate for a common *vision*. As an organization with yearly turnover, we must deal with *transition*. And as a student focused organization, *student engagement* is key, and should always be something we strive for.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Operational excellence focuses on two fronts: continuous growth for our business units and integrity of our operations. The prior focuses on finding new means to continuously improve MSU's business units (both financially, and alignment with values and vision). The latter refers to our internal systems and how they support our activities and operations.

1.1 CONTINUOUS GROWTH

This refers to how the VP Finance plans on supporting and growing our business units. VP Finance contributes by providing support, external insight and direction. As the VP Finance, I will work on facilitating goals that managers have in order to grow their units by providing them with the resources necessary and appropriate. As the VP Finance I will ensure that our business units are set for success!

1280

Current State: Catering has been the most consistent business in regards to financial performance. Catering menu has been in effect since last January, and has been very popular, but could be expanded.

Proposal:

- Actively seek business in terms of catering in order to maximize both take-outs and in-house catering.
- Enhance student engagement and create packages that encourage cross-club collaboration to utilize space, and recreate 1280 as also a means for student engagement during the day.
- Advocate for catering to CIBC hall to provide an alternative to Paradise Catering.

UNDERGROUND

COURSEWARE:

Current state: Underground does not play a major role in printing student coursewares. For example, Underground printed 3 in first term, and no more than 6 the second term. This is a missed opportunity to save students money, as Underground can provide coursewares at a 20-40% cost reduction.

Proposal:

- Target professors that SRA members know and have good relationships with.
- Target professors with expensive textbook requirements, and propose this service as means to ease student burden.

ONLINE ORDERING

Current state: no online ordering mechanism or website exists.

Benefits:

- Reduces huge line-ups and increases convenience to current users.
- Eliminates losses due to student mistakes by taking more control of printing (these losses are usually not claimed by the student).
- Expands design business by reaching a larger customer base that includes community, alumni, et cetera.

Proposal:

- Quantify benefits and potential of expanding design business.
- Support Sandro, manager of Underground, in proposing this again, and push this forward

CFMU

Current state: Students are engaged upstream in production of content, but there are no means to measure how we perform in regards to downstream engagement. Thus, we do not know if “student-focused” talk shows receive their deserved audience.

Proposal:

- Create “yardstick” that will assess CFMU performance downstream.
- Reach students in formats they are using, especially during midterm/exam periods. CFMU can create “midterm” or “exam” jams to reach more students, and indirectly create more familiarity with the station.

1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY

Organizational integrity refers to our internal processes and framework, and how they help us in delivering our vision, mission, and core activities. This can encompass a wide variety of things, and being specific is paramount to moving forward. I am focusing on two aspects, *wage reviews* and *policy to process*.

WAGE REVIEWS

Current state: This past year, PTMs approached the Finance Committee asking for wage increases, or hour increases. Our approach is very reactive.

Proposal:

- Systematic approach that looks at the job structure and job description, while looking at existing resources and opportunities for collaboration.
- Better understanding of what is “required” for a job to compensate, and what is “extra” to reward.
- Look at historical data of positions; historical data with a better understanding of job descriptions will equip us to make informed decisions.

POLICY TO PROCESS

Current state: not all policies are being implemented because there is a gap between policy and process. Policies are comprehensive, but do not outline an “action plan” for change. The target will be the *Social and Environmental Purchasing Policy*.

Proposal:

- Make Social and Environmental Purchasing Policy implementable by integrating into our processes, in a format of a guideline and develop performance metrics.
- Scope and scale: scale things down and do them really well. We should not be afraid to make small changes, continuously. Not all change has to be drastic.

TRANSPARENCY



This refers to transparency with information, and the belief that having information available does not make them accessible, and thus does not make them transparent. Transparency creates a “welcoming organization” and thus is important for student engagement.

2.1 SRA TRAINING

Current state: SRA members are expected to make decisions prior to equipping them with knowledge, which hinders transparency between BoD and SRA.

Proposal:

- Develop virtual SRA training in March and provide follow-up session prior to the April meetings.

2.2 STUDENTS AT LARGE

Current state: Information available is not accessible, as it does not cater to student preferences and behaviours. We still have students that are not familiar with the organization, and what the SRA and MSU can do.

Proposal:

- o Website: present information in a way that caters to students who want a “quick” and “brief” overview of organization. For example, utilize info graphics and provide summaries of policies.
- o Reach student in format/avenues they prefer: Facebook page for Board of Directors to make it easier for students to follow what is being done.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

1. STUDENT RECOGNITION
2. INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
3. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To continuously engage students, I believe the MSU should focus on positioning and aligning itself with students and their interests. Thus, the MSU must proactively monitor and gauge where student interests lie, and respond to their needs and their wants.

3.1 STUDENT RECOGNITION

Current State: Students do great things every day, but we do not hear about them, so it seems that nothing is being done. The MSU is missing an opportunity to appreciate students, and use student achievements and interests to engage and attract students back to the MSU. Students outside MSU are also doing great things, but only those involved in the MSU are recognized in the year-end recognition night.

Proposal:

- o Recognize student achievements, big or small, through MSU channels. For example, have the Sil proactively seek student achievements, and write about them.
- o Recognize student achievements as they occur – do not wait for a year-end celebration.

3.2 INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A strong example where MSU and student interests diverge is in regards to innovation and entrepreneurship, and I believe that the time is now for the MSU to close this gap.

Current State: Over the past one to two years, many clubs, competitions, and initiatives have emerged indicating a strong interest in innovation and entrepreneurship. Examples are: Spectrum, Hack-it-Mac, MSIL, Social Spark, and MEA. However, no special support, promotion, and recognition have been given to these initiatives on behalf of the MSU.

Proposal:

- o Student recognition: utilize our channels to recognize students.
- o Innovation Award: strengthens the fact that we value innovation, and want to award it.
- o Promote: utilize our reach and channels to promote for events and activities, provide Spectrum and others the buzz & vibe it needs to grow.
- o Advocate: collectively advocate the university, on behalf of student clubs, and alongside Spectrum, for student space. This is paramount for growing our “innovation” culture.

3.3 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly has clearly proved to us that students can, want and will be engaged when topics aligning with student interests, needs, and concerns are discussed. The MSU should recognize these points of engagement, and foster an environment where implementation is possible.

Current State: two binding motions, BDS and Kosher/Halal food in Bridges, passed during the GA with an overwhelming number of participants.

Proposal:

- o The VP finance will (and must) spearhead a solid plan of action to ensure continuity and implementation of both motions, regardless of personal point of views.
- o BDS: creation of an ad-hoc committee comprised of representatives of the student body, and representatives of MSU's finances to further understand what students want. The committee will create a plan and a guideline for integrating the policy into MSU processes, and develop metrics for implementation.
- o Kosher/halal: proactively work with stakeholders on finding certified vendors as outlined in the motion, and allocate part of the budget if necessary to ensure the motion is implemented.

VISION ALIGNMENT



Presidential elections are a time where the student body votes on a vision; the president and BoD collaborate in delivering this vision. As campaign manager, I played an integral role in the development of this vision, and as VP Finance, I will translate this vision into reality. Specifically, I will focus on two of Ehima's platform points: Talk Tuition and Community Kitchen.

4.1 TALK TUITION

Current State: we need to start the conversation on tuition.

Proposal:

- o Breakdown of tuition. By understanding what we are talking about, we become stronger advocates.
- o Campus-wide promotional campaign on the importance of starting the tuition conversation. We will also be in a stronger position to advocate when we have the student body on board.

4.2 COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Current State: community kitchen proposed in presidential platform, and a similar project later approved via SLEF.

Proposal: undergo feasibility study for community kitchen, to get a clearer understanding of the overall structure of the program, the risks involved, cost structure and location.

TRANSITION

ENSURING CONTINUITY

The MSU faces high turnover rates as positions change hands every year. It is important to take unfinished initiatives to completion, as the end-goal is enhancing student life, and not solely accomplishing personal platforms. As both have value to students, both should be worked on.

5.1 TRANSITION

As the VP Finance, I will take it upon myself to ensure that this organization is continuous, and work that has been done by Scott moves forward, as appropriate. To ensure that future BOD members also adopt this, I will advocate for adding a sub-section for this in the Year Plan.

Examples:

- o Athletic and Recreation Fee
 - Continue the discussion of how Athletic and Recreation can provide more value to students.
- o Roll Out of Levy
 - Managing changes with rollout of levy, and ensuring faculties demonstrate value for higher fees received.
- o Emergency Fund
 - Monitoring execution and implementation.
- o Community Ice Rink
 - Managing previous challenges and ensuring a plan forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read my platform. The five elements I have presented ensure that we deliver our operations with excellence, we continuously strive to be transparent and to engage students with us, we are aligned with a common vision, and we operate continuously.

My vision is for a stronger MSU, one that is, year after year, more capable of enhancing and aligning with the lives of the students central to our organization.

I always enjoy a conversation, so feel free to email me at akkadk@mcmaster.ca or call me at (647) 808 2848, should you wish to meet before elections.

I eagerly look forward to Election Day, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Kalia Akkad

NOTES

