DSU Vice President Internal
Report for the period of March 25th – April 8th

I’m excited to be submitting my final Council report for the semester, albeit under these circumstances. I’m sure this is not how anyone anticipated the year to end, and it certainly isn’t what I expected from the last month(s) of my term. To summarize my feelings about these being the last few weeks, it is bittersweet.

When I was elected I didn’t anticipate that this year would end up costing me a majority of my time, costs for credits I wouldn’t complete, relationships with friends and family, and physical and mental health. However, I’ve also gained so much - in skills and experience, confidence in my ability to do effective work (with the right medication, yay!), and friendships and relationships that I value so deeply and know never would have developed without going through this year together. Because of this I know that, given the chance to go back in time, I would choose this job without hesitation.

That said, if I could go back and change mistakes that have been made (the variety and amount of which is continually under debate) I feel confident that with the experience we all (Council and Exec alike) have gained would definitely have led to better circumstances and solutions. To all those who have been harmed in one way or another by any decision made this year, or could be harmed in some unforeseen way in the future, I have no excuses and nothing to say besides that I am truly sorry.

I think that despite the fact that there are things that certainly could have been handled in better or different ways, and that I know I will never feel like I’ve fulfilled what I aspired to do in this position, I feel that we all have taken steps this year in small and large ways that are building towards something better and more beautiful. It’s easy to feel that the problems we face are the largest and most daunting, but it’s important to remember that ultimately we are working to address the broader issues that exist within and outside these spaces, and are also individuals working towards our own goals and paths. I’m incredibly sad that many of us will be parting ways under these circumstances, but I’m grateful for everyone who has approached their work this year with care, passion, and a desire to create positive change. I hope that despite all the difficulties, and between the issues in student (and other) organizing that can feel ridiculously silly and those that feel insurmountable and world-ending, you choose to use your skills, knowledge, and passion to continue to make change.
At this time, where our plans and futures, those of our friends and loved ones, and the very basis of the systems and institutions we’ve been led to rely on feel like they’re uncertain, being tested, or crumbling, it’s important to remember that we still have the power to make changes and provide support to those around us. This includes the need to make change in your own life, to treat yourself and those around you with compassion and care, to take the time that you need to adapt to all the uncertainty that’s encircling all of us, and to use your energy to build yourself and others up in times where it can feel so much easier to burn yourself down and others in the process.

We can continue to be aware of the global and systemic issues that underly and persist within the situation we currently face without steeping ourselves in negative news to the detriment of our own health. And we can use this time to promote a future for ourselves, our communities, and the world that doesn’t rely on the temporary solutions being offered by the status quo that are more and more overtly revealing themselves to be as flimsy and inadequate as they have always been. We can innovate and expand our perceptions of what our world has to look like and be like, and we can do that when we’ve been able to take the time and feel grounded, healthy, safe, and able to do so.

In the words of Dr. Parasram, who sent an incredibly kind and inspirational note to all of his students and has expressed this sentiment in far better words than I could...

“Wishing you all wellness and strength, and looking forward to the world that our studies and our experiences tell us is not only possible, but long overdue.”

With that, I give you my actual report and update! If you took the time to read all this, thanks! If not, I understand lol.
Portfolio Updates

Societies

♦ Since last Council we’ve been primarily working on getting ratification up and running. I’ve met with the Member Services Coordinator and Supervisor who have been working on adapting the ratification process into new online forms, separating ratification for new societies and re-ratification for existing ones. We’ve been working closely with the Policy and Governance Coordinator to figure out logistics such as bank statement requirements, signature requirements, and society support in the interim between the end of the previous ratification period and the start of the new one.

♦ I’ve also been communicating with various societies to answer questions and provide support on COVID-19 logistics and non-COVID-19 related concerns. I sent out an email on the 7th outlining a few updates for societies that has gone to all of their primary contact emails.

Communications

♦ Since our new Communications Coordinator has arrived I’ve been grateful to have a lot of the communications-related responsibilities off of my plate. The majority of the work I’ve been doing related to Communications has been maintaining our Financial Resource list (dsu.ca/covid-19) and monitoring social media for updates and more information to add.

♦ I’ve also been drafting some communications and copy around our in-progress bursary updates, and making website updates related to this or just in general as-needed/by request. I worked on an FAQ for Part-time staff but the most pertinent information is continuing to change, so I’ve hesitated to send it out for now as we don’t want to provide inaccurate or outdated information.

♦ Additionally, I’ve been trying to assist with responding to questions/messages on social media as our Communication Coordinator gets more familiar with the ins-and-outs of the DSU!
Institutional Knowledge

- A lot of this week has been taken up by organizing all of my files, handwritten notes, and other things in preparation for transition. I’ve been working on finalizing my transition report as soon as I can so that I can provide the written document before we officially start meetings and training.
- I’ve also been working on a more general end-of-year report with a lot of the notable changes from this year.

DSU Committee Updates

Student Accessibility Fund Committee

- Following last Council we’ve had significant developments in the structure of the expanded bursaries and our ability to provide them. After feedback from legal counsel we’ve been working out alternative structures that would fulfill the mandate of the Accessibility Fund while ensuring the support we’re providing can meet the range of access needs being faced by the student body.
  - This has entailed a lot of research into accessibility policy, practices, and definitions, and drafting/re-drafting policy and application forms. I’m grateful to the committee members for all of their feedback and support and for dealing with all of my lengthy emails over the past weeks – I’ll provide a more specific update on our current status and answer questions in our Council meeting.
- We’ve processed a few sets of applications but I’ve held off on providing updates before we could confirm how payment would go out (we have the ability to do direct deposit now!) and the specifics of how the motion from last council would play out in practice.
Miscellaneous Updates:

♦ I’ve made a couple visits to the SUB to do some printing, cheque signing, to begin cleaning out my office, and do some searching for various documents that I/others needed.
♦ Assisted in reviewing the Executive Policy and provided feedback to the Policy and Governance Coordinator who has helped facilitate this process.

Regular Meetings
♦ March 26th – Communications Team Meeting
♦ March 30th – Communications Team Meeting, Executive Committee Meeting.
♦ April 2nd – Executive Committee Meeting