

DECEMBER 2024 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

PRESIDENT, RAI ALI

GENERAL UPDATES

- **CASA Advocacy Week**

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), in collaboration with the Quebec Student Union (QSU), hosted Advocacy Week from November 24 to November 30, 2024, on Parliament Hill. Highlights include:

- **Event Participation:** Over 100 student leaders convened to advocate for federal policy changes aimed at alleviating the rising costs of education and the inflationary pressures impacting students.
- **Observations and Insights:** As an observer, I was particularly impressed by CASA's comprehensive advocacy blueprint and their structured approach to engaging with policymakers. Their strategies provide valuable insights that we can adapt to strengthen our own advocacy efforts.

- **Custom Apparel Print Shop**

We are excited to announce that the OTSU Custom Apparel Print Shop is fully set up and operational. Significant milestones achieved this month include:

- **Staff Training:** On December 3rd, Noel from Value-Rite Business Products Inc. successfully conducted training sessions for our staff, ensuring everyone is proficient in operating the new printing equipment.
- **Business Plan Refinement:** Our team is diligently refining the business plan to ensure a smooth and sustainable launch. This includes outlining pricing strategies, marketing approaches, and operational workflows.
- **Launch Preparation:** We are currently assessing the optimal timing for the official opening, aiming to provide students with access to high-quality custom apparel services as soon as feasible.

This initiative promises to enhance student engagement by offering personalized apparel options while generating additional revenue streams for OTSU.

- **UPASS Referendum**

In preparation for the upcoming UPASS referendum elections next semester, key developments include:

- **Administrative Meeting:** A productive meeting was held with the university administration to discuss the logistics and framework of the upcoming UPASS referendum.
- **Collaborative Messaging Strategy:** We are working closely with the university's Communications team to develop clear and effective messaging that will inform and engage students ahead of the voting period. This collaboration aims to ensure that all communications are consistent, accurate, and resonate with the student body.

VP STUDENT LIFE, AREEJ FATIMA

GENERAL UPDATES

- **All-Society Presidents Meeting**

This month, I chaired the All-Society Presidents Meeting, which focused on gathering feedback about the semester and discussing planning for the end-of-year gala. Key topics included venue booking, rental agreements, direct deposit information, and the overall process. Feedback was gathered on what worked, what didn't, and other areas for improvement, which will guide future planning and decision-making.
- **Update on Women-Only Gym Hours**

I met with Scott, the Athletics Director, to follow up on our previous discussions about women-only gym hours. Scott confirmed that starting February 2025, the university gym plans to offer women-only hours as well as all-inclusive hours in specific spaces, including the aerobics room, spinning room, and varsity strengthening room. This initiative will foster inclusivity and support diverse student needs.
- **Carriage Cup Engagement**

Scott and I also discussed strategies for increasing student engagement for the upcoming Carriage Cup in January. He emphasized the importance of involving students in athletic events and explored ideas to encourage participation. Following this, I met with Mati, the VP Downtown, to discuss ways to engage downtown societies, clubs, and students. We proposed offering group tickets to make participation more accessible and foster collaboration between various campus groups.
- **End-of-Year Event Planning**

I had follow-up meetings regarding the end-of-year event, Pangea. After deliberation, we decided to retain the existing structure of Pangea for this year while gathering student feedback to assess its relevance and potential changes for the future. Recognizing the achievements of clubs, societies, and their executives remains a priority. To this end, we are organizing a separate Clubs and Societies semi-formal reception in March to honor these groups, celebrate their successes, and provide networking opportunities.
- **New Initiative: Student Discount Card**

To provide added value to students, I am exploring the launch of a Student Discount Card program. This initiative aims to offer exclusive discounts at local businesses, enhancing the student experience while fostering partnerships with the community. Currently in the planning phase, I am engaging with potential business partners to determine interest and feasibility. Once further developments have been made, I will present a detailed proposal to the board.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Clubs and Societies Committee**

No Committee Updates

VP STUDENT AFFAIRS, ZAINAB HUSSAIN

GENERAL UPDATES

- **Durham Region Transportation Advocacy**

I am currently discussing Kamika, the DRT engagement representative's visits for the winter semester. Students will have the opportunity to speak with her and express their concerns directly. Additionally, we are hoping to have Presto table alongside her.

In previous months, I discussed the potential addition of specialized drop-off and pick-up areas. This month, I want to confirm that these have been added near the Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre.

I also attended a presentation hosted by DRT, which provided various statistics on the price increase. I asked questions and sought clarifications regarding these statistics to ensure that, when discussing the referendum, we present the information in an unbiased manner. I will also be attending the UPASS communication meeting to discuss the potential strategy for the referendum.

- **Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)**

This month, I also worked on a blog post about the Student Advocacy Conference (SAC) to raise awareness among students about the conference and its advocacy priorities and recommendations. The blogpost which was also sent to students through our newsletter aimed to highlight OUSA's work for students and explain the relevance of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Survey (OUSS) to OUSA's efforts. Additionally, students were encouraged to complete the survey.

December will be the last month that the OUSS is running, so it was also the final opportunity to promote it on social media.

Mati will be co-authoring the spring paper. We attended the check in with the other authors and began working on the PCR sets.

I also attended MPP Begum Dolly's mental health table talk on behalf of OUSA, which my group was invited to during SAC. The focus group aimed to discuss various factors that affect individuals' mental health. I shared OUSA's recommendations on mental health, relevant statistics, and students' concerns on the topic. Begum Dolly plans to write a letter to the Minister.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Student Success Committee

VP DOWNTOWN, MATIFADZA (MATI) CHIDIVI

GENERAL UPDATES

- **Understanding Student Engagement at the Downtown Campus**

I created a report on my findings on downtown student engagement. I was also informed of similar research carried out by students in Professor Tyler Fredericks's class (During the Fall 2024 semester). I was able to attend their presentation of their findings and recommendations. I was pleased to realize we had reached the same conclusion. I have asked for the reports from these findings to be shared with the OTSU to back my findings and expand the pool of information regarding downtown student engagement. This information will also be shared with the City of Oshawa to inform how they engage with downtown students. This is a collaborative effort by Professor Frederick, who is working with Oshawa's TeachingCity initiative.
- **OTSU Municipal Involvement**

Based on my previous Conversation with the city of Oshawa and the following conversations I had with Professor Tyler Frederick and the VP of External Affairs of TDSA. I have created a recommendation for OTSU municipal participation. Strong municipal participation also requires a strong relationship and collaboration with TDSA and DCSA. This recommendation would require internal policy changes, restructuring, and possibly bylaw changes. I am working on getting in contact with the Oshawa Chamber of Commerce to explore further avenues for OTSU municipal involvement.
- **LGBTQ+ advocacy and resources**

Had a meeting with student leaders from OT- Pride to discuss resources and problems that LGBTQ+ students face on campus and possible avenues to improve those problems and create pathways within the university to support LGBTQ+ students.
- **Collaboration**

My research has highlighted a significant breakdown in internal communication and collaboration within the university when promoting campus events. This lack of coordination limits the reach and effectiveness of student opportunities, leaving many untapped and resulting in students missing out. While I have recommended several strategies to enhance internal collaboration, there is also potential to explore other avenues to strengthen internal communication and engagement further.

Externally, beyond collaboration with the City of Oshawa, the OTSU could greatly benefit from fostering stronger partnerships with other student associations in the Durham region. Establishing a sustainable platform for ongoing collaboration and communication— independent of the discretion of each executive team— would enable us to address regional and municipal issues more cohesively. Many of our concerns align across institutions, and joint advocacy efforts could amplify our impact and better serve our students.

COMMITTEE UPDATES