

# **Jonathon (Toni) Tonietto**

## **Campaign Platform 2016.**

### **UNLEASH McMaster.**

In my six years at McMaster, I have tailored my education with a focus on sustainable development for the world. People have many personal definitions of sustainability. The technical definition first presented by the Brundtland report in 1987 states that sustainable development must meet the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of the future [1]. I believe that sustainability requires humans to work symbiotically with the planet until uncontrollable cosmic circumstances make this impossible. Such a relationship requires that we work from a micro to macro scale ensuring that our actions do not impede those of future generations. These activities begin at McMaster University, and extend to the world stage. As the president of the McMaster Students Union (MSU) I will achieve this through the implementation of three core pillars of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic. I want to help McMaster unleash its potential, locally, provincially, federally, and globally.

#### **1. Mac Growth.**

*Unleash Sustainable McMaster: Development of stable roots in the university community, the city of Hamilton, and the world.*

#### **MSU Carbon Divestment.**

Unleash a greener McMaster. If elected I would ensure that student money is no longer used to support non-renewable greenhouse gas emitting practices. This idea would allow the MSU to work in parallel with university president Patrick Deane, who has stated that he will be developing a divestment advisory group in response to Fossil Free McMaster. This is a petition which has only garnered 900 signatures in the two years it has been online. This issue is something that will affect our future and is something more individuals need to be aware of. I believe that if the university is ready to commit in the cause, the student union should take interest. The campaign would work with this group, and our financial team, to properly create a portfolio allowing the MSU and McMaster University to join the University of Ottawa, and over 120 other companies in signing the Montreal Carbon Pledge. This is a pledge to measure the investment portfolio's carbon footprint, understanding the risks, and opportunities climate change presents. More information on the Montreal Carbon Pledge can be found at: <http://montrealpledge.org/>. I personally would like McMaster University to be a leader into a carbon free future.

#### **Implementation of a Living Wall.**

Unleash the beauty of McMaster's green space all year round. While spring through fall offers beautiful outdoor vistas, our winter lacks this colourful foliage. With the implementation of a living wall in the atrium of the McMaster University Student Center (MUSC), we would

help solve this insufficiency. The area above the fireplace would serve as housing for the wall. Other Ontario universities already have such walls in place, and McMaster's own wall would help to increase the aesthetic appeal of our campus, 365 days a year. Most importantly, the implementation of an indoor wall has been proven to increase the productivity of those in the vicinity as a response to different characteristics of sound, lighting and air quality with the addition of plant life [2]. The green wall will also help dampen the acoustics of the atrium, decreasing noise pollution from the first floor to the floors above. The Student Life Enhancement fund for MUSC refurbishment could be utilized to create this masterpiece. When it came to maintaining this wall, facility services would be engaged. It would be identified in the feasibility study whether to water the plant life through drip irrigation methods or if a spray system would be better. For the pruning of the wall, a small upfront investment of a scaffolding system would be required so that the proper maintenance required for the plants could be implemented.

### **McMaster Children's Hospital Mural.**

Unleash the true beauty of this university. I love this school, and I want the individuals coming to visit this school to be enchanted and awed by everything we have to offer. Currently, the front entrance to McMaster is identifiable by the concrete façade to its right which does not reflect the spirit and attractiveness of this institution. I propose a McMaster mural to be painted on the McMaster Children's Hospital (MCH) where the children will provide inspiration for the art installation. The idea would seek out local companies to offer creative supplies to MCH children, and their artistic creations would be submitted as a collage superimposed onto this wall. I am aware that this project would require significant stakeholder communication, including hospital administrators, McMaster Alumni for funding support, local government leaders, the building's architect, and many other important community members. Sufficient amount of financial support must be secured through crowd source funding campaigns, alumni donations and/or external fundraising. Then the production of the mural could commence.

The next step of the project could include the painting of the west facing wall, adding faculty-based designs. Each faculty would have an internal competition. Artists from their faculty would create a collage of what they feel portrays the best representation of their faculty (shades of the rep suits). Once each design is finalized it would be implemented as a mosaic of the different faculties creating an inclusive gateway to our campus. Additionally, a similar competition would be created for the 15 different wards of Hamilton. Finally, expansion of the mural could occur including portions for our department of athletics and recreation and our OUA/CIS sports teams. This mural would integrate McMaster's influence on the community, with the children, athletics as well as its academics, and ultimately add to the beauty of our campus.

### **McMaster Food and Waste Audit**

McMaster has a diverse range of options when it comes to food available on campus. Despite this abundance of choice, there is no way for students with dietary restrictions to identify what they can and cannot eat. My goal would be to implement a system, whether it be stickers or symbols, identifying which foods are "lactose-free", "gluten-free", "vegetarian/vegan", "halal or kosher" options. The inception of this idea comes from our on campus hotdog vendor, WillyDog. Currently Willydog has systems in place, accommodating for the needs and diversity of our students. With this simple tangible system it would allow McMaster to better accommodate the needs of our student body.

Currently, at McMaster whether it is a catered event, breakfast, lunch or dinner, food in residences and meals in the student centre, there is an incredible amount of food wasted daily. At this point in time there is no way of knowing the exact amount of food waste produced on campus. If elected I would implement a series of waste audits over the start of my term to get an accurate representation of the volume to then address where improvements can be made and solutions identified and implemented. The idea behind this is that I would help the university to address the point source of the costs. I would be able to reduce the amount of money this institution spends on food, and in turn lowering the amount of money students would be required to pay for food on campus.

## 2. MAC Discount.

*Unleash Financial Shackles of Student life: I cannot make the promise of lower tuition but I can lower the cost of student living.*

### **Marauder Price Cut Card (MPCC).**

One of the major issues ailing university students is money, and offering cheaper community alternatives will alleviate some of these financial burdens. Students today pay large amounts of money for not only tuition but housing and student life as well. I would like to implement a Marauder Price Cut Card (MPCC); this idea follows the lead of the McMaster Engineering Society discount card and the DeGroot School of Business Emerald Card. These discount cards offer reduced prices for individuals at some local restaurants and establishments. Currently I have reached out to over 40 businesses who show positive interest. These businesses are located all across Hamilton including the downtown core: James Street, King Williams Street, King Street, Main Street, Augusta Street as well as on Locke Street, in Dundas, and businesses in the west end (Ainslie Wood and Westdale areas). Such a card would unleash McMaster students from some of the increased costs of student living, while also unleashing the students into their surrounding community of Hamilton to explore what this beautiful city has to offer!

### **McMaster Campus Store textbook purchasing and rental plans.**

I would like to work with the university and The Campus Store to implement a rental system; students could avoid paying full price for textbooks without avoiding the textbook entirely. This rental program could allow the student to save up to 60% (percentage subject to change) of the price of certain textbooks. Additionally, an adaptive pricing plan could be implemented which would allow students to have a range of textbook prices available: new, used, e-book (if option available), rental, and even Amazon.ca price listings. This system would be implemented online; the students could search their specific titles of their textbooks and see the different pricing options that would be available for them. This would require The Campus Store to be actively reviewing prices in an effort to provide many affordable alternatives for students. The students would be guaranteed a certain price for the textbooks at the end of the semester; however, if they do not get it back before the start of the new semester there is no guarantee on the edition of textbook or if the course switches to a new textbook.

This idea is useful for the individuals who prefer to not be dependent on their computer for their schoolwork. As well this is not looking at changing the system that is in place entirely, but rather enhancing the system we have currently.

### 3. Mac Does.

*Unleash McMaster's cultural identity: Arts and cultural festival as well as an interfaculty hockey tournament; working with clubs, and faculty societies to expand Frost Week.*

#### **McMaster Winter Fair.**

By working with different faculty societies, clubs, and services, the MSU would look to expand Frost Week to be a festival of arts and culture. With this point I have seen two different Frost Week expansions attempted, and failed. For this reason, I feel Frost Week should be addressed. I want this to be created by the student body. The students would be encouraged to use social media to suggest events and activities they would want to see at their winter fair.

One idea is to include an art gallery night where students could submit their artwork to be showcased in the atrium of MUSC. Another idea includes McMaster musicians playing shows throughout the week at The Phoenix, Bridges, or 1280 in the form of a concert, recital, or coffee house. Finally, lecture halls or the MUSC atrium, could be booked by the MSU for student members to display their multimedia creative works. This would not be restricted to specific faculties but open to any musician or artist! In addition, I want to create an event which will bring to light different cultural clubs within McMaster. To make this event possible I would work together with clubs at McMaster as well as Diversity Services to finalize logistics. By doing so, an event could be planned that would showcase different heritages and cultures within our community as a precursor to "McMaster Pangaea" occurring in March. Preliminary ideas include events such as a fashion show, a potluck or a dance/music recital. Furthermore, I have talked with Campus Events on different initiatives we would take to increase the attendance and engagement of students for the shows occurring on Frost Week. This fair would be able to include specific Canadian delicacies including maple toffee and/or beaver tails (deep fried pastries covered with cinnamon sugar).

#### **Hockey.**

Unleash hockey to McMaster. This is an idea to create a series of charitable events where students would collect money to play in one game. One hundred percent of the proceeds would be donated to a Hamilton-based charity selected by the winning team(s) chosen from a predetermined list of charities in the Greater Hamilton Area. These events could take place at the start of the winter term featuring co-ed inter-faculty teams. I would work the Hamilton Bulldogs and the city of Hamilton to get the games to be played at the First Ontario Centre. I have been in conversation with a former First Ontario Centre employee who explained the following: She worked in a specific section which had the same season ticket holders in the section and they would regularly tell her that they would love to see McMaster playing down there.

For these events, it would be more than just a game and more than just hockey. It would be a chance to bring together staff, alumni, faculty and students from different academic departments of the school. Apart from the players, it would allow people to get involved, integrate challenges and offer prizes for attending the games. There would be a free skate after each of the games allowing everyone a time on the ice (pending Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services). Through community donations and alumni support, jerseys could be provided for the players and swag would be procured for prizes for the attendee contests. Attendance to the events would require a non-perishable food item donation to be distributed across food banks in Hamilton. This event would help build cross-faculty engagement through

friendly competition, raise money for charity, as well as an opportunity for McMaster students to experience hockey, a Canadian game.

#### 4. Mac SET.

***Unleash our Service Enhancement Time (SET): Enabling and expansion of services already at McMaster as well as increased advocacy of different initiatives for the organization.***

MSU services do some of the most important work to support and assist students here at McMaster. I would work with existing partners and our service managers to create a ‘marketing and promotional’ in order to increase their campus outreach. After speaking to individual representatives of different MSU services, it was clear that a greater focus on community outreach assisted by a specialized third party would increase their campus audience. SET can assist other groups in expansion of accessibility so that more McMaster students become aware of the resources available to them. The idea would be to hold volunteer “think tanks” to develop innovative ways to engage the students. With the recent decision to disband MACgreen at the end of this academic year, there will need to be a redistribution of efforts from other MSU services looking through an environmental lens. I believe that the McMaster Students Union does amazing work and through proper promotion and engagement we can only further its impact.

MacSET can be utilized to analyze possibilities for synergies between services in an effort to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organizations. The time would allow me and the part-time managers (PTM’s), along with the full-time staff, to review the services already provided. We would evaluate their relevance in an effort to amalgamate, revitalize, or shift resources between the services. This will ensure that members of the MSU have their money distributed in a way which will instil positive change moving forward. Additionally, the clubs and faculty societies will be contacted. Any issues that they may have sessions will be conducted creating concise problem statements to identify the root cause of the problems brought forward. Some measures that will be discussed include the introduction of high traffic advocacy installations to increase promotion and awareness of different issues throughout the year. These issues will include but are not restricted to mental health awareness, gender equity, disability awareness, racial issues, environmental and transportation awareness.

Finally, as MSU president I would look into a system which offers open source democracy. This would be useful for SRA members to identify where their faculty stands on certain issues before each biweekly meeting occurs. It would operate as a Democratic online senate, and could also be used to identify what specific issues are most important to the student body.

#### 5. MAC Flow.

***Unleash political sustainability: Continuity and consistency between MSU board of directors and external governments.***

Student leaders consistently present great ideas to the McMaster community; unfortunately, the yearly turnover in student politics has led to unfinished and forgotten projects. For many projects it takes years for them to come to fruition. I took the time to speak with the previous six MSU presidents: Mary Koziol, Matthew Dillon-Leitch, Siobhan Stewart, David Campbell, Teddy Saull and Ehima Osazuwa. I asked each of them “What was your greatest

failure as president?" The general consensus was a lack of communication and being prepared to start their presidency. This meant they did not have the full 12 months to address the issues and could not all achieve the results they expected. To address this I would spend February to April reaching out and meeting with the appropriate individuals from the university, the City of Hamilton and the government both provincially and federally. For the end of my term I would like to put in a structure so that we can identify our failures as well as a stable system for future.

This campaign goal does not offer new promises but instead highlights my dedication to increasing fluidity between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 MSU Board of Directors. The current board is working on issues like the fully funded tuition freeze, space issues on campus, the introduction of Maccess and increasing peer support training. Before my term in office, I will attend meetings with the current board of directors, to insure that I know what needs to be done in order to carry out the completion of past projects. Additionally, I would work closely with the university, municipal, provincial, and federal government on different initiatives to ensure that McMaster students' voices are heard. These initiatives would include working with Patrick Deane and the university's plan "Forward with Integrity: The Next Phase", as well as working with the City of Hamilton with whatever they require to start the construction of the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT). I would also continue the discussion with the provincial government for the negotiations in regards to the tuition framework expiring in 2017. Finally, I would work with Filomena Tassi the Hamilton West-Ancaster Dundas Member of Parliament with any and all issues that might arise during my term in office.

### Bibliography

- [1] World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), "Our common future," Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.
- [2] T. Bringslimark, T. Hartig and G. G. Patil, "Psychological benefits of indoor plants in workplaces: Putting experimental results into context," *American Society for Horticultural science*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 581-587, 2006.