

**The University of Michigan  
Regents' Communication**

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ITEM FOR INFORMATION

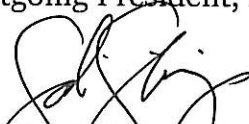
Subject: Michigan Student Assembly Report

Attached is the April update on the projects and activities of the Michigan Student Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mohammad Dar  
Outgoing President, Michigan Student Assembly



Sabrina Shingwari  
Incoming President, Michigan Student Assembly

April, 2008

Dear President Coleman, Regents, and Executive Officers,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present to you. With the recent transition after the Winter Term elections, I'm incredibly excited to serve the student body as the new President of MSA. Here is a taste of MSA's recent initiatives and current plans:

*Student Health Insurance*— After MSA voiced students' concern about the current University-offered health insurance plan, we have been in discussion with UHS about available options that the University sponsored insurance company is offering for the next year as well as the implementation of the most feasible and relevant policy for students. Dr. Winfield, Director of UHS, presented statistics about the current plan and student health issues at the last MSA meeting. It is a priority of ours to continue such discussions in the next few months as well as continuing to further gauge student needs.

*LGBT Issues* – MSA's LGBT Commission planned an extremely successful Spring Pride Week this year, including a sexual awareness event, a gender bender revue, and of course the annual Pride rally and hug-in. In addition, student concern over the FDA policy preventing homosexual men from donating blood is something that our LGBT Commission is examining closely. MSA is currently discussing the issue with other student organizations, several administrators, and our contacts in the Association of Big Ten Students to research and discuss the policy.

*Campus Safety* – Our Campus Safety Commission hosted Campus Safety Week this past month and focused on signing students up for the new emergency contact system. In addition, street lighting and the installation of security cameras at the CCRB will continue to be priorities of ours.

*Homecoming* – MSA's Homecoming last year was successful in revitalizing a lost tradition, raising Michigan spirit, and catalyzing collaboration between student organizations, the Greek System, and the administration. This past month, the MSA Homecoming Committee has already begun planning Homecoming Week for October. We've had a wrap-up meeting to get feedback from administrators we worked closely with this past year, several planning meetings with new committee members, increased collaboration with student organizations, and meetings with potential sponsors to start securing funding. Just a sneak peek – this year's theme is "More Cowbell".

*Increasing Outreach to Student Body* – MSA has been building its WTF? (What To Fix?) campaign where we reach out to students and allow them to vent about what they wish we could fix on campus. This campaign has been in full force this past month with a strong presence on Central Campus at the end of March and on North Campus in the upcoming week. We have also held three forums in the past month where we have invited students representing Michigan's diverse campus to voice their concerns to MSA and discuss what issues matter to them most.

*Disabilities Issues* – The last week of March was Disabilities Awareness Week, hosted by MSA's Disabilities Issues Commission as well as the student organization Best Buddies. On Monday March 24<sup>th</sup>, MSA hosted a Disabilities Awareness Diag Day where we invited several student organizations to publicize their current projects, events, services, and overall organizations in a welcoming environment for all students. We look forward to working with these organizations in the future and conducting more outreach specifically to students with disabilities to identify needs and work with the University to improve current resources.

*Fair Tees* – MSA's Peace and Justice Commission recently held a forum encouraging student organizations to purchase organic and sweatshop labor-free t-shirts and informing them of the benefits and monetary costs of doing so. We are currently working with roughly 10 student organizations to help them coordinate the purchase of fair tees for their members and hope to continue this campaign to encourage student organizations to purchase these shirts in preparation for their Fall '08 member recruitment initiatives.

*Student Parents* – MSA's Women Issues Commission has been working on creating a pamphlet for student parents that includes resources for them, such as contact information for relevant University resources and a map of child care and breast feeding locations on campus. This pamphlet will be distributed widely throughout the summer and into the fall to help student parents balance their dual roles.

*Internal* – We are currently in the process of appointing our new executive board and we will focus on benchmarking goals and planning projects, events, and internal structuring for our upcoming year upon their appointments.

I appreciate your time and look forward to seeing you again next month.



## MSA Accomplishments for the 2007-2008 Academic Year:

### Policy and Procedures Initiatives:

- 1.) **Textbooks Taskforce:** We worked on convincing the appropriate University offices to look into early notification of textbook lists in 2006. This led to the creation of the Textbooks Taskforce, whose recommendations are being pursued today.
- 2.) **Recreation Building Hours:** We requested the University administration to keep the Recreational Buildings open longer despite budget cuts.
- 3.) **Preserving Fall Break:** We insisted on maintaining the existence of Fall Break in the academic calendar up to 2011.
- 4.) **Rally for Higher Education Funding:** We planned the Higher Education Rally this September uniting 400 students and 9 Universities for the cause of higher education funding.
- 5.) **Environmental Issues and Renewable Energy:** We looked at and united behind issues of sound environmental and energy policy through the efforts of our Environmental Issues Commission. This commission's efforts this year went all the way to the Mayor's, the Governor's, and DTE's offices. In addition, they put on a strong Earth Week to educate our peers.
- 6.) **Burns' Park Rezoning:** We met with the mayor's office to make sure that student housing in the Burns' Park area would be grandfathered in during rezoning of those neighborhoods so that students would not lose their housing.
- 7.) **Removal of the Lease Signing Ordinance Loophole:** We successfully removed the waiver provision (loophole) from the Lease Signing Ordinance.
- 8.) **Commencement:** After Commencement was moved away from Michigan Stadium, we worked with the administration to find a suitable alternative to Rynearson which would be mutually beneficial to all parties.
- 9.) **Int'l Student Drivers' Licenses:** We monitored the issue of international students being denied Drivers' Licenses and were happy to see a swift conclusion to the matter.
- 10.) **Student Publication Free Speech Preservation:** We pushed for support behind the repeal of the LSA Student Publications policy which could have limited the free speech rights of our student publications.

## Educational and Community Initiatives:

- 11.) **Post VTech Outreach:** We provided the community a place to come together after the Virginia Tech incident.
- 12.) **Homecoming:** We revived the Michigan Homecoming with a week of events culminating in the homecoming parade.
- 13.) **LGBT Issues:** We tackled issues of the LGBT community with events such as National Coming out Week.
- 14.) **Social Justice Issues:** We took on issues of poverty as our Peach and Justice Commission worked to educate on and embrace the Millennium Development Goals of the UN.
- 15.) **Diversity Letter:** We worked with the admissions office to send a letter from MSA to all newly enrolled students letting them know of our commitment to protecting and enriching the diversity we have on campus.
- 16.) **Campus Political Leadership Luncheon:** We worked to bring active student leaders together through the Campus Political Leadership Luncheon,
- 17.) **State of Black America Event:** Our Minority Affairs Commission, which has embraced a new level of productivity this semester, took the first steps to tackle issues of latent racism with our State of Black America event.

## Better Resources:

- 18.) **Library Resources:** We put laptop locks and graphing calculators in the library for students to check out with their MCards.
- 19.) **Student Parents' Guides:** Our Women's Issues Commission looked at resources for student parents and created campus guides to be distributed to them in the future.
- 20.) **Student Association of Michigan:** Our members helped start and steer the newly formed Student Association of Michigan, the voice of students from all 15 of Michigan's public universities across the state.
- 21.) **Housing Resources and Data:** We sent a campus-wide housing email to all students telling them about their housing resources and simultaneously gathered data on student opinion of the current housing season to augment future efforts to facilitate a Winter housing season.
- 22.) **Financial Aid Office Reform:** We met with financial aid to talk about how they could better facilitate even and fair conversations with students in their current walk-in advising system. Conversations are still on-going but the office has expressed interest in adopting some of the recommendations we made.

### Internal Reform of our Assembly:

- 23.) **Internship Program:** We started the MSA Internship Program to create a useful conduit to involve Freshman into MSA.
- 24.) **New Website:** We hired two new MSA Webmasters to work on the infrastructure of a website that had been largely ignored for multiple semesters.
- 25.) **Representative Reports:** We passed a resolution to require representatives to start giving reports to MSA every three weeks on their activities.
- 26.) **Anti-Spam Policy:** We passed a resolution to make election spamming a punishable offense in MSA's election code.

### Ongoing Projects for the Future:

- 27.) **Health Insurance:** We passed and authored a resolution encouraging the University to look at a mandatory level of health insurance for all students. UHS will need to evaluate the effects that the lack of insurance has on students and we will depend on this body to make a final decision on the matter.
- 28.) **Online Reports and Funding Application:** MSA will need to take its many reports online in a system where, when they are submitted to our agenda, they are also simultaneously put online for our constituents to see at the same time. We have talked with our webmasters about the future direction and implementation of this. In addition, our online funding applications have been in the test phase and should go online in the fall.
- 29.) **Street Lighting:** For our street lighting project, we have gathered student testimonials and pictures of the area in question. In the future, we will need to acquire crime statistics and approach potential donors. Some donors are already interested, which is promising. We will be meeting with council soon to discuss the matter.
- 30.) **Repeal Rogers' Law:** The Michigan Universities' student governments have a strong desire to repeal Rogers' Law so that student voter efforts may be more streamlined and accessible for students.
- 31.) **Good Samaritan Alcohol Policy:** In addition, many of the Universities wish to work together change the Michigan Compiled Laws' statutes to include a good Samaritan policy when it comes to issues of underage students drinking and being able to call the authorities without fear of repercussions in case of alcohol poisoning.