

TEAM
HELLEN
PLATFORM
UPDATE

PREFACE:

The following is a review of the Team Helfand platform. Points outlined in the platform have been categorized as **Complete**, **Ongoing**, and **Incomplete**. **Complete** refers to projects that we consider to have been successfully closed within our 1 year term. **Ongoing** refers to projects that are still active, but completion can be reasonable foreseen as a result of work done within this year. **Incomplete** refers to projects that will require more work, and completion is not necessarily foreseeable. Many of the advocacy goals as laid out in this platform are ongoing as there will always be work to be done to enhance the Western student experience in these respects. It should also be noted that although these are the points we were elected on, and have worked hard on them since, we have advocated on more than just these topics and achieved success in many other endeavours including: enhancements to existing faith space on campus and the relocation and partnership with the university on the Peer Support Program.

SUMMARY

INCOMPLETE ● ● ● **ONGOING** ● ● ● **COMPLETE** ● ● ●

- ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW **ONGOING**
- BETTER DEAL FOR UCC MARKETING **ONGOING**
- BUS SHELTER AT THE GATES **INCOMPLETE**
- DECENTRALIZED BUS PASS **COMPLETE**
- DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE VP EXTERNAL **ONGOING**
- EARLY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN **COMPLETE**
- EXPANDING SERVICE AWARENESS IN RESIDENCE **COMPLETE**
- FACILITATING ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS **COMPLETE**
- FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY **ONGOING**
- FOCUS ON FUN **COMPLETE**
- FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL ADVOCACY **COMPLETE**
- FOOD INDICATORS **ONGOING**
- FEE FREEZE **COMPLETE**
- GOOD NEIGHBOUR CAMPAIGN **ONGOING**
- HOMECOMING ON CAMPUS **COMPLETE**
- INTERNAL PORTFOLIO MEDIA CORRESPONDENT **COMPLETE**
- INTERNAL STRENGTH **ONGOING**
- LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT RIDE-ALONGS **COMPLETE**
- LTC SERVICE IMPROVEMENT **ONGOING**
- MICROWAVES **ONGOING**
- MOVE OUT CLEAN UP **ONGOING**
- OSAP EDUCATION **COMPLETE**
- REDEFINING CLUB INTERACTIONS **ONGOING**
- RENTABLE LAPTOP & CELL PHONE CHARGERS **ONGOING**
- RESEARCH INITIATIVES **ONGOING**
- RESPONSIVE EXECUTIVE **COMPLETE**
- STREAMLINING LTC SERVICES **INCOMPLETE**
- STUDENT DONATION FUND **INCOMPLETE**
- STUDENT FEE REVIEW **ONGOING**
- USC APPEALS BOARD **COMPLETE**
- WAVE / SPOKE ATHLETICS **COMPLETE**
- WIRELESS INTERNET **ONGOING**

ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW

Looking at campus accessibility more closely once elected, we realized that Western’s campus has gone through an extensive review process in recent years. As a result, we have been working with many units at the university to reach their 2014 goals of creating accessible web content and accessible means of collecting student feedback. The accessibility coordinator in the Internal portfolio has done the majority of this work. In addition, her focus has been on raising awareness to the campus community on issues of accessibility. Through her initiatives including hosting an atrium day with student art to challenge the visibility of accessibility issues as well as hosting a full day conference, we have worked to raise awareness to the campus community in a new and innovative way.

BETTER DEAL FOR UCC MARKETING

In response to student concerns regarding the role of external marketing and vendors in the UCC, it was imperative for us to ensure that students were getting a fair deal for the space that they are renting to these external entities. As it currently stands, only 5% of bookings in the UCC atrium are made by external vendors and we charge them more than any other university campus for this space. The remaining 95% of UCC bookings come from student groups, Western and internal USC groups. Of the 5% of bookings from external entities, more than 80% is vendors who are selling goods directly to students and less than 20% is pure external marketing. Moreover, this year we received no complaints regarding the presence of these vendors. However, it is important to continually monitor student responses, as well as market forces.

BUS SHELTER AT GATES

After evaluating the costs of this project, we decided not to pursue the construction of a bus shelter. That said, although this did not happen in our term, it is still a very real possibility. We encourage future executives to talk to the university and the LTC about funding the bus shelter. If this is not successful, this could be a future capital investment made under the USC capital plan.

DECENTRALIZED BUS PASS

This September, the USC was able to decentralize our bus-pass pickup to professional schools, in order to accommodate different schedules. This change was a well-received service improvement for professional school students. It also slightly lowered our labour costs and reduced wait times in the Mustang Lounge. I encourage future USC executives to look at expanding this service to include Affiliate Colleges.

DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE VP EXTERNAL

This year we got the chance to define the role of the Vice President External. Being relatively new, there was still an interim terms of reference for the position at the beginning of our term. Having just passed the new terms of reference for the role, students, the USC and future candidates will now have a much better understanding of what the VP External should be expected to do. Included in this is a travel guideline outlining how much time the VP External should be spending out of the office on official business.

EARLY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Working closely with contacts at the City of London, the USC is now a part of more than 100 organizations in the Child and Youth Network. Working with community partners, the Early Outreach Conference will be made that much stronger. It is our hope that over the next year, the Early Outreach Conference will be taken over by the London Child and Youth Network with the expertise of organizations whose mandate it is to help our young people. Moving forward, the USC will be an invaluable partner in executing this conference by providing student volunteers and access to campus programming.

EXPANDING SERVICE AWARENESS IN RESIDENCE

This year we partnered with Western Housing to align our awareness weeks during the first semester. This allowed for consistent messaging and support across campus. Over the year, we have built bridges with housing as partners on supporting students and we hope this continues to grow next year.

FACILITATING ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The Western Votes campaign made voting at Western more accessible than ever before. In the fall, we successfully promoted and facilitated access to the municipal election. We worked to raise awareness of municipal issues relevant to students and partnered with Western’s registrar’s office and the city clerk to make voting easy for students. This campaign received a lot of positive attention from staff and politicians at the city, as well as local, provincial and national media. Our hope is that future executives will continue to build on the brand of this campaign and continue to share with our students why it is important to be a part of the political process.

FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY ●●●

Throughout this year, we have advocated for Western students on a myriad of issues pertaining to financial accessibility to education such as removing the expected parental income contribution, removing financial aid penalties for students with part time jobs, restructuring the tax credit system, and lowering the OSAP debt cap. We will not be able to evaluate the extent to which our efforts have been successful until the provincial budget comes out. We spent our advocacy week meeting with more than half of Ontario’s MPPs to talk about these changes. It is my hope that these improvements will be reflected in the provincial budget this spring.

FOCUS ON FUN ●●●

Fun programming was a priority going into this year and under Sam Kilgour, our VP Student Events, the USC was able to put together a strong portfolio of fun programming. This included: City and Colour, Lil Jon, Tim Hicks, Craig Cardiff, Monster Truck, Audien, July Talk, Shad K (With Western international), Kenny vs. Spenny and the new crowd favourite, Beer Fest.

FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL ADVOCACY ●●●

This year, the USC successfully advocated for improvements to transit, changes to the Town and Gown committee and actively lobbied against changes to the 5 bedroom by-law which would have resulted in preventing any more than three unrelated people from sharing a home. We were also involved in the creation and public consultation phase of the London Plan and will continue our involvement in the creation of the new terms of reference for the Greater Near Campus Neighbourhoods Strategy. We had a strong presence at city hall and our voice in London is stronger than ever. We partnered with city staff from various departments and held a successful Local Advocacy Week where we had the chance to meet almost all members of the new city council.

FOOD INDICATORS ●●●

In order to advocate for Western to improve their transparency with food offerings on campus, we decided we should prioritize doing the same in our own operations. We sat down with our Spoke and Wave managers and contacted the Food and Nutrition Club at Brescia to conduct a comprehensive analysis of our food offerings. Since students have been doing virtually all of the work this project has taken longer than if we had outsourced, but this project has created valuable, relevant volunteer opportunities for the 112 students that are involved. We are hoping to have the information for the Spoke out at the beginning of next year and the Wave completed by December. We will also be meeting with Western through transition to demonstrate the work that we have done and investigate how to best improve their food nutrition information on campus.

FEE FREEZE ●●●

As President of the Social Science Students’ Council in 2013, Matt proposed a freeze to the USC base fee as a member of council. Although this initiative failed on council floor, we brought it back as a core platform point for Team Helfand. The goal of the fee freeze is to ensure that all of our spending within the executive budget is calculated, strategic and ensures that any increase to the base fee is the last option. We are pleased to report that at our annual general meeting the USC unanimously, and without any abstentions, passed a three year budget including a fee freeze, accomplishing this platform point in its entirety.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR CAMPAIGN ●●●

Not only did we send students to clean up after homecoming, but we also partnered with Western Administration, Alumni and the London Police to canvas Broughdale Avenue prior to Homecoming. The purpose of this was to make sure students were aware of the Homecoming events on campus and to ask them to party both safely and respectfully. We found that students were very receptive to this initiative and as a result, were very cooperative with police on Homecoming day. The Chief shared this sentiment and noted that this year, the crowd for homecoming was one of the most respectful in a long time.

HOMECOMING ON CAMPUS ●●●

In response to past safety concerns and calls from the community, this year the USC sought to take a new approach to homecoming, by offering new programming on campus aimed at current students. In conjunction with Western, the USC was able to put together a festival on Concrete Beach involving food trucks, midway games and a free concert with acclaimed country musician Gord Bamford. While the program was fantastic, attendance was not as high as we had hoped. However, we were satisfied that this is a project worth continuing. Since that event, under the current USC leadership a brand new standing Homecoming Planning Committee (HPC) has been established. This committee will oversee homecoming programming, including student focused, on campus events. Planning for homecoming 2015 is already well underway.

INTERNAL PORTFOLIO MEDIA CORRESPONDENT ●●●

Our Associate Vice-President Peer Support Network took on the coordination of this project this year, and we worked closely with the communications portfolio to offer this service. Many of the coordinators brought on students as executive members to assist their service directly. This coordinated effort helped us double the likes on the PSN Facebook page, create social media accounts for each service that wanted them and create numerous informational and promotional videos.

INTERNAL STRENGTH

We have had a phenomenal year with all of the internal portfolio coordinators this year. Coming into the year we ensured that they were set up for success with the new Associate Vice President structure. Every coordinator was overseen by an AVP who had the time and the training to support each coordinator with whatever they needed to provide meaningful programs and supports for students. We also improved several of the job descriptions for the roles and altered the structure to consolidate the portfolio. Our awareness events have been bigger than ever before and we believe this is leading to students becoming engaged with important topics on campus and offering them the information and support that they need.

LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT RIDE-ALONGS

This was a new initiative that was incredibly successful this year. By sending student leaders on ride-alongs, we were able to build strong relationships with the London Police Service. This year, our team has worked to build a strong partnership with the LPS and we have no doubt that the ride-alongs contributed to this relationship. We have also drafted a memorandum of understanding between the USC and the LPS which we hope to have signed by the end of our terms in office.

LTC SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

There has been increased service levels along the Western Road side of campus and we continue to work alongside LTC to make transit better in the city. The USC and the LTC have recently signed a memorandum of understanding, outlining the shared commitment to improve transit for the whole city. Moving forward, we would encourage future executives to search for areas of partnership with relevant community stakeholders who also have an interest in improving transit.

MICROWAVES

Before our term started we purchased 10 new microwaves to put around campus and have been servicing them all year thanks to our dedicated staff. That said, it is apparent that demand for microwaves is increasing. After discussions with representatives from the University's senior leadership team, a long-term microwave plan is being developed. While the details are not firmed up, an agreement between the USC and the University involving cost sharing and a cleaning schedule is in the works.

MOVE OUT CLEAN UP ●●●

On April 28th and 29th the USC will be hosting the first annual Move Out Clean Up in the Ceeps parking lot. In partnership with the London Food Bank, Goodwill, Textbooks for Change and the City of London, students will be able to recycle/donate clothing, non-perishable food items, unwanted electronics, used textbooks and other household items. We hope that this pilot project will be a success and expansion plans are already in the works.

OSAP EDUCATION ●●●

We have ensured that the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance is collaborating with sector stakeholders in order to create a manual about student loans. Moving forward, we would like to see the USC make sure students know that the USC can serve as a resource to assist with any questions or challenges associated with their student loan.

REDEFINING CLUB INTERACTIONS ●●●

We have worked hard this year to attend more club events, offer support to club presidents and executives, and to be present within the club community. In such a large club system, however, we recognize that there are areas of concern. Over the year we have been looking at alternatives to the current WesternLink system as the primary online portal for clubs. Additionally, we have allocated resources to conduct a full review of our current club policies.

RENTABLE LAPTOP & CELL PHONE CHARGER ●●●

After the Social Science Students' Council introduced laptop chargers into Weldon we met with the University librarian to determine how to provide further service. More chargers were purchased for both Weldon and Taylor after we reviewed overall usage for the year. These chargers will be in libraries and available for use in the next few weeks.

RESEARCH INITIATIVES ●●●

Next year, each internal coordinator will be tasked with conducting a research project on a topic relevant to their service that will enhance the advocacy & outreach capacity of the USC, as well as help students learn more about their campus community. We are incredibly excited to see how this improves each coordinators ability to reach out to the student body, as well as the USC's ability to advocate using information from students to enhance the overall student experience.

RESPONSIVE EXECUTIVE

In our platform, Team Helfand made it a priority to respond to every email within three business days. While we cannot say with full certainty that every single email was responded to within three business days, we are confident that our response rate met the expectation of all students wishing to contact us. Responsiveness is an ongoing process and we consider this platform point an ongoing success.

STREAMLINING LTC SERVICES

It was our intent to move to a one-piece bus pass for Western students this year. This was piloted for Fanshawe students this year but through testing of the Western One cards, it was determined that the technology used by Western’s cards is not compatible with the tap technology used with the LTC buses. In order to fix this issue, it will likely be necessary to replace all student cards at Western. Therefore, if students want a one piece bus pass, it might cost a one time fee of \$20+ per student to replace the student cards.

STUDENT DONATION FUND

We have worked throughout the year to offer support to faculty council presidents in multiple ways, including their individual student donation funds. These are autonomous funds and once taking office, we determined that it was best to ensure the autonomy of each faculty council to promote their own opt-out, as well as how students can apply, in order to respect differences between each faculty. We have also supported faculty councils to empower those who have run into issues with the administration of the funds throughout the year.

STUDENT FEE REVIEW

This year, we undertook a review of student fees on two different fronts. The first pertained to USC fees, and the second pertained to Student Services fees - ancillary fees that are not directly controlled by the USC, but are overseen by a committee of students. With the introduction of the new Western Associate Vice-President Student Experience the USC is looking forward to a refreshed conversation about assessing the current student fees and their outcomes. Additionally, this year the USC fees have been rationalized, so as to ensure greater transparency and consistency. The correlation between USC fees and USC services will now be easier to understand.

USC APPEALS BOARD ●●●

Thanks to the hard work of one of our former board members and our governance department, a draft bylaw for this appeals board was ready to go by the summer of 2014. Passing this bylaw was one of the first actions that we took as an executive and its implementation has been very successful. Given the current appeal involving our elections, the implementation of this board has been timely.

WAVE / SPOKE ATHLETICS ●●●

In partnership with Mustang Athletics, The Spoke hosted three pre-game events for home football games. Each event saw a student group host along with free food, t-shirts, entertainment and discounted drinks. Additionally, there was a dedicated section at the football game for those who were part of the pre-game. This platform point was aimed at promoting ‘purple pride’ and an attempt to bolster attendance at sporting events. The attendance at these events was slightly lower than anticipated, but we consider it is something worth continuing and even expanding. Despite free admission at all our sporting events except for homecoming, attendance is declining and we believe that this program is an example of how the USC can help to counter this trend.

STUDENT FEE REVIEW ●●●

After speaking with Western’s Information Technology Services department during the summer, we were informed that Western was in the process of updating their system to help improve Internet access on campus. As a result, we decided to wait and see what the change was once student came back to campus. The biggest problem that Western faces is that not only are there nearly 50,000 people moving in and out of our campus on a regular basis, but now each individual has upwards of three devices, exponentially increasing the strain on the network. With this in mind, we have made concerted efforts to direct planners of large scale events that utilized campus networks, such as Hack Western, to plan their events during non-peak usage periods. It is clear that the service has improved, although there is still work to be done to ensure that students can connect while on campus. We will be meeting with ITS again before the end of the year to discuss this.

THANKS FOR READING!