



2019/20
USC EXECUTIVE
ROADMAP
JULY 2019

DEAR STUDENTS,

Our executive team is proud to present this Executive Roadmap to share our priorities for the 2019-2020 academic year. Our role as executive officers of the University Students' Council (USC) is to provide strategic direction, leadership, and oversight of the organization while managing portfolios that deliver services, events, and advocacy for undergraduate students at Western that are consistent with our mission statement. For the first time in USC history, our team has decided to publicly share our executive priorities for the upcoming academic year.

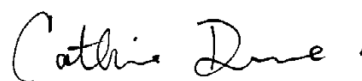
This roadmap has been prepared after many hours of team discussions that synthesized hundreds of ideas into 24 executive priorities. Our decisions were informed by the 2017 Long-Term Plan, the 2019 USC General Survey, PVP and SPO platforms, the current political climate, and our personal knowledge of Western and the USC. This roadmap is not a comprehensive list of every project and initiative we aim to complete by the end of our term. Rather, it outlines our highest-level priorities that differentiate our team's goals from the organization's routine operations, while dictating where we will collectively spend our time, energy, and resources. This document informs the Western community of our objectives and provides our Board, our Council, and our constituents with an opportunity to hold us accountable for our success. We commit to providing regular reports on the progress of our initiatives and the steps we are taking to achieve our goals throughout the year.

Our team is thankful for the opportunity to lead this incredible organization in an unprecedented year of challenge for student unions in Ontario. This year marks the beginning of a new era for the USC. We are excited to share our priorities through this document and are even more excited to start executing on our goals. With continued dedication and passion, our team truly believes that we have the power to change the world.

Your 2019-20 USC Executive Team



Bardia Jalayer
President



Cat Dunne
Vice President



Declan Hodgins
Secretary-Treasurer



Nico Waltenbury
Communications Officer



Cecilia Liu
Student Programs Officer



MISSION

To enhance the educational experience and quality of life for all undergraduates at Western University.

VISION

Students have the power to save the world.

VALUES

We are democratic, we are inclusive, we are student led, we are accountable to our students, we operate with integrity.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Student Support, Student Advocacy, Student Development & Opportunity, Student Engagement & Collaboration, Student Life.

ICON LEGEND



Student Support



Student Advocacy



Student Development & Opportunity



Student Engagement & Collaboration



Student Life

PRIORITIES

STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE



The Student Choice Initiative creates a new reality for the USC and all student unions across Ontario. While we are confident that we are in the strongest position possible, Student Choice changes everything we do as an organization. This government mandate ultimately challenges our ability to provide the critical programs and services that fill gaps in student support and allow us to constantly advocate on behalf of our members. Navigating Student Choice and positioning the USC for continued existence and success is our biggest priority in this unprecedented era in the history of student unions in Canada.

USC BRAND



In order to survive, the USC needs a brand that students relate to and understand. Every undergraduate should know who we are and what we do and buy-in to our mission and vision statements. Students may not engage with every arm of our organization, but every single time a student interacts with a USC program, service, or operation, they need to know we made that interaction possible and contributed to their student experience at Western. We will develop a brand strategy and bring this brand to the forefront of everything we do in an effort to help build a sustainable value proposition and earn our members' support.

STUDENT FEEDBACK



Student feedback involves constantly gauging student opinion and seeking student input on services, programming, and advocacy. We must be able to understand the feelings of our constituents on a range of issues to better represent their voices. Our decision making should be informed by direct student feedback and driven by data whenever possible. Within ethical and privacy constraints, our research findings should be open by default and shared with the broader community to increase transparency and hold us accountable to action. We will expand and standardize our student feedback capabilities to allow the USC to connect with students more regularly and more directly on the issues that matter most.

USC ELECTIONS



USC elections have historically experienced low engagement and voter turnout on campus. While the USC was experiencing an existential crisis resulting from the Student Choice Initiative, still less than a quarter of undergraduate students voted in the 2019 PVP election. Election engagement is a strong proxy for connectedness to the USC, which demonstrates our organization is still not reaching our students. We have to reform elections by modernizing By Law 2, improving overall USC engagement throughout the year, and continuing work to support non-traditional candidates interested in running for elected positions, to increase our diversity and representation. We will work on the USC election all year, not just during the campaign period.

YOUNG CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



If young Canadians could demonstrate we care about current political events and mobilize effectively on a broad scale, we could enjoy incredible influence at all levels of government that would allow us to win student-friendly programs and policies. Using the 2019 Federal Election as a catalyst, we will work to build civic engagement on our campus, while simultaneously collaborating with student unions across the country to align our efforts and messaging. We will create a plan that allows our successors to continue to build a national student coalition and exert our influence at a meaningful political level.

COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT



Council is our core governing institution, and the bedrock of the USC's democratic legitimacy. However, in recent years Council has not reached its full potential. Councillors often do not receive an adequate flow of information about what is going on across the USC. Furthermore, Councillors currently have minimal opportunity to get involved in the execution of USC programs and services. Thus, instead of being champions of the USC, they often fill a less impactful and ceremonial role. We want to see this change. We will work to create new opportunities for councillors to get involved across the USC, through professional development opportunities, coordinator committees, working groups, boards, and more.

ORIENTATION



The Orientation program is Western's largest peer-to-peer support network and is critical in ensuring a smooth transition for new students to university. We recognize that early intervention and the establishment of cohesive social communities play a significant role in our students' holistic wellbeing and overall success at Western. We will prioritize conducting a campus-wide assessment of the Orientation Program to identify successes and areas for change and growth. By reviewing the program through an intersectional lens, we will ensure that the structure of Orientation fosters effective engagement of departments and student groups across campus, Orientation Staff and Sophs are adequately trained for their roles, and diverse and inclusive programming that build stronger communities at Western is institutionalized into the program.

USC SPACE



One of the USC's greatest assets to fostering the student experience at Western is the UCC and the space we control within it, which we use for our offices, clubs, operations, and events. However, the USC's need for space now exceeds the amount of space that we currently control. This has become most apparent for our clubs and peer programs/peer support, which could both be significantly more effective with a properly outfitted and dedicated space. By securing more space within the UCC and investing in improving our current space, the USC can gain considerable opportunity and flexibility for our programming, clubs, and campus partners. We will advocate to the University to increase the amount of space covered by our UCC lease and create a plan to invest our excess capital on renovations to the existing clubs space and the creation of a new peer programs space.

USC FOUNDATION



The USC Foundation was launched in 2018 to serve as an independent charitable body focused on the delivery of critical non-academic services to Western students, focusing on promoting the health and wellbeing of Western students. As the current executive operates in a particularly important time for student unions in Ontario, our team has an obligation to continue the work of our predecessors to grow the Foundation and leverage our alumni network to solicit support for the current generation of Western students. We will prioritize Foundation activities and support the efforts of the Foundation Board to ensure Western students derive significant value from the generous support of our alumni and donors.

PURPLE FEST



Purple Fest is poised to be the biggest and best student concert ever held on a Canadian university campus. Equally as important, the event serves as a safer alternative program for Western students to the Broughdale Unsanctioned Street Party on September 28. Our team is not in the business of curtailing school spirit and celebration, but we acknowledge the very real safety risks associated with Broughdale. Purple Fest is our effort to provide students with a safer outlet to celebrate their Purple Pride in a sanctioned on-campus venue with world-renowned musical artists. We will continue to dedicate resources to this initiative to ensure its success as a high-spirited event that speaks to a broad student demographic and a viable alternative to Broughdale.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS



For the USC to be truly successful, we have to be seen as legitimate and credible by a wide range of stakeholders. As one of London's largest not-for-profit organizations, our team believes we have a responsibility to build stronger relationships with partners outside of the university and around the community. This will involve better collaboration with external partners, increased presence at community events, and further dedication to building relationships with key stakeholders. Our team will lay the foundations for this multi-year, community-based project. We will aim to be known as a strong and legitimate voice for undergraduate students at Western across the City to improve our advocacy position, while simultaneously striving to enhance the image of Western students in the eyes of Londoners.

CAMPUS TRUST



One of the USC's services that Western students value most is our Health and Dental Plan, delivered through Campus Trust. As one of the founding members of Campus Trust, the USC knows better than anyone the value and flexibility that the trust model brings to student benefits. However, Campus Trust could be so much better. We will work this year to fix the governance model within the Campus Trust, and ensure Western students are fairly represented at the decision making table. We will also work to continuously align our benefit plans with the needs of our students, providing the best value for their money.

ADVOCACY

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Up to one in four women attending university will experience an incident of sexual assault; the reality is, gender-based violence is prevalent across our campuses. In order to truly believe Western has the best student experience, we need to prioritize breaking down barriers faced disproportionately by women and the LGBTQ2+ community on our campus. Our goal is to increase the number of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs on, and available to, Ontario campuses. Our efforts will include supporting Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA), creating a best-practice upstander intervention program for local night-life, and working to develop a robust Western framework on sexual violence. We will continue to collaborate with Western administration to ensure campus policies empower survivors with decision making autonomy and always prioritize support for survivors of sexual violence.

AFFORDABILITY



The cost of university places an impossible burden on many of our students. With cuts to financial assistance, many of our students have to take on significantly more debt and choose between buying textbooks or groceries. Some of our students wonder if they can come back to university at all. We also know that financial insecurity and mental health challenges are related. The USC believes that all willing and qualified students should be able to access university. We will prioritize fighting to reverse the changes to OSAP, and work with university administration and the Federal Government to increase the amount of grants available to students in need.

JOBS



Work opportunities are at the heart of student development. In particular, work-integrated learning is proven to be a best practice for students to gain useful skills, become more employable in their desired field, and earn money in the process. However, we know these opportunities can be difficult to find, in particular for fields where work-integrated learning opportunities have traditionally not been prioritized. This is why we will advocate to the university to revitalize their career services, as well as work with community partners in London and in locations where students want to work, to increase the number of opportunities available. We will also advocate to the Provincial Government to prioritize increasing incentives in the Career Readiness Fund for employers, and decrease the skills-articulation gap.

SUSTAINABILITY



Students care about sustainability and they expect that Western genuinely practices sustainability as a leading higher learning institution. We don't pretend to have all the answers right now, but we do understand that students demand Western does more to contribute to a global movement toward zero energy and zero waste. Our generation will live with the very real consequences of global climate change, and our campus must do more to promote holistic sustainability. We will work with experts and stakeholders to research sustainability strategies for post-secondary campuses and advocate to the university accordingly in order to drive meaningful change.

CAMPUS ISSUES

MODERNIZED ACADEMIC COUNSELLING



Students have told the USC for years that they demand more convenient access to academic counselling, including the ability to book appointments online and have short, simple questions answered virtually. Academic counselling is currently undergoing various reforms in different faculties across campus. We will work with the University and continue to advocate for a modernized academic counselling system that supports academic success and holistic student wellbeing.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS



Menstrual products aren't a luxury; for half of the population who are menstruators, they are a necessity. Last year, the USC facilitated Western's first free menstrual products pilot project in the University Community Centre. Free menstrual products will soon be the standard in all public buildings; it is not a question of if, but when. We will advocate for the University to include menstrual products in their operational budget to position Western as a leader in gender equity in Canadian universities.

GENDER-IDENTIFYING SPACES



Gender-identifying spaces can mean the difference between a student feeling welcome and included or isolated and rejected in their campus community. Students preferring to use gender-neutral washrooms should be able to do so conveniently in every building on campus. New builds and renovations should prioritize gender neutral design by default. At the same time, we recognize the need for women- and trans-only dedicated times in various spaces, including campus recreation spaces to ensure all members of our community feel safe and comfortable while exercising. We will continue to advocate to the university for gender-neutral washrooms and dedicated recreation spaces across campus.

RESIDENCE STAFF



Residence Staff are among the most vulnerable, yet most dedicated student leaders on our campus. They are integral to providing holistic student support while ensuring every student living in residence has the opportunity to enjoy Western's best student experience. Last year our council acknowledged calls for support from Residence Staff for improvements to health and safety, compensation structures, and workplace culture. Council further committed the USC to participating in advocacy to support Residence Staff, which our team takes seriously. We will ensure the University makes meaningful changes to address serious concerns regarding workplace culture for Residence Staff.

INITIATIVES

STATE OF THE USC



The State of the USC is an important way for the executive to connect with Western students, share what's happening across the USC, and provide a forum for our constituents to hold us accountable for our mid-year progress and action plan. The event has not historically been well-attended or served as a meaningful forum for debate and inquiry. We are committed to reviving the State of the USC by engaging our wide network of student leaders and our many on- and off-campus partners. We will use the initiative to review our progress against this Executive Roadmap and set the community's expectations for the second half of our term.

WOMEN IN HOUSE



The first annual Women in House initiative was a resounding success last fall, bringing 24 female-identifying students to Parliament Hill with hopes of inspiring young leaders and allowing them to imagine themselves in leadership roles both on campus and in their future careers, through positive and representative role modelling. Building on last year's success, the program has great potential to be expanded and integrated into other initiatives, like the #AskHer campaign and USC mentorship program. We will expand the Women in House initiative to support female student leaders so they feel empowered to inspire other female students on campus.

STUDENT LEADER DEVELOPMENT



There are thousands of student leaders who are engaged at least indirectly with the USC, but we currently struggle to provide meaningful leadership development opportunities for students beyond the inner circle of executives. We have the resources in-house to offer incredible personal and professional development opportunities on a range of topics from event management to effective communication to building high performing teams. We also recognize that we underutilize our associates, coordinators, and interns, struggling to balance support and autonomy to help them reach their full potential. We commit to providing regular learning sessions for all USC student leaders focused on topics within our respective portfolios. Moreover, we will work intentionally to provide meaningful opportunities for our student support staff to learn and be engaged in our day-to-day work.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



The USC has always been committed to supporting all students, and offering specialized programs and services to students from minority and marginalized communities in an effort to ensure every student feels welcome on our campus and to equalize opportunities so every student can reach their full potential. Our team recognizes that students from racialized and marginalized communities may not have access to the same mentorship opportunities as their peers. We know the best way to inspire minority and marginalized groups to assume leadership positions is to see themselves in other leaders. To this end, we will aim to create a mentorship program specifically to connect minority and marginalized students to personal and professional mentors to help bridge the development gap that currently exists.