



Seen and Heard...



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McMaster Highlights

Hamilton Edition

Welcome to the May 2016 edition of *McMaster Highlights: Hamilton Edition*, the monthly e-newsletter keeping you up to date on what's happening at McMaster.

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Unique course helps students piece together Hamilton's history

A unique practicum course at McMaster pairs history students with local businesses and community groups working on specific heritage projects.

Through the History Practicum, students apply historical knowledge and research skills developed throughout their undergraduate degree to a heritage project. Working within the Hamilton community, this project allows students to develop new skills in the fields of local and public history.

Students have partnered with the Hamilton Public Library, Dundas' Picones Fine Foods and Dundurn Castle National Historic Site. They've even written the text for a number of local historical markers and plaques.

Two students, Robert Pinchin and Elizabeth Ivanecky were tasked with researching Auchmar House, a 19th century mansion, its original occupant (influential Hamiltonian Isaac Buchanan) and the site's historical significance.

"If we had just researched the house, though, we'd have come up with some facts like how it was one of the first in Ontario to have indoor plumbing," says Pinchin. "That's important, sure, but by really immersing ourselves in our work, we discovered much more about the history of Auchmar, Isaac Buchanan and Hamilton itself."

The students taped interviews with city politicians, area residents and others as part of the project, and are turning the footage into a short documentary.

"We developed the skills that we never would have developed in the classroom," says Ivanecky. Ivanecky also says the experience made her feel like more of a citizen of her hometown.

"After learning about the city's history, I feel more attached to Hamilton," she says.

Asa McKercher, the instructor of the course says the course is not only meant to hone the skills of Canada's future historians, but to develop good citizens.

For more information, click [here](#).

Homegrown Hamiltonian, MSU President Justin Monaco-Barnes excited to collaborate with the City of Hamilton



Newly elected McMaster Students Union (MSU) President Justin Monaco-Barnes started his term on May 1st. In the upcoming year, Justin plans to focus on several platform points, which include sustainability, financial accessibility and mental health.

Justin spoke to us about his vision on collaborating with the City of Hamilton, the MSU's contributions to the Hamilton community and the value of community engagement for students.

As someone who was born and raised in Hamilton, Justin is an advocate for the growth of Hamilton and community engagement. "This community means a lot to me, and is a large reason for who I am today," says Justin.

On strengthening the existing relationship between the MSU and the City of Hamilton:

This year, Justin plans on working with the city of Hamilton to bridge the gap for students who have never been exposed to Hamilton culture. He explains that as an organization, the MSU has the power to speak directly to the student body.

"Through hosting events such as Pop the Bubble, and Discover Your City week we are already putting the gears in motion," says Justin. "The more we can do to expose our students to this beautiful city, the more we can work together to continue to make this city great."

On connecting students to the local community:

Justin strongly believes that the economic impact of students in the community is contributing to the growth of the city he loves. "The MSU, through its services and clubs, contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to charity, most of which remains in Hamilton. We also actively work to bring students off campus into both urban and green spaces," says Justin.

He also highlights how partnerships with groups like the Immigrants Working Centre, Good Shepard and Canadian Blood Services, provides evidence of the strong civic engagement the student union has with the community.

On working with the City Council:

As president of the MSU, Justin plans on working closely with Councillor Aidan Johnson and Mayor Fred Eisenberger, the rest of city council and with the University to improve the McMaster student experience.

"Last year the MSU began a municipal lobby week, wherein we built more formal meeting structures to discuss student-driven ideas for city policy," says Justin. In regards to city council assistance, Justin hopes that the council will focus on improving the quality of city transit and employment opportunities for new graduates.

On increasing retention of young professionals in Hamilton:

Justin talks about how Hamilton is a lively, growing community with a lot to offer individuals embarking on a new journey post graduation.

"McMaster University produces graduates who are keen to work, live and thrive within this community," says Justin. "At the MSU we play an active role in providing graduates the tools they need to make the decision to stay in Hamilton. Not only do we want to show undergraduates the hotspots of Hamilton, but we also want to emphasize the community is growing for the future."

On LRT in Hamilton:

According to Justin, the new LRT line will have a significant impact on student life at McMaster. "This project is something that the MSU has long supported. The LRT will not only allow for a better flow of students through the city, it will also allow for students to live further away from campus - therefore providing a wider economic impact throughout the city," says Justin. "Building for a better, cleaner tomorrow is something that McMaster students all stand behind."

Hamilton Bike Tour tells story of Hamilton's past and future

As a part of last month's Big Ideas Better Cities: Climate Change and Environment week of events, a group of around 50 students, professors, and community members, gathered to take part in a bike tour of the city.

Michael Egan, Associate Professor of History in the Faculty of Humanities, organized and led the event from the Tim Horton's Field in downtown Hamilton through the town to Dundas.

Ward 3 Councillor Matthew Green kicked off the ride with opening remarks, "I used to drive everywhere! Three years ago I decided to park my car and change the way I move by using public transit, cycling, and walking." Councillor Green also spoke about the Beautiful Alleyways Project, a campaign with a volunteer action team dedicated to creating a cleaner, greener Hamilton.

Nancy Bouchier, Associate Professor in the History department, talked about the history of the Hamilton Waterfront.

"Forty years ago this [Hamilton Waterfront] development was unfathomable. Now it's a story from the past and also a story of the future."

Following the Waterfront Trail the convoy of bikes made their way through the McMaster campus and down into Lot M where student Rayna Matties spoke about the riparian buffer stream that runs behind the lot and is also a habitat area for turtles.

The final stop of the tour featured McMaster Engineering's Brian Baetz who talked about the Dundas Desjardins Canal Park.

For more information, click [here](#).

For more information or assistance please contact Jaskiran Shoker, McMaster University at 905-525-9140 x. 26572 or shokerj@mcmaster.ca