

Vice President Academic Summer Plan 2009

Mike Brown

Introduction

Summer is a time of learning for the Vice President Academic. There is a huge amount of information that I need to become an expert on for the upcoming academic year, if the summer isn't set aside for this learning, I won't be able to represent students in the most effective manner. In addition, there are multiple practical projects that I aim to tackle throughout the summer that would be infeasible to do any other time of the year. I'll also be working with the rest of the summer office, serving as a sounding board for any projects that they're working on.

Another aspect of my job over the summer will be to act as a general resource to a wide range of people including students, the faculty and the rest of the summer office. It should be noted that I'll try to run many of my projects concurrently as much as possible in order to maximize my productivity.

Tasks

These are my duties according to EngSoc policy:

- Submitting weekly reports to the executive.
- Submitting monthly reports to council.
- Assisting Executive members who are geographically unable to visit Kingston during the summer months
- Finalizing the annual operations of the Better Education Donation Fund.
- Liaising with the Faculty of Applied Science on Academic Issues.
- Meeting frequently with the Applied Science Summer Projects Office.
- Liaison with the AMS Academic Affairs Commission.

There will also be daily meetings with the other executive members, and regular meetings with the operations committee, and the IL management team. Beyond that, there will be general day to day tasks of reading and writing emails, sending mail and making phone-calls.

Projects

Project: Clean the EngSoc lounge

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2-3 Days

Description: Spring = spring cleaning, and for EngSoc this is no exception. While this isn't a particularly academic issue, it's important that we start off the summer in a clean and healthy work environment.

Project: General Website Overhaul

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 1-2 Weeks

Description: After what we'll call "the great crash of '08", anything related to Academics is seemingly missing from the website: this is a problem. I want to create a one-stop section where any student can go to receive academic based information. This task will require information gathering, specific sections being planned out and ultimately implemented.

Project: Update the Guide to the Classroom

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: Essentially the be all and end all of academic guides, this document needs to be updated year to year to reflect any changes that have occurred. I'll need to work with the faculty to make sure everything is accurate.

Project: Update the Registration Guide

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: Once again, any relevant changes to registration need to be investigated and updated in the guide available for students.

Project: Create a scholarship database for the website

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: Once the main Academic component of the website is available, I'd like to add this as an extra section. This will require the cooperation of the Student Awards Office, hence my next task.

Project: Meet with Student Awards Office

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: I plan to meet with this office to get a better idea of what's available to both engineering and Queen's students. This is a vital action to take if I'm to implement the scholarship database previously mentioned.

Project: Create academic complaint form

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: One of the aspects that I focused on in my campaign was that students should be raising any issues they're having with the VP Academic. While specific grievances are often handled through the Academic Grievance Centre, it's important that students have a formal way of bringing issues up to EngSoc beyond events like forums.

Project: Learn about OSUA, CFES & ESSCO

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 3 days

Description: Three different external organizations that I'd like to know much more about, especially if I'm to lobby for students on an academic level. Particular attention will be paid to the lobbying and government issues committee of ESSCO.

Project: Attend ESSCO AGM

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: The ESSCO AGM is held during the summer, so this is a great opportunity for me to attend

and discuss a variety of issues facing engineering programs across the province. Since I'll have researched ESSCO previously, I should be able to provide a credible voice for Queen's engineering students.

Project: Learn about provincial tuition framework and future possibilities

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 3 days

Description: Since the current tuition framework at the Provincial level will be up for review in a few years, it's important to plan for the future. This task will also involve utilizing various contacts across campus.

Project: Learn about student aid and current options available

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: Learning about student aid both at the University and provincial level is key to make sure that I can be a resource for all engineering students.

Project: Letter writing campaign regarding issues facing engineering students

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 3-5 days

Description: Once I have more of a grasp of the issues that we're facing in the upcoming year (rising tuition, continuous budget cuts), I want to communicate our situation out to policy makers so that there is a differentiation between the issues faced by university students in general and engineering students specifically

Project: Bring Englinks back online and refine the current operations manual

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 1 week

Description: Englinks essentially died during the crash of '08, and it's my aim to bring it back. During the summer I hope to work with the coordinator and support them in the effort to ensure the service is up and running by September and ready to be marketed to incoming students. In addition, it's been a year since the service was reviewed, so I'll look into any possible changes that are necessary for us to run a successful program.

Project: Meet with Academic Affairs Commissioner and VP University Affairs

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 3 days/ongoing

Description: These people will have a lot of common interests with things I'll be working on. Since the AAC and I are the only members of the Academic Caucus that stay during the summer, we should definitely pool our resources on any common issues. In addition, it's generally a good idea to have a positive relationship with these people (and if that involves skydiving... ugh).

Project: Investigate the feasibility of notations for technical workshops and possible transcript modifications

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 1-2 Weeks

Description: I can't take credit for this idea, it was all Andrew Sullivan (Director of Professional Development). While he'll be looking into the overall organization of the program, I'll be rallying support from the faculty (be it resource-wise or on a philosophical level) and investigating the steps we'd need

to take to ensure students receive credit for participating in these workshops. I'll also act as an overall resource to this project since Sully will be focusing on other things during the summer. This will be a major project for the summer.

Project: Act as a resource to the academic component of orientation/Submit content for primer

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: I'll be working with Matt from FC in regards to First Year 101. I'll also write a nice little submission for the primer highlighting the various academic resources available to frosh.

Project: Act as a resource for other summer office projects

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: Everyone else in the summer office will have their own projects, and they may need a hand from time to time, or someone to bounce ideas off of. I've been told I make a pretty good wall, so I'm sure all sorts of ideas will bounce off of me! I'm eager to be involved in discussion behind any issues that affect the society as a whole.

Project: Develop midterm review

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: I know that some departments already institute a midterm review, but I'd like to see this occur across the faculty; if I could throw something together with the help of the faculty and see it mandated by faculty board, that'd be great.

Project: Organize framework for an internal academic caucus

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: One of my goals for the year is to ensure that student input is available at every level of decision making. Many of the changes to the curriculum happen at the departmental level, and I simply can't sit on every department's curriculum committee. Many departments *do* have students sitting on these committees; I aim to have them all do this. In addition, if we can bring all of these students together to see what issues are common between the departments, we'll be able to come up with solutions together and collectively have more weight when dealing with the faculty. I need to come up with how this will all specifically work, and perhaps work with discipline clubs to amend their constitutions to accommodate such a body.

Project: Finalize BED Fund Purchases and Reimbursement

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 3 days

Description: Since there was no BED Coordinator this past year and I don't want to burden the new coordinator with the issues of the previous year, I'll be handling the finalization of this year's BED purchases. I'll predominately be working with accountants on the faculty and departmental level.

Project: Look into restructuring BED Fund Policy

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 3 Days

Description: While I brought some changes to BED policy at this year's AGM, I might bring some more,

particularly changing how reimbursement is done. The overall goal is to encourage ambitious proposals that can pay us back year to year on a loan method, rather than the current method of us reimbursing.

Project: Attend University Council

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 1 day

Description: Since I'm a senator until September, I'm also a University Counsellor. UC occurs at the beginning of May, and a variety of issues facing the University are discussed. This will be a great opportunity for me to gain insight into a variety of issues, while networking with all of the other counsellors.

Project: Act as a resource to students regarding registration questions

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: While we try to cover everything in the guide to registration, there will inevitably be questions left unanswered. It's my duty to help guide students with any questions that they may have.

Project: Investigate the English Proficiency Test

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 4 Days

Description: This is an issue that comes up every year, and I'll be tackling it once more. Many of the technical communication courses are dropping the EPT as a requirement, and the level of resources for students who initially fail the EPT is questionable at this point. All of this needs to be investigated, and a response might be generated to the faculty.

Project: Propose changes to update current Faculty Board policy

Priority: 3

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: Much of the policy listed for the Faculty Board of Applied Science (their policy, not EngSoc's) is out of date and doesn't reflect what actually occurs. I'd like to work to update this policy and ensure that procedures are followed appropriately.

Project: Participate in Educational Assessment Committee(s)

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: Part of our CEAB requirements is to evaluate how we're meeting a variety of standards in our engineering education. Seven committees are being struck in early April, and will continue to meet into the summer. I aim to sit on at least a couple of these committees and provide the student point of view.

Project: Meet with administrators external to Applied Science

Priority: 3

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: It's wise to develop relationships with a variety of administrators outside of Applied Science, including the Vice Principal (Academic), Dean of Student Affairs and the new Principal. Meeting with these individuals and demonstrating the credibility of EngSoc will allow us to effectively deal with any issues in the upcoming year.

Project: Reading, reading, reading!

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 1 Week

Description: The filing cabinet and computer drive are full of a variety of academic documents, stretching from practical regulations to philosophical aspects of engineering education. I want to absorb as much information as possible so that I may be an expert (or at least competent) on as many issues as possible.

Project: Clean out Academic filing cabinet

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 1 day

Description: As mentioned, the filing cabinet is full... literally. After reviewing everything, I'll need to decide what I can dispose of and what's important to keep.

Project: Update the Tuition Background Guide ("Tuition for Dummies")

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 3 days

Description: This is a document that essentially outlines how your tuition is used at Queen's. I need to review the current document and work with the faculty to make any necessary changes.

Project: Maintain and monitor "Queen's Engineering 2013" Facebook Group

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: We've created an EngSoc moderated group for the incoming class of frosh. It's important that we monitor this group to ensure that any questions are answered accurately and that upper year students aren't being abusive. We can also proactively post things to engage the frosh during the summer, building up the anticipation for September.

Project: Meet with Centre for Teaching and Learning office

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: The Centre of Teaching and Learning is a student funded initiative that focuses on specific teaching strategies. I'd like to meet with this office and know how a beneficial between EngSoc and them can be set up to benefit students in general.

Project: Meet with the Academic Grievance Centre office

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: Another office that I'll be dealing with during my tenure as VP Academic. It's important that I understand the process that this office takes so that I may advise any students that come to me with complaints.

Project: Meet with the Summer Projects Office of Applied Science

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: Ongoing

Description: The faculty runs their own summer projects, and it's important that I'm available as an overall resource. At this point, I'm not 100% sure of what they'll be moving forward on, but I'm always happy to help.

Project: Attend AMS Training Sessions

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 2 days

Description: These occur throughout the summer, it'd be useful if I tagged along to learn about a variety of issues in student governance.

Project: Write up Strat Plan & Year Budget

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 5 days

Description: Self explanatory.

Project: May Homecoming preparation and participation

Priority: 1

Estimated Time: 3 days

Description: This year's homecoming festivities will be taking place in May. I'll be working with the rest of the summer office to ensure alumni relations are maintained during homecoming.

Project: Organize "How to Study" Session for September

Priority: 2

Estimated Time: 4 days

Description: This is an event that has occurred in the past, and I'll be working on the background work to ensure that it occurs again in September.

Timeline

May

I plan to tackle a good majority of my learning in May, but I'll be fairly busy with meetings with the faculty. This is the period in which academic decisions will be made, so I need to ensure that students are being represented well. In addition, I'll have the task of finalizing BED fund and making sure all the accounts are balanced nicely. There's also the first ever May homecoming, something that we'll all have to put effort into if we want it to be a success. Hopefully the SEED report from this year will be good to go and ready to present to the faculty.

June

The learning will continue in June, but I'll begin to tackle some of the concrete projects that I've proposed, with special interest put into website development. I'll continue meeting with a wide variety of individuals across campus. The registration guide should be completed by mid-June in order to help students in their battle against QCard. I'll be looking into the structure of Englinks and ensure that the new coordinator has a proper operations manual to get the service up and running. I hope to get the bulk of the technical workshop work done in June, with some carrying into July.

July

I plan to do a lot of work on updating and creating academic documents in July, namely the academic complaint form and midterm review system. I'll also be working on creating the framework behind the internal academic caucus and ensuring that students will be on curriculum committees in the upcoming year. I plan to liaise with the Englinks coordinator to ensure that the Englinks website is being developed and marketed to both tutors and students. Letter writing campaign should be good to go by the end of July.

August

Tie up any loose ends that may have been overlooked, make sure all BED/academic reps still exist, work on the bursary section of the academics website. Finalize Academics 101 aspects with Orientation Committee, plan any Academic training for FRECs during preweek. Make sure Englinks is good to go for the upcoming academic year.

Conclusion

I'm looking forward to this summer and I believe that I'll be able to get quite a bit done that'll benefit both the society and engineering students in general. The more I know for the upcoming year, the better I'll be able to represent students to the faculty. If anyone has any suggestions of how I could make this plan better, I encourage them to contact me as I'm sure there's at least a couple of great projects I haven't thought of.

Cheers,

Mike Brown

Vice President (Academic)

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