



MOUNT ALLISON STUDENTS' UNION

KEEPING PACE WITH STUDENT SPACE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Canada's #1 undergraduate university, Mount Allison prides itself on creating an immersive learning community for independent-minded leaders. Mount Allison has led the way in the academic experience for students, boasting six 3M National Teaching Fellows and one of the lowest faculty-student ratios; in administration, completing a \$30 million Fine and Performing Arts Centre with no external debt; and in student wellness, playing host to three conferences on student mental health in the past two years and taking on national leadership roles to improve the student experience with regard to mental health, internationalization, and academic materials.

It is in this spirit of excellence that the Mount Allison Students' Union is proud to recommend three ways to improve the student experience even further with regard to the space students call home during their years at Mount Allison.

The Ralph Pickard Bell Library is a central study space on campus for all students and provides an environment conducive to all types of learning, with resources available for study, group work, and research. Since 2011, the MASU has co-funded the extension of weekend library hours. We believe that the maintenance of these hours on a permanent basis is important for students and that combining their ongoing funding with better marketing and information distribution, students will continue to make use of this resource. To this effect, we are recommending full funding for extended weekend library hours in the Ralph Pickard Bell Library.

In our 2010 and 2011 budget submissions, the MASU recommended that Mount Allison fund an external audit of its security department including security phone coverage, campus lighting, structure of the security department, and funding allocation. The MASU went on to secure external funding in 2012 to engage the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) in conducting this audit. METRAC's report includes a series of recommendations to be implemented over both the short- and long-term, and the MASU therefore recommends that Mount Allison University, in its 2013-2014 budget, commit to funding METRAC's recommendations for implementation within one year. The MASU further recommends that Mount Allison commit to fully implementing the recommendations in METRAC's report by 2018.

Mount Allison is proud to play host to a diversity of students and provide supports that allow every student to feel at home while on campus. One area that students have noted as needing improvement is the gendered nature of restrooms on campus. For non-cisgendered students, bathrooms categorized according to the male/female gender dichotomy provide a barrier to feeling welcome and supported on their campus. It is in the ethos of inclusion that the MASU recommends that Mount Allison refit its single-stall restrooms as gender-neutral restrooms.

The MASU is proud to advance this series of recommendations, which we believe will not only make Mount Allison a more welcoming, supportive environment for its students, but will continue to showcase Mount Allison's leadership as the #1 undergraduate university in Canada.

EXTENDED LIBRARY HOURS

Mount Allison students have long voiced a desire for increased study space to be made available on campus, particularly on evenings and weekends. Based on this need, extended library hours were first implemented through a partnership between the MASU and the Ralph Pickard Bell Library in the winter term of the 2010-2011 academic year. These hours allowed the library to remain open until 10:45pm on Saturdays and to open at 10:00am on Sunday mornings, allowing six extra study hours each weekend and making library hours consistent throughout the week. Usage rates demonstrated that there was sufficient demand to keep these hours in place.

Following this, the Ralph Pickard Bell Library financed the cost of the extended hours using its discretionary funding during the 2011-2012 year. This past year, the MASU has partnered with the library to continue to provide extended hours on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings.

In its Strategic Statement and the accompanying Update and Five-Year Action Plan released in 2012, Mount Allison stipulates that it “will explore ways (programs and facilities) to make improved use of the Library in providing academic support.” Although these improvements are perhaps most directly related to academic support services and the increased availability of librarians, the MASU believes that providing increased study space in the form of extended library hours further facilitates this aim.

Extended library hours are structured as a “study hall” model – meaning that library staff are not present and the circulation desk does not operate during these hours. This model is very cost-effective. Simply having the option to set up early or to stay late on weekends allows students to fully utilize the library as an academic space. Providing extended library hours would cost the University no more than \$4,000 in the next fiscal year.

In order for students to be successful, sustainable, reliable study space options on campus are necessary. Further, investing in the library as a study space could potentially allow Mount Allison to close other buildings earlier and to save money on the operating costs which must be put towards lighting and heat in spaces such as the Dunn building and the Wallace McCain Student Centre.

RECOMMENDATION: FULLY FUND THE CONTINUED EXTENSION OF WEEKEND LIBRARY HOURS UNTIL 10:45PM ON SATURDAYS AND BEGINNING AT 10:00AM ON SUNDAYS.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security is essential to the success of an academic environment. Student perception at Mount Allison is that the campus is a safe space in which they can pursue their studies. To ensure students continue to feel safe on campus, it is imperative that Mount Allison look for ways to improve security services and better utilize its existing funding.

With this improvement of safety and security in mind, the MASU commissioned an external audit of safety and security at Mount Allison by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) through a grant awarded by Status of Women Canada. This project allowed the MASU, through an internationally recognized agency, to develop a series of recommendations to improve safety and security at Mount Allison. These recommendations span in duration for implementation from three months to two years. In recognition of Mount Allison's small size and the budgetary constraints imposed by limited provincial funding, however, the MASU recommends fully implementing these recommendations within the next five years. The MASU's recommendations for 2013-2014 reflect the short-term recommendations provided by METRAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- INCREASE THE SHARE ADVISOR FROM A 0.5 FTE POSITION TO A 1.0 FTE POSITION;
- REPLACE OR REPAIR LIGHTS IN LOCATIONS OUTLINED IN METRAC'S SAFETY AUDIT;
- POST SIGNS WITH FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REPORTING BURNT OUT OR BROKEN LIGHTS;
- TRIM TREES AND BUSHES THAT BLOCK LIGHTS AROUND THE ATHLETIC CENTRE AND LIBRARY;
- ADD SIGNS AND MAPS IN LOCATIONS OUTLINED IN METRAC'S SAFETY AUDIT;
- INCREASE FREQUENCY AND NUMBER OF SECURITY PATROLS OF CAMPUS;
- BLOCK OFF ISOLATED LOCATIONS OUTLINED IN METRAC'S SAFETY AUDIT;
- INSTALL SECURITY MIRRORS IN LOCATIONS OUTLINED IN METRAC'S SAFETY AUDIT;
- DOUBLE NUMBER OF SECURITY SERVICES STAFF AND PROVIDE SECURITY SERVICES 24 HOURS PER DAY, SEVEN DAYS PER WEEK; AND
- CREATE A SAFETY AND SECURITY STEERING COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN JUNE 2013 TO ENSURE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF METRAC RECOMMENDATIONS.

GENDER-NEUTRAL RESTROOMS

An essential ingredient of the Mount Allison experience is providing a safe space for personal discovery and growth. Mount Allison's population reflects a diversity of students, a broad array of leaders, and various backgrounds. As a leader in undergraduate experience, Mount Allison has shone by providing resources to its LGBTQ community through support for Catalyst, the MASU's student-run organization for gay, lesbian, transgender, two-spirited, questioning, asexual, and queer individuals, and their allies.

A major issue for transgendered individuals is the necessary subscription to the male-female gender dichotomy reinforced by things like restrooms that cater only to cisgendered notions of gender identity. The University of Regina, University of Victoria, McGill University, and Western University have all converted restrooms to gender-neutral in order to accommodate transgendered students who may not feel comfortable identifying exclusively as male or female.

In order to promote an accessible, welcoming campus, the MASU believes that Mount Allison can easily and cost-effectively convert single-stall restrooms on campus to gender-neutral through a series of simple retrofits and updated signage. This would be a simple process to undertake, but would have tremendous benefits for transgendered students at Mount Allison.

RECOMMENDATION: REFIT AND REBRAND EXISTING SINGLE-STALL RESTROOMS AS GENDER-NEUTRAL THROUGH CHANGES TO LOCKING MECHANISMS AND SIGNAGE.