

# **ON THE RECORD**

**A ChangeCamp Western Report**

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**Prepared by**

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## **Introduction**

ChangeCamp Western was the first event of its kind at a Canadian university when it was held in February 2012. ChangeCamp Western is an ‘unconference’ predicated on the idea that an effective platform of change depends on the input and participation of a diverse array of community members.

As an organization, the USC has a clear interest in engaging students, USC managers and staff, Western administration and staff, faculty, and alumni. The USC programming and services provided for students (often by students) depend on a continuous stream of feedback, in the form of both criticism and praise. The advocacy activities of student leaders at the USC also benefit from stakeholder engagement. When students have a forum in which to present their policy priorities, debate the issues, and share their experiences, advocates have more information upon which to form their agendas.

In all, ChangeCamp is a forum that promises to listen to any student, staff member, manager, administrator, or educator that wishes to be heard. We grow as individuals, as organizations, and as communities, when we seek out, listen to, and respect the ideas of others.

With growth in mind, and hope for a bright future of student engagement ahead, it is my pleasure to present the first ChangeCamp Western Report, ‘*On the Record.*’

- Amir Eftekharpour, ChangeCamp Coordinator 2011-2013

## **Acknowledgements and Thanks**

I would like to thank the following individuals for their incredible work and support in bringing ChangeCamp Western to its first-ever report. Firstly, a thanks to Patrick Searle, the Vice-President, University Affairs (2011-2012), who brought ChangeCamp to Western, and who reached out to me to get this new, unheard-of event off the ground. Because of his vision, hard work, and guidance, ChangeCamp has had two successful conferences, is publishing a report, and is currently preparing for its third conference.

Secondly, I would like to thank Alysha Li, Vice President, University Affairs (2012-2013) for her incredible guidance and support this year. Because of Alysha’s faith, vision, and encouragement, ChangeCamp was officially integrated into the USC’s yearly agenda, where it promises to provide a unique and necessary outlet for students who wish to express their views, for years to come.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my ChangeCamp Executive, Stephanie Edwards, Tyler Benning, Chris Kay, and Katie Hackson. Because of their hard work and vision, ChangeCamp has expanded to two separate events, increasing the opportunity for students to express their views.

Fourth, a huge thanks to all Scribes and volunteers who have dutifully transcribed the arguments and ideas expressed at ChangeCamp. Without you, those ideas might have been forgotten. Because of you, they are on the record.

## How to Read this Report

The primary aim of this report is to communicate the values, concerns, and solutions presented by discussants, in a clear and easily-understood manner. Thus, instead of simply summarizing or ‘cleaning up’ the original ChangeCamp Western transcripts, I have synthesized the information, and packaged the arguments in an easily-navigable format. In each section, one topic is discussed. The various components and ideas discussed in that topic are clearly delineated.

Within each component, there are listed a series of **Principles** (states or implied values that discussants expressed), **Concerns** (issues with the status quo that violate the Principles), and **Recommendations** (solutions for addressing those Concerns).

### Disclaimer

It is important to remember that the following discussions contain a diversity of views. These views do not represent the official views of the USC, the ChangeCamp Coordinator, the ChangeCamp Executive, Scribes, Western Administration, or the student population as a whole. Instead, they are meant to be read as the views of (anonymous) individuals, and as the synthesis of debate between individuals. These views may or may not be representative of a broader view. The Principles, Concerns, and Recommendations listed in each section are not intended to be comprehensive, or to be the ‘final word’ on an issue. They are simply the various (and sometimes conflicting) Principles, Concerns, and Recommendations that arose out of each specific discussion.

Lastly, in synthesizing the viewpoints, I have worked hard to avoid dismissing major ideas, editorializing, or inserting private viewpoints that were not expressed at each table. For transparency and comparison purposes, the original transcripts are included in the Appendix section.

**Editor’s Note:** While there were valuable discussions on online learning and the responsibility of providing the best student experience, the transcripts of the discussions do not provide sufficient information for the creation of concrete principles, concerns, and recommendations. The notes will be bolstered by the discussions at future ChangeCamps, and included in future reports. In the meantime, they are available in Appendix 1.A.

# The Best Student Experience

**Discussion Question:** How do we define the best student experience? Who is responsible for providing it?

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.A

## Introduction

Firstly, is it possible to find a single definition of the ‘best’ student experience? The short answer, as discussants agreed, is no. Student life at Western happens along a wide spectrum of experiences. The following components were recognized by discussants as being integral to understanding and improving the student experience at Western.

## Component: Party Culture at Western

*Principle One:*

While the London ‘party scene’ and Richmond Row cultures play an important role in Western students’ lives, and in the ‘spirited’ reputation of the school and its students, they are not a part of Western itself. As such, those who choose not to drink or party must be able to find experiences that provide meaningful alternatives to this culture.

*Concern One:*

Many Western Club and faculty council events are predominantly alcohol-based, limiting the extent to which non-drinking students can integrate into the activities of the clubs and councils that hold those events.

## Component: Food Services on Campus

*Principle Two:*

Cultural dietary accommodation is integral to a campus as diverse as Western’s.

*Concern Two:*

Dietary accommodation options are highly limited when using campus catering services.

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*Principle Three:*

The USC must maintain a strong presence in the provision of food services working with the university to ensure that food consumed on campus and in student events is safe and healthy.

*Concern Three:*

USC events often conduct student-run barbeques, or offer food and beverages. There is always a potential for outbreaks of salmonella or other food-borne bacteria to result from student barbeque or food events.

*Recommendation One:*

The USC must continue to work with the university to ensure that safety regulations are maintained for student-run food events. This can be achieved through continuing effective food training for those handling or cooking food.

**Component: Bureaucracy at the USC**

***Travel Policy***

*Principle Four:*

While recognizing that ensuring the safety of students is paramount, the USC must ensure that travel policy is fair and consistent.

*Concern Four:*

USC policy currently allows USC members to rent and drive cars, but does not extend the same privileges to club members.

*Recommendation Two:*

The USC must address the issue of apparently separate sets of regulations for the USC and club members. If there is a separate set of regulations, then the USC should clarify and publicize the reason for such differences.

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**Policy Clarity and Transparency**

*Principle Five:*

Detailed explanations for why policies exist must be made available to students, and students should be encouraged to ask questions and seek out answers.

*Concern Five:*

Dismissive Language is often used by Western and USC staff when students raise concerns, limiting the ability of students to effectively raise those concerns, and receive adequate answers.

*Recommendation Three:*

The USC and Western should develop systems that allow students to ask questions and raise concerns about policies. Furthermore, students should be made aware of the resources available to them, to assist in asking those questions. For example, the USC should make clear the services that USC Managers and elected representatives can provide, and where those services can be attained.

## **Component: Student Jobs**

*Principle Seven:*

The best student experience should include connections to jobs, particularly those attained after graduation. Preparing for life after graduation is an integral part of the academic experience at Western.

*Concern Six:*

Current job-connection opportunities, such as internships and other experiential learning opportunities, are highly limited at Western.

*Recommendation Four:*

Other universities have developed internship and co-op opportunities. Western should similarly provide better co-op and internship opportunities for every program (not just business, but also liberal arts, health sciences, etc), or provide better counseling as to how to attain those positions.

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*Principle Eight:*

Career Counselors are vital to student development, goal creation, and goal fulfillment, and should thus be highly integrated into the student experience at Western.

*Concern Seven:*

Career Counselors often provide insufficient guidance, relying too much on generalized instruction booklets, and failing to provide program-specific advice.

*Recommendation Five:*

Western should provide program-specific counselors who are better able to connect to students in various academic streams. Those counselors could cover a range of programs, making them somewhat interchangeable and accessible to a broader range of students, while still maintaining some specificity.

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*Concern Eight:*

Career counseling opportunities are vaguely communicated to students, and students are not aware of the roles their counselors can play, and the services that career counselors can provide, or are connected to.

*Recommendation Six:*

Career counseling that exists outside of departments and faculties should be better promoted. Career counselors should integrate and communicate further with other services so that students can be referred elsewhere if they require a service that career counselors cannot provide.

## **Orientation Week and ‘Sophing Culture’**

**Discussion Question:** Orientation Week and ‘Sophing Culture’

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.B

### **Introduction**

Western’s Orientation Program is the first point of contact for first-year-students at Western. As such, it is crucial that the program achieve a certain set of identified goals. Firstly, the program must orient students to the various facilities on campus. Secondly, first-years must be familiarized with the opportunities on campus. Third, students should be exposed to the involvement-oriented culture of campus, and should be steered away from the high school stigma around being involved or enthusiastic. Lastly, the program should aim to help first-years get comfortable with university life. With these goals in mind, the discussants outlined a set of issues and components that are crucial to maintaining the positive aspects of O-Week, and improving upon those aspects which need refinement.

## **Component: Promoting a culture of respect and accessibility**

### *Principle One:*

The Sophing Program must provide a safe, accessible, and respectful environment for all volunteers in the program.

### *Concern One:*

The Sophing Program can be unwelcoming towards all members. The culture can be homogenous and unaware of alternative cultures and lifestyles. As well, the culture often stigmatizes certain members of the community, such as Residence Sophs, who are often not given the same respect as their faculty counterparts.

### *Recommendation One:*

The Orientation Program should continue with successful programming such as the 'Starlight Stage,' which can appeal to a broad range of students. It should also continue hosting events such as the 'The One Love Rally,' which promotes tolerance, greater inclusivity, and acceptance of alternative lifestyles.

### *Recommendation Two:*

The USC Services should be better integrated into Orientation Week to promote best practices. This can involve continuing to provide booth space for USC Services. It can also involve services acting as consultants on O-Week programming. The services should be introduced to first-years as resources that they pay for in their student fee, and that they can access at any time. This culture of acceptance should permeate all of O-Week, and not be relegated to programming that will be poorly attended or not prioritized by students.

## **Component: Soph Accountability**

### *Principle Two:*

Sophs must be held accountable to their performance as student leaders. They must be fairly evaluated, and their performance (year-long performance for returning sophs) should be taken into consideration during the selection process, where applicable.

### *Concern Two:*

While a survey (first-years evaluation form) exists for Residence Staff and Residence Sophs, there is no detailed and specific equivalent for Faculty Sophs. As such, there is no comparable basis of evaluation to use when these Sophs re-apply to the program. This

helps perpetuate the recurring perception that Head Sophs sometimes pick their friends, instead of selecting those who are most likely to be good Sophs.

*Recommendation One:*

The USC should institute a survey or other evaluation tool for Faculty Sophs, creating a way to hold them to their performance, and to provide Head Sophs with a method of evaluating sophs who are re-applying to a team. This will help reward good Sophs with continued involvement, and will provide an opportunity for Head Sophs to hold underperforming Sophs to account.

**Component: Meeting the Emotional Needs of First-years**

*Principle Three:*

The Orientation Program must allow First-years to comfortably integrate into their new university culture, while maintaining a spirited and exciting program.

*Concern Three:*

The program often overwhelms First-years with a flurry of scheduled activities, many of which are effectively mandatory for first-year students. Many First-years look to meet their peers in low-key environments, and the high-energy events in Talbot Bowl are often not conducive to this.

*Concern Four:*

While ensuring that First-years are comfortable, it is still vital that Sophs whole-heartedly promote O-Week programming. If Sophs are apathetic or unenthusiastic about programming, then First-years will certainly be hesitant about attending.

*Recommendation Two:*

The Orientation Program should put a greater emphasis on constructive and engaging alternatives to regular programming. These alternatives, such as the alternative programs occurring at Residences, should provide an opportunity for Sophs and First-years to interact, relax, and form meaningful relationships, in a low-key and low-stress context.

**Component: Providing Incentives to be a Residence Soph**

*Principle Four:*

Willing and able Residence Sophs are integral to the proper functioning of the Orientation Program.

*Concern Five:*

The Residence Soph program currently has difficulty attracting a sufficient number of strong candidates for Residence Sophing positions.

*Recommendation Three:*

Residence Sophs should earn some form of compensation to cover the costs of being a residence Soph, so as to ensure that the program is able to attract strong candidates.

**Component: A Transparent and Inclusive Decision-Making Process**

*Principle Five:*

The decision-making process of the Orientation Program must be transparent and inclusive.

*Concern Six:*

Sophing Eligibility Requirements were changed and announced with what was perceived as being very little transparency and Soph voice in the decision-making process, despite the presence of student voices on OPC and OGB.

*Concern Seven:*

Sophs know very little about OPC and other relevant decision-makers, and are poorly informed about the decision-making process.

*Recommendation Four:*

A Soph Council should be created. It should sit parallel to OPC, and should be comprised of elected representatives from each team. This would provide a representative voice for Sophs in the decision-making process.

*Recommendation Five:*

OPC and OGB should be more visibly involved in Soph training so that Sophs are better informed about where relevant decisions are being made, and who is making those decisions.

## **Component: Promoting Involvement after O-Week**

### *Principle Seven:*

Students should be made aware of the opportunities for involvement that exist after Orientation Week.

# **Ensuring Teaching Quality, Improving the Classroom Experience, and Evaluating Professors and TAs**

## **Component: Instructor Communication and Evaluation**

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.C

### *Principle One:*

Students must be able to effectively communicate with the professors and T.A.s who instruct them.

### *Concern One:*

T.A.s and Professors are sometimes less proficient in English, which creates language barriers between the instructor and the student. This can inhibit effective communication and instruction in classes and tutorials.

### *Concern Two:*

Large class sizes can make it difficult for professors to accommodate and engage students. While new technology can make it easier to engage a large number of students (recording lectures and making videos available to students), it is still imperative that Professors practice teaching and instruction, taking into account student feedback throughout the years.

### *Recommendation One:*

T.A.s and Professors should be evaluated, during the hiring process, on their oral presentation and language abilities, so as to ensure that those teaching classes are able to effectively communicate with students.

### *Recommendation Two:*

Student evaluations could be provided earlier in the semester, so that the Professor or

T.A. is made aware of their areas of strength, as well as their areas of opportunity. Providing this feedback earlier in the semester can help instructors improve during the course, thus creating more timely improvement for students in the classroom. Faculties might also consider making these evaluations available online, to facilitate student feedback.

## **Component: Consistency Across Class Sections**

### *Principle Two:*

Students should receive the same quality of instruction and standard of evaluation regardless of whether there is one class section for the course, or multiple class sessions taught by different professors.

### *Concern Three:*

The quality of instruction and standard of evaluation can vary greatly between class sections and professors, thus creating an inconsistent classroom experience for students taking the same course (i.e. highly different experiences and grade averages for those in first-year French section 001 vs. section 002).

### *Recommendation Three:*

Faculty Deans should institute guidelines for Professors to follow in certain courses, creating a more standardized instruction and evaluation experience for students, regardless of which class section they are in.

## **Component: A Diverse Skill-Set**

### *Principle Three:*

Students should experience a diverse array of skill sets, ideas, and methods of thinking, so as to promote a holistic educational experience for students.

### *Concern Four:*

In some programs, such as Science, there is very little critical thinking and writing. As such, many students go through their first three years of classroom instruction without developing these basic skills. Similarly, while the Sciences and Engineering programs emphasize group projects and workshops, the Liberal Arts programs emphasize individual work above all. Thus, the nature of the work done in these classes limits the breadth of skills and experiences that its participants will receive.

### *Recommendation Four:*

Allow for a pass/fail interest credit which would allow students to explore different skill sets, creating a broader learning experience.

*Recommendation Five:*

Encourage alternative methods of work (group projects, evaluations, presentations) and evaluation in all faculties. This becomes increasingly important as peer learning is further recognized as being essential for engaged and effective learning.

## **Financials: Tuition, Ancillary Fees, OSAP, and Student Debt**

**Discussion Question:** Cost of tuition, ancillary fees, OSAP, and student debt

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.D

### **Introduction:**

Education is the “great mobilizer.” As such, it must be accessible to willing and able students, following certain principles and ideals. For example, Tuition and ancillary fee frameworks must be equitable and realistic, with all stakeholders engaging to ensure that both students and universities can achieve their academic and experiential goals. Students must also receive adequate and realistic financial aid to help cover the costs of receiving an education. Participants at ChangeCamp engaged on and expressed these values in navigating the discussion on tuition and financial access.

### **Component: OSAP**

*Principle One:*

Students with the greatest financial need should not see OSAP as an obstacle to adequately funding their education.

*Concern One:*

OSAP allotments can be reduced if a student is working during the school year. This hurts the most vulnerable and those in need of the most financial aid, as those who need to finance their education on their own rely on OSAP and employment to cover costs.

*Principle Two:*

The OSAP application process should involve a realistic and fair assessment of the financial contributions being made towards a student's education, and allow that student to communicate irregular situations through the application process

*Concern Two:*

There is currently no way to receive financial aid if a student's parents refuse to contribute to their education, though parental income may be above the OSAP threshold. Students are unable to report this situation through the typical OSAP application process.

**Component: 30% Tuition Rebate**

*Principle Three:*

Student financial aid should be realistic and equitable for all students, and should provide aid to needy students during the course of their education, regardless of their situation before entering their program.

*Concern Three:*

The 30% Tuition Rebate only applies to students for four years after they finish high school. This means that students who take time off before attending a post-secondary institution become ineligible for the 30% rebate while they are still in university, and still paying tuition. This loss of support forces students to focus on making up for lost support, instead of focusing on schoolwork.

**Component: Food and Food allotments**

*Principle Four:*

Realistic OSAP meal allotments are required to make health eating possible for all students.

*Concern Four:*

OSAP's food allotments are unrealistic, and/or affordable food options are highly limited on campus. For example, OSAP allots \$2.75 per meal, while a lunch at King's can cost \$11.00. Food is not adequately accounted for in OSAP's cost assessments. If healthy eating is to be promoted for students, a realistic assessment of the cost of healthy food options must be undertaken.

*Concern Five:*

Affordable food options are limited on campus. The chain restaurants and establishments that set up branches on campus (Starbucks) do not provide a full range of services or perks. At the same time, the prices at campus franchises are often much higher than on-campus restaurants of the same chain. The impetus is on the university to re-evaluate the affordable food options it presents to students.

## **Component: Work Study**

### *Principle Five:*

Academic opportunities must be available to a broad range of students, and selection must be based on academic criteria.

### *Concern Six:*

Work-study at Western prevents those who do not qualify for financial aid from attaining academics-related work-study positions. Since Professors often hire out of these academics-related work-study positions, those who do not qualify for financial aid are prevented from gaining academic work experience, such as in laboratories. This does not create a fair and equitable basis for the attainment of many academics-related jobs on campus.

### *Recommendation One:*

Academics-related work-study positions should be filled on academic criteria, not financial need.

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### *Principle Six:*

The work-study application process should not create unnecessary delays that prevent students from beginning their work-study terms and earning their incomes.

### *Concern Seven:*

The current work-study approval process can take a long time. For a full-time student applying for a summer work-study position, the approval process can take until the end of May, reducing their income-earning summer to three months. The work-study application process can take a full three weeks, delaying the student's return to their work-study position.

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*Principle Seven:*

Commitments made to students for the provision of financial aid should be honoured.

*Concern Seven:*

Students who initially qualify for work-study, but become ineligible due to course overlaps, are put at risk of losing funding as they cannot complete their work-study term due to factors that are out of their control.

*Recommendation Two:*

Students that are accepted to work-study positions, but find that they cannot complete them due to course overlaps, should receive a bursary. This ensures the student receives the funding that they had been approved to receive with the acceptance of their work-study application.

## **Component: Ancillary Fees and Student Donation Fee**

*Principle Eight:*

Ancillary Fee collection and use should be transparent and honest, and should be aimed at enhancing the student experience of undergraduates.

*Concern Eight:*

The Student Donation Fee, a non-compulsory ancillary fee, is set at different and disparate levels for students in different programs. The fee can be set at any level, as it is a “donation,” and as such, students are able to opt out. The lack of consistency can create different program costs for students in various programs.

*Concern Nine:*

The opt-out process for the donation is not well-advertised, and many students express a lack of awareness of the opt-out option.

*Concern Ten:*

Students are similarly uninformed about the opportunity to apply to their faculty council to receive funding from the Donation Fee to enhance their school-related activities. The enormous amounts of funding available to students go untapped, and are often used to purchase equipment for faculty departments. While this equipment makes a positive difference in the coordination of courses, laboratories, etc, it is critical that the resources of the Donation Fee reach students.

*Recommendation Three:*

The Dean's Office in each faculty should better promote the opt-out procedure, as they collect the funding. This allows students who wish to opt-out with the necessary information to opt-out in a timely manner.

**Component: Per-Credit Tuition**

*Principle Nine:*

Tuition payment and costs should not penalize students who must work to support themselves during their post-secondary schooling.

*Principle Ten:*

Tuition costs should be proportional to the amount of education received in return.

*Concern Ten:*

Western's flat-fee tuition payment forces those taking fewer courses to pay more for less education received. For example, a student taking four courses will pay the same as a student taking five. This is not a proportional cost, and students do not receive value commensurate with the amount they pay in tuition.

*Concern Eleven:*

The flat-fee system is particularly harmful to those who cannot take a full course load, as they must work to support themselves during their post-secondary education. This means that those who are already financially vulnerable must pay more in tuition costs than they rightly should, related to the amount of education they receive in return.

**Component: Debt and Debt Repayment**

*Principle Eleven:*

Student loan repayment must be consistent but fair, and allow students to retain enough income to begin to build their lives after graduation.

*Concern Twelve:*

There is a real disparity between required OSAP payment amounts and the income many students make after graduation. Students with incomes below, on, or near to the OSAP repayment dues are negatively impacted by the obligation to pay student loans that they cannot afford on top of their living expenses.

*Recommendation Four:*

Instead of a fixed rate, public loans should be paid back at a percentage rate, as in the European system. For example, a student making \$70 000 a year will put 6% of their income towards their student loans. A graduated payment process is proportional, and is a more equitable and realistic payment process for those who have just graduated into their first jobs.

However, this sort of system must ensure that students are not renegeing on their debt obligations, as this can seriously undermine the future funding of universities and school programs.

## **Component: Tuition and Received Value**

*Principle Twelve:*

Students must receive proportional value in programs, classes, and academic services and opportunities in return for tuition paid.

*Concern Thirteen:*

Some programs, such as nursing, have high tuitions (approximately \$7000), but limited class and instructional time, creating a perceived disparity between tuition paid and benefits received. Should students be paying high tuition costs when they often have limited class services (many required online courses, as opposed to in-class courses, and often entire semesters without class), and are instead working in placements for the semester? Can students be charged for these 'class hours' when they receive no instruction, and have no classes? Students believe that it is not fair to charge full tuition based on class hours and credits, when they are not registered for classes for months at a time.

*Concern Fourteen:*

The high tuition that nursing students pay does not cover material such as scrubs and nursing shoes, raising the question of where their tuition costs go, and why they are forced to pay further ancillary fees for the equipment necessary to work in their placements.

*Concern Fifteen:*

There is little transparency into how university operating budgets are allocated, limiting the ability of students to track and understand the use of tuition funds. If this persists, students may continue to perceive tuition increases as unfair and undesirable, as they cannot track the financial rationale for such increases.

# The Role of Charity

**Discussion Question:** What is the appropriate role of charity groups (student or otherwise) on campus and in the USC?

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.E

## Introduction

Facilitating charitable initiatives at Western is one of the best ways to connect our campus to the outside world. In encouraging students, staff, administrators, and faculty to actively engage in issues that affect others, we burst the ‘Western Bubble’ and create important connections between our campus and a diverse array of people, places, and values. The following discussion aims to explore this theme. Discussants brainstorm opportunities, obstacles, and ideas for the future involvement of charitable groups at Western and at the USC.

## Component: USC Charity Clubs

### *Principle One:*

USC Clubs should prioritize the facilitation of student involvement and self-expression.

### *Concern One:*

The large number of USC charity-based clubs, while important in that they cover a wide range of different causes and ideas, can be overwhelming to first-year students that are just beginning to get involved at Western.

### *Recommendation One:*

USC charity-based clubs and other clubs should look to conduct their charitable activities in the context of broader activities that facilitate student growth and expression, such as coffee houses or social events. Overall, they should ensure that engagement and presentation are effective, but limited, so that charity messaging is not oversaturated and rendered meaningless to students.

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### *Principle Two:*

USC Clubs should be able to receive timely and relevant support from the USC in coordinating their charity events.

### *Concern Two:*

A wide variety of restrictions prevent USC clubs from effectively communicating an issue. Restrictions on bringing in outside food or hiring a paid speaker to present to students restricts the ability of USC clubs to facilitate student understanding of an issue.

*Concern Three:*

USC Clubs are currently limited in the fundraising they can accomplish given strict university restrictions on corporate advertising. If clubs are to hold effective fundraising drives, they must answer the question of how this limitation can be overcome. A solution depends on more communication and agreement between clubs and the university on the importance of charity, and the future of charitable groups at Western.

**Component: USC Orientation Charities**

*Principle Three:*

The USC must allow students to effectively engage with a diverse array of charitable causes.

*Concern Four:*

While the Clubs system allows students to get involved with a vast range of charitable organizations (local, regional, national, international), the USC's Orientation Charity resources are always directed at the same two charities.

*Concern Five (In response to Concern Four):*

On the other hand, if resources are continuously directed at new charities, this prevents the USC and its students from gaining the necessary experience required to make a measurable impact on a cause. Consistent involvement allows student organizations to gain experience, to build a reputation (such as Western's reputation in Shinerama), and to build emotional attachments that can facilitate life-long involvement in a campaign.

*Concern Six:*

The USC must be aware of the financial constraints that both residents of London and students at Western are often under. Orientation Week events, while successful, cannot place large financial burdens on London residents and students.

*Recommendation Two:*

USC Orientation Charities should focus increasingly on awareness over fundraising. Awareness is valuable, it does not create financial pressures, and it creates lifelong attachments to charities that facilitate involvement in these charities long after graduation from Western.

## **Component: Education and Promotion**

### *Principle Four:*

Students should be aware of the charity volunteering opportunities that exist at Western, regardless of size of scope.

### *Concern Six:*

While a Volunteer Fair is held, it is not a popular event because it is perceived by some as not being student-driven. For example, Clubs Week is highly popular, largely because it is a student-driven and run event. The current Fair, then, is not the most effective way of communicating charity volunteering opportunities to Western students, among other opportunities.

Second, certain programs have much more difficulty drawing attention and interest in their programs using the status quo promotional tools at the USC. For example, Habitat for Humanity will not have the same measurable influence and promotions capacity as Get Real, the Charity Soph Team (now the Charity Orientation Team), or Terry Fox.

### *Recommendation Three:*

A student-organized Charity Volunteer Fair should be organized to allow charitable groups to promote their presence at Western. This would allow students to introduce their clubs and initiatives to other students. It would allow all clubs an equal and accessible event during which to present their ideas and activities.

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### *Principle Five:*

Students should be able to measure – and be proud of – the impact of Western’s charity campaigns on the local, regional, national, and international scale.

### *Concern Seven:*

There is currently no way for Western students to follow the impact of their efforts outside of campus or club events.

### *Recommendation Four:*

An ‘Impact Map’ should be created to allow students to follow the effects of Western-supported charities (or the actions of their national or international counterparts).

## **Component: Alternative Spring Break**

*Principle Six:*

Charitable campaigns must make a positive impact for both the communities they target, and the volunteers that drive them.

*Concern Eight:*

Events such as ‘Alternative Spring Break’ are often criticized as ‘voluntourism,’ affecting volunteers far more positively than the communities they target. These communities can be negatively affected as volunteers take local jobs, consume local resources, and take away the incentives of local people to develop skills and resources to solve their own issues.

*Concern Nine (In response to Concern Eight):*

On the other hand, without activities such as ASB, Western students lose an opportunity to constructively engage with local communities. In all, it is better to make a difference (in yourself and in the community) than to make no difference.

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*Principle Seven:*

Alternative Spring Break must be financially accessible to all who are willing and able to participate.

*Concern Ten:*

The current financial resource structure of ASB is not helpful as students must pay a down payment before they are eligible for financial aid. This means that students who are not be able to attend the trip without financial aid must first place money (which they may not have) down before being considered for financial aid. This approach asks students with financial constraints to provide money (that they may not have – hence the financial aid requirement) before they are considered for aid.

*Recommendation Five:*

ASB should consist of two applications. One application would be for those that are able to attend regardless of forthcoming (or not forthcoming) financial support. The second is for those who are only able to attend if they receive financial aid. For this second application, a down-payment would not be required. This allows students to apply without being forced to find the funds to place on a down-payment, allowing students with immediate financial constraints to attend the trip.

**Component: Engaging in the Community**

*Principle Eight:*

Giving back to the local community is just as important as giving back to the international community.

*Principle Nine:*

Important Non-USC entities should be accessible to students who wish to contact them.

*Concern Eleven:*

There are a large number of homeless, hungry, and destitute individuals in London, and more resources can be devoted to developing the London community.

*Concern Twelve:*

Non-USC entities such as Get Real are not recognized by the USC, and thus not easily accessible to students who wish to use USC Clubs resources to plan events and programming with those non-USC entities.

*Recommendation Six:*

The USC community should increase and facilitate formal interaction with non-USC leaders such as Get Real, Emerging Leaders, Pillar London, and so on. These local leaders can help spur innovation and new programming designed to engage those in the London community.

## **Component: Role in Student Life**

*Principle Ten:*

Charitable groups at Western must meaningfully contribute to the positive student experience at Western

*Concern Thirteen:*

There is a perception that the university often does not see the tangible benefits to facilitating student charitable engagement at Western.

*Recommendation Seven:*

Continue to detail the benefits, to the university, of encouraging and facilitating student involvement in charitable activities. Firstly, the global nature of charitable work encourages students to think globally, and to prepare for careers as leaders on the

international stage. Secondly, allowing students to find a cause that they are passionate about will encourage a healthy, engaged, and passionate student body that will form a strong community to which members can feel that they belong.

## **Mental Health**

**Discussion:** Improving and/or Maintaining Mental Health Services on Campus

**Source Material:** Appendix 1.F

**Introduction:** Students and Staff often face enormous pressures in their academic lives or careers. The stresses and the strains that affect these individuals can manifest themselves in mental health conditions that significantly affect the ability of individuals to lead healthy and productive lives, professionally and personally. Access to and the promotion of mental health services should be a priority for all governance bodies on campus, and in the broader community. With an ever-expanding understanding of mental health challenges, participants at ChangeCamp engaged on various components of mental health.

### **Component: Recognizing a Diversity of Challenges**

*Principle One:*

Students are challenged by a variety of mental health issues of varying magnitude and scope. These merit attention and support.

*Concern One:*

Students with less intensive issues (such as stress, depression, or test anxiety) are overlooked in favor of students with more immediate needs.

### **Component: Mental Health Resources Available to Students**

*Principle Two:*

Students must have timely access to mental health services, given the urgent nature of many mental health issues.

*Concern Two:*

Due to increasing demand, wait times for mental health services are longer than ever. A waitlist, which forces students to wait for months at a time, risks endangering student health by leaving short-term, episodic, periodic, and temporary illnesses completely unaddressed in the time frame in which they occur. As well, many illnesses go undiagnosed and untreated, as students are not able to meet with health professionals in time to address symptoms.

*Concern Three:*

The services that exist are poorly promoted and coordinated. Student Health services, which has social workers that are able to direct students to appropriate services, and the Student Development Centre, which coordinates psych services, coordinate poorly, and are unable to meet current demand.

*Concern Four:*

Many students are not aware of the services available at their home faculty, at the USC, or at Western. As well, the services that do exist are often under heavy demand, and would only be put under more pressure with increased awareness. This reality clearly necessitates the need for increased and improved mental health support.

*Concern Five:*

While the USC is aware of mental health issues, it does not have the resources to implement a comprehensive and accessible mental health treatment and prevention service for those who most need it.

*Concern Six:*

While the USC does operate a peer support line, there is no Western-specific crisis line for students to access in times of immediate need. While a distress center does exist in London, students have identified some barriers to accessing London Health, and have expressed a desire for a western-specific distress line to address the unique needs that affect students, and that a city-based line would not be similarly familiar with.

*Concern Seven:*

Students at the affiliates are not aware of main-campus mental health support systems. This means that thousands of students who spend much of their time away from central campus resources, are even more unaware of mental health resources at their university. This increases barriers for those students looking for support in times of need.

*Recommendation One:*

The Student Development Centre and Student Health Services should coordinate their efforts and integrate their resources into a centralized access point which students can turn to in a time of need. This helps to avoid the back-and-forth that can occur when a student is sent between the two offices to attain similar services. As well, staff at the Student Development Centre must be accredited and trained to effectively support students with mental health issues, and direct them towards the correct services and professionals.

*Recommendation Two:*

Peer Support efforts should be encouraged and aided by the USC and the Western Administration. The Peer Support phone line should be promoted as a resource for students who simply need someone to speak to. An online forum or chat room can also provide students with a safe, secure, and anonymous place to speak to others about their concerns and stresses. While this is no substitute for effective treatment or detailed discussion, it does provide a small service for those who simply need someone to talk to. Lastly, Sophs should be encouraged to continue with their role as peers, supports, and mentors for first-year students. Increased mental health training at Soph Training can help them identify and address some of the symptoms or causes of mental health issues.

To further the goal of increasing peer support while simultaneously decreasing stigmatization, training programs can be created to educate students about mental health. These programs can be mandatory for certain volunteers, and promoted to others as a way to learn more about mental health, with the ultimate goal of decreasing stigma and increasing education. A visible sign, such as a hat, a shirt, or a badge, could be provided to those who complete the training, identifying them as peer supporters while simultaneously promoting the program.

*Recommendation Three:*

The London distress centre, a telephone hotline for those with immediate need, should be promoted as a resource that students with immediate need can currently turn to in the short term. Meanwhile, student leaders and Western administration must look into the possibility of instituting a western-specific crisis line staffed by accredited professionals.

As well, an email hotline should be considered. This type of service has been successful at Ivey, and should be considered as a service for all Western students.

*Recommendation Four:*

The various services already available should further promoted to students in need. Valuable services, such as counselors specific to Residences and Ivey, for example, should be further promoted to students in those constituencies. This allows those students to access more convenient support, while reducing some of the pressure on central campus services.

*Recommendation Five:*

The USC should not strive to provide a bevy of mental health services. Instead, it should focus on lobbying the university, which has the resources to implement a broader plan to address mental health service issues. An Awareness Week planned by the USC could be a critical component of an advocacy plan, raising the level of dialogue on the topic of mental health at both the student and administration levels.

*Recommendation Six:*

Affiliate-specific programming and promotion should be conducted to increase mental health awareness at the three affiliate colleges.

**Component: Prevention, Not Just Treatment**

*Principle Three:*

Action on mental health should not be limited to addressing mental health issues *after* they have arisen.

*Concern Eight:*

While stigma over mental health is declining, students are increasingly under pressure to attend university, perform well, and receive a degree. This can lead to significant stress and anxiety issues, which can be exacerbated by poor diet, poor academic accommodation and counseling, and overtaxed services.

*Recommendation Seven:*

Increased emphasis should be placed on maintaining student health by encouraging exercise and the use of Western's Recreation Services. Similarly, students should be encouraged to choose healthier food options, and should be able to find some of those options on campus.

# APPENDICES

## 1- A

### **Change Camp Western**

Table Number: 11

Moderator: Jasmine Irwin

Transcriber: Elizabeth Sarjeant

Discussion Question: How do we define the “best student experience”? Who is accountable for providing it?

What are our criteria?

- Orientation program, sense of community, is critical part of student experience
- Different people have different expectations of what this means
- Can't be defined as one single experience
- Western does excel in diverse types of experiences
- We need to continue to strive for best student experience, maintaining our level of experience

Party culture's place in experience

- Has an important role
- Richmond Row experience is unofficially endorsed by the university
- Proud of how we're ranked, which is partly because of party or bar culture
- But it is not a part of Western
- If you don't drink, party, you still need to be accommodated, especially with Oweek.
- Club experience needs to improve; limited in ways that you're allowed to promote
- Need more accessibility for clubs, especially in promoting events
- Dietary accommodations difficult when using catering services, limited cultural dietary accommodation

Food Services on Campus

- Can't bring in outside food to cater events, must go through food services
- Event catering expensive
- Strong USC presence important
- Regulations are for the safety of students, there are always good reasons
- Barbeques: outbreaks of salmonella, hurts universities reputation
- Need to limit competition for university food services; this is their turf

- Health and safety regulations can be imposed if catering through campus
- Regulations are always a part of organizations
- Challenge of bureaucracy: students need detailed explanations for why policies exist
- Students are encouraged to express concerns, ask questions

#### Travel Policy

- Can't rent cars, must take public transit
- Problem with inexperienced drivers renting cars, danger of an accidents
- Why is USC is allowed to rent cars with students driving but not clubs?
- Are there separate sets of regulations for USC and clubs generally? (answer unknown)

#### Bureaucratization

- Concern with dismissive language used by administration regarding student concerns
- What is the best way for an average student to raise concerns?
- First see Mark Wellington, then go to elected representatives (student council members, USC Board members)
- Regulations come from university and from insurers

#### Student Jobs

- Best student experience implies job connections
- Need for more practical classes to increase employability, provide opportunities to exploring the workplace opportunities
- Other schools have more internship opportunities
- We need co-ops, internships for every program, not just business but liberal arts, health science as well
- Greater focus on experiential learning at the school generally
- But other programs don't have natural fit into the workplace, need guidance as to where to fit into the workforce
- Need more and better skilled academic counselors
- Career counseling, non-partisan, non-faculty affiliated not promoted, students not aware of those services
- Career counselors have too large of a scope
- Experience with career counselors unsatisfying
  - Give out quizzes (insufficient guidance)
  - Over reliance on instruction booklet
  - Need more program-specific counselors who can connect better, could each span a few programs so that they can be interchangeable to a certain extent
- Role of career counselors too vaguely defined, communication program
- Narrow definition of career counselors at Western
  - Other parts of their role is to provide advice

- Need better communication between career counselors and other services so they can refer students elsewhere

### Who is responsible for providing student experience?

- Students
- Me
- University
- Faculty groups, student councils should be working hand in hand, collective effort
- USC: first point of contact
- Administration has set themselves up
- USC completely cut off from providing student feedback
- Strategic feedback mandate: developed with students, university, administration
  - Minister of University presented discussion paper proposing universities need to change to meet demands of labour force
  - Students consulted through the USC
  - Laid out best student experience and how to go about improving it
- Tax payers
  - Western originally built for students in the area
  - Concern about accessibility
  - Online learning opens up an opportunity for those who can't afford living expenses
    - Helps solve problems associated with elite institution
    - Helps us more accountable to tax payers
    - (More on online learning further in this document)
- Professors never came up, but when suggested by moderators the view was expressed that they do have a role, but aren't responsible for whole experience
- Professors can be responsible for the best student experience
- Professors should undergo ongoing training to learn about new technologies, etc. that they can use
- Difference between being smart and being a good teacher
- Some professors have industry experience but don't know how to teach
- Question of how intelligent professors are despite industry experience
- Onus is on administration for providing resources
- University focuses incentives on research, not teaching quality
- "Research-intensive school" – has anyone challenged idea that students really want to be at this kind of school?
- Is publish or perish policy beneficial to students?
- Age that students come to university means that teaching quality is vital
- Best professors get to teach courses they really care about, which tend to be upper year courses
- There are incentives for professors to use support services, ex. ITRC
  - Students offer to help professors, some are stubborn, set in their ways, don't accept help
- Smaller classes help teachers and students, though of course this is not always possible

- Teachers can connect better, can operate classes like tutorials, students can participate, develop their own opinions, which is most conducive to learning
- Learning should be focused on the experience
- Students should expect bigger classes at university
- Research-intensive institution has makes you more marketable for potential employers than the fact that you went to a school with the best student experience
  - Important at a time when getting a job is hard
- Best student experience makes you more marketable as an employee indirectly, having good communication, teamwork skills that come more from extracurriculars
- Teachers need to be passionate, which might come from having the ability to do their own research
- Focus on research varies from program to program; might be more important for science?
- Generally, need both teaching quality and research
- When research/discoveries come from Western, it adds value to all of our degrees in terms of Western's reputation

#### Barriers to participation in student experience

- Money: costs to join some to clubs, get involved
- Not enough financial accessibility at Western
- Need more awareness about financial services available

#### Mostly non-academic, based in culture?

- Argument that it does encompass academics
- Some of the highest entrance averages
- “the whole package”; more than just academics
- Academics and extracurricular, social experience go hand in hand
- Preparation for life after university

#### Online learning

- More freedom with timing
- Study at your own pace
- Option of directing yourself
- 
- Argument that online communication degrades experience of learning
- Agreement, but willing sacrifice for benefit of equal opportunity
- 
- Concern raised that increasing amount of online courses as a substitute for real lectures could be a way to cut costs, tying into trend of trying to optimize operating costs
- 
- Online courses are often perceived as a joke, but we could change this stigma
- Value of on campus lifestyle is legitimate, but not everyone can afford it
- Not the ideal, but might be the only way to accommodate those who can't afford

- But why not just lower tuition if we're really trying to solve the accessibility problem?
- Online learning could just be supplementary to in class learning
- Some components of online learning could be better than in class learning
  - Ex. being able to watch lectures again
  - Can't be thought of as supplanting in class learning
- Hard to move some programs online ex. in the case of group work
  - Learning online, you can get the same information but don't learn leaderships skills like working in a team, laboratory work, verbal discussion
- Push for online education is not coming from university administration but from government
- Physical restraints to accommodating students, including residence space
- Current online courses are designed to supplement, augment experience
  - University is not trying to reduce costs
- 200 online courses at Western, 1200 students registered in online courses

So what? (General commentary on ChangeCamp initiative)

- Open space, easy to voice opinions, felt like a very safe space
- Best thing was that higher up people were here so that students felt they were being listened to
- Should talk to elected student representative
- Need to organize, mobilize
- Don't let these concerns disappear
- Need to bring concerns to USC and administration
- Idea-driven, not as much focus on resolution
- Lobbying should start now
- Important to hear what students actually want
- USC usually feels removed from raw student experience
- We need to make sure that we move these ideas forward
- This is just the start; it's easy to point out problems but we need to formulate some solutions
- Usually when we're consulted about issues at Western, the topics are being decided by those in power; this was good because ideas were coming from the bottom up

## ***1 - B***

### **1)**

**Western ChangeCamp - November 14th 2012**

Topic: Orientation Week and Sopping Culture

**DISCUSSION 1**

- ✓ ✓ **programming is not diverse enough: little cultural diversity in program**
- we go to school in an area with lots of different cultures and religions, would be a good idea to introduce students to that culture
- religions, sexual orientation, culture are all part of diversity
- "understanding our own backgrounds"
- the programming promotes a culture that not all can participate in (heavy drinking, the partying, dancing
- the one love rally as an answer to this
- ✓ **drinking culture**
- difficult to go through the sopping / orientations program, the "big brother" feeling
- we need that control or there will be emergencies, though programming may be a better way to enforce the zero tolerance than sops as sops than become the enemies
- the starlight stage : "appeals to everyone"
- ✓ **cultural programming: including different cultural groups to help organize events**
- pride western, etc. groups who are closer to the culture would understand it better to aid programming as consultants
- the specific days "usc day" charity day" perhaps "diversity day" "cultural awareness day" with the one love rally at the end
- booths set up by different cultural groups, like sunfest,
- cultural awareness week already exists - the people responsible for that have space during purplefest - all people share it
- not advertised or promoted during the week
- should be included as part of training
- usc day / charity day have lower turnout
- students are tired, school is on
- doesn't get the same recognition as other days during oweek
- "if you want to make people feel welcome here, which is the whole point of orientation, you should celebrate them immediately" not shift cultural days to days of lesser turnout
- the one love rally as a good "way to break the ice" , immediately creates the culture of acceptance and appreciation of different cultures
- one love rally might still be better after as students have time to get to know each other better, feel more connected with students by the time the rally happens
- ✓ **new programming for oweek**
- support services coordinators introduced at the beginning of oweek (a necessary resource)
- keep clubs in clubs week: too much going on in oweek

- clubs are overlooked in oweek
- asking clubs and "the community" to contribute during oweek: might lessen financial burden
- more promotions of clubs week
- ✓ services treated as clubs: services feel like an outsider / bystander
- need to be better advertised as a service for students that they have already paid for
- things you are already part of as a western student
- ✓ CLUBS - people want to know why the fees are set where they are
- who sets them? what are they for?
- more information about club fees, how they work and why they are necessary
- "information overload" if clubs week is incorporated into oweek
- integrating participation into a charity event - clubs can choose to participate in charity events for their own exposure
- how do you choose which clubs?
- depends on the purpose of the charity: the clubs help promote
- clubs incorporated into the terry fox run: run as part of a club, clubs run together
- top club raiser for terry fox? a competition, club culture as much as it is oweek culture
- another trophy for top earning student initiative (like there is for top-earning soph team)
- ✓ SAO
- the optional orientation presentations: cultural students associations could have representatives come and present, introduce themselves, make their presence known to interested students
- presentations are currently geared towards parents not student: more student-oriented programming
- ✓ booklet provided to students
- put more clubs information there?

## DISCUSSION 2

- ✓ first year oweek dislikes
- early wake-ups
- felt "lost" - make soph tours of campus mandatory
- campus tours are part of faculty day
- if first years went to everything they wouldn't feel lost
- waking up early is "part of the fun"
- "it's sort of like hazing!"

- too many dances (one every night)
- wanted more indoor activities (lots of rain this year)
- LIKED opening ceremonies but went way too long(four hours!)
- shinerama and football game were too close together: those that actually tried to collect money for charity couldn't get on the too crowded buses and had to walk back to campus missing the football game
- difficult to navigate campus during oweek
- suggestion: run faculty olympics for frosh to know each other better
- ✓ "overall it's still awesome, though"
- ✓ first year oweek likes:
  - mock lectures
  - "r.a.'s were awesome"
  - residence community
  - rec centre
  - pretty campus
- ✓ would like to see:
  - early exposure to profs
  - some came to residences for meet and greets with students, incorporate it into oweek
- ✓ question: why does school start on thursday?
- ✓ oweek is an orientation to faculties and residences: faculties sometimes get overlooked
  - engineering faculty day is not connected to any eng related things
  - science faculty day generating positive response
  - faculty and soph team dependant
  - head soph training to ensure relevancy of faculty programming
  - more discussion with the faculty "it's not right for it to depend on the soph team, shift responsibility to the dean's office
  - sophs are volunteers, head sophs are a job
- ✓ "i didn't go to o-week because i didn't feel that there was a group for me. i lived off-campus first year and i didn't feel if there would be anything that would relate to me."
- ✓ "i did go to my oweek in first year, and despite the fact that i went i found it very limiting because everything...the need to drink. it was actually pretty boring."
  - didn't like the mock lectures - i'll be getting this for eight months i don't need an intro to it
  - "you don't really feel like you belong there"
  - "i didn't feel like i connected to my residence because the sophs were all about partying and drinking, i didn't feel like i connected to my faculty, the only thing i was connected to was my club, and for two weeks i didn't have a group to hang out with and i kind of felt like i was lost. i know a lot of other universities have the club presidents at o week. then at least if

- you're not interested in oweek there's something there for you."
- "we're not catering to one specific group of people. we're catering to everyone"
  - minority groups hear by word of mouth that it's boring or crazy or inappropriate and don't club.
  - "did you feel like you'd been oriented to western?"
  - "no, i didn't feel like that at all"
  - "a lot of it goes back to your sophs"
  - starlight stage and one love rallies as alternative venues
  - more culturally sensitive sophs
  - "do you think there should be more sophs that are part of other cultures?"
  - "yes, it's one thing to be sensitive to a culture and another thing to be part of it. it really makes you connect to them"
  - getting clubs involved as an alternative resource

## 2

### Table Number 1: Orientation Week and Sophing Culture Cindy Ma

- A dash denotes a topic of discussion
  - o A bubble denotes a new speaker
    - A square denotes an expansion/explanation of a point made by that same speaker
  - o Major policy suggestions highlighted

#### Session 1

\*Table full of sophs

- Question posed by moderator: What are the goals of O-week?
  - o Orient the students to the facilities on campus
  - o Familiarize frosh with opportunities on campus
  - o Expose students to the culture of Western
    - Getting rid of the high school stigma around being involved/enthusiastic
  - o Help frosh get comfortable with university life
- Question posed by moderator: What are the strengths/weaknesses of the sophing program?
  - o Everyone shared stories: Many developed very close relationship to their sophs

- However, someone raised the point that a lot of sophs have a similar IDENTITY
  - Not a lot of awareness of alternative cultures
- Another point raised was that people soph to be on a TEAM, not necessarily to help first years
  - How do we select students who are excited to help FROSH?
- A former rez soph said: “I would never do it again”
  - Everything about the sopping program is so clique-y
  - Stigmatization of rez sophs
  - Faculty sophs bad-talked rez sophs throughout o-week
  - People claim they are sopping for the frosh, but so many people are there only for the team
  - The faculty sophs did not come around after O-week
- Question posed: How do we improve the sopping program?
  - Why don't we have faculty soph surveys?
    - Why do poorly-performing fac sophs keep getting back on the team?
    - There's a recurring theme that head soph teams pick their friends, some of whom turn out to be bad sophs
    - How do we turn people away from picking their friends?
  - O-Staff member: we tried to include fac sophs in the survey this year, by housing refused to do so
    - They wanted to keep it limited to housing staff and rez sophs
  - Leadership team needs to be more assertive
    - They need to hold people accountable for visiting their frosh and committing to their role
- What can we improve about O-Week in general?
  - MIT Soph: How do we meet the emotional needs of frosh?
    - Orientation week should primarily be about meeting the needs of the frosh, which the program currently does not do
    - People are exposed to an entirely new culture, they simply need time to orient themselves, not to be bombarded
    - You need to GO to your frosh and ASK them what they need, not tell them what to do
    - Some people just want to RELAX
- How do we normalize other lifestyles within the O-week program?

- MIT Soph: From an administrative perspective, it makes sense to just push everyone through the same, uniform program—but that doesn't necessarily work
  - O-week is essentially mandatory, but not everyone wants to participate in the prescribed activities
  - Not an opportunity to build meaningful relationships
  - Maybe we shouldn't force the events on first years
- Charity Soph: But, at the same time, we WANT people to be pumped up
  - It's a fine line: maybe if we drag people out to events, they will end up having fun
  - If sophs themselves are apathetic and don't pump up the events, then first years definitely won't attend them
- Another Charity Soph: But again, some down-time would be nice
- O-staff member: there was a huge emphasis this year on the alternative programming stage
  - Trying to appeal to students who may not want to be in Talbot bowl all week
- Former Rez soph: Perhaps we should have a greater focus on residence alternating programming
  - Sophs need to look at O-week as a time to chill and get to know their frosh
  - Maybe shouldn't be so camp counsellor-y
  - People can't feel a connection to someone screaming at them
- We also need to allow frosh to meet each other, perhaps not be so in their face
- Cliques within the sopping community
  - There is a clear hierarchy within the sopping community
    - How do we keep people from doing it for the status?
  - Are there enough incentives to be a rez soph? Perhaps we should provide some sort of compensation for these volunteers to ensure we attract strong candidates.

## **DINNER BREAK**

### **Session 2**

- The issue of sopping eligibility constraints raised by Charity soph
  - What are the changes?
    - If you are not currently in that faculty, you can no longer soph for the faculty

- The issue, however, isn't necessarily about the policy itself, but about the fact that there was no student/soph voice in the decision-making process
    - Who is representing the sophs at these discussions?
  - Someone pointed out that three head sophs serve on OPC
  - Someone suggested the **creation of a soph council**
    - Elected representatives from each team that sits parallel to OPC
    - Who sits on OPC? How can we hold them accountable?
  - **OPC should even be present at training, so sophs know where the decisions are coming from**
  - The explanations for decisions need to be given to sophs
- Midway Carnival
  - The problem was that there was supposedly too much pressure on the students to donate
  - But at the same time, uniting for charity does create spirit and pride within the community—it is an important part of o-week
  - How do we strike a balance between financial affordability and spirit for charity?
- In order to minimize the APPEARANCE of spending, someone suggested that **the o-week fee be included in the first year student fee**, which students pay with their tuition
  - O-week is essentially mandatory as it is, this plan simply avoids the debacle of having to take out cash to buy the o-kit
  - It can simply be a service (like the gym) that all students are provided
  - Maybe students who don't want to or can't participate in O-week can opt out
  - This way, we also know how much money we have to work with

## **Group Discussion**

- SO WHAT?
  - How do we keep the discussion going? Talk to your student representatives
  - Lobby ideas at the USC/admin level
  - Forums like ChangeCamp are a good opportunity for student representatives to get a sense of what their constituents are thinking
  - Again, contact your student leaders
  - Grassroots nature of the event is unique

# 1 - C

## 1)

### Change Camp Report:

#### Topic: Teacher Quality

#### Problems:

- Frosh – difficulty adjusting due to lang. barriers – compare to HS – ratio is hard
- English Proficient Professor –
- Teaching Quality – any student should have the same quality of prof/teaching at any one time slot – some profs/reg. times are barriers for getting high quality professors.
- Science – lack of critical thinking – esp. first 3 years – should increase student engagement
- Takes away from creative side, but in reality – you need to be able in all areas
- TA quality – media attention with increasing class sizes
- Breadth requirements – don't really take advantages of requirements of breadth requirements
- TABLE PROFESSOR: John – music – now focuses on what we really need to address as an institution.

#### Discussion:

- Some Learning:
  - Learning: all this pressure on marks – how much risk is involved in barriers.
  - Hard to take courses that you're interested in due to GPA requirements
  - Pass/Fail System in many big institutions – may be a great idea in theory.
- You don't really know "how to actually" be in the professor
- Ex. University – is just about education.
  - We are losing a lot of areas because now university is so accessible.
- Ex. Not everyone is getting the "same" student experience.
- Flaw with registration date for choosing professor and time slot
- Would it be better to randomize the dates between the years according to priority
  - It may be better, consider that 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year – more requirements
  - It's more about logistics of the degree –
- Ex: there should be some sort of guideline for all professors to follow – there is inequality
- Should be a guideline by Dean.
- Ex: TA – no test for appointing them.

- TOFEL for the Non-English speaking TA's
- Difficulty: Not everyone gets a training to become better at the teaching process
- TA's – difficulty to understand the language
- Stop going to courses because of lack of understanding
- We have the right to receive good quality education
- Deficient in USC –
  - The Gazette should be more about student voice
  - Maybe the USC should take more hold on teaching issues.
  - One way to get at the TA issue is through students voices – through the Gazette
- What could the TA/Professors do to make the situation better:
  - Selection Process – it's a job – they need to prove that they can do the job properly as a "teacher"
  - Teacher Evaluation should be presented early in the semester – so the professor can know where to improve –
  - Maybe do another one at the end to see the change.
  - The surveys do have
- Online evaluations -
- Do students really care about giving the feedback?
- TA quality – should be an admin problem – but students need to address it more?
- Teaching/ Prep:
  - The kinds of evaluations are not diverse enough for the years
  - Lack of purpose for the actual task – only doing it for the course, not for practical use
  - Comes down to making an effort to actually talk to the professor – to make sure you are not just a number
  - Should first year incorporate it from the beginning? – Writing should be put in early from first year
  - Benefit of group work to keep it engaging – subjective throughout faculty
  - Ex. Social science – women's studies professors – should there be time set apart to get to know your class mates

Solution:

- End result: Most efficient, feasible = Lottery System
- End Result: What time slot we take – should be a standardized level for grading and the effort of teaching quality.
- Professor Level – should be standardized as well – Should be an easy fix as faculty are under contract, so they have to fulfill their requirements.
- Solution: an external source needs to look at it and evaluate it.

2)

**ChangeCamp**  
**November 14<sup>th</sup> 2012**

**Table 6**  
**Topic: Teacher Quality/Class Experience/TA's**

Language barriers between TA's and students

- especially important to have English speaking staff on campus (in particular first years)
- teaching quality from a holistic level – any student in any time slot should have the same experience that everyone else should
- student experience, regardless of the time slot
- science major: in particular first year – no critical thinking
- increasing student engagement
- devaluation of education – media attention – important to address the breadth requirements in prereq courses
- a lot of people are playing default on easy courses
- a lot of people go for bird courses – reexamine that system
- pass/fail courses that you can take out of interest without having to have graded because we want that breadth
- registration system of the time and such for registering for classes
- feasible, efficient, logistics for registration system
- first year French class – inequities between courses the same course
- there should be guidelines for professors in a particular course (multiple professors) – some sort of guideline from the dean of that faculty gives to the professors so that it's equal allover.
- TA's – is there a verbal testing for TAs?
- there is a really good program aiming at international TAs that include language, Canadian classroom culture etc – difficulty is that not everyone takes it or gets to take it
- need to think more of how to support it.
- different sections, different TAs – some are more difficult markers than others – not fair across the board.
- different discourse, different circumstances when it comes to programming and grading.
  
- English speaking TA's – because I can't understand what they're saying, stopped going to lectures and its hard to be engaged in the course when you cant understand them.
- civil engineering
- we have a right to be very angry about something we're not getting
- USC is not doing their job to go after these faculties to implement these things
- solution: the gazette doesn't reflect these substantial issues
- should be representing these views
- it's our main media and it doesn't shine light on this
- it's arms length – gazette and the USC
- the ability to communicate in English clearly for TAs
  - first threshold is surely to be able to understand them
  - are there concerns about evaluation of your work

- SOLUTION: selection process of TA's, TA review cards, also they come out really late and should come out earlier in the semester.
- make evaluation forms online, as opposed to on paper – some people that haven't gone to class still want to put in their feedback.
- across all fields from first year students need to practice writing for their field, whether you're in sci or poli sci.
- kinds of evaluation are not diverse enough from first year
- no critical thinking in first year science, they should implement more critical thinking and writing.
- western is better than other unis in the sense that they don't treat students as a number to a certain degree – there are office hours, more people that
- how important is peer learning?
- very important element – to be able to approach people/have friends in your class that can give you notes and that you can speak to about things – it allows you to clarify things to be able to work with/talk to each other.
- sci students in labs/eng students – all group work, that's all they know
- liberal arts students are less favorable towards group work.

### 3)

ISSUE: Ensuring teaching quality, improving the classroom experience, and evaluating professors and TA

GROUP 1

**TA**

PROBLEM:

- Need more TA that can properly communicate to the students; want TA to be more fluent in English-> lack of communication
- Hinders learning process, interaction with peers
- Knowledgeable about the course content they teach and be able to handle large group of students
  - o E.g. TA were described as “introverts” and did not know how to properly present their topic to the class
  - o E.g. 1<sup>st</sup> science tutorials -> TAs were not able to help the student and could not communicate properly to the students
  - o marks on the assignments can depend on TA's subjective marking

Proposed solutions:

- How are TAs hired? -> participants suggested to have oral component, not just an evaluation
  - o Is there a quota for the numbers of TA hired per class?
- Possible workshops for TA to better their presentation skills

## **PROBLEM**

- Why do we have courses that are repeated across different faculties?
  - o E.g. stats course being taken across the faculties
  - o Note: A participant replied to this question by asking if he/she wanted the courses to be standardized.

## **PROFESSORS**

### **PROBLEM:**

- Bad profs should not have tenure
  - o E.g. the profs that have research are being hired solely because of their research
  - o Proposed solution: change the hiring process for professors who actually want to teach
  - o Proposed solution: tenured professors teach new professors and share their passion

### **NEW QUESTION:**

Is the university running a business or does it put the students first? (not enough time to discuss this topic of interest)

## **GROUP 2**

### **CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE**

#### **PROBLEM: LARGE CLASSES**

- Solution: better training for professors so they know how to better accommodate the students
- E.g. Psych with Mike teaches a large class, and yet he is a great example of someone who can teach a large class effectively -> He still practices his lectures despite having taught the course for years now.

Inspiring story shared by a participant:

- MIT prof practices his lecture for 60 hours before lecturing. And on the day of his lecture, he does one more dry-run.

Would you rather listen to an exceptional professor live or listen to an exceptional professor through a video? What if you can still interact with the prof through live chat?

- There wasn't a consensus about one being better than the other. It depends how the student wants to learn

PROBLEM: Classroom design

- Use of technology in the classroom -> do they take away from the classroom experience?
- E.g. students distracting students by being on facebook or watching videos during classtime

SO WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHANGECAMPS? ARE THEY WORTH HAVING?

- YES! Safe environment to have your voices heard.
- GREAT SUCCESS!

## 1.D

Change camp western:

Cost of Tuitions, ancillary fees, osap and student debt

- too expensive

- ✓ Majority on OSAP
  - One girl not allowed/accepted
  - not the lowest income, but not highest
  - Qualifies for 30 percent, family of 5
- ✓ Should even itself out
- ✓ is OSAP a good thing?
  - Bandaid solution
  - Increase financial aid = increased student debt
  - Couldn't go to school without it, but instead imprisoned in debt
  - Should you be limited by prospects?
  - Nobody's guaranteed a job, so unfair after school
- ✓ If working, OSAP is less, not fair, because those who need to work need OSAP
- ✓ Tuition rebate: Only for those who immediately go to school
  - Not fair to those who took a year(s) off, those whose parents
  - should be paying attention to school, not paying rent
  - IF tuition weren't so high in the first place, wouldn't be an issue
- ✓ Contextualized tuition costs in terms of other provinces
  - Most expensive
  - Whether or not our degree is more valuable

- Our education is no more or less valuable than other provinces
- OSAP allots for 2.75\$ per meal
  - How?! at Kings, lunch 11 dollars
  - Food not allotted for
- Try to promote healthy eating, but not willing to subsidized
  - Healthy eating is more expensive
  - But not accounting for that
  - Instead of giving it to us for OSAP, give to schools for lower food costs
  - Expects OSAP to just cover
- How much onus is on govt than on school?
  - Expensive food on campus NOT the government, but the uni's choice
  - Government could lower cost of food
- OSAP not end in itself, but MEANS TO AN END
- OSAP as tool to obtain things - maybe uni itself needs to be more affordable on BASIC level
  - Chain restaurant more expensive on campus than campus meal
  - Student money plan - 5% off for taxes
    - So jack up prices to make it worth their while, students get discount for money on card
    - All companies making same amount of money
- Starbucks not offered on campus with perks you'd normally get
  - Starbucks card - why would I spend money on campus
    - Treated as cash
    - University holds monopoly
- Monopoly of University
- Parents not helping them, no way to help unless divorced parents and only declare one
  - Parents have too much income for OSAP, but not giving any money
- Workstudy on campus you need to receive OSAP
  - Not fair
  - Academic related work study position only open to OSAP - professors may hire out of workstudy positions
  - More academic opportunities for OSAP people - not fair, shouldn't count towards financial, only out academic
  - LAB positions
- How much should we pay for education?
  - Where is this money going?
  - Some of it is necessary
  - Ancillary
  - Need true cost breakdown
  - Lump sum of student fees, but where does that go?
  - 100 dollars that go to the grad committee during 3rd and 4th - Nursing and Kin
    - for graduation activities, not fair to someone who can't afford 100 dollars
- University can give 10000 dollar fee if called "donation" because you can opt out"
- 50 buck donation, put into pool, any student can apply for funds from that
  - Operating budgets

- Goal of student council to help students
- Faculty specific
  - Apply for school-related research/enhance life of FIMS undergrads
  - Ensure that it reaches students
  - Maybe money IS able to go somewhere, but is untapped
  - Onus on faculty to promote that or university?
  - Don't want people to opt out, so don't ever advertise that
  - Dean's office should be promoting opt-out, they collect the money
- DONATION FEE Science labs give good allocations
  - Faculty donation is 75 dollars for students
  - When i'm in the lab, can see the difference the donations make
  - So a good thing
  - Know what equipment is, how much it costs
    - Useful - how would i know how to use it if I didn't during undergrad?  
equipment applicable to rest of career life
- International student - workstudy position
- Takes a long time to get workstudy
  - Full-time student, end of may, a whole three weeks to wait until continue the work study position
  - Approved for workstudy position, but courses overlap
  - Hopefully won't get less money
  - Instead of workstudy, if I'm unable to I should get a bursary, because I was accepted
    - Workload on students during school/work
    - Want 6-hour days
- Not fair that we don't have per-course tuition
  - 4 courses cost full tuition
  - very unfair to part-time students who need to work to pay for tuition, yet they have to pay more for less schooling
- UWO as business
  - Cost of tuition
  - Education as business in general
  - Us as consumers rather than students
    - Solutions?
      - not so much taking out OSAP, it's the repayment
      - Real disparity between amount of OSAP repayments vs. the income you will get after graduation
      - If on OSAP - 350 dollar amount a month, if you're making less, huge impact
      - Instead of fixed rate, should be a percentage back
      - What they do in europe - 70,000 dollars a year = 6%
      - Graduated payment, porportional, makes so much more sense
- Taking on debts as grave responsibility
  - no one thinks about that
  - When paying that back, should be fair, shouldn't be jail sentence but should be heavy burden

- No guarantee of job afterwards
- If debt is released, how would we fund new universities
- If student isn't paying government back, what about all the students under 70,000 dollars
- Leads to more educated populus
- But - overeducated already, aren't we? we'd need to make more jobs
- Not fair for us to be holding on to manufacture-centered jobs
- Incentive to take more practical skills? doctors, engineers, more expensive schooling but
- OSAP frozen during schooling, but then you're more in debt
- Guelph vs. UWO, had no choice to stay home, because of OSAP not giving me enough
  - Had to stay home, now I've stayed home - perhaps I'm not dependent ?
- Government subsidized half of tuition - 6,800 = 13,000, but government pays for half
- Tuition based on hours of class?
  - Have to have access to labs, even keeping the lights on
  - Nursing - 7,000 tuition, but no class time, Half our courses are online, We're in clinical - in hospitals, long-term care etc. But that doesn't count as class time
  - No class in second term, not fair
- Equated Education vs. knowledge
  - You can learn everything on the internet for free
  - But internet not learning critical thinking, etc.
  - Bus pass - not fair that year long anymore, If you don't have class, don't need it
  - Referendum - if passed by 51% , 49% are mad
- Collectivist approach to OSAP
- Fee breakdown
  - Fighting against tuition costs because don't know where the money's going
  - How much does clinical cost?
  - Why aren't my scrubs paid for? nursing shoes? Where is that money going?
- Books
  - Every course has textbook in library
  - Little sympathy for textbooks in social sciences, other faculties screwed way more
  - aaaargh.com
    - online library
    - Free shit is the future
  - Depends on faculty - some things hands on (nursing eg), go out and do it
    - Quality of textbook
- OSAP and rates of tuition vs. TRUE cost of tuition
  - Writes economic articles
  - OSAP increases demand of demand, university are able to charge a lot because more students are able to want to go to university
  - Double edged sword
- Overqualified, inflating education, education becoming a business
- 
- Tangible changes?

- Abolish OSAP, government distorts credit allocation any kind of funding changes outcome of private markets
- Decrease regulation required
- Regulation

## 1.E

### 1)

#### The Role of Charity Groups (student or otherwise) on Campus and in the USC

##### Group 1

- What do people think of when you say charity? Definition? What is included? Charity in the community? In the world? Or just on campus?
  - Clubs week representation each level is covered
    - Local communities, more national and international
- How much are we actually doing? You have a club for charity but what is the impact?
  - Western heads East or Alternative Spring Break – discouraging trips to disaster zones
    - Volunteers using up resources because they are consuming things that these pre impoverished countries don't have
  - Selfish reasons and ulterior motives
    - Bump up your resume
  - Join this club or organization and then participate but you don't know first hand exactly what you are doing
- Club system is much more open to participate in any charity you want but, why are all the resources and all the time in O Week donated towards the same two charities?
  - Impact is correlated with experience
  - Taking up a new initiative
    - Might not have the same awareness materials
    - Lack of experience
  - The longer you support the same charity the better it gets.
    - By supporting something different every year you have to start all over again.
  - Build a reputation
    - Western's reputation in Shinerama it challenges other universities to bump their game up.
    - Shinerama video amongst universities – “like this video and your school can win \$1000”
  - Can't suck students dry for charity initiatives
    - But over time people get attached to a charity and you keep participating in it after o week, after university and etc.

- Charity connects people to the outside world – bursting the western bubble
- How can campus benefit from supporting students who want to participate in charity?
  - Global leaders
  - Benefit to student culture
    - Improved student body and community
  - Having a cause is a healthy aspect of university life.
    - Find a drive, something to work towards
  - Our generation is heavily criticized for being wrapped up in our own worlds
    - How can you look at people who participate and putting so much time into charity and say they don't care
  - Social media – used to a huge advantage – advocating
- Student life relation
- There is a lot of clubs – too many? As a new student I'm only going to go to clubs I am familiar with. How can we avoid this? How do we spread awareness about the different charity groups ?
  - First years often sign up for too many clubs to bump up their resume
    - Could be a good thing because they expose themselves to something they stick with
    - Or it could be people who just fill out the clubs slip and never goes back
  - Variety of ways for students to expose themselves
    - Caisa or a coffee house that engages different charities
  - Cant push charity down peoples throats
  - How much do students know these certain charity groups exist?
    - Clubs commissioner or word of mouth
    - So much to chose from – what do I pick?
    - A lot of resources are dispersed – students get bombarded and it becomes an every day occurrence and students begin to ignore it as an every day thing.
    - Quality versus quantity
      - Smaller turnout with people who are buzzing about it after it is going to spur more people and spread the word of mouth.
- Relating it the USC
  - Hard for the USC to chose how to support student groups
    - Limitations to what kind of organizations can be supported
    - More promo about the different clubs and what they do
      - But we are also drowned in different clubs and organizations so how do we fix this?
- Clubs at western have a lot of restrictions
  - Food or bringing a paid speaker to campus – hard to engage students and get them to understand an issue

- To what extent does the school want us to raise money for others and to what extent do they want to make money for themselves? Western is a business
  - The university can only give so much money but charities on campus couldn't go to businesses because there was red tape to advertising – how can this void be filled??
- University dictating what is considered charity and what isn't with the amount of restrictions in place.
  - How to find viable ways to fundraise while also aligning this with the University.
- More communication and agreement between clubs and other fundraising activities and the university in how they see things going.
  - Educated a generation that is supposed to be global leaders.
  - Disagreement as to the importance of charity.

## Group 2

- Get Real is hard to get in contact with because it is not USC approved – how can students get involved with it?
- Is there enough charity organizations on campus to give it its own week?
  - Volunteer fair?
    - Volunteer fair is not as popular because it is not student run.
    - Students organize clubs week and this is why clubs week is more popular than volunteer fair.
      - Volunteer fair charities to promote their presence at western more.
- Do any of the charities work together?
  - In Western they are separate but outside London there is a connection between them.
  - Get the impacts of each charity and what is the impact of each charity on the community and the world – a map of westerns effect
  - Alt Spring Break
    - Is this impacting the volunteers more than the people in these countries?
    - Even if it is self centered it is motivation for when you come back to take the initiative when these volunteers return home.
      - Doing this is better than not doing anything at all.
      - To make a difference rather than no difference.
      - A trip that is productive to you as a person versus spring break in Cancun
    - Issue with ASB – financial access. The structure isn't very helpful because you have to pay a down payment to even be eligible for the financial resources.
      - Two applications – 1) I can go regardless or 2) I can only if I receive financial aid.
    - Issue with volunteer tourism
      - How are we impacting the host community? As volunteers we are taking away resources from these host countries.

- Taking away jobs, food, and not showing them how to use their own skills.
- Course discussing how western societies are going into less developed countries and developing them.
  - Organization was planting trees on property but only 20% of people owned property so on the rest of the land the trees became property of the rich people who owned the land.
- Getting educated about what you're promoting
  - Kony
- Focusing on London community – there is lots of homeless and hungry people in London
  - Lots of clubs focusing on international causes.
  - Concentrating on keeping people in London after university
    - Increased innovation and opportunities.
    - Coop program for your university degree
    - Because there is a lot that can be done here
    - Is there enough opportunities for students to get jobs here? There is the opportunity but it needs to be developed.
  - Emerging leaders – how do we help create innovation in London

#### Table 4 - CHARITY

What kind of things people talk about when we say charity? Are we just talking about having Africa/orphans/or charity within Western or London?

- Where do you draw that boundary?

Based on how many clubs that are directed towards – each level of those are covered

- Local charity
- More national
- International

Food support center – hampers to give out for those who need it

- On campus charities are represented

How much are we actually doing? You have a club that is dedicated to rebuilding in Rwanda. Is it just a name? How much are we contributing to?

- **Kony**

--- Western Heads East; organizations really discourage volunteers trips into disaster zones

- Students going into volunteer but consuming more than they give back

Alternative Spring Break

- Sending students for a week, how much does that contribute for the community? For such a short period of time.
- Those can be motivated for a selfish reason
- Bump up your resume – or applications
  - o People joining for the title not for the outcome

In the club system – much more open to participate in any charity you want – but O-Week is always limited to the same two

- Why do we always dedicate time and resources to the same when we could shuffle it up
  - o Has to do with your impact is correlated with the experience you have in fundraising for those activities
  - o If the Charity team were to all of a sudden take up a new charity – not as effective. You develop an approach and experience etc
  - o **Reputation** – we’re not stupid, we’re going to say that Western is going to cure CF, but the impact that we have on other universities saying “We raised this much this year” .... You develop a reputation

Shinerama – it doesn’t matter WHO wins, the money is still going there, awareness is still spread

- Awareness over \$\$\$

Can’t exactly suck London and students dry to support a charity – the awareness is free, and the longer you support a charity, Alumni come connected to it and hopefully outside of Western they will still participate in

The city is connected in it

Connects students in the outside world – so easy to get stuck in the Western bubble

- There are still things going on when you’re in the bubble

Reason for voting for this topic: **“What benefit does the campus get for supporting students that want to support charities?”**

- Relates to the best student experience
- Students believe and see that they have an impact

**Reason for voting for this topic – “ because what is the role in student life? “**

- Having a cause or motivation is a healthy aspect in student life
- There are so many avenues to get involved here at Western and charity is a really interesting part **that can drive you in a way that you may not have been driven before**

Our generation has a reputation of being really involved in social media

- Seeing students sitting on the floor with markers and glitter and doing what needs to be done

We don't really realize the impact it has on characteristics of people our age

Even with social media → huge way of awareness

How it relates to student life?

- A lot of clubs out there that support charities

I'm only going to go for the ones that I'm familiar with

- Not going to go and find something that I haven't heard about or am not really familiar with
- **What kind of things should be done for this? Spreading awareness for different charity groups on campus and getting more people involved.**
  - o Two sides to that: first years going to clubs week go and sign up for as many charitable orgs. that they can
  - o Could be a good thing (learning and saying this may be interesting) and therefore sticking with it
  - o Also – filling it out and never doing anything with the club at all

People are more apt to participate in different kinds of activities

- Organizing a coffee house ... getting involved due to personal interests
- Different ways to actually get involved – **can't shove involvement in people's faces**

Blind involvement – how much are you really dedicated to the cause?

- Devoted and interested

Clubs Commission

- Website isn't quite as comprehensive (know someone to join)
- **So many options** – heard about but only little bits so it's hard to pick just one

So bombarded with information it's easy to gloss over it

Individuals who are organizing or running any charity event can focus on quality over quantity

- Smaller turnout for something more intimate; spur more people to join later on

Relating it to the USC

- How to choose to support these student groups (obvious limitations)

**What role the USC has in promoting/supporting these clubs and their initiatives.**

Before I came to Western I was google-ing what offered what I was interested in .... I feel like clubs at Western have a restriction that a lot of other clubs at other universities don't have – i.e. bringing food

- Harder for students to get involved in what they want to do

To what level does the schools want us to promote organizations/raise money VS raising money for the school

- You can only suck so much money out of students and the community

More communication and agreement between clubs and the school and where they see charity fitting in with the attitudes we want to foster on campus

- Getting students involved in things that don't relate to them – part of the best student experience
- Education a generation that is supposed to be engaged – **how important we think that is**

Restrictions on clubs

- Western is dictating what is a charity and what is not
- Being told what can be done as far as fundraising goes – **who decides where those lines get drawn?**
- Aligning with the policies

O-week charity could not happen without the USC

**How GetReal is hard to get in contact with – not USC ratified**

- Still should be accessible to student
- Took previous connections – people that don't have those connections are more difficult to reach
- Difficult for first years

**Charity Week** – week after clubs week

- Anything gets as much attention as students give it to
- **Students telling students**
  - o Maybe if there was more of a platform

Example: Habitat for Humanity doesn't have as much pull on campus as GetReal or Terry Fox and the Charity Sophs etc

Do any charities work together or are they all separate?

- They are separate
- Pillar London – does their own things in London, not really on campus

**Idea** - put together all the impact of charities - their impact on Western/London/National/International

- Voluntourism ?? necessary

**Relating experiences to your own community – Volun"tourism"**

- Building awareness

BUT

- Taking away jobs that could have benefited their community

- How does that end up helping them?

2)

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Clubs Commission

- Website isn't quite as comprehensive (know someone to join)
- **So many options** – heard about but only little bits so it's hard to pick just one

So bombarded with information it's easy to gloss over it

Individuals who are organizing or running any charity event can focus on quality over quantity

- Smaller turnout for something more intimate; spur more people to join later on

Relating it to the USC

- How to choose to support these student groups (obvious limitations)

**What role the USC has in promoting/supporting these clubs and their initiatives.**

Before I came to Western I was google-ing what offered what I was interested in .... I feel like clubs at Western have a restriction that a lot of other clubs at other universities don't have – i.e. bringing food

- Harder for students to get involved in what they want to do

To what level does the schools want us to promote organizations/raise money VS raising money for the school

- You can only suck so much money out of students and the community

More communication and agreement between clubs and the school and where they see charity fitting in with the attitudes we want to foster on campus

- Getting students involved in things that don't relate to them – part of the best student experience
- Education a generation that is supposed to be engaged – **how important we think that is**

Restrictions on clubs

- Western is dictating what is a charity and what is not
- Being told what can be done as far as fundraising goes – **who decides where those lines get drawn?**
- Aligning with the policies

O-week charity could not happen without the USC

### **How GetReal is hard to get in contact with – not USC ratified**

- Still should be accessible to student
- Took previous connections – people that don't have those connections are more difficult to reach
- Difficult for first years

### **Charity Week – week after clubs week**

- Anything gets as much attention as students give it to
- **Students telling students**
  - o Maybe if there was more of a platform

Example: Habitat for Humanity doesn't have as much pull on campus as GetReal or Terry Fox and the Charity Sophs etc

Do any charities work together or are they all separate?

- They are separate
- Pillar London – does their own things in London, not really on campus

**Idea** - put together all the impact of charities - their impact on Western/London/National/International

- Voluntourism ?? necessary

### **Relating experiences to your own community – Volun"tourism"**

- Building awareness

BUT

- Taking away jobs that could have benefited their community
- How does that end up helping them?

## **1.F**

1)

Does anyone know what's available in res?

- Live in staff (trained)
- Res manager (mental health, suicide)
- Volunteers who aren't as trained
- Someone who can do everything but prescribe (one for all of res)
- 

Need?

- Huge!
- Waitlist – over a year
- The need to hire more
- Revamp program because there are people in need who aren't getting it
- Hotline maybe?
- There is a distress centre but here isn't a hotline that is western specific

Crisis Line

- Available but not promoted

If med is needed you get sent back and forth to student health

Outside of Western – London Health doesn't get you in

While it is a London issue should we have a specific western one?

- We think so
- But mental health is a huge issue for London community
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Does it affect first years more?

- No, all across

Students have different issues than community members that need to be addressed

Preventive or coping strategies that should be out in place in first year of high school?

- A lot of ppl come to unit that shouldn't be here
- Ill-prepared and now with a ton of pressure
- BUT pressure hits anyone
- Genetics?

Stigma about not having a degree?

Sophing can help be just having a friend

What about a peer support group?

There is a group but it isn't publicized

There is something in place in Ivey where people can call and talk to other students with similar problems and can meet up if they want

What does oweek do about it?

- Housing had a big push
- They have meetings once a week and always talk about it

- There's an event where students get informed in first year (residence day) what about OC? What about the people who don't go?
- 1<sup>st</sup> years get a magnet with councillors info on it
- Res wait isn't bad (1-2 weeks) compared to student health services

Mental health awareness week at western

- Got started last year but it was at the end of the year
- Who is responsible? USC, Student development services, student health services, success centre?
- Everyone has their hand in a pot but there should be a harmonization?

Student development has students that do their practicum there in mental health

In university people are independent so they aren't forced into do anything?

So may be people don't even know where to go if they have a problem?

“Stressed? Come see us.”

- Is that the most helpful phrase?

What about gym awareness?

Survey about the mental health status of students?

One counselling session vs more help

How will you know if you can never meet with someone?

Is it capacity? Money?

Its been brought up, this is a continuing issue?

USC feels pressure to do something but they don't have the resources

- There's only so much that a student council could do

This is something that the university should deal with but the USC needs to push this

- Too much hot potato about whose responsibility it is to get anything done

Awareness week could be a good way to bridge the gap

Who advocates? Can the USC do that?

Stigma – people are afraid to help

Why come forward if you can't get help

Health triage – a place where students can go and drop in for casual help before they need serious help – its all the same place though so people are comfortable and know where to go

Student run? Students can hang out there and just give some help

Peer support centre – phone line, they offer help

- Not trained but they have info of where to go

Anne Brown – anything that required coordination with students she sometimes helps with mental help stuff

A service with stages – talk to a staff and they can direct you with the services they would need (but who would be that qualified)

Problem: Ivey has its own mental health services option because western doesn't offer it – peer support, councillors, if things get serious they get sent to Western (no access)

- There is no promotion of Mental health at Western at the affiliates

What about an email hotline – very successful at Ivey  
Set something similar up at Western

Queens mental health has destroyed their reputation and we are on the way there  
There have been suicides at Ivey that haven't been publicized  
Its not something that's publicized, people aren't inspired to do the same thing

2)

Don't know what's out there?  
Where do we go?  
What is the policy?  
I'm new and don't know where to go?

That's the issue – there are so many 'services' but we don't know what they mean  
We need centralization, not all of these different groups doing little bits  
Implement the framework  
What is the entry point?

Mental Health Western

- Health services

- Click mental health crises button (not everyone will be willing to press a 'crisis' button, they don't think that their problem is that extreme – something more accessible?)

Its accessible just not promoted

We need branding to help get the word out there

Health services don't go to health services

'Stress' – people don't always see it as mental health

We need to get rid of the stigma – Movember type thing to make it normal to seek mental help

- Make an equivalent statement, a visible thing that we can have/wear that will be 'cool' to hype up with launch party, get real hats, boobie bracelets, 'stomp on stigma'
- Risks of trivializing it, its sensitive but we still need to make it aware
- Launch party – but what about people with social anxiety

Educate students to what a mental health issue is

- Symptoms, you need to know that you have a problem before we seek out services

30 min demo on OWL to take a test about mental health, module for almost mental health first aid training, teaches you how to identify that there is an issue, how to approach, and where to refer

Huron has a mandatory writing test, could we make the OWL test mandatory to graduate?

- If you don't take it out of interest, will it still be helpful?
- There needs to be some sort of incentive

What about the diseases that no one knows about?

- The student would have to pledge to do something and know not to say words like 'crazy'

Oweek – res staff/sophs are liaisons already for mental health

- That relies on people going out themselves to get info

People need to know what this means

What about a symptom list? Awareness within themselves is something that needs to be addressed

What about a 'purple Friday' equivalent where someone dressed up gives out facts with a little prize, incentives and information

A pin saying "I am someone you can talk to"

- Make it coveted, make it something that people want

Its something so different because you need to know what is happening to realize that there is a problem

Should something be done at a different level? Why are so many students feeling this stressed? What if we got teachers to restructure their syllabi so that not all assignments are at the same time

3)

- In Rez
  - o Front line: rez staff member, trained
  - o Also sophs
  - o Residence counselor (1 for system)
  - o First year students
  - o Sophing community does help
  - o Need something more peer focused
  - o Need ways to reach out
- At western
  - o High demand
  - o Long wait times
  - o Across all years
  - o Hard for people to know which service to use
  - o Not integrated
  - o How do you know what you have when you can't meet with anyone
  - o Administration knows the need
  - o The USC knows about it
  - o The USC needs to lobby for mental health but not be a providing it
  - o Nobody wants to take responsibility for it
  - o Need the week of awareness earlier
  - o Why come forward if you can't get help
  - o SHS and SDC needs to coordinate which each other
  - o Filters
  - o Partnership with London

- We don't process the need, people don't know it's an issue
  - Ideas
    - Hotline for calling in
    - There is the distress centre for London
    - USC has on-campus peer line not crisis line
    - Coaching in grade 12
    - Most people who come don't know what they want
    - No prepared
    - Huge pressure because they made the investment
    - Sigma around not getting your degree
    - Publicize it!
    - Have it during o-week
    - Housing does it during o-week
    - Mental Health awareness week at Western
    - Who's responsibility is this
    - SDC not accredited staff
    - Identify high risk people
    -
  - What is needed
    - Easier access to meds
    - Mix of meds and counseling
    - But it is two separate departments, makes it very hard
    - There is no way to get into London services
  - Should the London system be separate from Western
    - Yes
    - But London needs services
    - Problems: closing of facilities
    - Low income and homeless with no where to go
- 

## SESSION 2

- All organizations provide their own mental health services
- Needs to be centralized and easy to find
- Mental health services hasn't branded itself as available
- Make it normal to go and seek help
- Educating students as to what a mental health issue is
- Utilize the services that we have
- Mandatory training for all students entering university
- But will that be engaging and responsive
- We need to show students how to refer their peers
- Something visible for mental health; wear a hat for a month
- More than just a visible thing but a mental shift. making them own the hat
- Use o-week
- Help doesn't go past residence
- Repetitive, every week
- Badge for anyone who knows about mental health

4)

## **Improving and/or Maintaining Mental Health Services on Campus**

Mental Health/Wellness supports available on campus:

- Residence counselor for students in residence
- Student Development Centre for psych services
- Student Health Services
  - Social worker to help direct students towards services
- Peer Phone Line (new initiative)
  - Not counseling but trying to fill in the gap by having students available just to talk to

Discussion:

- Centralized location for students for mental health issues
  - No communication between SDC and SHS
- Distinguish between short term versus long term needs/issues of students
  - Some students with smaller issues (eg. test anxiety) are overlooked compared with students with more immediate needs
- Should teach students self-care rather than having them being dependent on these services
  - Diversifying mental health rather than going straight to counselors
    - Eg. talking with friends, learning how to deal with stress, scheduling
- Don't always have enough resources
  - Long wait times for appointments
    - Short-term needs could become irrelevant
- Need stats on prevalence of mental health
  - Eg. study at McMaster (1/3 of Mac students suffer from depression in 2009)
  - Need details on what can be done rather than just statistics
- Peer Phone Line
  - Promotion of phone line
    - Wasn't in place for O-Week, maybe Frost Week?
  - Potential creation of an online forum/chat room for people to discuss their issues
    - People are able to log onto their computers and type out their issues rather than discussing it on the phone
- Awareness of services available on campus
  - How do we manage all the information that is fed to students?
  - Many students don't read all the paraphernalia in O-Week kits

- Mental health resources
  - Mental health issues are clearly a growing issue among students
  - Need to gauge the resources available to deal with the issues prevalent among students
  - More people are asking for help now because of destigmatization of mental health issues
    - Which also gives rise to wellness issues
- Bigger focus on wellness and self-care
  - What can we do to avoid issues such as stress and anxiety
    - Eg. motivate people to go to the gym/eat healthy
  - Prevention rather than treatment

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