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May 2011 Regents Report

Michigan Student Assembly



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "DeAndree R. M. Watson", is written over a horizontal line.

DeAndree R. M. Watson
President

Michigan Student Assembly Report to the Board of Regents
May 19, 2011

President Coleman, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, thank you for allowing me to address you all this afternoon. Although a large portion of our campus community has left for the spring and summer semesters, MSA remains busy working to enhance the quality of life for all of our students. Last month, I briefly talked about plans to reshape MSA in an effort to make it more of a resource for student activism, partly by engaging the university community, and partly by promoting a theme of activism and encouraging students to take action. Last year, former MSA President Armstrong launched the Get Involved Campaign to encourage students to become members of student organizations the second they stepped foot on campus. This year, we want to continue this initiative, but expand it to go beyond just getting students to join student organizations, but to also encourage those students and student organizations to take a more active role within the campus community and greater society. This is going to start with a Student Organization Panel that will be conducted during the summer orientation sessions. This project was developed and is being implemented by Brendan Friedman, a former MSA Representative who shares our vision for the student body. This panel will allow student leaders to address incoming freshmen by talking about their experiences as a student leader and the benefits of getting involved on campus. We plan to follow-up with this summer initiative with a comprehensive campaign to promote student activism in all sectors of campus life, from athletics and academics to arts and theology. We are still in the midst of planning this campaign, but we have come to a consensus that a major theme of this initiative is going to be bringing public activists to campus to speak to students and student organizations related to their respective disciplines. We are hoping to collaborate with various university departments to make this a success.

Speaking of activism, the Environmental Issues Commission of MSA is planning to conduct a recycling and composting program for Festifall and Northfest in an effort to promote sustainability and to take a step toward making our university more environmentally friendly. This is just one of many projects that the commission will be working on in the coming year.

Lastly, I am honored to report that Universal Academy in Detroit, which is a K-12 charter school, has taken a very special interest in the Michigan Student Assembly. The students of the high school portion are in the process of structuring a student government, and they have modeled their Constitution and bylaws off of our governing documents for MSA here at the University. In fact, the students will be traveling to campus this month to visit, and have asked if Brendan and I would like to speak with them, and of course, we agreed. So we are looking forward to conversing with these students and hearing all about their plans for their newly structured student government later this month. Thank you for your time.