

CARLETON GRADUATE
STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION

COMMUNITY
HUB
PROPOSAL



A TRANSFORMATIVE
ACTION PLAN

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**PART I: THE
TRANSFORMATION
OF MIKE'S PLACE**

Vision for the Community Hub

We recognize that Mike's Place holds a special place within the experience of being a graduate student at Carleton University. However, after several years of huge financial losses we as a GSA executive feel that it would be irresponsible to continue investing student money into a business that does not contribute to the wellbeing of all Carleton Grad students. Temporarily closing Mike's Place due to the COVID pandemic has allowed the executive to critically engage with the services that the GSA is currently lacking and re-imagine what the space could be for students moving forward.

We have come up with the plan of transforming Mike's Place into a Community Hub that would serve as a multi-purpose space to help graduate students better engage in a social, researching, and organizing capacity.

Organizing Hub

The GSA recognizes its capacity and its commitment to being a part of the wider community . We also recognize that one of the things that is desperately needed within the wider community is space to get organized.

The Organizing Hub would function as a meeting and organizing space where on campus and off campus groups that are committed to the wellbeing of marginalized groups and to the wellbeing of the community could meet, and access supplies, and resources.

This would allow for graduate students who want to have discussions and programming around tenant rights, student movements, tuition hikes - and many other pressing issues specific to the needs of students to have a dedicated space for this work.

The organizing Hub would be managed and staffed by the Community Hub coordinator and Community Taskforce Members.

Research Hub

Both from listening to the concerns of graduate students at Carleton and through our own experiences as Graduate Students, we recognize that there is a lack of resources specifically dedicated to aiding grad students in navigating the somewhat tumultuous web of scholarships, bursaries, grants, research, and publishing opportunities.

We also recognize that the GSA has not created enough in house opportunities to support the emerging academic voices of Carleton students, particularly in relation to current social issues, and inter disciplinary discourses and studies.

While department lounges and libraries provide the opportunity to have these discussions within one's own department we are still lacking in having spaces that are equally accessible to all students.

We believe that having a research hub that not only has a space for Carleton students to ask these questions, and access these resources and information but also have a dedicated staff member whose job is focused around the goals of the research hub will help in providing resources to more graduate students across the board.

Staffing

We recognize that the loss of Mike's place staff means that we are potentially losing graduate student jobs. Our goal with creating and subsequently staffing the community hub is not only to provide graduate student jobs, but also to create graduate student jobs that are more closely linked with the skills and learning that graduate students are gaining in the classroom, and that can be transferred into meaningful career opportunities upon graduating.

Organizing Hub Coordinator(s)

- Responsible for managing the community hub space in collaboration with the Research Coordinator**
- Responsible for coordinating space booking for graduate students and community groups**
- Responsible for coordinating pop up vendors in collaboration with GSA Executive**
- Responsible for assisting Community task force members with**
- Responsible for creating programming (workshops/events/talks) independently, in conjunction with the research coordinator, and in conjunction with the Community taskforce**
- Responsible for supporting the Research Coordinator in planning annual graduate conference**

Research Hub Coordinator(s)

- **Responsible for managing the community hub space in collaboration with the Community Hub Coordinator**
- **Responsible for researching scholarships, bursaries and grants available for graduate students**
- **Responsible for liaising with professors and members of academic departments about opportunities for graduate students to be published/ receive funding to be published/ receive funding for research**
- **Responsible for organizing graduate student study sessions + academic support workshops**
- **Responsible for creating programming (workshops/events/talks) independently, in conjunction with the Community Hub coordinator**
- **Responsible for liaising with VP Academics about any pervasive graduate student academic issues**
- **Responsible for planning annual graduate conference around a select community/social issue**

Food Pop Ups

The current Mike's Place kitchen does not have the capabilities to cook large amounts of food that would be necessary to cut overhead costs. However, it does contain a stove and refrigerator that allows us to store food that the GSA then re-sells. The profits we make from the sale of food does not justify the costs associated with paying for the staff that we require to operate Mike's place exclusively as a restaurant/ bar. However, we feel that re-purposing the kitchen area to enable local businesses to sell their food to students directly, allows for us to both foster networks within the community, and to support graduate students who may be small business owners. Below we have proposed three possible business models all which would incur zero cost for the GSA and two of which would show potential profits for the GSA that would slightly offset some of the operating costs of the space:

Free Retail Space Pop Up Space

- Food vendors apply for pop up space for periods of 6 weeks at a time (half a semester) during the fall and winter semesters and 8 weeks at a time during the summer semester
- The pop up space is free of charge to vendors and they incur 100% of the production costs and 100% of the profits
- Vendors are responsible for supplying their own staff that operate the pop up space

Low Cost Retail Pop Up Space

- **Food vendors apply for pop up space for periods of 6 weeks at a time (half a semester) during the fall and winter semesters and 8 weeks at a time during the summer semester**
- **The pop up space is free of charge to vendors and they incur 100% of the production costs and 80% of the profits**
OR
they incur 100% of the production costs and 100% of the profits and pay a flat fee
- **Vendors are responsible for supplying their own staff that operate the pop up space**

Hybrid Free/Low Cost Pop Up Space

- **Food vendors apply for pop up space for periods of 6 weeks at a time (half a semester) during the fall and winter semesters and 8 weeks at a time during the summer semester**
- **Half of all food vendor spots within a year is reserved as free slots for current Carleton Graduate students / community members that can prove financial need**
- **The pop up space is free of charge to vendors and they incur 100% of the production costs and 80% of the profits**
OR
they incur 100% of the production costs and 100% of the profits and pay a flat fee
OR
If approved for a free slot they incur 100% of the production costs and 100% of the profits
- **Vendors are responsible for supplying their own staff that operate the pop up space**

Celebrations & Space Booking

Space Booking

We will have staff to keep the Hub open during regular business hours, however the exact hours of the Hub are subject to change based on student feedback. Our hope is that all Hub employees will create a schedule that allows for them to have a small amount of overlapping time for planning and staff meetings while keeping the office open from 9 - 5pm from Monday to Friday.

This means that after that 5:30pm the space can be rented out to Carleton Graduate Students for meetings and events free of charge. It is vitally important to us that no matter what this space looks like in the future, it can remain a social space for Graduate students. This also means that the space can potentially be rented out for a small rental fee to any community groups that are charging entry or selling tickets to their event.

But what about getting a drink at Mike's Place at the end of my thesis defense?

We know that there is something special about the experience of going down to Mike's Place for a drink after the end of an incredibly long academic journey. And there is something equally special about doing it in a space filled with fellow grad students.

And while Mike's Place will no longer function full time as a bar, we are happy to rent out the space to academic departments for celebrations after hours, in which alcohol is present. We are also investigating the process of getting insurance that would allow us to have alcohol on the premises for one or two nights a week at the request of a GSA Councilor.

Part of being a community hub is being a space for celebration and we very much want to continue being a space where students can celebrate. However, we are equally excited about creating social spaces for students where alcohol does not always need to be a central mode of our connectivity.

Finally, the GSA is excited to have ongoing conversations with CUSA about the ways that Oliver's Pub and Patio will accommodate the new demand from the Graduate Student population. So that way if you really want to have an alcoholic beverage you feel perfectly comfortable going one floor down!



**PART II:
COMMUNITY
OUTREACH PLAN**

Survey

The Survey will launch on February 8th 2021

This will be an open form of giving feedback that will be open to all members of Carleton and the wider community though it will be sure to collect statistics on who (ie. Carleton Graduate Student, Carleton Undergrad Student, Prospective Graduate Student, Carleton Professor, Community Member etc.) is answering. The survey will ask both open and closed questions not only to gauge whether or not students went to Mike's Place before the pandemic and what their favourite elements of the space were, but also to see whether they find the proposed GSA plan to be an effective solution to many of the problems we have identified. Open ended questions will allow us to collect feedback and suggestions on how best to make the community hub space one that serves more graduate students more effectively.

Zoom Consultations

Departmental Consultations & Town Hall Zoom meetings are a chance for us to engage with students "face to face" and for us to hear their concerns and their experiences in a way that not only allows for them to give feedback, but to bounce ideas off of one another, hear the concerns and ideas of their peers and work collaboratively to envisioning the space.

We are excited to work collaboratively with department administrators and GSA Councilors to create a dialouge within departments and with students.

Ongoing Consultations

We recognize that this consultation period is relatively short and will continue to have an open survey and open feedback as the space undergoes renovation and is opened to students so that it can continually improve and be shaped by the needs of grad students and the community.



**PART III:
TIMELINE**

Timeline

Jan 25th

- **contact department heads**
- **present to council**

Jan 26th - Feb 1st

- **review GSA Council's feedback**
- **finalize survey questions**
- **launch social media teasers and communications materials**

Feb 3rd

- **confirmed list of departmental consultations from Feb 9th - 11th**

February 8th

- **Launch survey**

Feb 9th

- **Begin departmental Consultations**
- **start advertising for community town hall**

Feb 9th -11th

- **Departmental consultations**

Feb 18th

- **Community Town Hall**

Feb 22nd

- **Resume departmental consultations**
- **Tentative date for February Council Meeting**

March (Review Process)

- **Update Community Hub Proposal based on consultations and survey response**
- **release report on findings of consultations and survey**
- **Present report at council**

April (Transition Stage)

- **Potentially Onboarding New Hub Coordinators**
- **Onboarding VPEx + President**
- **Crafting recommendations for hub/ Mike's Place post transition**

**please note that some dates are subject to changes.*