

Thank you, Mister Chair, and good evening all. On behalf of the AMS Executive, Brian MacKay and Palmer Lockridge, I am pleased to address you as the 148th AMS President.

I must say that the view is different from up here but it's comforting to see so many friendly faces!

When the 3 of us sat down and talked about our year ahead, we recognized that the students of Queen's have continued priorities that stretch beyond our one year term. With that in mind, we are committed to tailoring our services to the needs of a modern student body and empowering students to focus on what they're passionate about.

We are also committed to listening and then acting to create a caring campus where everyone feels welcome and included.

Although Queen's just celebrated 175 years of excellence we must look forward to the next 175 years of potential.

There is one specific issue that's critical to ensuring a solid foundation for student life at Queen's, and that's the long-term plan for the John Deutsch University Centre.

Let me be clear.

Brian, Palmer and I are committed to this project's success and we look to all of you for your commitment and support. We recognize that it will be a multi-year project and we want to work with administration, the Board, and all student leaders to make it a reality.

As many of you will remember from your tour of the JDUC, the space dedicated to student life does not match our claims of excellence.

The building is old, inaccessible, and rapidly deteriorating.

Our student-run services operate above capacity, our rooms are booked months in advance, and most of our over 300 clubs do not have the space they need in order to serve students.

This must change. And it must change soon.

Our students deserve a building that they're proud to call their own.

A building that is transformative, accessible, and modern.

One that will demonstrate that Queen's is ready to compete for the 21st century student that has more options available to them than ever before.

Since our predecessors started this project, several student unions have already signed agreements with their institutions to enhance their student life centres. The University of British Columbia opened a transformative student life centre that is a tenet of their pitch to prospective students. Carleton University, York University and others have followed suit. McMaster University approved a new centre just this March.

While these universities have followed different paths in terms of financing and other details, they are united in their commitment to enhancing the student experience.

One of this Board's top priorities is to ensure we remain an attractive option to prospective students. Queen's cannot afford to fall behind on student life infrastructure.

Our students are active and responsible partners of the university community. Attracting these students will be difficult if we do not provide them with a space that matches their contributions to the vibrant campus spirit.

We are all proud to call Queen's a leader in academics, research, and above all else, the student experience. It's time to take the lead on creating a space that will nurture this experience for the students of tomorrow.

Let's do this together.