Dear Assembly,

This year, the Humanities caucus consisted of 3 new elected members. While it was challenging to balance the goals and aspirations of individual platforms and faculty wide events, I believe that our caucus did a successful job of representing humanities students. Whether it was voicing their concerns during question period or helping with events/projects, I am impressed with our successes.

For this final report, our caucus members outlined some of the successes and barriers we faced while trying to implement the platform points that we were elected for.

Bianca (Outgoing SRA member)

I had two goals coming into the assembly: erasing barriers to entry for minority groups and increased responsibility within the MSU.

As a member of MSU Wants You, I took part in the effort to recognize and address existing barriers to the MSU. While the goal of the working group is commendable and its members are all equally wonderful, I think we should consider assigning someone to steer the committee as their main priority, someone who can dedicate themselves to this cause alone. As a member of the SRA and the Bylaws Committee my caucus member, Ali Yazdankia, and I tried to pass a bylaw change to lower the vote threshold required for financial reimbursement after campaigns. This bylaw, in slightly different forms after consultation with different MSU bodies, failed twice. I instead resorted to personal "shoulder-tapping" on my own time, to encourage women to run for positions.

At the very first B&P meeting, I stated my intent to change the bylaws in such a way that members who do not attend committee meetings face "real" consequences, as stated in my platform. When scheduling priorities for the year, this task was scheduled by the commissioner for consideration later on. It is not clear to me, writing this report before my final B&P meeting, that this issue, along with a couple others we listed, will be addressed this year. A different way in which I maintained responsibility of the MSU, however, can be seen with the recent changes proposed to the GA. Before having flagged the issue, we were set to forego the MSU of their responsibility to advertise the GA in the Sil and via email, when possible. Instead, the change
would allow the GA planning committee to use their discretion and forgo these modes of advertisement. This change was packaged with several other changes, which were meant to address issues surround the GA. By flagging this change to other members of B&P, I was successful in blocking what I consider the Trojan Horse in the proposed GA reforms. The current proposal omits this alleviation of duty.

All in all, I am happy with this year and I am thankful for the opportunity to represent the Faculty of Humanities.

Ali (Outgoing SRA member)

I ran and got elected on three platform points: Integration – Transparency – Connectivity

My first point, in regards to Transparency, was something that started a lot of conversation regarding the money spent towards SRA training. This is something that I started to work on right away by meeting several times with Giuliana and Dan. They spent a lot of time filling me in on the specific spending during these training sessions. I’m happy to say that we saved a couple thousand dollars this year on SRA training, when comparing to how much was spent on the previous year.

In terms of Integration, my goal was to integrate the general student population into the MSU by reducing the barriers related to running for SRA. As a elected member of the Bylaws and Procedures committee, I looked for ways to reduce the barrier that were in our bylaws. Along with Bianca, I tried to pass a bylaw change that would lower the vote threshold required for financial reimbursement from %10 to 5%. Although this bylaw did not pass at the assembly, I am glad that I brought back the discussion regarding reducing barriers for students to run for elected positions within the MSU. After looking at the new election results, I can see that only a couple candidates fell below the 10% threshold and I hope to see the discussions continue.

My final point was in relation to Internet connectivity. This was something that a lot of classmates voiced concerns with. I dedicated this point to what the students wanted, and that was better Internet connection in most humanities lecture halls. I was fortunate to find out that during the summer, this was an initiative that was already being worked on.

Lindsay (Returning SRA member)

Create an active SRA Humanities Facebook Page

Before our election to the SRA Humanities caucus there was no active Facebook page for our constituents. I created this page to facilitate a space where constituents are able to access key information such as the livestream for Sunday meetings, important upcoming topics or issues, and updates with both MSU services and McMaster Humanities Society Initiatives. The page also created a space where visitors were able to ask questions and we could provide answers or further sources of information/contacts promptly. To date the page has 160. I am interested in looking at more promotional strategies and online presence to help further the outreach and usage of the page. This is something I continue to work on to again maintain the communication between SRA Humanities and McMaster students.
Art Matters Week 2016

HORRAY!! Seeing Art Matters Week 2016 come to life from my platform was an incredible experience and I’m happy to say the campaign ran last week. This week worked to explore the importance of the Humanities and the Arts and to discuss the complexities found within them. This week was open to all McMaster students and incorporated various campus partners from different faculties. The week took four months of planning and consultations with the MSU, MHS, and university staff were key parts in coordinating the success and vision. I would like to take this time to outline the successes and challenges from both the planning stages and the events that ran during the week.

i) Planning Stages

-Consulted with Sean Van Koughnett (Associate Vice President and Dean of Students). He offered brilliant advice on how to present the Humanities during the week and offered further points of contact of university members to help with promo and sending information out. He was very supportive for the duration of the few months.

-Consulted with Teddy Saull (Assistant to the President on Institutional Initiatives). Teddy met with me for two hours in January and helped develop my ideas further. Together we mapped out the week, he listened to my vision and he asked through follow up questions. In our meeting he also emailed me further points of contact, including two professors to consider for my panel discussion as well as the university space booking address. These resources were key as one of the two professors (the other was on sabbatical) attended my panel discussion and I was able to book appropriate spaces well in advance.

-Michael Wooder and Mike Beattie were consulted to help with design and promotional material. Both individuals were extremely helpful. Michael Wooder met with me to go over the structure of what to include in any posters or promo material, as well provided a space to advertise on the MSU website which I believe helped with outreach. A huge, HUGE, shout-out to Mike Beattie who designed the promotional material, website, and honestly was just a good friend. He was extremely supportive and on top of his busy schedule assisted with my questions and tasks.

-Board of Directors: Daniel D’Angela, the king of money. Dan was very helpful in establishing and setting parameters around budgeting. He took a lot of stress off my shoulders and made the process a lot clearer in terms of finances. Giuliana Guarna, was a supportive mom and helped answer any questions about EOHSS and points of contact. Spencer was super excited about the events and attended many of them with enthusiasm and support. Ehima always made it a point to check in during the stressful week and as well attended events.

These individuals – I am extremely thankful for. In an institution that is so vast, it is hard to get projects off the ground. They each offered a unique perspective and
pointed me in the correct direction along the way, contributing to the success of the week. In all honesty, any success of mine, is equally theirs.

ii) During the week (challenges):

-Monday: This day was a promotional day! There were low key events such as the Archives Exhibit Tour and Linked-In photos but overall a day to get the word out about the week! I didn’t see any posters on the bulletin boards that the Underground was responsible for and I am unsure if there was any put up. This miscommunication was definitely a challenge for promotional strategies during the week however is a strong point of growth for next time.

-Tuesday: The Alumni Event has considerably low attendance. While the space was a great location to host the event, Scott from the Alumni Association as well and the staff were friendly and extremely accommodating, this event could be re-structured. Including more alumni guests to come back may have gotten a higher attendance and something to consider for next time.

Wednesday: The Panel Discussion as well has a considerably low attendance. Although it was advertised the most it is difficult to say why turnout was not the highest. The LIVElab was an incredible space and I would highly recommend using it again. Despite the low attendance the individuals who did attend were extremely engaged and the faculty who participated were exceptionally insightful. This panel discussion offered a brilliant look at connecting the campus and I think attendance is something to look into because I see value in hosting it again.

The Coffeehouse that followed that evening was a low-key and inviting space for student performance. With a medium sized attendance it is a fun event in comparison to an academic event. Looking into either using incentives or reaching out to more people would help improve this event.

Thursday: The Wine and Cheese at the McMaster Museum of Art was highly appreciated by the Faculty of Humanities. The professors who attended would like to see the event continue again next year. The only challenge would be the space. If this event is expanded and more people attend the McMaster Museum of Art can only hold a capacity of 50 individuals in the exhibit at a time (this number does not include individuals who would be waiting in the small lobby with wine and cheese as they cannot bring it into the exhibit). As well as place to store jackets/bags since they cannot be taken into the exhibit as well.

Friday: McMaster Art Crawl did a great job incorporating live music and art to bring a Hamilton tradition of Art Crawl right into our own Student Centre. Looking into how to reach out to more students is key here to have more work displayed. While we
did have a considerable amount of submissions, there is still room to expand. Partnering with SOTA is an option to explore to face this challenge.

Better Engagement with the MHS
I definitely think that this point is both an accomplishment but still a large area for growth. Together, we collaborated in presenting Art Matters Week however, a few structural and logistical bumps in communication still need to be improved. In addition, we were unable to attend MHS meeting due to scheduling conflicts, however ensuring at least one SRA member is present at all the meetings next year would be a route to a better partnership.

Lindsay Personal Goals Moving forward:
- Continuing to find a space for Humanities students in the L.R. Wilson Building. This will help find a permanent home on campus for Humanities students and could potentially create positive relations and retention in the faculty.
- Experiential Education is something I still strongly believe in. I want to learn both in and outside the classroom. Recently I have be exposed to the idea of Blended Learning and will continue to work to find a place for it in the faculty.

CAUCUS CONTINUING GOALS

HUBBIES (Humanities Upper Buddies or Humanities Mentorship Initiative)
SRA originally had the idea of a Humanities Upper Buddy, similar to a “sibling idea” used in Art Sci, Health Sci, I-Sci or Nursing to name a few. A similar idea was executed by the McMaster Humanities Society with their Humanities Mentorship Initiative and we let them carry on with it. Moving forward I met with Zach Rudge, the VP Academic of the MHS to discuss where he sees the initiative in future years. I believe re-structuring the Mentorship Initiative will help with student retention and make the goals and mission of the program clearly outlined.

Awards and Scholarships
Awards and Scholarships were discussed in a meeting with Ken Cruikshank. I tried to find a better base for implementing them into the faculty and I thought Art Matters Week would be a good space to showcase them. Due to the vast size of the other events during Art Matters Week this initiative was not included. While this idea may still work it would need to be structured and implemented well in advance before the week since it would be a huge logistical area in terms of student recognition and financial allotment. I also believe reaching out to more faculty and students beyond the Dean to acquire their feedback for areas of recognition would be valuable in creating a variety of well-rounded awards/scholarships.

Course/Wiki and Student Success Centre Workshops
Combining these two ideas may help moving forward with implementing them into the year. While the Student Success Centre could help outline career paths this may help with acquiring better data for the Course Wiki as students can say use what they learn from the SSC to assess what they want in their courses. University Affairs has done a tremendous amount of work into implementing the Course Wiki and I think working on it in the future would not only help future students but maintain a positive relationship between our caucus and the University Affairs committee.
All in all, I am happy with this year and I am thankful for the opportunity to represent the Faculty of Humanities along with my faculty members.

Best,

SRA Humanities
McMaster Students Union