



REPORT

From the office of the...

SRA Arts & Science Caucus

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Pearl Almeida, SRA Arts & Science
SUBJECT: SRA 16J Report
DATE: November 13, 2016

CURRENT PROJECTS

I will be proposing a constitutional amendment at the SASS Winter General Assembly to remove the SRA Observer position from the Society of Arts & Science Executive Council (SASSex). The SRA Observer sits on SASSex as a voting member, and is a non-voting observer on the SRA. After a year of consideration, I strongly believe that this position does not benefit SASSex or the Arts & Science Representative. I have spoken with past SRA Arts & Science member, Spencer Nestico-Semianiw, as well as past Observers Eamon Colvin and Emile Shen, on the necessity and importance of the role. All past members have concluded that the role provides minimal support to the SRA member, either due to lack of interest demonstrated early in the year or other commitments. Having consulted with Spencer Williams, SASSex President, he brought up a valid point of whether the role will be more useful when a student who has not been involved in the MSU previously takes the Arts & Science seat. Considering that the past three SRA members have been highly involved in the MSU, Spencer's point is highly valid. I will be bringing up this topic at the next SASSex meeting and will confirm with the SRA the fruits of the discussion.

I am working with SASSex President, Spencer Williams, to propose changing how science is approached in Arts & Science. Currently, there is a larger focus on the arts and science courses are not mandatory past second year. We are considering approaching science the way the Integrated Science program does, enabling students to work on projects and have greater opportunities for research. Most of our courses are specialized and taught by hand selected professors, and first year science courses deviate from the Arts & Science program structure, as well as the founding principles of the program (smaller class sizes, interdisciplinary learning, etc.). Spencer has spoken with the iSci Director, Dr. Carolyn Eyles, and will be meeting with her again shortly to discuss how changes can be implemented. Currently, we are simply working on getting all the facts and possible methods of approach before we present our proposal to Dr. Wilson, the Director of Arts & Science.

I am currently investigating all the academic support available to Arts & Science students. Since we do not belong to a faculty, there does not seem to be many options available to students outside of the Student Success Center. There is currently no one in the Arts & Science office that can provide support to students in their final year of undergraduate studies. Furthermore, multiple Arts & Science students, including myself, who have used the Student Success Center's individualized advising opportunities have left unable to be helped or with not many takeaways. I will be sending out a poll to all students to evaluate student perception of potential research/job opportunities the program tangibly offers. The Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization Program suffers the same problem as Arts & Science in being a program without a faculty. However, the program has already hired a Career Development Advisor, Michelle Trottier, who is a recruitment consultant to help students access job opportunities and enable students to understand their skillset. Arts & Science students would benefit from this type of service greatly, so I will be meeting with Dr. Wilson to discuss the possibility of hiring a similar staff member for career consultations.

RECENT SUCCESSES

The by-election was great in terms of student engagement. Firstly, Preethi and I gave a talk on the Empowerment of Women and People of Colour for Elections 101. It served as a platform for two female candidates to contact me and ask for advice before and during the election. While I send emails to Arts & Science students after every meeting, my email about the referenda was reported very helpful in engaging students in the ongoing governance events. Over ten students actually replied back to the email and told me that I was doing an excellent job informing students, and that my most recent elections email was very thorough and informative. I held additional office hours during the week of elections, which were well attended and brought about in depth discussion which makes me feel really good about my performance within the role.

If you have any questions regarding my report, feel free to contact me via email, any of our social media outlets, or in person.

Regards,

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