



REPORT

From the office of the...

SRA Science Caucus

TO:	Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM:	Gilbert Kobina Baiden, Caucus Leader
SUBJECT:	SRA 16H Report
DATE:	November 27, 2016

Dear Assembly Members,

On behalf of the entire SRA Science Caucus, we would like to thank each MSU member for taking the time to read our report. We hope that the first month of the new school year has been good to you all and that you making good progress towards your year plans. Over the past few weeks, the Science Caucus has held several caucus meetings and has made some big steps towards the enhancement of student life through our personal and caucus year plans. We would also like to thank the Board of Directors for their support in our initiative thus far and any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding our report are gladly welcomed.

PROGRESS ON YEAR PLAN

In the past 4 weeks, we've taken some major steps in the continuity of the platform points we have already finished and working on our campaign for our academic platform on teaching focused faculty. Our plans for Outreach, Diversity/Representation, and Working with the MSS just about finalized. As one of our long term goals, the Academics pillar is continually coming along but we have made a couple of big breakthroughs.

Theme 1: Academics

Most of our academic project have either been started or are well on their way to completion. In the last couple of dean meetings, we've been addressing the teaching focused faculty concern and are working on collaborative campaign for this upcoming week with the McMaster Science Society on course evaluations & advocating for more Teaching Focused Faculty. This week long campaign will begin on Monday November 28th and end on Thursday December 1st. We will be creating a report based on the feedback we collect from students to complement the dean's current advocacy efforts. The goal is to raise the total cap of teaching focused from 24 staff to 33 (this is an extra one prof per departments and there are 9 departments in total). As for inquiry courses, there are new courses being designed within the life sciences program

with an inquiry focus pertaining to the newly developed subplans. We have started discussion on Science 1A03 as a first year inquiry course that we will continue discussing with the dean in future meetings. Access to inquiry course faculty wide is also a discussion we are hoping to have in the following term. As for accessible blended learning, we are in the process of meeting with Joe Kim to discuss this platform point in more detail and where we would like to take it in term 2. The goal is to work with course coordinators and administrators to revise the blended learning models that are currently used and work towards creating a more accessible model.

Theme 2: Diversity/Representation in Governance

Our caucus is working in tandem with the newly named MSU Governance & You committee to create a conference style workshop event on Saturday February 11th for students interested in electoral positions. Through this event we hope to address the barriers students face in both our internal and external elections processes. We also are discussing the idea of a promotional campaign leading up to this event to address these barriers to students at large.

Theme 3: Outreach

The SRA Science Committee consisting of science students interested in discussing platform points, giving us feedback on motions, and having discussions about SRA meetings is set to launch next term. We decided that student engagement with governance will begin reaching its peak during the electoral campaign season in term 2. They will be bi-weekly on Monday nights at 6:30 for any science student who is interested in learning more about the SRA, what we do, and how we do it. Our Newsletter project has been a bit challenging to stay on top of simply because our caucus members are still very busy but we are hoping to pull through it and finish off strong for this term. After a few discussions we are looking into changing up our promotional strategy on social media and making our platforms more efficient in terms of how often we post and what we post specifically. We will be sorting out what direction we would like to take our outreach next term and are currently evaluating the effectiveness of our outreach hours.

Theme 4: Working with the MSS

Since meeting biweekly with Mona Khalid, VP Academic and Patricia Kousoulas. We have decided to collaborate on a science based academic advocacy campaign on the course evaluations and teaching focused faculty topics. Some of our members have also been attending MSS meetings now that they are open and we are looking forward to being apart of the General Assembly for next term.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Since our last report, we have finalized the routes we are going to take concerning our academic platform points. We have outlined in detail our plans for Diversity/Representation, revising our outreach strategies, while continually maintaining a positive working relationship with the MSS. Now that these platform

points are becoming apart of our routine in solidifying themselves we have more time to focus on our long term advocacy efforts through our Academics pillar.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Academics

We will be meeting with Dr. Joe Kim in the upcoming weeks to solidify our accessible blended learning project. The goal is to discuss the blended learning and work together with faculty to create a unique model for each department based on the subjects. In our meetings with the dean next term, the next issues we are hoping to address are advocating for the program name on the degree and discussing the idea of Science 1A03 as a mandatory inquiry course for first year science students.

Teaching Focused Faculty Campaign

The McMaster Science Society and the SRA Science will be collaborating on our first academic advocacy campaign! We are hoping to create a report for the Dean of Science so that he can advocate it to the Provost to raise the total cap of teaching focused from 24 staff to 33 (this is an extra one prof per departments and there are 9 departments in total). A survey has been created for students so we can get their opinions on the demand for more teaching professors. We are also hoping that the course evaluations science students fill out this year are more detailed than in years past so the professors will have more tangible feedback. The week will consist of an online promotional campaign as well as class talks and a pizza party for students to come and work on course evaluations.

Diversity/Representation

As part of our collaboration with MSU Governance & You, we are working toward hosting a conference that addresses the barriers students face in elections and teaches them how to properly run a campaign. This conference will be taking place Saturday February 11th and we are currently discussing the promotional strategy in addressing these barriers at large to students. We might be collaborating with MSS again simply because their faculty society elections will be taking place during that time.

SRA Science Committee

The SRA Science Committee will be starting up in term 2. We will be discussing some of our stances on the referendums as well as informing science students of our platform points and the progress we have made. The goals of the committee are to integrate students interested in running for SRA into what the governance side of the MSU looks like from a science perspective and will promote the continuity on some of our long term platform points.

Outreach

Our social media outreach has greatly improved since the start of the term and we are working on a new/better promotional strategy that is more continuous for the next

term. We are also in the process of discussing how our outreach hours will be structured next term since we are not seeing their value at this point.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Accountability

Throughout the term we've had difficulty making sure that our projects are completed in a timely fashion. We are continuing discussions on how we plan to keep our members accountable for the term.

SUCCESSSES

Our team has been incredible hard working and critical when needed on certain ideas. Each of us have been working towards seeing all our platform points come to fruition. We have nearly completed 3 out of 4 platform point within a month's time and the school year has only begun. I am excited to bear witness to the other accomplishments the Science caucus will make this year. Thank you all for taking an interest in our progression this past month and we hope that you will take a look at future SRA Science reports.

Best,

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