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 that 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 apart of our collaboration with MSU Governance & You, we are working toward hosting a conference that addressing 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 student 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.

**SUCCESSES**
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,

Gilbert Kobina Baiden
SRA Science Caucus Leader
McMaster Students Union
srasci@msu.mcmaster.ca