



REPORT

From the office of the...

SRA Science Caucus

TO:	Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM:	Gilbert Kobina Baiden, Caucus Leader
SUBJECT:	SRA 16N Report
DATE:	February 5th, 2017

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 term has been good to you all and that you making good progress towards completion of your year plans. During the first term, the caucus made some big leaps toward completing most of our platform, we are currently looking into preparing the incoming caucus with transition into the roles and continuation of our projects. 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 5 weeks, we've taken some major steps in the continuity of the platform points we have already finished and working our academic projects involving accessible blended learning and extended library hours. 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 blended concerns and are working on collaborative effort with Joe Kim involving course feedback & advocating for program on the degree. Our Teaching Focused Faculty campaign was a success and we have sent a report to the provost to accompany a letter from the dean on the need for more teachers. 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. The are currently soliciting life science students for feedback on subplans and ideas. We have started discussion on Science

1A03 and improvements that can be made to the course with regards to its mentoring program. Access to inquiry course faculty wide is something that might be a long term project and the future SRA members will have to take it on.

Theme 2: Diversity/Representation in Governance

Our caucus has been working in tandem with the newly named MSU Governance & You committee to create a conference style workshop event on Saturday February 4th 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 having a promotional campaign this week 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 Thursday 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 are currently looking into the concept of office hours and how to effectively make use of them.

Theme 4: Working with the MSS

Since meeting biweekly with Mona Khalid, VP Academic and Patricia Kousoulas, the MSS President we have been able to sit in on their meeting with the dean and have very important discussions related to academics and student issues. In future years, we hope to keep this connection strong and this collaboration going.

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 most these platform points are completed, we are starting to look at the future of SRA Science and how we can ensure success in future years. We will be working on a transition manual for the incoming caucus and hosting a platform workshop in our open meetings on projects to continue forward with regards to things student should run for.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Academics

After meeting with Dr. Joe Kim, we are putting out a survey for students in all blended learning courses to get feedback and host a summer workshop for professors that teach blended learning courses. 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, we've talked about having a blended learning table at the MSS Academic Roundtable event to get more feedback on blended learning courses.

Diversity/Representation

As part 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 4th 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 February 9th at 6:30. 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 for future SRA members to have. 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.

SUCSESSES

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 themes within a month's time and we are working hard to make sure next year's caucus is in a good place. I am

excited to bear witness to the accomplishments the new Science caucus will make next 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