

YEAR PLAN

MSU SRA HUMANITIES CAUCUS

Landon Fama, Fiona McGill, Jason Chestney

2017-2018

(Submitted July 11th 2017)



OFFICE OF THE SRA HUMANITIES CAUCUS LEADER INTRODUCTION

Dear Humanities Students & Members of the Assembly,

Fiona, Jason, and myself, are extremely proud to have been given the opportunity to represent this wonderful and diverse Faculty for the 2017/18 academic term. It is with great honour that we look forward on our next ten-months as members of the Humanities Caucus, and plan how we can best represent the wishes, interests, and opinions of our constituents. We acknowledge the trust you have placed in us, and have the upmost intentions of carrying out diligent, and motivated work on your collective behalf.

Our Caucus year plan emerges from an incredible source, our constituents, the students of the Faculty of Humanities. Through meaningful consultations, and our own lived experiences, we believe that we have developed a year plan which is rooted in real student issues, leaving us poised to make a meaningful impact on the lives of Humanities students.

The intended direction of our Caucus is guided by the input of students. These are students who feel undervalued, under informed and misunderstood. It is through these common themes that we wish to take action as a Caucus to fight for our constituents. We are looking to break the Faculty hierarchy which has left Humanities students feeling subordinate to their fellow McMaster students. We are looking to instil programs and opportunities which celebrate the commonalities of Humanities students, while taking note of their breadth of differences. We are looking to bring Humanities students to the forefront of the McMaster community.

Ultimately, we are looking to work for you. Your wishes, interests and opinions are at the core of everything we look to do this year. In order to best complete this task, we ask for your feedback not only on our year plan, but on anything which concerns you as a Humanities student within the McMaster Students Union. The following pages provide an overview of what the SRA Humanities Caucus is looking to achieve during our term. Please contact us if we can better accommodate you in understanding our intentions for the term.

McMaster works best when we work together. I hope our plans can motivate you to help us in these efforts.

All the best,



Landon Fama
SRA Humanities, Caucus Leader 2017/18
McMaster Students Union
srahuman@msu.mcmaster.ca2

WORKING OBJECTIVES

Objective 1	<i>Humanities Student Recognition</i>
Description	Students have voiced their displeasure with the way Humanities students are regarded and treated on campus. McMaster has a tendency to favour Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematic-based programming over those centred around artistic merits. Humanities students fall victim to a campus culture which makes them feel less important, and undervalued. We would like to motivate the SRA, MSU and the University to take deliberate steps to better recognize the contributions of Humanities students on campus and in our community.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McMaster community as a whole will benefit from the increased contributions of Humanities students. • Humanities students will see opportunity and value in their actions on campus and within the community. • A greater sense of community at McMaster, where we can better value contributions of different natures.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural issue. This will not be fixed with a singular event or initiative, but rather is a combination of efforts from many different groups. See Objective 8. • Cannot control or directly influence many of the variables (i.e.: Government funding of STEM-based initiatives).
Long-term Implications	Though largely described previously, a campus where the contribution of every student is valued equally, is one which as the ability to achieve far beyond the sum of it's parts. Creating a level playing field for Humanities students will mean we are better situated to bring our unique talents and knowledge to the table for the betterment of our University.

Objective 1		<i>Humanities Student Recognition</i>
How?	<p>This is undoubtedly a long-term process, however it has been included in this stage of our year plan to ensure that it is a constant priority and motivation for what we do this year. We believe tangible steps have already been taken through the creation of Art Matters Week, the increase in Humanities' specific space at the L.R. Wilson building, the Dr. Robert & Andrée Rhéaume Fitzhenry Studios & Atrium, and increasing opportunities for Humanities-based students (such as performances).</p> <p>As a Caucus we are looking to do several things to support this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support for Art Matters Week. • Increased University-level advocacy for Humanities-based issues. • Pursuing opportunities for McMaster student involvement in performances and other art displays within the McMaster community. 	
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • Faculty Societies • BOD • McMaster University • Campus Events 	

Objective 2		<i>Increased Digital Student Engagement (Bi-Weekly Video Updates)</i>
Description	<p>With a relatively low Facebook 'Like' count, few Twitter followers and an overall lacking presence within the digital space, SRA Humanities will be focusing on boosting the social media interactions had with constituents. We feel this is a valuable way to gain the input of students as it uses a medium which they frequent.</p>	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities students will feel better connected to the happenings within MSU Governance which matter to them. • As a Caucus, we will be better informed of the wishes, interests and opinions of the students which we represent. In turn, this will allow us to make more informed decisions when acting in our role on the SRA. 	
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often feel bombarded with MSU-related content, and can often skip-over efforts to connect with them better. • Creating informative, yet engaging and desirable content can be hard. This is because it is difficult to pack in the required information, without creating dull and boring content which leads to a lack of interest. 	

Objective 2 <i>Increased Digital Student Engagement (Bi-Weekly Video Updates)</i>	
Long-term Implications	Better informed students, means better informed decisions regarding the future of Humanities students within the MSU.
How?	<p>This year, we will be looking to create short, Facebook-based video updates after each SRA meeting, and in the lead up to important MSU matters (such as a referendum or Election). These updates have been championed by previous Caucuses on the SRA, most notably SRA Science 16/17, who utilized them for key MSU-related issues (SoBi referendum, ECC, Marmor, etc.) reached nearly 5,000 students on their most popular post. While these numbers are an unreasonable expectation of SRA Humanities to match, this serves as a proof of concept for this initiative.</p> <p>After each SRA meeting, the SRA Humanities Caucus will look to begin sharing short informative videos on their Facebook page. These videos will be made by all, or a selection of Caucus members in order to inform constituents about the happenings of the most recent meeting. These videos will aim to be under 4-minutes in length, and attempt to defuse the important minutes, along with any information relevant to the next meeting. Going forward, this is something we would love to see cross Faculty integration on, involving members of different Caucuses to reach the most MSU members as possible.</p>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • BOD

Objective 3 <i>MSU Discount Card</i>	
Description	As an initiative which has been discussed within the MSU for multiple terms of government, the Discount Card is clearly something which has traction within the Union. We would like to work hard within committees to ensure this is getting done and delivered to students. Though a Humanities specific discount card was part of the platforms of members McGill & Chestney, our Caucus now feels a MSU-level card gives Humanities students better access to goods and services. We will bring the Humanities perspective to the table during the processes surrounding the delivery of a discount card to the MSU body.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSU Students will be able to gain better access to goods and services within the Hamilton community. • Community partners will benefit from the increase in McMaster-student patronage.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding and arranging discounts with community partners

Objective 3 <i>MSU Discount Card</i>	
Long-term Implications	Better community-student relationships. More money in students pockets.
How?	Carry-on the work of past VP-Finance's and MSU Finance Commissioners in pursuing an MSU Discount Card. Be sure that the needs of Humanities students are met during this process.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • BOD • AVP Finance • Community Partners

Objective 4 <i>Increased Campus Visibility</i>	
Description	The SRA is often portrayed as being reclusive, and the workings of the 'MSU-Bubble.' This can be particularly true within the Faculty of Humanities, where there is already a commonly held belief that the McMaster community does not value the contributions of Humanities students fairly. We will look to increase the presence of SRA members at MHS events, and events from the Faculty of Humanities, in order to increase the accessibility of SRA/Student interaction.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities students will feel better connected to the happenings within MSU Governance which matter to them. • As a Caucus, we will be better informed of the wishes, interests and opinions of the students which we represent. In turn, this will allow us to make more informed decisions when acting in our role on the SRA.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing time to attend events during the school year.
Long-term Implications	Creating a long-term pattern of accessible SRA members.
How?	Caucus members will seek to attend events put on by the MSU which are of interest to Humanities Students, those put on by the MHS and the Faculty of Humanities.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • MHS • Faculty of Humanities

Objective 5 <i>Improved Relationship With MHS</i>	
Description	SRA Humanities and the MHS in recent years have operated autonomously from one another. Though progress was made last term, much work still needs to be done to ensure efficiency in all aspects of student governance for Humanities students.

Objective 5 <i>Improved Relationship With MHS</i>	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities students will be better served by two levels of student government working in unison. • Programming, initiatives, and progress on Humanities student issues will be more efficient.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding mutually available time to schedule meetings and collaborate during the school year.
Long-term Implications	Better programming, initiatives and progress on Humanities student issues due to the increased cooperation of both levels of student government.
How?	Caucus members will seek to attend events such as MHS GA, where we will be available to constituents and the MHS alike. We will ask for permission to attend MHS meetings as official observers and be kept up to date on MHS business. We will reciprocate this invitation by encouraging MHS members to attend SRA meetings and be active in our decision making.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • MHS

Objective 6 <i>Better Transition Process</i>	
Description	In transitioning into this role, and in particular when preparing this document, the lack of a formal transition report or transition process has slowed progress. SRA Humanities needs to implement a Caucus transition report structure which can be carried forth to the following generations of Humanities representatives. We want to leave a strong process which can be used to transition many Caucus' to come.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next generation of SRA Humanities Caucus members will be better situated to immediately begin work on Humanities student issues.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and ensuring an in-term transition report building process.
Long-term Implications	Developing a better prepared culture of student government with the SRA Humanities Caucus' of future years.
How?	Caucus members will maintain records, including the development of a transition report starting at the beginning of their term. This document will include important knowledge for the role itself, progress on platform/year plan items and other key happenings of the SRA. Members will also be required to transition the newly elected SRA Caucus at the end of their own term. The transition process of other SRA Caucus' will be consulted in developing this process.

Objective 6		<i>Better Transition Process</i>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA Humanities 2018/19 	
Objective 7		<i>Light Up the Night' Artist Involvement</i>
Description	<p>Light Up the Night is the largest on-campus party of the year, and as such is a great chance to increase visibility for McMaster artists. The inclusion of visual art displays during this event will not only give McMaster artists the chance to be displayed in front of a major crowd, but would also see another level of depth added to the programming, therefore appealing to more students. We would be using large-scale events, such as Hamilton's SuperCrawl, as inspiration for integrating visual art mediums into large-scale programming.</p>	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual arts students have the chance to display their work on campus to their peers. This will be a huge increase in on-campus visibility for a group which is often over looked. • The MSU will increase the event's appeal even further by adding another level of programming to the evening. 	
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with MSU Campus events to create the space for McMaster artists to display their pieces. • Ensuring artists receive the promotion and credit they deserve for their work in the event. 	
Long-term Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more positive approach on campus for artists to display their pieces. • A deeper connection to the Hamilton artist community as a whole, which is a thriving sector of our city. 	
How?	<p>Consulting with the MHS, working within the Programming Advisory Committee, the VP Finance & MSU Campus Events, we will pursue the chance to integrate artists into the event. We will work to develop an application/screening process for artists who wish to participate in the event.</p>	
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • MHS • BOD • Campus Events 	

LONG-TERM PLANNING

Objective 8		<i>Improved McMaster Student Recognition</i>
Overarching Vision (What is our <i>ultimate goal?</i>)	<p>A campus where the contributions of all McMaster students are respected equally and without bias.</p>	

Objective 8		<i>Improved McMaster Student Recognition</i>
Description	As outlined in Objective 1, through the gathering of feedback from constituents, Humanities students feel undervalued on campus. This has been identified as something which will require a long-term solution and generations of SRA Humanities representatives to solve. We are hoping to begin an implementation process which better represents the needs of Humanities students in the areas of on campus programming, space allocation and University credit.	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities students will be able to contribute to their full potential on campus, and on an equal playing field to those in other Faculties. • McMaster will build a well-rounded reputation, as a school which values and promotes the arts, in addition to excelling in research and technology. 	
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a meeting with Dr. Patrick Deane on how to best meet the needs of Humanities & all other students within the McMaster community. Understand the steps the University can take to ensure they are valuing all contributions equally. • Consult other schools, particularly those whom promote the arts strongly to see what they are doing correctly when valuing students. • Develop a plan based on the results of this meeting on how we can best move forward as a Union and a University. • Create recommendations for both the MHS and SRA Humanities to strive for going forward. 	
Year 2 & Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate the progress of the slow cultural shift, understanding that this will not be a two year solution. 	
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA • MHS 	

GOALS TO STRIVE FOR

Five things we would like to have prepared before September:

1. Consultations with MSU Campus Events on artist integration.
2. Initiation of a discussion surrounding the MSU Discount Card at a meeting of the Finance Committee.
3. Open a line of communication with the MHS.
4. Begin the transition process for SRA 18/19
5. Have the logistical requirements for Caucus video updates arranged.

Five things we would like to have completed during the fall term:

1. Implementation of bi-weekly video updates.
2. Progress within committee on the MSU Discount Card.
3. Meeting date set with Dr. Patrick Deane.

4. Integration with MHS events and first term GA successful.
5. Finalize 'Light Up the Night' artist integration logistics and open call for art submissions.

Five things we would like to have completed during the winter term:

1. 'Light Up the Night' artists integration.
2. Recommendations to the MHS & SRA based on meeting with Patrick Deane.
3. Finalized transition report.
4. MSU Discount Card ready to be delivered to students in the next academic year.
5. MHS second term GA successful and a noticeable improvement in relations.

MASTER SUMMARY & CHECKLIST

Month	Objectives
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm ideas for the SRA Year Plan. • Consult students, and cross-check platforms.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with MSU partners on ideas for year plan.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Year Plan submission • Consult with MHS regarding each respective group's plan. • Discuss MSU Discount Card at Finance Committee. • Work out Caucus video update logistics.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin transition materials and report for SRA 18/19 • Arrange meeting with Patrick Deane for September. • Consult with MSU Campus Events on 'Light Up the Night' integration.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by-weekly Caucus video updates. • Meet with Patrick Deane. • Begin committee advocacy MSU Discount Card, 'Light Up the Night' integration.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHS event attendance. • Gauge and evaluate social media interaction effectiveness. • Meet with MHS to discuss mutual progress and efficiency thus far.
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize consultation on 'Light Up the Night' integration. • Open call for art submissions (LUTN).
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on recommendation for SRA & MHS based on meeting with Patrick Deane
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MHS on logistics for Art Matters Week
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Matters Week
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize transition reports • Finalize recommendations for SRA and MHS.