

# SRA

# Social Sciences

---

## Year Plan

2017 - 2018

Lauren Arnold | Uwais Patel | Kathleen Quinn | Kirstin Webb





# SRA Social Sciences

July 11, 2017

**Fellow Social Science Students, Members of the Assembly, and Members of the McMaster Community,**

This Caucus is grateful to be representing Social Science students on the Student Representative Assembly with genuine zealousness, tenacity, and passion. We are here to make a positive impact through our work, alter the status quo, and bring greater opportunities to better support our constituents. This year, we're very excited to be changing the way we represent our faculty — we hope you're excited too!

The Social Sciences caucus plans on achieving a significant amount this year for Social Sciences students. We want to obtain a sense of pride and inspiration within our faculty, and empower students around us. We want to better communicate with our students, conduct better outreach, and engage with the population like never before. As a caucus, we plan not only to work with the Faculty of Social Sciences and the McMaster Social Sciences Society, but we plan to connect with other MSU services, clubs, and campus partners. We're hoping to shine a brighter light on the MSU and the SRA's role within it to show students that we are here for them.

This year, our work will focus on the following broad themes: engagement, innovation, and support. Through our work on engagement, we hope to become better communicators and listeners. We are determined to actively work with our constituents and be more transparent in our actions. We hope to create and update new communication products and techniques to better accommodate the needs of our students. Moreover, we hope to support our students through their academics and extracurriculars.

We're ready to engage, innovate, and support our faculty. As a caucus, we're just getting started. If you have any questions, ideas, or contributions, we are here to listen and can be reached via email.

Warmest regards,

**Uwais Patel**

Caucus Leader, SRA Social Sciences  
McMaster Students Union  
[srassci@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:srassci@msu.mcmaster.ca)



# SRA Social Sciences

## Caucus Members



**Lauren Arnold**

Honours Social Work

[arnoll3@mcmaster.ca](mailto:arnoll3@mcmaster.ca)



**Kirstin Webb**

Honours Social Work

[webbkl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:webbkl@mcmaster.ca)



**Uwais Patel**

Honours Political Science

[srassci@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:srassci@msu.mcmaster.ca)



**Kathleen Quinn**

Honours Labour Studies

Political Science

[quinnke@mcmaster.ca](mailto:quinnke@mcmaster.ca)



**To Be Determined**

ETA: October 2017



# SRA Social Sciences

## Objectives

### Communications and Engagement Strategy

Previous outreach and engagement with social science students has been less than acceptable. Though the MSU has been actively trying to increase its engagement efforts, there hasn't been consistency amongst the communications and engagement activities that are geared towards students. The Communications and Engagement strategy is being developed as a resource for SRA Social Science members to communicate and engage with their constituents on a consistent basis. Its aim is to create a protocol that caucus members can use to interact with the faculty and its members.

### MSU Guidebook

This guide will serve as a handy how-to for students looking to get involved. The four Key sections are 1) What is the MSU 2) How to Run for a Seat 3) How to run a referendum 3) Meeting attendance and what you need to know. Looking to create a print and online version rough draft for September and distribute this resource to students afterwards.

### Formalized relationship with MSSS and Faculty of Social Sciences

As already determined, we will sit regularly with the MSSS to ensure we are in a collaborative and supportive relationship that best benefits students from both MSU and faculty-level platforms. Likewise, ensuring that we communicate with the Faculty of Social Sciences will enable the best and most comprehensive support for Soc Sci students.

### Student Representation at the University Level

Based on previous student engagement, some folks in Social Sciences have felt mis- and under-represented at the University level. This review can be completed easily through survey and/or consultation, and will engage faculty and students to see how we can ensure that students' voices are adequately represented.

### Accessibility for Courses/SAS Capabilities

Podcasting courses is one step to improving accessibility for courses for students. Similarly, we would like to work with students and SAS to ensure that SAS is meeting the needs of students in the best way they can (e.g. adequately recognizing the difficulty and inaccessibility of requiring doctor's notes, and re-evaluating and reforming the current notetaking system).

### Improved Course Evaluations

The current course evaluations system is crucial to quality of education; we would like to ensure that the system is transparent in how it affects teaching and educational opportunities, and, if needed, that the system is improved. We will do so through consultation with the Provost, Faculty, and others involved, and then potentially through a survey/other feedback opportunity.



# SRA Social Sciences

## Objectives

### **L.R. Willson: Hours**

Make the building designated for Social Science and Humanities students feel more like a second home with extended hours (ideally an hour before classes start and an hour after classes finish at night). Work with Stacey and lobby to the Dean of Social Sciences to do this.

### **L.R. Willson: Lounge**

This lounge is meant to be a home to Social Sciences students (and Humanities students!). We would like to work with the MSSS and the Faculty of Social Sciences to decorate and make this space accessible and comfortable for students to use to study, hang out, and feel at home at Mac.

### **Landlord Rating System**

This system will be implemented in coordination with the VP Ed, President, AVP Municipal affairs and associated committees. Looking to create a landlord rating system to help centralize information about bad landlords without the financial limitations of the off campus housing listing. Currently in research. Looking for draft by September

### **Study Sessions**

A night of studying in a room with snacks and possibly a tutor to help social science students during exams. Similar to PSL last year as it provided a noticeable benefit to those who attended. Will coordinate with faculty partners.

### **Experiential Opportunities**

Continuing the work from the previous Social Sciences Caucus, we're looking to work with the Social Sciences Experiential Education (EE) centre to learn how we can better support them and our faculty in obtaining experiential opportunities.



# SRA Social Sciences

## Master Schedule

Month	Checklist
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet and reach out to campus partners</li> <li>• Start landlord and MSU How to Drafts</li> <li>• Reach out to Faculty and Campus Partners</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photograph and plan materials for Welcome Week</li> <li>• Continue outreach to campus partners and develop year communication plan</li> <li>• Develop outreach material for open SRA seat</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize Welcome Week Plan and Communications Plan</li> <li>• Finalize outreach plan and material for open SRA seat with Comms Officer</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rough draft of how to completed</li> <li>• WW plan to be implemented</li> <li>• Begin meeting with MSSS regularly</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of landlord rating system and How To to be approved and made</li> <li>• MSSS GA</li> <li>• Meet with other Soc Sci stakeholders and representatives - EE, Faculty, etc.</li> <li>• Plan with other collaborators to meet with SAS</li> <li>• Elect our last member</li> <li>• Run how-to event for members wanting to run</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Sesh events</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Sesh events</li> <li>• Finish landlord rating system</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class talks and recruitment scouting of new members</li> <li>• Review course evaluation system within classtalks and/or online survey. Will be planned more thoroughly in first term.</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Master Schedule

Month	Checklist
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PROMO the GA</li><li>• Promotion of elections</li></ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Run how-to event for new members</li><li>• Promotion of elections for MSSS and SRA</li><li>• Prepare for transition</li></ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study Sesh Events</li><li>• Transition with new caucus, smoothly</li></ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

**Increase Communication with Social Science students**

**Lead: *Uwais***

**Support: *Kathleen, Lauren, and Kirstin***

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using both tested and new methods of communication to increase social science student awareness of MSU and soc sci events and other important information</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountability and transparency in SRA Soc Science's work</li> <li>Increased visibility of MSU opportunities and events</li> <li>Increased Participation and awareness among the general population</li> </ul>
<b>Difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to groundwork and timelines esp. in busy season</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longevity of participation within the MSU</li> <li>Increased two way feedback between MSU and students</li> </ul>
<b>How?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Email to Clubs, Services, and Academic Societies</li> <li>Planning of Class Talks Each Semester</li> <li>Social Media</li> <li>Longterm Year Communication Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McMaster Social Sciences Society</li> <li>Faculty of Social Sciences</li> <li>McMaster Students Union</li> <li>Various Campus Parts</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

**Increase Collaboration and Support for Social Science Groups, Clubs and Academic Societies & Formalized/Improved relationship with MSSS**

**Lead: *Kirstin and Uwais***

**Support: *Kathleen***

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seeking to co-ordinate year plans, attend meetings, and affect change through various platforms</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability and transparency in SRA Soc Science's work</li> <li>• Increased visibility of MSU opportunities and events</li> <li>• Comprehensive experience for Social Science students</li> </ul>
<b>Difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of Apathy around the MSU</li> <li>• Continuation Yearly</li> <li>• Working within our schedules</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and Restorative Relationship with the SRA Soc Sci Caucus</li> </ul>
<b>How?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Summer outreach to clubs, services and academic societies</li> <li>• Planning year of events to collab on/ attend</li> <li>• Planning of Meetings to attend from clubs, services, and societies</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Societies</li> <li>• McMaster Social Sciences Society</li> <li>• MSU Clubs</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

<b>MSU Guidebook</b>	
<b>Lead: <i>Kathleen</i></b>	
<b>Support: <i>Uwais</i></b>	
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSU How to guide book for students looking to understand who we are and how we can help them create positive change.</li> <li>• Includes: description of how the MSU runs, meetings, elections, services, campaigning, petitioning, and general forums.</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy for students looking to organize, comprehensive resource which is easy to navigate, increases student feedback, reduces inefficiency in communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation, printing, and changing policies.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time saving resource, enhances engagement.</li> <li>• Implications- can be useful to determining value of face-to-face contact and evaluating certain methods.</li> </ul>
<b>How?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class talks scheduled and organized for first week of classes at the beginning of each semester</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSU, clubs, McMaster University, SRA, Underground (if printed)</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

L.R. Wilson (Hours and Lounge)

Lead: *Kirstin and Lauren*

Support: *Uwais*

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in Social Sciences and Humanities will be given a new lounge in the basement of L. R. Wilson Hall, replacing the unusable space in the basement of the Commons Building. However, it will be closed to the general public and only accessible by the faculty societies via key card. In order to make this space more accessible and more effective in building community amongst Humanities and Social Sciences students, we want to aid and collaborate with SRA Humanities, the MSSS and the MHS to keep this space open to all Social Science and Humanities students Monday to Thursday from 6-10pm.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds community</li> <li>• Gives students a space to call their own</li> <li>• Good opportunity for us to outreach with more students</li> <li>• and collect their feedback</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulties</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big commitment</li> <li>• Difficulties in ensuring every organization honours their</li> <li>• commitment in this collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long-term implications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to Science's Nucleus lounge, this could become a longstanding tradition where liberal arts students can meet and form relationships.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRA Social Sciences and Humanities, MSSS, MHS, potential collaboration with faculties</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

### Student Representation at the University Level

Lead: *Kirstin*

Support: *Lauren*

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on previous student engagement, some folks in Social Sciences have felt mis- and under-represented at the University level. This review can be completed easily through survey and/or consultation, and will engage faculty and students to see how we can ensure that students' voices are adequately represented.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that students have their needs met and are communicated with in ways that benefit them from the University and not just with regard to the MSU.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulties</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback can be difficult to come by unless this is a priority for students - which it may not be if a topical subject does not come up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long-term implications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better communication across McMaster, with more of a focus on ensuring a comprehensive learning and living environment for students. Essentially, making sure that the culture of transparency that the MSU promotes is upheld across campus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct review personally, with interested SRA members potentially, and if deemed necessary, conduct a survey that could tell us what students need to hear more about and what they're not hearing enough about from the University.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provost, Social Sciences faculty, MSSS, other SRA members potentially</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Goals

### Accessibility for courses/SAS capabilities

Lead: *Kirstin*

Support: *Uwais and Kathleen*

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current SAS and accessibility systems on campus are crucial to so many students' education and overall lives. Ensuring that these matters are truly what is best for students in practice is key. Podcasting courses is one step to improving accessibility for courses for students. Similarly, we would like to work with students and SAS to ensure that SAS is meeting the needs of students in the best way they can (e.g. adequately recognizing the difficulty and inaccessibility of requiring doctor's notes, and re-evaluating and reforming the current notetaking system).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving accessibility for students, and educational opportunities for all. Addresses concerns that students have had for years about different accessibility issues on campus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulties</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be a lot more at play than anticipated, and potentially a larger project than we know.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long-term implications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised consciousness of accessibility concerns and lack of accessibility in education, and hopefully improvement in how the University answers the voices calling for these accessibility measures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocating for and truly implementing podcasted courses.</li> <li>Work with SAS to determine their successes and difficulties, and how they can be supported. Likewise, what students in SAS have concerns about.</li> <li>Reviewing the current notetaking system, potentially implementing a reward/incentive system (e.g. 5% participation) to ensure that notes are taken and provided more regularly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRA, Faculty of Social Sciences, SAS, Maccess (and more partners if more faculties want to be involved)</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## Long Term Planning

### Advocating for More Experiential Opportunities

Lead: *Kirstin*

Support: *Lauren, Uwais, and Kathleen*

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Experiential Education office. Continue progress from previous caucus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EE provides “unique approaches to learning within the classroom and more actively engaging students in the community, as well as promoting strong relationships between academic studies, career exploration and community involvement” (EE, n.d.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 1 2016 - 2017</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather data from Social Science students who have taken EE courses and their feedback for wanting to increase similar course styles.</li> <li>• Sit in on meetings with the MSSS VP Academic, and Experiential Education office</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 2 2017 - 2018</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a report from feedback received.</li> <li>• Work towards using that feedback and working with the EE office to seek more opportunities for Social Science students.</li> <li>• Create a campaign where students can share their opinions on potential opportunities that can be created.</li> <li>• Work with EE on how we can support them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VP Academic of the MSSS</li> <li>• Experiential Education Office</li> <li>• McMaster University</li> <li>• VP Education and Education team</li> </ul>



# SRA Social Sciences

## GOALS to strive for...

### List 5 things that you would like to have prepared for the beginning of September

1. Communication Plan for the Year including Welcome week
2. Year Calendar of Events and Meetings to attend
3. Materials and Recruitment plan for seats
4. Rough Draft of How To Guide
5. Outreach to various Campus Partners

### List 5 things you would like to have completed during the fall term (1st)

1. Rough draft of Landlord Rating System
2. One Study Event
3. MSSS GA #1
4. Successfully Transition another SRA member
5. Facilitate event to encourage people to run and get involved with SRA SocSci

### List 5 things you would like to have completed during the winter term (2nd)

1. MSSS GA #2
2. Successful continuation of class talks
3. Transition plan for incoming caucus
4. Overall engagement report with performance results
5. 600 Facebook Likes

# The End