



Year Plan

SRA Science 2018-2019

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INTRODUCTION

Hello!

Welcome to the SRA Science Caucus Year Plan! Throughout this document, you will find all of our objectives for the year along with plans on how we will accomplish each of them, a master timeline of the year, and some of our overarching goals. We believe that this year plan focuses on a variety of prevalent issues faced by science students including accessibility, communications, health & wellness, and more.

We are looking forward to a year of collaboration to ensure various students perspectives, ideas, and experiences are brought to the table. We have highlighted 17 primary objectives, along with the members who plan to push for these changes. Thank you taking the time to read through this document. Feel free to let us know if you have any questions, comments or concerns!

Yours in Governance,

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OBJECTIVES

Objective 1	3AM Thode Wellness Partnerships
SRA Members	Connor
Description	This platform point was created to continue the work done by the McMaster Science Society and the University Affairs Committee for the 2017-2018 year. The goal is to partner with University groups/offices and MSU Services to ensure that students are offered adequate support in stressful times aligned with the promotion of Extended Thode Library Hours.

Benefits	<p>Students will be healthier & there will be more support in stressful times</p> <p>Better promotions of libraries & facilitates better partnership with the MSU and university groups</p>
Difficulties	<p>Coordination with groups is hard - services are making their year plans now and may not partner with us</p> <p>Timeline is short, Extended Library Hours will start after reading week in October, so we have to get started</p> <p>Librarians should be consulted, and permission is needed for any events or initiatives we run</p>
Long-Term Implications	<p>Better standard of wellness at University, reduces students opposing the library hour extension as we promote wellness along with academic prowess. Not encouraging bad studying, rather being a support for whatever decisions students make and being proactive about situations</p>
How?	<p>Through consultations with the librarians and VP Admin of the MSU, implementation through planning and meeting with services, execution of events and initiatives through promotions & funding, reflection for planning for long-term sustainability</p>
Campus Partners	<p>Libraries, MSS, MES, SRA Engineering, Mac Bread Bin, SHEC, SWHAT, Student Wellness Centre, Good2talk, etc.</p>

Objective 2	Increasing Accessibility
SRA Members	Sinthu, Raisa, Ashley, Vaishna
Description	<p>Accessibility can be further divided into three subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increasing Podcasted Courses ● Decreasing Unnecessary Textbook Costs ● Improving the SAS Note taking Service
Benefits	Every student who wants to do well in a class,

	<p>should be given the resources to do so. Students benefit from podcasted courses because they are able to learn content they may have missed and review important lecture materials. Many courses also have unnecessary and expensive textbook costs associated with them, which may discourage students from enrolling in a class. Decreasing these costs will remove a financial barrier. The classes that do have podcasts often times have glitches and the quality can be subpar, improving the available technology and resources would allow for an enhanced learning experience. Finally, the SAS note taking system can be improved to have more note takers, such that any student that requires notes will always have access to them.</p>
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We still need to collect data for which classes would most benefit from podcasts that don't currently have it. This may be hard to collect for such a large and diverse faculty. ● Some professors do not support having podcasts in their lectures for various reasons. E.g. they believe students will not attend class, or they worry about copyright infringements. ● Some lecture halls or tutorial rooms do not have the technology for podcasts, and it is difficult to know where classes will be located ahead of time. ● Promotion of the SAS services to potential note takers should be efficient and sustainable for future years
Long-Term Implications	<p>Having more podcasts will be beneficial for students who are unable to attend class for accessibility, commuting, or other conflicting reasons. Moreover, it will allow students to review lecture content more effectively for tests and exams, leading to better student success. Decreasing textbook costs and improving our note taking service will allow more students to have access to education with fewer barriers.</p>
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Action Potential" survey data ● Consultations with SAS, UTS, the Dean of Science, and affiliated groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the caucus to reach out to professors and students
Campus Partners	<p>Dr. MacDonald (Dean of Science) Dr. Cameron (Associate Dean of Science - Academic) Professors from the Faculty of Science Technology Services (UTS) IT Student Advisory Committee Student Accessibility Services (SAS)</p>

Objective 3	Improve study spaces on campus
SRA Members	Raisa
Description	This platform point was made to address the issue of students being unable to find effective study spaces on campus due to lack of space, broken outlets, etc.
Benefits	<p>Student success</p> <p>Optimized space</p>
Difficulties	There is only so much that can be done with the space that is available.
Long-Term Implications	Many students will have more spaces and better spaces to study, meet with friends, and spend time. This will be especially useful for commuter students and other students living far away from campus.
How?	Work with MSU president on her platform point of “more outlets” and ensure that the places where science students study have working outlets.
Campus Partners	MSU, tech services, etc

Objective 4	Better Promotion within the Faculty of Science
SRA Members	Connor, Sinthu, Eric

Description	This project will continue the research done in Connor's ISCI 3A12 Independent Project and see more follow through on the end deliverables. We will also try to adopt this strategy within the MSU by meeting with key stakeholders.
Benefits	Better promotions from the MSU means that students will be less overwhelmed with updates and they will be able to process and absorb necessary information from all facets of the MSU.
Difficulties	Communications is a hard thing to change, especially in the MSU and on the Faculty level where things move slowly. Trying to find talented people to produce content is also difficult.
Long-Term Implications	Less clutter on social media and more effective communication of important dates, opportunities, and events to all students.
How?	Through meetings with the Communications Officer and Marketing and Communications Director of the MSU, we can hopefully make some procedural changes to the way the MSU does promotions. We will also try to focus more on creating video and photo content and see if our own personal outreach changes.
Campus Partners	Haley Greene (Communications Officer), Michael Wooder (Marketing and Communications Director), Dr. Maureen MacDonald (Dean of Science)

Objective 5	Career and Academic Resource Expansion
SRA Members	Connor
Description	There is a gap in the resources available to science students pertaining to planning out their careers to relate to their academics. It is difficult to know what experiences students have coming out of their BSc. and where they can go with their degree. There are so many options available to them, but it is not portrayed in an easy-to-access manner. Let's work with the SCCE Office to

	ensure that the information is available to students and assist them with the projects they are currently working on (e.g. expanding the MAP, experience guides, etc.).
Benefits	Students will have more of an idea of what to do with their degree and the various roles in a variety of industries they are qualified for. It will also help students plan their course effectively to ensure that they are getting a number of experiential and abstract learning experiences that will be useful in the workplace.
Difficulties	The SCCE is difficult to get a hold of and we don't want to impose. As well, many of the resources that we would like to build cost money. This could be a point where students can help advocate for more funding for the SCCE in some way.
Long-Term Implications	Students will be more equipped to find jobs and to know what they can get out of their BSc before even starting.
How?	Working with the SCCE and their team of summer project assistants that they hired in May. Many of the projects were suggested by Connor to Vicki and Maureen in first semester last year and are now being worked on by this team.
Campus Partners	Dr. Vicki Lowes (SCCE Manager)

Objective 6	SCIENCE 1A03 Review/Expansion
SRA Members	Connor
Description	SCIENCE 1A03 could be an excellence resource for students to learn more about everything Science, including the SRA, MSS, SCCE, and so on. There are many resources that are available to students, but many don't know. Dr. Cameron has expressed interest in having SCIENCE 1A03 be expanded to more students and introduce them to everything in the faculty from departments to student groups to resources and more. Dr. Vicki Lowes has also mentioned that she thinks the existing SCCE component of the course could be

	improved.
Benefits	Students will be more informed about the Faculty of Science right from the get-go. This could lead to increased engagement, more people running in elections, better use of services, and greater overall academic success.
Difficulties	Changing courses is a difficult process and Dr. Cameron is only here until December when Mic Farquharson steps back into the role.
Long-Term Implications	Better engagement with students and a well-informed faculty.
How?	Holding meetings with Dr. Cameron and the course facilitators (likely Dr. Sarah Symons) to discuss some potential changes and how we can create that into modules for students to learn and engage. There is also a third year course that is tasked with creating modules for this course and this could potentially be a project for that.
Campus Partners	Dr. Cameron, Dr. MacDonald, Dr. Symons, MSS, SCCE

Objective 7	Continued MSS Relationships
SRA Members	Connor, Sinthu, Raisa, Vaishna, Ashley, Maryanne, Eric
Description	The SRA should work closely with the MSS. We are both representative bodies for the Faculty of Science and so our visions should align.
Benefits	More bodies helping to advocate for student needs is always a benefit.
Difficulties	The MSS is a large organization with their own agenda. If it doesn't align with ours, or there is insufficient action on either side, then nothing will get done effectively.
Long-Term Implications	We could have better relationships with the MSS and thus have more institutional memory when there is transition to a new team. This could be

	the start of joint advocacy that should've been more prominent before.
How?	This could take the shape of joint advocacy efforts and surveys, joint meetings with the Dean and Associate Deans of Science, or joint office hours held in the MSS Office. We could share our resources and help one another out in a way that complements our strengths and weaknesses.
Campus Partners	MSS Dean of Science Associate Dean of Science SCCE

Objective 8	Research Information Hub
SRA Members	Raisa, Ashley
Description	Work with the MSS to create a hub/database of professors who accept undergraduate student researchers and links to their websites. Also try to implement a "personal experience bio" where students from said labs can share what they learned and how they grew.
Benefits	Student success; make it easier/more straightforward to understand how to get these positions. Getting more students involved in research.
Difficulties	Efficiently compiling all the relevant professors who accept students. Efficiently finding students in the labs to share their stories and create an aesthetically pleasing database.
Long-Term Implications	By creating a "one-stop-hub" for students to access information, we hope to help them gain hands-on experience in their chosen discipline and enrich their educational experiences.
How?	Through consultation with the appropriate MSS Vice President(s) and executives (VP External, Volunteer and Research Coordinator, Year Reps, Webmaster), we hope to compile all the

	necessary data and create the hub on the MSS website.
Campus Partners	MSS, various professors and students throughout the faculty

Objective 9	Foster Diversity in Leadership roles in Government Positions
SRA Members	Maryanne
Description	It is important that the students that are representing their caucus are representative of their student body. As we are in a position of power, it should be our responsibility to provide opportunities for all members of the science community to know about ways they can get involved within the SRA.
Benefits	Helping facilitate a more diverse group of people in leadership roles, since it will be more representative of the students that are attending McMaster
Difficulties	Being able to connect with the specific groups that are stakeholders in the community, and to create events that cater to the specific goals of the clubs/initiatives
Long-Term Implications	We would be able to continue to have a diverse group of people in Government positions
How?	Running a meet and greet event early in the second semester to allow potential candidates to know about the SRA
Campus Partners	McMaster People Project, Various MSU Clubs

Objective 10	Mosaic Improvements
SRA Members	Sinthu
Description	Mosaic only shows the bare minimum when it comes to course descriptions. Things like whether

	the classroom will be wheelchair accessible or what we're being evaluated on are not listed. I hope to increase the information displayed on Mosaic, especially during course registration.
Benefits	This poses a barrier for students with disabilities who may require physical accommodations, or those who are restricted in a particular evaluation (such as an oral final presentation if you have a speech impairment). The incorporation of this information will allow students know exactly what they are signing up for and allow them to choose courses according to their strengths.
Difficulties	As we have seen over these past few years, students have asked for many different improvements to Mosaic. It will require a lot of consultations, data collection, and time, to get this done.
Long-Term Implications	Students will have access to more information during course enrolment, allowing for academic success.
How?	Our first steps involved getting more student feedback (through the action potential survey), and then presenting our findings to the aforementioned groups. We have already met with the Dean of Science and will be hearing back from her soon.
Campus Partners	UTS IT Student Advisory Committee Dr. MacDonald

Objective 11	Master Events Calendar
SRA Members	Sinthu
Description	This calendar would be able to have consistently updated information from SRA Science, the MSS, and other McMaster-affiliated science groups outlining future events and deadlines.

Benefits	This would allow you to click on a single link to access various application deadlines, formals, meet and greets, professional development, and any other events targeting science students.
Difficulties	It will require a lot of collaboration and continuous updates from groups to keep the calendar running throughout the year. Technological limitations may also be an issue.
Long-Term Implications	This would improve streamlined communication to science students and allow for better outreach. In the years to come, a filter function should also be a feasible addition to this calendar.
How?	This is a relatively simple tool that can be implemented after discussions with the relevant science groups and potentially the McMaster IT Team. At first this could even be a temporary google calendar shared by science groups, accessible to all, and later expanded to a more intricate system (e.g. Mosaic integration).
Campus Partners	Monish Ahluwalia (MSS President) IT Student Advisory Committee

Objective 12	Reevaluating and Improving MSU Promotions
SRA Members	Eric, Maryanne, Connor, Sinthu, Ashley
Description	The MSU for the past several years has seen poor engagement and turn out through several of its events and services. This poor engagement means that less students are aware and are unable to engage in the various opportunities and services the MSU provides to all full-time undergraduate students. The problem that many students collectively agree upon is that inadequate methods of promotions used by the MSU.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased engagement to McMaster's large undergraduate student body - Students from all backgrounds and niches

	<p>will be aware of all services provided by the MSU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Money spent by the MSU for promotions and to fund services will be properly used - Adequate usage of MSU services
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will take several months of consultation with various internal and external parties (VP Admin, VP Finance, Communications team, 3rd party marketing consultants, Michael Wooder, SRA Members) - May be difficult to agree upon a solution when working with several parties
Long-Term Implications	<p>For the years to come, MSU members will be knowledgeable of all services offered to them and will be able to make the most out of their MSU membership.</p>
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strike an Ad-Hoc committee meant to unite all parties that aspire to improve MSU communications. - This Ad-Hoc committee will be proposed by Eric after consultation with Scott Robinson. - The official members will be the chair, VP Admin, VP Finance, two SRA Members, and two MSU Members. The official observers will be the MSU Communications team. - A plan will be made for this Ad-Hoc Committee to first identify the primary issues in MSU promotions and then take steps to improve those. - A final solution will be agreed upon that will set the promotions standard for all volunteer and paid members that contribute to the MSU. - Consultation with 3rd parties can also occur such as a marketing consultant and the Degroote Marketing Association.
Campus Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VP Finance, VP Administration, Michael Wooder, MSU Communications team, Degroote Marketing Association

Objective 13	Developing Academic Science Advocacy in partnership with the MSS
SRA Members	Eric
Description	The MSS has created a new periphery position that is in charge of academic advocacy for science students. This position has a great amount of potential but is very undefined and needs guidance in developing itself. The goal of this point is to help set the foundation for this position so that it can take steps to improving academic aspects for science students.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an MSS position with great potential - Short term and long-term improvements to the academic lives of Science students - Improved relationships between the SRA and MSS
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The directions taken are entirely up to the MSS President and the advocacy member - Advocacy takes time and the role will take a few months to develop - The level of advocacy (federal, university, provincial, etc.) can change the amount of time it will take to see change
Long-Term Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A developed role that if properly established, can improve academic lives for science students for years to come.
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with the MSS President and Advocacy position throughout the year - Within these meetings, determine the level of advocacy they wish to achieve (federal, university, provincial, etc.). - Offer knowledge of academic advocacy (policy writing, surveys, connect with education department, etc.) - Create year-long plan for advocacy role - Set defined role and projects for next advocacy member to take on
Campus Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McMaster Science Society

Objective 14	Create Awareness Regarding Mental Health Resources
SRA Members	Ashley
Description	Currently there is a lack of awareness within the student body pertaining to their access to mental health resources available on and off campus. With the help of our campus partners, we plan to create both a physical and online information campaign including all available helplines, counselors and groups that are open to students both on and off campus. Information pertaining to how to access these resources and locations may be included.
Benefits	Increase mental health on campus and raise student awareness on where to get help. Improves student success overall.
Difficulties	Outreach to students may prove difficult via e-mails as they are rarely checked
Long-Term Implications	By getting this information sorted and organized in order for distribution, it can be tweaked and edited as need be for use over the course of several years
How?	Implementation strategies include providing information during peak times of the year such as welcome week, midterm season and finals season. During these times, we will provide students this information through social media platforms, e-mail, possibly putting it up on various screens throughout campus, and a possibility of brochures or platforms with adequate information on where to get help, such as help lines, counseling services and groups.
Campus Partners	Welcome week advisory committee, Kristina (MSU VP Admin), MSS, Student Wellness Centre, Good2Talk, SHEC

Objective 15	Advocate for Open Educational Resources
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SRA Members	Ashley
Description	Textbooks costs, whether mandatory or elective are very high especially for science students. In our action potential survey, majority of students did not find them beneficial for student success and deemed them too costly. Open educational resources are freely accessible online textbooks and media that can aid professors in teaching.
Benefits	Students will be able to save money while still being able to utilize textbooks and other educational media for their own academic success. It will decrease the financial burden on most students and increase their quality of living. Additionally, the stress of purchasing expensive textbooks will be decreased allowing students more accessibility to course content and resources.
Difficulties	The main difficulty here is the profitability for the university and professors. Majority of textbooks currently available for courses are available at the bookstore which brings in money to the university and most textbooks used by professors are written and profitable to said professors.
Long-Term Implications	With a developing relationship between OER advocacy and professors, for upcoming years we could begin talking about implementation which will bring about student success both academically and financially.
How?	Work with the following campus partners to reach out to professors and the administration in efforts to educate and inform them on OERs and explain the possibility of implementing them into specific courses. The target would first be courses that, according to the action potential survey, appear to lack benefit from current mandatory textbooks. Further avenues of concern from the university and professors must be collected and addressed before moving forward. As well as looking at past and current platforms for OERs on campus and working alongside them.
Campus Partners	Dr. MacDonald (Dean of Science), Dr. Cameron (Associate Dean of Science - Academic),

	Professors from the Faculty of Science, MSS
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Objective 16	Interactive Blended Learning
SRA Members	Vaishna
Description	This platform point was made to address the issue of students finding the online component of a blended learning courses to be unengaging, which results to the modules being tedious. By improving the style of the modules, it can ensure students are gaining the maximum benefit from a blended learning course.
Benefits	By having interactive modules, it allows for students to be more engaged, and retain more information. Online modules can often be long and adapting something such as added visuals would prove beneficial to the student.
Difficulties	The cooperation of professors to adapt this new style of modules may be hard. Being able to redesign the modules in a time and cost-effective manner would be a challenge. The designing and up keeping of these new modules require constant collaboration between various sectors of the University.
Long-Term Implications	By improving the modules with the help of professors and IT services it will allow for students to find the modules engaging and effective for their courses. This would allow greater use of the modules.
How?	Gain feedback as to how the modules should be updated to students' needs, this can be done through a survey or questionnaire. With this information, contacting the Dean of Science/ Academic and relevant parties.
Campus Partners	Dr. MacDonald (Dean of Science) Dr. Cameron (Associate Dean of Science - Academic)

	IT Services
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Objective 17	Improving Accessibility
SRA Members	Vaishna
Description	This platform point was made to address the accessibility concern to those who are hearing and visually impaired as there seems to be a lack of initiatives done to address these groups of students.
Benefits	Students will have the resources they need to succeed available on campus, as well improvements made to the campus itself will allow for increased accessibility to those who need it.
Difficulties	As this form of disability may not always be seen by general public, gaining the support from various sectors may be difficult. The cooperation of professors to make changes and adapt new ways of presenting information to the class. In terms of uploading videos on avenue involve collaboration of groups for an extended period of time.
Long-term Implications	Changes which are made to the campus will allow for those who are visually and hearing impaired to feel safe and comfortable on campus alongside their peers.
How?	To those who are visually impaired it is crucial to ensure all signs contain braille, and accessible calculators (larger buttons, braille displays) are available for sale on campus along with the other calculators. As well, in areas such as underground printing having a braille printer available so that it is easily accessible to those who need it. In terms of classes advocating to have alternative print forms and copies of the material available before class. Changes which can be made to campus include having distinct colours on the stairs will allow for

	<p>those with visual impairment to navigate safely throughout campus.</p> <p>Next, for those who have hearing impairment, having a sign language expert interpret the lecture content and upload videos on Avenue for those individuals who require assistance.</p>
Campus Partners	<p>SAS</p> <p>IT services</p> <p>Dr. MacDonald (Dean of Science)</p> <p>Dr. Cameron (Associate Dean of Science - Academic)</p> <p>Facility Services</p>

MASTER SUMMARY & TIMELINE

Month	Goal
April '18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect "Action Potential" survey data
May '18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present "Action Potential" survey results to the Dean of Science
June '18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start working with SCCE on Academic & Career Resources
July '18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start working with new Science Communications Officer ● Meet with Dr. Cameron about SCIENCE 1A03 ● Meet with MSU President to discuss how to contribute to initiatives to increase the amount of working outlets on campus ● Begin coordinating with welcome week committee for mental health awareness
August '18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss Office Hours and MSS Relationships with the new MSS President ● Attend Science Faculty Day and speak to first years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin consultations with MSS VP External and associated executives to plan the “Research Hub” ● Start consultation with MSU VP Education about OER advocacy efforts
September ‘18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start holding weekly MSS Office Hours in BSB B108 ● Bring up mosaic improvements & master calendar idea during first IT Student Advisory Committee meeting ● Reach out to the Dean of Science for a follow-up ● Meet with SAS learning strategist (Joanne) and discuss changes which can be made
October ‘18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement Extended Thode Library Hours Resources ● Attend Science General Assembly ● Send out surveys for module feedback ● Bring forth the information gained from the SAS to the Associate Dean, IT services and the facilities officer
November ‘18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze the feedback given for modules and reach out to the Dean of Science and relevant sectors of the University
December ‘18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow up on SCIENCE 1A03 changes, ensure implementation with a new Associate Dean
January ‘19	
February ‘19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Host meet & greet event for students who may be interested in running for SRA ● Attend Science General Assembly ● Implement Wellness Partnerships round 2 for 3AM Thode
March ‘19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalize progress, transition new SRA caucus and hand off projects to ensure continuity