

# YEAR PLAN

**MSU SRA FACULTY OF ENGINEERING**

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**2020-2021**

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## OFFICE OF THE ENGINEERING CAUCUS LEADER INTRODUCTION

Dear Members of the Assembly and my fellow Engineering Students,

On behalf of my caucus members, I would like to thank you for allowing us to prepare our upcoming academic year plan. The following document brings to light and offers some solutions to the unique challenges facing the student body this year. We are striving to ensure that despite the ambiguity that faces us all in these, dare I say unprecedented times, our constituents still feel supported and advocated for on the broader university level. Furthermore, we will work tirelessly this upcoming year and utilize the full extent of our power as SRA members to create a COVID-19 world that addresses and aids your concerns

As opposed to previous long term objectives that have been established by our predecessors, the strategy for this year's plan is rooted in crisis management and expanding the opportunities that engineering students granted.

We will accomplish these goals with the collaboration of numerous parties, including but not limited to the Office of the Registrar, the Financial Affairs office and the Office of the Dean/Associate Dean of Engineering.

## GOALS

<b>Objective 1</b>	Making sure the structure of courses is inclusive to all students.
Description	Reaching out to all the departments and informing them of the limitations of some of the students in regard to academic resources. Such as lack of readily accessible Wi-Fi or even computers and/or software.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It levels the playing field for the students that do not have access to resources that they would under non- COVID circumstances.</li><li>- Ensures that all students still get a proper learning experience despite the circumstances.</li></ul>

Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some professors have run their courses in a specific way for years as they deem it to be the best method of teaching. Consequently, they may be hesitant to adjust their structure.</li> <li>- Certain courses require specific elements to be taught and thus removing an aspect of a course may significantly diminish the learning experience of that course.</li> </ul>
Long-term implications	Since these measures are in reaction to COVID-19 the long term implications are few; as this objective will apply to the fall 2020 semester and possibly the winter 2021 semester.
How?	Creating a document that will be sent to the different engineering departments informing them as to what exactly the students do and do not have access to along with suggested measures to be taken by the professors.
Partners	Dean of McMaster, Dean of Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Stop courses from using ProctorU for monitoring examinations</b>
Description	With the special circumstances of this upcoming semester, ProctorU is being used for many classes to prevent academic dishonesty. However by using ProctorU the user hands over complete control of their computer, opening up security concerns. So with an online fall semester (and potentially winter as well), we want to eliminate the use of ProctorU.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By eliminating the use of ProctorU, we also eliminate the security concerns of students.</li> <li>- Additionally, many students have stated that using ProctorU adds to the stress and anxiety that already comes with an exam. So by removing the service it</li> </ul>

	benefits the students' abilities during the examinations.
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Certain courses have content that can easily be cheated on. Such as a class that requires a lot of memorization of information. Without a monitoring service students who cheat will gain a huge advantage on those that do not. As a result, certain examinations and even mark breakdown of courses will need to be restructured.</li> <li>- These Proctor services may be paid in advance and so it may be difficult to prevent their use if they are already paid for.</li> </ul>
Long-term implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Again as this pertains especially to the issues that are present because of COVID-19 the long term implications are limited.</li> <li>- Some courses may be permanently restructured for the better</li> </ul>
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By gathering evidence to support the claim that monitoring services are a security concern.</li> <li>- Informing the students of the potential harm these services may cause and polling them for their opinions</li> <li>- If enough students disapprove of the service we will create a document outlining the core parts of this issue and send it to the different faculties so that they may make the adjustment.</li> </ul>
Partners	Office of Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Office of Provost

<b>Objective 3</b>	Improving communication with our constituents
Description	As representatives of the engineering caucus, we need to engage the students we represent and avidly seek their feedback and ideas that they want to be implemented.

Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The students' concerns will be better relayed to us which in turn enables us to act on these concerns.</li> <li>- Offering multiple avenues for communication will allow for students to present their ideas in a comfortable environment and a result more students might reach out to us.</li> </ul>
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only a small percentage of students actually voice their concerns on student issues</li> <li>- It may be difficult to get information from constituents without incentives</li> </ul>
Long-term implications	Improving the communication infrastructure between the SRA and its constituents will help future SRA representatives hear out the students and provide solutions promptly.
How?	Using a number of polls, anonymous drop boxes, and hosting an open mic dialogue with our constituents will let the voices of the students be heard in whatever medium they feel comfortable using.
Partners	Engineering Society

<b>Objective 4</b>	Increase amount of Engineering Courses offered in the Summer/Spring terms
Description	Engineers have to take large course loads each semester and if they want to lighten this load they must then extend their undergraduate degree. If more engineering summer courses are available then engineering students would not necessarily have to extend their undergrad.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows engineering students to lighten course load during the school year, reducing stress and promoting better learning</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows for students to participate in extracurriculars that they normally wouldn't have the time for</li> <li>- Students that failed a prerequisite aren't affected as badly</li> <li>- A difficult course may be taken in isolation in a spring or summer term to help students focus on the course</li> </ul>
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- amount of students enrolled may be low and not justifiable cost-wise by the University</li> <li>- The availability of the professors may be unpredictable for these spring/summer terms and so it might be difficult for students to plan early on.</li> </ul>
Long-term implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fewer students will fail courses</li> <li>- More campus involvement by engineers in clubs/teams</li> <li>- Happier students that will be less prone to burnouts</li> </ul>
How?	<p>These summer/spring courses will be provided in an online medium to allow students that go home or travel for the summer access to these courses. This will increase the overall amount of students enrolling in summer/spring engineer courses and thus making it worthwhile for the University. Additionally, we will try to isolate a couple of the more difficult courses from each stream and send out a document to the dean as well as the different departments and the professors that teach the aforementioned courses.</p>
Partners	Dean of Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

<b>Objective 5</b>	Propose motion to voice student concerns about tuition reduction to the Financial Affairs office and Dean of Students
Description	Students are receiving a fraction of the educational quality that they would normally be paying for. The disuse of plant and maintenance costs alone would warrant a drastic reduction in fees, let alone all the other benefits students no longer pay for. The university is adding strain on already financially troubled

	students and asking for unjust tuition during the difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Benefits	<p>-Aids students who are unable to work due to the pandemic and cannot afford steep tuition fees.</p> <p>-Improves trust and goodwill in MSU to advocate for our constituents when it really matters the most.</p>
Difficulties	<p>-University policy has so far been strict on maintaining tuition fees, so they will be unwilling to rediscuss the topic.</p> <p>-It will likely result in an operating budget contraction for the MSU, but seeing as business units are not running and several services have been rescinded, should balance out in the end.</p>
Long-term implications	<p>- Post-secondary education becomes more accessible for students with financial difficulties</p> <p>-The quality of the education received will be justified with reduced tuition cost</p>
How?	<p>-Draft official motion from MSU president to discuss the lowering of student tuition rates for 2020-2021 academic year with the university administration</p> <p>-Include figures on cost-saving measures that would allow the university to reduce fees</p>
Partners	BOD, Faculty Societies, Office of Financial Affairs, Office of the Dean of McMaster University

**Long-term planning**

Overarching Vision 1	Advocate for more electives offered within the field of engineering following the CEAB guidelines and regulations
Description	Allow engineers to take more diverse electives with more overlap with or without a science-based curriculum.
Benefits	Access to certain graduate programs otherwise restricted without proper Biology prerequisites. Can be further expanded towards other programs discriminating towards engineers who can only take a limited sample of electoral courses.
Year 1	Discuss with Dean + Associates what guidelines and regulations CEAB must follow to allot a proper grade.
Year 2	Talk with graduate program directors at McMaster to find a middle ground for engineers to be able to matriculate into said programs requiring prerequisites engineers are currently ineligible for.
Year 3	Hopefully, implement new courses added to standard curriculum/ workout alternatives with the Graduate admissions process.
Partners	Dean of Engineering + Canadian Engineering Associate Board (CEAB)

Overarching Vision 2	Work with MES to solidify the relationship between engineering society and MSU
Description	Formalize a plan for constant and stronger communication between the MES executive team and SRA engineering caucus. Involve MES in overarching visions for year plans and engineering specific events and funding opportunities.

Benefits	A strengthened relationship is mutually beneficial to both parties. MES gets more information and advocacy about the inner workings of MSU and SRA receives support and a wider range of resources to create deeper connections with faculty and students.
Year 1	Amend operating policy of MES to include SRA seats on committees and in meetings and vice versa for appropriate and applicable MSU committees.
Year 2	Generate ideas for co-sponsored and chaired events to improve SRA recognition amongst students and access the broader resources of the MSU to accomplish this.
Year 3	Improve financial transparency within MES by conducting yearly audits that SRA engineering caucus sits on and ensure that student funds are not being misallocated and wasted.
Partners	McMaster Engineering Society, Faculty of Engineering

**GOALS to strive for**

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

- Policies outlining how CEAB operates and proper certification to achieve a Bachelor’s in Engineering regarding Electoral Courses
- An official report on the issue of safety and security with regards to the use of online proctoring software and present to the office of the dean
- Motion to reduce student tuition rates passed before the start of the academic year
- Getting ProctorU removed from online examinations
- Acclaim a seat at the MES Council meeting for one or two SRA representatives

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the fall term (1<sup>st</sup>)

- Revisit tank top policy at The Pulse and have an open discussion regarding it
- Establish an effective line of communication between the engineering caucus and faculty's constituents
- Make sure online education is fair, inclusive and accessible to everyone
- Promote the policies and work of McMaster Student Union in understandable and accessible ways
- Solidify the relationship between the SRA and the MES

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the winter term (2<sup>nd</sup>)

- Implement Tank Top Policy at Pulse
- Get 1-2 new Engineering courses offered in the spring/summer terms
- Significantly improve the communication infrastructure with our constituents
- Making sure that courses are inclusive to students
- Compile a list of recommendations for 2021-2022 SRA Engineering Caucus

## Master Summary

May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiarize self with SRA operations and policies</li></ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin conducting research and asking questions on what exactly students would like to see done</li></ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin preliminary operations on finding necessary info and contacts regarding all short and long term goals the</li></ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss tuition reduction with MSU and formalize approach for university administration</li></ul>

September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all source materials available to all caucus members for particular long term goals.</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue working with faculty office on short term goals prevalent to fall 2020 specific issues</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalize plan for online exam proctoring that doesn't invade student privacy</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support first-year students with first university online exams, prepare half-year policy reflections and organize winter 2021 objectives</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the faculty and associated bodies on adding more engineering courses to the Spring/Summer curriculum</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue strengthening the cooperation and connection between McMaster Student Union and McMaster Engineering Society</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate former goals and objectives and create list for what was achieved what still needs work for next year's SRA</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition SRA roles, objectives, and goals to new incoming members</li> </ul>