

# YEAR PLAN

MSU SRA Health Sciences  
Bethel Samson and Zoe Tsai  
2020-2021  
July 7th



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## OFFICE OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES CAUCUS LEADER INTRODUCTION

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Dear fellow Faculty of Health Sciences students,

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for being given the opportunity to represent you on the Student Representative Assembly (SRA) this year. Both Zoe and I come into this role with an immense amount of passion and excitement for advocating for students, but more specifically, advocating for you, our constituents and classmates. We are ready to bring this dedication to our roles throughout the upcoming school year.

During these unprecedented times, we have two main focuses, adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, and increasing equitable practices within the Faculty of Health Sciences and McMaster as a whole. Both Zoe and I came into this position filled with a vision for the 2020-2021 school year, and it is currently evolving as we learn more about how online education and testing practices will change as the pandemic continues to unravel. Our priorities for online education are that students can maintain privacy while still being actively engaged in classes and properly assessed.

Secondly, the matter of equity. Now, more than ever, it is important to keep this at the forefront of our agenda. We plan on using the current momentum of positive global change in order to help the Faculty of Health Sciences become a more equitable institution as well. We have ideas such as providing anti-oppressive training to teaching assistants in BHSc, or creating book clubs dedicated to reading books that teach about anti-racist practices, and many more. We look forward to implementing all these online while simultaneously hearing your input on all matters.

Throughout this process, it is extremely important to us that we maintain a steady connection with you, our constituents, and hear both your positive feedback and criticism. We invite you to read through our year plan and come to Zoe and I with questions, comments, or concerns. We will always have time to listen to your ideas and will work tirelessly to see your ideas come to life.

Yours truly,  
Bethel Samson  
SRA Health Sciences Caucus Leader

## GOALS

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Increase Transparency and Outreach</b>
Description	The role of SRA members entails accurately representing the opinions, thoughts, and concerns of the members of their respective faculties. Therefore, it is imperative that constituents are aware of the decisions made by the MSU and how they affect them. Transparency goes hand-in-hand with increasing outreach. We can be as transparent as possible, but if constituents are not interacting with our work, then these efforts may go wasted. Thus, it is vital for us to maintain a strong online social media presence to ensure our constituents are staying engaged and informed.
Benefits	The role of SRA members entails accurately representing the opinions, thoughts, and concerns of the members of their respective faculties. Therefore, it is imperative that constituents are aware of the decisions made by the MSU and how they affect them. Transparency goes hand-in-hand with increasing outreach. We can be as transparent as possible, but if constituents are not interacting with our work, then these efforts may go wasted. Thus, it is vital for us to maintain a strong online social media presence to ensure our constituents are staying engaged and informed.
Difficulties	We may find it difficult to encourage student attendance at events; however, we plan to address this by offering incentives to encourage students to attend.
Long-term implications	By engaging constituents in the decision-making process, they will be more aware of the operations of the MSU. We hope this will empower them to apply for positions within the union.
How?	<p>Meeting minutes will be communicated via short infographics and will be promoted on various social media platforms, such as Facebook, to keep students engaged and informed. In order to make the information easy to understand and as concise as possible, minutes will be broken down into things that affect the McMaster community and things that affect the Health Sciences community.</p> <p>Among the different social media platforms, SRA Health Sciences has a strong presence on Facebook, while seldom using Twitter and being absent on Instagram. We hope to</p>

	<p>increase outreach by continuing utilizing Facebook as the main method of communication, but also expanding to Instagram to promote various events and give further updates. We hope to utilize welcome week to encourage first-year students to like our Facebook page and follow our newly created Instagram page. We may also discuss the possibility of hosting a giveaway on our Instagram page to increase the number of followers we have and reach more constituents.</p> <p>Lastly, we will be creating and distributing an SRA Feedback Form halfway through the year to give students the opportunity to let us know what we are doing well and what they would like to see more from us. This will give us an idea of the effectiveness of our work and allow us to continue representing our constituents as best as we can.</p>
Partners	Communications Officer

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Monthly anti-Decaire protests on campus</b>
Description	In an effort to eliminate or, at the minimum, reduce police presence on campus and have Glenn Decaire removed as police chief, we will be holding online protests (paired with other action items like emailing university administration) monthly until action is taken by the university.
Benefits	A more comfortable and safer campus for BIPOC students, both in BHSc and in the greater McMaster community.
Difficulties	Due to COVID-19 pandemic, our protests may have to begin as online ones, but we envision protests with social distancing practices and a mandatory mask policy to attend.
Long-term implications	<p>McMaster will be more likely to take into account the safety of its BIPOC students when making any future policies or hires of university administration. Furthermore, the SRA has passed an official motion with the same goals (but in more detail) as this objective.</p> <p>This objective shows that the SRA not only passes motions, but works together in order to make sure that action happens after a motion is passed.</p>
How?	This will be done by first reaching out to the Decaire off campus group and Hamilton Against Decaire groups as they probably have long term plans
Partners	Other SRA Caucuses, the Decaire off campus group, the Hamiltonians Against Decaire group, and McMaster services such as Diversity services

<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Propose Program Evaluations to Health Sciences Faculty Admin.</b>
Description	<p>The courses taken throughout the years of the Health Sciences program demonstrate certain themes, such as research and Inquiry. However, whereas students can provide input for specific courses via course evaluations, there is no system in place for students to reflect on the cohesiveness of the program as a whole.</p> <p>We're proposing to use program evaluations as an extension to course evaluations administered at the end of each year to provide general feedback to the faculty.</p>
Benefits	The faculty admin. may use this information to their discretion, perhaps addressing any concerns frequently brought up with other members of the faculty. Given that the faculty reviews and makes changes to almost every course each year, perhaps this information could further improve the student and teaching experience.
Difficulties	The faculty admin. must be on board with this and feel the need for this addition. It may be particularly difficult to convince them why this is a necessity.
Long-term implications	Being able to give feedback and reflect on the program itself is an outlet for students to voice their concerns beyond specific courses and potentially assist in improving the program as a whole as the years go on.
How?	We will be reaching out to the BHSc Office, perhaps first through Dr. Stacey Ritz, the Assistant Dean, and propose the general idea so that nothing is too concrete and the faculty ultimately has the final say.
Partners	BHSc Office and Administrators

<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Low maintenance greenery in the Health Sciences Library (HSL)</b>
Description	We would like to bring low maintenance plants to HSL in order to create a more soothing and relaxed space. Fun events such as a plant naming event and watering schedules will be put in place in order to better engage library users and make HSL a more inviting place.
Benefits	Having plants has benefitted other places on campus such as MUSC by making them more inviting and aesthetically pleasing.

Difficulties	COVID-19 may close HSL during the winter semester as well. Also, low maintenance plants still require maintenance.
Long-term implications	A more positive study space occurs with more greenery. Studies have shown that plants help to soothe those nearby, improving the studying experience of someone at HSL.
How?	By reaching out to the head of HSL and presenting ideas and plant variations that are very low maintenance. Will also be done by using MUSC as a case study. Data will be collected on whether the greenery in MUSC has had a positive effect on students or not.  Hopefully a volunteer program would be created where different individuals can sign up to water these plants, and a naming of plants event can occur at the beginning of the year where library visitors can vote online.
Partners	SRA Artsci HSL administrators and librarians

<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>TA AOP Training with BHSc</b>
Description	Anti-oppressive (AOP) training is provided by the Equity and Inclusion Office frequently to many different groups at McMaster University but it is not required for teaching assistants (TA) currently. We hope to introduce mandatory AOP training for BHSc TAs, once at the beginning of the year, and then another refresher one after the winter break.
Benefits	When TAs are educated on AOP practices and how to create safe spaces, learning can be done without unconsciously and unnecessarily harming marginalized students. Through this training, TAs would consider their own biases before entering their jobs and reflect on how this could affect their interactions with students.
Difficulties	The COVID-19 pandemic will slow down the process because training cannot happen in one large room easily. Technological solutions will have to be found, for example, the use of Zoom and it's break-out room function can be applied. Furthermore, TAs may be less engaged with the AOP material since the training will have to be online and not in person.  A solution to this is encouraging BHSc instructors to remind TAs of their training throughout the year and keep reflecting on how they behave when interacting with students.

Long-term implications	If this is successfully carried out within the BHSc program, then we will have an online framework for carrying out AOP training for large groups of people. This can be applied to TAs of other faculties. In the future, students can also have
How?	<p>We will be in contact with the EIO administration and Assistant Dean of BHSc. Then we will discuss a framework for the training to occur, specifically with Khadijeh Rakie of the EIO, in order to have training be as informative and efficient as possible.</p> <p>Then we will receive feedback from TAs on the training. Afterwards, refresher training will be delivered at the start of the second semester. This feedback is very important as it will let us know if there is a more effective way that training can be delivered.</p>
Partners	<p>SRA Sciences  BHSc Assistant Dean - Dr. Stacey Ritz  EIO - Khadijeh Rakie</p>

<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>Improving the BHSc lounge</b>
Description	The Faculty of Health Sciences Student Home Base, or “lounge”, is a central multi-purpose space for students to take breaks between classes on campus, have meetings, and host small events. It is currently equipped with desktop computers, a television, couches, tables and basic appliances to make student life more convenient. In the long run, we hope to maximize the use of this space to make it as accessible and functional as possible.
Benefits	With more improvements to the lounge, students will feel more inclined to use the space and it will serve as a welcoming area for all students who have access to it. Currently, the lounge is used primarily by students in the BHSc program, although other programs within the Faculty of Health Sciences, such as Nursing and BDC, have access to it. By renovating the area, we ultimately hope to see more students to foster a more cohesive Health Sciences community
Difficulties	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we may not have access to the lounge, but if we reach out to the proper people then we can have completely sole access to the lounge and renovate it without intruding on students using the lounge because they will not be there in the first place.

Long-term implications	We can heavily advertise the renovated space on social media to encourage students to use the space more frequently in the following years now that the lounge is a more inviting and cleaner space.
How?	The results of the previous SRA Health Sciences caucus survey will serve to guide our action plan. We will meet with the Dean of Health Sciences to discuss funding options for renovation suggestions.
Partners	BHSS Chair SRA Nursing Dean of BHSc Program

<b>Objective 7</b>	<b>Creating a Centralized Research and Community Engagement Database</b>
Description	Since the inception of the BHSc Program, LearnLink has served as a centralized platform where students could find virtually anything related to BHSc. Since the discontinuation of it this past summer, the search for another centralized platform where students can share course reviews and academic resources begin. We hope to collaborate with the BHSS and Health Sciences Senate Representative to explore alternative platforms where students can collaborate and share resources.
Benefits	The creation of a new website with academic resources such as notes, course reviews, etc. will allow students to feel a sense of community, and make up for what was lost with the termination of LearnLink.
Difficulties	Maintaining the privacy of students who submitted their work onto LearnLink long ago in a new platform will be challenging. The academic community will work on anonymizing all work and removing so that it can all be uploaded onto the new platform.  When creating a new website, we may run into challenges in regards to outreach. LearnLink was advertised to students by both faculty and peers allowing it to be a very well-known platform. In order to maximize outreach, it will be imperative for us, the BHSS, and Senate Representative to advertise the commencement of a new potential platform
Long-term implications	Advocating for accessible education through more podcasted classes will ensure students feel welcomed and well-equipped with the necessary resources to succeed. Furthermore, a centralized academic website will foster a



	more inclusive environment and enhance the academic experience of students.
How?	We will also meet with the BHSS, specifically the Academic Coordinator, to discuss the logistics and launch of a new potential centralized academic platform
Partners	AVP University Affairs BHSS Academic Coordinator BHSS Chair BHSc Office

<b>Objective 7</b>	<b>Enhance Engagement in MSU Student Governance</b>
Description	The 2019-2020 election year saw an unprecedented number of candidates running in First Year Council (FYC) Elections and as candidates for SRA Health Sciences. In light of COVID-19 and the inability to promote MSU on campus in the beginning of the year, we hope to continue this momentum into the upcoming year through online initiatives to spur further engagement in student politics and governance among Health Sciences students. Whether this be through encouraging students within the faculty to join SRA committees as non-voting members, continue promoting elections, or increasing BHSc student representation in FYC elections, we plan on attempting to make student civic engagement a priority this year.
Benefits	As previously stated, ensuring that students are aware of opportunities to get involved with student governance within the MSU will help to provide them with meaningful ways of instigating change within our community. In particular, with regard to FYC, we are looking to give first-year students early exposure to this type of engagement so as to push them to continue to pursue these types of leadership roles within our faculty and the university at large.
Difficulties	For one, maintaining consistent promotional efforts during election season may be tedious, as students may already be inundated with information from other sources regarding these same events. It may also be difficult to actually have students in the faculty (particularly those outside of BHSc) to attend our promotional events; we hope to combat this by instilling a strong social media presence within the faculty from the beginning of the year (via Instagram, Facebook & Twitter; see Objective 1 for more details).
Long-term implications	Being involved in student governance will confer a variety of positive effects on our community, particularly with regard to improving MSU-based outreach within our faculty and

	ensuring student voices are adequately represented and heard in matters affecting them. It will also enable students (particularly first years) to develop and enhance leadership and communication skills, while giving individuals with ideas for enhancing campus life avenues to explore and potentially implement said changes.
How?	<p>As previously stated, we will be partnering with the BHSc Welcome Week Coordinators to improve the annually distributed Welcome Week guidebook with regards to MSU Governance structure, addition to running 5-minute “Intro to the MSU” talks in HTH SCI 1E06 classrooms during the first 2 weeks of classes.</p> <p>In terms of student governance as a whole, we plan on actively promoting elections (FYC, Senate, SRA Generals) in addition to collaborating with the MSU Elections Department to host a “How to Run in an Election” event. Here, we would discuss the basics of running in an election, in addition to platform creation, consulting with stakeholders, and designing posters. This event will give potential candidates for SRA Generals, Senate and BHSS Elections the opportunity to gain valuable information about the election process and address any concerns students may have. We also hope to gather students who have previously held these positions to do a panel-style Q&amp;A for interested individuals.</p>
Partners	Deputy Returning Officer Elections Committee FYC Coordinator BHSS Welcome Week Coordinators

**Long-term planning**

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<b>Overarching Vision 1</b>	<b><i>Equity in all manners at McMaster - specifically in the TA departments</i></b>
Description	From advocating for decreased police presence on campus, to initiatives more specific to BHSc such as AOP training for TA's we hope to make McMaster a more inclusive and equitable place. We believe that TAs and upper years in general have a really big impact on younger students in BHSc because BHSc is a very small program and lots of

	<p>cross-year interaction is had. It is important that TAs are aware of their impact on students younger than them, and that they work actively towards making their teaching space one that is comfortable to all students.</p> <p>We hope to maintain the TA training for BHSc TAs in future years and hope that this sets a precedent for other McMaster faculties and work with other caucus to see this through.</p>
Benefits	With strong anti-oppressive practices in our institution, institutional discrimination can be reduced. TAs are very important to making a learning environment safe. By teaching them to use proper analogies, the proper way to interact with students, and what things can be taken as offensive, then we make the learning environment conducive to all BHSc students.
Year 1	Reach out to the BHSc Dean and EIO administration in order to deliver TA training online during the first semester and have refresher training in the winter semester. We are also going to send out a survey to collect feedback from the TAs that received this training.
Year 2	TA training feedback will be used to change training this year. Will also connect with other caucuses to have this training for TAs. The TA union will also be contacted to see if this training can be made more universal and permanent.
Year 3	Make sure that the TA training is now permanent and adjust it to in person training now that COVID-19 restrictions have hopefully been lifted
Partners	Other SRA Caucuses, BHSc Faculty and Dean, Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), McMaster Diversity Services

<b>Overarching Vision 2</b>	<b><i>Continue to receive feedback on the program and make BHSc more accessible by creating both a Database and a feedback form.</i></b>
Description	We hope to make the new database (with LearnLink resources) something that is permanent and continually added to and adjusted by future SRA Health Sciences and the BHSS. We would like to integrate this feedback form with the Database and make them both key pillars of the academic year in order to improve academic accessibility and create positive change to academics in BHSc.
Benefits	LearnLink was such an important resource for students as it had many years worth of notes and student-made question banks and practice problems. Now the only way of receiving help from years before is by asking an upper year friend, but not everyone has access to this kind of mentorship. The

	creation of a new website with academic resources such as notes, course reviews, etc. will allow students to feel a sense of community, and make up for what was lost with the termination of LearnLink. It will also give everyone an equal playing field with regards to access to notes and past documents.
Year 1	Work with the academic committee to anonymize all previous work submitted to LearnLink. Also reach out to the BHSc office about having a program feedback form.
Year 2	Create a website or google drive where all the previous LearnLink documents (now anonymized) are added.
Year 3	Make an easy to access form for submitting documents and notes to the new version of LearnLink so that it can be continuously updated for future years.
Partners	VP Education AVP University Affairs BHSS Academic Coordinator BHSC Dean BHSc Office

## GOALS to strive for

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

- Update photos and information on relevant SRA Health Sciences social media platforms
- Discuss the mechanisms of AOP training and contact all partners (EIO and BHSc Dean)
- Organize a date or multiple dates for AOP training amongst the BHSc faculty TAs and prepare all online material.
- Proposing to use program evaluations as an extension to course evaluations administered at the end of each year to provide general feedback to the faculty
- Have the AOP readings book club started

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

- Continue posting meeting minutes infographics on Facebook and Instagram.
- Finalize TA AOP training plans and have a training early in the year and also for refresher AOP training for TAs for the winter semester.
- Partner with anti-Decaire groups in Hamilton to hold our first few protests.
- Meet with BHSc Office regarding running “Intro to the MSU” talks in all HTHSCI 1E06 classrooms
- Discuss ideas to bring plants to HSL during the winter semester with librarians and sort out any feasibility issues.
- Send out and receive the results to our COVID-19 online education feedback survey

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

- Continue posting meeting minutes infographics on Facebook and Instagram
- Have program evaluations in place and being used at the end of the semester
- Run “Intro to the MSU” talks in HTHSCI 1E06 classrooms, in addition to an MSU Services panel Q&A for interested students
- Run refresher training for the TAs
- Continue to post updates on what resources are open during online schooling (if the semester is still online)
- Finish putting together the new and improved LearnLink

## Master Summary

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May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update the Facebook page with relevant updates regarding SRA meetings and VP candidate platforms</li> <li>● Promote MSU seats on SRA committees</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram on SRA activity</li> <li>● Update social media about VP Admin elections</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram on SRA activity</li> <li>● Meeting with Stacey Ritz with regards to TA AOP training and program evals.</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize plans for TA AOP training with Stacey Ritz and Khadijeh Rakie near the end of August</li> <li>● Finalize the date for TA AOP training with BHSc instructors</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hold TA AOP training online and save the training as online video modules that could be used for future years.</li> <li>● Organize anti-Decaire protest schedule</li> <li>● Post an online introduction to the incoming BHSc Class of 2024 during online Welcome Week.</li> <li>● Make the Instagram page as active as possible as that is what is most used by constituents and post introductions of all MSU services and what resources are available during the online semester.</li> <li>● Find a faculty member that we could partner for our social justice book club that would read books on the topic of social justice and discuss the chapters we have read together online (or in person depending on the situation).</li> <li>● Reach out to Academic Coordinator to start planning the new website for former LearnLink documents</li> <li>● Run 5-minute “Intro to the MSU” talks in all HTHSCI 1E06 classrooms</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>● Meet with the HSL director to discuss what changes are possible for the next semester</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have our first meeting with the book club where we pick a book and designate chapters to read by a certain date (and continue this process for the rest of the year)</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>• Release a survey within BHSc members asking for feedback on online education and what could be improved in order to adapt our ideas for the coming semester.</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>• Collaborate with other caucuses to hold final joint study reviews of the year</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>• Continue plans to bring plants to HSL, especially if school opens back up. This implementation will make sure to take into account social distancing methods.</li> <li>• Deliver the results of the online education survey to HSL director, BHSc Assistant Dean and work on making changes</li> <li>• Continue working with the academic committee to finish uploading half of LearnLink by now</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>• Run a short workshop on "How to run in an election" for students in our faculty</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue publishing bi-weekly updates on all social media platforms in order to remain active</li> <li>• Promote MSU Generals on all social media</li> <li>• Promo MSU seats on committees</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin transition with next SRAs</li> <li>• Collaborate with other caucuses to hold final joint study reviews of the year</li> <li>• Run pilot program evals.</li> </ul>