YEAR PLAN
MSU SRA Humanities

Haley Birch
Sarphina Chui
Malik Nakua
2020-2021

Submitted on July 7th, 2020

OFFICE OF THE HUMANITIES CAUCUS INTRODUCTION

Hello students of the Faculty of Humanities!

We are humbled and excited to begin this journey as your representative on the Student Representative Assembly (SRA) this year! Although we are navigating through the unprecedented situation with Covid-19, we are confident that you and your experience at McMaster will be our number one priority! We understand this position carries many responsibilities and we are committed to being _your_ voices.

For our vision this year, we have placed heavy emphasis on delivering an optimal online learning experience, ensuring online services accessibility, and maintaining ideal student life experience regardless of whether it is through a virtual space or in person.

Our caucus aims to serve the needs of our constituents as well as possible. As such, we are open and receptive to feedback and criticism on how we can improve and be more effective representatives. We will work diligently with the other caucuses and build upon the foundation which has been as established by the SRA in the past.

We encourage you to go through our year plan and let us know what you think. As your representatives, we want to make sure that you understand that we, and the MSU at large, are here to serve and support you. We want to highlight that we can be approached at any time and about any matter without fear of judgement. As your caucus we will work diligently and tirelessly to ensure that your needs are met. Lastly, while we maneuver through the difficulties of the un-parallel circumstance we find ourselves in, feel free to reach out, even if it is just regarding a seemingly simple manner-- we are here to help.

Best,
Haley Birch, Sarphina Chui, and Malik Nakua
Humanities Caucus 2020-2021
srahumanities@mcmaster.ca

GOALS

Objective 1	Student Advocacy
Description	As the conversation surrounding social change intensifies, the humanities caucus finds it imperative that our constituents have a viable avenue to express their concerns. This means we must first, educate ourselves on issues we are not personally familiar with and accompany this by providing resources for students to share their experiences. Meaning we will be able to hear the direct concerns of our constituents and act upon this information. We believe that perhaps that greatest fundamental shortcoming as it pertains to student advocacy is a fundamental lack of awareness of the issues that specially concern our constituents. To address this shortcoming we will act in two primary ways: i) we will spend a great deal of the first term creating and implementing methods which are accessible to all our constituents through which they can both share their experiences and highlight their concerns, and ii) identifying how best to address the outlined information, and ultimately acting upon it.
Benefits	The primary benefit, and the ultimate purpose of this objective is to create a safer and more accepting campus for our constituencies and the student body at large. Our aim is to establish a safer campus for all students and faculty alike. With this, we hope that a more inclusive setting for all members of the MSU community will continue to improve, and adoption of a more supportive campus culture will persist.
Difficulties	The most obvious difficulty for this objective is the logistical issues that accompany the transition to online learning. Because the first semester of the 2020—2021 year is officially online, it is relatively uncharted territory, and navigating through it will be a new experience for many. As a result, we will have to identify and implement a strategy that is both engaging and effective when reaching out to constituents. Additionally, advocacy is a long and unpredictable process and as such it is difficult to place a strict timeline on it. This coupled with the difficulty of the transition to online learning I believe presents a formidable task. However, with the efforts of our caucus, and a regimented goal based plan, we believe we can overcome these difficulties.
Long-term implications	There is an abundance of long-term positive effects that we hope will result through the student advocacy we hope to

	achieve. Some of which include greater sense of community throughout the McMaster student body, more diverse voices being heard which will ultimately lead to a greater array of ideas, and a more vibrant campus where all members feel safe and included in the decision making process. Through the groundwork that will be set by this objective, we hope
How?	While the transition to online learning presents multiple challenges, one of the positive aspects of the transition is familiarity and involvement with online platforms and media outlets. Our caucus aims to utilize this by creating forums where students can communicate and their concerns, and in addition, how best to tackle these concerns. We will also make use of our office hours to create an opportunity for an individualized dialogue. Once this information has been collected and surveyed, we will turn our attention to identifying the best ways of addressing these concerns.
Partners	TBA

Objective 2	Optimal Online Learning Experience
Description	Due to the current circumstances of COVID-19, academic lessons have been delivered through an online format. Given the relatively unfamiliar style of learning, it is crucial to examine and improve aspects of online education from accessibility to security, to student privacy. Altogether, this objective would provide an optimal academic experience for our constituents in the midst of an unprecedented situation.
Benefits	- Identify potential shortcomings of online learning and allocate proper resources - Facilitate optimal online learning for all students
Difficulties	**Postponed improvements** - Data on potential issues must be first collected - Resources to execute improvements may be not provided immediately
Long-term implications	- Strategies to improve online learning may be applied across campus
How?	- Partner with VP Academic in surveying the needs to building a holistic online learning experience - Open a channel of communication through social media to receive feedbacks from constituents
Partners	- VP Academic, AVP Academic

Objective 3	MSU governing transparency
Description	The importance of transparency when working with constituents is vital to allow governance to function properly. Our goal is to tackle the disconnect between SRA and constituents through a new communications committee within the SRA. The committee would be responsible for distributing useful graphics for SRA caucus' , meeting recaps, and other communication related content to each caucus to keep constituents informed.
Benefits	Creating more readily available content allows all caucuses the opportunity to work with constituents regardless their level of familiarity with technology. This allows all students who are busy and who may not have the time to sit through an entire meeting, the opportunity to watch a quick briefing on matters that they may have interest in. Additionally, if constituents have meeting recaps readily available, they will be able to hold their representatives accountable for their actions.
Difficulties	- Potential bureaucratic delay in committee formation - Student's awareness and interest towards SRA activities
Long-term implications	Creating transparency through increase in online presence allows constituents to trust their voice and opinions are being heard. This committee specific to the SRA is vital in doing so.
How?	This will be achieved by first communicating with the current SRA to identify what their communications needs are. Once this is completed we will find and survey what our constituents think is the most effective way to follow and benefit from the bi-weekly meetings. For this to work, it would require collaborations from all caucasus that find themselves under the umbrella of the SRA.
Partners	TBA

Objective 4	MSU governance engagement
Description	The SRA at large has lacked a social media presence that would allow it to to connect directly to the student body . Our goal is to involve our constituencies as much as possible. This means creating and identifying ways in which they can easily access information, and communicate with the assembly through their representatives. For this to occur, we need to communicate with our constituents to identify the most engaging process.

Benefits	The stragretic increase with social media will help constituents feel better represented while also giving them the opportunity to see exactly what the SRA is participating in.
Difficulties	At this point, the SRA has very little social media presence, so there is no existing framework to work off of. Because this is so, we will need to develop our own framework which would potentially allow us to effectively achieve our goals.
Long-term implications	If we were able to prepare the groundwork for an effective and large scale media presence during our term, it could potentially create a wide enough network for the vast majority of the McMaster community to be a part of. While this ground work may entail many tough and detail oriented tasks, the payoff of having the entire student body engaged with the MSU would be worth it.
How?	Create a clear year plan on how to grow the platform. Have prizes for people who share the platforms. Work with caucuses with developed pages as well as services in the MSU to promote the content.
Partners	All SRA Caucuses

Long-term planning

Overarching Vision 1	*Online Services Accessibility*
Description	As we experience unprecedented times, the need and use of online services is at an all-time high. Using these tools long-term within our services breaks down barriers and allows those who are unable to meet in person for potential peer support or other services provided. Our goal is to look into permanently using and expanding our services so that it is more accessible to those who are unable to meet in person/on campus.
Benefits	More students will have access to our services. Volunteers can be located from anywhere. Hours can be extended for peer support.
Year 1	- Review all student services and list the top 3 services that needs accessibility improvement
Year 2	- Contact related services to determine areas of improvement needed and a year plan
Year 3	- Start implementing those changes
Partners	All MSU services

Overarching Vision 2	*Promoting Intra-faculty relationships*
Description	The Faculty of Humanities consists of several programs such as: ● The School of the Arts ● Classics ● Communication Studies & Multimedia ● English & Cultural Studies ● French ● History ● Gender Studies & Feminist Research ● Peace Studies ● Linguistics & Languages ● Philosophy ● Eighteenth-Century Fiction ● Humanities Media & Computing We believe that cooperation between students across our faculty would provide an excellent learning environment and ensure multiple perspectives from diverse academic fields.

Benefits	- Greater student connections and friends from different programs - Identify the needs of programs across the faculty

Year 1	- Meet with each student committees and have monthly meetings with humanities society
	  - Outreach, intra-faculty activities
	  - Continuation of previous year's SRA support of Art Matters Week
	  - Continuation of previous year's SRA planning on Humanities Career Night
	  - Banquet, coffee house, games night

Year 2	- Propose objective to respective Deans and seek feedback
Year 3	- Explore the feasibility of having potential interdisciplinary courses or thesis opportunities
Partners	Faculties of: The School of the Arts Classics Communication Studies & Multimedia English & Cultural Studies French History Gender Studies & Feminist Research Peace Studies Linguistics & Languages Philosophy Eighteenth-Century Fiction Humanities Media & Computing

List 5 things that you would like to have prepared for the beginning of September
- Determine the feasibility of having a communication committee
- Compile a list of contacts with the MSY for accessibility
- Contact VP, AVP Academics and respective deans for their fall term online learning accessibility plan
- Build social media presence
- Contact all intra-faculty committee chair
- Compile a list of student services and action plans to review them

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the fall term (1st)
- Determine the feasibility of having a communication committee
- Have a stable and consistent social media presence
- Complete research on the structure of our "online conversation"
- Meet consistently with all intra-faculty committee members
- Assess online student services and plan on improvements

List 5 things you would like to have completed during the winter term (2nd)
- Organize faculty wide activity with all intra-faculty members
- Complete reviewing all online student services and contacted the top 3 services that needs accessibility improvement
- Complete research and planning on the communication committee
- Utilize our social media platform for student life advocacy
- Implement changes to improve online learning experiences

Master Summary

Due to the uncertainty of this school year, we have decided to keep humanities' year plan accountable by semester, instead of by month. We would also like to address winter term's uncertainty, and we hereby apologize for any goals that are delayed and/or changed as the school year progresses.