## YEAR PLAN

### MSU SRA Social Sciences

### Kristen Choi, Danielle Fernandes

### 2021-2022

(July 13th, 2021)

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OFFICE OF THE Social Sciences CAUCUS LEADER INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Members of the Assembly and MSU Members,

Although this year’s Social Science caucus is small, we hope that we can still put our goals and plans into action through this next year. As students who were fortunate enough to experience both online and in-person school, we do realize how difficult it may be for the recent and incoming first year students at this time. We recognize that there are many experiences that these new students have missed out and will most likely miss out on again. Despite the fact that the school is in the process of re-opening the campus, things will not be able to go back to normal immediately. With all that being said, we hope that our plans in being more active on our social media platforms and engaging with students more frequently will allow us as a caucus to build relationships with our fellow students so that they feel confident in coming forward with their concerns and feedback. Additionally, we hope with the new creation of a Discord server for the Social Sciences faculty will allow students of our faculty to network and connect with each other as there will be a lack of this kind of opportunity in person this upcoming school year.

Additionally, we also recognize that there has been major harm done to BIPOC communities both on our campus and in our country as a whole. We hope to address this issue and create spaces and services for BIPOC students at McMaster University.

We hope to create a space where students feel comfortable in sharing their experiences whether good or bad with us so that we can make improvements on our campus and within our faculties.

While my fellow caucus member and I are still in the process of learning about past caucus’ plans and about our campus in general, we aim to accomplish our new and previous caucus plans with our very best effort and bring about genuine change. We look forward to working alongside the BOD, fellow SRA Members, and others to see these plans through this upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Kristen Choi

SRA Social Sciences Caucus Leader

GOALS

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| **Objective 1** | Welcoming First Years |
| Description | Facilitating events that are specifically catered towards first years and their integration within the university and their faculty |
| Benefits | Through facilitating events , we will be providing opportunities to the first year social science students to get to know others virtually - making the students feel more comfortable and acquainted with McMaster. This will allow the students to feel more acquainted with the faculty, peers, and academics as they head into their first university year |
| Difficulties | As the first fall semester is expected to be hybrid or fully online, it will be difficult to make the students aware of the opportunities and events hosted. Online events can also be troublesome as it is very difficult to get students excited and engaged for online activities. |
| Long-term implications | Long-term, this objective will allow the first-year students to fully integrate themselves in both the social science and McMaster community. It will allow them to be more comfortable with going into their classes, as they will have met other students and make university and social life easier for the incoming students. |
| How? | We plan to hold various events catered specifically toward the first year population through zoom or microsoft teams that will allow them to meet peers and get acquainted with the faculty. We plan to facilitate chats and conversations with these students in hopes to make them more comfortable with their high school to university transition. With it being an online year this past 2020-2021 school year, it was very difficult for first year students to find their place and feel at home within our McMAster community - with these facilitated events we hope to bridge the gap between upper years and the first years, making one large community. |
| Partners | McMaster Social Science Society |

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| **Objective 2** | Encouraging Students to Build Relationships in an Unprecedented Time |
| Description | Our caucus will work on creating a discord server for all social science students to use to connect with one another during an online and socially distance year. |
| Benefits | This will be an opportunity for students to engage and interact with one another especially since the school year will likely be online. The Discord server will be most beneficial to the incoming first year student as they will be able to meet their fellow first year peers and create connections, since there will be a lack of in person opportunities. |
| Difficulties | Despite the fact that online platforms provide for so many opportunities for networking and connecting with people especially in times like now, it may be difficult for students to feel comfortable in meeting people in this way. Although we have all gotten somewhat used to virtual meetings and school, it may still be difficult to encourage students to make use of the discord platform. |
| Long-term implications | Due to the fact that there are limited opportunities to meet other students in person, we hope that students will feel the need to put effort into building friendships through utilizing a platform such as Discord. Additionally through Discord, students will be able to study with one another as if they were together at the campus libraries. We hope that students, especially the incoming first year students, will feel more comfortable knowing they are not alone. |
| How? | We plan to release a survey to all social science students to gather information on how they felt their past school year went, difficulty in engaging with new people, and what they would like to see and do on the Discord Server. Through those responses and feedback, we hope to create a Discord Server that will be beneficial and enjoyable to students. |
| Partners | McMaster Social Sciences Society |

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| **Objective 3** | Support Indigenous Communities |
| Description | In light of recent events, we hope to create a space within our McMaster community that allows for grieving, and listening to take place. As a Social Science caucus, we hope to learn more, educate our students and provide support and community to Indigenous peoples and students within our McMaster community. We hope to work towards the betterment of our community and understanding of Indigenous peoples, while also embracing our cultures and differences. |
| Benefits | This educational space will allow for students to learn more and educate themselves on Indigenous culture, history, and traditions, working towards the acceptance and uniqueness of different cultures. |
| Difficulties | Deciding a platform/space to create this learning base would be difficult as there is not one major platform that all individuals use. As we hope to be accessible to all McMaster students, we will look for the most common/accessible platforms to host our support space. |
| Long-term implications | Students will be able to know more about Canadian and Indigenous history, as well as the Indigenous students will feel welcomed and accepted into McMaster University for years to come. |
| How? | We hope to promote this Indigenous support throughout our social media platforms, and potentially create a group on Facebook/Instagram that students can find community and learn together. |
| Partners | Indienous Studies Program/Staff |

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| **Objective 4** | MSU Social Media Engagement |
| Description | It has been brought to our caucus’ attention that not only the Social Sciences caucus, but the SRA as a whole have been lacking in utilizing their social media platforms to maintain engagement with students of their respective faculty. Especially with an online year, social media engagement will be crucial for students as there are fewer opportunities for in person events such as club fests, faculty events, etc. We hope to build our social media engagement and encourage the other caucus’ to ensure student’s feel comfortable in bringing their concerns and feedback to us. |
| Benefits | We hope with an increase in social media engagement, students will feel better represented and will allow students to get to know our caucus members better so that they feel confident in bringing forward their concerns and feedback throughout the year. |
| Difficulties | Our caucus may have difficulty in building a strong following and getting attention to our social media platforms as there has been an ongoing lack of social media engagement for quite some time now. |
| Long-term implications | An increased social media presence will hopefully be beneficial in such unprecedented times and having to be attending school online. This will provide students with information that they need for upcoming events, workshops, SRA plans for the year, etc. |
| How? | Create a strategic plan on how we hope to go about increasing engagement on all social media platforms. Reach out to other caucus members about experience with graphic design. |
| Partners | All SRA Caucuses |

**Long-term planning**

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| Overarching Vision 1 | *Taking an Intersectional Approach and Prioritizing BIPOC students* |
| Description | Our caucus this year found that this was an incredibly important goal we wanted to continue to carry out from the previous Social Sciences caucus’ plans. As BIPOC students ourselves, we also found that this was a vision that holds a great importance to us. We hope to create a more equitable campus to ensure that BIPOC students do not feel neglected but to instead feel welcomed and comforted both on and off campus. |
| Benefits | We hope that BIPOC students feel welcomed and well represented by their university/student’s union and that they feel confident in bringing forward concerns, feedback and their hopes to their university/student unions as well. |
| Year 1 | We hope that with the slight re-opening of campus, we can begin planning on creating BIPOC spaces and services on campus. Additionally we would like to recognize harm that has been done to members of the BIPOC community and express our plans to build the trust of their community. |
| Year 2 | Start taking action on our plans for creating these BIPOC spaces and services and hopefully begin to open them up to the community. |
| Year 3 | Have conversations with faculty deans and other members on how we can ensure that course material is not centred solely on Western scholars but to include BIPOC scholars. |
| Partners | The MSU, BOD, the MSSS, and the University Affairs Committee |

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| Overarching Vision 2 | *Promoting Intra-faculty Relationships* |
| Description | The Faculty of Social Science consists of several programs such as:   * Anthropology * Economics * Environment & Society * Health, Aging & Society * Indigenous Studies * Political Science * Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour * Social Psychology * Social Work * Society, Culture & Religion * Religious Studies * Social Psychology * Social Work * Sociology   We hope to better the relationships between the Social Science faculties to have a closer-knit community for our Social Science Students. These relationships will also provide better learning environments and multiple perspectives from various individuals. |
| Benefits | There will be greater student connections and friends from various programs within the faculty |
| Year 1 | We hope to meet with each student committees and have bi monthly meetings within the social science society. This means we would reach out to the intra-faculty societies and facilitate activities and meetings for the different programs. |
| Year 2 | We will seek feedback from the programs within the society and see what we can improve on. |
| Year 3 | We will explore the hosting inperson mass events for the faculty if safe to do so, time come. |
| Partners | all SRA caucuses |

GOALS to strive for

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

* Creation of Discord Server
* Meet with the MSSS and brainstorm collaboration ideas
* Contact all Social Sciences intra-faculty chairs
* Build a greater following on Caucus social media channels
* Successfully transition into our role as SRA members for the social sciences caucus

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

* Circulate discord server
* Hold minimum 2 events for first year students
* Create a survey gain perspective from BIPOC students
* Research ways to support Indigenous students/communities
* Hold an intra-faculty event

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

* Hold initiatives recognizing and educating McMaster students about the Indigenous community
* Facilitate events and study sessions via the discord server
* Help the 2021-2022 SRA Social Sciences caucus transition smoothly into their roles as SRA members
* Integrate first year students by holding inter-year social science events
* Build a strong relationship with the MSSS and have more students attend GA