

# **YEAR PLAN**

MSU SRA Social Sciences

Isaac Burton

2022-2023

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**Office of Social Sciences**

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## **Office of Social Sciences Caucus Leader**

### **Introduction**

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Dear Social Science Students,

As a caucus made up entirely of first time members of the SRA we are bringing to you a new batch of ideas and approaches to student politics. In order to best help the Social Science students we will be sure to listen and accommodate the needs of all. We believe that it is important for the student population to have quality of life changes that ultimately will make the campus a better place in the long term.

We are looking to make the transition back in person, learning a seamless process that can be accommodating to all. In order to achieve this we wish to prioritize in person academic help to further suit all needs of the McMaster student population. Apart from academics we wish to help students succeed in all branches of student lifestyle (Mentally, nutritionally, socially, etc). In addition we would like to keep channels of contact accessible for those who wish to address issues and problems within the University. At McMaster we wish to ensure that all students are aware of and use the resources that are available to them.

During the 2022-2023 year we want to ensure that all students can be successful and that the university is doing their part to constantly improve and support student life. With that being said, we cannot expect to be perfect and we are always open to listen to what the McMaster student population has to say about different issues on campus.

Best of luck this year,

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**Short term Planning**

<b>Objective 1</b>	Increase connections between MSU and Social Science Clubs
<b>Description</b>	<p>There is a lack of communication between MSU and these Social Science Clubs, students especially first-years often find it hard to get involved within their own faculty regarding the extracurricular activities with the clubs.</p> <p>We rarely hear Social Science clubs' news after the Club Fest in the earlier of school year. This should be a continuous work throughout the school year.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	More Social Science clubs will be known in the Social Science students community and more Social Science students will get involved with the Social Science Clubs.
<b>Difficulties</b>	Some clubs are hard to get connected with or they are inactive for a certain time period. It may be hard to get through each social science club during the school year or before the mid of the school year. Time arrangement is one of the significant parts between MSU, Clubs and the caucus. Everyone is busy and it will be hard to find a time that works for everyone. There is uncertainty that how much money will cost on the connection with MSU and the Clubs.
<b>Long-term implications</b>	It will provide a much better social science students experience on campus, especially we are fully return in person now and students will have more extracurricular activities after classes.
<b>How?</b>	We will get in touch with each Social Science Clubs, McMaster Social Science Society (MSSS) and MSU (MSU Clubs) throughout the school year, hear what Social Science Clubs need and how the caucus should support them.
<b>Partners</b>	<p>McMaster Students Union</p> <p>MSU Clubs</p> <p>McMaster Social Science Society</p> <p>All clubs under Social Science</p>

<b>Objective 2</b>	Improvement in student housing
<b>Description</b>	<p>Finding a room/house to live near McMaster has become really tough for students. Off-campus housing is mostly possible through facebook groups, kijiji and by the help of a broker. University does have a dedicated site for off-campus housing but it is not updated constantly with new listings as it portrays houses that were listed almost a year back making it even more difficult for the students to look for a place.</p> <p>In addition to this, all other housing websites including facebook groups are risk prone due to scammers. There should be additional steps taken by the university to ensure the reliability of the owners before posting any houses at their site. Therefore, it is necessary that the university site for off-campus housing be updated and made more optimized with new house listings.</p> <p>Furthermore, on-campus housing should reserve a minimum number of rooms that can be made available in case of an emergency.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Making university site scam proof will prevent frauds and by making the off-campus housing site more optimized with regular updates on house listing will generate better results for students in finding a place for themselves. Bringing chances in on-campus housing policy by reserving some rooms for emergencies will help students to access the residential housing in case they were not able to find a house till the very last moment.</p>
<b>Difficulties</b>	<p>For regularly updating off-campus housing sites it would require a constant monitor on housing activity around MAC.</p>
<b>Long-term Implications</b>	<p>It will provide better and secure housing services to students, they wouldn't need to rely on facebook groups and other housing websites which are not trustworthy.</p>
<b>How?</b>	<p>In order to implement this, we will be contacting McMaster Housing Services and Student Accessibility Center. Then</p>

	we will discuss the benefits of this and will try to implement it in the shortest possible time.
<b>Partners</b>	Housing and Conferences Service

<b>Objective 3</b>	Hospitality services should be open until 11pm on Weekdays and should also expand the menu to be more inclusive towards different dietary restrictions.
<b>Description</b>	<p>The current hospitality services lack both quality and variety; possible improvements could be increased hours and an expanded menu. The current menu lacks options for students who have dietary restrictions such as vegetarian/vegan, keto, halal, gluten free etc.</p> <p>In addition to a larger menu, restaurants on campus should be open later on weekdays to accommodate all schedules across campus. For example some lectures will last from 7-10pm leaving students without dinner after lectures. When facilities like the student center are already open 24/7 it makes sense to have late night options. Currently students who live on campus and do not have access to facilities to cook for themselves can only eat at certain times.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	This would create a more inclusive space to learn on campus and accommodate the needs of many students who have dietary restrictions and late night classes.
<b>Difficulties</b>	It would cost money to reallocate resources to have a later and more inclusive access to food on campus.
<b>Long-term Implications</b>	Long term this would require hiring more staff to supplement the later hours of operation. Additionally,

	organizing new meals that could be approved by the McMaster student population.
<b>How?</b>	<p>In order to create change, we must first access the necessary funds in order to make it a reality. In order to gain this we would have to apply to the Student Life Enhancement Fund along with the SRA Project Fund.</p> <p>Secondly, we would need to come in contact with the Director of the McMaster University Student Center to plan the necessary changes and scheduling with staff.</p>
<b>Partners</b>	Hospitality Services MUSC Director

<b>Objective 4</b>	Introducing email services for contacting Office of Registrar
<b>Description</b>	<p>Contacting the office of Registrar is really difficult through the current chat functions since it has a large queue resulting in a long waiting time which sometimes disables students to reach out to the office regarding their issues.</p> <p>Ideally, both options for contacting the registrar's office should be open so that even if the chat function is not working or is taking a lot of time an email could be sent instantly for follow-up.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>This will save a lot of time for students who are constantly waiting in queue and are not able to connect. This will further allow the registrar's office to reply to queries at a desired pace since they can handle multiple emails at a time.</p> <p>Moreover, email could be used in times of an emergency when the chat function is down due to any technical difficulty.</p>
<b>Difficulties</b>	It would require additional personnel to monitor issues that are received on email.

<b>Long-term implications</b>	It would save a lot of time for students who are constantly waiting in line.
<b>How</b>	We will contact the Office of registrar and Student Accessibility Center so that this could be implemented as planned.
<b>Partners</b>	Student Accessibility Service

<b>Objective 5</b>	Improving the Student Engagement in Social Sciences
<b>Description</b>	<p>Many social science students find it is hard to get engaged on campus academically, especially there are difficulties in finding academic advisors for advising, unrecorded lectures, and the short hours of libraries. Currently during the regular school term (not examination season), Mills and Thode Library opens from 7am to 10pm, Health Science Library opens at around 12pm and closes at 7pm. During the examination season, Mills Learning Commons will open until 1am. We hope MacLibraries could extend the hours of operation in the non-examination season to increase the accessibility for all McMaster students.</p> <p>In addition to extending the hours of MacLibraries, students shared their experiences with us about difficulties of finding academic advising with their academic advisor, especially international students or newcomers. Students usually have enrollment inquiries, course inquiries and grades concerns, but unfortunately some students do not know how to ask for help. We hope the academic advising team could increase the advising sessions and make more students aware of their services.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, students rely on the online teaching format and most of the lectures (even tutorials) are recorded, and uploaded to the online platform afterwards. Currently in the post-pandemic era, as classes are moving fully in-person, it would be helpful to continue recording the lectures for all students and support</p>

	students who need accommodations.
<b>Benefits</b>	More students will engage in the academic part of university life, increase accessibility so that there are more chances to study in the library late at night, and there is no location limit that students can listen to lectures wherever they are.
<b>Difficulties</b>	It would require additional staff to operate the library in the late night, it would potentially require technical staff to help with lectures recording and there may be technical issues.
<b>Long-term Implications</b>	It will provide a better learning environment for Social Science students when the barriers are cleared.
<b>How?</b>	We will contact MacLibraries, Social Science Academic Advising team, and Faculty of Social Science's office to facilitate. There may also need Security staff to operate the libraries in the late night.
<b>Partners</b>	MacLibraries Faculty of Social Science Social Science Academic Advising team Security Services

**Long term Planning**

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<b>Overarching Vision 1</b>	Making OSCARplus user friendly
<b>Description</b>	OSCARplus is one of the most useful website for McMaster students. Students could check different events offered by the Student Success Centre and faculty as well as applying for internship opportunities (eligible Social Science students). For international students, they can also find events related to their needs, for example, how to apply for PR residency status after university. Unfortunately, this website does not update and manage very often and there are many issues when using it.
<b>Benefits</b>	Students will sign up for those events offered by the university much more efficiently and more students will be aware of this platform.
<b>Year 1</b>	Reaching out to related department (UTS) and asking for regular maintenance
<b>Year 2</b>	Contact different departments and adding more user friendly events
<b>Year 3</b>	Share this platform to all students by sharing on social media or by posters
<b>Partners</b>	University Technology Services Faculty of Social Sciences Student Success Center International Student Services

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<b>Overarching Vision 2</b>	Proposal to increase internship opportunities for all Social Sciences students.
<b>Description</b>	Landing an internship has always been competitive for students but when the pandemic hit and employers canceled their internship programs or made them virtual, that made it even harder. The Faculty of Social Sciences

	<p>consists of a wide range of subjects with an enormous number of students in it, this alone makes it difficult for a student to secure an internship position, also considering the fact that students from different faculties are also competing for those positions.</p> <p>In addition to this, international students find it even more difficult to secure an internship position because of the limited number of opportunities available at their disposal. University should increase the number of opportunities for all Social Sciences Students because gaining valuable work experience is an essential part of a students learning portfolio.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>An internship allows you to try out various career positions and improve skills learned in school while studying to complete an academic program. Depending on your post-secondary program, completing an internship can also be a requirement for graduation.</p> <p>It provides a hands-on situation within a company to gain real-world work or research experience in your chosen field. Many companies use these internship programs as an opportunity to recruit recent graduates and build their talent pool. Once the organization and intern have gotten to know one another, the company often extends permanent offers to internship candidates they saw potential in for current or future job openings.</p>
<b>Year 1</b>	<p>Pandemic has created a very difficult labor-market situation for everyone, so securing an internship place has become difficult overtime. University is limited to partner with only a few handful of companies and firms that is helpful for only some student placements.</p> <p>Year 1 would look like reaching out to different locations across Ontario to find companies willing to hire interns from Mac (Government, police, child and youth etc.). This process could be something that is worked on from year to year. At first, internship opportunities wont be open to every soc sci student given the student population. But as more and more positions come forward students will be offered a greater opportunity.</p>

<p><b>Year 2</b></p>	<p>As time goes on, the impact of the pandemic lessens (hopefully) strengthening the more employers looking for in person interns. As this opportunity comes we will be there to supplement the demand with more Mac students looking for internships. There will be a carryover from year to year looking for people to join our cause.</p> <p>As this goal starts to take shape we can start to evolve and involve more groups in this goal. Some potential groups that might be interested in helping us achieve this goal could be the Soc-Sci Society or the MPSSA.</p>
<p><b>Year 3</b></p>	<p>As contact with these groups and companies starts to increase, we will start to see results around the third year mark. Hopefully by this point more and more people will begin to see internship opportunities.</p> <p>We cannot guarantee internship opportunities for all students but if we can set achievable goals to reach around 15% of Soc Sci students with internships than it will be promising.</p>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<p>MSU Soc-Sci Society MPSSA Different Hiring</p>