



Memo

From the office of...

SRA Science Caucus

To: Members of Student Representative Assembly
From: Abdullah Masudi, SRA Science Caucus
Subject: Bylaw 12 – First-Year Council
Date: July 13, 2023

Dear respected colleagues of the SRA,

This memo is to implement changes to MSU Bylaw 12 – First Year Council with the purpose of making FYC a stronger representative body within McMaster and the MSU. FYC is a branch of the governance of the MSU that serves to better student life for a large and special demographic of McMaster students. By the first years, and for the first years, this body plans events, raises the voices and concerns of first years to upper university bodies, and advocates for these students in all aspects of university life.

The majority of additions to the bylaw are meant to directly impact the functions of FYC in a way that allows future cohorts to serve their constituents better. Some major changes include the implementation of the First Year Representative Society (FYRS) (Section 6) and attendance requirements for FYC members for the first time (Section 7). FYRS, led by the FYC VC External, is a FYC-affiliated group comprised of first-year representatives of all academic divisions to discuss issues and share ideas with each other related to first year student life. The addition of attendance requirements is to ensure that members of FYC are committed to their roles and fulfil their duties regularly, with a lot of this section paralleled from current MSU legislation. Additionally, there have been changes to the status quo of the MSU and FYC, which have been addressed in this amendment.

This amendment is a result of fruitful collaboration and consultation from several MSU members including the outgoing FYC coordinator, former President, current President, current FYC members, the Internal Governance Committee, the Administrative Services Coordinator, and the Executive Assistant. Below each change is outlined along with a description as to why each change was introduced.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to adoption in SRA 22E, please do not hesitate to reach out to me so we can address them.

Best,
Abdullah Masudi
SRA Science

Section	Current	Proposed	Description/ Reasoning
1.1.1.1	Provide a specific forum for discussion on issues of concern to students living in residence	Provide a specific forum for discussion on issues of concern to students living in residence and residing off-campus	To reflect the representation of students living off campus that FYC strives to provide.
2.2	The First-Year Council shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair External, Vice-Chair Internal, and Vice-Chair Events in addition to representatives from each residence, off-campus students, and commuting students for the purpose of providing an effective consultative body for students in residence;	The First-Year Council shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair External, Vice-Chair Internal, and Vice-Chair Events in addition to representatives from each residence, off-campus students, and commuting students for the purpose of providing an effective consultative body for students in residence first year students .	Removal of mention of commuting students to be more concise, as it would fall under "off-campus" Removal of "students in residence" to replace with "first year student" to reflect the representation of all first year students as opposed to just those in residence.
2.3	The First-Year Council shall host an annual First-Year Feedback forum in partnership with relevant services and departments;	The First-Year Council shall host an annual First-Year Feedback forum survey in partnership with relevant services and departments. FYC shall create and promote an annual Year-End First-Year Feedback survey in partnership with relevant services and departments to; 2.3.1 Gain valuable insight into the demographics of first year students 2.3.2 Assess lacking areas in student life for first year students 2.3.3 Include results of the survey in the transition report for the succeeding FYC Coordinator and Council 2.3.3.1 Results shall be finalized no later than April 30	In the winter semester, FYC developed a year end survey for the reasons stated in 2.1.1-2.1.3. We decided that because of the success of the survey and the constructive feedback we received, it would be beneficial for this survey to become a recurring event hosted by FYC. This data will be very important for future FYC cohorts as well as other MSU bodies to assess trends in student life of first year and act appropriately when necessary.
2.4	The First-Year Council shall work in partnership with the All-Ages Programming Committee, MSU Campus Events and Residence Life to plan at least one major event per term;	The First-Year Council shall work in partnership with one or more of the following: the All-Ages Programming Committee, MSU Campus Events, MSU Spark and Residence Life to plan at least one (1) major event per term that allows the first year student body to participate;	This is to set the expectation that FYC should be working with another group with the intention to develop a larger-scale event (e.g., First Year formal) for first year students by sharing resources and manpower. This is beneficial because it allows both FYC and the other group to plan an event that's scope reaches a larger demographic than would be possible with one group on its own. These events would also be a way to spread awareness about the functions of FYC through exposure. The inclusion of MSU Spark is because of the similar organizational objectives as FYC. It also reflects past collaboration, including First Year Formal. The All Ages Programming committee no longer exists
2.5 2.5.2.1	The FYC Coordinator must review the changes implemented for the FYC structure for the 2022-2023 term during the months of February and March of 2023 with guidance from FYC representatives:	FYC Coordinator FYC must review the changes implemented for the FYC structure for the 2022-2023 and 2023-24 terms during the months of February December 2023 and March of 2024 with guidance from FYC representative coordinator	Changes were made to the structure of FYC for the 2022-2023 year (addition of Residence Chairs). These changes were not assessed by the 2022/23 cohort. This change is to ensure that the coming FYC cohort will be able to assess the effectiveness of the changes for 2022/23

	(...) Changes made for the 2022-2023 term will then be made permanent or removed from the Bylaw by the SRA based on recommendations of the review	(...) Changes made for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 term will then be made permanent or removed from the Bylaw by the SRA based on recommendations of the review.	as well as the changes in this document for 2023/24. As recommended, these changes should be assessed by the Council, rather than the Coordinator, then reviewed by the SRA.
3.4.3	One (1) voting member of the previous year's First-Year Council, selected by the previous year's First-Year Council;	Three (3) voting members of the previous year's FYC selected by the previous year's FYC;	A major topic when discussing shortcomings of FYC for 2022/23 was the lack of external support, especially from experienced upper-year student from the MSU or previous councils. The expansion of the number of previous members as observers will be beneficial for the support of the projects of the sitting FYC, while maintaining their autonomy.
3.4.6	The President or designate of the Society of Off-Campus Students (SOCS);	Remove	SOCS no longer exists
3.5	N/A	In the event of nominations not being filled for Residence Chair past an extended nomination period. 3.5.1 A presently sitting member of the First Year Council shall volunteer to provide a forum for discussion on issues of concern to students living in the pertaining residence	This addition reflects a situation FYC had this year, where residents of Edward hall failing to produce a nomination for Edwards Residence Chair in 2022/23. The proposed change will ensure that any residence will still have a rep even if no residents nominate themselves for the respective Residence Chair position
4.2 – 4.3	4.2 First Year Activity Councillors shall: 4.2.1 Councillors must live in the residence building, live in off-campus housing, or be commuting students which corresponds to the position they were elected for during the fall-winter term; 4.2.2 Shall advocate for, and represent the opinions and concerns of their fellow residents or students; 4.2.3 Shall support programming of residence wide activities and events on behalf of their fellow residents/students; 4.2.4 Be part of the First Year Activity Council; 4.2.4.1 Meet at least once a month, excluding December and April; 4.2.4.2 Fifty percent (50%) of the members of the First Year Council shall constitute quorum at all First Year Council Meetings.	4.2 First Year Activity Residence Chairs Councillors shall: 4.2.1 Councillors must Live in the residence building, live in off-campus housing, or be commuting students which corresponds to the position they were elected for during the fall-winter term; 4.2.2 Shall advocate for, and represent the opinions and concerns of their fellow residents or students; 4.2.3 Shall support programming of off-campus and residence wide activities and eventson behalf of their fellow residents/students; 4.2.4 Be part of the First Year Activity Council; 4.3 All members of First Year Council shall meet at least once twice a month following the finalization of election results excluding December and April the months of December and April-September;	"First Year Activity Council" is a vestigial remnant of the structure of the FYC before the addition of residence chairs as voting members. Section 3.1 has been modified to refer to the roles in section 3.1.1-3.1.3 as roles of the Residence Chair (both on-campus and off-campus) instead of the non-existent Activity Councillors. The change to section 3.2 is to set the expectation that all members of FYC should at least meet twice a month. The previous expectation of once a month does not suffice in allowing FYC to carry out its functions. For most of 2022-23, all members of FYC meet weekly, which was enough for us to progress through our goals and objectives. Due to exams and the low-production nature of December and April-September will be excluded from the twice-a-month requirement.

		4.3.1 During the months of December and April-September, all members shall meet once per month	
5.2.1	The First-Year Council Core Executive shall: 5.2.1 Meet at least twice per month, excluding December and April-August;	5.1.1 Meet at least twice per month once per week, excluding December and April- August September; 5.1.1.1 During the months of the December and April-September, First Year Council Core Executives shall meet twice per month	Same reasoning as above, but for meetings of the Chair and Vice-Chairs
5.3	The FYC Coordinator Shall...	Move to Section 4	As the FYC Coordinator is not a member of the FYC Core Executive, it would make more sense to move this to another section.
5.3.11	N/A	[FYC Coordinator shall] Ensure that First Year Council meetings are scheduled appropriately with regards to member availabilities	Clearly state that the FYC Coordinator is expected to ensure that all members are able to attend any scheduled meetings
5.4.3	N/A	The FYC Chair shall] Monitor and ensure the regular attendance of FYC members at general meetings	Clearly state that the Chair is responsible for ensuring that all FYC members are engaged and reporting to meeting when they are expected to
5.4.3	Maintain regular communication with the Society of Off-Campus Students, Residence Life and other campus groups to discuss pertinent issues affecting first-year students;	Maintain regular communication with the Society of Off-Campus Students, Residence Life and other campus groups to discuss pertinent issues affecting first-year students;	SOCS no longer exists
5.5.3	[The Vice Chair Internal shall] Liaise with, and ensure the participation of first-year representatives from each residence building;	Remove	Is mentioned with the amendment to 5.5.4, no need to repeat
5.5.4	[The Vice-Chair Internal shall] Lead the residence activity council	5.1.1 Lead the Residence Activity Council; Lead all Residence Chairs and to that extent shall: 5.1.1.1 Provide support in fulfilling the duties of the Residence Chairs, 5.1.1.2 Support in the planning and execution of residence-wide and off campus events 5.1.1.3 Ensure the full participation of the Residence Chairs	Residence Activity Council no longer exists. Instead, this section has been modify to refer to the roles that the VC internal had been expected to hold during this year.
5.5.6	Be responsible for keeping attendance records and minutes of all Residence Council meetings;	Remove	Residence Council no longer exists
5.6.2	2. Liaise with, and ensure the participation of, first-year representatives from academic	Remove Addition of:	Refer to the addition of Section 6 – First Year Representative Society below

	<p>division student societies and SOCS;</p> <p>1. Lead a council of first-year representatives from academic division representatives from the McMaster Faculty Societies and SOCS;</p> <p>1. The council shall meet at least once a month, excluding December and April;</p> <p>1. Fifty percent (50%) of first-year representatives from academic division student societies and SOCS shall constitute quorum at these meetings.</p>	<p>Chair meetings of First Year Representative Society (FYRS) as outlined in Section 6:</p>	
5.8	N/A	<p>5.1 In the event of the departure of a First Year Council Core Executive from office prior to the end of the official term of the member, members of the Council not already part of the Core Executives shall nominate themselves for the corresponding role;</p> <p>5.1.1 Candidates shall be elected through a private quorate vote by all voting members of the council</p> <p>5.1.2 The successful candidate shall hold office as a Core Executive until any of the following conditions met;</p> <p>5.1.2.1 Successful re-election of the departed member</p> <p>5.1.2.2 The complete length of the term of the sitting council has elapsed</p> <p>5.1.3 Successful candidates shall not relinquish their previous position upon ascension a Core Executive Position</p>	<p>The addition of this policy is to ensure that FYC has a contingency plan in case a Chair or Vice-Chair leaves their position.</p> <p>By requiring nominees to hold their previous position, we avoid having to fill that role as well.</p>
6	N/A	<p>Addition of Section 6 – First Year Representative Society</p>	<p>In the current bylaw, there is mention of a council of first year representatives from all faculty academic divisions led by the Vice-Chair External of the FYC. Although this is a great initiative, this body does not have any structure to determine how it will work.</p>

			<p>FYRS serves to be a replacement of the aforementioned council with much more detail. This group of students will work together and share their ideas on what issues are present related to first year students, and how to address them. This is similar to what FYC does, but FYRS allows students to bring in their perspectives as members of different academic societies. Additionally, FYRS would work towards promoting integration between different academic divisions and abolish barriers preventing interdisciplinary collaboration.</p> <p>As this would be the pilot term of FYRS, the members of FYRS as well as FYC would review its successes and shortcomings, then recommending changes for the next term.</p>
7	N/A	Addition of Section 7 – Attendance	<p>Currently, there is no legislation on attendance requirements for FYC members for general meetings. The addition of this section provides clear regulation on attendance to ensure that FYC members regularly attend meetings and are held accountable if they forgo their commitment to FYC.</p> <p>Most policies included in this section are parallel to Bylaw 3/A, which includes attendance requirements for members of the SRA.</p> <p>7.4: The number chosen for the maximum number of meetings allowed to be missed was chosen after consulting with various MSU members, including current FYC members on what an appropriate amount would be</p> <p>7.8: In Bylaw 3/A, attendance requirements do not apply to the MSU president and VPs, due to the nature of their employment. Since the FYC Chair and VCs hold volunteer positions, same as Residence Chairs, it would make sense that they are subject to the same requirements as the rest of their colleagues on FYC</p>
Recurring	First Year Council	First Year Council FYC	Formatting