

# YEAR PLAN

MSU SRA Health Sciences

Larissa Long & Matthew Olejarz

2024-2025

June 30, 2024



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## OFFICE OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES CAUCUS LEADERS INTRODUCTION

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Hey there BHSc!

We are incredibly excited for the upcoming year, and for your support as we transition into our new roles. We are incredibly excited to represent you all, and have committed to maintaining an open ear to all your concerns and opinions as we progress through the school year.

Through our participation in various committees, we are committed to representing your interests in many regions of the SRA. Across the two of us, we are part of the Executive Board, Provincial and Federal Affairs committee, the Elections committee, the Finance committee, the EFRT Advisory committee, and the MSU Information Technology Advisory committee. As for a quick introduction to both of us:

I (Larissa) am entering my third year of BHSc in the Child Health Specialization, and decided to run for SRA to see what it was all about. As the BHSS Elections Coordinator for the 2023-2024 school year, I oversaw the internal BHSS elections, and saw the high levels of interest and excellent campaigns that were run for the BHSS executive council this year. This, combined with my interactions with MSU Services was what inspired me to run for the SRA, to attempt to uncover the potential for these two bodies to liaise. I am incredibly excited to work with both BHSS and the MSU in this new capacity, and for this upcoming year.

I (Matthew) am also entering my third year of BHSc in the Core stream. My student life involvement reached a wide breadth last year as a part of the BHSS External, Academic and Second Year Council committees. Through this involvement, I gained a vision for what student life involvement could look like with the appropriate systems and infrastructure in place. This brought me where I am today, having been selected by all of you to advocate on your behalf towards the MSU. I will continue listening to your voices and will strive to deliver an enhanced student life experience for you all this upcoming year.

Together, we hope to enact many of the policies you'll find in this yearplan, and are incredibly excited for the year ahead. We will commit to making ourselves available to you all, and maintaining regular correspondence through BHSS meetings and BHSc events in general. We look forward to working together for the upcoming year!

Best,

**Larissa Long and Matthew Olejarz**

SRA Health Sciences Caucus Co-Leaders 2024-2024

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# GOALS

<b>Objective 1</b>	Ease Research Opportunities for Health Sciences Students
Description	Within the Health Sciences Faculty, research is a heavily sought after co-curricular opportunity with many barriers to entry. We plan to reach out to various professors, and upper year students to facilitate the process of obtaining research opportunities. Whether this comes in the form of improving communication channels between professors and students, or creating a referral program for upper year Health Sciences students to pass on their positions, we are hoping that Health Sciences students can better access research positions in the future.
Benefits	Students will have even more opportunities to seek out research, which will help a majority of students reach their goals. There is a common interest within the Health Sciences Faculty for research involvement, whether related to Health Sciences or not, and creating opportunities in this regard can improve quality of life for students.
Difficulties	Research positions can seem scarce at times, and the barriers are quite high, especially upon first trying to find a position. Many students go through the process of sending “cold emails”, or sending emails to hundreds of professors in the hopes to get a response. However, this process somewhat resembles that of a lottery, and creates a lot of stress and difficulty in receiving these opportunities. This issue will continue to persist even with programs in place to ease these difficulties, but through our initiative, the process should be more manageable.
Long-term implications	Ideally, a system can be created for people to pass their research positions down throughout the years, and help new students get involved as graduates move on to another stage in their careers. Research should be more open towards a greater proportion of the Health Sciences faculty through this initiative.
How?	Preliminary steps will include reaching out to upper year Health Science Students, BHSc office administrators, and BHSc professors to scout the available positions and discover how we can best approach this. Through these consultations, we can develop program to open up the doors towards research
Partners	Upper Year Health Sciences Students  BHSS  Health Sciences Faculty Office  Health Sciences Faculty and Professors

<b>Objective 2</b>	Expand Current Practices Relating to Student Housing
Description	Housing is one of the most challenging aspects of university life that all students face. The affordability and conditions of the housing market in the current day leave minimal choice to the student body in terms of choosing their residence. Through this initiative, we will give Health Sciences students the resources and skills they need to look for appropriate housing, the types of houses/landlords they may encounter, and more.
Benefits	Students will have better living conditions moving forward. Housing is a basic necessity that everyone should have access to. Therefore, if we are able to help in this department, we can improve the living situation for many students.
Difficulties	With the economy and current social state of Hamilton, housing is becoming more and more scarce, and landlords have little incentive to focus on the best interests of their clients. In addition, many scams exist online for housing, which can create uncomfortable financial situations for students. Addressing these concerns for incoming students will be key in housing assistance.
Long-term implications	The hope of this initiative is to ensure students are able to have strong autonomy in their ability to make decisions in their housing prospects. With many students being new to this kind of experience, having these skills be passed on and easily accessible can be hugely beneficial in getting adequate living conditions for the student body.
How?	This can be accomplished through housing conferences and workshops, as well as increasing availability for questions and assistance when students need it. In the future, it may even be beneficial to create a training module that can be reused over the course of different years to get students accustomed to the process.
Partners	BHSS (External)  MSU First Year Council  MSU VP Education

<b>Objective 3</b>	Create Incentives for Course Feedback and Course Evaluations
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Description	Currently, there is little incentive for students to provide feedback to various courses. This occurs for various reasons, including the fact that the student body doesn't really receive updates based on the feedback that was given, and the fact that many of these students will not be participating in these courses again moving forward in their university careers. We propose to create incentives for students to fill out these surveys, potentially even in a monetary form for their efforts.
Benefits	Both the faculty and students will benefit from this initiative as students will feel rewarded for completing this task, and faculty will gain more feedback from the students, which is the goal of the feedback forms being sent out in the first place.
Difficulties	Receiving funding or negotiating with the faculty of Health Sciences for other benefits for students may prove to be difficult. In addition, some course surveys may prove to be somewhat long, increasing the burden presented for students to complete the task at hand.
Long-term implications	Quality of courses should improve for incoming students in the following years. Through the input of the students who have actually completed these courses, the faculty will be able to make adequate improvements to improve the experiences of incoming students. In addition, students will feel more empowered, as their voice will be known to be heard and make a real difference in the experience of incoming students.
How?	The first point we will try to address is what happens with the feedback that is currently given. Currently, students are not aware of the implications that arise from giving courses evaluation surveys. In addition, giving an academic or monetary incentive will be considered to further encourage students to complete the tasks. This may come in the form of a monetarily driven raffle, or a grade boost to certain courses, as is done with various other courses at McMaster.
Partners	<p>BHSc. Office</p> <p>MSU SRA Assembly</p>

<b>Objective 4</b>	Increase Transparency with the Health Sciences Faculty on MSU Affairs
Description	Throughout the year, there are a plethora of major and valuable events that take place within the MSU. The “MSU bubble” is something frequently discussed within the MSU itself, both with regards to its core decision-making body, such as the SRA or BoD, but also extends to elements such as MSU services that put in great effort to assist the student body, while many students go about their academic lives without knowing of the existence of many of these services.
Benefits	Health Sciences students being looped in on the services and proceedings of the MSU is incredibly important, as it allows them to be accurately represented, when they are able to contribute their own opinions to the governing bodies of the student union.
Difficulties	The BHSc program has historically not been very engaged in MSU proceedings, with multiple testimonies from peers that they did not know what the SRA was prior to this year’s election. Building this engagement will be difficult.
Long-term implications	By encouraging the Health Sciences Faculty to engage to a higher caliber within MSU affairs, it increases the opportunities for many things, such as collaborating with BHSS to better serve BHSc students, as well as increasing voter turnout at least for Health Sciences students in MSU relations, such as referenda and presidential elections. While Health Sciences traditionally has very high voter turnout for its internal governing bodies, this does not presently extend to voter turnout within the rest of the school.
How?	This begins with updating the instagram account regularly, providing a channel where students are able to regularly access the proceedings of the MSU and the SRA. Additionally, we will do Instagram takeovers, highlighting different components of the MSU that we are involved in, as well as spotlighting different services periodically. Finally, the SRA members should routinely attend BHSS meetings in order to maintain communications with other BHSc students, and ensure that both societies work in conjunction to support BHSc students.
Partners	BHSS (Bachelor of Health Sciences Society)  MSU Elections Coordinator & Deputy Returning Officer

<b>Objective 5</b>	Support Nutritional Values Within the Health Sciences Environment
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Description	<p>Within BHSc, as well as McMaster at large, there are a plethora of initiatives in the upcoming school year to increase accessibility to healthy food sources for students, as well as support the wellness of students with regards to providing snacks for students on campus during long days. A pre-existing initiative is the wellness cart, run by the BHSS Internal committee, led by the Internal coordinator. Throughout the year, we observed difficulties by the BHSS Internal committee with maintaining the wellness cart, keeping it stocked with a variety of snacks, fidget toys, and other personal health resources. We intend to assist with this initiative, by assisting with the stocking of the snacks within the cart, which tend to be consumed at a rapid rate. This decision was made in consultation with the incoming Internal Coordinator for BHSS.</p> <p>Additionally, another component of supporting nutrition on campus is the accessibility of microwaves within Health Sciences spaces. Some of the more popular study spaces for Health Sciences students include the BHSc lounge, as well as the Health Sciences Library, both located in the same building. Many popular study spaces across campus are serviced by multiple microwaves, the Health Sciences study spaces being an exception. The only microwave available is within the BHSc lounge, one that is not maintained, and has built up quite a bit of residue over its time in the lounge. To aid in the maintenance of this, the SRA members this year will personally clean out the microwave each semester, to ensure that BHSc students have access to sanitary and clean areas to heat up food they bring from home.</p>
Benefits	<p>The benefits to this initiative are improving accessibility to nutritional values in multiple manners for Health Sciences students. These avenues include providing sanitary areas for students to reheat food that is being brought from home / saved for a later time, as well as increasing the volume of snacks available to students who need snacks during their time on campus.</p>
Difficulties	<p>The first component of this initiative will require financial investment from the SRA Health Sciences. While BHSS Internal has its own budget, the Internal committee had difficulty meeting the demand of the BHSc students, and could use help from the SRA.</p>
Long-term implications	<p>This sets a precedent, as well as extends on last year's initiative to provide a wellness cart to BHSc students. The precedent set is one of closer collaboration between BHSS and the SRA for Health Sciences, as traditionally there has been a disconnect in this regard.</p>
How?	<p>The plan of action for this initiative involves supporting the BHSS Internal committee to increase their snack budget, as well as revitalizing the microwave to support the accessibility and cleanliness of microwaves within a frequented Health Sciences study spot.</p>

Partners	BHSS; Internal Coordinator and Internal Committee BHSc office SRA Nursing
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## Long-term planning

Overarching Vision 1	Increase Engagement Between the Health Sciences Faculty and the MSU
Description	Health Sciences has historically been quite disconnected from the MSU, and generally proceedings outside of the program. The vast majority of communications that receive the highest engagement are through social media, and word of mouth communications. By increasing social media engagement, which can trickle down to word of mouth communications, we hope to increase the engagement between the faculty and the MSU's proceedings.
Benefits	This allows BHSc students to take a more active role in their governance, with more students being actively represented by their SRA, setting a precedent for future responsibility of the SRA to coordinate elements between the MSU and the BHSc student body.
Year 1	<p>In the first year, many foundations will need to be built. This involves revitalizing the Instagram page, increasing our social media presence and engagement. This will be done through the aforementioned service highlights, as well as summaries of each SRA meeting in condensed posts that are easy to digest. Moreover, this can also be done through simply making students aware of the SRA account, both by reposting on BHSS stories, SRA member's stories, as well as following all health sciences students on the SRA account.</p> <p>Moreover, in the first year, we will work on initiatives in conjunction with the BHSS, beginning with attending all BHSS meetings to ensure that we are looped in on BHSS communications.</p>
Year 2	In the second year of this plan, the goal will be to liaise the program office with the MSU's proceedings. Traditionally, BHSS has a very unique role in which their communications twitch the BHSc faculty office are incredibly streamlined, with regular meetings set up between the BHSS chair (who attends weekly BHSS meetings), and the Assistant Dean of the BHSc program. The SRA Health Sciences caucus hopes to expand on this relationship by looping an SRA representative into these meetings, although this will be building off of the foundations set upon in Year 1 of this plan, where we develop the relationship between BHSS and the SRA Health Sciences Representatives.
Year 3	Moving into the third year of this plan is maintenance. With the nature of one-year terms for both the BHSS executive council, as well as the SRA Health Sciences committees it is important to do effective transitioning between years to ensure that relationships built within a year are not lost upon the next. Facilitating

	<p>this transfer for once we graduate is something we will look to plant the seeds of this year, but will definitely need to be build upon in future years.</p>
Partners	<p>BHSS Executive Council</p> <p>BHSS Chair</p> <p>BHSc Office (Assistant Dean)</p>

Overarching Vision 2	<p>Collaborate with BHSS Councils to Promote more Events in the Health Sciences Faculty</p>
Description	<p>There are a plethora of events that are run each year through the multiple committees of our student society, BHSS. These committees include the Internal, External, Social, Financial, Academic, Communications, Elections, Welcome Week, as well as Year representatives for each year. Our most recent election had really high engagement levels with many close margins for candidates in various positions, as well as high voter turnout rates. This demonstrates an interest in BHSS, and positions the SRA in a unique position where we are able to extend off of this growing interest in student governance for the coming year. To do this, we hope to promote additional events in collaboration with the BHSS council to engage Health Sciences students further.</p>
Benefits	<p>This allows Health Sciences students to represent themselves, as well as remain engaged in proceedings of both BHSS and the MSU. We believe that by creating this relationship, and organizing events that are run with BHSS and the SRA in conjunction, students can find various different avenues to get involved within the university, specifically in relations to governance, a region where interest has been expressed.</p>
Year 1	<p>Fostering a close relationship between BHSS and the SRA Health Sciences caucus is crucial in the first year of this plan. This involves attending all BHSS meetings, as well as ensuring that BHSS concerns are conversely brought back to the SRA meetings, where ideas are generated. Collaboration can begin with Year councils, which often host many events throughout the year, and by combining forces with the SRA and individual year councils, there is high potential for higher engagement levels.</p>
Year 2	<p>Maintaining this relationship is incredibly important moving forward. This involves extending the event-planning gestures to other committees of BHSS that typically run events, such as the Social, Internal, External, and Academic committees. The key focus for this is the Social committees, which runs the most budget-consuming events of the year, but proportionally have a massive impact on the BHSc environment and community. This plan was made in consultation with one of the incoming 2024-2025 BHSS Social Co-coordinators.</p>

Year 3	Lastly, this event-planning collaboration should aim to extend into the council as a whole, having SRA attend meetings regarding BHSS Finances, BHSS Communications, BHSS Elections <sup>6</sup> as well as partaking in the Chair's updates to the BHSc Office. This can help generate more events for segments of BHSS that do not traditionally host many events, and help generate more discourse. For example, there is high potential for SRA to collaborate with BHSS Elections committee, as the SRA and BHSS elections happen in close proximity in their timelines.
Partners	BHSS Executive Council  BHSS Committees

Overarching Vision 3	Improve Communications Between the Health Sciences Office and the Health Sciences Student Body
Description	In the current state, there is a lot of miscommunication that happens between the BHSc. Faculty and the student body. Whether the items at hand are based on academic inquiries, funding opportunities, or other questions that students may have, there are at times conflicting answers that are given, and sometimes, no communication is delivered at all. We will strive to improve the communication channels between the Health Sciences Faculty and the student body.
Benefits	Being able to have questions answered and have a completely transparent faculty body will help improve the experience of BHSc students. Should they have questions about any issues whatsoever, the students need to have a reliable source of information to refer to and be able to reach out to whenever necessary.
Year 1	Gather feedback on various areas where the student body feels that the BHSc. office can improve their communication channels. We will gather anecdotal evidence for these inquiries and present them to the BHSc. office
Year 2	Develop a plan with the BHSc. office and identify areas where communication can be improved. Following that, various changes based on the feedback will be implemented and observed.
Year 3	Continuation of the initiatives of the last two years. Since the framework will have been in place for the past two years, we can continue working through this system in a quality improvement sense, with a continuous feedback loop between student feedback and changes in administration

Partners	BHSc. Office BHSS
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## GOALS to strive for

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

- Updated instagram account for students to increase transparency
- Introduce the SRA and responsibilities during Welcome Week to the student body
- Reach out to all stakeholders and affiliates about the plans in place for the 2024-2025 academic year
- Create and share a summary post of all completed tasks for the summer to share with the student body
- Establish connections between BHSS and SRA representatives for proceeding meetings

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

- Secure funding for the wellness cart at the BHSc. Office
- Survey Health Sciences students for feedback on various initiatives
- Complete beautification of social media and have regular updates/takeovers scheduled
- Review year plan for feasibility of tasks for the winter 2025 term
- Develop a plan for housing education

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

- Report on the completed initiatives for the 2024-2025 academic year
- Create a feedback form for the Health Sciences faculty
- Establish a clear line of communication for the Health Sciences Office and the SRA Health Sciences Caucus
- Increase engagement between the Health Sciences Faculty and the MSU
- Create a transition report (if needed) and evaluate the progress of long-term goals

## Master Summary

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May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● N/A</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete and submit year plan</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin to clean up social media accounts</li> <li>● Preliminary contact with stakeholders involved in year plan</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalize plans with stakeholders for the 2024-2025 academic year</li> <li>● Share summary post of year plan for social media</li> <li>● Establish proceedings between BHSS and SRA Health Sciences</li> <li>● Plan with Welcome Week Coordinators to promote SRA during Welcome Week</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contact the BHSc. Office for year plans and communication methods</li> <li>● Meet with BHSS</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete Objective 5</li> <li>● Complete beautification of social media for Health Sciences</li> <li>● Establish finances in place for future plans</li> <li>● Send out surveys for Health Sciences students</li> <li>● Meet with BHSS</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalize survey results and disseminate data</li> <li>● Continue promotion of SRA and MSU proceedings through social media</li> <li>● Meet with BHSS</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revise year plan, make necessary adjustments</li> <li>● Meet with stakeholders to revise plans for the Winter term</li> <li>● Meet with BHSS</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Publish Fall 2024 report for the year plan</li> <li>● Collaborate with stakeholders for housing education</li> <li>● Create plans with year councils for new initiatives</li> <li>● Reach out to Health Sciences professors for research involvements</li> <li>● Meet with BHSS</li> </ul>

February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Follow-up with Health Sciences professors on research</li><li>● Reach out to upper year students for housing and research</li><li>● Address student body concerns with Health Sciences office</li><li>● Promote MSU winter events</li><li>● Meet with BHSS</li></ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Present quality improvement plans to Health Sciences office</li><li>● Finalize end of year events with BHSS year councils</li><li>● Complete research promotion initiative</li><li>● Meet with BHSS</li></ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final year plan review and report</li><li>● Final survey for BHSc Students</li></ul>