

YEAR PLAN

Academic Advocacy Coordinator

Lauren Roxburgh

McMaster Science Society

2023-2024

(submitted August 19, 2023)

**MCMASTER
SCIENCE
SOCIETY**



2023-2024 Year Plan

Letter from the Position

Hello MacSci, and welcome to another amazing term of the MSS. My name is Lauren Roxburgh, and I am the Academic Advocacy Coordinator for the 2023/24 term. This will be my first year in this role, and this year marks the beginning of my membership in the MSS. In a few words, my role is to serve as a liaison between you – the students – and the Faculty of Science, namely the offices of the Associate Dean of Science and the Dean of Science. Over the term, I will communicate any feedback MacSci students have regarding academics to the Faculty of Science, as well as create opportunities for networking with faculty members to lessen the divide between professors and students. These goals – set by the previous AAC, Wynter – have seen significant progress in the past year, which I hope to continue.

Last year, the former Academic Advocacy Coordinator, Wynter Sutchy – the current VP Academic – made strides toward increasing transparency, and facilitating easier transitions from Level I to Level II programs. Her novel approach to transparency – by presenting the Survey and Census data reports to the MSS website – helps to show MacSci students how their responses contribute to change in the Faculty. The data reports, which are presented to relevant parties in the Faculty, are now available for students to view and analyze the resultant data trends. By partnering with the 2022-23 Associate Dean of Science, Dr. Steven Bray, these responses have helped to shape the content and format of your learning. In addition, she reflected on the factors which influence students' decision of Level II programs through student-submitted survey responses. Based on her personal experience, she was inspired to ensure equal access to resources and information in order to determine the most appropriate and rewarding academic path.

Something new I hope to bring to this role is a stronger emphasis on representation and equality in the Faculty of Science – specifically in course content, guest lecturers, and research highlights. McMaster is a wonderfully diverse community which represents groups of students from many backgrounds, and who identify with many marginalized groups. It is my aim to increase student response on how they feel represented through their learning, through the research which is featured in class, and through promotion of the MSS online. I will be working alongside the MSS Equity and Inclusion Officer to ensure sensitivity and to effectively collect responses from all MacSci students. I hope to ensure that every student feels represented in every aspect of the Faculty of Science at McMaster, including academics.

Furthermore, I will strive to continue the efforts of AACs from previous years by decreasing the barriers between faculty members and students. Many students express concerns regarding making meaningful connections with professors and other faculty members. This has implications in undergraduate research experience, resume building, and networking. By creating more opportunities for students and faculty to interact and connect on a personal and academic level, students are able to gain exposure in the McMaster Science community. Moreover, professors and research leaders are able to meet promising candidates with common interests which may be assets in their studies.

As the Academic Advocacy Coordinator, I am determined to be a vessel and a liaison for you, the students of McMaster Science, to inflict meaningful change in your academics. I am so excited to represent the students of the Faculty of Science this academic year, and I wish you all success in the coming year.

Lauren Roxburgh
 Academic Advocacy Coordinator
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TIMELINE

Month	Objective/Project/Event/Goals
June	Things to complete: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit communications request for Sciclopedia 2. Participate in MSS training 3. Begin recruiting for Sciclopedia panelists 4. Create registration form to recruit incoming first years for the event
July	Events/Projects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sciclopedia Summer Livestream Things to complete: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit panelists for livestream 2. Compile participant responses to registration, organize questions to be answered live
August	Things to complete: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make reservation at Academic Roundtable venue

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Conference with EDI Officer to create survey questions 3. Format Fall Survey and submit for review by the Associate Dean of Science 4. Submit communications request for Fall Survey
September	<p>Events/Project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fall Survey open period <p>Things to Complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting faculty staff and professors for the Academic Roundtable 2. Compile data from Fall Survey into data report
October	<p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize event details for Academic Roundtable 2. Share Fall Survey data report with Associate Dean of Science
November	<p>Events/Projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Roundtable <p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create finance request for survey raffle prizes
December	<p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin planning for Winter Academic Survey and Science Census 2. Publish data report from Fall Academic Survey to the MSS website
January	<p>Events/Projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MSS Science Census released <p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make final edits to the Science Census
February	<p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft the Winter Academic Survey and brainstorm topics to be included 2. Complete Science Census data report
March	<p>Events/Projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Winter Academic Survey released <p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present MSS Science Census report to AP&PC meeting members, as well as to the Associate Dean of Science

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Publish the Science Census data report to the MSS website 3. Complete Winter Academic Survey report
April	<p>Things to complete:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present Winter Academic Survey findings to AP&PC meeting members and the Associate Dean of Science 2. Publish Winter Academic Survey report to the MSS website 3. Transition to the next Academic Advocacy Coordinator

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: Increase representation in course content	
Description/ Current State	<p>Ensure that all students at McMaster feel represented through the work of their many and diverse communities, in course content, featured research, and MSS social media promotions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently, the course content in the sciences emphasizes the work of scientists in a privileged social position - It is my goal to receive feedback from science students about how they feel represented through their course offerings
Goal	<p>It is my goal to ensure that every MacSci student feels represented through the course offerings. Ideally, they would feel that they can achieve similar goals by highlighting the work of scientists from similar backgrounds and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By creating surveys focusing on representation in the Faculty of Science academics, and by compiling the data collected, I will determine what level of representation the student body feels at the current time - Once the data report is created, the information will be shared with the offices of the Dean of Science and the Associate Dean of Science, as well as with the creators of the McMaster curriculum - In doing so, I hope that McMaster Science students feel a sense of belonging and find aspirations based on the achievements of science professionals from similar backgrounds

	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As an extroverted individual, I love getting to know people and forming lasting connections. In doing so, I believe I can get first-hand accounts of the current state of representation in the curriculum - I am passionate about education and science education. In particular, I am always interested to hear about the advancements being made in my fields of study. I hope to encourage the Faculty to feature the advancements of BIPOC scientists, scientists with disabilities, and scientists who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A challenge I will face is not having first-hand experiences of a lack of representation to share. It will be crucial to ensure that the student body's voices are the sole driver of this objective, including their stories, perspectives, and opinions about diversity, inclusion, and equity at McMaster
Long Term Implications	<p>A stronger sense of belonging and possibility for all MacSci students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The primary aim of attending university is to learn. Therefore, the course offerings should reflect the community that McMaster wishes to foster for all students - By ensuring representation in academics, students will be exposed to the advancements and discoveries made by a diverse network of scientists
Partners	<p>Elisabeth Jonah, MSS Equity and Inclusion Officer equityinclusion@macsci.ca Wynter Sutchy, MSS VP Academic (vpacademic@macsci.ca) Associate Dean of Science Academic, Dr. Rosa Da Silva adeansci@mcmaster.ca</p>

Objective 2: Continue to decrease barriers between faculty and students	
Description/ Current State	<p>I hope to make students feel more comfortable approaching faculty members, asking for help, and making connections to advance their careers and network with scientific professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently, many students experience anxiety approaching professors regarding research opportunities, course content, or interest in their field

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a barrier for students to advance in their careers, and gain experiential learning while in their undergrad
Goal	<p>By facilitating more intimate, extracurricular gatherings for students to engage with faculty, students will hopefully feel more confident and less intimidated to connect with their professors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By extension, these students will be more likely to connect with possible mentors in a field of study which interests them, or gain research positions by making more personal impressions
Long Term Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students with better connections with their faculty may be more engaged in their material - Students with stronger relations to professors may be more likely to obtain undergraduate research roles in a field of study of interest - When more undergraduate students are involved in research and engaged with the faculty, this facilitates a better learning environment where students feel supported and encouraged throughout their academic journey
Partners	<p>MSS VP Academic, Wynter Sutchy (vpacademic@macsci.ca) Associate Dean of Science Academic, Dr. Rosa Da Silva (adeansci@mcmaster.ca)</p>

EVENTS & PROJECTS

Name of Event/Project: Sciclopedia Summer Livestream	
DATE	July 29, 2023
PURPOSE	<p>The Sciclopedia Livestream is a virtual opportunity for incoming first-year MacSci students to ask upper year student panellists questions about university life. Students across all gateway and direct-entry programs register for the event through a form, and submit questions for the upper year students to answer. Questions may be about academics, extracurriculars, residence, housing, university life, and more. Upper year students volunteer their time and provide their advice and experience for information they wish they had known in the first year of university.</p>
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit upper year student panelists internally from the MSS executive team, Sciclones, and Program Societies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a Google Form for interested upper year students to register through - Collect first-year students' questions through a Google Form which will allow them to submit questions and register for the event - Reach out to McMaster Science Undergraduate Recruitment and Education Manager to promote the event via email to the first-year class; encourage participation, preparation for their transition to university - Submit communications request to the Communications Team for promotion - Reach out to panelists, confirm participation - Create Microsoft Teams channel and breakout rooms based on first-year program - Finalize and consolidate all questions from first years into a form for panelists to sign-up and answer - Create event itinerary to distribute to all event volunteers - Attend and record the Livestream to be posted to the MSS Facebook page; allows students to watch if they are unable to attend, or to rewatch and reference
DIFFICULTIES	Engagement with first-year students, and recruitment from all first-year direct-entry and gateway programs. Outreach to first-year students through various platforms. Possible technical difficulties, Wi-Fi interruptions, or unforeseen circumstances leading to panelist absence.
PARTNERS	MSS VP Academic, Wynter Sutchy (vpacademic@macsci.ca) Undergraduate Recruitment and Education Manager, Ben O'Connor (oconnobd@mcmaster.ca) Sciclones Welcome Week Planners (welcomeweek@macsci.ca) Program Society Executives
PROJECTED OUTREACH	~60 participants during the live stream, 300+ views on the recorded video after being posted on the MSS Facebook account.
BUDGET	N/A

Name of Event/Project: Fall Academic Survey	
DATE	September 19, 2023

PURPOSE	This year's Fall Academic Survey aims to assess the current representation climate of McMaster Science.
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the help and advisement of the MSS EDI Officer, create targeted questions about representation, diversity, inclusion, and equity in McMaster Science Academics - Submit communications request for survey promotion - Submit survey questions for review by the Office of the Associate Dean of Science - Release survey via social media platforms and email to McMaster Science students - Consolidate student responses and format data report to be presented on the MSS website - Randomly select raffle winners from survey participants - Submit finance expense request for raffle prizes
DIFFICULTIES	Student outreach and engagement through various streams. Barriers in formulating questions with sensitivity.
PARTNERS	MSS Equity and Inclusion Officer, Elisabeth Jonah (equityinclusion@macsci.ca) MSS Communications Team (vpcomm@macsci.ca) Office of the Associate Dean of Science (adeansci@mcmaster.ca)
PROJECTED OUTREACH	~150 student survey responses.
BUDGET	N/A

Name of Event/Project: Academic Roundtable	
DATE	November 2023 (Tentative)
PURPOSE	The Academic Roundtable allows for a more personal setting in which McMaster Science students may interact and connect with professors and other Faculty members. Students may inquire about academic-centred topics that are of current concern or discussion among the student body. The event encourages students to form connections with Faculty members, thereby increasing their potential for opportunities, and breaking barriers between students and faculty. In addition, students are able to gain advice, perspectives, and mentorship from experienced individuals in academia.
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine an event date that lies in the middle of the semester during a time when students and faculty are less

	<p>busy (i.e., not during exam/midterm periods, avoiding overlap with other faculty events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm the budget for the event - Decide on and confirm the venue space and the catering services provided at the venue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Phoenix will likely be the host venue, due to its central campus location - Fill out the Communications request to promote this event and provide access to students to sign up for the event. - Send out invitations to faculty members and confirm their attendance via email. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faculty that have confirmed their attendance will also be asked to RSVP via a Google Form to ensure they will receive a meal that is included in the event. - Contact MSS and Program Society Executives to recruit volunteers to facilitate conversations at the tables. Once confirmed, provide them with the necessary information to ensure they understand their role in the event. - Promote the event on social media, MSS general meetings, and in-class visits if allowed. - Edit and release feedback forms via Google Forms after the event occurs to both faculty members and students who attended.
DIFFICULTIES	Outreach to interested students and low attendance due to the busy time of year coinciding with mid-term exams. Promotion of the event across the faculty. Capacity of the event venue may be a concern, depending on the response received to primary promotion.
PARTNERS	Faculty of Science professors and faculty members MSS Executives, primarily the Communications Team Program society executives
PROJECTED OUTREACH	~100 students
BUDGET	\$2500 (unconfirmed)

Name of Event/Project: Science Census	
DATE	January 2024 (tentative)

PURPOSE	The annual Science Census aims to collect long-term data on the opinions and concerns of students within the Faculty of Science. This data will be used to identify areas of improvements and will serve as a starting point for new MSS initiatives.
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write and format questions regarding the general state of science academics across the Faculty, as well as the student experience - Submit communications request for survey promotion through social media platforms - Submit a rough draft of survey questions to the Office of the Associate Dean of Science for review and approval - Create and format Google Forms survey - Release survey - Complete raffle draw (on video) - Submit finance expense request for raffle prizes
DIFFICULTIES	Reaching a large audience of science students for the most possible raw data. Obtaining meaningful feedback from students, as the format of the survey is longer than the previous surveys released.
PARTNERS	MSS VP Academic, Wynter Sutchy (vpacademic@macsci.ca) Associate Dean of Science, Dr. Rosa Da Silva (adeansci@mcmaster.ca) MSS Finance and Communications teams Faculty of Science communications
PROJECTED OUTREACH	~200 students
BUDGET	\$125.00

Name of Event/Project: Winter Academic Survey	
DATE	February 2024 (tentative)
PURPOSE	This year's Winter Academic Survey aims to elucidate the student view on barriers to obtaining extracurricular research opportunities.
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create targeted questions about barriers to obtaining undergraduate research positions - Submit communications request for survey promotion - Submit survey questions for review by the Office of the Associate Dean of Science - Release survey via social media platforms and email to McMaster Science students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidate student responses and format data report to be presented on the MSS website - Randomly select raffle winners from survey participants on video - Submit finance expense request for raffle prizes
DIFFICULTIES	Reaching a large audience of science students through various streams. Piquing student interest and receiving adequate engagement for reliable data.
PARTNERS	MSS VP Academic, Wynter Sutchy (vpacademic@macsci.ca) Associate Dean of Science, Rosa Da Silva (adeansci@mcmaster.ca) MSS Communications and Finance teams Faculty of Science Communications team
PROJECTED OUTREACH	~150 student survey responses.
BUDGET	\$0.00