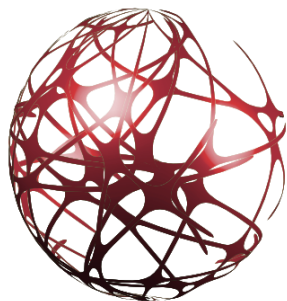


# Annual Operation Report 2015/2016



## SCIENTIST ASSOCIATION AT MAC

### 1 VISION OF SAM

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Our responsibilities are;

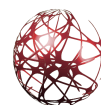
1. Facilitate conversations between graduate students from the Faculty of Science and administration including but not limited to the GSA, CUPE and the office of the Dean.
2. Provide graduate students a communication platform for academic, personal and professional development. The format of these platforms include but not limited to lecture series, workshops and social gatherings.
3. Facilitate networking opportunities for students' future career advancement with McMaster alumni, industry partners, etc.

### 2 REVIEW OF YEAR ONE (2015-2016) AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT

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1. While communication with the Office of the Dean and the GSA were recurrent, communication with CUPE was lacking. Meetings with the Dean (Dr. Robert Baker) and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Dr. Bruce Milliken) were attended by the President and VP Financial and occasionally, were also attended by executive members. FRCs have been present at all GSA executive meetings and have liaised effective communication between SAM and the GSA. Currently, the President is involved in both SGS affiliated group (International Graduate Student Advisory Group) and CUPE (Political Action Committee). More involvement by other executive members with CUPE needs to be encouraged.
2. Whereas some events have been very successful, others lacked participation. The outcome of each event is reviewed under section headings "Successes" and "Needs Improvement".

In terms of communication between SAM Executives and general members, our website works well but can be improved to be more interactive. For example, the TA feedback survey can be made available on our website for personal use by TAs in Science. Given that graduate students receive many emails, indiscriminate email communication is not always effective to reach out to

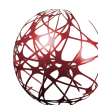


general members as information can get buried under other emails. We will keep the “registered member” list to effectively reach out to those who are more interested. Additionally, to gauge the interests and needs of Science graduate students, executive meetings that discuss the general operation and direction of SAM should be made available to general members. Communication among different departments has been effective at the executive level given that each of the Science department and program are represented. In order to facilitate large-scale communication among different departments, we can facilitate science projects by using the network that SAM can offer as long as ethics issues for participant recruitments are resolved.

3. Two Alumni Socials were organized this year. During the Fall term (November 2015), we invited an alumni from Chemistry (Richard Lee) and an alumni from Geography & Earth Science (Ryan Garnett); during the Winter term (February 2016), we invited an alumni Neuroscience (Brandon Aubie) and Biochemistry/Engineering (Justin Policarpio). Feedback from the attendees was great. The number of participants was small (< 10 students) which allowed for closer interaction with invited alumni; however, we would like to have more participation (~20). To increase participation, we need to consider the timing of the event (i.e. events may see increased participation if it were held during the fall and/or winter reading week or if it were held during the summer term). When subsidizing meals at these events we need to consider what is more cost-effective – subsidizing the students’ entire meal or a certain percentage of the meal.

#### **Successes:**

- Lab Coat Social
  - First event as SAM
  - 56 registered; ~40 attendees
  - Advertisement was done well with enough time, people were also available.
- LaTeX Workshop
  - Well-attended (27 registered); engagement from other faculties (i.e. engineering).
  - Attendees were engaging.
  - Workshop timing (4:30-6:00pm) did not work for some students.
  - Additional LaTeX workshops were requested.
- TA Survey
  - To provide an opportunity where TAs can express their concerns, we started the TA Survey approximately a year ago.
  - Gained support from the Dean and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
  - Still in the process of collecting data
- SPICES Grant Approved for McMaster Open Learning Environment (MOLE)
  - Positive response from executive members; shows the interests from different departments.
  - The project team plans to reach out to all GSA FRCs to gain participation from each faculty.
- Funding Support Approval
  - CUPE Political Action Committee will provide financial support to future Alumni Socials.
  - Annual funding (\$1000) + fund for career/skill oriented events from the Faculty of Science.
- General Operation
  - Regular meetings: monthly meetings with Dean and Associate Dean, monthly meetings with representatives from almost every department and program in the Faculty of Science



## Needs Improvement:

- Alumni Social
  - Great feedback but ~ 10 or less participants
  - Not enough promotion; more time needs to be allocated to set up the event
- Winter Potluck in collaboration with EGS
  - Science participation was little low, timing was not good
- Social media presence
  - Current Twitter followers: 33; There have been 25 tweets since Sept. 2015
  - Facebook page: 87 Likes
  - We need a passionate Communication Officer that ensures SAM has an online presence.
  - Any relevant science news (i.e. Science magazine article) can be tweeted and added to the Facebook page.
- Reliability and commitment of executive members and subcommittees
  - Work overload for certain individuals in the executives
  - Amendment in bylaws (Section 8 Description of Executive Council) hopefully mitigated this issue

## 3 TOP PRIORITIES FOR YEAR TWO (2016-2017)

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1. Maintain the connection we have; within each department, CUPE, GSA, Dean and SGS
2. Focus on events that worked and ensure sufficient time for promotion: Alumni Social for career support, Socials such as Lab Coat Social that facilitates a sense of community among Science graduate students and interdisciplinary Seminar Series for academic development.
3. Execute one major project per year (eg. SPICES, Forward with Integrity).
4. Maintain the source of funding from on campus organizations.

