

YEAR PLAN

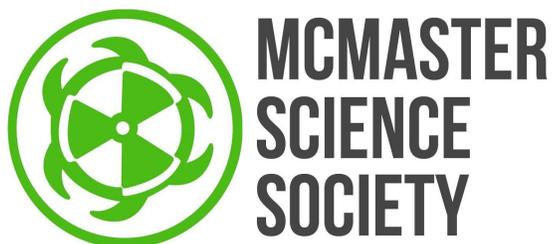
Research and Volunteer Coordinator

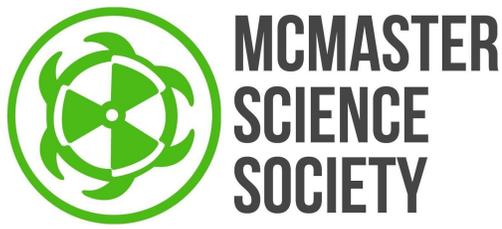
Vanessa Catenacci

McMaster Science Society

2020-2021

(submitted June 11, 2020)





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2020-2021 Year Plan

Letter from the Research and Volunteer Coordinator

Hi hello! My name is Vanessa and I'm so excited to be your Research and Volunteer Coordinator for the year! I'm going into my fourth year of Honours Biochemistry, and over my undergraduate career I've seen so much passion for science within our community! There are many ways you can enrich your experience as an undergraduate student, and I can't wait to help you find the opportunities to explore your passions and extend your undergraduate experience beyond classroom academics.

Last year's coordinator, Kristal Cerga, carried out an incredibly successful research networking event, Symbiosis. Her hard work allowed it to be incredibly successful for the second time around, which is why I am so excited to continue this event going forward. In addition, she worked tirelessly to implement workshops and sessions to equip students with the tools they need for if/when they decide to pursue a research or volunteering position.

Given the uncertainty around our fall term this semester, my goal for this year is to design accessible online events (such as Symbiosis and research workshops) that provide students with key insight into research and how to get involved. Although our year might be a little different, I want to make sure you have access to upper year insight, information on how to apply for research and volunteering opportunities to ask questions.

The McMaster Science Society represents a unique variety of programs and specializations. In keeping with this diversity, my ultimate goal for the year is to provide information and opportunities that holistically include all streams and branches of McMaster Science. Regardless of what program you are in, I will find a way to tailor these opportunities and research information to you!

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, I want to hear them, so please never be afraid to reach out! I'm here to provide as much support as I can, and I'm so honored to be in a position to be able to do so this year.

Vanessa Catenacci

McMaster Science Society Volunteer and Research Coordinator

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**2020-2021 Plan: This plan takes into account the changes that may be necessary this year due to COVID-19

Carrying out Symbiosis	
Description/Current State	Symbiosis is a student-run networking event in research that aims to connect students with upper years and graduate students several topics, without the added stress of making an impression on established faculty/professors. Rather than pushing Symbiosis into second semester, the goal is to hold the event online on a platform accessible to students.
Goal	<p>To expand upon Symbiosis' success, as well as adapt the plan to an online format due to COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin planning logistics in the summer: identify/test an ideal platform to host the event, reach out to faculty departments to identify how to best adapt the event to serve students during pandemic, pick a rough date/time for event ● Review transition reports and comments from the previous coordinator to adequately analyze past cost/logistics of the event and identify suggestions going forward ● Reaching out to more potential partners for the event, outside of student researchers by the end of the summer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CityLab, SCCE, etc. ● Reach out to student volunteers from different programs <p>**COVID-19 Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify a social media platform on which Symbiosis can be held (look into using Discord) ● Identify graduate students/upper year volunteers that would be interested in participating

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide an accessible way for students to access the online platform and connect with a thesis student in their program of interest so they can ask questions/advice
Barriers to Success	<p>Lack of student interest/COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students may not be considering research placements/opportunities so early in the school year ● If timing of event is close to midterms, students will likely opt to prioritize studying ● Students may not be as engaged with the online platform and/or confused by the set up <p>Online platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finding an online platform with breakout rooms and where students can move from room to room is difficult and ● major concern is that the platform that is chosen also has to be accessible to students/volunteers: Zoom/discord is ideal because many people already have those
How to overcome barriers	<p>Advertise event specifically towards needs of each class of science students, with the help of the Communications Team and VP External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First years: exposure to research ● Second years: opening up research opportunities (i.e. practicums, research placements, etc.) ● Third years: event provides insight into future thesis projects ● Fourth years: event allows for relaxed environment to discuss their own research, or explore research areas of interest <p>Identify feasible online platform to run</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore use of Discord, which has the ability for students to choose what groups they want to be in themselves ● Can have upper year volunteers manage their own breakout room and students can either hop from room

	<p>to room themselves or be rotated through in 15 min intervals</p> <p>Registering for the event in advance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since it's hard to plan a networking event online, students may be asked to register for the event in advance, as well as to list the people they are interested in talking to ● Students that sign up for the event can be emailed a list of volunteers and their research positions. This will help them to navigate what rooms they want to visit and who they want to speak to. ● Volunteers will be each placed in their own breakout room, and can entertain questions from students <p>Timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 month before event send out promo + gather volunteers ● Aim to have promo started 1.5-2 weeks before the event begins ● Prepare a list of upper year volunteers and their research positions to send to students 2 days before the event. This will help them to navigate the platform and pick which breakout room they want to be in ● In the same email, provide students with the information to attend the event (ex: event link). This information can also be posted on FB pages so people can join last minute even if they did not sign up.
<p>Long Term Implications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening connections between science students and researchers ● Encouraging excitement towards involvement in research ● Exposure for labs and research venues on campus/in Hamilton

Partners	<p>Randy Su VP External vpexternal@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Nathalie Pulla Abasto VP Communications vpcomm@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Tanvi Patel VP Sponsorship and Fundraising sponsorshipandfundraising@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Katheryne Stewart steak17@mcmaster.ca Career Development and Relationship Manager, SCCE</p> <p>CityLab, Innovation Park, and other organizations Science faculty and student researchers</p>
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Research Workshops	
Description/Current State	<p>Students who decide to pursue a position in research may find that the lab or position they're applying to requires specific skills that they do not possess yet. Ongoing research workshops will hopefully be able to provide these skills (technical skills, soft skills, or otherwise) to students to allow their applications to stand out and be more competitive.</p>

<p>Goal</p>	<p>Host two workshops per semester to provide students with skills/information needed to obtain a research position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will provide students with opportunities to accrue specific skills that labs/research positions look for ● Will invite student researchers to host Q&A sessions with students to provide advice on how to approach obtaining a research position ● Work on being able to podcast these sessions so that they are available online. This can be done either by getting student permission to record the session if they are using video, or by just having the presenter record their screen/powerpoint as they talk and not including the Q&A period in the recording. <p>First workshop: Scientific Writing workshop (September)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since many thesis students will be writing literature reviews, have a writing workshop on how to conduct effective scientific writing ● Contact SCCE and the Student Writing center via email to try to set up a workshop in September ● Contact Dr. MacDonald (Associate Professor of the Biochemistry department) who runs a scientific writing course to see if she would be interested in running a workshop ● Connect with other profs who run scientific writing courses via email to see if they would be interested in hosting a writing workshop ● Identify a platform to host this on (Facebook live, Zoom) <p>Second workshop: Research 1A03 workshop (November)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation given by SCCE and a Q&A panel session with upper year thesis students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussing how to identify what research you are interested in, email professors, and getting advice from upper-year thesis students ○ Identify a platform to host this event on: Zoom and/or live Facebook podcast <p>Third Workshop: Summer research opportunities workshop (January)</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of how to find a summer research job and internal/external research scholarships ● Also discussing non-research jobs in science for the summer and volunteering opportunities within Hamilton community ● Based on COVID-19 situation, this may be held in person or online <p>Fourth workshop: Lab Skills workshop-Computational/Bioinformatics (March)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with professors and/or course coordinators to deliver a computational skills workshop: Purposeful use of databases, Conducting meta analysis, Data/statistical tools, Coding resources ● While many students have exposure to first year introductory labs, introduction to software, statistics and computational techniques are important skills that can provide them with an advantage when applying to <p>Based on COVID-19 situation, this may be held in person or online labs</p>
<p>Barriers to Success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Timing events close to midterms of popular classes may affect the overall turnout ● COVID-19 may affect student engagement

<p>How?</p>	<p>Begin contacting with SCCE in August to see if they are interested in collaborating on research workshops</p> <p>Connect with undergraduate program advisors and program societies in summer</p> <p>Reach out to graduate students/thesis students involved in research that would be interested in participating in a Q&A panel about how to get involved in research/email professors</p> <p>Connect with professors interested in holding a computational/bioinformatics workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email professors currently running statistics/bioinformatics courses ● Contact graduate students within computational/bioinformatic labs to see if they would be interested in hosting an event <p>Mindfully planning for events around students' schedules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being aware of busier seasons during the school year ● Be aware of barriers to accessibility and communication due to COVID-19 ● Many research positions tend to open up in late winter/early spring, important to plan timing of events accordingly ● Ensuring research workshops are providing key skills that labs may look for prior to application deadlines to help students be competitive
<p>Long Term Implications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fosters positive relationships between faculty/professors/researchers and science students

Partners	<p>Randy Su VP External vpexternal@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Katheryne Stewart steak17@mcmaster.ca Career Development and Relationship Manager, SCCE</p> <p>Nathalie Pulla Abasto VP Communications vpcomm@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Faculty of Science Undergraduate Program Advisors</p>
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Monthly Newsletter - Research and Volunteering Section	
Description/Current State	Work with the VP External to create a research section in the MSS newsletter to provide students with tips on how to apply for research, deadline for external research programs, etc.
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinating with VP External in summer to identify the best formatting way to incorporate research opportunities into the newsletter
Barriers to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of student interest
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two possible ways of incorporating research opportunities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the "What's happening this month" section, RVC will attempt to include information on MSS research workshops, external research application deadlines, different external science conferences 2. Another section of the newsletter can be created to highlight/list upcoming research workshops, application deadlines and science opportunities. This could be titled "Getting Involved in Science at Mac"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can also include the RVC email so students can reach out if they have questions
Long Term Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging excitement towards involvement in research - Providing a source for new opportunities at Mac
Partners	<p>Randy Su VP External vpexternal@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p> <p>Nathalie Pulla Abasto VP Communications vpcomm@mcmastersciencesociety.com</p>

EVENTS & PROJECTS

Symbiosis	
DATE	Mid October
PURPOSE	Networking opportunity for students interested in research.
PROCEDURE	This event will be held online. Fourth year students will provide information about their research projects. External partners can also attend, to provide new insight/potential opportunities beyond just the McMaster research community.
DIFFICULTIES	Finding speakers, ensuring successful turnout, adapting to online platforms
PARTNERS	Thesis students/graduate students, SCCE, CityLab, MSS executive, volunteers
PROJECTED OUTREACH	200 total students in attendance, including attendees and presenters

BUDGET	00.00 ***Look into Zoom platform cost ***
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Research Workshops	
DATE	September, November, January, March
PURPOSE	Provide skills and tools needed to successfully pursue a position in research.
PROCEDURE	Workshops help twice a semester. Students from all years will be welcome to partake, and faculty/researchers will host workshop lessons that will allow a student's application to be more competitive and compelling.
DIFFICULTIES	Finding suitable speakers, securing willing faculty to host workshops, ensuring successful turnout
PARTNERS	Science faculty, undergraduate program advisors, SCCE, VP external
PROJECTED OUTREACH	50 per workshop
BUDGET	00.00

MSS Newsletter- Research Incorporation	
DATE	Monthly
PURPOSE	Work with VP External to incorporate the research section into the current newsletter.

PROCEDURE	VP External currently has an ongoing MSS Newsletter. Will be coordinating over the summer to identify ways to incorporate research opportunities and events into the newsletter.
DIFFICULTIES	Getting students to engage with the newsletter, ensuring timely release of newsletter each month.
PARTNERS	VP External
PROJECTED OUTREACH	2000/month
BUDGET	00.00

GOALS TO STRIVE FOR

5 things that you wish to have prepared for the beginning of September:

1. Contact SCCE and faculty for research workshops
2. Have contacted program advisors to ask what students from their program could benefit from
3. Decide themes for each individual research workshop
4. Complete logistics for Symbiosis
5. Coordinate with VP external on monthly newsletter

5 things to be completed during the fall term (1st):

1. Host first research workshop
2. Symbiosis!
3. Host second research workshop
4. Work on research section of monthly newsletter with VP external
5. Fall progress report

5 things to be completed during the winter term (2nd):

1. Contact professors about arranging computational/bioinformatics research workshop
2. Hold third research workshop
3. Hold fourth research workshop
4. Work on research section of monthly newsletter with VP
5. Create transparent transition report (outlining problems, successes, etc.).

TIMELINE

Month	Objective/Project/Event/Goals
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completing year-plan and finalizing budget.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach out to faculty advisors, and partners in the community that may be interested in participating in Symbiosis or workshops. - Work with VP external to coordinate efforts on a research section of MSS newsletter
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logistics planning for workshops and Symbiosis. - Reach out to student writing center and/or faculty that may run scientific writing courses about holding a scientific writing workshop
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host first workshop at the end of September; - set Symbiosis event date & finalize logistics - Reach out to volunteers for Symbiosis (3 weeks before event) - Monthly newsletter - Reach out to SCCE about hosting research 1A03
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach out to VP Comms, Webmaster, Graphic Designer and Social Media Coordinator to advertise registration for symbiosis (2 weeks before the event) - The week before the event send students their networking schedule and Zoom link - Symbiosis in late October - Monthly newsletter
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host Research 1A03 workshop with SCCE - Monthly newsletter

December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-year transition report completed - Monthly newsletter
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host third research workshop on external research deadlines, summer research funding at Mac and summer job search - Reach out to faculty professors about hosting a computational/bioinformatics research workshop in March - Monthly newsletter
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly newsletter
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host bioinformatics/computational skills workshop - Monthly newsletter
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete transition report