

Watching what's happening on SASS and the SRA, I'm Adeola, the SRA observer and you're listening to SASSwatch

Welcome to the September podcast of what is hopefully an 8-part series this year. The following four parts are what I hope ends up as the break down of the segments.

Need to Know: comprised of super basic info, thats super important

Get to Know: meeting and talking with someone from SASS, maybe even the SRA

Get in the Know: what's happening on the SRA from my de-condensed notes

Know More: learn something new related to SASS or the SRA

The timestamp of each part will be listed in the transcript if you want to jump to a specific point. If not, let's get into it:

NEED TO KNOW - 1:00

GET TO KNOW - 3:15

GET IN THE KNOW - 6:30

KNOW MORE - 10:45

NEED TO KNOW

What is SASS?

SASS or Society of Arts and Science Students is YOU. Every person enrolled in the Arts & Science program at Mac is a member of SASS. Congrats! Now when we say SASS Executive, or SASSEX - that's a little different. These are elected members from all of ArtSci who do everything from planning events to advocacy and support for you.

Imagine in high school when you had a HS Student Council with the pres, secretary, finance, spirit coordinators and such. That's SASSEX, just instead of representing grades from 9-12, we represent ArtScis from first to fourth year.

Some SASS roles are pretty obvious, but some are a little less intuitive. Like mine, which is SRA observer. I'm a member of SASSEX, but I bridge the gap between SASS and the SRA by doing things like office hours or this swanky podcast. We've got Program Advisors providing input on the ArtSci program itself, whether it be issues with classes, combinations, attracting incoming students or more. There's one more role I bet you haven't heard of, so you'll have to wait until "Get to Know" for that!

What is the SRA?

The SRA or Student Representative Association is the highest governing body of the MSU, responsible for as detailed *representing* students in things like presenting and addressing student concerns or lobbying the University to improve student life (if they don't go in circles with political jargon). What's the MSU? It's the McMaster Student Union. So back to the high school reference, the MSU is like the university wide Stud. Co with numerous events and resources. The SRA is one section of that.

The SRA has proportional representation from each faculty, meaning that large faculties get more seats and smaller faculties get less. That's why ArtSci has 1 member. They have bi-weekly meetings (live streamed on Facebook) on Sunday in Gilmour Hall. Do you know who's allowed at these meetings? YOU, without invitation or reservation. They release the agenda for the meeting the Wednesday before, so if you check it out and see something that concerns/interests you - feel free to show up!

CONCLUSION: I hope you understand a little bit more about Student Politics that directly concern you!

GET TO KNOW

Today I'm pleased to have Rachel Murgel, a second-year ArtSci join is. Rachel is the Senate Observer! Oh yes, much like in Ottawa, or even better in Star Wars, McMaster has its own Senate and one of the roles on SASSex is Senate Observer.

So Rachel, what does your role entail?

Why'd you want to do this role?

What's the spiciest thing you've heard on the Senate so far?

What do you think could be changed on the Senate?

What are you looking forward to this year in general?

Thank you! (applause)

GET IN THE KNOW

Well we've had two meetings and much has happened.

At the first meeting (19F), it was mainly opening, closing adding removing and voting people onto seats on MSU committees that will work through-out the year. ArtSci gave our year report which you can check on the new SASS web.

Key notes from the Prez was that ClubsFest is getting TOO big and the Clubs Administrator role wasn't meant to be an event planning role - which it's turning into. He's looking into that for next year so there isn't too much stress or a massive planning fail. One of Josh's presidential points of election (more study space in MUSC) was delayed (hadn't gotten a chance to talk to Student Services Committee). Two more class renovations (like the one in TSH) on their way based on surveys taken last year. A uni that listens? It's more likely than you think!

Additionally our VP Ed, Hackett spoke on his plans to mobilize ads for the federal election so look out for that!

During the info period, SRA member Williams spoke up about the elephant in the room - CSSA. This was taken up during the next meeting (19G) as some SRA members brought forth a deratification motion for that club - Chinese Students and Scholar Association.

At the 19G meeting, SRA member Seneca brought up tentative accessibility survey. The end goal is to team up with Macess for a general review of how the MSU and McMaster does with accessibility (hint: not that hot), so that is something to look forward to.

Now for the meaty stuff. If you are not aware, the SRA is responsible for ratifying clubs. Being from Mac and having so many clubs, its an arduous process. Unfortunately, maybe a process in need of review. The SRA ratified a club this summer- The Dominion Society, formerly known as the MacDonald Society which was found to have pretty close ties with white Canadian nationalists active today. The Prez, in an emergency vote, deratified the club and all that info can be found on the Sil.

The CSSA is also a club with problematic history.

Background info: Uyghur (wee-goor) people are a Turkish ethnic group that the CCP is against. Investigal journalists have found that indoctrination is happening in "re education camps" that the Turkish people are detained in. 1.5 million people here forced to speak Mandarin and recite CCP lines.

MMPJ Event where a formerly detained Muslim was speaking out against these crimes. This event was recorded by CSSA members (unknown) and sent to the Chinese Consulate in Toronto. This put Mac in international headlines. If the CC in Toronto, reported to the CCP in China, this could endanger Chinese students or activists at Mac with family back home.

What was the SRA's response? Nothing lol. And that's where we ended up here. The motion brought forth at the meeting let SRA members give evidence to 1) CSSA's links to CCP, 2) CSSA Responses to SRA Questions in July and 3) Comparing and Contrasting responses to the Dominion Society and CSSA.

After about 1 h of semantics of varying necessity and a constituent's testimony, the CSSA was deratified for violating Section 5.1.3 of a class C offense according to MSU policy. Seneca motions to release an official SRA report on this, to detailing where students using CSSA as a resource can go and to remain transparent. Discussion is needed so a motion to open committee of a whole is brought forth, but fails (to be fair, the meeting had run two hours longer).

Now you are in the know.

KNOW MORE

So You've Tuned into an SRA Meeting and can't understand SH-QUAT

Some of the words I used: motion, constituents, ratify aren't common vocabulary. If you've tuned into an SRA meeting before, it gets filled with jargon.

SRA works on Robert's Rules of Order. It's the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making.

Here are the basic elements of Robert's Rules:

- Motion: To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member (saying "I move that.....") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.")
 - In the SRA, the motions are outlined in the agenda, which the Speaker will say "Moved by blank, seconded by blank" and then say what the motion or next piece of business is. Then the SRA member who wants to

take over that motion in a sense will lift their placard with their name to move it and another person must do the same to second it

- In the SRA, the Speaker will also ask the person who does so to speak on why they moved it. Our VP know for just saying "Let's get er done!"
- A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws.)
- Amend: This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted
- Table: To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.

There are also times when you're allowed to interrupt! Points, I like to call them,

- a) Say you're trying to listen to an SRA member talk about their next resume builder initiative, but someone is snacking so loud on their chips. You're allowed to interrupt them, and say
 - i) "Point of privilege" to ask them to shut the hell up -Complain about noise, room temp., etc
 - ii) "Point of information" - Request information
 - iii) Point of order" - Object to procedure or personal affront (meeting is not following proper rules.

Those three motions + the points, as well as adjourning the meeting, are the main motions that you'll hear at an SRA meeting. Hope the next time you tune in is a little more delightful!

We've had a pretty hefty segment today, so thanks for sticking around! Tune in for the October podcast! Toodles!