

# Vice-President (University Affairs) Report to General Assembly



Chloe Rourke

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# Portfolio Structure

## University and Academic Affairs

- Senate
- Admin Relations
- Faculty VP Academic Relations

## Policy, Research & Advocacy

- Policy-Writing & Revisions
- Society Research projects
- Supporting Student Advocacy

## Mental Health

- Student Services
- Mental Health Policy & 5 Year Plan

## Equity

- Indigenous Affairs
- Equity Concerns

## Libraries

- Library improvement fund
- Library relations



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# University & Academic Affairs

## Senate

- Allocated over 85 seats for student representation on [University and Senate Committees](#)
- Student Senators have submitted questions to Senate on the topics of **physical accessibility**, the **refugee crisis**, the **truth and reconciliation report**, McGill's **alleged violation of Bill 100**, and **international tuition deregulation**
- Student Senators have also been pushing for [Fall Reading Break](#) based on a proposal drafted from a McGill survey of approximately 4,000 undergraduates.



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# University & Academic Affairs

## Admin Relations

- List of SSMU's demands for upcoming **Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) Negotiations** were sent to the Deputy Provost Student Life & Learning. Some of the key points included:
  - Use of McGill name for student groups
  - Permission for the SRC to cater on campus
  - Distribution of the Yearbook at more locations on campus, including convocation

In summary, the goal is to negotiate an MoA that does not unduly burden SSMU and does not unnecessarily restrict SSMU's activities.

- Attended the **Joint Board-Senate Meeting** on Creating a "Smart Campus" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and bi-weekly "Future of the University" discussions
- Meetings with Principal, Provost, Deputy Provost of Student Life & Learning, Student Services, Enrolment Services, Associate Provost of Policies Procedure and Equity and various other offices within the administration regarding a myriad of student concerns



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# University & Academic Affairs

## Faculty VP Academics Relations

- Re-Established the **McGill Academic Round Table (MART)**, meetings with VP Academics from all faculty associations
- Hosted first-ever **Student Academic Summit** to foster stronger relations between VP Academics of departmental and faculty associations
- Presentation topics included accessibility and universal design for learning, teaching & learning services, open source textbooks, student academic rights and processes of change within the University
- Student Senators also attend their Faculty Association meetings and regularly report on activities of the University



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# Policy, Research & Advocacy



## Policy-Writing & Revisions

- Working with the **Sexual Assault Policy** Working Group to consult and revise the policy to incorporate intersectionality with the goal of bringing the policy to Senate in the winter semester
  - Meeting with Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures, Equity) and the Harm Reduction Liaison Officer to examine current recourse measures and their issues
- A **Subcommittee on Student Assessment** was struck to research best assessment practices and will be used to revise the University Student Assessment Policy
- Advocating for greater accountability and implementation of **McGill's Employment Equity Policy** including resources for department chairs and setting targets

## Society Research Projects

- Working on wrapping up three research projects from last year”
  - **Alternative History Timeline**: research on alternative narratives that are typically excluded in the re-telling of McGill's history
  - **Equitable Hiring**: critically examining the implementation of McGill's Employment Equity Policy and comparing practices to those of peer institutions
  - **Indigenizing the Academy**: investigating current efforts to support Indigenous students at McGill and compare to peer institutions as well as overall Indigenization of the academy
- Commissioned minor research projects on interdisciplinary programs, structure of other student unions and research to support SSMU during the MoA negotiations



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# Policy, Research & Advocacy



## Student Advocacy

- Provided training to all Senators and University Committee representatives
- Will also be hosting a “Navigating McGill’s Organizational Structure: Strategies for Student Advocacy” training for all students
- Working to revive the Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee (PARC)
  - PARC is an impartial resource to students wishing to create change on campus. PARC assists students in navigating University structures and in preparing research necessary to support their advocacy goals.
- Created a University Affairs Committee to increase engagement and outreach of the University Affairs portfolio

## Future Projects

- **Know Your Rights campaign** so that students are more aware of their academic rights
- Lobbying for increased use of **Open Educational Resources** (including open source textbooks)



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# Mental Health



## Student Services

- Student Services is undergoing an administrative unit review. Recommendations will come out of this review that will guide the future direction of Student Services
- Do you find it difficult to navigate the Brown Building? Are there needs on campus that are not being met? Should there be a greater focus on upstream service provision? Complete this [consultative survey](#) or email me at [ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca)
- If you have feedback for a particular service contact the student reps on the [advisory boards](#) or email René Iwo at [uasecgen@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:uasecgen@ssmu.mcgill.ca)

## Mental Health Policy & 5 Year Plan

- Organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Mental Health Awareness Week**
  - Focus on creating educational and informative promotional materials as well as providing a diversity of programming (over 20 separate events)
- Working with VP Clubs & Services to design a feasible plan for a **Mental Health Space** in our building
- Meeting frequently with Mental Health Services and Healthy McGill to improve **upstream services** and preventative measures as well as looking at new ways to address high demands
- SSMU and Mental Health Services will be launching a **“Happy Lights” Lending program** which will allow students to rent lamps clinically-proven to treat Seasonal Effective Disorder for up to 2 weeks with a \$20 deposit from the SSMU office
- Planning a University-wide **Mental Health Open Forum** for next semester



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## Oct. 15 | Thursday

LEAVE YOUR MARK with paint!  
Y-Intersection, 12:30-15:30

How Do I Learn Best? \*  
Room 4300 Brown Building, 14:00-15:30

## Oct. 16 | Friday

Emotional First Aid Kit  
Madelaine Parent SSMU Building, 12:30-13:30

How To Support Someone With a Mental Illness  
Madelaine Parent SSMU Building, 16:00-17:00

Mental Space Coffee House  
ECOLE, 20:00-22:00

## Oct. 18 | Sunday

Zumba Class  
Aerobics Room McGill Sports Complex,  
12:00-12:55



McGill  
**Mental  
Health  
Hub**

[www.mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://www.mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)

@

## embrace your mind.

*Everyone's mind works differently. Living with mental illness can be challenging, but it's still possible to thrive and be healthy. Respect and celebrate neurodiversity in yourself and others.*



[mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)

## running on empty?

*Chronic stress, not sleeping or eating well can result in burn out. It's okay to take a step back and ask for help.*



[mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)

## how do you find balance?

*Student life includes a lot of juggling. There are workshops and resources to help navigate a heavy workload and a healthy lifestyle.*



[mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)

## anxiety can be debilitating.

*Many students live with mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. You're not alone - support is available.*



[mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)

# Equity



## Indigenous Affairs

- SSMU is hiring our first-ever Indigenous Affairs Coordinator to chair the Indigenous Affairs Committee, liaise with campus and community groups and spearhead a Reconciliation campaign in March
- Committee will also be drafting a policy to institutionalize advocacy and solidarity initiatives including the Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

## #ConsentMcGill

- Hosted a Gerts Trivia night, tabling and a panel event on intersectionality



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# Equity



## Equity Complaints & Concerns

- Improving the equity complaint procedures by promoting informal consultation with SSMU Equity and clearing communicating to a claimant when they are triggering the formalized complaint procedure
- Supported MUS and WUSC McGill in addressing equity concerns raised regarding the Froshafari theme and the “WUSC McGill Info Session” (previously titled “Mock Refugee Camp at Y-intersection”)

## Goals & Future Projects

- Expand the diversity of equity programming to approach equity in imaginative ways using art, humour and music in addition to traditional programming such as workshops
- Increase partnerships with student groups on campus
- Work with Office for Students with Disabilities to promote accessibility and Universal Design for Learning on campus and in classrooms
- Encourage critical perspectives and increased dialogue on campus through social media and sharing of social media and articles



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# Libraries



## Library Relations

- Law Library Access during exams
  - All students will have access to the Law Library during exam period during extended hours and on weekend day
- McIntyre Library renovations
- Fiat Lux “Let there be Light”: The [Library Master Plan](#) for the Redpath and McLennan Library

## Library Improvement Fund

- VP University Affairs and Library Improvement Fund (LIF) Coordinator liaise with McGill libraries
- The LIF Coordinator oversees the distribution of \$650,000 in funds to improve library spaces for student use. Past projects include extended hours, Redpath washroom renovations, the ‘fishbowl’ and opening the Red Path doors (just kidding)
- Students can submit an application to the LIF Committee for consideration



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## VP Internal Delegation

- **Redesigning SSMU's website:** released a [survey](#) to gather student feedback to guide the information that is posted on the website and how it will be reorganized
  - Fun fact: Most users use the website for information on clubs and services
- **Old McGill Yearbook Fee:** decided to postpone the fee levy to next semester in order to obtain results from the plebiscite question

## Internal SSMU tasks

- Greatly improving the **archiving and institutional memory** of the University Affairs portfolio, particularly with respect to University and Senate Committees and HR processes
- Improved outreach of the University Affairs portfolio through new [UA Facebook Page](#) launched two weeks ago
  - 3,294 post reach this week!
- Working on finishing a work plan that will be made public and creating a SSMU University Affairs website that will include information on all parts of my portfolio



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## ...or Senators & Student Staff!

## Questions? Contact me...

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by appointment

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**Student Senators:** [senators@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:senators@ssmu.mcgill.ca)

See full list of [Student Senators](#)

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