



Students' Society of McGill University
Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs)
Bureau du Vice-président (affaires externes)

VP External's Report to Legislative Council

September 17th, 2015

It has been an exhilarating whirlwind of a summer with no shortage of things to do. I'm incredibly happy in this position and so excited to share the work I've been doing with you all! This report aims to be an overview of the summer as well as a glimpse into what is coming next for the external portfolio.

Personal

I cannot wait to start this year with all of you! Thank-you for all of your positive energy and hard work during council retreat; I know that we threw a lot of information at you but I trust that you will all feel comfortable in your roles very soon. I would like to apologize for my lack of cat costume this meeting; if you feel strongly about it please voice these concerns at my **office hours**: Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9:30 am till 11:00 am, or by appointment.

External Affairs

Student Federations

- After [the collapse of the FEUQ](#), over a dozen unaffiliated student organizations such as SSMU, CSU, and FAECUM got together to discuss problems that occurred with the FEUQ and how to move forward
- An initial meeting in April resulted in two different groups who decided to move forward independently. A few student associations, notably SSMU, CSU, PGSS, FEUS, AELIES, and AGE UQAT
- These two new associations were known for a while as PPME and Vision Commune

[AVEQ \(Association for the Voice of Education in Quebec/ L'Association pour la Voix Étudiante au Québec\)](#)

- Formerly known as Vision Commune
- Formed by four initial student associations who felt that the UEQ was recreating the FEUQ ([see their open letter here](#))
- Released an [open letter of support](#) for the creation process with CSU and PGSS VP Externals
- Progress
 - Chantier #1 (May 16th -17th): Defined the mission, vision and values of the association, started to arrange working structures
 - Chantier #2 (June 20th-21st): Created structures for the executive committee, permanent commissions, and voting methods
 - Chantier #3 (August 8th-9th): Developed standing regulations, initial policies, and staff positions
- Decisions
 - One association – one vote
 - 6 person executive committee
- Next steps
 - Hiring a part time general coordinator and communications coordinator right now
 - Next meeting September 26th-28th to discuss finance and fees, finalize elections politics, and talk about affiliations



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UEQ (Union Étudiant du Québec/ Student Union of Quebec)

- Formerly known as Projet pour la mouvement étudiante
- Presented a contract in late April and many associations signed and gave money immediately, leaving SSMU to act as an observer for the rest of the summer
- Progress
 - Elections #1 (May 2nd): Elected four executives to do organizing work over the summer (paid). One executive resigned in mid-may
 - Chantier #1 (May 30th-31st): Decided working committee structures and voting methods
 - Chantier #2 (July 11th-12th): Took initial political positions and decided executive committee composition
 - Chantier #3 (August 15th-16th): Voted on standing regulations, decided fee
 - Elections #2 (September 7th): Voted in 5 executives, including two returning, one former FAECUM member, the former VP External of PGSS and the former Secretary General of PGSS
- Decisions
 - Double majority voting system
 - 10 person executive
 - \$4.50 per student per semester fee levy

Other External Affairs updates

- Went to a FEUQ “post-mortem” meeting with all former members to discuss what worked and what didn't. There were general disagreements on voting, structural inefficiencies, and lobbying methodology
- Set up meetings between our executive and members of CSU, FAECUM, CADEUL and REMDUS
- Performed extensive research related to external affairs and history of SSMU's involvement in the student movement; used historical precedent and current SSMU policies to guide my actions at the student federation tables this summer

Community Affairs

Milton Parc Community

- I have been in close contact with Hélène Brisson from the Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee all summer long related to a number of different projects
- Worked especially with the community relations team for Frosh through actions such as delivering letters to community members, attending community events such as the Fête des Voisins, and coordinating Street Teams
- Ongoing projects
 - Garbage survey of the streets: This project will attempt to see where in Milton parc the current garbage disposal bins are inadequate in order to convince the city that more are needed
 - [C.A.R.E.](#) renewal and reconsidering the messages that we send to each other

Community Engagement

- Preliminary conversations with the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) office and the SSMU Volunteer service regarding the Community engagement database
- Been involved in the initial conversations for the World Social Forum



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Campaigns

Anti-Austerity

- Planned anti-austerity week! Happening NOW ☺
 - (It's been really lovely so far)
 - Hopefully this week will help launch a coalition of folks working together against austerity
- Had a few anti-austerity mobilization committee meetings over the summer to get a sense of where the movement at McGill will be headed in the fall
- Worked with CSU to develop an information campaign – look forward to posters, brochures, flyers, and (more) banners!
- Updated and developed the “fckausterity.com” website

Federal Elections

- Launched “McGill Votes” campaign, please spread the link: McGillVotes.com
- Preliminary work to launch the [Vote Mob](#) and the [debate with CKUT](#)
- Working with CL&E and McGill's office of internal communication and external relations as well as Elections Canada to help promote a “get out the vote” type narrative on campus and distribute relevant information to future voters

Coalition ÉCO

- Currently sitting on the board and actively involved in upcoming projects
- Major demo occurring on October 10th which will be focussed on organizing against the energy east pipeline (join the McGill contingent ☺)
- Working on a massive conference (target participation: 1000 students) that will be co-hosted by SSMU and student's at UQAM called the [Conference of Youth](#) from November 26th-28th

Divest McGill

- Very active this summer!
- Participated in the #JobsJusticeClimate mobilizations in early July
- Actively organizing [Fossil Free Week](#) (September 21st-25th)
 - Week of action with many incredible speakers, such as Clayton Thomas-Muller, Heather Milton-Lightening, climate justice hip-hop artists, some really cool McGill profs, famous McGill alumni, divestment campaigners from all over, and more
 - Will also feature [divestment teach-ins happening in classrooms](#)
 - Very diverse range of activities, including faith sessions, prof talks, daily rallies and a rap battle for climate justice!
- Have also continued strategic interactions with CAMSR
 - Met with some members to discuss financial aspects of divestment
 - Currently demanding that McGill commit to an immediate freeze on all fossil fuel investments while they deliberate over our second submission (note: it's been almost eight months)

Demilitarize McGill

- Met a few times to discuss upcoming event series on militarism and intersectionality



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Mobilization

Anti-Austerity in Quebec

- Anti-Austerity is looking to be a HUGE issue this fall.
- ASSÉ has again chosen anti-austerity work to be their main focus for the year, and have launched <http://unmouvement.org/> (One movement, 10 billion solutions), and other universities across the province are mobilizing once again for their campaigns
- In addition, labour unions working together with the [Front Commun](#) are potentially mobilizing toward a strike.
- The FAE (teacher's union) will also [be going on strike on September 30th](#)

Upcoming demonstrations:

- Rassemblement unitaire contre les politiques conservatrices et néolibérales (Sept: 24th)
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1057331717640781/>
 - Divest McGill is organizing a climate bloc
- Grand Rassemblement (Teacher union strike demo- September 30th)
<https://www.facebook.com/events/709080082526264/>
- ÉCO demo against the pipelines (October 10th): <https://www.facebook.com/coalitioneco/events> followed by a demo with Solidarity Across Borders: <https://www.facebook.com/events/505377332951171/>

Union Affairs

McGill Communities Council (formerly known as citizens council)

- Met a few times over the summer to discuss governance survey (you all will get this soon) and other potential projects

McGill Fight for Fifteen Coalition

- Worked with AMUSE and AMURE to visualize initial campaign

General Union Affairs

- Have met with AMUSE, AMURE and AGSEM
- Most major unions (including MUNACA) will be at the negotiation table again this fall – hopefully we will see the same student-union solidarity that we've seen in past years at McGill!

Misc

- Worked with an incredible executive team to vision a dynamic and exciting year for SSMU! Can't wait to have you all on board 😊

With love and solidarity,

Emily Boytinck