



## **Report of the Vice-President (University Affairs) to Legislative Council**

**October 1, 2015**

*The work in this report is a summary of all areas of the University Affairs Portfolio. All activities are the product of the hard work of many people including, but not limited to, other Executives, Senators and student staff.*

### **University & Academic Affairs**

#### **General Updates**

##### Fall Reading Week

- The results of the survey sent out in the winter semester showed that approximately 70% of students were in favour of a Fall Reading Week after reviewing the tradeoffs. A proposal was brought forward to the Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC) suggesting a 5-day break in conjunction with Canadian Thanksgiving. There has been reportedly some resistance among Faculty to the idea. The proposal will be discussed again at the next ESAAC meeting this coming Tuesday (October 6<sup>th</sup>)

##### Enrolment Services: Inclusive Registration Forms

- Follow-up meeting regarding inclusive registration forms occurred. Changing the forms to include a non-binary gender has already been submitted to IT. A formal proposal will be submitted this year to allow students of certain identities and groups (e.g. student with dependents, students with disabilities) to self-identify. The purpose of allowing for self-identification would be to connect students to services and to collect statistics on recruitment and retention of certain populations of students.
- IT projects tend to be slow moving however in the interim we hope to change the survey McGill sends to students who accept or decline their offers of admission to include demographic questions

#### **Senate**

##### Senate

- Senate documents can be found online: <https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/senate-2015-2016/senate-meeting-documents>. All Senate meetings are open to the public and can also be watched over the livestream
- Student Senators received responses from the 3 questions that were submitted to Senate and asked follow-up questions during the Senate meeting



- Question regarding McGill's Alleged Bill 100 Violation  
[https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/6a.\\_q3\\_response\\_bill\\_100.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/6a._q3_response_bill_100.pdf)
- Question regarding McGill's Response to the Truth & Reconciliation Report  
[https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/5.\\_question\\_regarding\\_mcgills\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_truth\\_and\\_reconciliation\\_report\\_and\\_response.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/5._question_regarding_mcgills_response_to_the_truth_and_reconciliation_report_and_response.pdf)
  - Provost Manfredi suggested McGill could become a leader in the West in terms of supporting Indigenous students and developing an Indigenous studies curriculum
- Question regarding Physical Accessibility on Campus  
[https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7.\\_question\\_regarding\\_physical\\_accessibility\\_on\\_campus\\_and\\_response\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7._question_regarding_physical_accessibility_on_campus_and_response_0.pdf)
- Other items that were discussed included the current usage statistics of the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination and potential barriers towards accessing the policy as well as funding for investigator and discovery driven research, specifically in Biomedical research

### Senate Caucus

- Agenda items of Senate Caucus included:
  - Senate debrief
  - Appointments of undergraduate students to serve on the advisory committees for the appointment of the deans of law and music and other members of the senior administration
  - Royal Victoria Hospital site
    - A Principal's Task Force has been struck to review the use of space if the University chooses to acquire the site. Contact Erin Sobat at [artssenator2@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:artssenator2@ssmu.mcgill.ca) if you are interested in further information and stay tuned for upcoming efforts to solicit student input on this matter
  - Statement regarding the decision of the DPSLL to appoint a new Interim Director of Student Services

### Senate & University Committees

- Makeup training was scheduled for committee representatives. A "Committee Representative Agreement" and PowerPoint slides were sent to all committee reps. We are greatly emphasizing the importance of reporting and have already seen improvements from past years. Reports from representatives are critical to ensuring the improvement of SSMU's institutional memory with respect to McGill governance, which is severely lacking at the moment



## **Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations**

- Submitting list of negotiables to McGill this week in close consultation with all other Executives

## **Library Relations**

- Met with the Libraries and the LIF Coordinator to touch base for the year
- The libraries are hosting an open forum to present the Library Master Plan on October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:30. The Library Master Plan is a \$180 million project that would greatly increase student study space on campus and transform the Redpath/McLennan library space into more of a “student center”. If you would like more information on the open forum or the Library Master Plan I invite you to contact Evan Vasallo at [lifc@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:lifc@ssmu.mcgill.ca)
- Access to the law library during exams was briefly discussed with the hopes that SSMU, LSA and the Libraries will be able to arrive at a compromise and arrive at a solution amenable to the needs of all students

## **McGill Academic Round Table (MART)**

- Hosted the first MART meeting of the year and agreed to meet on a monthly basis to discuss possible collaborations and updates on projects. In the meantime there will be communication via Facebook and email to stay in touch and encourage cross-Faculty collaborations and the sharing of information

## **Student Academic Summit**

- The first-ever Student Academic Summit was hosted last weekend. The event allowed for the professional development and networking of the VP Academics of faculty and departmental associations with fellow student representations. The Summit was well-attended and received generally positive feedback from participants, however some felt that the Open Discussion was too short and rushed.
- Final schedule included the following presentations:
  - Accessibility and Universal Design Principles (Office for Students with Disabilities)
  - More than just Course Evaluations (Teaching & Learning Services)
  - Open Source Textbooks (SSMU VP University Affairs)
  - Advocacy & Change at McGill (Dean of Students)
  - SSMU Library Improvement Fund and Library Master Plan (LIF Coordinator)
  - Know Your Academic Rights (Arts Senator)
  - Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy (SSMU Mental Health Coordinator)
  - Open Discussion Forum



**University Relations Projects/Goals to Complete in Fall 2015**

- Present MoA negotiables to the University
- ~~Organize the Student Academic Summit for VP Academics and Presidents of Faculty and Departmental Associations~~
- ~~Re-establish the McGill Academic Round Table (MART)~~
- Launch the SSMU Know Your Rights Campaign
- Compile a binder of committee reports at the end of the semester

## **Advocacy & Research**

### **Policy-Work**

#### Sexual Assault Policy (SAP)

- The working group met over the weekend, however unfortunately I was out of town and unable to attend
- The working group will be engaging in consultation efforts in the near future, specifically targeting groups that have not yet been consulted in the writing of the SAP

### **Student Advocacy**

#### Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee (PARC)

- The purpose of PARC is to facilitate and empower students to advocate on behalf of themselves. Members of PARC are trained in the University organizational structure and assist students in navigating bureaucracy to forward their advocacy projects and create systemic change. Currently the only other resource most students have to help them navigate McGill bureaucracy is the Office of the VP University Affairs. Importantly PARC is meant to be a resource for all students wishing to create change, indiscriminate of political affiliations.
- Currently recruiting two co-chairs to revive PARC. Details including responsibilities of the position can be found here: <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PARC-call-out.pdf>. Interested candidates should email myself at [ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca)



**Advocacy & Research Projects/Goals to Complete in Fall 2015**

- Re-establish the University Affairs Committee
- Re-establish the Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee (PARC)
- Provide training to PARC co-chairs and assist in training the committee members
- Host a Society Research project competition
- Increase the visibility of student research projects
- Work with the SAP working group to incorporate stakeholder feedback and intersectionality into the policy

## **Mental Health & Well-Being**

### **Student Services**

*Many changes are being proposed that would transform Student Services and have the potential to simultaneously increase efficiency and quality of service provision. A Mental Health Strategy Consultant has been hired, many of the Services have undergone internal and external reviews recently and the Student Services unit as a whole is scheduled to be reviewed in November. My job is ensuring that student needs and the student voice is the primary driver behind these changes.*

- Continued meetings with multiple stakeholders regarding service provision and increasing preventative measures and “upstream services”
- Have been in discussion with Executives of PGSS, MCSS and MCGSS regarding the decision of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) to appoint a new Interim Senior Director of Student Services. We intend to release a statement on this matter voicing our disapproval with the lack of student consultation.
- Regular meetings with Mental Health Services, Health McGill and SSMU are continuing to discuss possible collaborations including the expansion of peer support services.
- The VP Clubs & Services and myself are looking into the creation of a room that can be used to facilitate group support sessions (as well as collective meetings) and the creation of a ‘Mental Health Space’ that would allow the Peer Support Centre to operate in our building. We are looking into room 429 and 430.
  - We are also looking into establishing an agreement with Mental Health Services to allow them to operate their Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) group support sessions. The WRAP sessions are a new project that was funded through the Student Services Innovation Fund



## **SSMU Mental Health Initiatives**

*Includes updates on the implementation of SSMU's Mental Health 5 Year Plan*

### Website & Social Media

- The McGill Mental Health Hub website ([mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca](http://mcgillmentalhealthhub.ca)) will be launched this weekend. It is designed to be a resource for students struggling with mental health issues and for students who wish to educate themselves on mental health.
- Will be adding a page to include information on all the events of Mental Health Awareness Week. The plan is to direct students to the website which will also be a long-lasting resource for students beyond the campaign.

### Mental Health Committee

- Call-outs for the Committee are being sent out. Interested students should email [mentalhealth@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:mentalhealth@ssmu.mcgill.ca)
  - The Outreach Working Group will focus on raising awareness for mental health and mental illness through social media, events, tabling and other creative means.
  - The Advocacy Working Group will focus on advocacy based on research and student consultation and will draft documents to propose changes to existing McGill policies and practices.

### Mental Health Awareness Week

- Mental Health Awareness Week is coming up from October 15-23!
- Promotional materials are being drafted in consultation with Healthy McGill. We hope to have a series of posters that remind people of the upcoming events but also include de-stigmatizing and educational messaging. We are trying to create inclusive messaging that will spark dialogues on campus. We also want to adopt the #EmbraceYourMind from campaigns at UBC.
- Events are being planned with a variety of student groups on campus (Jack.org, McGill Psychology Students' Association, AUS) as well as Student Services units (Mental Health, Counselling, Office for Religious and Spiritual Life)



**Mental Health & Well-Being Projects/Goals to Complete in Fall 2015**

- ~~Revise the Mental Health Committee structure~~
- Plan a successful 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Mental Health Awareness Week
- Liaise with Mental Health & Counselling Services
- Expand current mental health awareness outreach
- Establish a SSMU 'Happy Lights' rental program,

## Equity

### SSMU Equity Initiatives

#### Equity Committee

- Recruiting committee members. We're planning on expanding the diversity of SSMU's equity outreach initiatives this year. Interested students should email a CV and cover letter to [equity@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:equity@ssmu.mcgill.ca)

#### #ConsentMcGill

- SSMU hosted tabling sessions at our front kiosk as part of #ConsentMcGill, a Trivia Night at Gerts and a panel event titled "Creating an Inclusive Dialogue surrounding Consent Education and Sexual Violence"

#### Indigenous Affairs

- The dream catcher from First People's House will remain in our building for the rest of the week in honour of Indigenous Awareness Week
- It was suggested to have an Indigenous Awareness Month in March to continue campus-wide discussions and strengthen McGill's connections with local Indigenous communities
- See above for McGill's response to our question regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Report

#### Accessibility

- See above for McGill's response to our question regarding physical accessibility on campus and for summary of the meeting with Enrolment Services to allow students with disabilities to self-identify in order to improve service provision



**Equity Projects/Goals to Complete in Fall 2015**

- Liaise with organizers of #ConsentCampaign and host a panel as part of the week-long event
- Expand the diversity of SSMU equity event programming beyond typical education events such as speaker series and workshops
- ~~Strike an Ad Hoc Indigenous Affairs Committee~~

## **SSMU-Wide**

### **Outreach & Communication**

#### Social Media & Website

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**SSMU-Wide Projects/Goals to Complete in Fall 2015**

- Present a public, detailed workplan and provide updates tasks completed through Council reports
- Increase social media presence through Twitter and Facebook
- Create a University Affairs website with a 'Senator's Corner' tab to include information and updates about the UA portfolio
- Update all website content related to the UA portfolio
- Collaborative workplans with all student staff
- Improve institutional memory particularly with respect to Senate and University Committees

Respectfully Submitted,

Chloe Rourke, Vice-President (University Affairs)