



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

November 5th, 2015

Personal

Really feeling the “w” curve of being a SSMU Executive – some of the times are incredibly high and I’m so lucky to be able to be doing the things I’m doing, other times I’m utterly burnt out and sort of feel like I’m walking through jello. The good times definitely outnumber the bad by far, but if you’ve seen me and I’m zombie-esque, please forgive me.

Despite being zombie-esque at times, please don’t let that deter you from visiting me in my office hours! Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 am – 11:00 am ☺

External Affairs

I’ve been noticing lately the sheer amount of time that I’ve been putting into this part of my portfolio and how it’s largely invisible to the majority of campus, so I’ll be making a presentation at council this week. **Please** – if you have any suggestions for how I can help to spread the word about the existence of this part of my portfolio (ie. Coming to your councils, preparing a brochure, etc.) – let me know!

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

- Has been a very busy last three weeks ! I’ve been sitting on the « coordination committee », which is doing everything from working with the general coordinator to form a legal non-profit organization, to helping draft the text for the website, to talking about different communication plans !
- Hosted the last working group meeting at McGill last weekend :
 - Finalized the general regulations (by-laws)
 - Approved various policies related to :
 - Communication
 - Electoral regulations
 - Accountability
 - Discussed the new logo !
- Have been making final edits to some of the policies, which were originally written by myself and thus are quite similar to policies that SSMU already has
- Two of the associations, CSU + MAGE-UQAC, have already started referendum campaigns ! Next meeting will be the 28th and 29th of November in Rimouski, so people may be affiliated then.

[UEQ \(Union Étudiant du Québec/ Student Union of Quebec\)](#)

- Has been relatively less work since this association has an executive – this has been good in terms of a lighter workload but not particularly great in that I’m feeling that decisions are being made without the insight of certain member associations
- For example, a website went up that a) I never heard about or had the chance to look at the content before it went live and b) is currently only available in french (unionetudiante.ca)
- Next meeting is looking to be within the first two weeks of December



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Misc

- External affairs committee had our first meeting ! Hopefully this committee will be able to fill an important role in researching and communicating external relations to students
- Had a skype meeting with U15 campus student unions across Canada – some people are hoping to start some sort of informal research advocacy group – for now it's highly informal and I'll update you all once I know more

Community Affairs

Milton Parc Community

- Have been working on the greener streets project with Robin, my community affairs coordinator – we're hoping to do our first survey of the garbage in the neighborhood by next week! ECOLE has been a huge help in volunteering, so much love to them!
- Currently drafting content for a website which talks specifically about students and the neighborhood
- Plans to meet with Hélène to revise C.A.R.E. agreements

Community Engagement

- Community Engagement committee had our first meeting! We have thought of some great ideas, such as a health and social justice community mixer. Stay tuned! ☺

Campaigns

Anti-Austerity

- McGill Against Austerity has become the name of a new group who wants to do anti-austerity organizing at McGill. We meet every Wednesday at 5:30 pm, please let me know if you would like to get involved!
- Have been mainly focussing on tabling/flying/general outreach, as well as building team dynamics and all that fun stuff ☺
- We'll be sending a demo contingent on November 5th! We meet at noon at the Roddick Gates, tell everyone that you know!!
 - Have made posters/flyers and done general outreach for the contingent
- Hoping to make some more information brochures similar to the beauties that CSU has made, if anyone has any content that they think would be particularly valuable, hit me up!

Federal Elections

- Wow this seems so long ago now! On October 19th, I had to do some damage control after receiving false information from Elections Canada, which resulted in me sending out an emergency Isitserve and then contacting McGill so that they did the same.
- Generally very dissatisfied in Elections Canada, but overall happier with an increase in turnout in this year's election!
 - Super important to remember that political activism doesn't end with an election, this is really only the beginning ☺



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Divest McGill

- Generally just an incredibly active year for Divest!
- Had a CAMSR meeting on October 22nd – we created and rehearsed a presentation and our professors said it was the best they had ever seen us. We certainly felt strong and knowledgeable but we found the response from CAMSR to not vote on an immediate freeze on fossil fuel investments to be a completely unacceptable and reflects on their unwillingness to show good faith throughout this process
- Other actions: We have an alumni campaign going strong with over 150 who've vowed not to donate to McGill until they divest and over 30 who've pledged to return their degrees to McGill on March 30th, 2016 if McGill has not yet divested
- Divest UdeM started! We went to visit them for their first event and presented a bit about our long history (we were the first divestment campaign in the country!)
- Have been organizing a bus to the Climate Welcome – hopefully I'll be heading out right after this meeting! Check out climatewelcome.ca for the fun things that we'll be up to ☺

Demilitarize McGill

- Hosting an incredibly upcoming event series called #RememberThis: A series of events against War and Militarism – really awesome anti-colonial workshops/film screenings/ and panels!
- Check this out for more details: <http://demilitarizemcgill.com/rememberthis/>
- They've been operating mostly independently, so I've mostly just helped out by providing resources

Mobilization

Anti-Austerity in Quebec

- The front commun is an umbrella group which represents over 400,000 workers, has planned strike actions for the first few days of December
- Strikes happened a bunch last week throughout various regions for both the public sector workers and the school boards
- November 16th and 17th will potentially be first strike days
- November 5th is the national demonstration of the ASSE, over 40,000 students are going to be on strike

Union Affairs

McGill Fight for Fifteen Coalition

- Have been talking about getting exact numbers with Zach, once we know it might be possible to tie a staff salary increase to a base fee increase
- Have been going to some coalition meetings to help on the student support end

QPIRG

- Culture Shock is this week and the theme is science fiction! There are so many incredible workshops and speakers, and it is a great way to learn more about issues surrounding equity, race, immigration and colonialism
- Been working with the popular education committee of QPIRG
- Check it out from November 5th – 8th ☺



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4 Floors & SSPN

4 floors still happened despite the lack of a VP Internal! I'm so grateful for all of the committee members of SSPN, along with Zach & Kimber and all of the permanent staff who put so much into this event. Like all major events, there were some pros, some cons, and some lessons learned!

Pros:

- We had two live bands, three DJ's, and free pizza for everyone
- Equity: posted posters up around campus and through social media – culture shift is really happening because we only had to tell one student to remove their costume
- Generally positive reviews from everyone who came!

Cons:

- We didn't sell out, so at the last minute we closed gerts in order to cut security costs, which may have been dissappointing for some students.
- Since we didn't sell out, the budget will not break even. Still waiting on the final tally but this event will run a deficit

Lessons learned:

- We switched to online ticket sales this year and sales dropped dramatically (we honestly promoted so much and included in person ticket sales, I'm not sure why this happened) – perhaps keeping exclusively in person ticket sales would be better?
- Start promotion earlier – since we were late getting started we were late with promotion, which could have been highly problematic for ticket sales

Commission des Affaires Francophones

- Really lovely new part of my portfolio which is mostly autonomous but still makes me really happy, I think they forgive me for being a hopeless anglophone (come try and learn french with me!!)
- We launched a website! <http://www.cafmcgill.com/>
- Host talks and conferences related to french and french lit – stay tuned for more event updates!
- Also want to get more involved with External Affairs things – could be a really neat fit.

Misc

- Currently hiring an external communications coordinator – really excited for this position to exist!

With love and solidarity,

Emily Boytinck