



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

**November 5<sup>th</sup>, 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

- Worked with Enrollment Services and the Associate Dean of Arts to draft a survey to be used to consult Faculty on the possibility of a Fall Reading Week. Meeting with Senate Caucus to discuss mobilization around this issue. We are anticipating push back from Faculty. A recent survey at Brock University suggests that Fall Reading Week reduces stress in students. As well, out of 4000 students surveyed 71.5% were in favour of a Fall Reading Week after reviewing the trade-offs.

#### Inclusive Registration Project

- We've successfully drafted questions to be added to the survey that are sent to all students who accept/decline an offer from McGill. This would enable us to refer student with dependents or students with disabilities to resources prior to coming to McGill
- We will also be drafting a business plan to submit to IT in hopes of having some form of "census" via Minerva that all students would be encouraged to fill out. Collecting this data would help connect students to resources and give us information on the demographics of our student population. Currently no information exists except for information on nationality

### **Senate**

#### Senate Meetings

- Senate discussed Senator Dyen's [response](#) to Senator Brunot's Question Regarding the Current Refugee Crisis
- McGill's International Strategy was also discussed during the Open Discussion forum
  - Discussion centered around international tuition deregulation, student mobility via a vis exchange and study abroad, the international student experience at McGill



(international students disproportionately experience mental health issues) and how McGill can expand its partnerships abroad

- Joint Board-Senate meeting takes place on Nov 4<sup>th</sup>. It is an annual meeting in which Senators and Board of Governor members come together to discuss a topic of relevance to the McGill community. Past topics have included mental health, equity (thus forming the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity or JBSCE and its subcommittees), and community engagement. This year the topic is a “Smart Campus”. Background reading was circulated to all Senators and Governors.

### Senate Caucus

- PGSS hosted the first Joint SSMU-PGSS Caucus to review the upcoming Senate documents. The next will be held on Nov 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in Lev Bukhman. This is a new initiative to encourage greater collaboration between PGSS and SSMU. These meetings (as well as regular Senate Caucus meetings) are open to the public and we encourage students who are interested to attend!

### Senate & University Committees

- Attended a Committee on Student Services meeting
  - We discussed the Innovation Fund, a vision for Student Services moving forward and the current budget
  - It was expressed that CSS needs access to financial information including information about the budget
  - Student Services Unit Review is upcoming at the end of November. Students involved with Student Services (e.g. student members on the Service Advisory Boards, student staff, etc) will be interviewed during the two-day site visit. However to enable greater, broad-based consultation student members of CSS will be engaging in additional consultation. This consultation will be summarized into a document submitted to the review team.
  - This review is an opportunity to influence how Student Services is structured and how it operates. Please direct any student interested to me so that their feedback can be incorporated.
- Attended a meeting for the appointment of an Assistant Vice-President (Innovation & Partnerships)
- Senate Nominating and Academic Policy Committee were cancelled



## Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations

- We have decided that the VP Finance & Operations and myself will be the primary representatives of SSMU during the MoA negotiations
- We have submitted a list of demands to McGill and hope to begin negotiations as soon as possible
- The University Affairs Committee will be the primary consultative body throughout the MoA Negotiations and updates will be posted online via social media and blog updates on the University Affairs website. If anyone has any suggestions as to how to increase transparency and student consultation please let me know!

## Library Relations

- Attended the Library's presentation plan for the McLennan and Redpath Libraries
- The [full plan](#) with architectural designs, entitled "Fiat Lux" or "Let there be light", is available online.

## Library Improvement Fund Committee

- The Committee has met twice and is currently refining the criteria used to assess proposals and creating a strategy to increase the number of student submissions

## McGill Academic Round Table (MART)

- SQ

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

- ⊖ Present MoA demands 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)

- Met with the Dean of Students and Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures & Equity) to discuss the SAP. We have reached out to SEDE, OSD, all the JBSCE Subcommittees, and some local Montreal-based organizations
- I was unable to attend the last SAP working group meeting as it was scheduled during Four Floors
- We will be revising the policy on Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. We hope to have received feedback from all the groups we are consulting by then. If you have feedback on the policy or suggestions for stakeholders to consult, I invite you to email [sap.mcgill@gmail.com](mailto:sap.mcgill@gmail.com)

## Research Projects

- Hoping to create an “Accessibility of Education” research project
- Three student research projects were passed on to me from my predecessor
  - Alternative History Timeline: project providing alternative narratives of McGill’s history
  - Equitable Hiring: examining ways to improve employment equity within both SSMU and McGill
    - Update: Project is set to be completed this week, with a complete final report.
  - Indigenizing the Academy: comparing McGill to peer institutions and looking at ways in which McGill can better support Indigenous students.

## Committees

### University Affairs Committee

- Recruiting members at large for the University Affairs Committee. The University Affairs Committee will advise on matters of the University Affairs portfolio including long-term advocacy goals, Society research projects, the upcoming Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations. Anyone interested in learning more about Senate, McGill governance or what I do all day should email [arc@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:arc@ssmu.mcgill.ca) to apply

### 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.*

### **Seasonal Affective Disorder Lamp Rental Program**

- Hoping to set up the “Happy Lights” Lending Program this week. Student Accounts refused to charge us for unreturned lamps. I met with Mental Health Services and apparently they don't have many issues with unreturned lamps, thus we will likely pilot the project with a \$20 deposit that will be reimbursed if the lamp is undamaged and returned on time
- Mental Health Services has agreed to pay for 50% of the cost to purchase the lamps. The launch of the program will also coincide with a sleep hygiene workshop hosted by Mental Health Services and SSMU as well as an awareness campaign



- Regular meetings with Mental Health Services, Healthy McGill and SSMU are continuing to discuss possible collaborations including the expansion of peer support services and other upstream supports to reduce the waitlist.

### Mental Health Space

- The VP Clubs & Services are working on a proposal for the space. We also plan to provide forums for consultation and feedback so students can voice what they would like to see the Mental Health Space look like.

### **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)) has been launched. If you have any feedback on the website please send it to [mentalhealth@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:mentalhealth@ssmu.mcgill.ca) and we will communicate it to the web designers
- The goals were to design a website that is easy to navigate and would serve as a one-stop shop to find support and educational resources for mental health.

### Mental Health Committee

- Committee membership will be finalized at the end of this week!
  - 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

- A survey was released to participants and event organizers to gather feedback in order to improve it for next year and track attendance at events. We suspect that workshops scheduled in the morning had lower attendance. Overall Mental Health Awareness Week was a great success! All 20+ events went smoothly and we have received ample positive feedback, in particular on the [promotional materials!](#)



**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

- Presented on cultural appropriation ('My Culture is not a Costume) and consent ('My Costume is not Consent') at a Halloween Event organized by the Environment Committee

### Equity Committee

- The first Equity Committee meeting occurred last week. Objectives for the year was discussed

### WUSC McGill Event

- Met with WUSC McGill to discuss the concerns raised over their event and provided support to them in the writing of their public statement

### Indigenous Affairs

- SSMU is hiring an Indigenous Affairs Coordinator in order to liaise with groups on campus, coordinate advocacy efforts and organize a Reconciliation campaign in March
- The Indigenous Affairs Coordinator will be chairing the Indigenous Affairs Committee once hired
- Recruiting committee members for the Ad-Hoc Indigenous Affairs Committee as well as the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group.

### Accessibility

- SQ



**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 & University Affairs Website

- The SSMU University Affairs Facebook page has officially been launched. It will be used to share updates for all sections of my portfolio. Share it with your friends!
- Website is still under construction

### **VP Internal Portfolio Delegation**

#### SSMU Website redesign

- Consultation survey has been completed and will be distributed this week. We will then be examining what information should and should not be available on our website and then deciding the most logical, cohesive organization of all information.

#### Student Engagement Committee

- Delegated to Kimber





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

Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs)  
Bureau du Vice-Présidente (affaires universitaires)

**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)