



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

**January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

*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**

#### Smoking on Campus Working Group

- We are holding a town hall on the blank as well as focus groups targeting smokers. All feedback will be used to revise the current proposal before bringing it to Council for approval.

#### Fall Reading Break

- Majority of feedback from Faculty has been in favour of a Fall Reading Break. There is considerable disagreement over the timing of a break however there does not seem to be agreement on when would be a better time.
- As of now, the plan is to stick with the original proposal (5 consecutive days off in conjunction with Canadian Thanksgiving) and hopefully bring the proposal to Senate this year. There remains some logistical details to be sorted out including the cost of having exams on a Saturday.

### **Senate**

#### Senate

- Open discussion on Employment Equity will be taking place at the February Senate meeting

#### Senate Caucus

- Provost Manfredi attended Senate Caucus. Topics discussed included a taskforce on Indigenous programming, student academic rights and accessibility on campus.

#### Senate & University Committees

- Committee representatives are being asked to submit end-of-semester reports that will be compiled and published online
- Committee on Student Services met to discuss the Innovation Fund and



## **Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations**

- The University has refused to agree to any of our demands.

## **Library Relations**

- LIF Committee held an open forum jointly with the Libraries to solicit student feedback
- As well, the whiteboard campaigns have been really successful with some Libraries such seeing the feedback and responding almost immediately
- Committee is currently soliciting proposals and will be reaching out to the VP Academics of departmental and faculty associations
- We are also possibly sending out another survey to assess students' general feelings towards library spaces

## **Faculty Relations**

### McGill Academic Round Table (MART)

- SQ

## **Advocacy & Research**

### **Policy-Work**

#### Sexual Assault Policy (SAP)

- We will be releasing our final draft of the policy on February 6<sup>th</sup> and hosting a town hall on the 11<sup>th</sup>
- The SAP working group was also invited to send representatives to a university working group on sexual violence

### **Research Projects**

#### Employment Equity

- We will be releasing the full report as well as a press release. We are hoping to get considerable media attention and circulate the report in advance of the Open Discussion at Senate

#### Alternative History Timeline

- SQ



## **Committees**

### University Affairs Committee

- Interviews for the Student Research Competition are ongoing. The Committee reviewed all the proposals and narrowed it down to a shortlist.
- All the proposals we received were excellent and highlight a need for more applied student research opportunities on campus. All those who were unsuccessful were referred to groups related to their research interests within SSMU or on campus.

### Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee

- Approval to hire a Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee Coordinator. Hopefully this person will be trained and able to lay the foundation for PARC to be in full operation in the fall

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

### **Student Services**

- Student Services Unit Review team submitted their report that details recommendations to improve Student Services at McGill. The recommendations will eventually be made public
- The administration has time now to detail their response to the recommendations.

### Wellness Roundtable

- Attended a roundtable meeting with approximately 40 other students, administrators and health professionals to discuss a “mental health strategy”
- Discussed the importance of engaging and educating Faculty, many of whom are either ignorant of the importance of the issue or don't know how they can be part of the solution.

### **SSMU Mental Health Initiatives**

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

### Mental Health Committee

- The Outreach working group will be fundraising to install a yellow bench in our building in partnership with the Friendship Bench foundation as a physical reminder of mental health and suicide awareness.



- The working group is also focusing on increasing awareness through our social media presence and tabling on campus and creating a “resource map” to communicate clearly how to access campus services
  - You can now follow us on instagram @ssmumentalhealth
- The advocacy working group is reviewing research on mental health in post-secondary institutions and preparing for our Open Forum to be held on March 11<sup>th</sup>

### Mental Health Forum

- Forum has been scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup>

### Mental Health Space

- Discussions continue to determine how best to organize the space to meet student needs. Renovations are likely to begin in the summer.

### Happy Lights Lending Program

- The Happy Lights Lending Program has been hugely successful and has received considerable attention!
- All lamps are currently being lended out. SSMU and Mental Health Services are looking into purchasing a couple more to avoid having to put students on long waitlist.

## **Equity**

### **General**

- We've had a number of equity complaints submitted last semester. Thus far, the majority has been resolved informally.

### **Indigenous Affairs**

- Indigenous Affairs Coordinator has recruited more members and will begin drafting an Indigenous Solidarity Policy
- Also planning to host an “Indigeneity & Allyship” campaign in March (although room bookings are scarce in our building)
  - Hope to focus on what it means to be an ally and how universities should be responding to the Truth & Reconciliation Report

### **Accessibility**

- VP Bialik and the SSMU Equity Commissioners are drafting a SSMU Accessibility Policy



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

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

### **Employment Equity**

- SSMU will be hosting a panel on January 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. The panel will highlight the experiences of professors with marginalized identities in academia.
- Carolin Huang, one of two student researchers will be presenting SSMU's report on employment equity at McGill

### **SSMU-Wide**

#### **Outreach & Communications**

##### Social Media

- Progress is being made on the UA website. Hope to launch it to make the work being done in the UA portfolio more accessible

Respectfully Submitted,

Chloe Rourke, Vice-President (University Affairs)