



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

October 15, 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 [proposal](#) was discussed again at Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC). Several concerns were raised by Faculty members including the logistical challenges it poses, particularly with respect to Saturday exams. Other concerns were raised over the justifications behind a Fall Reading Week, with some Professors questioning whether it has student support and if it would address stress, mental health issues and homesickness.

Enrollment Services

- Inclusive Registration Project has been transferred to me. Working group meeting will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks and will now include Scholarships & Student Aid.
- Also scheduling a meeting to discuss the early release of the fall exam schedule and to look into the possibility of the schedule being released before the end of add/drop as this would be highly beneficial for students to have when selecting their courses. The main logistical challenge this poses is the changes in registration numbers during add/drop would make it difficult to schedule exams and book rooms. Releasing the exam schedule after add/drop also allows Enrollment Services to minimize the number of conflicts.

Teaching & Learning Services

- Meeting with PGSS and TL&S to discuss the possibility of using Minerva course evaluations to provide instructors with ongoing feedback throughout the semester.

Senate

Senate Meetings

- Senator Brunot submitted a Question Regarding the Current Refugee Crisis



- There will also be a discussion on McGill's International Strategy at the next Senate meeting on October 21. The discussion will focus on 'four key pillars':
 - Our international student community
 - Our international community of scholars
 - Our international research partnerships
 - Our international network of alumni
- If you have any thoughts on this topic please direct them to me or your Senate Caucus Representatives.

Senate Caucus

- Agenda items of Senate Caucus included:
 - In follow-up to our question at last Senate, Senate Caucus received the 2013-2014 [Executive Compensation Report](#) as per the request of Senator Sobat
 - Smoking on campus was discussed after concerns were raised from a constituent in the Faculty of Medicine. Senate Caucus is recommending designated smoking areas and smoking cessation programs to the University Health & Safety Committee
 - Many updates from Committees including:
 - Preliminary discussions on changing policies for leaves of absences for students and medical notes procedure
 - Bookstore relocation
 - Envisioning the potential uses of the RVH site
 - Employment equity
 - 'Meet your Advisor' events
 - Transfer Credit Policy Updates
 - Classroom/Lab Repairs
 - McGill Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- The first Know Your Rights Working Group meeting is on Friday
- We will likely be submitting questions to Senate on employment equity, assessment practices and peer support/mentorship programs next month

Senate & University Committees

- Attended Enrollment Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC), Senate Steering and Nominating Committee and Academic Policy Committee (APC) meetings
- Submitted names to the Advisory Committees for the following appointments:
 - Dean of Music (in consultation with MUSA)
 - Dean of Law (in consultation with LSA)



- Secretary General
- Assistant VP (Innovation & Partnerships)
- As well, submitted names to the Advisory Committees for the following possible reappointments:
 - Dean of Students
 - VP External
- Currently recruiting a student to serve on the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada Review Committee

Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations

- Submitting list of SSMU's MoA demands to McGill this week in consultation with Executives. The list includes the following:
 - Greater freedom to use the McGill name, in particular for student groups
 - The ability to cater on campus
 - Ability to distribute the Old McGill Yearbook at key locations and events on campus including convocation and the Bookstore
 - Access to information including student numbers for use at our General Assembly and a list of graduating students for the Yearbook
 - Generally less restrictive and burdensome to the SSMU so as to not unnecessarily hinder our operations and the services we provide to students
- 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

- The Library is hosting an open forum to present the Feasibility Study results on October 15th at 3:30 in Cybertheque.

Library Improvement Fund Committee

- The Committee will have its first meeting this week

McGill Academic Round Table (MART)

- Will be meeting 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



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)

- The SAP working group had a meeting last week to reach out to groups and begin more targeted consultation. I was unable to attend as I was out of town
- We have a meeting with the Dean of Students and Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures & Equity) on Thursday to discuss the SAP and another meeting with the Working Group this Friday

Research Projects

- Three student research projects were passed on to me from my predecessor
 - Alternative History Timeline: project providing alternative narratives of McGill's history
 - Update: Project is almost finished. There is a couple loose ends to tie up. Next steps will include hiring a web designer to create an online, interactive timeline.
 - Equitable Hiring: examining ways to improve employment equity within both SSMU and McGill
 - Indigenizing the Academy: comparing McGill to peer institutions and looking at ways in which McGill can better support Indigenous students.
 - Update: Final report has been submitted. Will be posted on the University Affairs website

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 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

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.

- Received a quote from Northern Lights for SAD Lamps and am considering starting the pilot 'Happy Lights' project with 25 lamps and a 2-week rental period. Waiting to hear back to see if we can charge students who do not return the lamp via Student Accounts. The alternative is requiring credit card information or a higher deposit, which is considerably less accessible.
- 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, Healthy 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) has been launched. If you have any feedback on the website please send it to 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.
- There is also a 'MHAW' tab for Mental Health Awareness Week! We will be advertising the website through all our MHAW promotional material



Mental Health Committee

- Committee is still recruiting members at large. Interested students should email 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 happening October 15-23!
- We drafted a series of promotional material in consultation with Healthy McGill to not only advertise the events but also to raise awareness, fight stigma and create a dialogue on campus. We will also be increasing outreach efforts through tabling and a whiteboard campaign (e.g. 'I take care of my mental health by...' 'Creating a supportive campus environment means...'). Important to have an active physical presence on campus in addition to the online social media campaigns
- 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)
- Many offices in McGill and student groups have been sharing our Facebook and promoting Mental Health Awareness Week. Please continue to share it and invite your friends to attend!

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

- ~~Revise the Mental Health Committee structure~~
- Plan a successful 2nd 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



- The deadline for applications was extended for members at large. This year we hope to expand the diversity of SSMU's equity programming and outreach initiatives.

#ConsentMcGill

- Overall the campaign (in its second year) was successful! All the SSMU events went smoothly and there were some interesting discussions that came out of the Panel event!

Indigenous Affairs

- Recruiting committee members for the Ad-Hoc Indigenous Affairs Committee as well as the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group. We will be doing some targeted outreach to students (e.g. INDG 200)

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

- Currently developing content for each section of the website and organizing the content in a way that is clear and accessible to students
- Hoping to have the blog and Senator's Corner live in the coming weeks!
- Also working on developing graphics for the Facebook page and will be officially launching it soon

VP Internal Portfolio Delegation

SSMU Website redesign



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

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

- We are planning to completely overhaul our website. This will be a massive project and will likely not be completed this year. It will also include consultation with the student body to determine what information they would like to be able to access more easily. Stay tuned for a survey that will be circulating throughout November and December!

Student Engagement Committee

- Currently recruiting members. If you are interested please answer the following questions and submit your response to ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca

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)