



Report to Legislative Council January 23rd, 2012

For your information

Community relations:

- I attended a meeting of the Milton-Park Citizen's committee. They are currently working on how they will approach the issue of the 'studentification' of the neighbourhood. An issue is the transformation of housing units into rooms that are rented to students for absurd prices by absentee landlords (or any combination of the above): they wish to see the City take action on this issue and will be meeting with representatives from the borough next Tuesday.
- A message to students from SSMU and the Dean of Students will have been sent out, explaining the basics of living in a residential neighbourhood.

External affairs:

- TaCEQ: Along with VP Patel and Simon Charbonneau, SSMU's political attaché, I attended the Annual General Assembly of TaCEQ which took place in Trois-Rivières. Many problems surfaced and many strong points were made.
 - The executive had failed to produce financial statements and still has not put the organization's finances into an understandable format, after 8 months of being in office. They clearly require added support on this front.
 - We discussed TaCEQ's plan of action. Most delegations were keen on focusing on TaCEQ's media presence and considered the idea of hiring a TaCEQ press attaché. After having consulted with the External Affairs Committee, I decided to oppose this approach, arguing that TaCEQ needs to focus on coordinating awareness-raising campaigns on each of its campuses or else run the risk of being nothing but a shell (even if a shiny one that gets quotes in the papers).
 - The SSMU executive sent a letter to every TaCEQ delegation and the executive outlining what changes are needed in the organization to ensure it functions properly, and how we believe grassroots mobilization should be the priority, over media relations.
 - TaCEQ sent out a press release to discuss the findings of the IREC, an economics research institute, which found that the cost of introducing tuition increases is much higher than was originally thought since it requires additional money be transferred to the financial aid budget; and found that the cost of getting rid of tuition fees is similar to the cost of a tuition increase – in the order of 180 million \$. Groundbreaking stuff – coming soon to a poster near you.
- CLASSE: Along with 3 other SSMU members, I attended the congress of the CLASSE last Sunday. Sadly, the congress was preoccupied mostly with matters of internal interest this time but did vote to coordinate the beginning a student strike three school days after 7 student associations on three campuses



representing 20,000 students (at least) have decided to organize an unlimited student strike – this will likely happen in February.

Mobilization and campus affairs:

- Education Week: this event series could have used more promotion, but overall we covered a lot of ground. Lots of students who hadn't yet been engaged on tuition hikes and a slew of other related issues attended workshops. More seasoned student activists deepened their knowledge and skills. Some events simply weren't attended but most were!
 - Facilitated following workshops:
 - Intro to tuition hikes for students in residence
 - Intro to Quebec society, history and politics
 - A discussion for international students on what their needs are with respect to government policies (tip of the hat to Councillors Burnett and Uribe who helped me put it together).
 - Led a field trip to UQAM and attended part of the social science student association's general assembly (learnt a bit on how to foster successful GAs)
- Winter camp for anglophone student activists: this happened two weekends ago at Concordia and McGill, hosted in the SSMU building on the Sunday. I helped organize logistics, food, and facilitated a workshop on how tuition increases will affect out-of-province and international students, and what issues faced by these categories of students aren't being addressed (ex.: immigration problems, access to health care, discrimination, etc.).
- I met with Mariève, VP External of PGSS, and a VP of the MCSS, about upcoming student demonstrations. We discussed the possibility of an ASSE-organized demonstration around February 23rd (during McGill's reading break unfortunately) and the one organized by FEUQ on March 22nd.

Other:

- Results of councillor and student body surveys:
- Daycare board meeting: I could not attend the last one, unfortunately. Props to VPs Patel and Fraser for being on the ball.
- Met with SSMU Speaker Mike Tong about General Assembly Standing Rules to share ideas on how General Assemblies can be structured to allow for more participatory decision-making.
- The executive had a mini-retreat last Saturday which I attended.
- Media: two full interviews with Le Délit (on the AUS General Assembly and the upcoming student strike), one with The Daily (on my vision for the rest of my mandate) and two email exchanges with the Tribune (on November 10th and Education Week).



- Thoughts: should I keep a tally and give a prize (ex: high-fives all around) to the newspaper with the most in-person interviews?

Upcoming

- Meeting of the Coalition opposée à la tarification et la privatisation des services publics on January 24th.
- SSMU General Assembly on February 1st! I will help mobilize and promote. Anyone interested in doing classroom announcements or helping out should contact me.
- Interviewing candidates for a second Political Campaigns Coordinator
- TaCEQ meeting via Skype on January 25th.
- McGill U. inter-union on January 26th.
- CLASSE training camp: the Shatner building may be hosting this on Sunday, January 29th.
- Meeting at UQAM on international students' issues, January 31st at 12:30
 - Student demonstration on February 2nd
- CLASSE congress, February 4th and 5th in Montréal.

Respectfully submitted,

Joël Pedneault VP (External)