

Report to Legislative Council

March 15th, 2012

For your information

Community relations:

- Post office potential closure in La Cité: I was interviewed by CBC English about the potential closure of a Post Canada post office in the La Cité mall.

External affairs:

- TaCEQ meeting on March 4th: AELIES (grads at Laval) did not field a delegation because:
 - o No work has been done on TaCEQ finances since the last meeting.
 - o CADEUL (Laval undergrads) broke an agreement which existed between TaCEQ and CLASSE to concentrate media work away from local associations – CADEUL sent out three press releases during last Thursday's demonstration on March 1st.
 - o We discussed the March 22nd demonstration (see below).
- Quebec Budget: The Quebec budget will be unveiled on March 20nd. There may be some surprises about out of province and international tuition fees, although it's possible this will be used as a “bargaining chip” the government may want to keep for negotiations with student organizations (ie tuition freeze for Quebec students in exchange for fee increase for others?). The Minister of Finance has also announced tuition fee increases are just the beginning, and the government will move ahead with user fees in almost every public service.
- Negotiations: Based on informed guesses and student movement history, I expect the government will offer to negotiate around the tuition increase by the end of the month. The question is: which organizations may be excluded.
- Attended the CLASSE congress last Saturday in Sherbrooke. It is still unclear what CLASSE will do on March 22nd. See below.

Mobilization and campus affairs:

- Student strike continues: As of writing, over 130 000 students had a strike mandate or were on strike across Quebec, including multiple departments at Concordia, even engineers!
 - o With Kevin Paul, organized two Open For a to help students get answers about the strike, on Feb. 29th and on March 6th. The format is structured so as to allow the discussion to evolve organically and allow attendees to obtain answers to their questions. A subject that comes up often is that of picket lines: what do they look like, what are my rights, etc.

- March 22nd demonstration: Both the student federations and CLASSE have called for “the biggest demonstration ever” against the fee hikes to gather at Place du Canada (corner of Peel) in the early afternoon. The federations have unveiled a route, CLASSE has not. This raises many logistical problems.
 - o Essentially, the federations called for a demonstration on March 22nd shortly after the last major one (November 10th) without announcing a time and place
 - o CLASSE decided to also demonstrate that day, and to set a starting time and place
 - o The federations jumped on board in a blatant attempt to co-opt the CLASSE demo. Their press release even mentioned TaCEQ endorsed their demonstration.
 - o Scandal erupts.
- SSMU General Assembly on March 28st: I have currently booked Leacock 132, Leacock 26 and Adams Auditorium between 6-9 on March 28th for a Special GA.
- McGill Inter-union: Met last March 1st, as well as March 6th. We are organizing Alternative Open Forums to create a different space than the ones organized by the administration to discuss Freedom of Speech. They are being called “Really Open Forums”. The first one is Thursday March 15th at noon, Clubs Lounge.
 - o Different labour unions also gave updates on their collective agreements. MUNACA is having trouble finalizing some parts of their collective agreement that are still open to interpretation/vague.
- SUS General Assembly: Got quorum and passed a motion opposing tuition fee increases!
- Philosophy undergrads held a vote regarding a student strike and resolved to support an eventual AUS strike.
- PGSS voted for a three-day strike from March 20-22.
- MUNACA held a demonstration last Friday since they still have not signed a collective agreement with McGill. It's an issue of interpretation of the tentative agreement signed months ago.
- Strategic summit on international students: A success! Many thanks to Emily Clare who did most of the organizing. We discussed the services offered to
- AUS strike vote on March 13th: I was excited to know the outcome at the time of writing
- Worked on the SSMU student strike FAQ, with the invaluable help of Amber Gross and Kevin Paul.
- Strike votes took place in Social Work (for unlimited strike) and in Architecture (for March 22nd) both take place on Wednesday at 2:30 and 5:30 respectively – I planned to be at these assemblies.
- SSMU election results announced on Wednesday (already!).

Other

- Last March 7th, a demonstration in relation to the student strike was violently dispersed by the police. Someone may lose his eye to a tear gas canister.

Upcoming

- Daycare Board meeting this Friday.
- Event: "How would tuition hikes affect women?" on March 20th in collaboration with the Simone de Beauvoir institute.
- March 22nd: MASSIVE demonstration against tuition fee increases. A McGill contingent will gather at the Roddick Gates at noon to join the protest, which starts at 1 pm at Place du Canada (Peel @ René Lévesque). Mark your calendars.
- SSMU Special General Assembly on March 28th – Motions deadline was yesterday for motions in advance but motions from the floor can be submitted until 3 pm on March 28.

Respectfully submitted,

Joël Pedneault VP (External)