



Report to Legislative Council

March 29th, 2012

For your information

- Banned from campus:

- I was recently “excluded” from campus by the university administration under article 21(a) of the Student code of conduct. I was very surprised at this, given that the grounds for essentially banning me from campus have to do with the fact that I was present in the same room while UQAM students were explaining to a UQAM course which a UQAM professor had moved to McGill (in the Adams building) that their student association had voted in favour of a strike. I had been invited by the UQAM science student association to observe this process (since it was happening at McGill) and to serve as a mediator if needed. The discussion in the class was peaceful, no picket lines were held, and everyone left the classroom together. However I received a letter from Dean Andre Costopoulos later on the same day (Monday) informing me I was excluded from campus effective immediately until Friday the 30th. Responding to media requests and speaking to lawyers and student advocacy has taken up a good chunk of my time since then. I've fortunately received permission from Prof. Costopoulos to be in Shatner today 9-6, during SSMU council, and 2-5 on Friday (which is what I had asked for).
- Prof. Costopoulos has also gone on record stating article 21(a) can be used abusively since it's unclear how to appeal it. I'll be following through on this with Student advocacy as well as Emily Clare.

Community relations:

- I attended a meeting of MPCC on March 19th.
- Closure of Canada Post office in La Cite towers: I was contacted by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers - Montreal in relation to this. They are asking me to be a part of a press conference on the potential closing of the store on Friday. Major issues include the fact that this office provides a wider range of services than the sub-contracted franchises, including services needed by students when they apply for loans and bursaries.

External affairs:

- Quebec provincial budget: It was unveiled on March 20th. Nothing of notice, the government has still not backed down on tuition fees, nor has there been any movement on international or out of province students' fees. The next two weeks will be key to determining whether the strike movement can succeed in making its demands heard.
- TaCEQ: REMDUS (Sherbrooke graduate student association) recently took a position to stop paying salaries of the two TaCEQ executives in the near future, to split the cost of the last 2 months of their salaries three ways, excluding Laval grads



(who seem to be refusing to pay their share – I am investigating why), and are encouraging member associations to find a way to draft last year's financials. They've also floated the possibility of dissolving TaCEQ. I'll be working with Simon Charbonneau to determine what are the best possible courses of action in this situation, which does not bode well for TaCEQ's continued existence.

Mobilization and campus affairs:

- Student strikes on campus: Since our last meeting, Social Work, Geography, Gender Studies, Philosophy, Art History and Communication Studies and DESA (English) have voted to go on an unlimited general strike. Music, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and French Language and literature were on strike for all or part of last week. MUSA apparently voted to hold hard picket lines last March 22nd. DESA is no longer on strike, and Geography was having a strike renewal vote when I wrote this report. Anthropology is also having a strike vote tomorrow (Friday).
- Really Open Forum: Was a success, brought together many people from different constituencies within the university. The inter-union will have to follow-up after next week as for next steps. The sense is that McGill has reached a crossroads and could either go down the path of reform or repression.
- Workshop on tuition hikes and women: happened last week, was well-attended.
- Bed in on March 21st: There was a creation night and sleep-in the night before the big protest outside Shatner.
- March 22nd demonstration: This march was a great success and occurred very peacefully. Student delegations from Laval University and UQTR joined the McGill contingent at the Roddick Gates in the early afternoon, and groups marched off progressively towards the main gathering spot at Peel and Rene Levesque. The march ended in the Old Port. We apparently got coverage in 80 countries!
- Strike Facebook event: A member of the student staff used the SSMU Facebook account to invite social media enthusiasts to an event promoting the many non-violent civil disobedience actions happening this week in the context of the student strike. SSMU never officially endorsed these actions and the event (which was created under the tuitiontruth banner) was deleted and moved to another, unofficial platform for those who may still be interested in participating in or knowing about these actions. A statement was put out on the SSMU Facebook explaining that SSMU did not endorse the event. The password to the SSMU Facebook account was also changed and I explained to the student staff member what type of events SSMU normally endorses in relation to our accessible education mandate.
- SSMU General Assembly: All the co-signers of the petition for a Special GA agreed to retract the petition, which did not occur yesterday. I will report orally.

Other

- CKUT show on the strike: I participated in an hour-long special on the student strike with a student in Geography last Monday.
- I was interviewed by the International Herald Tribune about the student movement in Quebec! By someone in Paris!



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

Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs)
Bureau du Vice-président (affaires externes)

- Budget meeting with Shyam and Robin: met to sketch out the details of the Campaigns, External Affairs, VP External Affairs and Community Affairs budgets for the upcoming year.

Upcoming

- I'll be attending all or part of the CLASSE congress this weekend in Alma (March 31st and April 1st).
- There will be a demonstration against tuition increases in Montreal on April 4th at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joël Pedneault VP (External)