



## **Report of the Equity Committee to Council September - October 2011**

November 3, 2011

### **1. Committee Membership**

- a. We selected our Committee in mid-September. Our membership includes: Cassandra Zawilski, Equity Commissioner, Co-Chair; Ryan Thom, Equity Outreach Coordinator, Co-Chair; Emily Yee Clare, VP University Affairs, Equity Officer; Carol Fraser, VP Clubs & Services, Equity Officer; Shyam Patel, VP Finance & Operations, Equity Officer; Radney Jean-Claude, Councillor (Social Work); Azzura Lalani; Justin Morein; Kevin Paul; Shaina Agbayani; Victoria Song; Zina Mustafa.

### **2. Meetings**

- a. Anyone is welcome to attend our non-confidential meetings. Our meeting time has varied in an attempt to accommodate the Committee members' schedules. Generally they have been held in the SSMU Office on Wednesday evenings, Thursday evenings, or Friday afternoons. Please contact the Equity Commissioner if you would like to attend a meeting.

### **3. Outreach**

- a. This is SSMU Equity's third year in perpetuity; as such, much of the work we've done thus far is laying and strengthening the groundwork for strong working relations with the rest of campus. This year, Equity is focusing much of its time on increasing its presence, so that the many advocacy and support groups on campus – for example, First People's House, SEDE, and student groups such as Queer McGill and BSN – are aware of the Equity Policy and services SSMU Equity offers. We hope to connect these groups, serving as a network center so that anti-oppressive and social education projects may be carried out with a greater level of solidarity. As such, some of our specific projects include:
  - i. Participation in the form of a workshop at Rad Frosh and Culture Shock
  - ii. A series of outreach meetings with each of the cultural students' associations, First People's House, SEDE, and other equity-related campus groups to explain the Equity Policy, the function of the Equity Committee, and the Equity Complaint procedure, and to discuss possible collaborations
  - iii. A series of monthly networking events (potlucks) which will also serve to create an equitable safer space on campus



- iv. A collaborative workshop series on equitable subjects such as Indigenous rights, anti-racism, decolonization, feminism, anti-ableism, and gender diversity so as to increase understanding of equity amongst the student body
- v. Increasing accessibility and visibility of Equity outreach materials, including the creation of an Equity brochure, the implementation of Equity Facebook and web pages, and a poster campaign
- vi. Liaising with student activist groups, such as the Mob Squad, in order to facilitate equitable relations within the activist community and to increase accessibility of the McGill student activist movement
- vii. Liaising with faculties (re: equity policies) and residences (re: Rez Project)
- viii. Participating and consulting in the development of various equity-related projects on campus, including follow-up studies to Mendelson's Diversity Survey that was conducted in Fall 2009
- ix. Revising the current Equity policy for greater clarity and ease of interpretation

#### 4. Other Projects

##### a. Coyote Ugly

- i. Cassandra and Ryan addressed the Coyote Ugly misunderstanding with the following response in the McGill Tribune:

<http://www.mcgilltribune.com/opinion/letter-to-the-editor-1.2616339>

##### b. Equity Statement for myMcGill/myCourses

- i. We are working with SEDE, OSD, and FPH in creating an Equity Statement that will appear on myMcGill/myCourses as a way of publicizing the policy, the complaint process, students' rights, and resources.
- ii. Emily Clare, VP UA, will discuss the statement with Morton Mendelson.

##### c. Equity Policy Revisions

- i. Policy, for grammar and to include an appeals process
- ii. Committee Terms of Reference
- iii. Commissioner By-Laws

##### d. Equity Award

- i. Presented a first draft of an Equity award proposal to JBSCE;



- ii. This Award would recognize faculty, staff, and/or students who have demonstrated a commitment to equity and diversity at McGill.
- iii. This Award was developed based on recommendations from the Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence, and Community Engagement.

## 5. Events

### a. Strategic Summit on Equity and Diversity at McGill

- i. Friday, November 4, 2011, 12-5pm, Clubs' Lounge  
<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=194164933989246>
- ii. This Summit is an opportunity to discuss issues of concern regarding equity, inclusion, and diversity with faculty, staff, students, and McGill equity groups. We will discuss the current state of equity at McGill, our successes and challenges with equity, and ways we can address these challenges.
- iii. Although the Summit runs 5 hours, you can come and go as you please. All are welcome. We ask that you RSVP to [equity.outreach@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:equity.outreach@ssmu.mcgill.ca).

### b. Academic Undergraduate Conference

- i. With the success of our 1<sup>st</sup> Equity Academic Conference in March 2011, we plan to organize another tentatively for February 2012.
- ii. The conference is an opportunity for undergraduate students to share their research on issues related to equity.

We plan to submit a Report to Council on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. In the interim, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Zawilski  
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