



**THE
STUDENT'S SOCIETY
OF
MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

Celebrating 100 years

*We can see how little matter the small disputes,
the petty quarrels of the day or hour,
how much the long achievement of a century.
The college lasts longer than we do;
no single mind, no single life controls it.*

Forward

100 years. A century of student leadership, of helping clubs and services, of pushing for a more democratic and equitable university, of throwing parties and fighting for a quality education. Where does one even begin to cover the history of a student society, a society that has been the collective success of hundreds of executives, thousands of students, and millions of hours of labour?

McGill thankfully provided the answer. On the day I started my research, the Faculty of Arts hosted its annual *Cundill Prize* lecture that began with the nominees talking on “Writing History for a Popular Audience.” These historians spoke about their duty to write with integrity and responsibility. They stressed the importance of accepting controversy in their findings. Most importantly, they talked about the importance of history delivering lessons in context and being useful to the reader.

Writing with integrity and responsibility. I embark on this project knowing that most SSMU history, as found in the archives of the McGill Daily, the McGill Tribune or even Old McGill is written through the glasses of reporters learning about stories at SSMU council meetings. I read their stories knowing that what happens at council, and even what executives may say in candid interviews is not always candid. I also have the benefit of both my own individual impressions of 7 years at McGill and the oral history of executives from both during and before those days. And yet, like all oral histories, those stories may have changed and evolved with each telling. In writing this then, I am cognizant that the truth of SSMU’s history is one that is, and always be, only partially known. My job was then to, with integrity and responsibility find those events that tell our story.

Accepting controversy. As every McGill student knows, student politics is filled with scandal and controversy. Some are personal, the resignation of executives and the faux-pas of decisions not fully thought out. Others are the controversy of the SSMU as a whole, from censorship to fights with the McGill Daily. And yet, despite being told to accept controversy, I was also mindful of Stephen

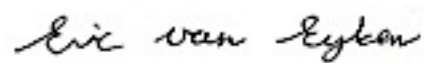
Leacock’s words, of “how little matter the small disputes, the petty quarrels of the day or hour, how much the long achievement of a century.” The history of SSMU is, as these pages document, one where bad decisions are sometimes made, but is for the most one of progress and growth. The controversies of SSMU are quickly forgotten. I decided to do my best to present them as the entertaining anecdotes that they have become with time, stories to amuse us and make current students prouder of the SSMU of today.


Delivering history in context and being useful to the reader. The 12 month term of a SSMU executive is one that requires executives to take up many long running struggles, master their history quickly and propose solutions. Many SSMU councillors are elected with little knowledge of SSMU’s past or the nature of long running disputes. This project is written with the goal of informing future generations of student leaders of some of their history and providing them the context through which they can think about their own decisions. This particular goal has made this task to be a slightly more manageable one, as it has allowed for me to focus on the last 30 years of SSMU history, the decades that bear the greatest relevance to the SSMU of today.


This document is comprised of two types of sections. There are three parts that look at the achievements of SSMU in the 80s, the 90s and the 2000s. Additionally, there are a number of analysis and focus pieces on the recurring topics of SSMU history. As Mark Twain is credited with saying, “history may not repeat itself, but it rhymes a lot.” As such, the selection of in depth topics was made to score together the ensemble of issues that SSMU has repeatedly dealt with.


Special thank to VP (Clubs & Services) Sarah Olle for her many comments and edits.

Enjoy,



EARLY DAYS	1902-1903	1905	1908	1909
	The Alma Matter Society was founded. It was the first campus wide society.	The first student union building was opened in what is now the McCord Museum.	The Student Society of McGill University was created.	SSMU was recognized as the official student government by McGill.

MID-CENTURY	1931	1963	1965	1968-1969
	Female students become members of SSMU. The first women president was Sharon Sholzberg in 1965.	PGSS was brought under the aegis of SSMU.	The new University Centre was opened to students.	Students occupied offices and disrupted meetings to gain seats on departmental committees and senate.

NOT THAT LONG AGO	1973-1974	1975	1977-1978	1980
	SSMU was incorporated as a distinct entity from McGill.	SSMU was put in trusteeship and student life was administered by the University.	SSMU was re-born as a department of McGill.	The McGill Daily became independent from SSMU.


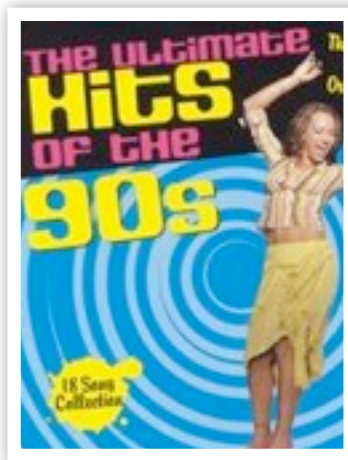
ONLY YESTERDAY	1991	1992-1993	2003	2008-2009
	PGSS became independent from SSMU.	SSMU was re-incorporated at the urging of McGill. It negotiated its first MOA & lease with McGill.	SSMU was accredited as the official student society federation for McGill.	SSMU turns 100.

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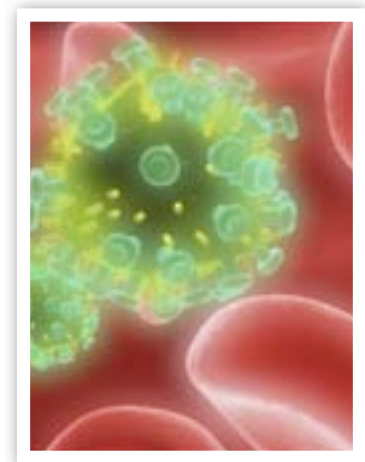
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James McGill's Burnside home.

The StudSoc of the 80s

At a glance

Called “The StudSoc” by the McGill Tribune, a newly formed paper in 1981, the Society of the 1980s would be recognizable to the students and executives of today. It’s offices are in the back area of the first floor of the University Centre. Many of the services that exist today were created. The underfunding of McGill led to the creation of ancillary fees.

Foundations of the present

Many of the institutions and hallmarks of the SSMU of today were founded during the 1980s. We highlight both the achievements and events which are still with the SSMU today and mention a few of the lessons learned from the decade.

Services, Publications & Operations

The **McGill Tribune** was founded as a weekly newspaper publication in 1981. While it had a student editor, many of the articles were written by SSMU executives and councillors. The VP internal had a strong role in the paper’s production. The Tribune’s early goal was “to cover student government, student activities, student clubs, student’s societ[ies], and to provide a forum for presenting, explaining and discussing the Society’s positions.” The paper emerged from a SSMU newsletter started in 1979-1980 which gave way to the “Informer,” edited by the VP internal in 1980-1981. Over its first few years, the Tribune underwent many masthead and layout changes as well as moving from a paper covering only student society activities to one that covered everything from financial news to weekly features on

non-campus issues. The rivalry between the Tribune and the McGill Daily was strong from the beginning.

Travel Cuts moved into the University Centre in 1981. The travel agency was part of the service arm of the National Union of Students, a precursor to the Canadian Federation of Students.

The **Mature Student’s Association** was founded in 1979 to act for freshman students at least 23 years of age.

Gertrudes II, aka **The Alley** opened in the basement of the University Centre in October of 1982. The Alley was a plush carpeted wood paneled bar and café aimed at the daytime crowd of sophisticated jazz loving students. It avoided the loud

represent all Black students regardless of ethnic and national origin. It supplemented various African and Caribbean student associations.



Q-PIRG McGill was founded as a club in 1987-1988. It became an independent student group with space outside of the university center the following year. It’s first initiative was the successful institution of a paper recycling program at McGill.

In 1989 the **McGill Legal Information Clinic** also became independent from the SSMU after its budget was cut by 50% without consultation. Despite this independence, the Clinic continued to frequently publish student oriented legal information articles in the McGill Tribune. The logo they adopted is still in use today.

CKUT was created out of Radio McGill after receiving an FM transmitting license. In 1988-1989, it required a \$4/semester fee to cover a \$229 000 debt to McGill from previous operating losses.

Plans for a **new Bookstore** were drafted in 1986. SSMU negotiated with the university to give up the profits they received from their current bookstore for the duration of the construction loan repayment period.

The 1980s saw the creation of independent student groups on campus. The McGill Daily was joined by CKUT, MLIC & Q-PIRG.

top 40s music of Gertrudes upstairs while holding events every evening. Upstairs at Gertrudes, beer prices increased from \$1 to \$1.10 (\$1.30 in the evenings) in an attempt to make the bar profitable again.

The **Black Student Network** was created in 1985-1986 as a group to

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Delays in construction emerged and the arrangement between SSMU and McGill over the funding was revisited on numerous occasions. The bookstore was finally finished in October of 1989.

The **Walk-Safe Network** was formed under the auspices of the Women's Union in 1988-1989. It's creation was spurred by increasing sexual assaults in the McGill ghetto.

Funding McGill

The as yet unnamed **Tomlinson Field house** received \$4 million of student funding at \$15/year for 15 years starting in 1982-1983. Problems in getting permission to build on the mountain delayed construction for the entire decade. McGill happily collected the student fees for the project anyways. Students voted in the winter of 1987 to end the fee if building had not started by 1989. Future SSMU execs chose not to enforce this mandate when construction appeared almost ready to begin by the 1990s.

University fees were first levied in 1986. A \$99 course materials fee was approved by the board of governors to cover photocopies. This additional fee was not considered part of tuition and therefore not subject to the MEQ tuition freeze. Once levied, it quickly becomes apparent that the fee was going to cover various departmental operating costs and not used for its purpose. Students in fact continued to have to pay for photocopies of readings at the bookstore. When questioned about this in Senate, McGill responded that they "never

said every penny would go to course materials."



Government & McGill Policies

Differential tuition for foreign students was increased in 1983-1984 as foreign students were to be charged \$5800/year (up from \$4350) compared to the \$500 tuition fees of other students. The International Student's Association wrote Minister of Education Dr. Camille Laurin to condemn the move and explained the various contributions international students make to McGill and Quebec.

For the first time, **out of province** students are charged a higher fee of \$1000 starting in the fall of 1984. RAEU holds a press conference condemning the issue as one that would lead to language based tensions in the province.

Senate considers adopting a **Sexual harassment** policy in 1983. A standing committee of Senate is mandated to this task. While various drafts are adopted, their prove problematic. A satisfactory policy is finally adopted 22 years later on December 12th 2005.

Longer library hours in McLennan are instituted during exam period as a SSMU initiative starting in the spring exam period of 1984.

SSMU began to partially fund this initiative in 1985 at a cost of \$2000.

The **Student Grievance Code** was presented to Senate in the fall of 1985. Senate initially found itself unable to adopt it for lack of quorum.

Senate recognized SSMU's right to **appoint students to senate committees** in the fall of 1985. While the right of students to sit on senate and its committees was won in 1967-1968, it took until 1985 for SSMU to be able to determine its student representatives.

An **Access McGill** fee of \$2/semester was initiated in the winter of 1988 to facility the mobility of differently abled students. Initial plans were for a (now removed) red wheelchair ramp for the University centre and the purchase of a special van. The operating costs of the van were to be paid for by McGill. The fee, initially a two year levy was renewed permanently.

SSMU Policies

In 1989-1990, the University centre became **smoke-free** in all areas outside



The StudSoc of the 80s

of Gert's and the Alley. The Management representative to Council argued that such a move was sending a wrong signal- that smoking is a bad habit.

SSMU Governance

The **General Assembly** was allegedly first held in the winter of 1988. Council envisioned the body as one that would pass resolutions that would set the agenda of council meetings. Quorum was a problem from day one and generally blamed on student apathy and insufficient advertising. Quorum was first reached when 500 students attended a GA in 1990 on whether to strike in protest of pending tuition increase. That motion failed although a blockade of the James building was approved.

SSMU execs could be **part-time students** and full time executives as of 1989.

A student **elected VP-Finance** was approved by student referenda in 1988-1989. Previously the VP finance was appointed by council.

External Representation

The Fédération Étudiante du Québec (**FEQ**) (later **FEEQ** and eventually **FEUQ**) was envisioned at McGill by representatives from SSMU, Université de Montréal (UdM), Laval, Concordia, Bishop's and Sherbrooke in 1988-1989. FEEQ is officially inaugurated in the SSMU ballroom on Saturday February 25th 1989 by McGill Sherbrooke, UdM, Laval, UQAR and Polytechnique. It's first policy was adopted from the SSMU policy on loans and bursaries with the additional request that 25% of a

student's debt be forgiven if a student graduates on time. This policy was eventually adopted by the Aide financière aux études (AFE) although at an amount of 15%.

It seemed like a good idea at the time...

While the 1980s gave SSMU many of the aspects that it has today, not all ideas were to be long lasting and successful. A few of the failed ones are highlighted below.

A **SSMU Activist Resource Centre** was envisioned in 1981. The library was to be staffed by student volunteers and accept donations from students and staff of materials on student societies from around the world. Councillors questioned why SSMU was trying to duplicate a function of the libraries. While it collected a few volumes and had a few student volunteers it appears dubious as to whether it did much more than get off the ground.



An **Ottawa-McGill** bus was envisioned between the student society of Ottawa and SSMU. The project failed after one trip when it was realized that no one had gotten a license from the Quebec government to operate a bus line. The bus would

have given cheaper tickets to students than the private greyhound line.

Along with the Concordia Student Union (CSU), SSMU **pulled out of RAEU** in November of 1982 in an attempt to reform the organization. While the reforms happened, such as a more equitable fee structure and proportional voting. SSMU executives failed numerous times to pass a campus referendum to rejoin.

Deficit budgets were rampant in the early 80s, with the Bruce Hicks administration overspending by \$273 255. By 1984 SSMU owed over \$700 000 to the university. Council passed a motion requiring budget surpluses from then onwards. A special student fee was leveled from 1985-1991 to pay back this debt.

Following a series of fights and coat theft, Gert's instituted a full time **coat-check policy** in 1989-1990. This response was believed to cut back on fights as students would not be able to smuggle weapons into the bar.

A meeting between Education Minister Claude Ryan in 1988 and university student leaders was a failure as most student leaders were in infrequent contact and the individual societies had no **common policy**. This failure was one of the reasons behind creating a federation of student societies.

Things SSMU should have thought of first...

Looking at the 1980s a few lessons emerge from the successes and failures of the decade.

The \$99 **course materials fee** was approved of by some councillors

The StudSoc of the 80s



whom thought the funds would go towards improving course materials in classes. When no such improvements actually materialized, students were quite upset. Lesson learned: just because McGill says they're going to collect funds for one reason does not mean those funds will actually be spent that way.

New building projects take a long time, especially when they're on the mountain. Efforts to build the sports complex were hindered a fair amount by antagonism between non-mcgill residents in the Ghetto and McGill. Building better relations there eventually went some ways towards the project being approved.

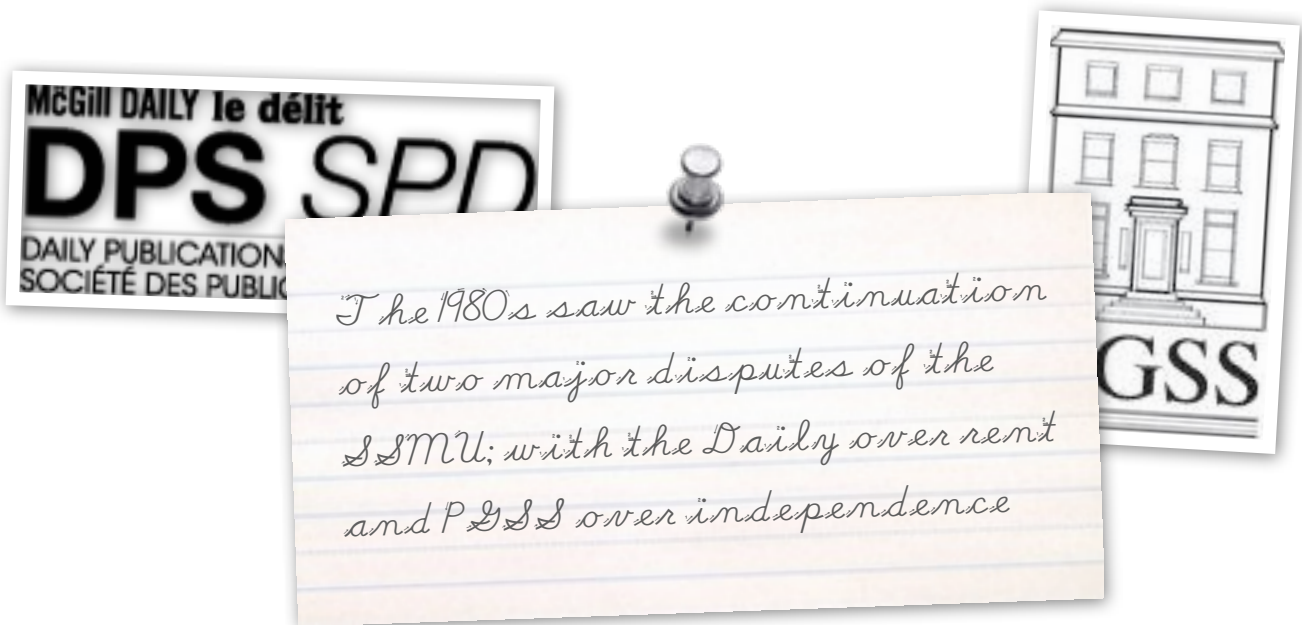
When students showed up to protest a **BOG** meeting in 1989-1990

at which increased tuition was to be discussed students thought they'd achieved a victory when the meeting was adjourned. The BOG meeting was merely re-convened a few minutes afterwards in the quiet of the principal's office.

Profit sharing initiatives are always problematic. Such an initiative with the SSMU cafeteria management company created an atmosphere of distrust as revenues were allegedly moved around to reduce the profits SSMU got. A similar profit sharing initiative for the McGill bookstore would prove equally problematic for SSMU in the 2000s when various administrative management fees were added to reduce the bookstore's profitability.



The StudSoc of the 80s



Daily Trouble...

All politicians, student or otherwise, have disputes with the press. The 1980s saw yet another saga of disputes between the SSMU and the McGill Daily. The creation of the McGill Tribune was in large part a product of dissatisfaction of the refusal of the Daily to provide coverage of student life or at the very least what the SSMU perceived as fair coverage. Like today, the Daily of the 1980s was a paper that saw itself as a defender of alternative view points and the voice of the marginalized.

The Daily's positions were clearly not ones supported by a majority of students. In almost yearly referendums, the Daily failed to motivate students to increase its student fees. When such referenda did pass, enterprising students used the SSMU judicial board to invalidate them on technicalities. Daily pleas to the McGill Senate fell on deaf ears.

Eventually, the Tribune and the Daily began to accept each other as worthwhile papers and stopped critiquing the coverage and ideology of the other.

The Daily went into the 1980s paying a symbolic rent of 1\$ to the student society and eventually finished the decade at the same rate. However, in between, negotiations dragged on with SSMU threatening to charge rents equivalent to downtown Montreal commercial rates. When the Daily finally had one of its referenda approved, SSMU relented and returned to a \$1/ a year model.

PGSS just wants to be left alone...

Due to financial difficulties, the PGSS was placed under the umbrella of SSMU in the early 1960s. PGSS had representatives to SSMU council and graduate students were eligible to become SSMU execs (although few ever did so).

With Thomson house renovated into a graduate house & bar in the 1980s, and with an increasing sense that graduate students did not get the same benefits as undergrads from SSMU, the PGSS began to lobby for independence.

Various referenda's and meetings were held along with university mediated discussions on what was to be done with PGSS. The McGill Senate itself was reluctant to see the creation of an independent student society, perhaps in part over concerns of having both SSMU and PGSS representatives to committees.

Many debates raged over the charging of the same SSMU fees to graduate students as undergrads. Eventually, SSMU relented and lowered its fees for graduate students. However, SSMU was adamant that PGSS should pay SSMU a fee for the services it gave grad students.

The 1980s ended with the dispute unresolved but with the PGSS becoming less and less involved with SSMU affairs.

Building History

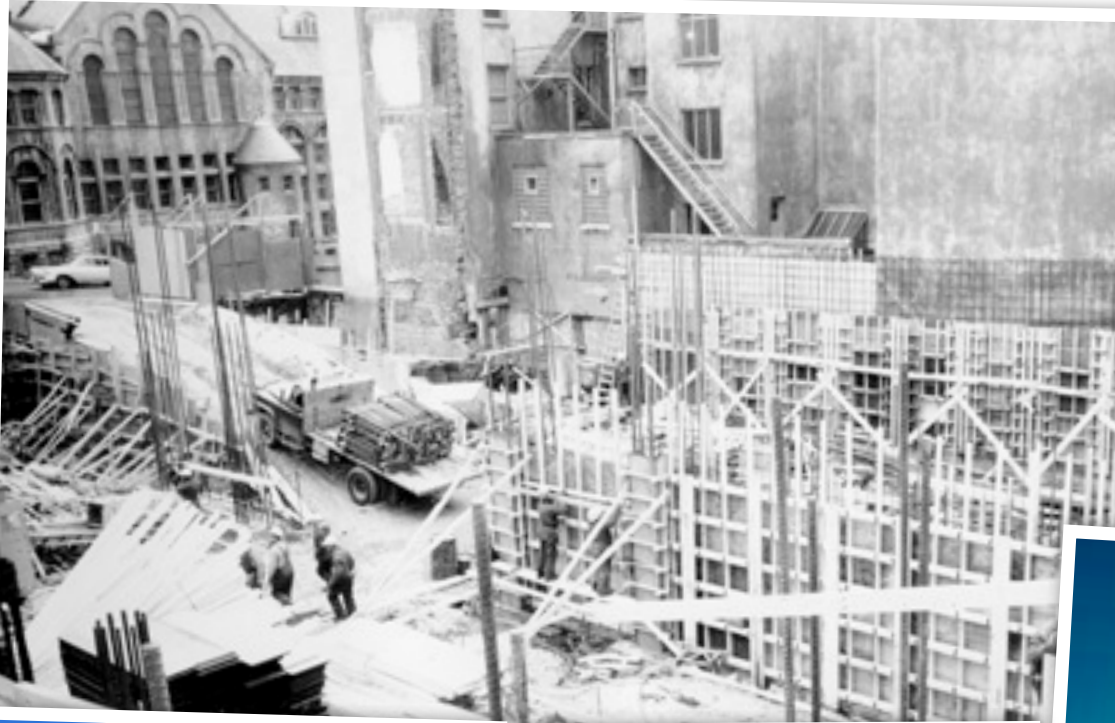


The Student Union Building

The Student Union building was a gift from Sir William MacDonald. When the Student Union Building, (now the McCord Museum) was opened in 1905, it was declared one of the finest clubs in Montreal. All male students whom paid the annual 5\$ membership fee could benefit from the building.

The structure, built of Montreal limestone, was elegant, but was not overly ornamented. The basement contained an exercise room, baths, showers, the kitchen, and storage areas. The entrance hall, on the first floor, led into the dining room and the luncheon room where students could get a hot meal after class.

Building History



The second floor contained a spacious, comfortable lounge furnished with chairs and tables and heated, in part, by a large fireplace. The great hall, with frescoed tympanums above the windows, stretched the length of the third floor.

University Centre

The initiative of creating a new building was a project of decades. A New Union Committee was struck in the late 1920s and 35 years later eventually succeeded in having the building started.

The University Centre, or unofficially since 1992, the William Shatner University Centre, was constructed from 1963-1964 and was completed in 1965.

The building was designed by the same architectural firm that designed the Leacock building. It's goals were very functional- to provide meeting spaces for student clubs and host a collection of student society activities. The University Bookstore was also previously held in the building.

Moving into Brown

As of 1997-1998, SSMU began collecting a 20\$/semester fee to construct a new Student Services building. Negotiations with McGill allowed for SSMU to move it's offices into the new building. Space was also provided for the SSMU Daycare, the MISN Coca-Cola International Student Lounge (which becomes the SSMU Nursery in

Building History

2009, and a SACOMSS office. SSMU moved into its new office in 1999-2000. This move allowed for a re-organization of the Shatner building.

The McGill Tribune office was brought to its first floor location from its basement location in what was a subdivision of the Alley. The Tribune occupied what was then the actual offices of the SSMU executive. The Alley was closed, but Gert's was moved to the B1 space that included the former McGill Tribune office. The first floor lounge, cafeteria, and smoking rooms were established. Additionally, the Daily Office was changed slightly to give it its current B1 location as the B1 entrance was created.

Up to Code

After a safety audit revealed that the Shatner building did not allow hosting of large events in the ballroom, a series of renovations were undertaken from 1999-2009. The safety & accessibility aspect of these renovations included the adding of a main elevator to the building, the construction of a B1 access, installation of smoke guards and improvements to the sprinkler and ventilation systems. While an external fire escape was also considered, its prohibitively high cost made it impossible to construct. Cosmetic changes to the building included the addition of a student lounge on the first level, renovations to the ballroom, additions of a 3rd floor kitchen and server, new club offices and meeting rooms on the 4th floor, new meeting rooms in B1, the relocation of TV

McGill and Sadie's, and renovations to bathrooms on both B1 and the first floor. The student fee of 11.84\$ that funded these projects will end in 2009-2010.

Paying our Dues

For most of SSMU's occupation of the University Centre, McGill has charged a symbolic \$1 rent for the building. In the 1999 LOA negotiations, SSMU agreed to pay first \$50 000 then \$100 000 per year

for the building. With the expected revenues from the CBA these sums were not considered excessive. As of 2006, McGill wanted to charge SSMU \$200 000 for rent as part of the agreement reached in 1999 that SSMU's rent would increase once the bookstore profits were transferred to it. However, the \$100 000 amount was maintained despite McGill's costs for heating and electricity for the building allegedly costing 3-4 hundred thousand dollars per year.



In, Out & About

SSMU & the Student Movement

The Student Movement: Always at the crossroads

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville remarked that the people of the United States were members of all manners of associations, clubs, and gatherings.

Student activism at a level greater than the university only occurred centuries after Tocqueville's visit and materialized throughout the world in the 1950s and 1960s.

Since its inception, the student movement has been split along two substantial fault lines. The first, whether student groups should be taking a stance (let alone what stance that should be) on larger socio-political questions at home or abroad, and secondly, whether students should be protesting or engaging (and if so how) university and government stances on education. As such, the student movement is usually divided into four large camps.

There is clearly no right answer as to which of these camps or approaches is the better approach.

Indeed the right stance may well depend on the situation in question. At SSMU, each executive and council is usually comprised of members that will fall into one camp or another. Additionally, individual students also hold their own beliefs as to what they expect from their student society and may organize general assemblies to take actions to influence their student society or protest the university or government directly.

Like SSMU, other student societies also face their own shifts in the spectrum due to both internal factors and societal political issues. The combination of these factors suggests that the student movement is usually in a state of flux.

The Early Quebec Student Movement

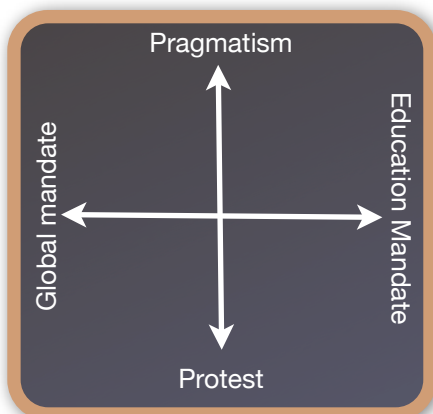
As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Quebec student movement has been divided since its inception in 1964-1965 with the creation of the Union Générale des Étudiants du Québec (UGÉQ). While the McGill Students' Council had an interest in joining the organization in 1965, a number of councillors rejected involvement in an organization that was seen to be controlled by separatist sympathizers. Students voted 2859 to 2548 against joining in what may have been the largest voter turn out achieved by that time. Some McGill students, interested in seeking membership in the UGÉQ, were not dismayed and on February 8th 1967 succeeded in joining UGÉQ after a 3rd referendum was called on the question. The Students' Council

received a mandate to join by a mere 34 votes. UGÉQ meetings were only held in French, and English was not even a recognized language of the organization. The agenda was dominated by both Marxist and Maoist elements. When the UGÉQ began to assist the *McGill Français* campaign, the Students' Council decided to revisit its interest in the organization. By the late 1960s, the organization was in turmoil and no executives were even elected from the membership.

McGill students were not represented in a new organization, the Association Nationale des Étudiantes et Étudiants du Québec (ANÉEQ) founded in 1974. The Student Society

The CFS and its precursor the NUS stayed out of the Quebec student movement through an understanding with the various Quebec associations until PGSS joined CFS in 1994.

did however maintain a type of observer status within ANÉEQ. ANÉEQ was a broad based coalition of universities and CEGEPS. It believed in protest as politics and took stances on all manner of broader social issues. Its "one association one vote philosophy" meant that the more youthful and idyllic views of CEGEPS students often preempted the desire of University associations to focus on educational issues. Decades latter, the first FEUQ president stated that the ANÉEQ made today's L'Association



In, Out & About

pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante (ASSÉ) look quite reasonable and tame.

From 1976-1979, the Rassemblement des associations étudiantes universitaires du Québec (RAEU) was established as an organization that only comprised university students. The SSMU joined in 1980 and withdrew in 1983, along with the CSU out of protest over the much higher fees anglophone universities were charged to be part of the organization. Nonetheless, before that occurred, the SSMU provided an office for RAEU in the University Centre and McGill students were part of its executive committee.

Soon after SSMU and CSU left, the RAEU agreed to many of the reforms that SSMU wanted, but the SSMU executive was repeatedly unable to convince McGill students to approve a referendum to rejoin the organization. These failures were due to an untoward alliance between organized interests by more left-wing students and the McGill Daily wanting SSMU to join the ANÉEQ and students who stood against any organization that promoted a freeze in student fees during an era of growing university deficits. Despite having no formal ties, SSMU maintained an observer status within RAEU and participated as best it could.

Founding FEEQ

After having been a member of a larger Quebec organization for a grand total of 5 years

since the 1960s, in 1998 SSMU adopted a leadership stance in founding the Fédération étudiante de Québec (FEQ) in partnership with CADEUL, FÉACUM, CSU, Bishop and FEUS. These associations had successfully lobbied together to create a computer loan program. Yet despite that success on a common goal, the general weakness of student societies with no common positions or strategies became apparent during an 1988 meeting with education Minister Claude Ryan.

The early Fédération des étudiants et étudiants de Québec (FEEQ) quickly grew to 7 organizations but existed more as a name and ideal than an actual organization. It had no office, staff or even a phone line and survived by voluntary donations from its members. SSMU itself was giving \$5000 a year during this infancy. For 1990-1991 FEEQ members decided that the organization should have an elected executive committee and SSMU successfully fielded candidates for the positions of Political Affairs and Academic Affairs. SSMU suffered a setback however when one of those officers resigned their position in protest to SSMU's unwillingness to grant PGSS independence.

As a federation, the policies of the FEEQ were those of its members. The FEEQ was set up in a way that respected the rights of individual societies to maintain distinct opinions but allowed members to reach a consensus on united stances that FEEQ

adopted as its positions. As such, while there was a weighted voting structure put in place, most if not all decisions were reached by consensus.

SSMU contributed \$2500 to an early effort of the FEEQ to pursue a court case against the government on impending tuition increases. The case, which was eventually unsuccessful would have allowed having all tuition increases paid into court pending resolution of the trial. This option was dropped as universities were thought to be within their right to expel students for non-payment in the interim.

Formalizing membership

Unlike an organization like CASA, the FEEQ's members were not simply the student societies but the individual students of those societies. As such, referenda were held amongst the various associations of FEEQ. The votes at the Université de Montréal and SSMU squeaked through at 54% and 52% respectfully. SSMU faced its own challenges from a PGSS that ran a no campaign in protest of their lack of independence and pursued various avenues to contest membership decisions that bound them as well as SSMU.

The FEUQ yo-yo

New Years Eve 1991 sees FEEQ reborn as the Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec (FEUQ) following the creation of its sister organization FECQ. The new year also sees SSMU pull out of the organization by a mere 13 votes when PGSS organizes a campus referendum to leave FEUQ mere



In, Out & About

weeks after officially joining. Unfortunately for PGSS, the SSMU J-board returned SSMU to membership finding that only council initiated referenda can affect student fees. Unfortunately for SSMU, the protest resignation of their VP External over the PGSS referenda left them with no one to return to the table.

SSMU's hard won membership was not to last long. FEUQ's campaign against tuition increases limited the increase of tuition to a 3% increase rather than the 15-20% the government was pushing for. This "victory" galvanized the campus left and the McGill Daily whom heavily attacked this concession arguing in favor of association with the ANÉEQ and adoption of its free tuition policy. Subsequently, a student initiated referenda called for SSMU to pull out of FEUQ. The J-Board, in reversal of its position of the previous year, approved this student initiated referenda but allowed council to change the question to a less biased one.

After an election campaign that saw full page pro-FEUQ ads in the Tribune, multiple anti-FEUQ Daily articles and FEUQ executives campaigning with SSMU on campus, students vote 42% to 39.5% to withdraw from FEUQ. The following year, a newly elected SSMU president wanted SSMU to join ANÉEQ while the VP External wanted to rejoin FEUQ.

Newly Independent

An-anti ANÉEQ, independent SSMU VP External finds little for the portfolio to do. Some voices on

campus question whether the position of VP External is even required when there's no associations for SSMU to work with.

Come 1994-1995 however, SSMU is rethinking external memberships. The VP External is in discussions with non-Quebec student societies to create the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations (CASA) and was considering joining a FEUQ that



had recently adopted a firm tuition freeze stance, abandoning a compromise position of inflation adjustments to tuition. Despite some campus concerns over pro-sovereignty elements in FEUQ and lack of English documents SSMU decided to take out provisional membership.

The Sovereignty debate

While not present at the meeting, SSMU's VP External informed council that its fears were quelled as on December 6th 1994, the FEUQ membership voted that FEUQ would have no official stance on sovereignty and would spend no resources nor lobby the government on that issue.

Instead, an ad-hoc student group was spearheaded by FÉACUM whose membership had passed a referenda requesting that it adopt a pro-

sovereignty stance and lobby FEUQ to adopt such a stance as well.

Unfortunately for SSMU, spring of 1995 sees a FEUQ report submitted to the National Commission on Sovereignty. SSMU council immediately ended its provisional membership status. How and why FEUQ reneged on an engagement of its membership taken mere months before will likely remain an open question. However, in the fall of 1995, the re-elected SSMU VP External resigns without explanation following the presentation of a letter received by FAÉCUM from the SSMU VP External outlining changes that SSMU wanted to the FEUQ National Commission on Sovereignty submission.

The remainder of the 1990s saw SSMU working with CASA and justifying its membership in that organization. Additionally, the SSMU co-operated with FEUQ and its members in various demonstrations and efforts to fight for the continuance of the tuition freeze.

In the fall of 2000, the FEUQ president was invited to SSMU council and stated that FEUQ's sovereignty mandate has not been acted upon in years and was an anachronism. SSMU President Baraniak notes rejoining FEUQ is an "inevitable" conclusion and is "just a matter of timing." FEUQ revoked its sovereignty mandate in May of 2001.

Marching towards the inevitable

In the winter of 2002, a former FEUQ executive and then current LSA VP External, with the blessing of the SSMU executive, formally motioned for SSMU to re-join la FEUQ.

In, Out & About

Nick Vikander became the first SSMU VP Community & Government to represent SSMU for a full year mandate and followed up on his involvement by becoming the first SSMU executive, since the founding of the FEEQ, to take an executive position at FEUQ. In 2006-2007 two additional McGill students were elected to la FEUQ. During the five years of SSMU's membership, la FEUQ unanimously adopted official positions against differential tuition at the request of SSMU. The FEUQ also asked the government to take action against McGill for ignoring the caps on international tuition. Perhaps due to its already awkward systematic underfunding of McGill, the MELS ignored these efforts. Further efforts proved futile as McGill opts out of public funding for some of its faculties international undergraduates.



In 2004-2005, the SSMU hosted the 15th anniversary of the founding of the FEUQ and invited a then much larger organization back to the ballroom for the gala celebrations.

\$103 million reasons

In 2004-2005, the Liberal Charest government cut \$103 million from

bursaries in the province of Québec. This decision set off the largest student protests in the province's history. Members of the FEUQ, ASSÉ and CFS-Q took to the streets and engaged in ever increasing campaigns against the government action. As the year progressed, FEUQ and the SSMU VP C&G become more and more at odds over the violent behavior of students at FEUQ protests. This behavior culminated in the use of a battering ram to breakdown the doors at a Liberal caucus meeting at the Chateau Montebello luxury hotel. While SSMU's involvement in the fight is limited to efforts at informing students of the issues and an attempted phone-a-ton campaign of liberal MNAs, a grassroots movement on campus succeeded in convening a massive GA. Eventually hundreds of McGill students marched with their brothers and sisters from across the province and engaged in protests and strike actions on and off campus.



Following the resignation of the Education Minister in the winter of

2005, the FEUQ negotiated a restoration of \$103 million worth of bursaries. Various student associations throughout the province held GAs and voted to end protest actions. A number of schools however felt betrayed and vowed to continue protest actions and use the momentum of student activism to push for greater concessions from the government than a return to the status quo. This split and dissatisfaction amongst various student groups eventually lead to a period of disaffiliation's from the FEUQ. The SSMU latter unified these dissatisfied groups in helping to found a new organization; the Table de Concertation (TaCEQ) in 2007.

A Return to Independence

Despite having left CASA in 2005-2006 in good parts due to it not being perceived as effective as the FEUQ, SSMU had students vote to leave the FEUQ in the fall of 2006.

A cyclical referendum planned for the winter of the 2006-2007 year was advanced to the fall after SSMU council learned that FEUQ was intending to secretly manipulate public opinion on campus in its favor. Such actions would remove the ability of SSMU execs to entirely control the referenda process.

At its first meeting of the year, SSMU Council called for an immediate disaffiliation referendum. After a campaign that SSMU focused on FEUQ's sovereignty stance of the 1990s, and a admittedly leading question, students voted 73.9% in favor of leaving FEUQ.

In, Out & About



Flirting with the CFS

A few weeks after leaving FEUQ, SSMU took out provisional membership with the CFS and attended a CFS national conference where they passed a motion to have CFS lobby Health Canada on the discriminatory blood drives questionnaire.

SSMU's interest in CFS was however conditional. The VP External wanted the CFS to become a greater body of debate on student issues rather than an executive driven association before joining.

In a year when tuition fees had become unfrozen for the first time since 1990, SSMU became increasingly interested in mobilizing against the tuition hike and sought to

engage the CFS-Q and its resources to this effect. This led to SSMU embroiling itself in a legal and political battle in the summer of 2007 over the elections of the CFS-Q executive. SSMU's actions see the other CFS-Q members, including PGSS, successfully lobby in CFS to have SSMU expelled. The Québec Superior Court resolved the legal battle in the winter of 2008 finding that the SSMU slate of CFS-Q directors was illegitimate.

The Table de Concertation

SSMU Council officially adopted membership in the Table de Concertation in the winter of 2009. This TaCEQ is comprised of SSMU, CADEUL, REMDUS, and AELIES. They adopt a three tiered voting

structure, a focus on consensus decision making, and start to seek official recognition from the MELS. Only the future will tell whether this organization will become a recognized middle path between the pragmatism of FEUQ and the radicalism of ASSÉ. Regardless, It is certain that SSMU will continue to fight for student's interests whether in or out of the larger student movement.



Becoming SSMU in the 90s

In a nutshell

SSMU in the 90s saw its transition from a department of McGill to an incorporated entity. The early decade saw the foundation of important SSMU programs, such as the health insurance plan while the end saw the construction of the current cafeteria. Important services such as the Daycare, Drivesafe, SACOMSS and TV McGill got their start. SSMU engaged in a vigorous attack on differential tuition by launching a court case that went to the Quebec Court of Appeal.

Gifts from the 90s

Services, Publications & Operations

The SSMU **Award of Distinction** Fund was created in 1990 following the donation of \$50 000 from a new campus food supplier. McGill refused to recognize the Award due to their policy of not having donors involved in the selection of award recipients.



SSMU VP Finance 1992-1993 Lev Bukhman proposed that SSMU set up a **medicare plan for students**. 75% of students voted in favor of the idea. A few years latter, Lev founded **ASEQ** and SSMU became its first client. The dental portion of the plan was added in the fall of 1996.

In 1991, The **McGill Sexual Assault Centre** (MSAC) which latter becomes the Sexual Assault Centre of

the McGill Student Society (**SACOMSS**) is founded to act as a lobby group interested in having parliament re-pass the rape-shield provisions to the Criminal Code and have McGill adopt a sexual assault policy. A few years latter and following growing sexual assaults and rapes near campus SACOMSS became a non-judgmental student service to assault victims while a coalition of the Women's Union took on the political advocacy role of the MSAC.



A SSMU report finds that there was a need for **daycare** spots for undergraduate students. The groundwork is set for a SSMU Daycare that finally opened in 2002. In 1997, students begin paying a fee to SSMU for the creation and running of the daycare.

Co-ops were the new thing in business and at SSMU. A used book co-op was set up in Shatner along with a computer co-op. An Organic Food Co-op was created in 1998. However, after McGill refused to collect a 2\$/semester fee for it as an independent group the project fell to the wayside until 2002.

SSMU convinced **Peel Pub** to **manage Gert's bar** and invest \$150

000 into renovating it. The pink walls and steel cages were replaced by hardwood floors and a oak and mahogany bar. Gert's became quite the classy joint. However, like most other food and beverage managers that SSMU contracted with, Peel Pub left the contract early finding it impossible to make money.

1995 saw an attempt to increase the Alley's attractiveness, it partnered with music students to host **big band nights** and other live performances. The lack of practice space for music students made the Alley a perfect venue for all involved.

In 1998, **UniversityBytes** opened in Shatner and established a partnership with SSMU providing both hardware and later network solutions. UniversityBytes was started by McGill alum out of their residence rooms and eventually grew to be a medium sized business in Montreal. SSMU ended the relationship in 2007 over a rent dispute.



In 1998-1999, **SSMU Drivesafe** was created. It helps get students home safely after SSMU events and was aimed at students living outside the ghetto area.

Becoming SSMU in the 90s



TVMcGill was also founded in 1998-1999 with an initial budget of \$3600.

IRSAM, one of the largest SSMU clubs, became independent in 1999 due to their large accounting needs. An agreement was reached whereby they are charged a symbolic \$1 rent a year. IRSAM still expected to receive funding as an SSMU club of about \$5000/year.



SSMU opened its own **photocopying service** in 1994 in partnership with the EUS. The service was shut down due to failed management negotiations with EUS in 1996 and the space was replaced by an elevator in Shatner. SSMU realized that there were many other cheap copying services available close to campus.

The **McGill First Aid Service** was founded in 1997. They were continuously starved for funds until they receive a direct subsidy through a student referendum in the 2000s.

MTY Tiki-Ming signed an agreement in 1999 to be the Shatner food supplier and invested \$650 000

into renovating the Shatner 2nd floor cafeteria. Even that sum was insufficient to renovate the area and SSMU spent an additional \$80 000 out of CERF to finish the project. Original visions of a posh international style food court were never completed.

In the winter of 2000, the McGill carnival tradition is revitalized with the establishment of **SnowAP**.

Government & McGill Policies

With growing class sizes due to insufficient university funding, the mid-90s VP University Affairs worked towards the creation of **First Year Seminars** to give incoming students a chance at a more personalized university learning experience.



SSMU was vocal in getting Senate to reject a **4.3 grading scale** in 1995-1996. The debate returns to Senate every few years afterwards.

SSMU successfully worked in Senate during 1996-1997 to create a revised **holy day policy** that accommodated non-Christian students. No longer would students need notes from Rabbis, Mullah's or other religious leaders to justify their participation in their own religious holidays.

When PQ Education Minister Pauline Marois threatened to **increase tuition** in 1996, a SSMU GA saw over 800 people voting in favor of a strike action and joining the efforts of students across the province. After massive FEUQ led mobilizations and

demonstrations, the PQ government abandoned the policy but decided to increase out of province tuition to the Canadian average and match international tuition rates to Ontario's.

The **Millennium Scholarship Fund** was created in 1996-1997. CASA took credit for the achievement. Quebec eventually negotiated its own arrangement.

SSMU Policies

In 1992-1993, SSMU officially adopted its long standing position to **not pass council motions on external political issues that are extremely divisive**. The official policy reflected concerns over the Palestinian question.

SSMU officially terminated its **South African Campaign**, with the goals of divestment by the Board of Governors reached. The campaign, started in 1979, and enshrined in the constitution in 1991 was ended in the winter of 1993. Students in the group were free to continue to take actions independently of SSMU.



Becoming SSMU in the 90s

In 1992, botched cafeteria contract negotiations see **Polycuisine** commence legal actions against SSMU and McGill. The Québec Superior Court finds SSMU and McGill's favor after a long legal battle that ends in 2004. McGill was less than pleased in being included in a dispute they did not see as their own. The court found that there was no contract between SSMU and Polycuisine despite evidence that Polycuisine was about to start serving food within hours of the negotiations breaking down with SSMU.

In 1993 SSMU decided to officially **recognize clubs of a political or religious nature**. This doubled the number of recognized clubs on campus. Some councillors expressed concern over funding all these new groups.

Annual protest actions were started in the early 90s against a discriminatory **blood drive policy** than bans the collection of blood from homosexual men.

SSMU Governance

SSMU is **re-incorporated** in 1992-1994 as part of a requirement of LOA negotiations. McGill may have been concerned about it's liability from SSMU actions due to the Polycuisine action. SSMU had previously incorporated in 1973-1974 but was latter placed in trusteeship due to bankruptcy. The incorporation left SSMU having to repay McGill \$360 000 that SSMU had been borrowing for summer expenditures. This repayment is completed by 1997.

In 1992, a jocular Alex Usher & co passed a referendum to name the University Centre the **Shatner Building**. William Shatner expresses pleasure and even visits the building once in 1999 where he is shown plans for the new cafeteria. He never donated money to his alma matter so McGill does not recognize the



building's baptism.

For 1991, the SSMU decided to add a Speaker of Council position to allow the SSMU president to fully participate in council debates.



A new general manager, **Guy Brisebrois** was hired by the SSMU in the winter of 1992. The GM worked with SSMU until the winter of 2004 at which point he went to Toronto.

In 1993-1994, SSMU organized a commission on French at McGill that has 40 presenters from McGill including various Deans and the Principal. SSMU's recommendations were eventually given to Senate. Recommendations included professors providing a bilingual lexicon of key words to students and the replacement of the SSMU VP External by a **Francophone Commissioner**.

1994-1995 **Senate restructuring** saw the creation of ex-officio seats for the SSMU President and VP University Affairs. The 13 remaining undergraduate student seats were proportionately allocated to faculties that fielded candidates.

Following Al Gore's invention of the internet, SSMU decided to get its own **website** in 1996. This decision becomes the bane of VP Internals for years to come. The early websites had a few club and service pages.

SSMU Council established new **standing committees** in 1996 that continue to exist such as Nominating, Constitutional & by-law review, and programming. Other committees such as publications nominating and activities nominating were eventually abandoned.

The **Financial Ethics Research Committee** was created for 1996-1997 despite a SSMU executive campaign against the positions. The advisory Commissioners were seen by SSMU as a needless bureaucratic hurdle and generally ignored from the start. The SSMU executive has the j-board initially void the referendum on

Becoming SSMU in the 90s

the grounds that SSMU never translated the question into French.

The number of election posters for the 1997-1998 SSMU executive campaign were so high that they led to the imposition of a **limit of 1000 posters** per candidate and a reduced candidate campaign budget of \$300 to \$150. Some candidates were previously posting nearly 8000 posters during a campaign period.

The **First Year Committee of Council**, and eventually a First Year Rep to Council position was established in 1997.

Both in 1992-1993, and 1996-1997, Council rejected a proposed split of the VP UA position into a VP Academic and new **VP Equity**. The groundwork was however set for a SSMU Equity Commissioner in years to come.

In 1997-1998, SSMU Council voted against putting **elections on-line**. Councillors expressed fears that an online system could be hacked and that students may vote without learning about the issues first.

The SSMU executive of 1999-2000 was quite entrepreneurial and attempted to create a **SSMU Poverty Research Centre**, a **SSMU Travel Program** and a **SSMU Small business investment fund** in co-operation with the City of Montreal. The programs don't last much past the embryonic stage.

As of 1999, the SSMU began to pay **rent on the Shatner building** of \$100 000 rather than the previous \$1. This amount was expected to increase to \$200 000 once the bookstore loan was paid off by McGill. The rental

amounts were considered inconsequential given the pending millions SSMU was to receive from the Coca-Cola deal.

A 1998-1999 security and safety audit found that the **Shatner building** was not up to code. This necessitated an estimated 2.5 million dollars of **renovations**. SSMU President Duncan Reed thought the renovations would be accomplished by the end of the summer. The audit forced campus groups to cancel activities, such as EUS pubnight, in the ballroom.

As part of the renovations, Gert's and the Alley were merged, moving Gert's to its current downstairs location.

Funding McGill

The **Tomlinson sports complex** was finally opened in January of 1995, 13 years after the student fee was first levied. Students keep paying various renovation fees until 2008.

The **Library Improvement Fund** was first levied in 1997 at \$10/semester despite some Council protest that libraries are a core university function. McGill had been facing criticism in media rankings for its poor standing in libraries.

SSMU supported the construction of a **student services building** and completion of the newly opened sports complex. A \$30 fee was levied for both projects starting in 1997. SSMU eventually negotiated space for its new office, MISN, SACOMSS and a Daycare in the new building.

The **McGill Student Fund** was passed for 1999 at \$38/semester. It replaced the previous library fund and allocated 14\$ to the libraries and \$12

each to bursaries and the Shatner renovations. The McGill Alumni Association agreed to match student contributions to the libraries and bursaries.

It made sense to them...

Like every decade, SSMU in the 90s made decisions that appear to students today as good hearted but perhaps somewhat misplaced. Decisions that an attentive council should really have subjected to more debate. Topping the list of ideas that made sense to them but not to us are:

The spending of \$31 000 on SSMU branding including the purchase of a **giant Martlet mascot** that resembled a big red chicken. When enterprising students abscond with the Mascot's head a few years latter the remainder is placed in SSMU storage.

SSMU attempted to establish its own **emergency bursary fund**. Thankfully this project kicks around until someone at SSMU decided that a student bursary fee administered by McGill Student Aid is more practical.

Council rejected a new Walksafe constitution that would grant a majority of executive positions to woman on the grounds that this was discriminatory and in violation of the SSMU Constitution. Council eventually decided that **affirmative action** clauses in clubs are not discriminatory but empowering.

SSMU lobbied in senate to have **gender neutral degrees** awarded and proposed that Baccalaureates and Magisteriats degrees be granted rather than Bachelors and Masters. Senate rejects the idea and finds that

Becoming SSMU in the 90s

the political correctness movement can only go so far.

To er is SSMU

SSMU grows and makes itself a better organization every year. The 1990s like every decade saw SSMU engaged in a number of unfortunate situations. No history is complete without touching on some of those.

To be more environmentally friendly, 1995-1996 SSMU Frosh gives students diskettes with campus information rather than paper. The few students who actually look at the diskettes suffer computer crashes when the **virus infected disks** are loaded.

Despite a constitution that required SSMU documents in French, it took a VP University Affairs taking

his own executive to J-Board to force SSMU to **translate its by-laws, constitution and policy** into French or face having them invalidated.

The **cola wars** hit McGill in 1999-2000.

Despite McGill and SSMU allegedly agreeing to equally sharing 10 million dollars from Coke, the PGSS, CFS, and other campus elements campaign against the effort. Eventually 56.4% of students vote against the proposal. Some students are upset that the agreement will not be a public document and there are fears of Coke having control over academic



materials. An additional concern was of automatic extensions if sales quotas are not met. A few years latter McGill signs an agreement anyways, and Pepsi and SSMU sign their own agreement. Although McGill signed the agreement, it was SSMU that operated campus cafeterias. The early 2000s sees McGill remove these cafeterias from SSMU management. The referendum itself and subsequent j-board decisions highlighted significant problems in the Elections McGill process including the role of 3rd 3rd parties in funding SSMU campaigns, the limited powers of the CRO to address rules violations, and the problems of SSMU executives not being allowed to use their office to campaign.

Ruel c. Québec (Éducation), [2001] R.J.Q. 2590 (QCCA).

After agreeing to maintain a tuition freeze of \$1668 for Quebec residents in 1996, the Minister of Education increased by \$40/credit the amount out of province students paid for 1996-1997. SSMU supported a suit against the Minister of Education for authorizing this amount and McGill University for collecting this increased amount. SSMU recruited a BC student named Paul Ruel as the primary plaintiff in the case. After SSMU lost before the Superior Court, they hired one of the most famous lawyers of the day, Me. Guy Bertrand, on appeal. Me Bertrand had recently been an intervenor in the *Reference re Secession of Quebec*, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217, and was a founding member of the Parti Québécois.

SSMU's case on appeal was on 2 primary grounds. The first was whether the implementation of differential fees through the use of discretionary power by the Minister of Education was a violation of administrative law. The second was whether differential tuition violated s.10 and s. 15 of the Canadian Charter- interprovincial mobility rights and Equality Rights. In addition SSMU alleged that s. 10 of the Quebec Charter was violated- the right to equality in the exercise of one's rights and liberties.

The Québec Court of Appeal followed a string of jurisprudence holding that rules outlined by the Minister of Education are just that rules, and not regulations which can be the subject of judicial action. Furthermore, the Minister of Education has wide powers, established by legislation, to use their discretion in making policy. Furthermore, as universities were simply permitted to charge an additional \$40 per out of province student, and as universities are independent from the government no violation of administrative law occurred.

The court also followed jurisprudence in determining that mobility rights allow Canadians to earn a living in any province and that studying, while perhaps a pre-requisite to earning a living, is not gainful employment as such. Therefore s.10 was not violated. The court equally determined that "residence" is not an analogous grounds of discrimination and that furthermore, charging higher tuition to out of province students was not an affront to their human dignity- a requirement for discrimination suits. The court noted with approval that Quebec was merely allowing universities to charge the Canadian average for out of province students and was still spending more on education than any other province.

Blood Drives

SSMU has not faced an easy path in dealing with blood drives. Before donating blood, male donors are asked:

“Have you had sex with a male, even one time, since 1977.”

For their part, female donors are asked:

“In the past 12 months, have you had sex with a man who has had sex, even one time since 1977, with a man?”

While for decades, SSMU has been hosting blood drives, the 1990s saw a growing and vocal concern from Queer McGill. The question, like others on the blood drive questionnaire, is discriminatory. For some, the question is especially problematic as they believe it reinforces an image of gay men as the carriers of HIV/AIDS.

SSMU Council initiated its first ban in the fall of 1993 and decided to lobby the Canadian Red Cross (CRC). Perhaps given the recently adopted position that Council would not take a stance on divisive external issues, the SSMU debate was framed as to whether the Society’s constitution prohibited SSMU from hosting blood drives.



The response from the Red Cross was less than positive, with the Montreal Medical Director for the Red Cross saying that he was “very disappointed that where we have the most intelligent people in Montreal this resolution has passed.” Opposition to the SSMU decision also came from on campus, with the SUS arguing that SSMU should lobby Health Canada who sets the policy, not the Red Cross whom collects the blood. Similarly, AUS organized a campus referendum to overturn SSMU’s decision. The winter of 1994 saw council overturn its decision when the Canadian Red Cross presented council some of the science of blood collection. The SSMU VP Internal who drafted the SSMU Constitution’s language on discrimination said that it was never the founder’s intent that the SSMU Constitution prohibit blood drives.

The SSMU Judicial Board ruled 2:1 that men who are banned from giving blood suffer no prejudice and that the SSMU constitution includes a proportionally test that allows SSMU to act in the best interest of the membership as a whole. With the referendum question approved,

students voted 2207 to 412 in favor of continuing blood drives.

In the fall of 1996, controversy again visits SSMU when President Carter, the first openly gay SSMU president, attempted to give blood, resulting in the CRC canceling the blood drive for fear that other gay students would secretly give blood. President Carter’s actions resulted in hundreds of students signing a petition calling for his impeachment.

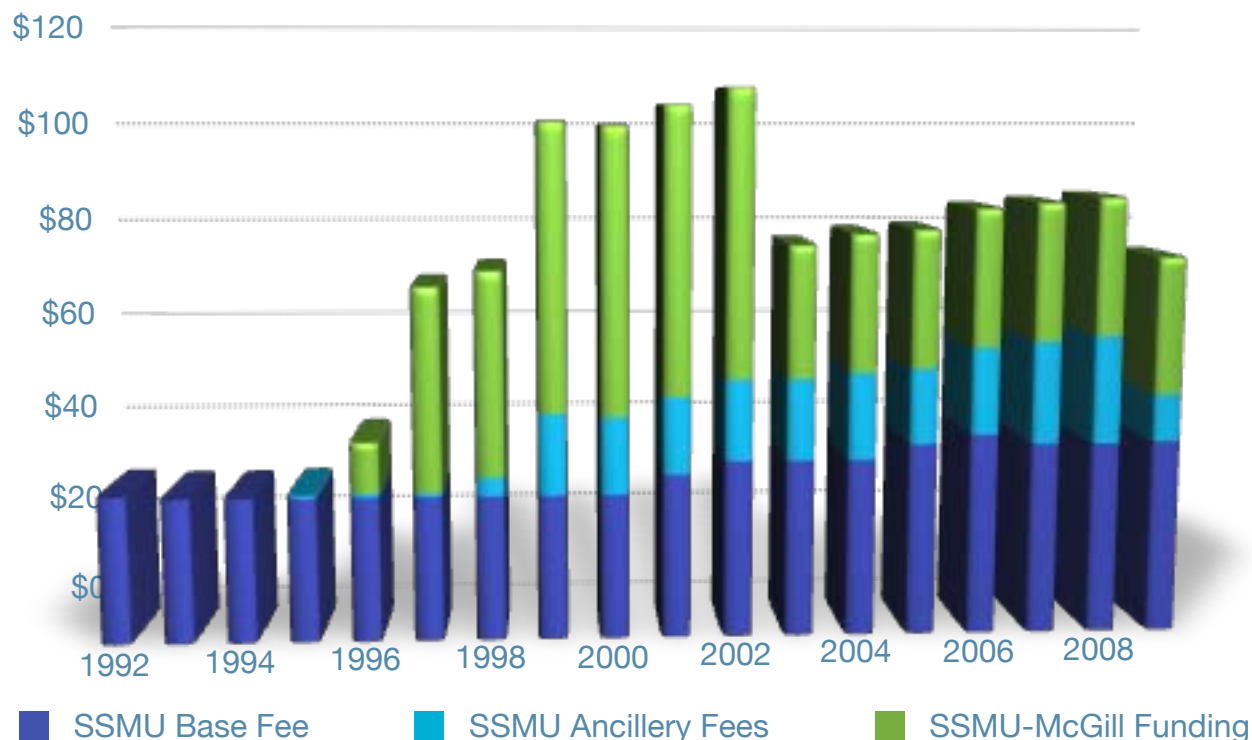
Despite these complications, SSMU made some progress on the issue when the CRC admitted that the 1977 date is problematic and that they had made recent advances in blood testing that would allow for modifying the question. Unfortunately, for SSMU the national debate on blood safety flared up following the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s. The Federal government’s *Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada* (The Krever Commission) even went so far as suggesting that blood collections not occur at all in Montreal due to its large gay community.

SSMU returned to hosting campus blood drives and Queer McGill annually engaged in various information campaigns and protest actions. In the fall of 2001, the Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec held open forums on the blood drive questionnaire and Queer McGill made a submission. After public consultations, both bodies maintain the question due to the opinion of public focus groups. In the fall of 2005, SSMU Council unanimously decided to engage Héma-Québec again on the reasons behind the question. A radical splinter group of Queer McGill, the Second Cumming, disrupted a 2005 blood drive and Héma-Québec left mid-drive due to fears about students lying on the questionnaire. In 2006-2007, SSMU invited Héma-Québec back for town hall discussions but later banned blood collection in Shatner for constitutional reasons. A student initiated referendum saw student vote 68.5% for reinstatement of blood drives but a specially appointed J-Board affirmed 2:1 that SSMU’s Constitution does indeed prohibit blood drives. That decision effectively bans blood drives in Shatner until a new questionnaire or new SSMU constitution is developed.



Money Matters

SSMU Student Fees Since Incorporation



The above chart shows the amounts SSMU has been charging students since its incorporation in 1992. For simplicity's sake, we ignored the fact that there are actually four levels for SSMU fees- those charged to students in "A Faculties" and those charged to students in "B Faculties" as well as divisions for part-time and full time students in both sets of faculties. "B Faculties" are those students in what are generally considered professional programs at the undergraduate level, such as Law, Architecture, Dentistry, Medicine, and Religious Studies. "A Faculties" are all remaining undergraduate students. Students also pay \$2.00/semester and \$0.50/semester to fund services for differently abled students (Access McGill) and to bring refugees to study at McGill (World University Services Canada).

The base fee (dark blue) represents the unallocated amount that SSMU receives from each student. Such amounts go to paying the SSMU operating budget. The fee was largely unchanged until it was pegged to inflation for 2006.

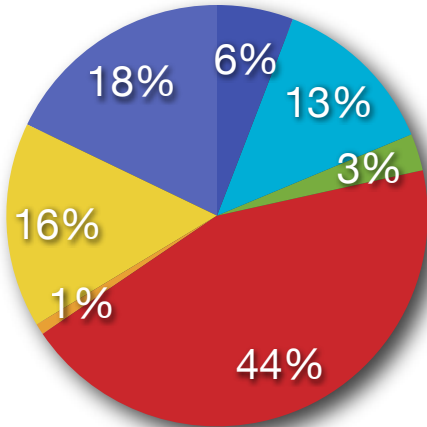
SSMU ancillary fees are fees that go directly to SSMU but are earmarked for specific purposes. The first fee was for SACOMSS in 1995, followed by a Daycare fee in 1998, and eventually a SSMU building renovation fee as of 1999. The second half of the 2000s saw a number of small ancillary fees added for individual projects, services, and publications. Many of these fees were initiatives of the beneficiary student groups to secure guaranteed SSMU funding. Along with the MSF, most of these ancillary fees are optional. Opt-out rates have increased from 2-3% in the early 2000s to 10-12% by the end of the decade. This change may be influenced by the institution of an electronic opt out system on Minerva. Interestingly enough, opt outs are consistent across fees, suggesting that students do not opt out, on the whole, for political reasons.

The last component, SSMU-McGill Funding, is money that SSMU collects and then transfers to McGill to cover projects that students wanted to directly fund. Such projects include bursaries, libraries, athletics renovations, and the construction of the Brown Student Services Building. The spike of these fees from 1997-2002 represented a contribution to the Brown Building. For 2004, SSMU both reduced the amount it contributed to libraries and bursaries but also levied a fee for athletics complex renovations.

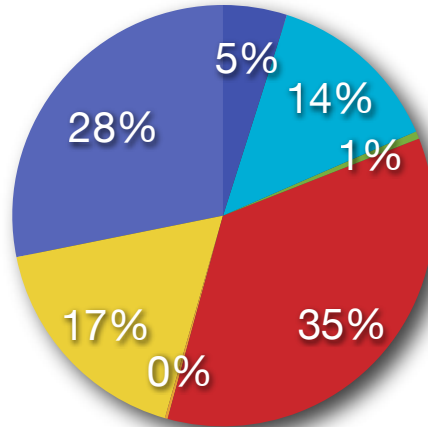
Money Matters

● Haven Books ● University Center ● Clubs ● General Admin ● Gert's ● Governance ● Surplus

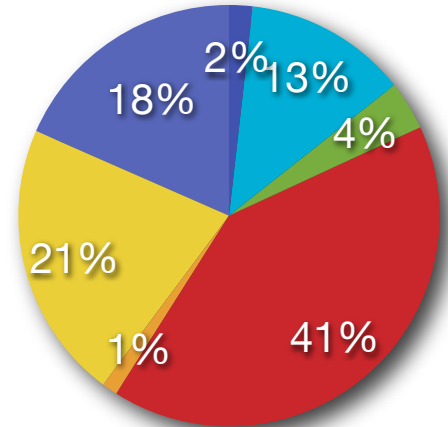
2008-2009



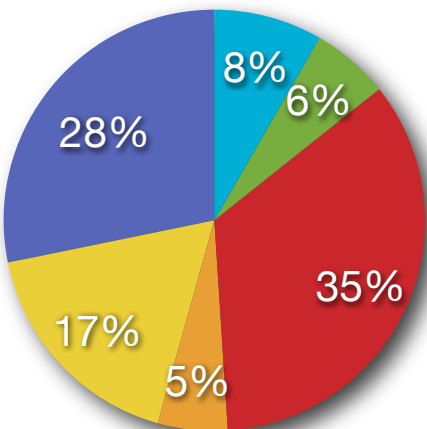
2007-2008



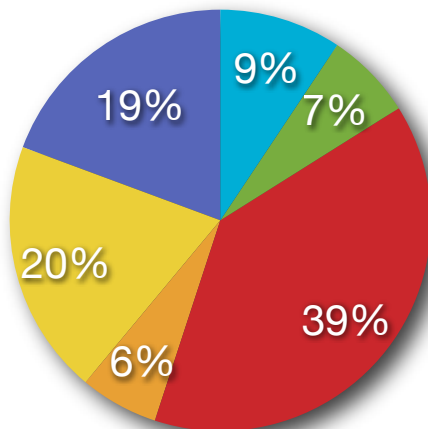
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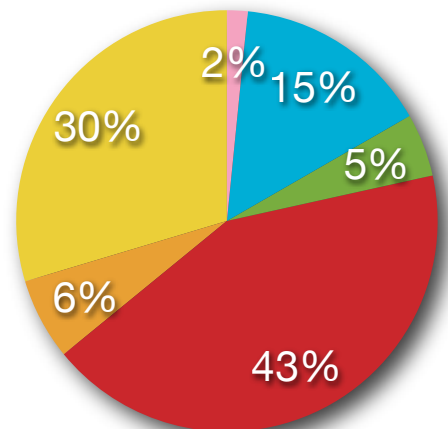
2005-2006



2004-2005

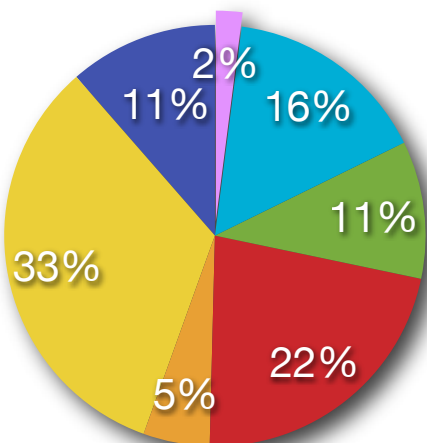


2003-2004

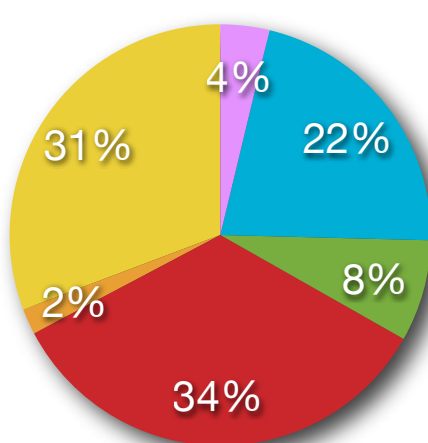


● Publications ● University Center ● Clubs ● General Admin ● Gert's ● Governance ● Surplus

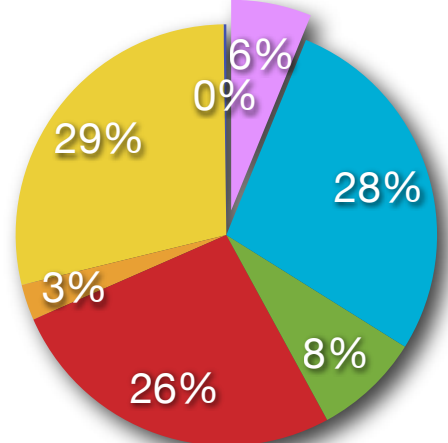
2002-2003



2001-2002

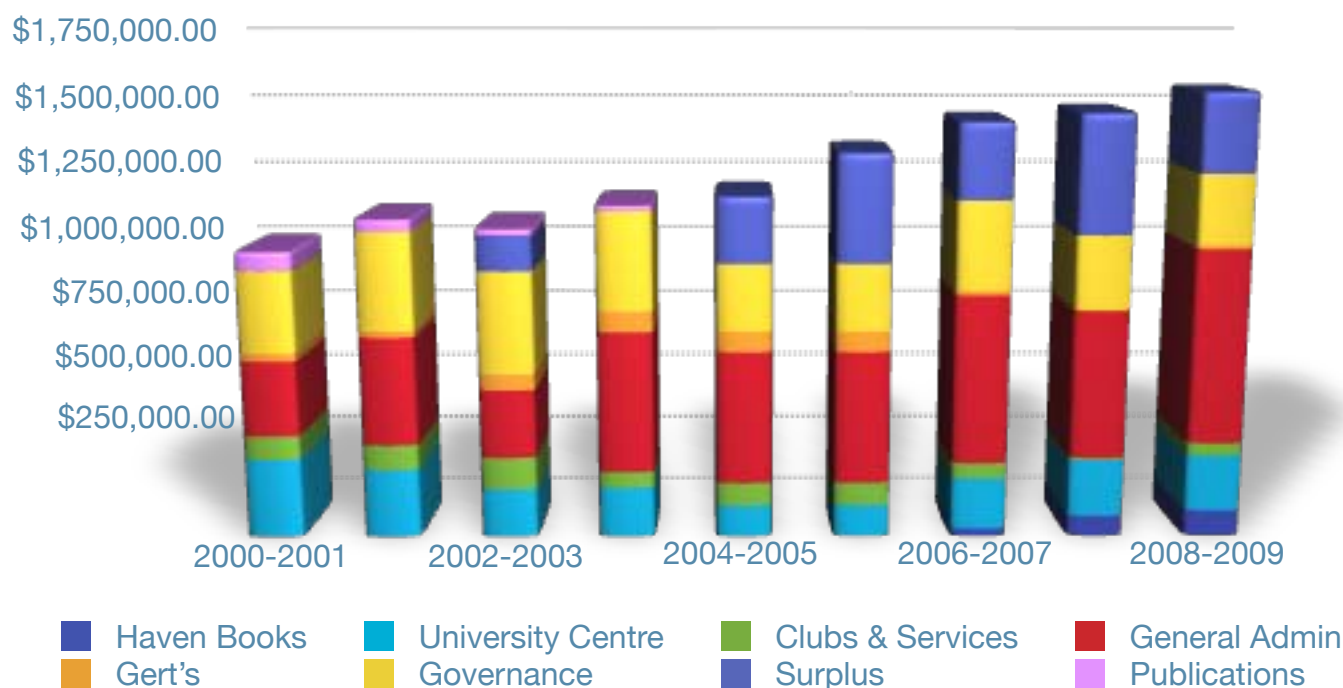


2000-2001



Money Matters

SSMU Year End Net Expenditures 2000-2009



The nine pie charts and the above bar graph shows SSMU net expenditures from 2000-2009. Net expenses are expenses of the society after revenue is taken into account. In essence, they are subsidy from the SSMU base fee and other revenue to various activities. As such, some activities, such as SSMU programming (Frosh, 4 floors, Snow AP, etc) which actually generate a surplus on the aggregate therefore do not appear as society expenses. Similarly non-intuitive, is the decline in amounts SSMU is spending on services from 2007-2009 despite various increases in direct service funding from student fees. Again, this is nothing more than a reflection of the type of graph, that shows net, not total expenditures.

When the society generates a surplus, as it notably has from 2005-2009, the surpluses from all activities, such as SSMU programming or services are included in that sum.

The pie charts show the percentage of SSMU money allocated towards specific activities in a given year. They are useful for assessing where money is going in any given year. The bar chart on this page takes into account that

SSMU expenditures have increased by 50% in the last decade, and is therefore more useful for cross year comparisons.

Understanding the Data

Having outlined what we're looking at, we can next ask what the numbers tells us about SSMU expenditures over the last 10 years.

Publications & Haven Books

The most obvious difference is with publications and the bookstore. From 2000-2004, SSMU was subsidizing its publications, such as the McGill Tribune, Red Herring, Old McGill and the Agenda. Starting in 2004-2005, those publications become net generators for SSMU through increased revenue from advertising. At the other end, from 2007-2009 we see the costs of Haven Books.

Gert's

The next interesting story is with Gert's. We note that it a significant expense of SSMU from 2002-2006, hovering at 5-6%. However, in the years before it was less of a

Money Matters

burden and in subsequent years it ran at an almost break-even amount. This represents efforts from 2005-2006 onwards into controlling Gert's expenditures and represents shifting attitudes towards the bar.

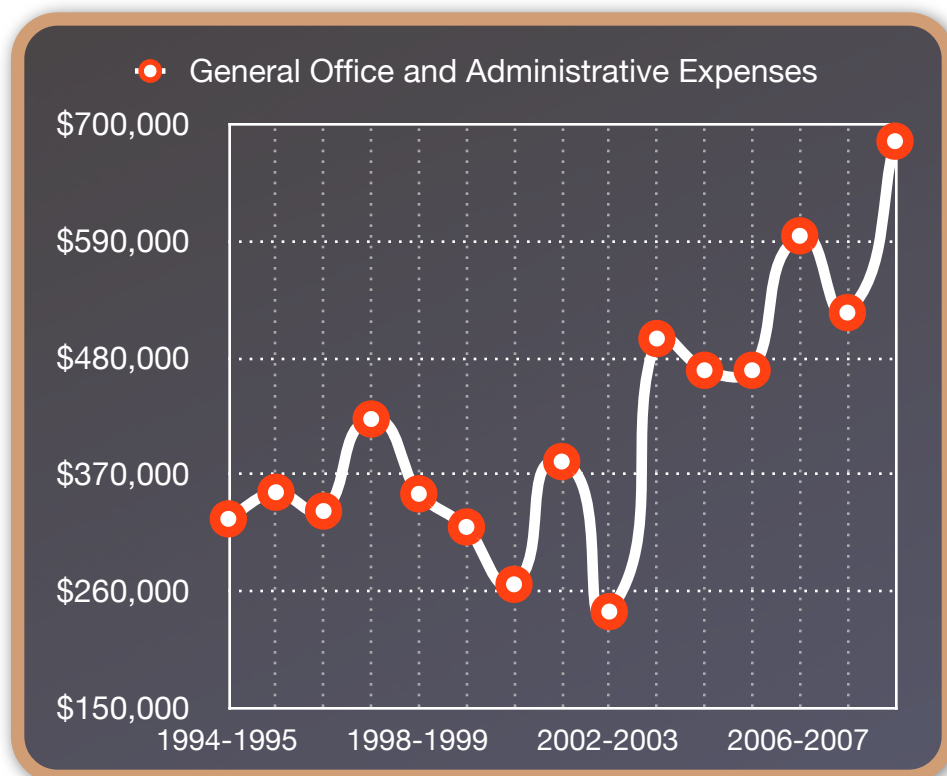
Surpluses

If we compare the first half of the decade to the second, we note that, with the exception of 2002-2003, SSMU was operating at either a loss or break-even in the earlier years and has been generating significant surpluses in the latter half of the decade. Not included in this graph or the pie chart is an additional one time payment of 1.875 million in 2005-2006 to SSMU representing a buy-out of SSMU's interest in the McGill bookstore. These bookstore funds were invested and now generate additional annual revenue for SSMU.

Notwithstanding the bookstore payment, SSMU's operating surplus for the decade is of \$1 588 239, or about an entire year's worth of student fees. This accumulated surplus has been critical to maintaining a positive SSMU cash flow position during the summer months. Some of these surpluses have also been set aside as part of the SSMU Capital Expenditures Reserve Fund (CERF) and for the Awards of Distinction Fund.

University Centre

If we look at the University Centre, we note a significant jump from 2005-2006 to future years. This jump represents a decision to eliminate SSMU ballroom booking



fees, a reduced PGSS subsidy and a decrease in revenues due to the departure of University Bytes in 2006-2007.

General Office and Administrative

In most of these years, the largest expenditure of the SSMU is for general office and administrative expenses. These expenditures are largely staff salaries but also include significant expenses such as computers, insurance and legal fees.

Most of these expenditures variations represent changes to SSMU staff. For example, the drop in costs in 2002-2003 represented the absence of the SSMU comptroller and other SSMU accountants. Over the years, some SSMU staff costs have decreased, such as the elimination of one of the three SSMU

accounting clerks in 2005-2006. However, SSMU staff has also been increased since 2006-2007 with the addition of a full time security chief, an IT specialist, and an operations supervisor. All three positions represented increased needs of SSMU.

Governance

Governance, or Council services, are the costs associated with the political activities of SSMU, such as external lobbying, research, executive salaries, Elections McGill, general assemblies and on campus awareness campaigns.

As the graphs show, council services have remained relatively stable over the years. This is despite changes such as leaving CASA (approximate expenditures of \$50

Money Matters

Gross Expenditures

The graph (below) shows the gross SSMU revenue and expenditures from the late 1990s to 2009. A number of expenditures and revenue are excluded from this graph, such as SSMU funds for the health plan, renovations, CERF, the award of distinction and a few other funds. The large spike in 2005-2006 represents, in good part, the afore mentioned SSMU bookstore amounts it received from McGill.

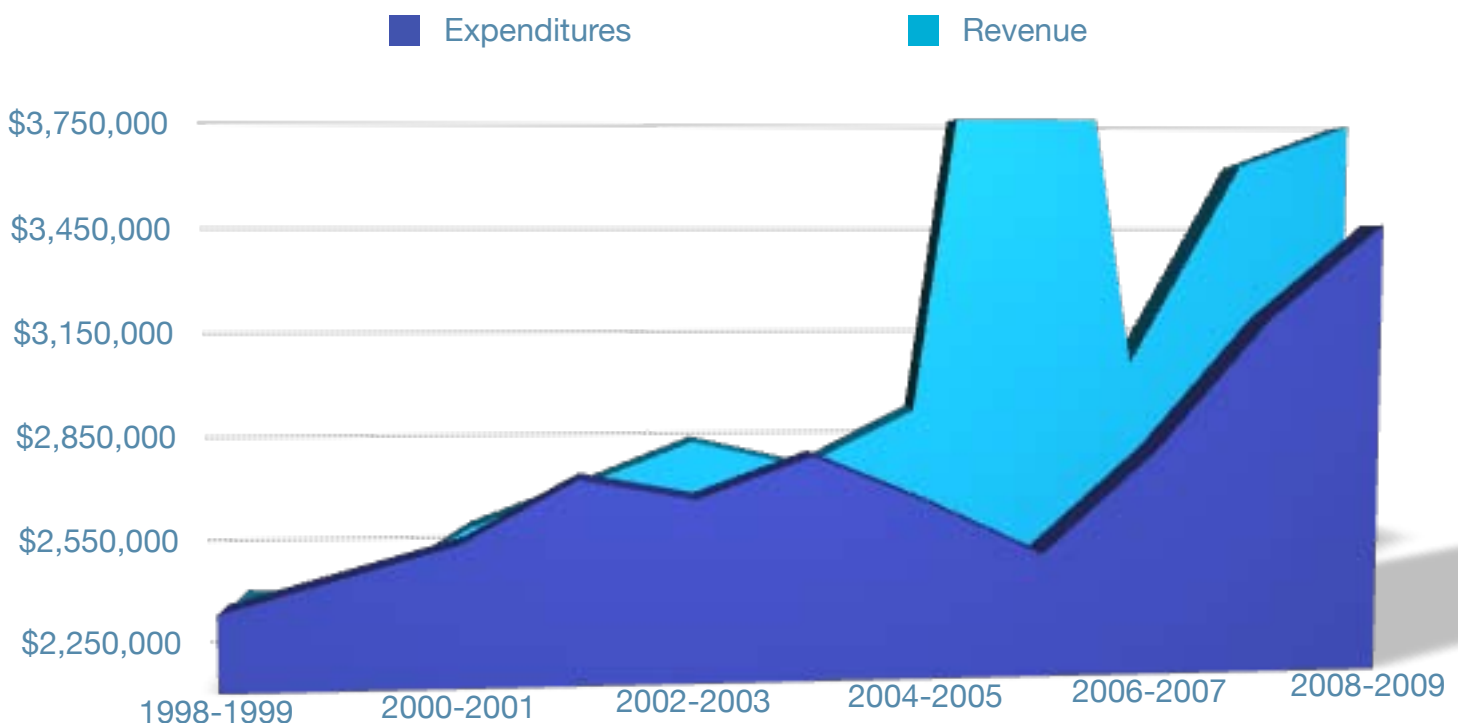
The difference between the dark blue (expenditures) and light blue (revenue) represents the surplus that SSMU is receiving. For the years before 2002, SSMU is operating at break-even levels with either small surpluses or losses.

Balancing the Books

The inquiring reader may be curious as why SSMU has accumulated surpluses and the role of CERF. As alluded to elsewhere, SSMU used to receive advances from McGill to cover its expenditures during the summer before the remittance of its student fees in the Fall. When these advances were eliminated around 2004, SSMU had to acquire a line of credit for the summer months, delay purchases and put off paying suppliers in order to stay afloat. Approximately \$400 000-600 000 is needed to cover SSMU's summer expenditures.

CERF was created in the 1980s to spread out the cost of major SSMU expenditures on capital goods. The majority of such costs were for computers, software and other equipment. As such, for example, purchases of \$30 000 of computer equipment could be made from CERF by using \$10 000 each year for three years rather than a single operating budget. Despite now making computing and software purchases on an annual basis, having a building student fee for major renovations to the building, and a space improvement fee for small renovations, the CERF fund is maintained. The fund now acts as a useful insurance policy should McGill not chose to renew its lease to SSMU on the University Centre.

SSMU Gross Expenditures and Revenue



SSMU Inc. 2000

Synopsis

SSMU in the new millennia becomes an increasingly professional organization. The Shatner building faced a decade of renovations while SSMU Clubs and Services face years of austerity in the second half due to SSMU financial difficulties.

Beginning the next century of growth.

Services, Publications & Operations

The newly constructed Brown Student Service Building's daytime only opening hours limited **SACOMSS'** plan to create a new **Night Office** and hold after hours activities. McGill initially proposed that a small apartment be rented off campus but later provided a confidential space on campus for this night office. McGill also granted SACOMSS space in the basement of Peterson Hall for 2002 to replace its Brown office. However, in 2005-2006, an increasingly space crunched McGill removed SACOMSS, along with the Muslim prayer room from the Peterson location to construct an archeology lab. McGill also removed the SACOMSS night office but later returned it after McGill Student Services agreed to co-operate more with SACOMSS activities. SSMU hosted SACOMSS new day office in what was the MUPS space in the basement of Shatner.

SSMU and other campus groups begin to **lose direct oversight of cafeterias on campus** in 2000. The first re-claimed are the Redpath and EUS Cafeterias. SSMU did manage to save the beloved campus hot-dog man by providing space to him in front

of Shatner in 2001 as a new SSMU operation. However, in 2004, a phone-call to the montreal police sees the vendor literally carted away for violating Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau's ban on street meat vendors.

SSMU Post was created in 2001. Until 2006 it served SSMU and the McGill community by posting flyers for campus activities. The rise of direct e-mail list serves proved a more effective means of reaching the McGill community and the service quietly vanishes.

SSMU loses \$66 200 in revenue from the operation of a **photocopier service** in Redpath when its service is replaced by one run by Ancillary services.

Throughout much of the decade, the large deficits of Gert's became a significant elections issue. The move of Gert's to the basement and later the elimination of a security partnership with the football team saw a dramatic decline in sales. Theft also became a significant issue. From 2005 onwards, Gert's became more of a lounge than a nightclub and focused on making itself a place for student run events. It's losses shrank dramatically.

SSMU-CC was created as an audiovisual clubs rental service. While McGill has its own AV service, it is only for academic purposes meaning that a duplicate SSMU service is needed for its clubs and services.

One of the oldest groups on campus, the Women's Union decided to included the empowerment of transgendered people in its mandate as of 2002-2003. The following year,

the Women's Union becomes the **Union of Gender Empowerment (UGE)**. The change of mandate proves a difficult one with the 2005-2006 UGE having a mere two executive members leading SSMU considering its fusion with Queer McGill. Both groups protest and the UGE maintained its independence.

In 2004-2005 SSMU adopted **Savoir Fare** as a new catering operation, incorporating a former tenant into its direct management. **Savoir Fare** suffered loses and lacked a place in a campus that has many other food catering options and was shut down in the summer of 2006. It's basement kitchen was made available to student groups.

In 2005-2006 LOA negotiations, SSMU renounced its potential share of bookstore profits in exchange for a direct payment of 1.875 million dollars. That decision was taken when it became apparent that McGill was inflating the administrative costs of the bookstore to reduce its profitability to a negligible amount. One year following the settlement, SSMU acquired the Montreal location of **Haven Books** as a new operation. The operation replaced various efforts of past years to run used book drives. Early years of operation saw it operating at loses in the tens of thousands.

A **Bike Co-op** is opened in the basement of Shatner in 2007-2008. The co-op uses part of the space previously used by University Bytes.

Midnight Kitchen and the **Organic Food Co-op** get their start in 2002-2003. Kitchen facilities are

SSMU Inc. 2000

finally made available to them in the 2005 summer renovations.

After a decade of fun in the snow, **Snow AP** is has its final bash in 2009. Mounting costs for security charges and heating were resulting in annual losses of \$15 000. SSMU decided that student money was best invested in other activities.

SSMU Governance

SSMU & PGSS renegotiated the entente reached following PGSS independence from SSMU. PGSS had been paying SSMU \$65 000 a year prior to 2000. A lower sum of \$16 000 was paid to SSMU from 2001-2008. An even lower amount of \$4000 was agreed on in 2009-2010 for future years.

The **Campus Life Fund** was created for 2001-2002 at \$3.00/semester. Its purpose was to fund speaker series, new clubs and C level intercollegiate Athletics teams (Club teams are teams not funded by McGill). The Alumni Association matched all increased grants to Athletics teams. In 2004-2005, CLF became a main source of club financing due to SSMU financial cutbacks. The CLF was eventually joined by other direct funding fees such as a space fee in 2008 and an Environmental initiatives fee for 2009.

Underfunding of **SSMU services** lead to an era of supplementary direct services funding. A “referral services fee” was charged starting in 2006 for Nightline, Queer McGill and the UGE. In 2007, this was joined be fees for the Midnight Kitchen and the McGill Tribune. This multiplication of fees was facilitated by an innocuous change to

the SSMU constitution in 2004-2005 which allowed for multiple SSMU fees to be up passed or renewed in the same year.

SSMU and the **McGill Daily** were in court again in 2000-2001 after the SSMU removed part of the Daily’s office to construct the B-1 entrance to Shatner and proposed that the Daily share a darkroom with MUPS following the advent of digital photography. SSMU eventually locked the Daily out of its office and they temporarily moved to the Thomson Coach House. The Québec Superior Court finds for SSMU and the Daily is force to sign a new lease.

SSMU was **accredited** as the official undergraduate society for McGill in 2003 after falling just short of quorum in 2002. Accreditation turned SSMU privileges into rights, such as the ability to appoints students to committees, collect a student fee, have an office, and receive a student list. McGill largely ignored these new rights, continuing to govern its relationship with SSMU through the LOA and sometimes directly appointing students to committees, such as with the Principal’s Task Force on Life and Learning.

After council rejected returning to a slate elections system in 2001, the **Progressive Students Coalition** was formed to elect left-leaning students to campus positions. It’s original members were from BSN, Queer McGill and the Women’s union. While the coalition is unsuccessful in directly electing many candidates, they do push SSMU election promises to the

left. The group appears to dissolve by the 2005 election.

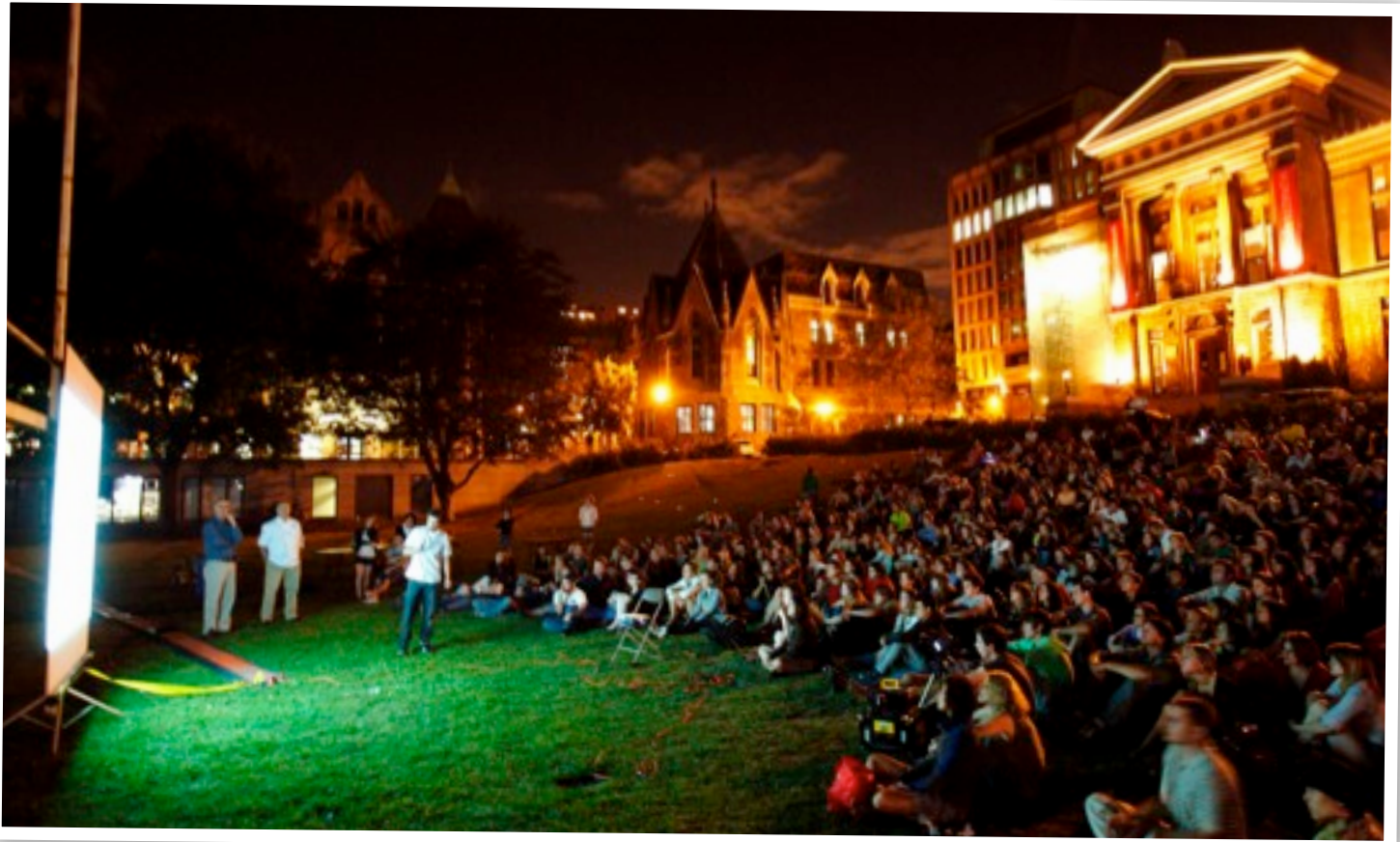
A string of activist oriented SSMU VP Externals from 2002-2006 pushed to reform **CASA** into an organization that engaged in lobbying for broader socio-political issues and mobilized students for protests. While these changes are begrudgingly adopted by CASA on paper, the organization and its other members are reluctant to become another CFS. The failed reforms paves the way for SSMU leaving in 2005-2006 and joining CFS in 2006-2007.

A fee of \$11.84 is set for collection from 2003-2010 to pay for the **Shatner building renovations**. The fee replaced the \$10/semester portion of the MSF. Arriving at the \$11.84 number was somewhat a product of guesswork as no one had a firm idea of how much the needed safety and code compliance renovations would cost. The first cost overruns occur in 2003 when McGill decided it was no longer interested in paying the \$600 000 cost of installing an elevator in Shatner.

Pauline Gervais was hired as the new General Manager of SSMU in late 2003-2004 after an extensive search. She brought to SSMU many years of private sector experience and has facilitated SSMU’s transition to a more professional streamlined organization. Notable projects of hers have been a complete revamping of the SSMU accounting system, computer systems, and security.

SSMU finally adopted an **online voting system** (OVS) for the 2003 election period. Having the OVS

SSMU Inc. 2000



reduced elections costs and allowed for far greater voter participation.

In 2004-2005, SSMU may have become the first student society to develop an **ethical purchasing policy**. The policy was made to be flexible and take into account the uniqueness of student societies. For example, it acknowledges that SSMU may be required to deal in “best of class” arrangements for certain products and exempted purchases under \$500 from the policy. The policy has since acted as a model for other student associations.

The SSMU **Francophone service** was disbanded in 2007 and replaced by the *Commission des Affaires Francophones*. The commission continues to host Francofete.

Government & McGill Policies

SSMU lead a two year campaign from 2003-2005 in protest over a new **text-matching software** called turnitin.com that McGill introduces to fight plagiarism. Some students objected to their intellectual property was used by turnitin.com to make its service better and therefore more profitable. The McGill Senate eventually adopted a broader policy on plagiarism allowing students to engage in other efforts to prove the independence of their work. SSMU had also lobbied in the 1980s against statistical analysis software used to catch cheating on multiple choice exams.

Board of Governors restructuring in 2003-2004 saw the

elimination of the SSMU president as a member of BOG. Despite likely violating the Accreditation Act, the BOG by-laws required that a student member enroll in at least 18 credits a year, far more than a SSMU President is capable of. After over a year of lobbying and discussing the situation with board members, the BOG invited 2005-2006 SSMU President Adam Conter, in a individual rather than official capacity, to act as a resource person for it. A similar arrangement was reached for subsequent years allowing the President to keep acting as a resource person on BOG.

Following a year of lobbying and protest, the McGill Senate approved a **Dining at McGill Advisory Committee** for 2004-2005. The

SSMU Inc. 2000

Committee recommended against a campus monopoly on student services and set the precedent for creating a permanent senate committee on ancillary services.

McGill has been concerned over the **use of the McGill name** since SSMU's re-incorporation in 1992. At that time, some services, notably SACOMSS were renamed. As Canadian trademark and copyright law limits the enforceability of a mark that has been diluted through repeated unauthorized use, McGill has been keen to limit such uses. Furthermore, the Polycuisine lawsuit proved the danger of parties contracting with student groups having the McGill name believing they are contracting with McGill. In 2005-2006, McGill renewed its interest in seeing SSMU clubs and Services renamed. Diligent and uncompromising efforts by SSMU executives from 2005-6 onwards have prevented any such action.

When McGill Security rejected an application for a tuition protest on campus, SSMU pushed for the creation of a **policy on campus gatherings** in 2004-5. The new policy identified various areas on campus for gathering. Decisions on how much security is required for an event remained at the discretion of McGill Security.

SSMU got a say in **university levied ancillary fees** when the Quebec Government passes rules to limit such increases to, in McGill's case, \$15 a year. SSMU has since requested that McGill fees be put to

student referendum. The FEUQ takes credit for the new rules.

SSMU acted within Senate to reverse an administrative decision that would have prevented students and professors from **working/traveling in dangerous areas**. McGill administrators vetoed senate and re-adopt a modified **dangerous travel policy** that allowed faculty Dean's to make exceptions.

From 2003-2007, SSMU also undertook actions against McGill's specific MELS underfunding known as "**Ajustement McGill**." This policy saw McGill deliberately underfunded by several million dollars with the savings transferred directly to the other Québec Universities. SSMU presented on the topic to the National Assembly in its cyclical review of McGill i 2003-2004. SSMU executives also undertook actions directly with the Minister of Education and through la FEUQ in 2005-2006. SSMU's co-operation with the FEUQ & McGill administrators in 2005-2006 paved the way for the elimination of the underfunding as of 2006-2007.

2005-2006 was the year of the McGill scandal. It started with an Redmen hazing scandal involving "Dr. Broom," followed up with a Journal d Montréal exposé on the riské behavior at MUS carnival, and finished with the release a Playboy issue naming McGill a top 10 best party school. SSMU was frequently in the media to promote McGill's excellent reputation. McGill began to care much more about the effects of student events on its reputation.

SSMU Policies

SSMU moved to make its operations **smoke free** in 2003-2004. Unable to make Sadie's viable without cigarette sales, the decision was postponed in 2004-05. The Quebec government passed legislation to the same effect in 2005-2006. The decision meant that Sadie's tabagie came to an end and was replaced by a collection of vending machines in the summer of 2006. The memory of Sadie Hempey, SSMU comptroller, lives on in baptizing the area "Sadie's Corner."

SSMU Keeps trying

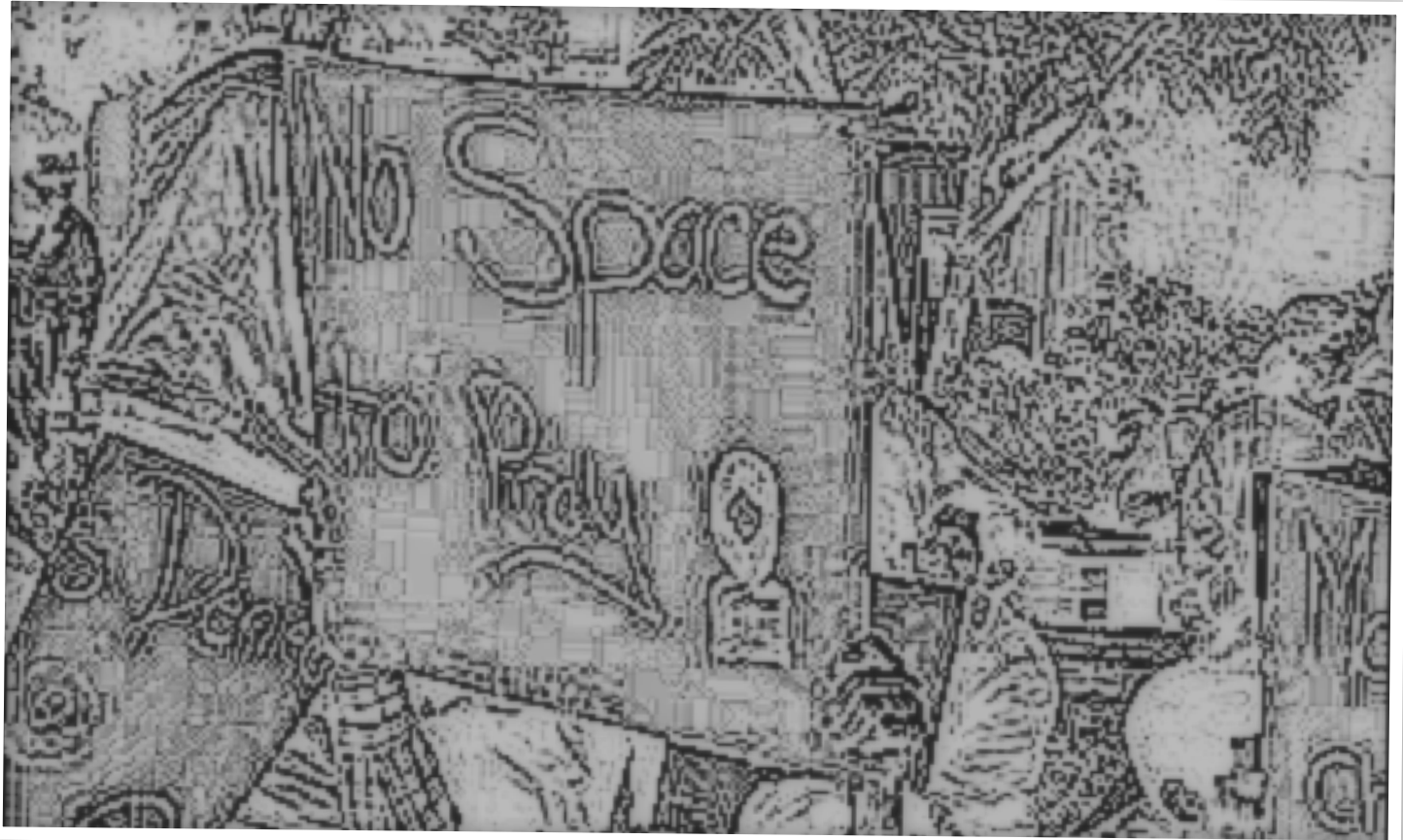
In an attempt to revive winter Carnival spirit on campus, SSMU launched the first **Inter-Faculty Olympics** in 2006-7. The effort failed to gain many participants.

SSMU VP External Silverman attempted to create a SSMU Flying Squad in 2006-2007 similar to labour union programs of the 1930s. The project is largely ineffective as activists tend to believe in causes, not process.

SSMU's desire to purchase an \$8000 **plasma TV** for the Shatner lobby was the object of much ridicule in 2002-2003. Thankfully calmer minds prevailed and students saved the money.



SSMU Inc. 2000



Muslim Prayer Space

Unlike Jewish and Christian groups on campus, whom both successfully integrated off campus space into the McGill community during the 1940s and 1950s and had a history of campus and community involvement since even before then, Muslim students at McGill are still facing challenges for space on or near campus. While Muslims have been a significant minority on campus since the 1960s, it was only in 1997 that an official prayer space was found for them on campus within the Birks Building. That space was replaced to make room for new staff offices in 2002 and, after some effort by SSMU, a new temporary space was made available to Muslim students in the basement of Peterson Hall until that space was required for an archeology lab as of 2005-2006. McGill had made the provision of space to Muslims in 2002 conditional on SSMU securing future space for them within the University Centre. However, it became clear to SSMU that such an arrangement was not fair to other student groups who equally had needs of the limited space in the building.

SSMU attempted to work with both the University, the MSA and Alumni Services from 2005-2006 to find a solution that accommodate all parties but unfortunately, no such reasonable accommodation was forthcoming. SSMU offered a small prayer space in the Basement of Shatner and continues to offer the Ballroom for Friday prayers and for holidays. However, with such facilities inadequate, the MSA has been seeking a judgement from the Quebec Human Rights Commission since 2006.



SSMUocracy

McGill students know that SSMU is at its most visible during the annual election periods. This is not that surprising, given that it is the very nature of democracy that public appeals are part of the campaign process at any level of politics.

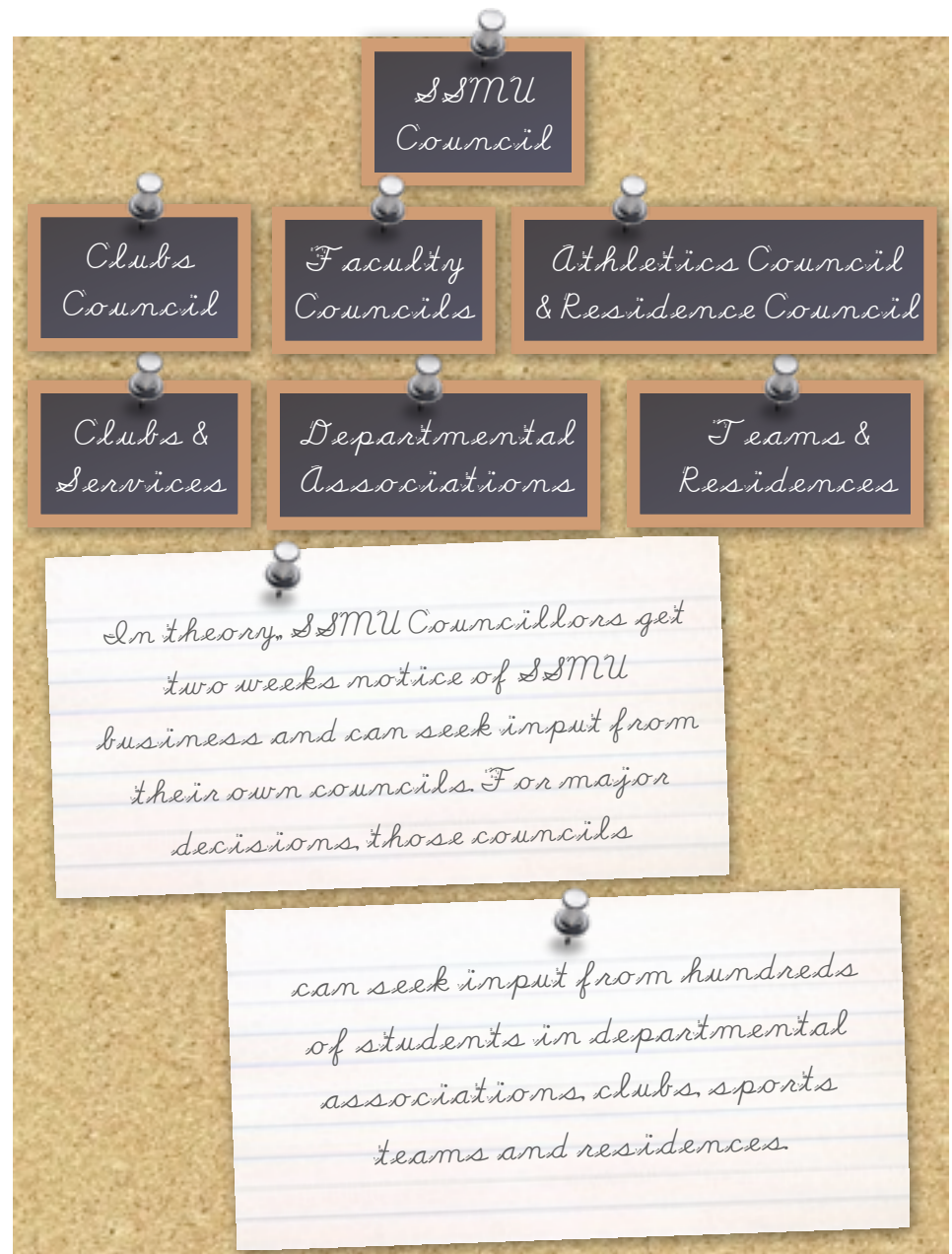
SSMU democracy is not restricted to this campaign period however. The bi-weekly council meetings comprised of representatives from various faculty associations and interest groups, general assemblies, public consultations and referendums & plebiscites all form part of making SSMU a representative and legitimate partner in the McGill decision making process.

As Winston Churchill so succinctly put it, “democracy is the worst form of government except for all those others that have been tried.” It is unsurprising then that SSMU democracy faces a number of challenges.

SSMU Council

SSMU council meets every two weeks during most of the school year. It hears executive and committee reports and is the deciding body for SSMU policy and initiatives. SSMU council acts as a fusion of a parliamentary inquiry committee, loyal opposition, backbencher voices, and supportive majority. Given this nebulous role, it is unsurprising that for as long as the McGill Tribune or the Daily have been evaluating the performance of executives and councillors, SSMU council has been receiving less than positive reviews.

There are many reasons behind this perception. For one, councillors, like some executives, are often



unfamiliar with Robert's Rules of Order, rarely read the SSMU by-laws, and are most likely unfamiliar with existing SSMU policy and history. Many councillors also face the challenge of not being able to consult with their own associations before voting on motions at SSMU as executives are notoriously bad at getting council reports out on time, let

alone giving two weeks notice on many policy issues. Councillors are also full-time students with additional responsibilities to many clubs, teams and associations. As such, they may not always read their documents let alone show up and participate in debate. Councillors often know far less than SSMU executives on the issues being presented and are often

SSMUocracy

THE GAMES COUNCILLORS PLAY

[Excerpt from "A Students' guide to Students' Council" *Old McGill* 1974.]

Council spectators this year, as in the past, have had the opportunity to witness some of the finer skills councillors employ to win imaginary points.

The first game is called Law and Order. It consists of some superman authority) Robert's Rules of Order, "tradition," past Council minutes) which councillors invoke when they expect opposition. A really good player can prevent his or her opposition from speaking, amend a motion by an opponent to its opposite, or win an argument on technicalities alone. Victory is leaving the opposition speechless or out of order. Extra zing is provided by selective use of the rules...

The second skill is called Lobbying. Pre- and post- meeting huddles present post-mortems of past meetings and sound out opinions of people. When possible, no motion is proposed to Council before some ad-hoc voting tally has been taken. Losing too often on the front line can mean a credibility gap in front of students, and even worse, other councillors.

The third game is called Speech-making. (it helps to be from the debating union of from the law faculty for this one). The object is to provide enough material to convince everyone of the correctness of your views at least three times a year. Winning isn't the important thing, because the consolation prizes are good too.

First, people have to listen to you. Second, you can bore or confuse them to the point where they table a motion you were not prepared to vote on at that particular meeting anyway. Third, you can compete with yourself to see how much time you are using up.

Law and order is the best antidote to Speechmaking unless discussion on a motion turns into discussion on procedures. In that case, Speechmaking automatically scores a win.

The fourth game is Representation. Its opening lines consist of either "I must consult my constituents" or "As the representative for" As already indicated, representatives are not representative at all. (Or at least not much). Playing representation means motions can be tabled and bonus points can be scored for being noble.

It also means insecure councillors can hide opinions they are unsure of behind their constituents. Almost everyone plays lip service to this ritual.

A fifth game is Ego to Ego. Sometimes this is the results of two autocrats clashing with each other. Other times, it is the result of discord induced by a third party so that he or she can carry the ball over the goal lines, while others are involved in the fruitless discord.

more interested in being friendly with their peers than being ostracized for creating waves and questioning the status quo. While some councillors may speak up at council, perhaps

seeking attention in the press in preparation for the next election, others are afraid of looking ignorant or foolish in public and in front of the

campus press and keep their opinions to themselves.

So despite all these difficulties, how does Council contribute to the democracy and legitimacy of SSMU?

Council is a public check on SSMU executives as it requires reports and does allow for both questioning by one's peers and information to get out to McGill students through reporting in the campus press. The existence of SSMU council allows for Executives to learn about the happenings on campus, and it allows for faculty



associations to share ideas and best practices amongst themselves. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, Councillors also act on numerous committees that help develop better SSMU policy which may eventually lead to better decision making at McGill. These committees allow for executives to discuss challenging issues with a group of dedicated people and are a key part of the SSMU decision making process.

General Assemblies

While open meetings have been a feature of SSMU for decades, SSMU introduced general assemblies (GAs) in the winter of 1988. At that time, they were seen as a mechanism for

SSMUocracy

setting the agenda of Council, that is for raising issues that SSMU needs to address.

The exact role of the GA as a consultative and opinion setting body was established by a judicial board ruling of 1974 that found that only SSMU council can address budgetary and financial issues of the society. That decision came about from the Daily's efforts to fight against budget cuts to their publication through mobilization of students.

The first few GAs in the 80s faced many of the same problems that face the GAs of current years, a lack of quorum and accusations of insufficient publicity by the executive.

And yet, SSMU history is one that has seen the ballroom, classrooms and cafeterias filled with hundreds of students. McGill students who may well eschew showing up at a GA just because one is called have shown up, debated and voted when issues of great importance to them were held. When the provincial government has increased or threatened to increase tuition fees, McGill students have voted. When important education policy changes have been announced, from massive cuts in university funding to the elimination of 103 million dollars in bursaries, McGill students have convened and taken to the streets. When the leaders of the world have threatened war in Iraq, not once but twice, students have shown their solidarity and their opposition to armed conflict. And when violence erupts in Israel, students will come to condemn or defend a country that is the hope of millions.

Since 2006-2007, SSMU has also seen the introduction of mandatory GAs once a semester. These GAs have seen a general lack of quorum, and the introduction of mandates on SSMU that are generally fanciful, either deliberately or unknowingly. In order to fight SSMU being captured by minority interests, SSMU has since made use of its OVS to get a larger sample of the population to vote on the questions before the GA.

This last presents a particular problem in the concept of the GA. The general assembly is, in a way, a throwback to Athenian style democracy. This form of participative democracy relies upon orators to convince an open minded crowd of the virtues of one path of action or another. The history of GAs at McGill however shows that students are perhaps less concerned with reaching a consensus on action or the truest path to a good policy through socratic dialogue but rather a form of mob rule whereby the group that can summon the most supporters can win the day.

The GA is therefore perhaps best a tool for the SSMU to judge the level of concern on a particular topic, rather than a tool for policy setting. When hundreds of students come out to vote or when dozens of students do the same, SSMU has been given a clear indicator of how important an issue is to the student body.

This conclusion also suggests that the perennial accusation of SSMU executives and councillors that they have failed to inspire students to come out to a GA is misplaced. It is issues that inspire students, not

process. When the issue is of import, McGill students are prepared to assemble and show the strength of their convictions in force.

Senate Caucus

A unique and interesting wing of SSMU democracy is the SSMU Senate Caucus committee. The Caucus is formed of the SSMU senators, both the SSMU President and VP UA and the 11 student senators.

SSMU has had representatives on Senate since 1968. McGill had authorized 8 student senators in 1967, but SSMU did not take up the seats in protest of Senate being closed to the public. McGill reversed that decision in 1968. By the early 1990s, Senate reform had created 20 positions for students, some of which were held by PGSS and MCSS.

On a few occasions in the last 30 years, SSMU has questioned the role of Senators. Are they to vote as a block? Whose voices do they represent: SSMU's, their faculties' or their own? Faculty associations have the ability to mandate their senators to adopt positions. What of the student senator positions on SSMU council? Are those senators there to bring senate issues to SSMU or SSMU issues to senate?

The existence of Senate Caucus bypasses many of these difficult questions by allowing senators to share their views amongst themselves and work out solutions that ensure that a more or less cohesive student voice is heard at Senate.

Food Politics

The student society has been operating food services of one kind or another since the 1930s when it had opened a small food counter in the Faculty of Music.

Food and beverage services have for years been the purview of student societies at McGill and many other universities across the country.

Both SSMU and various faculty associations have operated food providers on campus and within the University Centre.

While at times, SSMU has actually directly managed a food or beverage service, such as a short lived 1973 decision to manage an individual food outlet (although the rest of campus was run by a SSMU tenant) or the decision to run Gert's taken in the 1990s. Generally however, SSMU has simply placed campus food locations up for tender and overseen the contracts that governed the relationship with a food supplier.

Managing Food Services on Campus

In 1982-1983, SSMU signed contracts with the the LSA, MUS, ASUS and EdUS whereby those societies hired SSMU to take care of managing their cafeterias. These contracts meant that SSMU was running food services in the Union building, Redpath, and in faculty locations across campus.

Despite this indirect management, food politics was a cumbersome issue for SSMU. Councillors frequently raised issues regarding either food prices or quality. In 1984-1985, SSMU Council decided to prohibit discussion

of food issues in order to make time for other society endeavors.

SSMU has contracted with a wide number of food suppliers on campus. Unfortunately, many campus food suppliers did not find the McGill campus to be an profitable business environment to operate in. Unlike other restaurants, McGill only has student clients for 6 months of the year, with the other 6 months being less busy due to exams or summer. Profits were minimal and the SSMU was often interested in voicing concern over both prices and perceived lack of quality of the food served on campus. Over the 80s and 90s, many food suppliers ended their contracts early and others renegotiated better terms for themselves.

Notwithstanding these early cancellations, relations between SSMU and its food suppliers was also complicated by various reports that the food suppliers were not giving an adequate share of their profits to SSMU. SSMU had to commission various audits, which cost tens of thousands of dollars, to survey its food operations.

University Centre

The University Centre has significantly benefited from various food providers, as many of them have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into renovations to cafeterias and Gert's pub. Unfortunately, many of these renovations were not long lasting and the investment of one supplier often got replaced by the next as the vision of campus food and beverage locations changed.

The current operators, MTY moved in in 1999 in conjunction with the shatner renovations of the time. The original concept called for multi-ethnic food counters that would rotate the type of food they provided on a regular basis. This concept was however modified to the current tenants.

Student Run Food Services

Over the years, SSMU has flirted with the idea of student run co-ops, often at the urging of campus groups such as Q-PIRG. However, SSMU has been reluctant to self manage cafeterias given the realities of high student turn-over and the serious administrative burdens of such a venture. SSMU's efforts in having a catering service, Savoir Fare, and a food kiosk in Gert's in 2004-2005 were short-lived and unprofitable ventures.

Savoir Fare was a SSMU attempt to take over a pre-existing catering business in the basement of the shatner building. With an existing client base, the synergy opportunities from catering to the Daycare, and with the elimination of rental payments, SSMU believed that the operation would be a profitable one. However, a combination of failures to advertise, difficulty in competing with other campus catering services, and a general lack of business during the summer meant the operation was not successful.

However, SSMU has supported various student run food services such as the Organic Food Co-op and the Midnight Kitchen. These groups have benefited from a large and dedicated core of volunteers interested in

Food Politics

catering to niche food markets on campus. SSMU renovations to Shatner in the mid 2000s have made available kitchens on both the 3rd floor and sub-basement of the building to these groups.

In 2007, following the departure of University Bytes from its room 103 location in Shatner, SSMU considered using the space to open a student run food service. At the time, McGill had recently threatened a take-over of the much loved student-run Architecture Café. As such, there was a community of students interested in student run food services. Despite this interest, at a closed meeting of SSMU Council in 2007, it was decided to lease the space to a new tenant- Liquid Nutrition.

Food Take-Overs

The Coca-Cola vote of 1999-2000 marked the beginning of the end for SSMU running food services on campus. When students voted to deny McGill millions of dollars in revenue as part of a exclusive Cold Beverage Agreement, it became clear that operating of food services on campus was not a matter of tens of thousands of dollars but rather much more. In 2001-2002, McGill decided not to renew agreements it had with SSMU and faculty associations over their operation of food services. McGill also began to remove the Pepsi vending machines from campus and replace them with Coca-Cola dispensers. In 2002, McGill signed an agreement with Coca-Cola as a beverage

provider, while in turn SSMU signed with Pepsi for its own services. SSMU terminated its exclusivity agreement in 2007.

The direct management by McGill Ancillary Services meant that SSMU and students no longer had a say in prices, variety or quality of food being served on campus. This motivated student protest and lobbying in Senate between 2004-2006 resulting in the creation of a permanent Ancillary Services oversight committee and a renouncement of a monopoly food provider on campus. The Ancillary services committee was eliminated from Senate in 2009 when ancillary services was re-classified as an administrative issue and hence outside the purview of Senate.

Polycuisine Ltée c. Students' Society of McGill University, [2004] CanLII 25103 (QCSC).

In 1992, Capital Food Services (Scotts) informed SSMU that despite having 3 years left in their food services contract, they were giving 90 days notice that they were exercising their right to terminate the contract for May 15th 1992. SSUM immediately put the operation of eight campus cafeterias and two bars up for tender.

After receiving an initial 15 applications, SSMU narrowed its options down to two: Polycuisine Inc. (a small privately owned Laval based cafeteria) and Marriott Corporation of Canada Ltd. (a multinational cafeteria operator). SSMU began final negotiations with Polycuisine in May 1992 having informed Polycuisine that they were their preferred partner.

During these negotiations, Polycuisine became convinced that they had in fact been awarded the contract and undertook both a number of expenses and staff changes in expectation thereof. Polycuisine was given an office with SSMU, keys to the campus, hired the previous cafeteria staff and purchased equipment.

SSMU however demanded a number of contractual changes, notably that the Polycuisine owners personally guarantee Polycuisine performance in an amount of \$250 000. Polycuisine stated that they could not do this at which point SSMU engaged Marriott to begin cafeteria operations on campus.

Polycuisine sued SSMU for 2.6 million in lost profits on the grounds that SSMU had broken a verbal agreement with it. The Court found that Polycuisine's testimony that they had been awarded a contract was not convincing and found for SSMU although awarded \$7000 in damages to Polycuisine for a few of its expenses.

Polycuisine also sued McGill and RIAL on the grounds that SSMU had an apparent mandate to act for McGill to sign campus cafeteria contracts. The court found that while SSMU did have McGill employees working for it (it's comptroller) and used the McGill name (in conjunction with "Student Society") it was obvious that SSMU was separate and no reasonable business person should believe that SSMU could sign contracts on McGill's behalf.

Serving Students

Student of organizational behavior are likely well aware that organizations grow to accomplish the voids that exist within their environment.

SSMU, as a political organization, also grows to respond to public concerns of students.

Many of SSMU's services and interests grew during the 80s and 90s due to the lack of direct provision by McGill of comparable services. In the 2000s, as McGill became increasingly concerned and aware of the risks associated with the provision of safety services to students it began to question whether SSMU or the university should be the source of these services. For its part, SSMU, having seen students capable of providing such assistance, and being well aware of the benefits to both their service volunteers and to the campus community has been reluctant to see the restriction or elimination of these campus groups.

Saying no to sexual assault

In 1988, a female student was raped at a frat party. Unaware of what to do, she unfortunately showered and waited two days before speaking with the Montreal police. Her rapist was never convicted, and in decisions all too common of the time, the judge was concerned with her level of intoxication at the party. She dropped out of McGill but, represented by Julius Grey, settled a civil suit with her assailant. McGill's own disciplinary process failed to help the victim.

SSMU groups were understandably upset and a coalition of groups surrounding the Women's Union formed a sexual assault

coalition to address this very important issue.

The McGill Women's Union created a **walk safe** service to assist students in getting home safely after late nights studying on campus. The Service becomes a distinct SSMU group in 1990, and an official service in 1992-1993.

In 1989-1990, the sexual assault coalition engaged in rape awareness campaigns. Eventually in the fall of 1991, the McGill Sexual Assault Centre, later renamed the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student Society (**SACOMSS**) was established. The Centre's goals were to both act as a lobbying body to improve the McGill Sexual Harassment Policy and to see the Federal Government re-enact the rape shield laws that rendered inadmissible an alleged assault victim's previous sexual history. In its early stages, the Centre was divided as to whether they should focus on victim services or political lobbying efforts.

In its first year of operation, the Centre helped 13 students who had been assaulted in the McGill ghetto. SSMU engaged in various safety audits of the ghetto and lobbied the city of Montreal for an increase in street lamps and police patrols east of campus. The McGill Tribune posted weekly notices of assaults, attempted assaults and suspect activity along with descriptions of the assailants. Annual rallies and marches encouraged female students to "take back the night" and SSMU Mini-Courses taught various self-defense courses to concerned students. The

McGill Tribune assisted in publishing advice from councillors and experts on how to deal with sexual assault.

Ten years latter, SACOMSS was seen as important enough that it was provided space in the new Student Services building. However, the desire to operate a night office for students in 2000 and the limited hours of accessibility to the building meant that SACOMSS needed to find alternative space. The university provided space in the basement of Peterson Hall.

While SACOMSS was entirely a student run service, the importance and delicate nature of its operations meant that it had informal partnerships with advisors within McGill Student Services. These ties became formalized in 2005-2006 following a confrontation between McGill, SACOMSS, and SSMU over the risks and capacity of SACOMSS to provide assistance to McGill victims of sexual assault.

First Aid

Since its inception, McGill has been a leader in medical sciences. Its dedication to the montreal community is well known though the McGill University Hospital Centres, and its innovations in medicine are world renowned. During World War I, McGill operated the No. 3 Canadian General Hospital (McGill), the first ever University hospital unit in the British Empire.

While the commitment of the University goes back to its foundation, the SSMU only established the McGill First Aid Service (MFAS) in 1997. The service, which now operates at the Red Cross's recognized "First

Serving Students



Responder” status has been helping SSMU keep its events safe, is on hand at McGill sporting events, and, in the McGill tradition, is ready to provide services to the Montreal community.

The support of SSMU for these efforts has often been a challenge given the high cost of operating and training volunteers to deal with life & death situations. However, with the

collection of a dedicated service fee in the 2000s, the MFAS has been able to become the essential service that it is today.

SSMU Security

SSMU Security was introduced in 1973-1974 when SSMU council restricted the SSMU executive from calling in Montreal police to arrest anti-zionist protesters. SSMU originally hired two agents to patrol and secure the University Centre. In the 80s and 90s, SSMU security began to employ McGill Redmen football players to supervise its activities. Unfortunately, while such persons certainly had an imposing presence in Gert's, SSMU's needs were for a more professional non-student security force. In the 2000s,

SSMU Security became a more integrated operation of the Society, supervising and preventing thefts in the Shatner building, providing security for on campus events like SnowAP and even integrating defenses to computer threats. In the latter part of the decade however, McGill security services has taken a greater interest in staffing SSMU on-campus activities outside of the University Centre. This decision by McGill marked a small downturn in SSMU's security activities, and eventually, due to the cost of McGill's services, the eventual complete demise of SnowAP- the last in a long tradition of McGill winter Carnival Events dating back to the Red & White Revue and before.



Speaking Up

Most executives and SSMU councillors have come face to face with the inherently difficult question of balancing free speech & freedom of assembly with their obligations under the SSMU constitution and the role of universities in fostering debate in a free and open society.

Annually, students are likely to be offended by the actions of their peers who share different political and moral sensibilities than they do. In other years, McGill has taken offense to the content of publications or the insensitivity of some student actions. SSMU inherently finds itself caught in the crossfire and trying to bridge the gap. Whether SSMU defends the offended, apologizes for the miscreant behavior or simply promises to do better, it's sure to be controversial and leave the other side unhappy.

Two specific situations, the decision to move the McGill Tribune towards independence and the decision regarding a pro-life club in the late 2000s demonstrate the inherent challenges of the 21st century student society.

The Tribune break-up

The 2005-2006 Tribune Editor-in-chief, created an alter ego, under the name of Brandon Chudleigh, for writing quasi shock editorials. While certain McGill students likely found them entertaining, and while a number of articles did contain interesting social criticism, some more left leaning students were offended by their insensitivity.

After months of letters to the editor and various scandals, the Tribune and SSMU decided that the Tribune should develop an official editorial policy to prevent similar situations from arising in the future. The policy was drafted.

The 2006-2007 executive was especially concerned with equity issues at SSMU. Yet, they also likely realized the limits and impropriety of directly intervening in the editorial content of the Tribune. However, not all students were happy with such a nuanced stance, and the SSMU decided that rather than have to face

more balancing of interests, the simplest political solution was to put the Tribune on a road towards complete independence from SSMU.

The Tribune got its own small student fee and may well become independent from SSMU by its 2010 deadline.

Given the likely increased costs that would be associated with having its own advertising and accounting staff, and the possibility of paying rent to SSMU, whether it can survive independently remains a question to be seen.



Chose Life

From 2007-2010, SSMU was faced with yet another incarnation of orthodox christian groups on campus. SSMU has previously had to decide how to treat missionary groups or those bent on more pro-active recruitment of members.

Recall that it was only in 1993 that SSMU granted official recognition to political and religious groups.

Chose Life was to be the McGill wing of an american based NGO with chapters across many campuses. The group is a militant anti-abortion group that has been known to have quite provocative material demonstrated at its meetings.

Chose Life was approved as an interim club in 2008. In the fall of 2009, one of its events was disrupted by a group of protesters who found the materials presented oppressive towards women. The Montreal Police were called in to remove the protesters. The event made the Canadian and US news.

SSMU has decided to maintain interim support of the Chose Life club although they did suspend them in late 2009.

After SSMU attempted to lobby McGill to restrict the group's use of campus facilities, McGill issued a statement that affirmed its policy of allowing free debate of ideas on campus- even when some students may find such ideas objectionable. The debate surrounding the club has made it onto both Canadian and US news outlets.

