



Report of the Vice-President (University Affairs) to Legislative Council

March 24th, 2015

The work in this report is a summary of all areas of the University Affairs Portfolio. All activities are the product of the hard work of many people including, but not limited to, other Executives, Senators and student staff.

University & Academic Affairs

Senate

Senate Meetings

- Senate meeting on March 23rd and discussed annual reports on [Scholarships & Student Aid](#), [Enrollment and Strategic Enrollment Management](#). Approved revisions to the [Student Assessment Policy](#).
- Meeting docs available on the [McGill website](#).
- Questions were submitted regarding student grievances procedures and Universal Design for Learning and Neurodiversity
- Both questions were deferred to the April Senate meeting unfortunately
- Student Senators also questioned the increased security presence in response to the announcement of the Board of Governors not to divest from fossil fuels. We also questioned the lack of consultation with student groups and the lack of notice for this meeting

Senate Caucus

- Senate Caucus will be writing a thematic report that will be publicly available detailing all the various student issues we have been working on throughout this year. This report will be useful to transition incoming Senators and to better communicate our work to students
- We are beginning recruitment for Senate & University Committees next week

Senate & University Committees

- Next year's Joint Board of Governor-Senate Meeting will be discussing Sustainability
- Committee on Student Services met to review the budget for FY17 and to review Student Services Innovation Fund proposals (more info under "Student Services")



Memorandum of Agreement Negotiations

- Responding to McGill's most recent version of the MoA with our current demands. The majority of our demands have been denied
- I have expressed we will not be signing a MoA unless our most important demands are responded to

Library Relations

- Followed-up with Provost regarding the creation of an Interfaith Meditation Space

Library Improvement Fund Committee

- The Committee saw an increase in the number of student-submitted proposals (approx. 30 in total were submitted) in large part due to successful outreach with VP Academics of Faculty & Departmental Associations.
- We have begun reviewing proposals and will be making decisions next week.

McGill Academic Round Table (MART)

- Emailed out Faculty breakdown of Student Experience Survey to Presidents and VP Academics of Faculty Associations. If the email wasn't received please let me know as there were some issues (thank you Groupwise)

Unpaid Internships

- Discussed SSMU's stance on unpaid internships with NDP McGill (who submitted the GA motion passed in Winter 2015), the Interim Director of CaPS and the Experiential Learning Network
- I will be working on a first draft of a policy with NDP McGill however this is likely to come to Council in the Fall 2016 as it requires further research and consultation over the summer



University Relations Goals to Complete in Winter 2016

- ~~Make recommendations to improve the Office of Student Life & Learning through the Cyclical Unit Review process~~
- Fall Reading Break proposal brought to Senate for approval
- Renew MoA with McGill
- ~~University Student Assessment Policy revisions approved~~
- End-of-year thematic report from Senate Caucus
- Recruit University & Senate Committee representatives before final exams
- Submit a question to every Senate meeting
- ~~Clarify SSMU's stance on unpaid internships in relation to experiential learning opportunities~~

Advocacy & Research

Policy-Work

Sexual Violence Policy (SVP)

- You may notice the change in title. This was at the request of the University as “sexual assault” has a specific legal definition with particular implications
- The working groups has been meeting with the Office of the Dean of Students and the Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity)
- They have expressed an unwillingness to support the policy in its current form and would like to remove several elements of the policy including some that are considered non-negotiable by the working group
- The main non-negotiables as defined by the working group include
 - A commitment to appoint a qualified person (and preferably an Office) to deal with cases of sexual violence for all members of the McGill community
 - The inclusion of intersectionality
 - The administration do not approve of the listing of marginalized groups who disproportionately experience sexual violence (e.g. LGBTQ community, Indigenous communities, women, people of colour, etc).
 - A strong pro-survivor approach including guaranteed rights for the person who experienced sexual violence (e.g. non-directional, no victim-blaming, etc)
 - This last one is not as heavily contested



- At this point we are frustrated and will be deciding whether or not we want to continue working with them to revise our current draft or backing away from this process.
- You can read the student working group's version of the policy online at: <http://sexualassaultpolicyatmcgill.com/feb2016policy/finaldraft.pdf> . This version of the policy has been the result of significant research of existing sexual assault policies at other Universities, widespread consultation with numerous community stakeholders and 2 and a half years of unpaid labour.
- If you have feedback on the policy or suggestions for stakeholders to consult, I invite you to email sap.mcgill@gmail.com. We will likely be hosting a town hall to discuss the issue further in the next 2 weeks.

Research Projects

- Student research competition projects ongoing. The project researching Access Barriers to Education has been delayed and will be going into the summer.

Committees

University Affairs Committee

- Reviewed the MoA and provided feedback to myself and the VP Finance & Operations
- We will also be developing content for the University Affairs website

Policy Advocacy & Resource Committee (PARC)

- Hiring for this position will no longer be happening due to budget cuts ☹

Advocacy & Research Goals to Complete in Winter 2016

- Bring the Sexual Assault Policy to Senate for approval
- ~~Raise concerns with current protocols and procedures for addressing sexual violence~~
- ~~Release the SSMU's report on Equitable Hiring at McGill~~
- Create a hub for applied student research on campus
- Oversee the completion of the SSMU's first Student Research Competition
- Host SSMU's research projects in one central place online
- ~~Train the SSMU PARC Coordinator~~



Mental Health & Well-Being

Student Services

- Student Services is planned to undergo massive changes. Approximately 1.3 million of the accumulated surplus will be going towards transformative changes including renovating a common triage space, new technology and software (electronic medical record, online appointment bookings), staff development, etc.
- Committee on Student Services also approved funding for two projects:
 - “Spin Gardens” - stationary silent bicycles surrounded by plants in secluded areas of buildings
 - Exercise has been demonstrated as an effective method to improve both physical and mental health
 - “Therapy Assisted Online: E-Health Services” - essentially therapy provided via Skype, will be a joint partnership between Mental Health and Counselling (#harmonization)
 - This is also an important aspect of the stepped care model and providing more efficient and effective service delivery
- Ongoing communication with Senior Director of Student Services and other Director as needed

Smoking Cessation Resources

- Meeting with Healthy McGill, Mental Health, Student Health, and Counselling to discuss the development and promotion of smoking cessation resources including medication (e.g. patch), counselling, and potentially peer support
- Identified a need to expand and provide greater education on the issue of substance mis/abuse more broadly. Addiction and mental illness are often intertwined and cannot be treated independently. Counselling actually runs a substance misuse program however does not appear to advertise it very well.
- Healthy McGill is open to working with us on a campaign to educate and also destigmatize smoking

International Student Health Plan

- As per the request of Health & Dental Review Committee I reached out to International Student Services regarding the International Health Insurance Plan
- ISS was open to the idea of creating an advisory board on the international student coverage. Apparently as of now consultation happens through the ISS Advisory Board with some success. ISS has already reached out to Procurement Services



regarding the Request for Proposal for a new broker. It is tentatively scheduled to occur May-June.

SSMU Mental Health Initiatives

Includes updates on the implementation of SSMU's Mental Health 5 Year Plan

Mental Health Space

- The project as originally envisioned has been delayed for a minimum of 2 years
- Hoping to have a room on the fourth floor set up with comfortable furniture and decorations that will be a flexible facilitate

Mental Health Open Forum

- The Open Forum received largely positive feedback. There was a nice balance between staff and students in attendance and the discussions were generally fairly productive.
- The Q&A with Service Director was also well-attended. Students had the opportunity to ask a number of hard questions and I believe the opportunity for dialogue was beneficial to all.

Mental Health Committee

- See Mental Health Committee report for all the great work being done!

Miscellaneous

- Meeting with Mental Health Services to develop a WRAP program tailored to student executives to help them cope with stress



Mental Health & Well-Being Goals to Complete in Winter 2016

- ~~○ Host SSMU Mental Health Open Forum~~
- ~~○ Advocate for a University-wide mental health strategy~~
- Establish a Mental Health Network including Healthy McGill and mental health-related student groups
- ~~○ Increase social media presence and outreach on campus~~
- Install a friendship bench outside our building
- Coordinate a mental illness workshop series
- Share an “accommodation flowchart” through social media
- Send out a “Spotlight” mental health listserv during exams
- Improve mechanisms of student feedback to adjust international student health coverage

Equity

SSMU Equity Initiatives

Equity Committee

- Equity Committee staffed the Rupri Kaur speaker series event! Overall the reception was extremely positive. Unfortunately the event was so popular we had to turn away hundreds of students and community members due to capacity.
- Her spoken word poetry was extremely emotional, impactful and touched on themes of love, loss, violence and sexual abuse. It illuminated the importance of women of colour reclaiming spaces on our campus as described by the [McGill Daily](#)

Indigenous Affairs

- The Indigeneity & Allyship event series have been going excellently! Thank you to the Indigenous Affairs Committee, all participants in the event and in particular to the SSMU Indigenous Affairs Coordinator, Leslie Anne!
- Highlights of the event series include the Indigenous-led conference titled Resurgence, Reconciliation and Revitalization, a panel event on Indigenous student experiences and a Reconciliation & Allyship panel
- These events have brought to light the discrimination that Indigenous students, staff and professors face as well as the importance for sustained action on this issues that includes active engagement with diverse Indigenous stakeholders



- An Indigenous Solidarity Policy has been drafted in consultation with multiple Indigenous stakeholders to institutionalize a commitment for the SSMU to act on this issue in multiple important ways. Recommendations from the Indigenizing the Academy research project and previous meetings were incorporated.
- After the motion brought forward to the General Assembly several groups on campus have reached out to consult with the SSMU Indigenous Affairs Coordinator. There will also be specific consultation measures outlined in the Indigenous Solidarity Policy

Accessibility

- The Accessibility policy is almost complete and will be coming to Council next week for a first reading.
- If you would like to see the policy and give feedback please send me an email!

Equity Goals to Complete in Winter 2016

- Present Accessibility Policy to SSMU Council
- ~~Present Indigenous Solidarity Policy to SSMU Council~~
- ~~Host Indigeneity & Allyship campaign~~
- ~~Organize educational panel events on current equity-related topics~~
- ~~Host a successful speaker series event in collaboration with SSMU External Affairs~~

SSMU-Wide

Outreach & Communication

Social Media & University Affairs Website

- Invite your friends to like the [SSMU University Affairs](#) Facebook page! We also launched a [SSMU Indigenous Affairs](#) Facebook page!



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

Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs)
Bureau du Vice-Présidente (affaires universitaires)

SSMU Goals to Complete in Winter 2016

- Complete hiring of student staff before end of term
- Creation of SSMU University Affairs website
- Send updates to everyone involved in University Affairs portfolio through semi-regular listserv
- ~~Advocate for SSMU to better support the mental health of its Executives, staff and student representatives~~

Respectfully Submitted,

Chloe Rourke, Vice-President (University Affairs)