



Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs)

Tel: (514) 398-6797 | ua@ssmu.mcgill.ca | ssmu.ca/ua

3600 McTavish St, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC H3A 0G3

Located on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka traditional territories

REPORT OF THE EQUITY COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2017



Overview

The mandate of the SSMU Equity Committee is to confront historical and current inequities at McGill through active engagement and public education in agreement with the Student Society of McGill University's relevant policies (e.g. Equity Policy, Accessibility Policy). The committee so far has been planning awareness, sensitization, and support events largely focused on race; however, committee members have a range of knowledge, skills, and lived experiences that can contribute to ongoing and future programming or advocacy initiatives.

Membership

Robyn Lee, Member-at-Large

Ki-eun Peck, Member-at-Large

Jennifer Chan, Member-at-Large

Alexandra Yiannoutsos, Member-at-Large

Jennifer Lockerby, Member-at-Large

Anton Zyngier, Member-at-Large

Noam Blauer, Member-at-Large

Ashley Yu, Member-at-Large

Romita Sur, Law Representative

Ommu Kulsoom J Abdul-Rahman, BSN Representative

Erin Sobat, Vice President (University Affairs)

Simone Cavanaugh, Equity Commissioner

Marilyn Verghis, Equity Commissioner



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Meeting Dates

January 25/27, 2017

February 1/3, 2017

February 8/10, 2017

February 15/17, 2017

March 8/10, 2017

March 15/17, 2017

March 22/24, 2017

March 29/31, 2017

April 5/7, 2017

Current Projects

Equity Policy Revisions

We are continuing an extensive revision and restructuring of the *Equity Policy* in order to improve the clarity and accessibility of this resource for both students and our Equity Officers. This entails a substantial reorganization of the existing content with some revisions to improve interpretation, scope, procedure, conflict of interest scenarios, and more. These changes will now come to the Legislative Council for approval this month.

Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) Application

SSMU Equity has provided several letters in support of a Sustainability Projects Fund application to hire a Community Projects Manager (Racialized and Ethnic Students) and we are pleased to report that this project has received its funding and the Community Projects Manager has been hired. Marilyn Verghis will be working closely with Malek Yalaoui to structure the nature of the collaboration between SSMU and SEDE for the Community Projects work in consolidating, support, advising, and developing educational materials on racialized student experiences and support structures available at McGill.

Representation on the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity (JBSCE)

Marilyn is continuing as the SSMU representative to this committee, which develops University policy regarding “under-represented groups” (women, racialized and ethnic peoples, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ people). Current initiatives of the JBSCE and subcommittee include revising the terms of reference; advocating for IT improvements for the use of preferred names; advocating for more equitable recruitment and hiring; providing feedback to the Task Force on Indigenous Education providing feedback on the draft *Policy Against Sexual Violence*; and more. Simone serves as a student member of the Subcommittee on Persons with Disabilities and Marilyn as a student member of the Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons. The latter group is currently functioning as the working group for the Mandatory Equity Training initiative (elaborated below). Marilyn also works with Angela Campbell Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity), McGill University in a new initiative implemented this year to examine and remove course evaluations that exhibit discrimination or bias against a teaching staff based on their race gender, sexual orientation etc.



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Mandatory Equity Training

Marilyn has been collaborating with a working group of the Joint Board Senate Committee on Equity to advocate for online equity training for all incoming students, similar in model to the Minerva academic integrity tutorial. The group is currently in the development of a series of modules around existing policies that promote and protect equity and inclusivity at McGill, in order to establish a “baseline” equity standard for all students based on their rights and responsibilities. This project had stalled during the second term but is picking up this semester under the leadership of the JBSCE Subcommittee for Racialized and Ethnic Persons.

Winter Campus Conversations

So far, SSMU Equity is planning on a total of three “Campus Conversations” sessions this year. This includes our *Post-Election Support and Solidarity* self-care event held last Thursday, November 10th; a closed POC discussion on *Race in the Academy* next Thursday, November 24th; and a SSMU-PGSS workshop on strategies for engaging in anti-oppressive conversations post-election on Monday, November 28th, which focused on skills for white students when they head home for the Winter break. This semester this series has continued with *Mixed Race Identities: The Best of Both Worlds, or Neither?* held on Wednesday February 8th, 2017.

Future Projects

Winter Campus Conversations

We plan to continue our Campus Conversations series next term with monthly instalments. In the week of March 13-March 17 there will be a Campus Conversation in collaboration with Queer McGill and BSN on racial dating preferences, and in the last week of March or first week of April we will be organizing one on diaspora experiences/first generation Canadian experiences.

SSMU Equity Speaker Event

The annual observance of the SSMU Speaker Series this year has been organized and successfully received funding for the anti-oppressive comedian such as Hari Kondabalu! We are organizing the comedy night for March 20, 2017 and hope to welcome a large group of students for this much needed self-care event.

International Women’s Day

We are collaborating with the Women of Colour Collective of McGill Law for the second instalment of their *Women’s Resistance* art night, which will be held in Thomson House on March 8th (following up on a keynote speaker event the night before and in advance of the Law Needs Feminism conference the following weekend).

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilyn Verghis and Simone Cavanaugh
SSMU Equity Commissioners