



Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs)
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Located on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka traditional territories

Equity Committee Report

February 13th, 2020

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).

MEMBERSHIP

Recruitment for members at large of the equity committee began on September 15th, 2019 and ran until September 24th, 2019. Upon receiving the applications, the equity commissioners selected a total of nine applicants. Of the members selected, eight out of the nine members responded to their invitation to sit on the committee.

The councilor position which is a requirement of the committee, as outlined in section 4.4 of the 'Committee Terms of Reference - Equity Committee', was not filled this year. The committee is open to receiving a councilor for the rest of the Winter 2020 term, in order to fulfill this requirement and expand membership of the committee.

Amy Gan, member-at-large
Arij Soufi, member-at-large
Briana Wilson, member-at-large (Fall 2019)
Caroline Pease, member-at-large
Jaime Little, member-at-large
Kaitlin Pearson, member-at-large (Fall 2019)
Kennedy McKee-Braide, member-at-large
Salma Mohamed, member-at-large

Madeline Wilson, VP University Affairs
Zeytouna Suleiman, Equity Commissioner
Alana Bertin, Equity Commissioner (Fall 2019)
Amandri Dahanayake, Equity Commissioner (Winter 2020)



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There have been certain changes with regards to the membership of the equity committee and its leadership throughout the year. Alana Bertin, who was serving as one of the equity commissioners, was unable to continue in her role for the winter 2020 semester, due to unforeseen circumstances. As such, a hiring process began in early January that carried on for the rest of the month, to fill the co-equity commissioner position. Amandri Dahanayake was hired to fill the role and has begun serving as co-equity commissioner as of February 5th, 2020.

Certain members-at-large were unable to continue taking part in the committee in the winter term. Briana Wilson, was unable to continue for the winter term, as she has completed her studies. Kaitlin Pearson, was no longer able to continue taking part in the committee during the winter term, due to time constraints.

Meetings

The equity committee has been meeting on a weekly basis since October 2019. For the winter term, the members meet every Wednesday evening from 5:00-6:00pm to execute the vision and projects of the equity committee.

2019-2020 Equity Committee Vision

- Focus on popular education to increase awareness of equity concepts and increase awareness of inequity on campus
- Conduct a review of the equity policy
- Execute a series of community building events
- Engage in advocacy on campus
- Promote events, initiatives and projects of other equity based groups on campus

Fall 2019 Projects

Fee Campaign

The committee ran a fee campaign during the fall, to encourage students to 'vote yes' to the the proposal of a fee increase of the equity fee to one dollar as well as a proposal to make the fee non-optable on the Fall Referendum. Of these proposals, the the increase was passed however, changing the opt-outable status of the fee did not pass.

Online Equity Campaign

The committee members have been working on popular education to increase awareness of equity concepts and increase awareness of inequity on campus. They have been doing this through infographics, which involve a process of research and



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peer editing and are subsequently published on the SSMU Equity Facebook page. This is an initiative that is ongoing in the winter term.

Social Justice Coffeehouse

The committee hosted a social justice coffeehouse, which was an open mic format. The purpose of the event was to better establish the presence of SSMU Equity on campus and work on building community. As well as, to provide students with a safe space to de-stress and have free food, at the end of the semester. The event took place on Friday November 29, 2019.

Winter 2020 Projects

Photo Campaign

The photo campaign was a project that the equity committee was planning on carrying out in the fall term. The purpose of the campaign was to highlight the voices and experiences of marginalized groups on campus as a means of popular education through storytelling. Highlighting themes of resilience, activism, discrimination, marginalization amongst others. The idea was to allow students, faculty and staff on campus, to share a caption or story pertaining to one or several of the aforementioned themes and pair it with a photo of them that would be shared on the SSMU Equity Facebook and Instagram. This would be inspired by the widely popularized 'Humans of New York' storytelling and photography style. However, we learned that the 'Community Narratives Project' which falls under the portfolio of SSMU VP External, was putting together a very similar project, in which the equity commissioners were asked to sit on the board of the project. As such, we decided to merge to photo campaigns and have it remain under the 'Community Narratives Project'. In the winter term, the equity committee has been taking on a more active role in order to solicit submissions for the photo campaign.

Art Show

The idea behind the art show was to have a culminating event for the aforementioned photo campaign. This would be a social event in which many of the photos and captions collected would be printed and displayed in addition to any other forms of submitted art work that corresponds with the themes, in a one night exhibition. The art show is currently scheduled for the evening of Wednesday April 8th 2020, and tentatively will be held in the Thomson House lounge.



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Submitted by,

Zeytouna Suleiman
Equity Commissioner