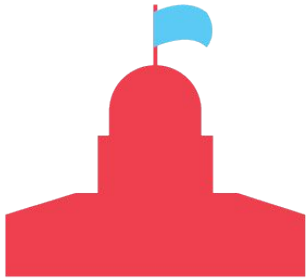


# Report of the Vice-President (University Affairs)



Fall 2021 General Assembly - *Claire Downie*

# University Affairs & Representation



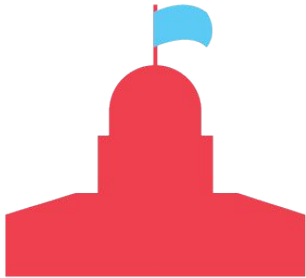
- Responsibilities
  - Undergraduate Senate and Committee representation
  - Senate Caucus
  - Student Rights and the Know Your Rights campaign
    - Both individual and overarching support
  - University-level accountability
  - University-level policy review and development
  - Research and advocacy projects
- McGill Committees, Working Groups, Standing Meetings
  - Senate Steering Committee
  - Scholarship Review Subcommittee
  - Committee on Student Services (CSS)
  - University Health and Safety Committee (UHSC)
  - Policy Assessing Student Learning (PASL, formerly USAP) working group
  - Ad Hoc Committee of Senate on COVID Academic Planning and Policies
  - Weekly check-in with Dean of Students to support students who reach out
  - Weekly COVID check-ins with DPSLL Labeau, PGSS, MCSS, MACES
  - Weekly check-ins with PGSS, MCSS, MACES

# Academic Rights



- Supporting individual students who report academic violations by instructors
  - With new reading week, received reports of professors ignoring reading week/academic calendar
  - Remote learning violations and potential violations
    - For instance, how participation is evaluated in remote learning environments
- Contributing to PASL (Policy Assessing Student Learning, this was formerly called the USAP) revisions
  - Policy concerns exam accommodations, participation grades, etc, so having a strong policy is very important
  - Significant opportunity to advocate for SSMU's goals (for instance, potentially placing restrictions on paid material required to participate in a course)
- Know Your Rights Campaign
  - Successful tabling outside the University Centre
  - Addition of COVID-related rights
    - Complicated by changing and unclear information on the part of the university
  - Hopeful for more locations in the winter

# COVID-19 and Academics



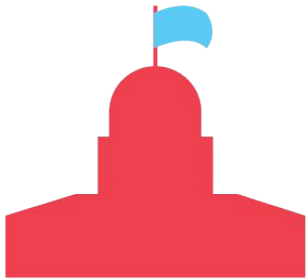
- Academic Accessibility and Accommodations
  - Lack of accommodations for students vulnerable to COVID-19, and for students who were unable to return to Canada by the start of the Fall semester.
  - Advocating for individual students who reach out is typically (at least partially) successful, but a lack of streamlined accommodations remain troubling and make learning environments unsafe and/or inaccessible for many.
  - As stated before, absence of clear and streamlined academic rights and accommodations remain a substantial barrier.
- Ad Hoc Committee of Senate on COVID Academic Planning and Policies
  - Struck several weeks ago, meets at least weekly
  - Discussions surrounding accommodations and mode of delivery
    - Issues concerning students, faculty, staff with a lot of overlap

# COVID-19: Campus Safety and Vaccination



- Protest for a Safe and Accessible Campus
  - Worked with VP External, SSMU staff and volunteers
- Vaccine mandate/use of Vaccine passport
  - Ongoing university resistance
- Promoting accessibility of vaccination
  - Campus vaccination clinics, resources for transportation
- Collaboration with other stakeholders, liaising with administration concerning various safety concerns
  - Ability of instructors to remove masks while teaching
  - Air quality in classrooms and campus spaces
  - Robustness of contact tracing
  - Rapid testing
  - Transparency of university information, communication
- Regular meetings with administration
  - Some productive instances, but unfortunately nearly all decision-making power remains concentrated to the EOC and student consultation remains largely an afterthought.
- In constant contact with student union leaders at other universities in Quebec and across Canada re: campus COVID policies

# Overarching Issues/Work re: COVID-19



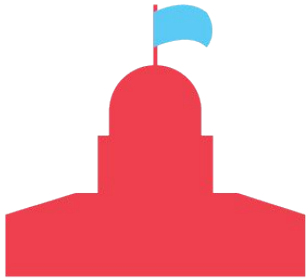
- Lack of communication and transparency by administration
- Lack of student consultation, difficulty communicating with university stakeholders
- Significant amount of decision-making power by EOC, even when concerns are academic or labor in nature
  - Ongoing university governance issue, addressed in part by ad-hoc committee
- Lack of streamlined accommodations for students, instructors who cannot be on campus
- Mandatory attendance remains
- Lack of testing requirements or vaccine mandates
  - Changing rationales provided for inability/unwillingness to impose one
- Contact tracing
- Incorrect or misleading information being disseminated by university (see: most recent MRO)
- This work has been taken on so significantly by SSMU because:
  - Pressing issue of accessibility and (in)equity for students
  - Concerns students and larger community
  - Collegial governance concerns re: EOC
  - Emblematic of ongoing university issues re: accessibility

# Academic Resources & Libraries



- Responsibilities
  - Library development and Library Improvement Fund
  - Study spaces and physical development
  - Academic accessibility
  - Open Educational Resources (OER) project
  - Library relations
  - Menstrual product access in libraries
- Relevant Staff
  - Library Improvement Fund Commissioner
  - Open Educational Resource Coordinator
- Advocating for prayer spaces in libraries
  - With capacity restrictions, fewer appropriate spaces on campus for students who pray

# Additional Projects (1/2)



- Indigenous Affairs
  - Supporting Indigenous Affairs Commissioner while maintaining autonomy of portfolio
  - Hiring additional staff to expand and support IAC
  - How to strengthen SSMU's mandate of Indigenous solidarity at SSMU and more broadly
- Gender and Sexuality
  - QUIPS Motion passed through LC, all credit goes to Gender and Sexuality Commissioner
  - Question on upcoming referendum about a fee to provide much-needed bursaries to Queer students for essential needs and research
- How to reduce unpaid labor done at SSMU
  - Continuing work done by UA predecessors
  - May require constitutional changes, referenda



# Additional Projects (2/2)



- Menstrual Health
  - New team is hard at work
  - Free products available across campus
  - Expanding to new locations on campus
  - Expanding product offerings
    - Reusable products distributed to UGE and community groups
  - Advising other student unions on their programs
  - Revising/renewing policy
- SSMU Policies/Internal Work
  - Family Care Policy currently in revision
  - Menstrual Health Policy currently in revision (supported by Menstrual Health team)
  - Ad-Hoc Governance Review Committee
  - Frequent presence at University Centre to assist students with questions or who need something from SSMU
    - Assisting with staffing needs at building



**Questions? Comments?  
Concerns? (Also thank you to Brooklyn  
for the presentation template)**