Introduction

Policy is the responsibility of Council, under Bylaw 2. The Society Policy Manual is a “universal reference for people acting on behalf of the Society in various capacities” and is a “catalogue of broad guiding principles.”

1. Amendments to this Manual may only be entertained during the period from October 1st through March 31st of the following year, unless Council votes by special resolution to entertain an amendment outside of this period.

2. Any amendments to this Manual must be proposed through Council:
   2.1 First Reading: Council
       2.1.1 Notice of a proposed enactment, amendment, or repeal of any part of this Manual shall be given to the Secretary-General at least two (2) weeks before the meeting of Council at which the motion is to be introduced.
       2.1.2 Notice of the wording of the proposed motion must be given to Council members at least five (5) days before the Council meeting at which the motion is to be introduced and debated.
       2.1.3 The motion shall be read a first time at Council. The motion shall be debated and amended if so desired, and approved in principle by a simple majority vote.

2.2 The Governance Committee
   2.2.1 The motion, as approved in principle by Council, shall be conveyed in writing to the Governance Committee within one (1) week.
   2.2.2 The Governance Committee shall consider the motion.
   2.2.3 Within ten (10) working days of having received notice, the Governance Committee shall notify the Secretary-General in writing of any recommended changes to the proposed Manual. If no such changes are recommended, the Secretary-General shall be notified of that fact.
2.2.4 If the Governance Committee submits no changes within ten (10) working days, then the proposed amendment shall go forward to be read a second time at Council.

2.3 Second Reading: Council

2.3.1 The Secretary-General shall ensure that the proposed amendment and the recommendations of the Governance Committee are included for second reading at a Council meeting, and that this agenda be given to all Council members at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting.

2.3.2 Council shall debate and consider the proposed motion, and any recommendations made by the Governance Committee.

2.3.3 The Speaker shall not permit Council to consider any further amendments from the floor, other than those recommended by the Governance Committee.

2.3.4 The proposed motion shall be approved by a special resolution of Council and the changes shall take effect immediately upon such approval.

3. The Secretary-General shall oversee updates to the Manual as required

Issues Policy: University/Industry Research Partnerships

Preamble:
In Canada and around the world, governments, academia and industry have increasingly emphasized the importance of knowledge in stimulating economic growth and driving higher productivity (1). In parallel, governments' cutbacks to higher education and research grants have forced universities to seek other kinds of funding, in particular, partnerships with industry. These partnerships have become one of the Canadian government's priorities (2). A common form of university/industry partnership involves universities contracting out the use of their publicly funded facilities. Another common kind of partnership involves signing research contracts linking university researchers to industry, whereby the university receives industry money to generate research in a specific area. Such contracts may entail the transfer of intellectual property to industry.

Policy:
The PGSS supports:

1. The generation and dissemination of knowledge for the betterment of society.
2. That all research contracts with the University should respect academic freedom.
3. Informing students of potential consequences of university/industry contracts to intellectual property, possible publication delays and conditions for graduation.
4. That research, and the use of University facilities, be held accountable to the University's ethical and methodological standards.
5. The right of the academic community to obtain information regarding research projects funded through university/industry partnerships, such as patents obtained, and products or services generated.
6. The right of the academic community to obtain information regarding any use of the University's facilities by any external body.
The PGSS opposes:

1. The consideration of potential profitability in the prioritization of research projects.
2. Research contracts that may delay significantly the publication of research results or that may hinder students’ ability to complete the requirements associated with their degrees.
3. Industry use of the University’s research facilities that hinders access by the University’s researchers.
4. The reduction of public funding due to an increased availability of industry financing for university research.

Finally, with regards to the Policy regarding Teaching Assistants, the PRC recommends to Council that the Policy be renamed to “Policy on PGSS Members as Teaching Assistants”.


**Issues Policy: Policy on Guaranteed Funding for Graduate Student Researchers**

Preamble:
McGill University is a publicly funded, student-centered and research intensive institution. Some G13 universities, such as University of Toronto and University of Western Ontario have instituted minimum guaranteed funding packages for all graduate students engaged in research. Research conducted by graduate students plays a key role in sustaining McGill University’s competitive status in the international community.

Policy:
The PGSS supports:

1. That all graduate students who are active participants in research for the University be guaranteed a minimum living stipend, competitive with McGill’s peer universities, through some combination of the following (or other) sources:
2. Remission of tuition and University ancillary fees;
3. Differential fee waivers for international and out-of-province students;
4. Access to teaching, research and/or other campus work opportunities, so long as the combination of such opportunities does not detract unduly from an individual’s own research;
5. Competitive scholarships from government, industry, or other sources; and
6. Other research monies.
7. That the net value of a guaranteed funding package after tuition and fee deductions be equal and independent of citizenship and residential status.

That graduate student researchers be tax exempt for all monies received as a result of university work or affiliation, including scholarships, grants, research and teaching.

Adopted March 14, 2007 by resolution of PGSS Council
Issues Policy: Policy on Research Funding at McGill
Preamble:
McGill University is a publicly funded, student-centered and research intensive institution. However, public funds may be insufficient to support all graduate and postdoctoral students at McGill and to maintain internationally competitive research funding levels throughout all divisions of the University.

Policy:
The PGSS supports:
1. That research at McGill be funded by the public to the greatest extent possible; and
2. The solicitation of funds from private individuals, charitable organizations, governments, or corporations, provided that these individuals, organizations, or corporations conduct their business in a manner consistent with the standards of the PGSS.

Adopted March 14, 2007 by resolution of PGSS Council

Operations Policy: The PGSS Health Insurance Plan
Preamble:
Traditionally, the PGSS has provided a Health Insurance Plan (Health and Dental coverage) for its regular members and their dependents to help ensure their physical and mental well-being. The public health care system does not cover all essential needs. The absence of adequate insurance coverage can result in temporary or permanent interruption of a student’s education.

Policy:
The PGSS shall strive to offer a student Health Insurance Plan that:
1. Provides access to quality health care;
2. Achieves a balance between premium cost and adequate coverage;
3. Provides coverage for high unexpected costs while keeping low recurring costs from becoming a financial burden to the users;
4. Provides access to preventative health care;
5. Provides coverage to the dependents of PGSS members; and
6. Facilitates access to health care both on and off campus.

Adopted January 10, 2007 by resolution of PGSS Council

Operations/Issues Policy: The PGSS Environment Policy
Preamble:
All members of the global community can strive to engage in sustainable practices in order to improve the quality of life for the current generation without compromising that of future generations.
As leading universities across Canada are actively promoting comprehensive campus sustainability research and implementation projects, supporting the University’s efforts to become a leader in environmental stewardship is becoming increasingly important.

The actions of the PGSS members impact the environmental quality of the University, the surrounding community, and global environment.

**Policy:**
The PGSS shall strive to:

1. Disseminate information to PGSS members related to all campus-wide environmental policies and projects that promote environmental sustainability.
2. Encourage PGSS members to be environmentally aware and to adopt lifestyle practices that foster the values of environmental sustainability.
3. Support the existence of a strong and relevant University Environmental Policy and promote the implementation of sustainable practices at the University.
4. Participate in University committees and initiatives that promote the environmental sustainability of the campus.
5. Encourage, support, and participate in student-initiated sustainability projects.
6. Operate all PGSS activities adhering to the principles of Rethink/ Reduce/ Reuse/ Recycle. These principles emphasize the need to think and “rethink” about one’s role in the Environment, to “reduce” the amount of materials consumed in order to preserve natural resources, to “reuse” goods in order to reduce waste, and to “recycle” all materials that are not reusable.
7. Establish and maintain purchasing policies which favour, whenever possible, products that are environmentally safe, manufactured from post-consumer waste, biodegradable, and non-toxic.

Adopted May 2 2007 by resolution of PGSS Council

**Issues Policy: PGSS Policy on Equity and Diversity**

**Preamble:**
Historically and presently, certain groups of people have systematically been denied access to education, or the opportunity to participate fully in the University community, whether as students, professors or members of University staff.

Hence, there is a need for leadership on issues of equity and diversity within the PGSS membership and in the McGill community. This need has been partially addressed by the University through the establishment of the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) office, and the recent drafting of an Employment Equity Policy by McGill. However, this need has yet to be addressed specifically by student organizations.

Currently, federal and provincial legislation only recognises the following disadvantaged groups: women, Aboriginal Peoples, visible minorities and ethnic minorities whose first language is neither French nor English, and people with disabilities.
Policy:

1. The PGSS understands that the term ‘disadvantaged groups’ includes, but is not limited to: women, indigenous peoples, people of minority sexual orientations and gender identities, people with disabilities, visible minorities, ethnic minorities whose first language is neither English nor French, and people of underprivileged socio-economic status.

2. The PGSS is committed to promoting a University community that embraces its own diversity, and supports the pursuit of a range of intellectual endeavours representative of the pluralistic nature of its membership.

3. The PGSS encourages the participation of students from diverse backgrounds and experiences in its Council and committee membership, and encourages a diversity of representation within McGill’s administrative bodies, with a view to broadening the scope of ideas and perspectives that contribute to our community.

4. The PGSS calls upon McGill University to:
   4.1. Provide resources, programs, and services to support members of our community belonging to disadvantaged groups.
   4.2. Continue to pursue initiatives designed to actively educate, heighten awareness, and provide opportunities for dialogue about equity and diversity-related issues.
   4.3. Maintain an Employment Equity Policy that includes the disadvantaged groups specified in federal and provincial legislation plus people of minority sexual orientations and gender identities.

1. The PGSS will endeavour through the usual course of its operations:
   1.1. Not to affiliate or collaborate with organizations known to promote or engage in unjust discriminatory practices.
   1.2. To actively support projects that aim to end discrimination or to promote diversity and inclusiveness in the McGill community.

Issues Policy: On Tuition Fees

Preamble:
In 2007, the Quebec government allowed tuition fees to rise by $100 per year, representing an average increase of 6% per year. During the 2010 budget speech, Finance Minister Raymond Bachand indicated the Government of Quebec’s interest in significantly raising tuition fees beginning in 2012 when the $500 increase over 5 years expired. Both the CREPUQ and business interests like the BTMM have advocated for an increase of $1,500 and $3,000 respectively over the course of 3 years ending in 2015. As we enter the next budget cycle, it is clear the government intends to dramatically increase tuition fees.

The PGSS Recognizes:

1. There are financial concerns in the province of Quebec, but the allocation of public revenue is a choice;
2. There are alternative sources of governmental revenue that can be used to fund higher education instead of raising tuition fees;
3. That the burden of financing tertiary education should not fall upon Quebec resident graduate students, who are among the economically vulnerable groups in Quebec. That the burden of financing tertiary education should not fall upon Quebec resident graduate students, who are among the economically vulnerable groups in Quebec.

The PGSS supports:

1. The elimination of tuition fees for Quebec resident, graduate students;
2. The implementation of a freeze on tuition fees for Canadian and international students at current levels where Canadian and international student tuition fees are adjusted annually to correct for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Recommendation:

1. The PGSS should create a policy regarding ancillary fees.

[Adopted March 2, 2011 by resolution of PGSS Council. See the documents from that meeting for supporting documentation.]

Issues Policy: On Graduate Students as Teaching Assistants

Preamble:
A significant portion of graduate students are employed by the University as teaching assistants. While, teaching assistants are represented by their union, PGSS also represents teaching assistants in their capacities as graduate students.

Teaching assistants play an important role in the quality of education at the University. Their work is often not directly related to an individual’s own research work.

Policy:
The PGSS supports:

1. Teaching assistantships are a form of employment that contributes to the financial needs of a graduate student; it is not a source of funding.
2. Teaching assistants be paid wages on par with unionized teaching assistants at McGill’s peer universities in Canada.
3. All graduate students who are employed as teaching assistants by the University be provided with adequate resources to fulfill their duties, including but not limited to: designated work space, designated computers, appropriate space to meet with students, proper training and conference rooms.
4. Teaching assistants not have to work more hours than they are being paid for.
5. Any additional work performed by teaching assistants to adequately perform their job be paid in full.
6. Teaching assistants be treated with the same respect and fairness as other University employees.
7. Consultations occur with teaching assistants and their union before any changes or adoptions are made to policies, rules or regulations, at the University, which are in any way related to teaching assistants.

Adopted January 9, 2008.
Issues Policy: On the Conduct of Research

Preamble:
Universities play a fundamental role in advancing knowledge. Research conducted at universities often directly contribute to social well-being, culture, legal, economic, technological and scientific development. Academic freedom, including the freedom of inquiry and the freedom to communicate ideas and results, is essential to University research and innovation. Hence, researchers and students should be encouraged to publicly present their research, regardless of the funding agency. However, academic freedom also obliges students, researchers, and institutions to understand the ethical and moral guidelines that apply to their research, and to make every effort to conduct it in a moral, ethical, and legal way. All research and scholarship must be governed by the principles of honesty, integrity, transparency, trust, accountability, and collegiality. Researchers should have a reasonable knowledge of precedents concerning similar research with regards to its potential harmful effects on individuals, the society, and the environment, and should apply this knowledge to guide their research.

Regulations on the conduct of research should address both the content and method with which research is being conducted. They should help maintain the highest moral and ethical values within research and scholarship; they should be committed to transparency that aids the reporting of research; and they should ensure that research is neither done in a way nor has outcomes that are directly harmful to individuals, the society, and the environment.

Policy:
The PGSS supports:

1. A policy that explicitly acknowledges the central role of graduate students in research at the University.
2. Regulations that ensure research cannot be conducted if implicit or explicit conditions of the funding purpose or recommend any conclusion.
   2.1. Transparency in reporting sources of funding is encouraged while anonymous funding directed at specific research efforts is discouraged.
3. That any contract or binding agreement, including military and private industry partnerships, are encouraged to respect the right of students and researchers to publicly present their research findings in a timely fashion.
4. Appropriate recognition of student contributions to any scholarly or non-scholarly publication.
5. Regulations that urge researchers to be aware of potentially harmful applications of their research, including obvious uses by supporting agencies and sponsors. Any research or research methods deemed harmful by the researcher involved or appropriate review committees should be strongly discouraged and subject to strict review and regulation.
6. A clear definition of “harmful applications” of research, in order to guide researchers when weighing the potentially harmful applications of their research against the benefits.
7. That the PGSS would support any university initiatives to educate graduate students on the potential harmful effects of their research.
8. Awareness and adherence to the ethical guidelines of applicable research domains, areas or disciplines by all researchers throughout their research.
9. That any policy regulating the conduct of research should be reviewed at the third year of its operation by a working group that includes appropriate representation from the unit.