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1 Approval of the agenda

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3 Speaker’s Report

4 Announcements

4.1 Fee levy referenda

Whereas the council has approved the following two referendum questions and the changes can have a significant effect on the services provided by PGSS. Please be informed that the following questions will be presented as referendum questions shortly.

*Referendum question; Membership Fee

Whereas the PGSS membership fee was cut by about 37% (Approximately $19 per term) between the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years;

Whereas the PGSS has consequently had to reduce its free services to members;

Whereas the current Membership fee does not sufficiently cover the costs of PGSS services;

Whereas a significant number of members have recently moved to the Glen site, where the PGSS does not have a presence;

Whereas accommodating services to all members, including the non-downtown campus based members, is becoming more challenging;

Whereas the PGSS is continuing to maximize cost savings and revenue generating measures to reduce costs to members;

BIRT the following question be put to referendum:

Do you agree that PGSS modify the non-optoutable membership fee of 32.59$ per semester (excluding summer) to 35.85 (an equivalent of 10%), starting in January 2016, and continuing until such time that this fee is brought back to referendum. The membership fee funds general PGSS activities, including Services, Advocacy, and Events. This fee will apply to all PGSS members and be tied to inflation. A no vote will result in a reduction of PGSS Services to members."

*Referendum question; Special Projects Fund

Whereas the special projects fund is used for a variety of long term projects such as IT, daycare construction, external daycare priority placement for members, sustainability and legal cases;

Whereas since the inception of the special projects fund in 2012, it has paid out more money than it has collected in fees;

Whereas this fund is not tied to inflation;
Whereas the nature and reason of this fund (which is to support fiscally responsible long-term projects that make a major impact on the experience of Graduate Students at McGill) requires sufficient future funding;

BIRT the following question be put to referendum:

Do you agree that PGSS modify the non-optoutable Special Projects fee of $4.60 per semester (excluding summer) to $6.60, starting in January 2016, and continuing to and including this fees previously determined end date in 2027. This fee will apply to all PGSS members and be fixed to inflation. At any point, PGSS or its members may bring forward a referendum to reduce or modify this fee."

Fee levy referenda

4.2 Sustainability Project Fund Annual Report Presentation

The SPF mandate is to: “Build a culture of sustainability on McGill campuses through the development and seed-funding of interdisciplinary projects.” It creates opportunities for the McGill community to actively engage in sustainability initiatives on campus, and thus appropriate and be change agents in their own studying and working environment.

As PGSS members, we contribute an annual non-opt outable fee towards the fund alongside SSMU. Student contributions are matched equally by the administration.

SPF Steward Kim McGrath would like to use this opportunity to update PGSS on the SPF’s performance over the past year.

4.3 Upcoming Survey on Graduate Supervision

This is just a friendly announcement of the upcoming survey on graduate supervision. We hope this survey will begin late November.

4.4 Importance of PGSS Representation

We need more volunteers. PGSS will not be successful without further involvement from its members.

5 Business Arising

6 Reports

6.1 Report on New Quebec Student Federations

I have been participating in the formation of two new Quebec student federations, AVEQ and QSU. Report on progress thus far, the importance of belonging to a Quebec student federation, and plans for an affiliation process later this year.
6.2 External Affairs Officer Report for Annual General Meeting

2015-10-07 External Affairs Officer Report for Annual General Meeting

6.3 FAO report to the members

Whereas in the Society Activity Manual Chapter 1 Section 1 Point 12.2 states: "Officers, either individually or collectively, shall present to the Annual General meeting of the Society a report detailing their activities and those undertaken by the Society during the previous year."

Please find attached the FAO report to the members at the General Meeting

2015-10-08 FAO report to the members

6.4 Annual financial statement

Whereas in the Corporate Affairs Manual Section 7 point 3 it is stated: "The current annual financial statement, including the auditor's report, shall be presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting, and shall be available to regular members of the PGSS upon request."

Please find attached the auditor's report on the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

2015-10-07 Annual financial statement

6.5 Report from the Academic Affair Officer for the October 2015 General Meeting

Need more PGSS Representatives
Priority on enhancing the experience of graduate supervision and expanding possible funding packages

2015-10-07 Report from the Academic Affair Officer for the October 2015 General Meeting

6.6 IAO Report to AGM - October 2015

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving long weekend! I've been working on restructuring the events portfolio, from budgets to events. I have been taking part in post-Orientation Week debrief meetings with our Graduate and Postdoctoral Orientation Week stakeholders. The PGSS Social events had the highest overall rating of 4.08/5 of the three aspects being assessed! October is full of some great events for (my favourite holiday) Halloween. You won't want to miss the Rocky Horror Picture Show screening in the
Ballroom, the Pumpkin Carving Contest, or the Halloween Party! If you have questions, concerns, or want to know how you can get involved, feel free to email me at internal.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca.

2015-10-07 IAO Report to AGM - October 2015

6.7 2015-10-14 Member Services Officer Report to the General Meeting

2015-10-12 2015-10-14 Member Services Officer Report to the General Meeting

6.8 2015-10-14 Secretary General Report to the General Meeting

2015-10-07 2015-10-14 Secretary General Report to the General Meeting

6.9 Report from Member Support Commissioner - 2015-10-14 Annual General Meeting

Ongoing initiatives

- Funding for graduate students: push for deadline by which departments must notify students of funding decisions for upcoming year
- Time limitation students: need updated policies regarding access to supervision & PhD committee support, access to student services.

2015-10-07 Report from Member Support Commissioner - 2015-10-14 Annual General Meeting

7  New Business

7.1 Motion to Approve changes to the PGSS Bylaws

Whereas, the Bylaws, as currently written, contain some information that is vague, ambiguous, or incorrect.

Whereas, the current Bylaws have not been subject to a major overview since their adoption in 2012.

Whereas, the current Bylaws do not address issues such as virtual meetings and electronic motions.

Whereas, the proposed revisions include the addition of previously missing definitions, provisions for electronic motions and virtual meetings, and rephrasing of previously unclear articles.
Whereas, the proposed revisions have been approved by the Executive Committee, Council, and the Board of Directors.

BIRT, the PGSS General Meeting approve the proposed amendments to the Bylaws.

BIFRT, the proposed amendments take effect immediately following approval at the General Meeting.

Motion to Approve changes to the PGSS Bylaws

7.2 Motion to Ratify Appointments to the Board of Directors

WHEREAS the Board of Directors has approved the appointment of two (2) new Board members;
WHEREAS Xavier Milton has been appointed to fill one (1) of the two (2) seats reserved for External Members;
WHEREAS Amanda Winegardner has been appointed to fill one (1) of the two (2) seats reserved for Internal Members;
BIRT the appointment of these Directors be ratified.

7.3 Motion Regarding McGill Divestment from Tar Sands, Oil Pipelines and other Fossil Fuel Industries

WHEREAS, there is a strong consensus in the international scientific community on the reality of anthropogenic climate change, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that it is “virtually certain” that anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses, such as those released from the combustion of hydrocarbon fuels, are major contributors to climate change on a planetary scale (1, 2, 3);
WHEREAS, global climate change already imperils human welfare worldwide by 1) threatening food security through increases in frequency and severity of droughts and floods, 2) increasing the frequency and intensity of severe weather events, 3) displacing coastal communities due to rising sea levels, and 4) increasing the risk of the spread of infectious diseases (4, 5, 6);
WHEREAS, Canada affirmed through the 2010 Cancun agreements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2) that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time
WHEREAS, the tar sands represent the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in Canada and are the most significant impediment to meeting Canada’s emissions reductions targets (7, 8)
WHEREAS courts in various jurisdictions have ruled on the negligence and liability of major fossil fuel companies, finding them responsible of deleterious impacts on the local environment and surrounding populations derived from, including but not limited to, oil spills in the marine and terrestrial environment, and water contamination from other sources of pollution
WHEREAS, court proceedings have ruled on the criminal negligence on the part of major fossil fuel companies which are responsible for major deleterious impacts on the local environment, including but not limited to oil spills in the marine and terrestrial environment, and water contamination from other sources of pollution (Ecuador v. Chevron)
WHEREAS, McGill’s Endowment of approximately $2.1 billion dollars is invested in fossil fuel companies (10a, 10b), including but not limited to tar sands companies (10a, 10b, 12);

WHEREAS, 35 of the companies in which McGill University owns shares are among the largest fossil fuel companies in the world, and collectively hold 205.455 Gigatonnes of CO2 beneath the ground (10a, 10b, 12) that if released into the atmosphere would have potentially catastrophic impacts on human society and ecosystem services

WHEREAS, 60-80% of the world’s known carbon reserves must remain underground to keep warming below 2C (11), and none of the companies in which McGill invests have committed to keeping any significant portion of their reserves unburned;

WHEREAS, the recent declines in the hydro-carbon market demonstrates the volatility of these investments and the threat to the financial stability of institutions posed by these investments, while profitable alternatives to fossil fuel companies exist, such that fossil-free portfolios would have performed better in the last ten years than those invested in fossil fuels (13);

WHEREAS, the McGill Board of Governors Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) reviewed its terms of reference and proposed changes that were considered by the Nominating, Governance and Ethics (NGE) Committee and approved by the Board of Governors on May 22, 2013. These revisions expanded the definition of social injury to include grave, injurious impact, which the activities of a company are found to have on the natural environment;

WHEREAS, fossil fuel divestment is a broad global movement of over 1200 universities, foundations, municipal governments and other institutions that are lobbying for fossil fuel divestment with the aim of isolating these companies on a social and economic basis.

WHEREAS, as of December 1st, 2015, 2.6 trillion dollars have been committed to be free of fossil from investments, from 449 independent institutions committed to divesting from fossil fuel stock holdings.

BIFRTPGSS recognizes that the exploration, processing and transportation of fossil fuels, including but not limited to coal and petroleum, is responsible for major deleterious environmental and social impacts, including but not limited to major oil spills, contamination of water resources related to the extraction of petroleum and coal on a local level.

BIFRTPGSS recognizes that fossil fuel companies promote the combustion of fossil fuels at levels that will drive anthropogenic climate change above 2C above pre-industrial levels, a scientifically established tipping point for irreversible climate change.

BIFRTPGSS recognizes the meritorious efforts made by members of the McGill Community, including but not limited to students, faculty and staff, to develop methods to improve, mitigate and mediate the deleterious environmental and social impacts of the fossil fuel industry activities described above.

BIFRTPGSS endorses and promotes a strategic investment policy at McGill University that promotes sustainable, renewable alternatives that do not contribute to the emission of green-house gases, including but not limited to carbon dioxide and methane.

BIFRTPGSS recognizes the negative role that fossil fuel companies play in affecting public policy, including, but not limited to energy policy, science policy and environmental monitoring of the impact of climate change in Canada and around the world.

BIFRTPGSS recognizes that fossil fuel companies contribute to negative impacts on local communities and the natural environment, and thus meet the Board of Governor’s definition of drivers of social injury.
BIFRT PGSS encourages any action from the Board of Governors of McGill University to divest its endowment holdings in companies engaged in fossil fuel production, specifically calling for an immediate divestment from tar sands and oil pipeline companies and provide a 3-year time-frame to divest from the other top 200 fossil fuel companies in which it is invested.

BIFRT PGSS encourages its representatives at the McGill Senate and or the Board of Governors to lobby for divestment from fossil fuel companies.

BIFRT PGSS endorses the Divest McGill petition for McGill to withdraw direct stock holdings in the world’s 200 largest oil and coal companies including but not limited to tar sands and oil pipeline companies from its endowment, and thus meet McGill’s standards for investment practices specified in the board of governor’s terms of reference.

Motion Regarding McGill Divestment from Tar Sands, Oil Pipelines and other Fossil Fuel Industries

8 Discussion Items

8.1 Discussion: Bixi docking stations around campus

1) How many people use bixis as a method of transportation to/from campus?
2) How many people have issues finding available docking stations around campus?
3) Is this an issue you would like to see the PGSS look into this year?

8.2 2015-2016 Work Plan

The attached Work Plan was approved by Council during the Sept 16 Meeting.

Please ask any questions you may have.

2015-2016 Work Plan