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Call to order

1 Approval of the agenda

1.1 Add Item: Report from the Environment Commissioner

Passed Unanimously.

PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

2 Floor Items

2.1 December 2nd Council Meeting

PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

3 Speaker’s report

Welcome to 2016!
4 Announcements

6:34 PM 4.1 Provost Christopher Manfredi

A brief presentation followed by a Q & A session.

Prof. Manfredi briefly mentioned his role as Provost and Vice Principal, Academic serves two aspects - Chief Budget Officer (he builds the Universities budget to align with our Academic priorities) and Chief Academic Officer of the university (following the principal).

Two academic initiatives are in the works. The first is the work on a School in Public Policy (a graduate level school, tentative launch in Fall 2017), this is a piece of the McGill strategic academic plan to do more in the area of public policy. The second initiative is related to Indigenous Access McGill and increasing Aboriginal education and Indigenous Studies. We are currently doing a lot in this area but projects are not integrated with each other or well publicized so there is a push to make endeavours in this area more cohesive and public.

The Speaker then opened the floor to questions.

Y. Bresler (Physics) - One priority is making McGill a top research institute, and an initiative to achieve this has increasing graduate student enrolment, is this wise given the limited space faced by existing students?

Provost Manfredi thanked Mr. Bresler for his question and stated that we are currently below the average student:professor ratio. He also explained that we are doing quite well on the graduate funding front (at or above U15 norms) but that this funding is not uniform across the school. He clarified that the problem is in resource allocation rather than in the resources themselves.

M. Duramo (Environment) - Interest in response to the sexual assault policy and the issue of sexual assault on campus. Has your office been involved in those discussions and what is your stance on the existing policies and the changes that need to be made to the policy?

Provost Manfredi - There is a process in place to make changes to this policy and there are changes underway that are being led by the Dean of Students’ office and that will go to Dr. Campbell in the Provost’s office. There is a lot of work being done on equity issues right now to ensure we have the best practices of equity in place for our academic searches. These will eventually come to senate, though discussions about changes are ongoing and involve numerous stakeholders around the university.

C. McLeish (MGSS - Music) - Expressed that there concerns in the Music department regarding funding, are Music research students considered Arts in this context or as conservatory programs?

Provost Manfredi clarified that his previous reference to Arts was in relation to his previous role of Dean of Arts. There is currently a search for the Dean of Music, but he expressed hesitation to discuss specifics without looking at the numbers.

McLeash - Often music has many overlaps with research going on in Arts but seems distanced from these programs.

Manfredi - We have a quite unique school of Music in that there are research, technological, and performance based areas and the school performs very highly in all three areas.

B. Lungu (MSO) - In a senate meeting last year, the previous Provost could not outline where the funding for the OSD office was going, can you comment on the funding for this office?
Provost Manfredi suggested that he would look into this and follow up.

D. Mills (AAO) thanked the Provost for joining us. He then proceeded to ask if there any movement on the part of McGill Facilities to enhance the safety of the hills around McGill campus during icy winter conditions.

Provost Manfredi stated he would discuss with Facilities our initiatives regarding salting or abrasives. He then briefly outlined that there is a City plan for McTavish that could affect Facilities’ plan in this area.

R. Debrosse (EDC) - Noted the Provosts highlighting of the schools work on equity and the initiative mentioned earlier regarding First Nations, and asked when a similar initiative would be formed for Black studies.

Manfredi highlighted the existing African studies program but noted that there is currently nothing planned for a program or department for Black studies.

V. Frankel (EC) - Principal highlighted the importance with engaging with the new government, how can we engage with them to encourage funding for renewable energy research, particularly encourage funding for this research over hydrocarbon related research.

Manfredi - We are in collaboration with the U15 group to lobby the government relating to funding of research. The government wants sustainability to be a priority for the country, we want to ensure that funding is going to fundamental research and is given out in a competitive manner. McGill has great strengths in this area so if there are funding opportunities we are well placed to take advantage of them.

Seeing no further questions, the Speaker thanked Provost Manfredi for joining us.

4.2 ASEQ Health Insurance Presentation - Alexander Golovko

A short presentation from the ASEQ representative will be given followed by questions. Purpose is to get Councilors more informed regarding the health insurance.

Introduction to ASEQ plan by the guest presenter.

Our current Insurance provider is Desjardin Financial. Mr. Golovko presented a powerpoint outlining ASEQ’s role as a student insurance provider. This powerpoint will be made available on the PGSS website. Following the presentation, Mr. Golovko opened the floor to questions.

B. Lungu (MSO) thanked Mr. Golovko for his presentation and asked for him to elaborate on the psychological network? She additionally asked how partner practitioners are chosen and does ASEQ get benefits from students using these providers?

Golovko clarified that the partnerships with providers is to allow students more offices to go to. ASEQ does not get any profit from these partnerships, they are based on proximity to schools and the feedback from student users are taken into account. The Psychological Network is done in partnership with PSY Montreal, a group that promotes psychological services. There are specific practitioners around Montreal that provide services to our members for reduced costs. This is an outcome of our survey from two years ago.

MSO - PSY Montreal can also be accessed online, is that correct?

Golovko confirmed that individuals can Skype a professional for a first meeting and then can be scheduled for an appointment from there if needed.

Seeing no further questions, the Speaker thanked Mr. Golovko for his presentation.
4.3 Presentation from iNNERSHiP

Presentation from Emily regarding a new project called iNNERSHiP

*iNNERSHiP is an app that the team is trying to make available broadly at McGill. Emily first got involved as a tester for this app and is at council today to explain a bit about what this app is and why it’s useful. Her presentation can be found on the PGSS website under council documents.*

The app focuses on helping users define and progress towards goals using keys (questions about your goal and reasoning behind your goal) and companions (friends, colleagues, etc. who care about you and your goals).

Emily then invited councillors to participate and passed around a signup sheet and opened the floor to questions.

*Seeing no questions, the Speaker thanked Emily for her presentation.*

4.4 Want to learn more about your rights or resources available to you? Schedule a visit with your PGSA!

If students in your department have questions about their rights as students, the resources available to them, or even about discrimination and harassment, we will be happy to visit and answer your questions! Contact us: Regine, your Equity and Diversity Commissioner, and Ayo, your Member Support Commissioner.

R. Debrosse presented her two announcements and encouraged councillors to be in touch if they were interested in having more information presented to their PGSA or wished to have the EDC or MSC present at a PGSA meeting to answer questions.

4.5 Feeling embarrassed, threatened, excluded or simply feeling uncomfortable?

If a situation at McGill make you feel embarrassed, threatened, excluded, or uncomfortable, you might be suffering from harassment or discrimination. We are your commissioners and we are here to support you, whether you need to talk, to examine if your rights have been violated, or to be accompanied while you gather more information.

Check this factsheet (http://www.mcgill.ca/harass/factsheets) or contact us: Regine, your Equity and Diversity Commissioner, and Ayo, your Member Support Commissioner.

Feeling embarrassed, threatened, excluded or simply feeling uncomfortable? ()
5 Reports

5.1 Report from the Board of Directors

7:13 PM

2016-01-11 Report from the Board of Directors

The Council Director presented a brief report about the happenings at the December 2nd Board Meeting and stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the Council Director for his report.

5.2 Equity & Diversity Commissioner Report

7:16 PM

2016-01-06 Equity & Diversity Commissioner Report

The Equity and Diversity Commissioner presented two updates, there was money acquired for a peer support group for racialized students in response to student request (Jan 26th will be the first meeting). There is also a talk coming up about sexual violence with the EGSF institute on January 29th. She also highlighted ongoing work looking into mental health resources for racialized or ethnic students.

Debrosse then outlined the information in her report and stood for questions.

The speaker thanked the Equity and Diversity Commissioner for her report.

5.3 Health Commissioner Report

7:19 PM

2016-01-06 Health Commissioner Report

The Health Commissioner gave a brief overview of her report, highlighting the WRAP group therapy program that will be starting soon at Thomson House. She then stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the Health Commissioner for her report.

5.4 Member Support Commissioner Report

7:19 PM

This year my focus is on keeping track of the nature & frequency of inquiries received by the Member Support Committee, continuing our push for updated & enforced policies to protect students working with private corporations, and to assist with the “managing your supervisor” workshops scheduled for this semester.
2016-01-07 Member Support Commissioner Report ()

2016-01-07 Member Support Commissioner Report ()

The Member Support Commissioner gave a brief overview of his report, he highlighted the work on a policy regarding conflicts of interest and intellectual property and PGSS’s support of students on these issues. He also expressed a desire to collect information from PGSA’s on minimum funding for departments and contracts to that effect. He then stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the Member Support Commissioner for his report.

5.5 Report from the Environment Commissioner

The Environment Commissioners gave a brief update on three initiatives in their portfolio. There will be a startup weekend/hack-a-thon in February for a Montreal initiative that aims to make the city fossil-free by 2042. GreenDrinks are ongoing and successful. They encouraged councilors to get in contact with them if they would like to get involved and then stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the Environment Commissioner for his report.

5.6 Internal Affairs Officer Report

The IAO briefly introduced herself and gave an update on the winter orientation events so far. She outlined her goals for the term being 1) running the events planned by Sahil, 2) increasing the transparency and collaboration between PGSS committees, and 3) adding to the existing list of events and projects. She encouraged councillors to be in touch and stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the IAO for her report.

5.7 Report of the External Affairs Officer

The EAO reviewed his report and drew council’s attention to the motion regarding an affiliation policy. He requested councillors inform their members about the policy (if it passes) and that there will be affiliation referenda later this semester. The EAO encouraged councillors to email him if they had specific questions or concerns and stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the EAO for his report.

5.8 Report from the Academic Affairs Officer

The AAO encouraged councillors to apply for PSAC and Governance, as well as to the various award
committees (ie. excellence in supervision award committee). He then updated the council on work towards Intellectual Property and students’ rights, at senate today we received support from the Dean of GPS to include a section on tracking forms about conflict of interest so that this is documented in a place where it can facilitate a conversation between students and supervisors.

Managing your supervisor on Feb. 3 and 8, if you would like to be on the panel, please contact the AAO, otherwise we encourage you to come.

He then stood for questions.

F. Armstrong (PPSMUA) - Requested an example of the conflict of interest.

AAO - If a professor owns a company and requests the student to conduct their research as part of that company, the student is under the umbrella of the university but is also partly in industry. The idea is to encourage an ongoing dialogue so conflicts can be dealt with early.

F. Armstrong - Would students be required to document things that appear to be conflicts of interest as well as actual conflicts?

AAO - Right now the conflicts of interest only arise when the student brings it up, this procedure would encourage the supervisors and students to discuss this, it is not that finely defined at this point.

The Speaker thanked the AAO for his report.

5.9 FAO report 7 January 2016

2016-01-07 FAO report 7 January 2016

The FAO gave a brief overview of his report, highlighting the fact that over the past few years PGSS has spent more than it has received and we need to make sure our operations are more efficient and that we begin balancing our budget.

The Board has approved bringing in an advisor to re-organize our budget and our accounting system.

The FAO then stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the FAO for his report.

5.10 Quarterly financial report 2

2016-01-07 Quarterly financial report 2

The FAO presented the update for the second quarter and stood for questions.

MSO requested clarification on the colours.

Green is for approval by the council purview
Orange is for approval by the board and shared purview

V. Rahimzadeh (FMGSS) - The failure of the two referendum questions was mentioned, what are the modifications being proposed given those failures?
FAO - Those discussions are still ongoing, we will not be able to make everything work with the status quo regarding the incoming funding, but we need to carefully consider where to cut.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) - Can you highlight on this document where we are falling short?

FAO - On this document, we are no longer falling short as we are trying to run a balanced budget this year; however, we have over-expenditures from past years (in the Special Projects Fund) that are not taken into account from on this budget as it is a yearly budget. Further clarification can be provided during the next report.

The Speaker thanked the FAO for his report.

5.11 Budget update

Please find attached the budget that is now passed by both council and the board of directors. Please take note that the green cells are changes that are under the councils purview, the orange ones are those under the board of directors purview, and the purple ones are under both bodies purview.

2016-01-07 Budget update

Green - changes approved by council

The main issue in previous years was we did not look at the actuals of the membership fee revenue when building the budget. Contrary to predictions, the income from these fees was not increasing by 4% per year. There was enough of a buffer for previous years to cover this miscalculation, but that is no longer the case, we therefore need to make changes to reduce our spending or increase our fee income.

The FAO then stood for questions.

The Speaker thanked the FAO for his report.

6 Question Period

F. Armstrong (PPSMUA) - INNERSHIP felt as if it was an infomercial, why was it allowed?

D. Toccalino (SG) - They are PGSS members presenting a project believed to be relevant to other PGSS members, we would be happy to discuss additional criteria if it is believed necessary.

7 New Business

7.1 Applications sent from the Appointments Board Committee for Approval
Committee | Applicant | Status
---|---|---
Senate 2015-2016 | Mathew Kramar | Approved
Senate 2015-2016 | Doaa Mamdouh Farid | Approved
External Affairs Committee | Margarita Komarova | Approved
2015-2016 Cyclical Review: Department of Food Science & Agricultural Chemistry | Nicolas Chatel-Launay | Approved
Judicial Board | Christopher Hadjis Chartrand | Approved
Judicial Board | Giacomo Marchisio | Approved

Passed unanimously.

7.2 **Motion to adopt a policy on procedures for affiliation with or disaffiliation from a student federation**

Motion to adopt a policy on procedures for affiliation with or disaffiliation from a student federation

WHEREAS the PGSS should only be affiliated with a provincial or national student federation that reflects and represents its interests,

WHEREAS the decision to affiliate with or disaffiliate from a student federation should always belong to the PGSS membership,

WHEREAS the benefits of affiliating with a federation should be clear and apparent to the PGSS membership,

WHEREAS a referendum question on affiliating to a Quebec student federation may be presented to the PGSS membership during the current term and clarity on affiliation and disaffiliation procedures is pressing,

BIRT the PGSS adopt the following ‘Operations Policy: Procedures for Affiliation and Disaffiliation’ as its working policy on affiliation with and disaffiliation from a provincial or national student federation.

**Operations Policy: Procedures for Affiliation and Disaffiliation**

**Preamble:**

A provincial or national student federation will only be considered for affiliation by the PGSS if its mission, administration, policies, and principles are in accordance with those of the PGSS. The PGSS may affiliate with or disaffiliate from a federation at any time when it is in the interest of its members. Affiliation with or disaffiliation from a federation must be approved by a majority of members in accordance with the PGSS’ referendum procedures. The decision to affiliate or disaffiliate is solely that of the PGSS and not of any federation or other association.

**Policy:**

The PGSS shall affiliate and disaffiliate from student federations according to the following procedures:

1. Affiliation or disaffiliation shall be determined by a referendum in a manner determined by PGSS Bylaws and Manuals. The referendum question shall include: the name of the federation, the benefits of belonging to the federation or the reasons for leaving it, and the amount of the fee that must be paid by individual members to fund the cost of affiliation.
2. The PGSS will become a member of a federation only after entering into a binding, written agreement with a federation. This will remain in effect until the PGSS chooses to terminate its membership.

3. Binding, written agreements between PGSS and a federation must recognize the PGSS’ right to terminate its affiliation when its members express the will to disaffiliate.

4. When PGSS is affiliated with a federation, in order to determine whether the membership wishes to continue its affiliation a referendum shall be held at most every five (5) years following affiliation, in a manner determined by PGSS Bylaws and Manuals. The referendum question shall include: the name of the federation, a summary of PGSS’ affiliation with the federation, the benefits of continued affiliation with the federation, and the amount of the fee that must be paid by individual members to fund the continued cost of affiliation.

5. Membership in the federation shall not preclude the PGSS from belonging to any other organizations.

6. Any increase in the amount of the fee paid by individual members to fund the cost of affiliation must be approved by a referendum, except for increases tied to inflation as approved in the referendum.

7. The PGSS will not consider affiliation to any federation whose mission, administration, policies, or principles conflict with those of the PGSS.

Motion to adopt a policy on procedures for affiliation with or disaffiliation from a student federation

Before debate began, the mover motioned for the approval of reviewing an updated version of the policy including minor text changes to #1 and #2, the inclusion of a clause for referenda to stay.

Moved by B. Por, seconded by V. Frankel

Motion passed.

The EAO then motivated the policy focusing on the desire to have clear guidelines for this process and to ensure that PGSS’s affiliation to any federation is in the best interest of its members and lasts only as long as it remains in the best interest of its members.

F. Armstrong (PPMSUA) - Motioned to divide the question to discuss each point separately. The motion was seconded and defeated by a majority.

Camille (BGSA) - With the current policy it says we can disaffiliate at any time, but at what cost?

EAO - This policy says that we can only join organizations that allow us to disaffiliate.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) - Thanked the EAO for the addition of #3.

F. Armstrong (PPSMSUA) - What would the referendum question consist of, more specifically does it include the whereas clauses?

EAO - How this is phrased is up to the drafter of the question that then would be approved by this council.

F. Armstrong - Expressed concerns about arguments for or against within the question.

FAO - The questions should be unbiased, we have two organizations potentially to be affiliated with, how does that fit into this policy.

EAO - Agrees that there could be a conflict with the phrasing “the benefits of belonging to the federation or the reasons for leaving it” and that these arguments would be included in the yes and no committee texts anyway.

FAO - Concern with the clause related to inflation.
MSO - Thanked the EAO for bringing this motion. Regarding the 5 year clause, does this prevent us from holding a referendum within this time?

EAO - There is a stipulation now that there will be a referendum on affiliation

F. Armstrong - Questioned what would happen if an association had an affiliation policy at the time of affiliation and then removed that policy or changed it following PGSS’ affiliation.

EAO - Clarified that if we joint a federation that has disaffiliation policies at the time of affiliation but then changes those policies we have nothing holding them to that ability to disaffiliate. However, if there is a signed agreement between organizations to allow us to disaffiliate any changes to bylaws then contravenes our agreement with them.

There was a motion and second to call the question, passed majority.

Motion passed.

8:31 PM Adjourned