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1 Approval of the agenda

2 Approval of the minutes

3 Speaker’s report

4 Announcements

4.1 Time Limitation Policy Changes

I will provide a short overview of changes to the current policy, which disproportionately affects PhD students.

4.2 Quarterly Budget Update

Attached is the third quarter of 2015-16 budget update (as of February 29, 2016)

2016-03-09 Quarterly Budget Update

4.3 Call for Volunteers: Fall 2016 Post-Graduate Orientation

The Internal Affairs Committee is looking to recruit volunteers for the Fall 2016 Post-Graduate Orientation, to be held August 28-September 11th. We are looking for volunteers for the following:

1. Orientation Planning Team
2. "Ask me about PGSS" Team for Discover McGill
3. Promotion Team
4. Group Leaders for MTL Food Crawl and other events (similar to Frosh Leaders)

If you are interested, please email internal.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca to learn more about these teams. A detailed notice will be included in the upcoming Newswires.

5 Business Arising

5.1 Changes to SAM - First View by Council

Whereas, Changes to the SAM were necessary to make the Standing Committees of PGSS more functional
BIRT, Council conditionally approve the changes included in the attached document, therefore, recommending a review by the Policy and Structure Committee.

Changes to SAM - First View by Council ()

Changes to SAM - First View by Council ()

6 Reports

6.1 Environment Commissioner Reports

2016-03-10 Environment Commissioner Reports

6.2 Health Commissioner Report

2016-03-09 Health Commissioner Report

6.3 Equity and Diversity Commissioner Report

2016-03-10 Equity and Diversity Commissioner Report

6.4 Members Services Officer report to March 2016 Council

2016-03-09 Members Services Officer report to March 2016 Council

6.5 Internal Affairs Officer Report to Council

2016-03-10 Internal Affairs Officer Report to Council
6.6 External Affairs Officer Report to Council

2016-03-09 External Affairs Officer Report to Council

6.7 2016-03-16_Secretary General Report to March Council

2016-03-09 Secretary General Report to Council

7 Question Period

8 Discussion

8.1 Discussion re: April Special Referendum on Quebec Student Federation Affiliation

2 discussion points:
1) Should Council vote on ratifying a special referendum question, in the April Council meeting with a referendum to be held soon after, on affiliating to a Quebec student federation?
2) What should the question be? Should it be a yes or no question with one federation on the ballot, or a ranking question with two federations and a no option on the ballot?

PGSS Society Activities Manual, Chapter 9, Section 3:
2.3 Formulation of referenda questions:
2.3.1 By resolution of Council, the PGSS may conduct a referendum which either:
2.3.2 Requires a single choice between “YES”, “NO” or “NO OPINION” to a question; or
2.3.3 Allows the ranking or a multiplicity of options determined by Council.
2.4 Council may call a referendum at any time by means of a resolution which receives the assent of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present.

Please see the federations’ websites, and contact me or the federations directly with any questions:
AVEQ: http://aveq-nous.ca/?lang=en
QSU: http://unionetudiante.ca/home/
9 New Business

9.1 Motion to Approve of Amendments to the Bylaws

WHEREAS, Commissioner positions are not currently considered "titled" positions in the existing bylaws.
WHEREAS, the proposed amendments make Commissioner positions titled positions thus better governing their place in the society.
WHEREAS, the PGSS currently has a joint Policy and Positions Manual that serves as a manual for "evidence-based positions touching on areas of political interest to the PGSS" but does not have a systematic place for storing governance-related policies.
WHEREAS, the proposed amendments create two separate Manuals to better store political positions (the Positions Manual) and governance-related policies (Policy Manual).
WHEREAS, Roberts Rules of Order are currently used in all bodies as rules of parliamentary procedure but the existing bylaws related to parliamentary procedure are vague.
WHEREAS, the proposed changes stipulate Robert’s Rules of Order as the primary rules of order for the Society while allowing for additions and amendments when necessary for effective operation.
WHEREAS, there are currently no listed grounds for removal or censure in the Bylaws.
WHEREAS, the proposed changes cite violations of the Code of Conduct or agreed-upon best practices to be grounds for removal or censure.
WHEREAS, other minor changes have been proposed to aid understanding or increase ease of readability of the bylaws.
BIRT, the PGSS Council approve the proposed amendments to the Bylaws, subject to approval at the General Meeting.
BIFRT, the proposed amendments take effect immediately following approval at the General Meeting.

Motion to Approve of Amendments to the Bylaws ()

9.2 Amendment to PGSS Issues Policy on University/Industry Partnerships

WHEREAS the recent legal case of a former McGill student being sued for destruction of his Master’s Thesis by a private corporation [1] highlighted the need for greater protection of PGSS members engaged in university/industry partnerships.
WHEREAS Council mandated the Committee for Member Support to propose updates to the Society Policy Manual to reflect the goal of further protecting students engaged in university/industry partnerships.
BIRT Council conditionally approve the changes to the PGSS Issues Policy on University/Industry Partnerships in the attached document, therefore, recommending a review by the Governance Committee.

9.3 Motion for Approval of the Mental Health Policy

WHEREAS the PGSS does not currently have a policy on Mental Health and Wellness.

WHEREAS the Mental Health Policy Working group has collaborated over the past several months of develop this policy (see attachment).

WHEREAS mental health has become an important topic of discussion at universities across Canada, including McGill University. Mental health needs of PGSS members play a vital role in both academic and personal lives and strives to support the PGSS community in this respect.

BIRT PGSS council approves and recommends the attached PGSS Mental Health Policy be implemented into the PGSS Society Policy Manual.

Motion for Approval of the Mental Health Policy

9.4 Amendment to the PGSS Environment Operations/Issue Policy

Whereas the PGSS Environment Policy has not been updated since 2007,

Whereas the PGSS Environment Policy could benefit from more recent language and specific directives,

BIRT that the entirety of the "Operations/Issues Policy: The PGSS Environment Policy" of the Society Policy Manual be amended to the following:

Operations/Issue Policy: The PGSS Environmental Sustainability Policy

Preamble:

In the context of this policy, environmental sustainability refers to the notion of meeting present needs from physical ecosystems without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. All members of the global community can strive to engage in environmentally sustainable practices without compromising the quality of life for current and future generations. Members of the PGSS can play an important role in promoting environmentally sustainable practices that improve the environmental quality of the University, the surrounding community, and the global environment. The PGSS, as an organization, is in a unique position to create and facilitate opportunities for members to promote environmentally sustainable practices.

Policy:

The PGSS shall strive to promote environmental sustainability in the following categories:

1. Co-curricular education and networking: Develop, invest in, and maintain revenue-neutral events and programs that increase opportunities for PGSS members to engage in environmentally sustainable activities. Specifically, such events include but are not limited to:

a. Regular networking events for community members that are interested in environmental sustainability issues.
b. Workshops that promote environmentally sustainable lifestyles.
c. Educational simulations of environmental policymaking at the local, national, or international levels.
d. Speeches, panels, and lectures on current issues related to environmental sustainability.
e. Programs that provide gardening and beekeeping opportunities for PGSS members.

2. Low-impact operations: Investigate, establish and maintain practices that eliminate or offset environmental impacts associated with all PGSS operations including but not limited to procurement, waste, and PGSS financed travel.

3. Community engagement and advocacy:
   a. Facilitate the participation of PGSS members in initiatives that promote environmental sustainability at the University, local, or international levels.
   b. Encourage, support, and participate in projects initiated by PGSS members that promote environmental sustainability.

4. Assessment and planning:
   a. Assess, review and if necessary, update, the PGSS Environmental Sustainability Policy in April of each year.
   b. Prepare a Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) report once every five years for review by Council and the Board of Governors. The last STARS report was completed on January 9th, 2013.

Amendment to the PGSS Environment Operations/Issue Policy ()
Amendment to the PGSS Environment Operations/Issue Policy ()

9.5 Referendum Question: McGill Writing Center Auxiliary Fee

Whereas, The original McGill Writing Center (MWC) auxiliary fee expires as of Winter 2016;
Whereas, Graduate students routinely utilize the tutorial services as well as enjoy unique employment opportunities provided by the MWC; therefore,
BIRT the following question be put to referendum:

Do you agree that a non-opt-outable fee of $1.50 per term (excluding summer) to support the McGill Writing Centre be charged to all full-time, part-time and additional session Graduate Students, starting Fall 2016 and up to and including Winter 2020? It is understood that a majority "no" vote would result in the termination all one-on-one tutorial services for graduate students provided by the Writing Centre. This could renewed by a student fee referendum in 2020.

9.6 Motion for PGSS to express solidarity with student protests in India

WHEREAS, following an event held in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi, India on the issue of Kashmir, students were arrested on charges of sedition (chanting slogans against the sovereignty of
WHEREAS, the JNU community has demanded that all students under arrest be released unconditionally, given the false and tampered evidence constituting the basis of arrest, proven by forensic analysis.

WHEREAS, academicians and international universities have stood in support of the JNU community against the violation of the right to freedom of speech and expression by the Indian government.

WHEREAS, concerned students of McGill have circulated the attached solidarity statement to support the JNU movement for release of the arrested students, which currently carries 50 signatures including some by faculty and alumni of McGill.

BIRT PGSS stands in solidarity with the JNU student movement and supports the demands of students and teachers of JNU

BIFRT PGSS signs the attached "Statement of Solidarity with Student Protests in India" in support of the JNU Student movement

Motion for PGSS to express solidarity with student protests in India

9.7 Motion to Approve proposed Positions

Whereas, in the formation of the two federations, there will be Positions Books compiled of all of the political positions that federation wishes to support.

Whereas, the positions in the attached document are positions that PGSS has no official mandate to support or oppose.

Whereas, in the interest of working with any federation, it is important for PGSS representatives to have a good understanding of the interests of PGSS' members.

BIRT, the PGSS approve of the positions outlined in the attached Positions Book.

Motion to Approve proposed Positions

10 PGSA Announcements