Attendees (184)
CALL TO ORDER
18h33

1. Approval of the Agenda
Motion to approve the agenda C12-03-#AGM (D. Simeone/M. Isabel)
Motion passed.

2. Speaker’s report
Speaker explained for those attending the basic procedure of the AGM and Robert’s Rules. He also asked that everyone remain respectful in speaking with each other, to give speaking priority to those that have not spoken, and to state names when speaking.

3. Announcements
3.1 President (R. Nassim)
The President of the PGSS thanked everyone for coming to the AGM and announced quorum has been reached. He also ensured that everyone had a voting card.

3.2 Elections Commissioner (T. Hamade)
The Elections Commissioner announced the exits in case of an emergency. He introduced the current PGSS Executive as well as the candidates running for the PGSS Executive in the upcoming elections and the upcoming referendum question. He also encouraged everyone to remain for the candidate debates following the AGM.
4. Approval of the Minutes
The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of March 18, 2009 (C09-03-#AGM) were approved (A. Kaats/S. Avlijas).

5. Executive and Other Reports
Available online as well as circulated prior to the Annual General Meeting in the package.

6. Other Matters Affecting the Interests of the Society
6.1. Motion R12-03-AGM-1: To ratify Directors (A. Kaats/M. Ouellet)
BIRT Grayden Wagner be ratified as a member of the Board of Directors
BIRT Noah Billick be ratified as a member of the Board of Directors
BIRT Martin Lennox be ratified as a member of the Board of Directors
BIRT Michael Dodge be ratified as a member of the Board of Directors

A. Kaats explained that the members listed have been members of the Board of Directors for at least a year, with this motion being their formal ratification. S. Forte asked if any proposed changes in the PGSS constitution will affect this motion and the members contained in it. A. Kaats explained those changes will not apply to these board members.

Motion to call the question (G. King/M. Ouellet)
Motion passed.

6.2. Motion R12-03-AGM-2: To approve the audited financial statements (A. Kaats/M. Isabel)
BIRT the audit for fiscal year 2012-2011 in Appendix A be approved.

A. Kaats explained this was circulated with the AGM package and that the PGSS is in good financial health.

Motion passed.

6.3. Motion R12-03-AGM-3: To appoint an Auditor (A. Kaats /M. Serrano)
BIRT Deloitte & Touche be appointed auditor for fiscal year 2011-2012.

A. Kaats stated that there were 6 proposals received. Deloitte & Touche submitted a very competitive package, including other support services aimed at the NPO (non-profit organization) market, and the Board of Directors unanimously decided on their proposal.
S. Forte asked for annual cost for audit. A. Kaats answered it was $13,500 per year including a management letter, and that start up overhead will be waived for the first audit.

Motion passed.

6.4. Motion R12-03-AGM-4: To ratify the change to the Letters Patent regarding the name of the corporation (R. Nassim/A. Kaats)

BIRT motion BoDR-12-02-#07 regarding the name of the corporation be ratified.

“Board of Directors Meeting BoD-12-02-#07, resolution BoDR-12-02-#43

WHEREAS the legal French name of the PGSS is L’ASSOCIATION DES ETUDIANTS POST-GRADUÉS DE L’UNIVERSITE MCGILL INC.

WHEREAS this name consists of improper French,

BIRT the legal French name of the PGSS be changed to Association étudiante des cycles supérieurs de l’Université McGill, with the French acronym AÉCSUM. Motion passed.”

Motion passed.

6.5. Motion R12-03-AGM-5: To ratify the change to the Letters Patent regarding the purpose of the corporation (R. Nassim/P. Tyagi)

BIRT motion BoDR-12-02-#44 regarding the purpose of the corporation be ratified.

“Board of Directors Meeting BoD-12-02-#07, resolution BoDR-12-02-#44

WHEREAS there has been no revision to the purpose of the corporation since 1973

BIRT the purpose of the corporation in the letters patent be changed to:
The corporation is constituted for the following purposes:
1) To establish and maintain a social club for members and their guests;
2) To promote and enhance collegial relations amongst members;
3) To offer opportunity for free and informal discussion of issues of concern to members;
4) To provide representation and advocacy for members;
5) To promote the educational and cultural interests of members.

Motion passed.

For information the former text is:

To establish, maintain and conduct a social club for the convenience of members of the company and their guests, to promote friendship and unity among members, to offer opportunities for free and informal discussion of common problems encountered by members, and to promote the educational and cultural interests of members of the corporation.”
R. Nassim explained that the former text is out of date and with these changes the Executive seeks to update the wording without changing the overall goals. D. Simeone motivated that point 4 regarding representation and advocacy was also added to the former text as it was not there previously, and the Executive feels this is an important role for PGSS.

Motion passed.

6.6. Motion R12-03-AGM-6: To ratify the change to the Letters Patent regarding a dissolution clause (R. Nassim/L. Palacios)
BIRT motion BoDR-12-02-#45 regarding the addition of a dissolution clause in the Letters Patent of the corporation be ratified.
"Board of Directors Meeting BoD-12-02-#07, resolution BoDR-12-02-#45
WHEREAS the letters patent does not contain a dissolution clause
BIRT the following dissolution clause be added to the PGSS letters patent:
In the case of the dissolution of the corporation or distribution of the assets, all assets shall be distributed to corporations with similar purposes.

Motion passed."

D. Simeone explained that a dissolution clause is mandatory for a non-profit organization to have in its letters patent and was previously missing from those of the PGSS.

Motion passed.

6.7. Motion R12-03-AGM-7: To ratify the change to Corporate Bylaw 6 and the adoption of new Bylaws (R. Nassim/G. Lord)
BIRT the Board of Directors’ repeal of Corporate Bylaw 6 be ratified, with such ratification to come into force only upon the coming into force of the following two resolutions.
BIRT the Board of Directors’ repeal of all other corporate bylaws, effective June 1st, 2012, be ratified, with such ratification coming into force only upon the coming into force of the following resolution.
BIRT the bylaws presented in Appendix C be approved, and come into effect June 1st, 2012.
BIRT the Council be granted any and all powers necessary to pass transitional resolutions, so as to ensure a smooth transition between the present and new bylaws.
R. Nassim spoke on a point of motivation and stated a need to protect the society by having these worded in such a way so as to not leave the PGSS without any bylaws in the event that the motion did not pass.
Motion to call the question (F. Soler Urzua/ G. King)
Motion passed. One abstention (D. Simeone)

Main motion passed. Three opposed (P. Tyagi, S. Houshmand, E. Cawley)

6.8. Motion R12-03-AGM-8: To approve actions with respect to the tuition fees campaign (M. Isabel/M. Embriaco)
WHEREAS the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) has announced that Quebec tuition fees will be going up by 75% over the next five years ($325/year for a total increase of $1625, bringing Quebec tuition fees to a total of $3793 – NOTE this does not include ancillary fees);
WHEREAS the combination of tuition fees and ancillary fees (currently approximately $1,625 per year at McGill) represents an increasing proportion of the average graduate student’s revenue (between $16,000/year (Masters) and $22,000/year (PhD));
WHEREAS tuition fee increases have been statistically demonstrated to affect the accessibility of post-secondary education, especially for lower income students who are not eligible for financial aid (e.g. Aide financière aux études), as well as particularly vulnerable groups such as student parents;
WHEREAS graduate students are already paying their “fair share” for education through taxation, and benefits to society and the “knowledge economy,” while not getting a high individual financial return on investments;
WHEREAS the student movement in Quebec is organizing a provincial demonstration in Montreal on March 22nd;
BIRT PGSS hold a one-day strike on March 22nd, in order to encourage students to participate in the province-wide demonstration, and to show PGSS support of the Quebec student movement and its defense of low tuition rates.

M. Isabel, on motivation, restated the PGSS policy on tuition fees for graduate students and noted that it is also the policy of McGill to advocate for no graduate student tuition fees. She encouraged graduate students to participate in the student event on March 22nd and for students to feel that they can and should participate. At a recent meeting with the teachers’ committee (MAUT), it was decided that they
would present a motion at their next meeting, calling for instructors not to penalize students who do participate in the student demonstrations.

Motion to amend the resolution to “PGSS hold a three (3)-day strike starting on the 20th and ending on the 22nd, the day of action” (S. Peters, A. Bon-Miller).

S. Peters, on motivation stated that this would be in greater solidarity with other student groups and that a three-day strike may convey a more serious opposition to the tuition increase.

S. Avlijas spoke in favor of the motion as it would give graduate students a greater opportunity to voice their opposition to tuition hikes.

M. Luxion spoke in favor of the amendment arguing this would be a much stronger statement by graduate students.

Motion to call the question (F. Soler Urzua/L. Gouigah) Motion failed.

The Council Commissioner warned against excessive use of calling the question by the same individuals to stifle debate.

S. Forte spoke against the amendment stating it was not necessary to follow in the footsteps of other student groups in order to display solidarity and that a three-day strike would likely have a detrimental effect on the research activities of graduate students.

A. Best spoke against the amendment stating that a one-day strike would be large enough to make a large impact.

A. Bon-Miller spoke in favor of the motion and stated that those speaking against the motion are out of touch. He argued that McGill is disconnected from other universities of Quebec and for McGill graduate students to show solidarity with those students that are on general unlimited strikes and have been for some time.

K. Ramadan spoke against the amendment, and feels that the government and other groups will not see a difference between a one-day and a three-day strike.

B. Joyal spoke in favor of the amendment and wanted to express his dissent of the previous Mathematics departmental representative who spoke against the amendment.

B. Harack spoke in favor of the amendment. He voiced his opinion on the importance of education in the world and feels that a strike is a way for students to make a meaningful contribution to educational access in Quebec and the world.

Motion to call the question (G. King/A. Bon-Miller).
Motion passed.

Motion to amend passed. Six opposed (R. Nassim, G. Dawe, S. Forte, E. Cawley, J. Carr, D. Carozza)

Debate on the main motion with accepted amendment:
D. Carozza asked for clarification as to what legal basis the PGSS has to call a strike. M. Isabel explained that the Quebec government announced they are not recognizing student strikes as legitimate since students are not employees of the University. She also explained that currently about 130,000 students have voted to be on strike, despite the government refusing to recognize the strike as legitimate.
J. Carr spoke against the motion arguing that most graduate students do not go to class every day and generally manage their own schedules, so constraints will not affect our decision to attend a one-day strike. He also inquired if encouraging a strike would allow graduate students to miss classes that they are contracted to. M. Isabel explained that T.A.’s are legally bound to instruct their class and fulfill their duties, and the PGSS is just debating on whether graduate students should strike.

Motion to extend the debate for 15 minutes (A. Kaats/M. Isabel)
Motion passed. One opposed (G. Dawe)

A. Kaats spoke in favor of the motion as he believes that McGill has a great deal of clout and would be a hugely symbolic action for McGill students to openly support and encourage students to join the demonstrations. He also explained the Quebec government’s consistent failure to live up to its previously stated commitment to work towards the elimination of tuition fees.
M. Luxion argued the increase of $325 per year is a large amount of money and will only serve to push students further in to debt. Also, as a member of Queer McGill Board, queer students and female students will make far less in wages in the future and have less access to scholarship money, so this affects them disproportionally.
M. Embriaco spoke for the motion arguing that tuition will increase much faster and larger than TA pay over the same period of time, and that it is critical to express our solidarity with Quebec students around the province already on strike for some time.
T. Centea inquired as to what was the tangible result of this motion passing as amended. M. Isabel stated that PGSS would openly encourage other GSA’s and graduate students to take action, and to participate in the greatest number possible at the day of action.
M. Mericle stated that all previous Quebec student movements and protests in the past were victories for students, so if we do nothing, nothing will change. C. St. Denis spoke for the motion and voiced it is very important for McGill to be involved in this movement as it is such a large movement that our absence would be very much noted.

Motion to extend debate till end of speakers’ line (M. Isabel/M. Serrano)
Motion passed.

L. Han spoke in favor of this motion, but from a different stance and more from the student body point-of-view. She explained that PGSS has a policy on tuition and spoke that the passing of this motion will give PGSS Executives a stronger mandate regarding tuition and the ability to speak stronger at Senate and to McGill Executives. She argued that supporting this motion sends a strong symbol of what the PGSS stands for.

M. Isabel gave an explanation for the breakdown of the proposed tuition increases and that they are cumulative per year, not just $1 per day, and represent a 75% increase over what students are already paying. She also explained the number one reason a graduate student abandons their studies is monetary constraints. She argued that our approval of this motion is the minimum contribution we can do for the student movement and will add considerable weight and voice to it.

Main motion passed, as amended. Five abstained (R. Five opposed (E. Cawley, P. Watson, J. Carr, S. Forte, D. Carozza)).

6.9. Motion R-12-03-AGM-9: Creative actions in the lead up to March 22

G. King motivated for this motion and for the PGSS to be active in organizing and supporting activities and actions to support the student movement against tuition fee increases.

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M. Isabel spoke in favor of the motion to encourage not only the PGSS but also GSA’s around the University to get involved as much as possible.
A. Kaats inquired as to whether the motion is asking for the Executive to approve finances for these creative actions and asked the mover of the motion to give an approximate cost. G. King responded that creative actions would be within fiscal reason and that creative actions can be very simple and have an impact.

Motion to call the question (S.Avlijas/S. Forte)
Motion passed.

Main motion passed. Three opposed (E. Cawley, P. Watson, S. Forte)

6.10. Motion R12-03-AGM-10: Private Security on McGill Campuses (M. Luxion/M. Embriaco)
WHEREAS every student has a right to safeguard of his or her dignity and a right to be protected by the Charter of Rights against vexatious conduct displayed by a representative of the University acting in an official capacity;
WHEREAS the University has an obligation as stated in the Charter of Student Rights to ensure that adequate measures are taken to protect the security of students on University property;
WHEREAS numerous concerns from the university community have been raised in light of actions taken by Securitas agents throughout the 2011-2012 school year;
WHEREAS Dean Jutras’ report call on University Authorities to revisit the standard operating procedures of McGill’s Security Services;
BIRT PGSS call for a campus safety audit to be conducted by an independent, non-McGill organization of the “securitization of campus” identified by Dean Jutras;
BIFRT PGSS call for a review of alternatives to contracting private security on McGill campuses.

M. Luxion, on motivation, spoke to the increased security presence on campus, given recent events, reports of increased monitoring of student activities and of following by security guards. She also noted Dean Jutras’ reference to the “securitization of campus” in his report, which acknowledges and recognizes this at the administrative level, and that securitization is only bound to increase, given the new protocol for security on campus. She argued that this securitization does not necessarily make all students on campus feel ‘safer’. Also homophobic, sexist, and racist comments have been reported to Queer McGill regarding actions of security guards. Further, she advised that Securitas has a record of poor labor practices and that we should be considering our relationship with them as a community and that
there are alternatives to having private security guards as part of campus community.

G. King spoke about the recently released independent student inquiry report and that it is important that we pass this motion given the increasing security.

Lena, a member of metropolitan action committee (METRAC), spoke about the role of METRAC as an external auditor of security at York University previously culminating in a report with a number of recommendations to make campus safer with security. She spoke about the need for this type of participatory audit at McGill and that the University administration must be open to the audit as it requires access to confidential information.

Motion to amend “call for” to “commission” in the BIRT and amend “call for” to conduct” and add “by April 30, 2012” in the BIFRT (L. Han/G. King).

Debate on the amendment:
A. Kaats addressed a question regarding the cost of such an audit, and said that there is a large sum of discretionary funds remaining that could support this. He also spoke in favor of the amendment as it is a much more specific goal, and would push this topic to become much more of a priority for the Executive.

K.N. Dixon asked if there was something like this already happening on campus and if we could join that instead of commissioning our own review. A. Kaats explained that all existing commissions happening on campus would be considered before beginning one for the PGSS.

Amendment passed. One opposed (M. Krause).

Main motion passed, as amended. Four opposed (G. Dawe, S. Forte, P. Watson).
Four abstentions (E. Cawley, R. Nassim, M. Krause, P. Tyagi, D. Simeone)

6.11. Motion R12-03-AGM-11: Solidarity in mobilizing against tuition increases
(S. Avlijas/G. King)
WHEREAS students across Quebec are mobilizing against tuition increases,
WHEREAS students are strongest when we are undivided,
WHEREAS decisions of student associations, including at the national level should be made democratically,
BIRT PGSS adopt the following bases for their relationships with other student associations at the national level association to which we are affiliated:
1. Solidarity: that each national association refuse to negotiate with the government if those negotiations exclude any of the others.
2. Non-recommendation: that the national associations shall not recommend an offer from the government to their members, so that the local membership at each university can have the final say in the decision.
3. Non-denunciation: that the national and local associations shall not publically denounce actions undertaken by other national or local student associations.

Motion to amend “Clause 2 non-recommendation” to “if our national association is considering taking an offer other than zero increase in tuition fees, the VP External of the PGSS must hold a consultation with PGSS members before making a decision on whether to accept or reject that offer.” (S. Avlijas/C.L. Conway)
Amendment accepted by unanimous consent.

S. Avlijas, on motivation, stressed the importance of displaying that the PGSS is in solidarity with students who are participating in a general strike. She also added that any benefits that are won by those taking more drastic actions than members will, by default, benefit PGSS members as well. She spoke to the importance of having a solid front by aligning the opinions of the PGSS as a group with that of other student groups involved in student actions against tuition fee increases.

Motion to divide the question and vote on clauses separately (M. Isabel/P. Tyagi)
Motion fails.

Motion to call the question (G. King/S. Avlijas)
Motion failed.

M. Isabel spoke against the motion as a single motion. In terms of solidarity, she stated that FEUQ has refused to negotiate. Regarding clause 2., non-recommendation, the consultative process is one that the VP External has been doing very diligently with the PGSS members. Regarding clause 3., non-denunciation, it has her support as long as actions are not violent.

R. Nassim spoke against the motion, stated that the Executive works hard with committees and with other groups to formulate a single strategy with regard to this, and this motion would make it so that they would be bound to make decisions that might be against their strategy. He added that it would be possible to have PGSS be bound to support actions that are violent in nature.
S. Forte voiced his opposition towards clauses 1 and 3 as he feels they will not properly represent the views of the majority of McGill students and would align them with groups that are refusing negotiation.

M. Mericle spoke in favor of the motion and felt that all points are extremely valid given the current climate and student action against tuition increases.

A. Kaats spoke against the motion, arguing that this exact motion was presented to student delegates last year at a meeting of provincial student groups and after a two-hour debate, it was defeated. He stated that it was also the most polarizing point of debate among students given the differences between the various groups in the student movement. He argued that this motion is inappropriate, that this is not the way in which student politics are performed, nor the way the PGSS engages in student politics.

G. Lord spoke against the motion arguing that this would surrender PGSS’s liberty to disagree with other student organizations and it is uncertain how those groups may choose to act in the future.

Motion to amend and add “non-violent” before “denunciation” in resolution item three (L. Lewis/M. Isabel)

Motion to call the question (M. Luxion/S. Avlijas)
Motion passed. 3 Opposed (M. Embriaco, T. Centea, M. Pappalardo).

Motion to amend passed.

Motion to call the question (M. Ouellet/A. Kaats).
Motion passed.

Main motion fails.

6.12. Motion R12-03-AGM-12: Voting annually on McGill’s Senior Administration (F. Soler Urzua/L. Palapdous)
WHEREAS student consultation is lacking within the existing procedures for contract renewal of McGill’s top administrators;
WHEREAS student feedback is essential to evaluate the impact of McGill’s most senior employees;
WHEREAS actions taken by senior administrators drastically impact student campus life;
BIRT PGSS poll the Annual General Meeting, asking: Do you approve (YES/NO/NO OPINION) of the following senior administrators?
  - Principal and Vice-Chancellor;
  - Provost;
  - Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance);
  - Vice-Principal (Research & International Relations);
  - And Deputy Provost Student Life & Learning
BIFRT the results are provided to the Board of Governors.

Motion to object to consideration of the question as it is below the Council and would be undesirable for Council to hear the motion (E. Cawley/ D. Meadows). Motion fails.

F. Soler Urzua motivated that senior administrators should be aware of graduate student opinion of their performance. She gave a brief overview of each administrator’s role within the university and stated they are responsible for acting in the best interests of the McGill student community. She then described a number of ways in which the Administrators have acted in direct opposition to their defined positions.
D. Simeone acknowledged and echoed the previous speaker’s opinion and concerns towards the questionable actions of the administration as a body, but argued that it is inappropriate to act as a reviewer for these individuals as employees of the University in a way that is an “HR review of their performance”.
L. Harvey echoed the concerns of the motivator of the motion, but that the language is not appropriate for the motion and that a poll during the AGM is an inappropriate means for evaluating the administrators.
C.L. Conway spoke in favour of this motion as it is important to have an opportunity to give feedback on the performance of administration in their roles, and it is not a personal evaluation, rather an evaluation of their performance and capacity in their respective roles. She argued that students evaluate professors every semester, and that a similar system should be in place for evaluating the administrators.
Motion to amend resolution as follows: “the PGSS poll its entire membership ‘Do you approve (YES/NO/NO OPINION) of the manner in which the following offices have been executed over the past year?‘…” (A. Kaats / L. Gouigah)

Debate on amendment:
A. Kaats stated that it is extremely easy to poll the PGSS membership by email and have the results very rapidly and easily.

Motion to call the question (M. Embriaco / S. Avlijas)
Motion passed.

Motion to amend passed.

Debate on main motion, with amendment:
S. Avlijas debated in favor, noting that it is not a personal evaluation but it would function as a performance review of the administrator’s role(s) in their position.
G. King speaking as PGSS representative on the CKUT Board of Directors noted that fee-levy groups are also subject to a vote and feedback in the form of a poll.

Motion to call the question (E. Cawley / S. Houshmand)
Motion passed. Three opposed (G. Lord, J. Carr, A. Rahn)

Main motion passed, as amended. Four opposed (E. Cawley, P. Watson, S. Forte, R. Russell)

6.13. Motion R12-03-AGM-13: To ratify articles and corporate bylaw amendments
(R. Nassim / S. Avlijas)
BIRT the PGSS Article and Corporate Bylaw amendments in Appendix C be ratified.

Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn (A. Kaats / S. Avlijas)
Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT
21h30