### Agenda

1. **Approval of the agenda**
   - 1.1 Motion to Move: Motion to approve special considerations for the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund Referendum

2. **Floor Items**
   - 2.1 March 20th Council Meeting

3. **Speaker's report**

4. **Announcements**
   - 4.1 Next (and final!) council of 2016 - 2017, May 3rd at Mac Campus!
   - 4.2 Library Improvement Fund - Visit from the Dean of Libraries
   - 4.3 Graduate Innovation Projects Fund
   - 4.4 McGill Course Lecturers & Instructors Union (MCLIU) announcement regarding student teaching and request for info from PGSA's
   - 4.5 Tribune Reporting - Clarifications
   - 4.6 Departmental Equity and Diversity Survey
   - 4.7 March for Science!
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5. **New Business**
   - 5.1 Motion to approve special considerations for the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund Referendum
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   - 5.6 Motion to observe one Quebec Federation - External Affairs Officer
   - 5.7 First reading: PGSS budget 2017 - 2018
Call to order

6:38 PM

1 Approval of the agenda

A. Nosrat (DDDS) motioned to remove the first reading of the budget, as the budget has not undergone proper amount of consultation. He said that his requests to change the budget have not been responded to.

FAO replied that questions will all be answered in detail when she is presenting the budget.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) seconded the motion.

The motion was called to a vote.

Motion did not pass.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) requested that 9.5 be moved to become 9.1.

Motion passed.

A. Dixon motioned to move new business before announcements.
Motion passed by special resolution (44/47 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstensions).
Motion to approve agenda passed unanimously.

1.1 Motion to Move: Motion to approve special considerations for the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund Referendum

7:17 PM

2 Floor Items

6:42 PM 2.1 March 20th Council Meeting

Motion passed unanimously.

6:42 PM 3 Speaker’s report

6:42 PM 4 Announcements

6:43 PM 4.1 Next (and final!) council of 2016 - 2017, May 3rd at Mac Campus!

Field trip down to the beautiful MacDonald campus in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec! We will provide the buses to and from!
Question: Any chance we can stay a little while longer and kick back a few and celebrate?!?!

6:43 PM 4.2 Library Improvement Fund - Visit from the Dean of Libraries

Colleen Cook, Trenholme Dean of Libraries, and Diane Koen, Senior Director (Planning and Resources) are here to talk about Fiat Lux, the 5-year library renovation plan, as well as to seek input on how to use the PGSS Library Improvement Fund.

The AAO introduced Colleen Cook to talk about the library renovations. She spoke about availability of space in McGill libraries not meeting student usage needs. She also discussed scholarship in a digital world. She then spoke about plans to renovate the McLennan-Redpath complex into spaces that are flexible over time and meet diverse needs, moving out seldom used print collections into an underground robotic facility to free up space for users, and incorporating new technology. She showed renderings of what the renovated library would look like. More information at mcgill.ca/library/about/fiat-lux

Questions:
SG asked about timeline, next steps, and how PGSS can help.

C. Cook responded it will happen as quickly as they can get people to support it. Their next steps are to get signature donors.

E. Sheedy (MGSS) asked what her plans are to address the needs of music students and performers, as there has been talk of moving all resources to a centralized location.

C. Cook answered that all of the other libraries will stay the same, it is only resources from McLennan-Redpath that will be moved.

E. Sheedy (MGSS) asked what will happen with Redpath Hall and the organs.

C. Cook replied that it will stay exactly the same way. Redpath Hall will stay as a music venue and practice space.

J. Singh (MCGSS) asked if relaxation zones in the library have been considered. He also asked about temperature control near the windows, and whether they are pursuing LEEDS certification.

C. Cook replied that yes, relaxation zones have been considered. Window question has been asked a lot, architects say construction material is so good now that this won’t be an issue. Hope is that this construction will be LEED.

IAO asked where students will be relocated to during construction and renovation. If they have to go to other libraries, it will become very crowded.

C. Cook replied that students will have to migrate to other libraries to some extent, but the plan is to do renovation in phases, rather than shutting down whole library.

The Speaker thanked C. Cook for her presentation.

4.3 Graduate Innovation Projects Fund

7:02 PM

Associate Vice Principal of Research and Innovation to address council regarding the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund Campaign. Voting period is April 6 - 13.

Angelique Manella, Associate VP of Innovation, spoke briefly about the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund campaign. She emphasized that all kinds of innovation are eligible. They want to build an ecosystem and community that supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and having funding is a key part of this. Her office is also committed to supplying mentorship, to both fund recipients and others.

Questions:

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) asked how they came up with the $3.75 per student fee.

A. Manella responded that it is what they thought would be the minimum amount to create around $60K as the student contribution. Her team worked with the Provost and Student Life and Learning to leverage funds to create $250K as good size fund to start with.

4.4 McGill Course Lecturers & Instructors Union (MCLIU) announcement regarding student teaching and request for info from PGSA’s

7:06 PM

"In the past year, the course lecturer union as seen a drastic decreased in the number of positions available for graduate student to teach classes [in some departments]...General course lectureships are assigned
Based on seniority. 15% of courses are reserved to graduate students, associate professors, managers and professionals... Students can ask the provost to correct the situation. Give back the work to students, and back to the course lecturers. Using the points system."

Action Points:

- We want the students representative go to back to their department and count the number of lectureships offered to students before and now.

Raad Jassim, President of MCLIU spoke about ongoing negotiations with McGill, which ended up with a collective agreement regarding student teaching. He encouraged members to view this agreement on their website. He also spoke about specific articles that affect graduate students.

Seeing no questions, he was thanked.

7:12 PM 4.5 Tribune Reporting - Clarifications

McGill Tribune has recently published two articles misrepresenting PGSS position on LICM referendum (PGSS has no official position, took the quotes of Manmeet Rai as representative of PGSS, which they are not, whether as a PGSS member or as CRO). Recent Tribune article represented MCGSS referendum as a disaffiliation referendum, not as what it actually was, which was to allow MCGSS executives to explore the feasibility and viability of disaffiliation.

The SG clarified errors found in two articles recently published by the McGill Tribune that do not reflect PGSS or the truth.

J. Blakeburn (RSGS) asked if PGSS has a stance on the LICM referendum.

The Speaker responded that we haven’t officially made one

SG replied that we cannot officially have a stance, since it’s an external referendum and cannot be policed by PGSS.

7:13 PM 4.6 Departmental Equity and Diversity Survey

The PGSS Equity and Diversity Committee plans to assess the equity support and resources across graduate departments. We’ve developed a Departmental Equity and Diversity Survey that seeks to answer questions regarding three key concerns: what are the backgrounds of our student population, what equity and diversity education and resources already exist in graduate departments, and what are student experiences in their departments as they relate to their identities.

The survey will be released in the coming days. PLEASE encourage your departmental student body membership to participate in the survey (it only takes 5-10 minutes!). The results of the survey will be compiled into a public report - this will allow PGSS to better understand, represent and accommodate student needs moving forward.

Upon completion, you may include your email to be entered into a draw for one of four $20 giftcards to Thomson House!

The EDC announced that the survey on Departmental Equity and Diversity Survey will be released this Friday, and how it is really important to get a good distribution of students participating to gain a better understanding of existing resources and student experiences. The survey closes on Apr 21.
4.7 March for Science!

March for Science
Location: Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Ontario
Time & Date: April 22, 2017, 7:30am-4:00pm
Cost: $10
Included: Transportation to and from Ottawa, Ontario
******Register Here! *****
Trip Timeline:
7:30am Group departs from Chancellor Day Hall on Peel Street
10:00am Approximate arrival in Ottawa
11:00am Rally begins
2:00pm Return to Montreal
5:00pm Approximate arrival in Montreal
*schedule subject to change, PGSS is not responsible for delays.
Description:
On April 22, we march for science! The March for Science is a celebration of our passion for science and a call to support and safeguard the scientific community. Recent policy changes have caused heightened worry among scientists, and the incredible and immediate outpouring of support has made clear that these concerns are also shared by hundreds of thousands of people around the world. The politicization of science, which has given policymakers permission to reject overwhelming evidence, is a critical and urgent matter. It is time for people who support scientific research and evidence-based policies to take a public stand and be counted.

We are scientists and science enthusiasts. We come from all races, all religions, all gender identities, all sexual orientations, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all political perspectives, and all nationalities. Our diversity is our greatest strength: a wealth of opinions, perspectives, and ideas is critical for the scientific process. What unites us is a love of science, and an insatiable curiosity. We all recognize that science is everywhere and affects everyone.

Please register on the PGSS events website!

The SG spoke about participation in the upcoming March for Science. Buses have been booked to take PGSS members to Ottawa (round trip for $10 for PGSS members, $20 for non-members). Register on the PGSS website and remember to bring lab coats.

The EC added that if you can’t make it to the Ottawa trip, PGSS will probably be sponsoring another rally here. Still have to go through the motions to do that.

The SG said that there is already one put in place, from Square Victoria.
4.8 Moonlight - Free Film Screening (April 7)

Join the McGill Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons and PGSS Equity and Diversity for a free screening of MOONLIGHT on Friday, April 7! (If you’ve already seen it, just know it’s even better the second time around - we promise!)

Moonlight tells the coming-of-age story of Chiron, and follows his experiences of sexuality, masculinity and Blackness growing up in Miami. Met with universal critical acclaim, the film won Best Picture at the 2017 Academy Awards, as well as Best Adapted Screenplay (Barry Jenkins, director, and Tarell Alvin McCraney) and Best Supporting Actor (Mahershala Ali). It is the first Best Picture winner to feature an all-Black cast, and an LGBT plot. It is based on McCraney’s play, In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue.

The screening will take place in the Education Building, Room 129 (3700 McTavish) on April 7, 6-8:30 pm. The film will be followed by an informal discussion, so feel free to bring your dinner! Refreshments will be provided!

ACCESS INFO: The Education Building is wheelchair accessible from the 1st floor McTavish street entrance, and the 2nd floor entrance between Peel and McTavish street. A gender neutral washroom is located on the basement level (Room #B136).

Get more info and RSVP here: https://www.facebook.com/events/154219201768316/?notif_t=plan_user_associatedif_id=1490816396938828

Please contact equity.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca if you have any questions or requests.

5 New Business

5.1 Motion to approve special considerations for the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund Referendum

Whereas PGSS special referendum on innovation has generated a lot of interest among the campus community at McGill, including undergraduates, faculty and members of the administration, committing 180,000 per year to the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund and seeking to generate approximately $70,000 from PGSS members through the fee referendum,

Whereas PGSS governing documents, including the Bylaws and the Society Affairs Manual do not specify if non-PGSS members can constitute "yes" and "no" committees for referenda,

Whereas PGSS CRO advised that allowing for non-PGSS members to join the "yes" and "no" committees for the referendum on the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund should be approved by council,

Whereas PGSS was asked to consider a motion on the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund on the February 15th council but adjourned before the referendum question was put to a vote,

Whereas PGSS council passed the referendum question in the March 15th council,
Whereas PGSS secretary general was informed by Student Accounts on March 23rd that any change in fees has to be reported to student accounts by April 15th (but because this falls on a holiday weekend, this information needs to be received by April 13th,

Whereas PGSS bylaws governing referendum processes do not provide specific instructions on the time-lines for the running of special referendums, but do provide information on referenda under normal circumstances that provision for

1) Nominations for ‘yes’ and ‘no’ committee - no less than 1 calendar weeks from the day when the email is sent.

Campaign

2) The campaign period will last for a minimum of two (2) weeks and end at 11:59pm of the day prior to the voting period.

3) The voting period will last a minimum of both five (5) business days and a seven (7) calendar days to a maximum of ten (10) business days

Whereas PGSS bylaws outlining procedures for regular referendum questions require a 7 calendar-day voting period, thus necessitating the start of the voting period on noon April 6th in order to provide the results of the vote by noon on April 13th to student accounts,

BIRT PGSS executives approved the following special considerations to the referendum processes on the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund, conditional on PGSS council approval,

1) Chief Returning Officer (CRO) that manages elections emails PGSS members on the referendum timeline and calling for “yes” and “no” committees

2) Campaign timeline will specify that the campaign period lasts from March 27th at noon to April 6th at noon

3) On CRO email sent to PGSS members sent on March 27th, CRO will call for the creation of “yes” and “no” committees on Monday March 27th.

4) On PGSS Council on April 5th, these special considerations for the referendum will be approved before the voting period begins on April 6th.

BIRT PGSS council approve the special considerations passed by PGSS executive committee

BIFRT PGSS special referendum on the Graduate Innovation Projects Fund allows for non-pgss members to constitute both “yes” and “no” committees.

The SG motivated to approve the special referendum, as any change in fee status need to be by Apr 15, however that is Easter Sunday, so needs to be earlier. He explained that the campaign timeline had to be constrained because according to bylaws, need at least one week of voting period.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) motioned to request speaking rights for Ayo Olanrewaju (BGSS).

Motion was questioned.

Motion passed.

No questions.

Debate:

A. Olanrewaju (BGSS) introduced himself and his links to PGSS. He spoke against the motion, stating that PGSS is a democratic body and the primary objective is to protect all PGSS members. He said it is
not about whether this fee is correct, but the way it is being done stifles transparency and debate. He said that we need innovation, but we need it done democratically.

J. Singh (MCGSS) agreed, saying that it is big deal to suspend the SAM. He said he understands the situation, but at the same time, it is something of concern and we should really critique the reasons why He also expressed concern about this information only being made available to PGSS councillors but not all members. Further, he said there is no end date on suspension of the SAM, and will bring it in as an amendment later as not to change the debate topic.

The SG thanked A. Olanrewaju and J. Singh for their comments. He refuted their arguments by stating that fee is opt-out-able. Contributing to this shows administration that we are excited about creating an ecosystem for innovation. He said that it is not just the people who join design teams and enters competitions that benefit from this; everyone benefits from having a place to collaborate on innovation and mentorship opportunities. He agreed that this was rush process, but said that Council did not give the respect to extend the last meeting to allow this motion to pass, leading to this to occur.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) also spoke against the motion. He said he thinks it’s a great initiative, but agrees with previous points. He also said to keep in mind that it needs to be submitted to McGill before going through a contestation period.

The IAO asked why non-PGSS members are allowed to join the yes/no committees when only PGSS members will be paying into this fee levy.

The SG answered that there is nothing in our bylaws or SAM that says non-PGSS members can be or not be in the yes/no committees. He also said that the administration and undergrads that may be coming to McGill really want this to pass.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked what will be the ultimate result if we deferred this to the fall referendum. He said that he doesn’t understand why we have to rush through it now when it can be done in the fall with a proper referendum time period.

The EAO said that funds are not secured for next year if we don’t have the referendum this year. If we run it right away, it is secured for next semester. Good opportunity to get an over 3 for 1 matching.

J. Blakeburn (RSGS) motioned to extend speaking rights to CRO to explain the email quoted in the motion. Motion was seconded.

Motion passed.

The CRO responded that the email was to initiate the referendum process, and to make sure the new set of rules passed by the Executive are known and followed faithfully.

J. Singh (MCGSS) proposed the following amendment:

BIFRT measures taken by the PGSS executive be reversed and the original SAM be fully reinstated on April 15, 2017.

No questions or debate arose. The amendment was called to vote.

Motion to accept the amendment was passed.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked, if the university is not matching funds after next semester, what is the long-term plan for this fund?

The EAO replied that it is an opportunity for us to show we have an interest in these funds. If we do not show we have interest, they may lose interest in giving us the money. If we do show interest, they’ve
pledged to give us funds for long-term.

The SG added that the seed money students and administration are putting in now will show potential donors the capacity of interest. The long-term goal is to decrease student contribution to this fund.

A. Olanrewaju (BGSS) commented that this is the kind of debate we should be having during the referendum over two weeks. There is no “no” committee, but based on the voices we’ve heard, he is fairly sure they could find one if given the time. He said that the way we do innovation should be free, transparent, and follow the rules, but right now we are voting to break the rules.

The EAO replied that the debate we are having now is due to the fact that we didn’t have the time during Feb Council to pass this to go on referendum.

A. Nosrat (DDSS) responded that Council can do whatever it wants. If Council didn’t want to have an extension, then that was a decision it made, so the argument to bend rules doesn’t fly. However, he said that he thinks this is a very important initiative and unique opportunity, as PGSS will benefit a lot from moving this forward. He said that considering it’s opt-out-able, he thinks Council should be forgiving and vote based on what you think is right for the membership.

The motion was called to a vote.

Motion passed by special resolution (35/47 voted in favour, 7 against, 5 abstentions).

5.2 MOTION FOR THE PREPARATION OF GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS ON STUDENT FEE REFERENDA ENSURING PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

MOTION FOR THE PREPARATION OF GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS ON STUDENT FEE REFERENDA ENSURING PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

[presented by Adrien Habermacher, President of the Graduate Law Students’ Association]

Whereas PGSS represents the interests of all graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University;

Whereas independent organizations such as the LICM, Radio CKUT, and Midnight Kitchen offer valuable services to graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University thanks to fees collected from the aforementioned students and fellows;

Whereas graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University are regularly consulted by referendum by these independent organizations on the creation, modification, or renewal of such fees;

Whereas the policies of McGill University governing student fee referenda only govern the wording and content of the referendum questions, in addition to the administration and compilation of referendum results;

Whereas graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University observe great variance in the rules and practices governing the preparation and conduct of such fee referenda, including the opportunities for interested parties to campaign in favor or against the referendum question, and of the same to contest the processes or their outcomes;

Whereas graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University have an interest in the implementation of rules and practices guaranteeing a uniformly adequate level of oversight, procedural fairness and transparency in the preparation and conduct of such fee referenda;
Whereas PGSS has already developed substantial resources to pursue these objectives in the referenda it prepares, conducts, or oversees;

Whereas graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University, PGSAs, and PGSS have expressed on repeated occasions a perceived need to develop internal procedures regarding the conduct of fee referenda by independent organizations;

Be it resolved that PGSS shall commit to the preparation of precise guidelines on fee referenda for the use of independent organizations on McGill University campuses;

Be it further resolved that the aforementioned guidelines shall offer rules and examples of best practices ensuring adequate procedural fairness and transparency in the preparation and conduct of student fee referenda;

Be it further resolved that PGSS shall, for the preparation of the aforementioned guidelines, consult with all independent organizations across McGill University campuses that hold fee referenda on a regular basis, including but not limited to LICM, Radio CKUT, Midnight Kitchen;

Be it further resolved that PGSS shall make its resources available to such independent organizations in the preparation and conduct of referenda for fee to be levied on graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at McGill University.

A. Habermacher (GLSA) motivated the importance of developing guidelines for independent organizations to ensure that concerns raised at the last meeting regarding the LICM referendum are addressed in the future by taking a systems level approach.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) suggested adding a timeline for this to be done by September.

A. Habermacher (GLSA) responded that he wasn’t sure what the best timeline was when drafting this, but would be ok with September.

A friendly amendment was made to add “by Sept Council” to the first BIRT clause.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked why external groups like LICM and CKUT do not go through PGSS referendum procedures like PGSS and the administration does?

The SG responded that external groups find that our rules and timelines are sometimes not consistent. The spirit of this motion is to improve our referendum policy, so that it provides a better environment such that external organizations are more encouraged to run their referendum through PGSS.

J. Singh (MCGSS) asked for clear definition on what constitutes an independent organization. He also asked if this only applies to all future referendum from that point on after it has been created.

A. Habermacher (GLSA) replied that these guidelines are not intended to be binding to anyone outside PGSS. He said it is our point of reference to decide how to advise/support independent organizations. He explained that independent organizations refers to anything that is not PGSS or SSMU.

The Speaker clarified that these policies are not going to become rules, rather they are just guidelines.

Motion to extend speaking rights to CRO. Motion passed.

The CRO added that external organizations are on campus and have a memorandum of understanding with McGill. He said that one of the reasons why they don’t come to PGSS is that procedures are not clear, and that if they run it on their own, the chances of having it succeed is much higher. He said passing this motion will bring in transparency and fairness.
J. Blakeburn (RSGS) spoke for the motion, by referring to the recent athletic fee that came through PGSS and the difference in SSMU and PGSS responses. He said that clarifying our rules would give us more grounding.

The IAO also spoke for the motion. She said it is in our best interest for these organizations to run their referendums through us so we can ensure it is transparent and fair.

Motion passed.

5.3 Applications sent from the Appointments Board Committee for Approval

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<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>Juan Camilo Pinto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial Board</td>
<td>Sara Ferwati</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elections Committee</td>
<td>Jaaved Singh</td>
<td>Approved</td>
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P. Gomez (EGSS) asked whether the approval process is done by a PGSS committee.

The Speaker responded yes, it is done by the Appointments Board.

P. Gomez (EGSS) said that he has an issue with one of the applicants, Juan Camilo Pinto. He said that he did some research on the candidates, and found that Mr. Pinto was centered by PGSS in 2014, when he was the Secretary General, and had some of his powers removed and transferred to other members. He asked if the PGSS committee was aware of that.

The SG made a point of clarification that as the Appointments Board was unable to meet, these three candidates were actually passed by the Executive yesterday. He said that he agrees that this raises questions, and that's why we have this process.

P. Gomez (EGSS) replied that according to an article in the McGill Daily, he had an option to represent himself against charges but declined and resigned rather than face his charges. He said he would not be comfortable with this person on the judicial board.

IAO said that she did not have knowledge of this when these appointments were put forward voted on.

The Speaker suggested to split the question and vote on the other 3 candidates first.

Motion to split question passed.

Motion to approve appointments of S. Ferwati, J. Singh, and G. Marchisio passed.

A. Habermacher (GLSA) said that his PGSA does not endorse this application.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) asked if, in his application, did Mr. Pinto make note of this?

The SG responded that he doesn’t think so.

Motion to approve appointment of J. Pinto did not pass.

5.4 Applications sent from the Appointments Board Committee for Approval

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<td>Elections Committee</td>
<td>Giacomo Marchisio</td>
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7:53 PM

7:58 PM
5.5 Motion Regarding Endorsement of Open Letter on Mental Health

Motion Regarding Endorsement of Open Letter on Mental Health

Whereas, on March 31st the McGill Mental Health Working Group released an open letter outlining ongoing concerns with McGill Counselling and Mental Health Services (CAMHS);

Whereas, systemic changes introduced to CAMHS this year have not effectively addressed concerns with insufficient and inaccessible support services;

Whereas, the letter calls on the administration to take the following actions:

Address urgent student and staff concerns in Counselling & Mental Health Services;

Keep all dedicated funding in Student Services by eliminating the $650 000 in annual overhead that is deducted from this budget by the central administration;

Implement a comprehensive, campus-wide, evidence-based Mental Health Strategy that addresses the spectrum of mental health needs and acknowledges the responsibility of university stakeholders outside of Student Services to create a healthier community;

Whereas, the letter includes an appendix with 25 specific recommendations for improvement;

Whereas, the letter has collected over 450 signatures as of Monday, April 3, 2017;

Whereas, The Post Graduate Students’ Society (PGSS) Health and Wellness Committee endorsed this letter,

Be It Resolved That The Post Graduate Students’ Society (PGSS) formally sign on to the open letter;

Be It Further Resolved That PGSS distribute this letter through its relevant communication channels, including social media and the listserv.

Moved by: J. Andrew Dixon


The HC motioned to extend speaking rights to Shannon Snow from McGill Mental Health.

Motion passed.

S. Snow encouraged students to read the full letter online, and spoke briefly about the main points. She said that there has been no Director of Mental Health Service at McGill Mental Health since November, which is concerning considering this is the year where Counselling and Mental Health have been integrated. She also spoke on the presence of major management issues that have affected staff members that have come from higher up, specifically the Provost of Student Life & Learning. As a result, a letter has been written explaining these concerns, with 3 requests to be addressed. She said they have received 795 signatures so far, but there are tens of thousands of students. She asked councillors to vote to endorse this letter, as well as individually sign the letter online.

Questions:

N. Jeanbart (AGSA) asked for an explanation of the integration of Counselling and Mental Health.

S. Snow explained that Counselling (psychotherapy) and Mental Health Service (CBT, medication from psychiatrists) have combined in a stepped care model. More information is available on the Mental Health Hub, or the Counselling & Mental Health website. She emphasized that this was a significant event, during which there was no leadership to address hiccups.
E. Larson (GSAN) asked if the letter has been brought to SSMU and whether they have endorsed it.
S. Snow responded yes, and that the PGSS Health & Wellness Committee as well as Senate Caucus of McGill have endorsed it.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked what the $650 000 refer to it?
S. Snow replied that it is administrative overhead fee, which is typically between $100 000 to $200 000 for a university of our size. She added that within student organizations, they’ve started removing services that we previously had, such as cleaning and maintenance of the Brown Building.

Debate:
The HC spoke in favour of endorsing the open letter, as it is a great way to show support and make McGill a better place for mental illness
Motion passed unanimously.

5.6 Motion to observe one Quebec Federation - External Affairs Officer

PLEASE refer to the document for the rationale.

Whereas the PGSS External Affairs Officer (EAO) has spent the 2016-2017 term, to date, observing the Quebec Student Union (QSU) and the Association for a Voice for Education in Quebec (AVEQ), two Quebec University student federations
Whereas the EAO has submitted a memoir on their experiences observing these federations;
Whereas the QSU has been considerably more active in the Quebec student movement;
Whereas the QSU has demonstrated that it operates in an equitable, democratic and transparent manner;
Be it resolved that the QSU be the organization that the External Affairs Officer (EAO) prioritizes when observing provincial student federations, but does not limit their ability to observe other organizations;
Be it resolved that the value of observing QSU be re-evaluated by the end of the 2017-2018 term.

Motion to observe one Quebec Federation - External Affairs Officer

The EAO presented his report on the two Quebec Federations he has been observing. He said he has received endorsement from the PGSS executive following an amendment to the 1st BIRT clause, which makes it much less exclusive. Instead of the QSU being the only provincial federation that PGSS would observe from now, the EAO would prioritize observing QSU, but this does not limit the ability to observe other organizations. He explained that this is ensure that there is flexibility in the EAO’s portfolio. He said this motion is based on conclusions from his report, that the QSU has been much more productive and acts on their words.

Questions:

J. Singh (MCGSS) asked for clarification on whether this is just referring to observing, and not affiliating yet.

The EAO responded that this is correct.

Debate:
B. Por (GLSA) spoke against the motion. He said that, as the EAO last year and having participated in the founding of both AVEQ and QSU, he believes that AVEQ represents his values better and has a more constructive atmosphere. He believes that the report makes AVEQ sound quite sketchy, but he heard a lot of good things about AVEQ from PGSS members. As it is a smaller federation, he feels they could use the support of PGSS quite a bit. He also said that it doesn’t take that much resources and the EAO would not be required to go to all the meetings.

E. Larson (GSAN) spoke in favour. As the FAO a number of years ago, he had the experience of dealing with CFS, and that one of the biggest criticisms was their lack of feedback and clarity. Reading through the report, he said that it is clear that the QSU values member feedback to a much greater extent than AVEQ.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) spoke in favour. He said he worked with the FEUQ before it dissolved, and that many of these people are now in QSU. He said he can attest to their level of professionalism, and that he believes McGill graduate students align better with the QSU approach of government lobbying, whereas AVEQ has more emphasis on mobilization of students.

EO addressed the concerns mentioned earlier by B. Por. He said that both have a Community Action Fund, but one requires participation of member organizations, whereas the other is open to non-member organizations. He said he would not want student funds going to an association that was disbursement to other student associations that are not paying into it. Regarding the ideologies of AVEQ vs QSU, he said it is one thing to have an ideology, another thing to act on it, which was not done at AVEQ based on his observations this past year. He said he agrees with their position on fighting for marginalized people, but they did not do so more than the QSU did. Regarding the ability of the EAO to observe two federations, he said he has had tremendous difficulty observing both organizations, and that it is also quite costly, with not enough return for students.

A. Habermacher (GLSA) asked about exec resources (time, money) that is allocated to this. He also asked the EAO to comment on the weight that PGSS has in each one, and if the EAO thinks there is a difference in smaller organization in that that we would have a bigger voice.

The EAO responded that he allocated $4000 in the budget, and has spent about $2500 so far. Regarding the voting system, he said that as an association with 800 members, we are more well off in a proportional voting system. He said the QSU has a two round voting system, where the first round is one association one vote, and the second round is proportional. He said he has seen this in practice and it is very democratic and fair.

A. Magdzinski (NGSA) asked why there are two organizations and why they don’t merge.

The EAO replied that for student politics, there are different approaches to getting things done. They have similar ideologies, but different methodologies. He also said he has seen a stark difference this year between what is put into practice.

The SG said that he has been to some of these organizational meetings and that AVEQ has been doing great work, but their intentions are better than proof of what they’ve been doing. He also spoke about leadership issues within AVEQ. He emphasized that this motion only prioritizes the EAO going to QSU, but allows the them to go to AVEQ as well if they have time.

B. Por (GLSA) commented that if he were EAO this year, there would likely be a very different report, as it is the opinion of the people who were involved to a certain extent. He spoke about AVEQ’s support for marginalized students, and said if AVEQ isn’t doing a good enough job, he’d like to see PGSS getting involved to make it better.
The EAO responded that he supplied a 15 page report outlining factually what each organization has done.

Motion called to vote.

Motion passed by majority.

8:18 PM 5.7 First reading: PGSS budget 2017 - 2018

First reading of budget, to be passed for a first reading before it is sent to governance committee, board of directors and ratification at next reading

First reading: PGSS budget 2017 - 2018 ()

The FAO presented the budget and stood for questions.

Questions:

HC asked whether the Health & Dental plan line reflects the fact that we will likely still have MCGSS on our plan next year.

FAO responded yes. She said they have considered that we are going to lose 8% of members (post docs), and MCGSS to be part of PGSS for all of next year.

The EC reiterated his earlier motion about holding procedures accountable to membership. He said this sentiment is shared by his colleagues in the executives & commissioner committee. He asked the SG to provide his evaluation of the budget design process and whether it has been sufficiently inclusive in trying to address all of the comments in a timely manner so that the budget reflects their values.

The SG replied that this is an important point. He said he has also been frustrated in the inability to have this type of information provided to the executive and council earlier. He said he understands the FAO has been working to provide a conservative budget that accounts for disaffiliation of post-docs and uncertainty of losing MCGSS members, and that this is part of the reasons for the delay in giving a proposed budget. However, he said that he doesn’t think we should stall the first reading of this budget, as it opens the door for us to engage in this process and make amendments, so budget can be passed in May council before the year is over.

The EC asked, over the next month, what guarantees can the FAO and SG make? He asked for specific actions taken to ensure that consultation does take place. He said he sent 8 emails to the FAO, none of which have been addressed.

The FAO replied that she cannot make the decisions on her own. She said she had to wait until March 30 for Mac campus negotiations regarding disaffiliation or not. Second, she said that the budget hasn’t gone to the Board of Directors until earlier today.

The Speaker requested that the FAO answer the EC’s question about process.

The FAO responded that she will be sending the budget to the executive to review again, and the final decision would be made by the Board of Directors and FAO, then brought to Council again for amendments and to vote on. She said the timeline depends on when the first Board of Directors meeting will be, maybe the SG can provide the exact date.
The SG responded end of April, before council on May 3. He said we need to ensure proper consultation process to pass the budget.

The MSO asked if we can mandate that the board meeting happens sooner, so that it can go through either executive committee or executive commissioner caucus.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) motioned to extend Council by 15 min.

Motion passed.

Following up to the previous question, Y. Bresler (MGAPS) said he does not think Council can mandate when the Board meets, but proposed the following amendment to the budget:

BIRT we approve the first reading of the budget.

BIFRT the budget is approved by the executive committee, the executive commissioner caucus, and the board of directors, to be re-submitted for the May council meeting.

Motion was seconded.

Motion for amendment passed.

J. Blakeburn (RSGS) questioned the necessity of these actions and why current processes are insufficient.

The Speaker replied that it is normal process, but wasn’t laid out clearly so people might have been confused.

Y. Bresler (MGAPS) added that the executive commissioner caucus part isn’t in the bylaws.

J. Blakeburn (RSGS) said it seems like there are two issues, one is the question of sufficiency of the current process, the other issue is the deadline of getting information in time. He asked whether these state the issues from the different questioners correctly.

The EC replied that the consultation isn’t sufficient, it is inert to a lot of requests. He asked what is the point of parading a budget when commissioners don’t have a say, and even other executives don’t have much of a say.

The HC said he agrees with the EC, and said that he would like to see a mechanism whereby we can ensure that our values are reflected.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked about library improvements fund and needs-based bursary fund, which students pay into but both lines show having $0.

The FAO replied that these fees are collected by McGill directly, the money is not deposited into PGSS.

E. Larson (GSAN) asked a follow-up question, stating that all fees are collected by McGill, but they get remitted to us.

The FAO replied they send some of the fee levies to us, and we deduct the money from that for transactions, then give it back to McGill. She said these two lines of budget don’t come through us at all. For more clarification, can talk to operational manager.

The HC clarified that we have representation at the university level which decides where the money goes, just not on our books.

Debate:

The IAO said that she doesn’t agree there hasn’t been a consultation process. She said she has worked closely with the FAO in proposing budget for events, and they have worked hard in itemizing every expense.
Unfortunately, this process is more complicated for commissioners, as there isn’t a line dedicated to them. She said that commissioners should each have their own separate budget line, and that there is a need for integration of commissioners into the budget into a more constructive manner.

Motion called to a vote.

Motion passed.

8:40 PM  Adjourned