

PGSS Policy on Equity and Diversity (Amended April 10, 2013)

Preamble

The PGSS uses the term equity to recognize that, both historically and presently, certain groups of people are systematically denied access to education or the opportunity to fully participate in the University community, whether as students, professors or members of University staff. These groups include, but are not limited to:

- Ethnic minorities
- People whose first language is neither English or French
- Indigenous peoples
- People of minority sexual orientations and gender identities
- People of underprivileged socio-economic status
- People with disabilities
- Visible minorities
- Women
- Francophones at McGill

Equity is, therefore, an awareness of the past and present marginalization of certain groups that underpins the lack of access and respect in society for those groups, and corresponds to the privileging of other dominant groups within society. Working for equity and diversity includes prompting the creation of policies and actions that change these disparate power relations and to remedy the negative impacts they cause. PGSS is committed to taking on a leadership role on issues of equity and diversity within the PGSS membership by advocating for inclusiveness and social and economic justice through recognition, respect, numerical representation, accountability, and responsibility. As such, the PGSS Policy on Equity and Diversity was adopted.

Policy

1. All staff and representatives of the PGSS are accountable for the implementation of this Policy.
 - 1.1 This Policy shall apply to all activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the PGSS; including written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, endorsed, or funded by the PGSS and activities, events, and promotions held in the Thomson House.
2. As student leaders and representatives serving a diverse membership, and recognizing equity is both an individual and a collective responsibility, the PGSS has a responsibility to act with full respect for human dignity and without discrimination.
3. The PGSS commits itself to accessible language, structures, programs, and activities that promote the full-democratic participation all its members.
4. The PGSS shall demonstrate leadership in matters of equity, diversity, and social sustainability. Thus, PGSS is committed to building a University community that embraces its own diversity, supports the pursuit of a range of intellectual endeavours representative of the pluralistic nature of its membership, and works to expose and eradicate discrimination, harassment and removing barriers and actively promoting inclusivity.

5. To broaden the scope of ideas and perspectives that contribute to our community, the PGSS will actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds and experiences to participate on PGSS Council and committees, as well as to represent PGSS on external bodies.

6. The PGSS calls upon McGill University to:

6.1. Provide resources, programs, and services to support members of our community;

6.2. Continue to pursue initiatives designed to actively educate, heighten awareness, and provide opportunities for dialogue about equity and diversity-related issues.

6.3 Take a leadership role in the realization of equity by promoting anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, employment equity, accommodation and salary equity within its employment and governance structure.

7. The PGSS will endeavour through the usual course of its operations:

7.1. Not to affiliate or collaborate with organizations known to promote or engage in discriminatory practices;

7.2. To actively support projects that aim to end discrimination or to promote diversity, mutual-aid, and inclusiveness in the McGill community;

7.3 To regularly evaluate social sustainability in all aspects of the PGSS and to actively cultivate an equitable and respectful environment by providing resources and trainings for PGSS members and representatives.

[Section 8 is under review by the PGSS Board of Directors]

8. The PGSS will maintain an Equity Complaint Process facilitated by the Equity Commissioner, in consultation with the PGSS Equity Committee, and ratified by Council.

8.1 This process should offer an online complaints form, informal and formal resolution procedures, and, where applicable, refer to the PGSS Committee for Member Support, university procedures and policies, or to external legal sources;

8.2 The Equity Complaint Process will produce a final report that maintains confidentiality, will be kept on record by the PGSS, and offers outcomes that may include, but are not limited to, recommended: A) Mediation or dispute resolution; B) Letter(s) of apology; C) Censure, suspension, or dismissal from position in PGSS employment, membership, and/or representation; D) Suspension of PGSS financial support for activities organized by associations or groups that violate this Policy; and E) Trainings, workshops, or other resources.