



SUMMER 2009

Welcome to Council.

1. External Representation

A) **TaCEQ** (Table de Concertation Etudiante de Quebec) institutional development this summer:

The TaCEQ is the new student lobbying organization on the provincial level, which SSMU has played an integral role in forming. The mandate to pursue membership and the commitment of our resources to this organization was provided by SSMU Council last year. After the founding General Assembly in late April 2009, the nascent institution has grown over the course of the summer. Currently there are four student associations that are members of the TaCEQ: CADEUL (U. Laval Undergrads), AELIES (U. Laval Grads), REMDUS (U. Sherbrooke Grads) and SSMU. We expect that another two very interested student associations will be bringing affiliation motions to their GAs this fall.

- i) Meetings: 3 meetings of the Table des association and one meeting of the Board of directors
- ii) By-laws completed
 - four bodies of power: Board of directors (rubber stamps and oversees financials), Table des Associations (sets policy and plans campaigns) and Annual GAs (reviews financials, can change by-laws, elects executive, sets agenda for year), executive (executes mandates of Table des associations)
 - two executives: Secretary general and vice-secretary general
 - no fees
 - non-partisanship
 - easy entry and exit
 - in-kind contributions and interim cost-sharing formula
 - available in French on the SSMU website, in the process of being translated
- iii) Research and lobbying
 - 30 page brief against the governance laws prepared by the executive for submission to the National Assembly Education Committee
 - Timely press release in June addressing leak that Quebec Government was planning to extend defreeze from 2012 to 2016
- iv) Name change
 - After being known as the Table de concertation for short and the Table de concertation des associations etudiante universitaire (TCAEU), decision was made



to develop a nicer acronym. After consultation TaCEQ was the choice. This retained "Table" in the name and "concertation", which we strongly felt was appropriately reflective of the quality of the organization. Our un-official English translation is Quebec Student Roundtable (QSR)

v) Visibility

- External office has been developing content of TaCEQ website as part of our in-kind contribution
- Official media launch should happen sometime in October

vi) Funding and recognition

- Provincial government decided not to recognize us as a provincial student association in June saying they needed more time to establish criteria. Once recognized, the TaCEQ would be able to apply for provincial grants legally available to provincial student associations. These grants are currently being disbursed to the FEUQ and have been for just under 20 years, a year after the inception of the organization. It is evident that the Ministry of Education is postponing the decision because they are reticent to pay up, as we do conform to all the criteria stated. In early July, the SSMU Legal and Political Affairs Coordinator, Boris Savoie-Doyer, and I went very prepared to a meeting with the Minister's political attaché. We put a lot of pressure on her to acknowledge that the Ministry could not justify why the FEUQ would receive the funding and not the TaCEQ. Ultimately she recognized our case but said that nothing could be done over the summer when the Ministry is not in full operation. We will be following up with her in the next week.

B) Relations with other student associations

- PGSS: I have had numerous meetings with the External of the PGSS and our executives have had a few sit-downs as well. We have dealt with Public transit initiatives and continue to negotiate with them in spite of the differing views. I participated as a scrutineer during their FEUQ affiliation referendum.
- CSU: The CSU and three of the SSMU exec met in late June. Many things were discussed, including external affiliation and the running of our operations and services. We have served as a resource for them as they revise their constitutional structures. We could potentially be collaborating on the Fill the Hill event in late October.
- Through other bodies, such as the CREM, the coalition against the governance laws and the TaCEQ, SSMU has had continuous contact with student associations at the CEGEP, undergrad and post-grad level from around Montreal and Quebec. In spite of the topical nature of the meetings, we



maintain a strong presence in the Quebec student movement and strong connections with a number of other student associations.

C) Opposition to the **Governance Bills 38 and 44:**

Bills 38 and 44 are in the process of going through consultation at the National Assembly Education Committee. The Bills create a cookie-cutter formula for the composition of the Board of Governors of Quebec post-secondary institutions – including a minimum 60% from outside the university. SSMU, the Quebec student movement and even McGill are against the bills, although the opposition is qualitatively different.

- i) TaCEQ: Member associations provided funds to the organization to stipend the executive to compose a detailed and well-researched submission outlining TaCEQ's opposition to the Bills. The product was thorough, 30 pages long and represented the professionalism of the TaCEQ. It can be found on the SSMU website.
- ii) Coalition against the governance laws: establishment of a multi-Stakeholder, issue-based, coalition composed of multiple student associations, union representatives and the ASSE to specifically launch an awareness campaign on our campus, through fliers, posters, buttons and a website.
- iii) SSMU's brief to the Education Committee: SSMU will submit a brief of our position. It is in the process of being edited

2. Community and Municipal issues

A) Municipal Election:

- i) In collaboration with FAECUM, we called meeting of the Coalition regionale etudiante de Montreal to address bringing student issues to the Municipal election forum. The coalition is composed of around 8 student associations from around Montreal. Election platforms from each student association will be drafted and consolidated into a common front of demands.
Themes discussed include: Public transit, environmental issues, student representation and housing
- ii) Beginning to consult with different interest groups on campus to draft a SSMU election platform that represents issues of concern to McGill students on a municipal level.

B) Montreal and Milton-Parc: outreach and contact



- i) MPCC: I have worked extensively with the Milton-Parc Citizens Committee, composed of the long-term residents of the Milton-Parc neighbourhood, over the summer. Our primary goals have been to mitigate the disruptive effects of frosh and other big events on campus, encourage greater sensitivity and awareness of students to the neighbourhood, and plan ahead. I have met many times with members of the MPCC
- ii) Frosh/Street fest: My job for frosh and street fest was to promote community sensitivity, presence and involvement. At Street fest, with 1st year office and VP Brown, we ensured the presence of community organizations at the Tables.

For frosh, I facilitated communications between community members and Frosh planners as well as encouraging proposals for ways to mitigate the effect of it. Measures were taken during frosh and after to address issues that arose over the course of the events. The plan now is to plan events to bring community members and students together and develop a comprehensive action plan to address student impact on community and prescribe solutions and courses of action

- ii) Radfrosh: coordinated a Radfrosh tour of the Milton-Parc community
- iv) CAT: Community Action Toolkit is built to provide first-years with opportunities to integrate into the Montreal community and create their own volunteer projects with local non-profits and NGOs. The External Office has aided in the research and brainstorming of ideas as the project was coming together. SSMU has contributed money and HR to the promotion of the Toolkit around campus.
- v) Community relations research project: Commissioned before the beginning of my mandate, I have aided in researching and editing. Provides comprehensive history of Milton-Parc – McGill relations, addresses studentification, prescribes courses of action.
- vi) BYB: Burst Your Bubble, project by SEDE office, to providing McGill students with tours of local Montreal community and cultural locations. Have worked with SEDE office on this.

C) Transit in Montreal

- i) PGSS and U-pass: Have negotiated with the PGSS on their U-Pass plan. Students above the age of 25 suffer from an unjust discrimination preventing them from receiving reduced fare. PGSS intends to combat this with a U-Pass. SSMU exec and I are not favourable to this because we don't think it would



- ii) Age discrimination: External office has been conducting research into background of this with intention of building a good case for its abolition. We have successfully made this one of the main demands in consideration at the CREM.

3. At SSMU

A) External Office records

- i) Reorganization of records: Very little order to external office files and records at the beginning of my term. With the help of a stipended individual I conducted an audit of all the filing cabinets and other records to sort documents. All information in the External office is now catalogued, relevant and retrievable.
- ii) Added to records: I have been researching reports and published research relating to education issues and community issues etc. External Office is becoming a repository of available information, data and research on issues relating to the portfolio for posterity and accessibility to students

B) Communications

- i) Tuition Truth: tuitiontruth.ca was a website started by former VP External Silverman during the 2007 campaign against the tuition defreeze. Since then it had fell out of disuse. I have been working to revive and revamp the website, which should be completed by the end of the month. Tuitiontruth.ca will be the political mouthpiece of the External Office for the purposes of popular education on post-secondary education issues. The technical and design upgrade was done by Floh Herra-Vega who was the initial web designer.
- ii) Updated SSMU website: Worked to update the External Office sections of the SSMU website. There are now more links and more up-to-date information
- iii) Printed External Brochure: See External brochure for distribution
- iv) Radfrosh workshop on student activism at McGill: VP Dooley, Max Silverman and I conducted a workshop on student activism at McGill to educate and promote involvement.



4. Other

A) radio CKUT Board

I volunteered to be SSMU representative to the CKUT Board. Points to note include, dealing with financial squeeze from opt-outs, working on alternative sources of funding, finding two undergraduate reps to fill vacant Board seats and, most importantly, CKUT visibility on campus.

5. Some goals for the year

- A) Formation of TaCEQ with funding and the proper structures functioning and a clear agenda of engagement and lobbying
- B) Centralize external office as resource on education issues and synod of political debate around policy that affect education. This includes encouraging more research, visibility, involvement and debate around the External portfolio
- C) Complete long-term Action Plan for McGill-Milton-parc relations
- D) Age discrimination and transit: put together a complete dossier on the issue to inform actions
- E) Reproduction of the External Office Glossary

My doors are always figuratively open, even if they are sometimes literally closed, and the office is full of information peruse and inform yourself with. Education issues are important and have a huge impact on student life and the quality of our society. Take advantage of the resources available and speak to me or come by my office to find out more.

Respectfully submitted,

Sebastian Ronderos-Morgan SSMU VP External 2009-1010