



SSMU Legislative Council

Report of the Vice-President Finance & Operations
September 9, 2011

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." – Nelson Mandela

1. PREAMBLE

The summer term was busy yet enlightening at the same time. I miss the summer months when the office was quiet and relaxing; however, I enjoy that students are dropping by the office with questions or just to chat.

As an aside, I will be holding office hours during the whole year. For the fall semester, I have set aside office hours for three out of the five weekdays. If this is not sufficient, students can request an appointment or I will also consider increasing the number of office hours.

2. BUDGET AND FINANCES

Budget

- I already started preparing for the Budget Revision by first holding a brief meeting with the Comptroller to assess our goals and structure the way we want to approach the budget
- For next year, I hope to introduce a new format with robust explanations so Councillors approve a budget that it understands
- For the Frosh event, I worked closely with Vice-President Plummer to maintain the budget (the final numbers will be presented when they are ready; I should mention that because this is a larger event, the actual figures will take a couple of months to process fully)

Clubs & Services

- For the clubs, the Vice-President Clubs & Services and I created a brainstorm for Club Workshops covering topics such as room bookings, funding, club audit, and so forth – two have already been complete and the feedback was fairly positive
- For Services, with the help of Vice-President Fraser, I was able to create a Services Budget Worksheet to facilitate the Services' budget creation; it also includes a sample budget with step-by-step instructions
- We have also met several of the Services to discuss their vision for their year and to explain the financials
- Over the summer, I also reviewed the new audit form that was revamped by the Junior Accountant; last year, I created a club audit with my predecessor and implemented feedback from student groups to make this year's form even simpler and less daunting
- As an aside, roughly 84 clubs submitted their club audit for 2010 – 2011 (this makes me super content because this is the highest number in many years and I worked closely with last year's team to assist clubs in completing their audits)



Associated Faculty Associations

- Thus far, I met with POTUS and SWSA, to go over their budget and also to introduce myself (as an aside, I think these groups are really great and will have an excellent year)

3. OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES

Gerts

- Renovations are taking place next summer in 2012; the Gerts Administrative Committee met to reassess the budget to ensure that the amount for the renovations does not exceed the amount approved by last year's Legislative Council – the amount approved was \$453,000
- Gerts will have daily specials, especially after last year's enormous success with the specials
- This year, Gerts will continue its food service and will expand by providing daily food specials

Mini Courses

- The registration, as a mentioned by the Mini Courses, is going very well
- The Mini Courses team revamped the website to make it more user-friendly and appealing; therefore, I extend my sincere thanks to them

Book Bazaar

- I have been in the process of sorting all the books from last year; this task is definitely daunting and was pushed back later into the semester due to more pressing concerns
- Books that are from Haven Books will be sold on the SSMU's Marketplace because they are now the property of the SSMU
- As for the Book Bazaar books, I am going to do my absolute best to return the books to the rightful student
- I drafted an apology letter for the mismanagement of Haven Books & Book Bazaar to post on the SSMU Website towards the end of September; this is mainly because there are many students who are still discontent with the way it was operated and for the lack of communication in the past

Marketplace

- I will be working with the Communications & Publications Manager the week of September 12, 2011 to finalize all details
- Thus far, I have completed a marketing strategy that covers the brand message, advertising strategy, and so forth
- The Graphic Designer is currently working on a poster for this
- A detailed report will be provided in the fall semester once the project is more developed

Student-run Cafe

- The Working Group met briefly in August to discuss opportunities and set forth a plan for the semester; the hope is that the semester will allow for communication with Councillors and students



- Thus far, the Working Group is conducting research to prepare for a Business Plan; the research includes focusing on external (other associations) groups that have a student-run cafe, researching the internal history of the SSMU on this issue, looking at Sustainability, and so forth
- If you would like to help volunteer or know anyone who may be interested, send me an e-mail at fops@ssmu.mcgill.ca
- I would like to also mention that this Working Group and the members a part of it have really impressed with their quick, efficient, and thorough work

4. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Accounting Committee

- Hired the Junior Accountant 2: Sandy Ko
- Along with the help of the General Manager, during the summer I undertook many initiatives to make the SSMU's accounting process stronger by strategizing and implementing the following:
 - Asking executives to provide feedback on the unaudited financial statements prepared by the SSMU Comptroller
 - Putting the SSMU's accounting procedures into one guide book; this should be complete once I add a FAQ section
 - Created a Services Budget Worksheet, as mentioned previously
- With the cooperation of the Comptroller, the next step of the financial statements revamp will include adding notes to the unaudited financial statements to ensure that the Executives, Staff, and Services understand the figures

Finance Committee

- No report this week – reports will come in the fall semester

Financial Ethics Research Committee

- I have decided after discussing with some experienced individuals (for example, the Sustainability Coordinator) that FERC will be used for three main areas next year
 - Creating an Ethical Investment Policy
 - Revising the Purchasing Policy
 - Reviewing purchases that are over \$15,000
- I also realize that there needs to be a proper system to ensure that the best practices are being following which is why FERC will do the following
 - Meet to discuss ideas and brainstorm
 - Split the committee into three to focus on the points above with the FERC Coordinator maintaining some organizational structure and communication
 - Prepare documents for Council
 - Present ideas to Council
 - Take feedback and revise documents
 - Present documents to Council – this will continue until the policies are finalized and approved
 - Implement the regulations and policies



- Review and troubleshoot

Funding Committee

- The funding applications have been well received; I changed them last year during my term as Funding Coordinator and there have been no complaints or substantive issues with the applications

Operations Management Committee

- No report this week – reports will come in the fall semester

5. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

ASEQ

- The ASEQ provided the promotional material that was slightly changed from last year; however, for the most part it is the same due to the nature of the information required to understand the Student Health & Dental Plan
- The Executives attended an Orientation to understand how ASEQ works and to also better answer questions if students drop by the SSMU office or if they receive any e-mails about it

By-law Book II Revision

- I started an initial revision to provide general comments on By-law Book II
- The General Manager and I will be meeting shortly to discuss the more substance based aspects; this should take a while because, if a change is made, the way accounting and finance works internally is also affected

Job Description

- I completed the job description for the Vice-President Finance & Operations portfolio with helpful feedback from the executives, specifically President Knight

Trademarks

- The General Manager is working on this – reports will be provided as information is more accurate and accessible

Website

- The SSMU Website is up and running and I would like to specifically thank the Communications & Publications Manager, the Security Supervisor, and the IT Manager for their support and dedication to creating a website that is user-friendly
- What are some of the improvements with this new website?
 - The Clubs & Services tab is easier to use since all the forms that clubs need to submit are in one central place
 - The look of the website is professional, yet student-oriented
 - The main headers (can be found at the top of the page) have a drop-down effect with sub-headings



- The way a student can submit a form is simpler; for example, if a student wants to send a list-serv submission the form can be completed and automatically sent to the individual who responsible for that specific form

Peace be with you,

Shyam Patel