

SSMU Policy Manual

Updated December 9, 2010

Introduction

The SSMU Policy Manual was originally compiled by Max Reed, Vice President (University Affairs) 06-07. Since this time, new policies were adopted by SSMU Council and the General Assembly and added to the Policy Manual.

On March 18, 2010, the SSMU adopted a new process for enacting policies. This process creates a definitional and structural distinction between policies and resolutions, provides a more thorough process for adopting policies, and introduces a process for consistent review of policies. This new policy formulation process is outlined in the next section, “By-Laws Governing SSMU Policies and Resolutions”. The 2010-2011 SSMU Council and Executive should focused on bringing extant policies into the proper structure (similar to the Sustainability Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, and Equity Policy), reviewing out-of-date policies, and filling in gaps with new policies. We hope that this new process, combined with further efforts from future, will establish a clearer direction for the SSMU.

Adrian Angus, Vice President (University Affairs) 07-08, had these remarks concerning the Policy Manual: “Let's hope the tradition continues and that the members of the SSMU have a document to guide their understanding of the priorities and positions of the council that leads in their name.... Thank you for your interest, and I hope you find ways to contribute to the SSMU's positions in our ongoing efforts to better represent you.”

- The 2009-2010 SSMU Executive Team

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By-Laws Governing the Policy Manual

BY-LAW I-15– POLICIES AND POLICY MANUAL

Article 1—Definition and Format of Policies

1.1 Policies are defined as broad, guiding principles that direct the actions of the Society.

1.1.1 Policies must be labeled as such before being presented to the body which shall vote on the policy.

1.2 Policies shall:

1.2.1 Be expressed in broad and widely applicable terms;

1.2.2 Be relevant to the Society and relate to its mission statement;

1.2.3 Pertain to topics within the purview of the Society;

1.2.4 Be forward looking and proactive in essence;

1.2.5 Not refer to specific events or incidents;

1.2.6. Be subject to the Constitution, By-Laws, and extant Policies of the Society;

1.2.7 Contain a sunset clause, which shall state a five (5) year maximum validity period;

1.2.8 Meet further requirements, as defined by Legislative Council.

1.3 Stances which refer to specific events or otherwise fall outside the definition of Policies shall not be defined as “Policies” and shall not be governed by the By-Laws which govern Policies.

1.4. WHEREAS clauses contained in the motion to explain the policy shall not be considered part of the policy nor shall it be included in the Policy Manual.

Article 2 – Definition of the Policy Manual

2.1 There shall be a body of position papers known as the “Policy Manual.”

2.2 The Policy Manual shall contain all policies of the SSMU.

2.2.1. Policies should be kept as few and concise as possible while still expressing direction for the Society.

2.3. The Society Policy Manual shall be a universal reference for people acting on behalf of the SSMU in various capacities.

2.4 The Policy Manual shall be made available, upon request, to any member of the Society in both French and English.

Article 3—Adoption of Policies

3.1 Policies may be adopted by any one of these three bodies/processes: the Legislative Council, the General Assembly, and Referendum

3.2. The formal process for enactment, amendment or repeal of policies by the Legislative Council shall be as follows:

3.2.1 First Reading: Legislative Council

3.2.1.1 Notice of a proposed enactment, amendment or repeal of a policy shall be sent to the President at least seven (7) days before the meeting of Legislative Council at which the motion is to be introduced.

3.2.1.2. The proposed enactment, amendment, or repeal shall be sent to all Legislative Council members at least five (5) days before the meeting of Legislative Council at which the motion is to be introduced and debated.

- 3.2.1.3. The motion shall be read a first time at Legislative Council. The motion shall be debated and input given.
- 3.2.2. Second Reading: Steering Committee
 - 3.2.2.1. The Steering Committee will review the proposed enactment, amendment or repeal of a policy to ensure it fits the requirements laid out in By Law Book I and prepare a recommendation for Council.
 - 3.2.2.2. The Steering Committee's recommendation shall be sent to all Legislative Council members at least five (5) days before the meeting of Legislative Council at which the motion is to be debated and voted upon.
- 3.2.3. Third Reading: Legislative Council
 - 3.2.3.1. The Steering Committee shall bring its recommendation for the proposed enactment, amendment, or repeal of a policy to Legislative Council. The motion shall be debated and amended.
 - 3.2.3.2. Legislative Council shall have the final and ultimate authority of whether the policy is adopted and, if so, the wording of the policy.
- 3.3. The formal process for enactment, amendment or repeal of policies by the General Assembly or Referendum shall be as follows;
 - 3.3.1. First Reading: Steering Committee
 - 3.3.1.1. First the author of the motion shall send their desired motion to the President, who shall solicit input from the SSMU Steering Committee.
 - 3.3.1.2. The Steering Committee will review the proposed enactment, amendment or repeal to ensure it fits the requirements of a policy as laid out in By Law Book I and will work with the author to ensure the motion conforms to these requirements.
 - 3.3.2. Second Reading: Speaker/CEO
 - 3.3.2.1. For a General Assembly, the Speaker must approve the motion by the process described in By-Law Book I.
 - 3.3.2.2. For a Referendum question, the Elections McGill CEO must approve the question by the process defined in By-Law Book I.
 - 3.3.3. Third Reading: General Assembly or Referendum
 - 3.3.3.1. The motion shall be put before the student population by the process defined in the Constitution and By-Laws for General Assemblies or Referenda.
- 3.4 The Society's Legal and Political Affairs Coordinator shall keep a record of all Policy Motions of the Society, with their expiry timetable, and upkeep the Policy Manual as need be. The Society's Legal and Political Affairs Coordinator shall inform the Society's President and Speaker of Council of every Policy Motion which is entering its final year of validity.

BY-LAW I-16– RESOLUTIONS

Article 1—Definition of Resolutions

- 1.1 Resolutions are is topical and time-sensitive. They may contain:
 - 1.1.1 A call for an action for the SSMU to undertake;
 - 1.1.2 Lobbying points which have a restricted and immediate timeframe;
 - 1.1.3 A stance on a specific incident or event; and/or
 - 1.1.4 A change in the normal operating procedures of the SSMU.
- 1.2 Resolutions must be labeled as such before being presented to the body which shall vote on the resolution.

1.3 Resolutions shall not be confused with Policies nor shall they be governed by the By-Laws which govern Policies.

1.4 Resolutions shall be subject to and in line with the Constitution, By-laws, and Policy Manual of the Society.

1.5 Resolutions shall be valid for no longer than one (1) year from the date of enactment, but can be re-enacted.

1.6 Resolutions shall contain both WHEREAS and BE IT RESOLVED clauses.

Article 2 – Adoption of Resolutions

2.1. Resolutions may be enacted, amended, or repealed by Referendum, General Assembly, or Legislative Council by the processes laid out for those bodies.

Policies

Sustainability Policy

Adopted: by the General Assembly on February 1st, 2007

Expiry: February 1st, 2012

1. The Student Society will actively promote the principles of the ecological, economic and social sustainability on campus; including but not limited to

1.1.Championing student-initiated sustainability projects to McGill's administration;

1.2.Working with McGill's administration to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to responsibly manage our waste;

1.3.Working with McGill toward the establishment and maintenance of space where faculty, students and staff can easily collaborate on campus-focused sustainability research and implementation;

1.4.Working with McGill toward the integration of sustainability issues into existing curricula in all faculties and programs;

1.5.Working with McGill to secure space and resources for operating services necessary for building diversity with social equity.

2. The Student Society will creatively implement organizational and operational changes toward becoming a model for sustainability at McGill; including but not limited to:

2.1.Regularly monitoring the environmental impact of all Student Society events and operations;

2.2.Ensuring that the Shatner University Centre's food offerings and provision meet a high standard of environmental and social responsibility;

2.3.Minimizing unnecessary energy use and material consumption and striving to make ethical procurements;

2.4.Ensuring that independent student groups, club and services have access to training and resources to develop their capacities for equitable decision-making and environmental stewardship.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Adopted: by SSMU Legislative Council October 1, 2009

Expiry date: October 1, 2014

1. Preamble

1.1. The Students' Society of McGill University has a responsibility to engage in respectful, ethical, and objective decision-making practices. A conflict of interest is hereby defined as any situation in which an individual has an interest that may compromise their actions. This interest can be financial or interpersonal. A conflict can arise out of a current or former involvement with an individual, business, or a campus organization. The existence of a conflict should be evaluated on a case by case basis. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the individual to acknowledge their concern about a potential conflict of interest they may have before entering into a financial transaction or debate directly related to the making of a decision. All business, committee, and hiring activities are already subject to the Society's Equity Policy. Hereinafter, "student" will be understood as any member of the society. "The Committee" will be understood as the hiring or other committee of the Society involved; Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Council, or other committee of the Society. "Student Group" will be understood as any club, service, operation, or other group operating under the Society.

2. Hiring

2.1. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to enforce these policies when a conflict of interest arises.

2.2. If a student becomes aware that they have a conflict of interest upon the receipt of job applications, they are responsible for stating the conflict to the Chair of the Committee before the start of the interview process.

2.3. If a student involved in hiring believes that they have a conflict of interest, and they are unable to abstain from the interviewing of the individual in question, they cannot be the sole interviewer in the hiring process.

2.4. In the event that a student does not feel comfortable stating their conflict, they reserve the right to abstain from the hiring process without giving reason beyond the statement of a conflict of interest.

2.5. In the event that someone on the Committee is aware that an individual involved in hiring is in conflict, it is their responsibility to inform the chair of the committee if the individual in question does not make their conflict known.

2.6. In the event that the Chair of the committee is in a conflict, they must defer to an alternate when possible.

3. Business and Financial Transactions

3.1. Students will conduct Student Group business ethically and objectively, in compliance with all applicable University, Municipal, Provincial, and Federal laws.

3.2. The purchase of goods or services from a business in which a member student or their family or friend has a financial interest, or may directly benefit from such a purchase, is a potential conflict of interest. Such situations must be disclosed to the Financial Ethics Review Committee for review prior to the dispersing of funds for that item or service.

3.3. In conducting business, Student Groups may encounter offers of gifts from suppliers. A gift is hereby defined as anything of monetary value that is given as a supplement to a primary business transaction. The following guidelines apply:

3.3.1. While there may be occasion to accept gifts of nominal value (for example company promotional trinkets, e.g., pens or note pads), these or other gifts should never be accepted in return for a business favor. Such gifts may not directly or indirectly influence the students' business judgment or give the appearance of impropriety.

3.4. Any promotional benefits that result from a business transaction must be provided to the student group (or any other student group registered with the Society) and not to an individual student.

3.5. Student group members cannot refuse proposals from firms wishing to pursue business relationships, unless a signed contract with another product or service provider is already in place.

4. Committees and Decision-Making Bodies

4.1. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to enforce these policies when a conflict of interest arises.

4.2. If a student becomes aware that they have a conflict of interest, they are responsible for stating the conflict openly to the Chair of the Committee before the start of debate.

4.3. If a student believes that they have a conflict of interest, they should abstain from voting on the matter.

4.4. In the event that a student does not feel comfortable stating their conflict, they reserve the right to abstain from voting and debate without giving reason beyond the statement of a conflict of interest.

4.5. If a conflict of interest interferes with the achieving of quorum necessary for a vote, and no other alternate may fill in for the individuals in conflict, the Committee may use its discretion to determine a course of action.

4.6. In the event that the Chair of the committee is in a conflict, they must defer to an alternate when possible.

5. Breaches in this Policy

5.1. If it is believed that a student has breached this policy, the following procedure should be followed.

5.1.1. The matter must be brought back to the original Committee to decide a course of action. The student who is in conflict will not be allowed a vote. The following guidelines apply:

5.1.1.1. Any breaches of the policy on "Hiring" may result in a re-hiring of the position, when possible.

5.1.1.2. Any breaches of the policy on "Business and Financial Transactions" may result in the termination of a business relationship with the supplier and/or the removal of the student from office.

5.1.1.3. Any breaches of the policy for "Committees and Decision-Making Bodies" may result in a re-vote and/or striking of the individual's vote.

5.1.2. If the matter cannot be resolved in the original Committee. The following procedures will be followed:

5.1.2.1. Any breaches of the policy on “Hiring” or the “Policy on Decision-Making” bodies will result in referral to Executive Committee for a recommendation.

5.1.2.2. Any breaches of the policy on “Business and Financial Transactions” will result in referring the matter to the Financial Ethics Review Committee for a recommendation.

Equity Policy

Amended & Adopted: by SSMU Legislative Council on November 11, 2010

Expiry date: November 11, 2015

1. Background

The SSMU has a long standing history of leadership on issues of Equity and Social Justice. The development of formal mechanisms for addressing Equity matters has been in a constant process of growth, development, and improvement over the past two decades. The SSMU has demonstrated in its history a commitment to not only excel in the practice of Equity, but to be a progressive leader in the field. The third pillar of the SSMU's commitment to its membership, *Leadership*, is described solely in the context of social justice and equity related matters in the Preamble of the SSMU Constitution:

“VI. All Students' Society endeavours shall be undertaken with full respect for human dignity and without discrimination on the basis of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, language, sexual orientation or social class.

VII. The Students' Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The Society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic, and environmental surroundings.

VIII. The Students' Society commits itself to groups, programs and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or social class.”ⁱ

The SSMU's history has seen extensive student organization against sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of discrimination on the local, University, Provincial, Federal, and International levels. The SSMU counts among its Services student groups with a strong commitment to equity, safety, and the creation of safe(r) spaces for its membership; including Queer McGill, the Union for Gender Empowerment, the Black Students Network, the Sexual Assault Centre of McGill's Students' Society, Walksafe, and Drivesafeⁱⁱ. Dozens of SSMU clubs and affiliated student groups also share a commitment to equity and anti-discrimination in their mandates.

Civil rights movements over the last 40 years have shown the impact Universities and students have on progress in equity issues.. From the struggles for Women's rights to Francophone rights to Gay rights; the SSMU and its members have played an active part in the struggle for equal treatment and personal sovereignty. Much of the SSMU's

commitment to equity comes from the responsibility of University organizations to create safe havens from the rest of Society, where disadvantaged persons can come together and create communities centered on ways to enact positive change to better their situation.

In 1989, the SSMU defined itself as an “anti-oppressive” organization. This was an important step in defining ourselves as leaders in the field of Equity. Oppression is ^{iiiiv}

defined by Iris Young as the interaction between “Exploitation, Marginalization, ^{vivii}

Powerlessness^v, Cultural Imperialism, and Violence” imposed by a dominant class of people onto a powerless class of people through systems (formal laws and institutional practices) and interpersonal interactions. ^{viii} By incorporating anti-oppression practice into the SSMU, we expanded our formal understanding of Equity beyond the simple relationship of person-to-person isolated events of harassment and discrimination into an in depth evaluation of the situation of certain groups that leads to a lack of access and respect in Society for those groups. This method for evaluating and addressing injustice, discrimination, and inclusion is utilized by many non-profits across North America and is a staple in academic discourse surrounding social movements.

“The SSMU—an organization working with individuals, in groups, within organizations, and across a wide social and political context—shall promote a functional anti-oppressive environment that fosters a culture of respect and facilitates our mission of service representation and leadership.” [Approved by Legislative Council on March 14th, 1989]

Since this 1989 decision, the 90s saw a great deal of development in the SSMU’s regulation of equity. The creation of a VP Equity (by splitting the VP University Affairs position) was proposed and rejected by Council in 1992-1993, and again in 1996-1997 for reasons most likely related to a lack of confidence that this was the best allocation of responsibility. Council soon after created the position of Equity Commissioner, who was given the responsibility of managing the Equity Committee and taking a proactive position in addressing equity issues at McGill. ^{ix}

McGill University created the Joint Senate Board Committee on Equity in 1994. ^x Today, this Committee has grown into an umbrella group with five subcommittees on Women, Race and Ethnicity, First People, Queer People, and People with Disabilities. The effectiveness of this structure is still in question, and undergraduate students have taken an active role in pushing for equitable practices at McGill. In 2004 McGill created its first interim Policy on Harassment ^{xi}. In 2005, it established the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office as an outreach unit for the McGill community. In years to come, the recommendations of the Principle’s 2009 Taskforce on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement will likely see some changes to the way McGill addresses diversity and inclusion on its campuses.

Since 2005, the SSMU Equity Policy has gone through its most intensive process of review and implementation as Equity has grown in importance to our membership. The most important developments in the Policy over this time period have focused on the protocol for addressing violations of the policy, the delegation of responsibility, and settling of disputes over equity matters.

The following SSMU Policy on Equity is the culmination of revisions done by the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Equity Committees and is based off of the most recent Equity Policy passed at Legislative Council on March 6th, 2008.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. *Oppression* means the exercise of power by a group of people over another group of people with specific consideration of cultural, historical, and living legacies.
- 2.2. *Privilege* means a benefit, right, advantage, or immunity usually allocated to and held by a small, "dominant" group of persons to the disadvantage of others.
- 2.3. *Marginalization* means the creation of a dominant group of people which is defined as the "normal" group, creating classes of people who do not fit into the dominant group. These groups are thus "at the margins" of society, and deemed not belonging to society or not worthy of certain rights or privileges.
- 2.4. *Disadvantage* occurs when a group or person is denied equal treatment, access to resources and opportunities, respect, and/or safety of person;
- 2.5. *Complaint* a formal written declaration of a violation of the Equity Policy to the Equity Officers.
- 2.6. *Appellant* means the person or group which has experienced the alleged discrimination and/or harassment.
- 2.7. *Respondent* means the person or group which has been accused of committing an action which may be defined as harassment or discrimination as defined in this policy.
- 2.8. *Discrimination* means the differential treatment of an individual, typically to their disadvantage.
- 2.9. *Harassment* means an overt act of discrimination.
- 2.10. *Minority* means a group or individual having little power or representation relative to other groups within society.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy shall apply to:
 - 3.1.1. The members and the staff of the Students' Society of McGill University.
 - 3.1.2. All activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the Society and SSMU-affiliated clubs and services.
 - 3.1.3. Written or graphic material which is published, distributed, endorsed or funded by the Society.^{xii}
 - 3.1.4. Activities, events, and promotions held in the William Shatner University Centre.
 - 3.1.5. Funding allocated by the Society.
- 3.2. Neither this policy in general, nor its definitions in particular, are to be applied in such a way as to detract from the right of members to engage in open discussion of potentially controversial matters. No individual student or student group should have the effect of limiting dialogue on legitimate topics provided that such discussion is conducted in a respectful, non-coercive, collegial manner that conforms to the policy on discrimination and harassment set out in section 4 of this policy.

4. Policy Statement

The SSMU has a responsibility, as a leader, representative, and service provider to a diverse membership, to conduct ourselves by the highest standards of respect, fairness, integrity, safety and equitable treatment for all persons. At the forefront of this responsibility are, respect for personal and professional integrity, dignity, academic freedom, diversity, personal and social property, for safety. We strive to create a community that exceeds social standards of equitable treatment, creating a safe haven for all of our members where collegial debate and marginalized ideas can flourish in a culture of respect.

To support this responsibility as well as our mission of service, representation, and leadership, the SSMU will promote a functional anti-oppressive environment.^{xiii} We acknowledge that a functional anti-oppressive environment is achieved through...

- (1) recognizing that systematic processes and cultural biases disadvantage certain groups of people on the basis of irrelevant personal characteristics;
- (2) taking proactive steps to challenge and acknowledge the current and historical processes and biases that affect the safety and well being of these disadvantaged groups;
- (3) acknowledging that certain groups of socially privileged people knowingly or unconsciously benefit from this process and do not have the same experience of disrespect and exclusion as those in disadvantaged groups;
- (4) and taking pro-active steps to challenge the actions, attitudes, and assumptions that result from this social privilege.

The SSMU understands that groups historically and culturally disadvantaged on the basis of irrelevant personal characteristics include but are not limited to women, trans* and gender-non-conforming persons, indigenous persons, Métis, people of color, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, queer people, people with disabilities, people whose language is not that of dominant usage, persons without citizenship status, immigrants, refugees, people who do not conform to dominant size norms, or people from a disadvantaged socio-economic status. This does not prevent any program or activity whose purpose is to improve the conditions of a specific disadvantaged individual/group from conducting business that maintains a specific focus on that individual/group.

The SSMU condemns harassment or discrimination of disadvantaged groups on the basis of, but not limited to gender, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality or sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, language, size, or social class. The SSMU regards harassment or discrimination on the basis of these considerations as serious offences. This does not prevent any program or activity whose purpose is to improve the conditions of a specific disadvantaged individual or group from conducting The SSMU will actively support projects and policies that aim to end discrimination or to promote accessibility and inclusiveness in the McGill community. In accordance with this, the SSMU and its affiliated clubs and services will not affiliate or collaborate with organizations known to promote or engage in the previously mentioned discrimination or harassment.

5. Protocol

5.1. Equity Officers

5.1.1. The Society will have 4 Equity Officers.

5.1.2. Selection of Equity Officers

5.1.2.1.1. The Equity Commissioner will be an Equity Officer.

5.1.2.1.2. Three (3) members of the Executive Committee will be selected by the Executive Committee and approved by Legislative Council to serve as Equity Officers.

5.1.2.1.2.1. In the event that three (3) members of the Executive Committee do not express interest in or are not deemed appropriate for the position of Equity Officer, Council will elect Equity Officers from its membership to fill the vacant spot(s).

5.1.2.1.2.2. Preference in selection will be given to Executives and Legislative Council members who have received Anti-oppression training.

5.1.3. Responsibilities

5.1.3.1. It is the responsibility of all Equity Officers to uphold the Equity Policy.

5.1.3.2. It is the responsibility of at least two Equity Officers (one of whom must be the Equity Commissioner) to receive complaints, investigate, and report back to the implicated parties in a timely fashion.

5.1.3.3. It is the responsibility of all Equity Officers, in consultation with the Student Equity Committee, to research and address systemic issues of discrimination, harassment, and oppression within the SSMU.

5.1.3.4. Equity Officers must attend Student Equity Committee meetings.

5.1.4. Accessibility

5.1.4.1. Upon selection, the Equity Officers will be advertised over the SSMU Listserv.

5.1.4.2. The Equity Officers will be given a page on the SSMU Website with their contact information and a copy of the Equity Policy.

5.2. Complaints

5.2.1. All complaints shall be submitted in writing, or addressed in writing to an Equity Officer.

5.2.2. Complaints submitted by persons who are not members or staff of the Society can be pursued informally, at the discretion of at least two (2) Equity Officers.

5.2.3. A complaint can be submitted anonymously.

- 5.2.4. All complaints submitted will be investigated, provided the appellant party is willing to assist the Equity Officers in a capacity that will not put their personal safety of the safety of any other individual or group at risk.
- 5.2.5. Equity Officers shall be empowered to seek any information that is not explicitly confidential.
- 5.2.6. Complaints will be investigated primarily by the Equity Officers; in certain cases, the Student Equity Committee, and or the Executive Committee will be consulted for further investigation and procedural matters.
- 5.2.7. All complaints will be resolved as per the stipulations in section 5.3.

5.3. Discipline and Resolution of Complaints

Act(s) of discrimination and harassment will be considered an offence and subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action in the case of SSMU Employees is an HR matter and is at the discretion of the Executive Committee and General Manager. Disciplinary actions and resolutions include, but are not limited to:

- 5.3.1. Letter(s) of apology.
- 5.3.2. Suspension of the respondent from their position within the SSMU and its affiliated clubs, services, or publications.
- 5.3.3. Suspension of financial support by the SSMU for clubs, services, or publications that violate this policy.
- 5.3.4. Dismissal of the respondent from their position within the SSMU.
- 5.3.5. In the case of more serious violations, the complaint may be referred to the administrative powers of the University, or to an external legal source.

5.4. Documentation – Equity Log

- 5.4.1. Any formal decision and/or action shall be documented in writing and provided to the appellant and to the respondent.
- 5.4.2. A copy of the report must be signed by and Equity Officer and a witness, confirming that the report was received by both appellant and respondent.
- 5.4.3. A copy of all written complaints shall be kept in the Equity Log.
- 5.4.4. Any informal action undertaken shall be noted in the Equity Log, along with that signature of an Equity Officer.
- 5.4.5. The Equity Log will be a Confidential Document.

5.5. Limitations

- 5.5.1. No complaint shall be considered with respect to an incident of discrimination or harassment, which occurred more than one calendar year prior to the complaint.
- 5.5.2. Nothing in this Policy precludes either party from exercising any recourse available external of the SSMU.

Appendix A

Recognizing the footprints behind us helps to determine a planned course of action for the future. The following articles acknowledge the progress made by our predecessors while indicating that some members are excluded in the current legislation.

McGill University has several articles in its *Charter of Students' Rights* (July, 2003) recognizing equity in its broadest form.

Article 2.1 Every student has a right to equal treatment by the University; this right must not be impaired by discrimination based on race, color, ethnic or national origin, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, sex, sexual orientation, social condition, age, personal handicap or the use of any means to palliate such a handicap.

Article 3 Every student has a right to the safeguard of his or her dignity and a right to be protected by the University against vexatious conduct displayed by a representative of the University acting in an official capacity.

Article 7 The University has an obligation to maintain safe and suitable conditions of learning and study.

The Students' Society of McGill University has passed several policies over the years to deal with varying aspects of discrimination and harassment.

Approved By: Legislative Council Date: March 14, 1989

Any written or graphic material which is published, distributed, endorsed or funded by the Society shall be governed by the following: No material will discriminate against any member or group within the Society on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, age or financial status. Activities endorsed or funded by the Society, its clubs, or interest groups shall also abide by the above.

Approved By: Legislative Council Date: April 10, 1990

The Students' Society of McGill University recognizes that racism is detrimental to the dignity of all people. The SSMU will not knowingly endorse or do business with parties that violate Canadian or United Nations' sanctions.

Approved By: Legislative Council Date: February 9, 1992

The Students' Society will not facilitate outside organizations or individuals from promoting themselves in the William Shatner University Centre if they discriminate on the basis of, but not limited to, gender, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, language or social class, notwithstanding the Society's commitment to affirmative action.

The Students' Society will not directly or indirectly allocate funds to be used to facilitate association with or promotion of groups or individuals that discriminate on the basis of, but not limited to, gender, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, language, or social class, notwithstanding the Society's commitment to affirmative action.

Appendix B: Previous Policy: Adopted by SSMU Council February 2008

Policy on Equity

1. Background On February 21, 1996, the Subcommittee of Race and Ethnic Relations proposed to Senate a Policy on Discrimination and Harassment. Seven articles out of thirty-five from the entire document which addressed an overall concept and definitions were approved. In 2002-2003, the Joint Senate-Board Committee on Equity (JSBCE) Workgroup on the Harassment and Discrimination Policy was struck to evaluate the question, “Does McGill University need a policy on harassment and discrimination?”

2. Preamble The Students’ Society of McGill University (SSMU) is committed to creating, promoting, and engaging its membership in an environment that fosters respect. The Government of Quebec and McGill University have recognized individual rights and responsibilities relating to harassment and discrimination such as the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, the Civil Code of Quebec, an Act respecting Occupational Health and Safety, an Act respecting Labor Standards, and McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, its Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, its Code of Student Grievance Procedures, Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities, and the Policy on Discrimination and Harassment.

3. Vision The SSMU – an organization working with individuals, in groups, within organizations, and across a wide social and political context – shall promote an anti-oppressive environment that fosters a culture of respect and facilitates our mission of service, representation, and leadership.

4. Objectives

The intent of this policy is that the behavior of all members of the Society will reflect:

- i. Fair and equitable treatment of all persons.
- ii. Personal and professional integrity.
- iii. Respect for academic freedom.
- iv. Respect for diversity.
- v. Respect for personal and Society property.
- vi. Respect for safety.
- vii. Respect for the dignity of all persons.

The SSMU condemns harassment or discrimination on the basis of, but not limited to, gender, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality or sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, language, or social class, but not precluding any program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, language, age or mental or physical disability. The SSMU regards harassment or discrimination on the basis of these considerations as serious offences. Neither this policy in general, nor its definitions in particular, are to be applied in such a way as to detract from the right of members to engage in the open discussion of potentially controversial matters. No student organization should have the effect of limiting dialogue on these legitimate topics provided that such discussion is conducted in a respectful and non-coercive manner.

5. Protocol

- i. This policy shall apply to the members and to the staff of the Students' Society of McGill University and the activities and events hosted by the SSMU and SSMU affiliated clubs and services.
- ii. Scope: This policy shall also apply to activities or events held in the William Shatner University Centre.
- iii. The members of the SSMU listed below are constituted equity officers. Equity officers
 - a. The Vice-President (University Affairs).
 - b. The Equity Commissioner.
 - c. The Vice-President (Clubs and Services)
 - d. The President.
- iv. Responsibilities
 - a. It is the responsibility of the Equity Officers individually or collectively to receive complaints, investigate, and report back to the parties in a timely fashion.

6. Complaints

- i. All complaints shall be submitted in writing, or addressed in writing to an Equity Officer.
- ii. A complaint can be received anonymously. However, no formal resolution will occur unless the appellant(s) chooses to identify themselves. Such complaints will be noted in the Equity log as having been submitted anonymously.
- iii. All complaints submitted by an identified party will be investigated, provided the appellant party is willing to assist the Equity Officers in a capacity that will not put their personal safety, or the safety of any other individual or group at risk.
- iv. It is at the discretion of the Equity Officers whether a complaint will be dealt with:
 - a. Informally: through discussion with both appellant and respondent individually, potentially followed by a group discussion.
 - b. Formally: by submitting recommendations to committees such as, but not limited to, the Student Equity Committee, the Finance Committee, and/or the Executive Committee for resolution.
- v. The complaint will be investigated primarily by the Equity Officers; in certain cases, the Finance Committee and the Executive Committee will be consulted for

further investigation and procedural matters.

vi. In the case of more serious violations, the complaint may be referred to the administrative powers of the university, or to an external legal source.

7. Discipline Act(s) of discrimination and harassment will be considered an offence and subject to disciplinary action such as but not limited to:

- i. Letter(s) of apology.
- ii. Suspension of the respondent from their position within the SSMU and its affiliated clubs, services, or publications.
- iii. Suspension of financial support by the SSMU for clubs, services, or publications which violate this policy.
- iv. Dismissal of the respondent from their position within the SSMU.

8. Documentation – Equity Log

- i. Any formal decision and/or action shall be documented in writing and provided to the appellant and to the respondent. A copy of the report must be signed by an Equity Officer and a witness, confirming that the report was received by both appellant and respondent.
- ii. A copy of all written complaints shall be kept in the Equity Log.
- iii. Any informal action undertaken shall be noted in the Equity Log, along with the signature of an Equity Officer,

9. Limitations

No complaint shall be considered with respect to an incident of discrimination or harassment which occurred more than one calendar year prior to the complaint.

ⁱ Preamble of SSMU Constitution. Articles 6-8, Page 2. January 15th, 2010 ⁱⁱ Walksafe and Drivesafe were created as a response to the increased recurrence of assault towards women in Montreal and were involved in certain women’s movements in the 90s such as “Take Back the Night”. (100 Years of SSMU) ⁱⁱⁱ Exploitation: when a dominant group of people uses their position of power to impose limitations/laws/servitude/taxes upon a less dominant/powerless group of people to their own benefit. ^{iv} Marginalization: means the creation of a dominant group of people which is defined as the “normal” group, creating classes of “others” or people who do not fit into the dominant group. These groups are thus “at the margins” of society, and deemed not belonging to society or not worthy of certain rights or privileges because of their “otherness”. ^v Powerlessness: is when a group does not have power/agency/sovereignty over their own bodies, livelihood, life path, etc. ^{vi} Cultural Imperialism: is when the culture of a dominant class of people is normalized and all other cultures are identified as abnormal/wrong/lesser than this dominant culture. ^{vii} Violence: when cultural norms or power distributions lead to damage, humiliation, or physical harm of a person or their assets/property.

^{viii} Iris Young. *Five Faces Of Oppression. Oppression, Privilege, & Resistance*. McGraw-Hill, 2004. Pg. 37-63. ^{ix} van Eyken, Eric. *100 Years of SSMU*. Students' Society of McGill University. Pg. 24. 2010

^x Fzli, Shehyrar. *New policy on discrimination*. The McGill Tribune, 11/28/00.

^{xi} D'Souza, Kim. Succinct Senate Summary. The McGill Tribune, 2/17/04. ^{xii} Approved by the Legislative Council on March 14, 1989. ^{xiii} Similar policy approved by Legislative Council on March 14th, 1989

Policy on SSMU Priorities

Adopted: by Referendum March 13, 2008

Expiry date: March 13, 2013

SSMU's primary obligation shall be to support Clubs and Services.

Policy on Space in Shatner

Adopted: by the General Assembly October 9th, 2007

Expiry date: October 12th, 2012

Student endeavours shall be prioritized over any other sort of endeavour in SSMU space;

SSMU space, when it is to be used for revenue-generating activities, shall be given to such operations that are run by and for students;

In the alternative, in such cases as revenue-generating activities are to be contracted out, that they shall be contracted out only to such companies that are socially and environmental responsible.

Policy on Negative Corporate Influences on Campus

Adopted: by the General Assembly on October 5th, 2006

Expiry date: October 5th, 2011

Whereas corporations threaten the public nature of our campuses and the integrity of academic research;

Whereas corporate funding specifically targets profitable sectors of teaching and research to the detriment of other sectors;

Whereas corporate funding is granted unequally amongst universities leading to disparities between them;

Whereas these disparities generally match the socioeconomic background of the students enrolled in those universities;

Whereas the role and orientation of education should not be determined by the market economy but democratically by the academic community and society as a whole;

Whereas corporations have persistently attempted to increase their influence at McGill;

Whereas the McGill Board of Governors has more representatives with corporate backgrounds than students, faculty and staff combined;

Whereas the administration has demonstrated a commitment to corporatisation at the expense of students interests;

Whereas the SSMU has, in the past, mounted successful campaigns against monopolization bids by Coca-Cola Ltd. and Chartwells Inc.;

Whereas the SSMU does not have a general policy concerning corporate influence on campus;

The Student Society of McGill University:

- Condemns corporate invasion of public space and interference in academic life;
- Supports the publicly-owned and funded nature of the University;
- Believes that decision-making power should be vested in the members of the McGill community, namely Students, Faculty, and Staff;
- Resolves that the SSMU actively oppose increasing negative corporate influence on campus;
- Further resolves that the SSMU actively pursue the goal of a democratic university managed by its Students, Faculty and Staff;
- Calls upon the McGill Administration and Board of Governors to consult Students, Faculty, and Staff by means including but not limited to binding referenda before making any major decisions that affect the McGill community and the public nature of the University.

Policy on Food Services

Adopted: by SSMU Legislative Council on February 21, 2008

Expiry date: February 21, 2013

In the event that Ancillary Services attempts to gain oversight or control of student-run services SSMU shall intervene to defend autonomous student control of these services,

SSMU shall take an active role in fostering the growth of new on-campus student-run initiatives and services in locations across the campus, outside of the Shatner Student Center.

Policy on Solidarity with Workers Struggles

Adopted: by the General Assembly on October 5th, 2006

Expiry date: October 5th, 2011

Whereas in its constitution the SSMU commits itself to groups, programs and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics including social class;

Whereas in its constitution the SSMU commits itself to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights and social justice and is mindful of the effects of corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political and economic surroundings;

Whereas in its Ethical Purchasing Policy SSMU commits itself to respect for workers rights and labour standards,

Whereas the rights of students everywhere are intrinsically tied to the rights of the SSMU membership;

Whereas the well-being of students depends on workers both on campus and off;

Whereas the SSMU does not currently have a policy concerning solidarity with students and workers;

Whereas, through its relationships with the McGill administration and other corporate and government bodies, the SSMU is in a position to act in support of workers' interests;

Be it resolved that the SSMU support, by whatever means at its disposal, the workers' struggles affecting our campus and the greater McGill community;

Be it further resolved that when the rights of students anywhere are under attack, the SSMU use whatever means at its disposal to defend said rights.

Policy on Transparency in Animal Testing

Adopted: by the Special General Assembly November 13th, 2007

Expiry date: November 13th, 2012

Whereas McGill uses nonhuman animals for research purposes;

Whereas McGill receives money from both the general public and the McGill student body specifically and is therefore accountable to the community;

Whereas multiple freedom of information requests made by individual McGill students have been denied;

Be it resolved that the Students' Society of McGill University officially support transparency in McGill's use of nonhuman animals in research.

Be it further resolved that the SSMU take action towards the achievement of this policy as a goal.

Policy on Transparency in Military Research

Adopted: by SSMU Legislative Council on November 13th, 2008

Expiry date: November 13th, 2013

Whereas the McGill Regulation on Research Policy says that: “Research in the University... should be used to increase knowledge in ways that do not harm policy”;

Whereas there is not public transparency at McGill for research that is funded by or done in collaboration with military agencies;

Whereas military research being done at McGill is not being evaluated ethically;

Be it resolved that the SSMU support the implementation of a policy for public transparency and ethical evaluation of all research at McGill funded by or done in collaboration with a military agency.

Be it further resolved that the SSMU support the development of similar policies at McGill’s peer institutions.

Policy on Accessible Education

Adopted: by the General Assembly on February 15th, 2007

Expiry date: February 15th, 2012

Whereas high and rising tuition fees are a barrier to accessible post-secondary education;

Whereas the average graduating debt for a student in Canada is over \$25,00 and over \$10,000 in Quebec;

Whereas the average student graduating debt has more than doubled in the past 10 years;

Whereas a highly educated workforce is a public good, not a private gain;

Whereas the current freeze on tuition fees for Quebec residents and continually rising fees for out-of-province and international students has not proven effective enough in stemming rising student debt;

Whereas McGill is currently grossly under-funded, and in most jurisdictions rising tuition fees have been followed by massive government cuts in funding;

Be it resolved that the current SSMU position on accessibility to post-secondary education and tuition fees in particular be amended to include that the SSMU:

- Stands for high-quality, universally accessible post-secondary education as a human right;
- Will oppose any mechanism or legislation that would permit the increase in nonconsensual fees for any student, Quebecker, Canadian, or international,
- Calls for a public re-investment in post-secondary education from all levels of governments,
- Calls for the elimination of all financial barriers to a high-quality post-secondary education, and advocate for a progressive reduction of tuition for all students, including the eventual elimination of ancillary and tuition fees,
- Will work with all elements of the Quebec and Canadian student movements towards these goals.

Ancillary Fees Policy

Adopted: by the General Assembly February 10, 2010

Expiry date: February 10, 2015

WHEREAS no clear guidelines have been set out to inform the SSMU's response to any future increases in mandatory ancillary fees, and;

WHEREAS ancillary fee increases are similar to tuition fees in that they create a significant barrier to accessing post-secondary education, especially for students from an economically marginalized background, and;

WHEREAS the Ministry of Education of Quebec has set a temporary cap of \$15 per student per semester on increases in ancillary fees charged by universities to students, and;

WHEREAS this cap is set to expire in the summer of 2011;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the SSMU will oppose any future increases in mandatory ancillary fees required of students by McGill University, excepting if such increases have been duly approved by majority vote of a referendum open to all members of the Society; and let this hold regardless of whether or not said fee increase would exceed the current limit of \$15 per semester per student set by the government of Quebec on such increases, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SSMU will oppose any future legislation that would allow for the ancillary fees billed to students by McGill University to increase beyond the current limit set by the government of Quebec, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the SSMU will lobby the government of Quebec to either maintain or lower the maximum dollar amount per semester per student, by which McGill University may increase mandatory ancillary fees.

Policy on the Self-Funded Tuition Model

Adopted: by the General Assembly February 10, 2010

Expiry date: February 10, 2015

WHEREAS McGill University is scheduled to increase the tuition of the MBA program to \$29,500 in the 2010-2011 academic year, and;

WHEREAS this decision is indicative of a trend of moving toward privatized, self-funded, professional degree programs in other Universities across Canada, and;

WHEREAS the SSMU represents undergraduate students in Faculties with professional degree programs that are a part of this trend in other Universities including Law, Medicine, Dentistry, and Engineering, and;

WHEREAS increases in tuition fees have not proven effective enough in stemming rising student debt, and;

WHEREAS research has shown that government investment in post-secondary education is inversely proportional to tuition levels, increases in tuition have been consistent with decreases in real government investment in post-secondary education, and;

WHEREAS a highly educated workforce is a public good, not a private gain, and;

WHEREAS a lack of accessibility to professional degree programs affects the level of education in our society and opportunity for social mobility, and;

WHEREAS graduates of professional degree programs will not always go on to earn high incomes, despite assumptions and high debt after graduation creates a disincentive for graduates to work in the public or not-for-profit sector, thus limiting the distribution of professional degree skill sets throughout our society, and;

WHEREAS in 1992, SSMU Council passed a policy to be “unconditionally opposed to any increases whatsoever in the total dollar amount of university tuition fees,” and;

WHEREAS in 2007, the SSMU General Assembly passed a policy on accessible education calling for “elimination of all financial barriers to a high quality, post-secondary education” and advocacy “for a progressive reduction of tuition for all students,” and;

WHEREAS these decisions were predicated on the belief that the responsibility of funding public post-secondary education lies with the provincial and federal governments, not with students;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the SSMU take a formal policy against the self-funded tuition program model to guide its lobbying on the University, Provincial, and Federal level.

Student-Parent Status Policy

Adopted: by the Special General Assembly November 13th, 2007

Expiry date: November 13th, 2012

WHEREAS education is less accessible for a student-parent for the following reasons:

- Lack of space in the public daycare system
- Schedules being maladapted: some classes are only offered at night and on weekends
- No parental leave, obligation to abandon courses with heavy penalties on the record
- Poor assistance through the governmental Financial Aid Program
- Often obliged to be part time students to fulfil parental obligations and then denied Financial Aid
- Exposed to living under the poverty standards fixed at 10 800\$ per year
- Higher possibilities of living in isolation and marginalisation

Be it resolved that the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) adopt the following policy:

The National Assembly should create a special "student-parent status" to:

- Grant parental leave for students, without penalties, financed by the public system, for a maximal period of 2 years
- Give priority to the "student-parents" for the places available in the CPEs connected to or near post-secondary institutions
- Grant full time student status to part time student-parents

The creating of "student-parent status" should be the part of an accessible and flexible daycare system put in place in post-secondary institutions in order to ensure a conciliation between the needs of study and family.

Be it further resolved that the SSMU take action towards the achievement of this policy as a goal.

Policy on Universities' Independence

Adopted: by SSMU Legislative Council on October 28th, 2008

Expiry date: October 28th, 2013

University Governance

Be it resolved that the SSMU reiterate its desire that university governance be based on collegiality, the recognition and representation of the diversity of campus communities, and on the respect of the institutional culture of each university.

University Governing Bodies

Whereas external members have a positive role to play within university institutions;
Whereas internal members are more aware of institutional, academic, and financial problems of universities;

Whereas the management of universities should be based on a balance of powers;

Whereas the Boards of Directors of universities should retain control of their internal functioning;

Be it resolved that privately chartered universities remain sovereign regarding the composition and functioning of the governing bodies.

Auditor General of Quebec

Whereas the Auditor General of Quebec has a mandate to supervise the use of funds by public organizations, government agencies, and crown corporations;

Whereas the issues facing universities exceed the jurisdiction of the Auditor General;

Whereas the Loi sur le vérificateur général du Québec already excludes universities from the reach of the Auditor General ;

Be it resolved that the mandate of the Auditor General of Quebec not be extended to the auditing of universities, except in exceptional circumstances.

National Objectives

Whereas there are large institutional culture differences between Quebec universities;

Whereas the establishment of National Objectives is too broad a political measure to have a real, positive impact on individual universities;

Whereas universities are better understood by the members of the respective communities;

Whereas an individual approach is the best way to allow Quebec universities to achieve the most;

Be it resolved that the SSMU is opposed to the political control over the mission of universities.