

ONLINE REPORT 2010/2011



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ABOUT US

MISSION

The CSU Student Advocacy Centre's mission is to inform, empower and support students in the Concordia community and society at large.

VISION

The CSU Student Advocacy Centre is a service that is centered on students' needs. We strive to support students in their academic endeavours and exercising their rights on campus and everyday lives.

VALUES

The CSU Student Advocacy Centre is guided by the following core values:

1. We respect the dignity and rights of all users of the CSU Advocacy Centre's services.
2. We recognize that students have unique needs with respect to achieving success in their academic careers.
3. We believe that students should be informed, empowered and supported in exercising their rights both in and beyond their academic environments.
4. We believe that a knowledgeable staff and personalized strategies are the backbone of our work and necessary to achieve our objectives.
5. We believe that the transparent exchange of information, ideas, knowledge and values are essential to the achievement of our mission.
6. We believe in managing the CSU Student Advocacy Centre with transparency, integrity and accountability to the undergraduate students of Concordia University.
7. We protect the right to confidentiality and privacy with respect to information provided to us by and about students.

PROFILE

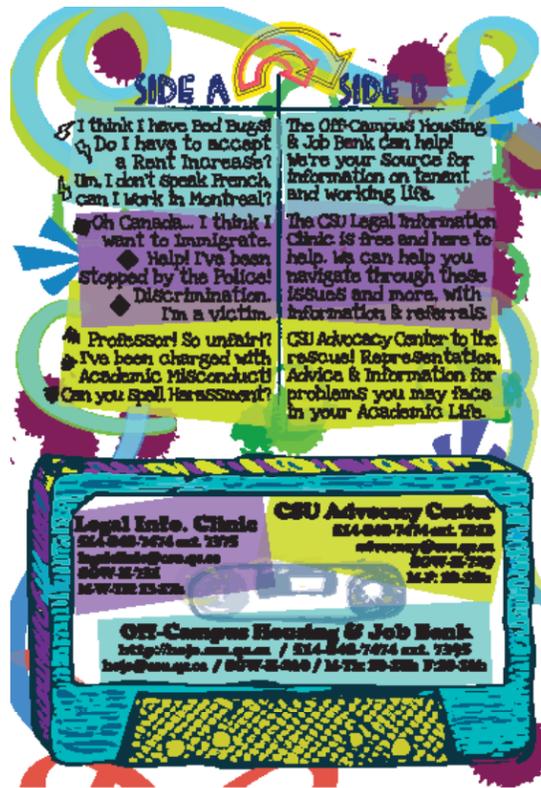
The CSU Student Advocacy Centre believes that students should be informed, empowered and supported in exercising their rights both in and beyond their academic environments. We are here to provide assistance to students who feel that they have been treated unfairly on campus or to help students by informing them of University policies that impact both academic and non-academic pursuits on campus. In addition, the Centre provides representation services to students as defined under the Academic Code of Conduct or the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. CSU Advocates are here to listen to students and to address their concerns in a proactive manner. We also advocate a student-centered perspective on issues that impact undergraduate students both within and outside the University. Other services include a free Commissioner for Oaths for undergraduate students, academic information sessions and consultations, referrals and mediation services. The Centre also conducts research projects on issues pertinent to its constituents.

While the Centre is there to provide support when difficult situations arise, we also emphasize on prevention as an important component in safeguarding student rights. Advocates are available to answer students' questions and to brainstorm solutions before a given situation escalates. If you are unsure about the Code or how to approach your schoolwork, we urge you to come and see an advocate. Services provided at the Centre are confidential and it is our mission to provide relevant and timely solutions in a non-judgmental and supportive environment.

WHAT WE DO

CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2010-2011

- The hiring of four part-time advocates and the continued development of new training programs such as workshops with the Quebec Human Rights Commission and the Centre for Research Action on Race Relations (CRARR);
- Provision of Advocacy services at Loyola Campus;
- Presentation to the Quebec Human Rights Commission about international students and plagiarism;
- Academic Fairness Campaign;
- Increased demand for mediation and conflict resolution services;
- New poster and pamphlet campaign to enhance awareness of the Centre on campus;
- The implementation of new marketing strategies at Orientation;
- Increased partnership with the CSU Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank and CSU Legal Information Clinic in various initiatives;
- Preliminary research on University organizational culture and its impact on undergraduate students;
- Application of training on issues of human rights, social justice, discrimination and advocacy issues;
- Continuation of creating links with key administrative and service departments within the University;
- Continued partnerships with various external and non-profit organizations and the NGO project, a new outreach initiative aimed at recruiting more external partners within the Montreal area.
- Implementation of a new data tracking system to measure the factors involved in committing misconduct so as to better help students accused of misconduct.



do I start my job search? * I think I'm the victim of ... * I've been ... by the police, what do I do? * I think I have ... * I missed an exam due to ... * Thinking of ... to Canada... * ... accept a rent increase? * I've been charged with ... * ... a Commissioner for Oaths. * I don't speak French, ... in Montreal? * My apartment is freezing cold, ... can I'm an ... how can I make some ... I'm having ... with my call phone provider... * I think I have ... what do I feel like I'm being treated unfairly by ... how do I ... an apartment? ... * I think I ... be a victim of ... my ... to kick me ... 514-848-7474 ext. 7813 advocacy@csu.qc.ca * ... can I break my ... ? ... got walk ... ? ... of harassment... * ... can I ... get a ... ? * I've been ... what do I ... ? ... by a professor... * ... can I ... do I find an ... ? a roommate... * ... been ... with Academic Misconduct... * What ... I have no work ... ? * Do I have to accept a

CASE WORK

Case work is the *raison d'être* of the Centre. It remains the most complex and demanding aspect of our mandate. Students who open cases with the Centre generally do so for the following reasons:

Complaints

This category refers to complaints about professors, other students, University staff and administrators, University policies, environment, and contract workers on campus. The Centre can process a complaint in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances. If appropriate, the Centre can help resolve the complaint through mediation and conflict resolution. In other circumstances, CSU Advocates will help students construct, document and file formal complaints. For instance, the Code of Rights and Responsibilities (CORR) can be invoked along with other University policies in order to effectively deal with complaints.

Student Requests

This category refers to deferrals, transcript notations such as MED and DISC, retroactive DNEs, late registration, transfer credits and re-evaluation requests. Such requests often have a significant impact on students' GPAs and/or tuition costs. Other student requests are primarily concerned with academic standing. These cases generally involve readmission applications, re-evaluation requests, remedial steps, referrals and GPA assessments. Failed standing cases can result in a student being removed from his or her program for a minimum of a year, delay graduation and impact future employment and academic prospects. The Centre informs students about the various regulations dealing with such cases, helps with the construction of student requests, evaluates options available in various cases and advocates on behalf of the student.

Academic Misconduct

This category refers to charges of plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, personation and other offences listed in the Academic Code of Conduct. CSU Advocates evaluate the alleged charges and develop case strategies with the student. They provide information and guidance throughout the process, as well as representation at interviews and hearings for cases falling under the Code. As second offence cases can result in expulsion, we devote significant resources and time to them. The Centre also helps students with the appeals process for decisions made under the Academic Code of Conduct.

The CSU Student Advocacy Centre...

is a free and confidential service offered to all Concordia Undergraduate students in need of help. The Centre ensures that each student who walks through our doors is treated fairly, with respect and without judgement. Our services are completely confidential. You have a student advocate pre-meeting you may have the administration.

Please make an appointment with your student advocate today.

What Does the CSU Student Advocacy Centre Do?

Essentially, the Centre acts as a liaison officer of the CSU and as a mediator for students with internal complaints, and requests. The Centre provides access to external resources and occasionally will support students with off-campus issues. Communication is an integral part of the work we do. Our advocates are trained to aid students in effectively communicating their interests to other parties.

Who are student advocates?

Student advocates are Concordia undergraduate students who have received training in negotiation, and active listening. They are trained in Concordia's rules and over the years, they have developed a large network aimed at resolving your problem.

A delivery guy brought a package to my door today. The package says I have been charged under that Academic Code of Conduct (for plagiarism, cheating, etc). What happens now?

You should consult a student advocate as soon as possible.

if you find yourself in any type of difficult situation. The sooner you come by, the sooner we can inform you of your rights and discuss all options available to you.

Group Work Mediation

Commissioner of Oaths

A Commissioner for Oaths is available to administer oaths and solemn declarations free of charge for undergraduate students. An oath or solemn declaration is when an individual swears and/or declares that the contents of a document are factual and accurate.

As mentioned, the service is free for Concordia undergraduate students. For Concordia graduate students, a fee of \$1.00 per oath/declaration shall apply. For Concordia non-students, a fee of \$5.00 per oath/declaration shall apply.

Please note that the Centre reserves the right to refuse to administer any oaths and/or solemn declarations. The Centre also reserves the right to cancel the service at any time based on office needs. Please call (514) 848-7474 ext. 7313 or email us at advocacy@csu.qc.ca for further inquiries about this service and/or for times it is offered.

Mission Statement

The CSU Student Advocacy Centre is committed to the promotion and preservation of undergraduate students' rights at Concordia University. Our efforts are aimed at helping students who find themselves in difficult situations by accurately identifying their needs and determining and executing the necessary course of action. Students can be assured the Centre functions under a strict policy of confidentiality and that all persons will be treated with dignity and respect.



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Code of Rights and Responsibilities

This category refers to cases in which a student has been alleged to violate the Code of Rights and Responsibilities (CORR). Possible sanctions for serious infractions of the CORR can include suspension and expulsion. The Centre has provided input about the CORR to the University, is well-versed in its application, and provides advice and representation for students charged under CORR in informal and formal processes.

Residency

This category also includes residency cases which involve helping students apply for Quebec residency and acting as a liaison between the student and the University in order to obtain information and help resolve issues pertaining to these applications.

Policy Analysis

Students sometimes request that the Centre analyze and recommend changes to University policies dealing with academic misconduct, student requests and other policies.

CAMPAIGNS AND PROJECTS

Academic Fairness Campaign (formerly the Intent Clause Campaign)

The Centre has long maintained that the lack of an “intent to deceive” clause in the Concordia Academic Code of Conduct causes serious challenges for students who commit honest errors in their academic pursuits. In practice, such students are judged by the same criteria as students who may deliberately attempt to subvert the Code. This is the case despite the fact that such students are often able to demonstrate that they did indeed make an error. Students with charges upheld against them are subject to sanctions such as failures in assignments and courses, additional credits, or other, more severe punishments. Sanctions tend to vary in severity depending on factors such as intent or mitigating circumstances.

International students are also often negatively impacted by the omission of an intent clause and the general lack of nuance in the Academic Code of Conduct. For example, the Academic Code of Conduct does not recognize the plight of international students from different social and ethno-cultural backgrounds and how these international students approach writing their papers or essays based upon their past educational experiences. In addition, sanctions under of the Academic Code of Conduct can cause adverse effects for such students. A punishment of additional credits in an academic misconduct case can result in exorbitant financial costs due to international student rates, and punishment of additional credits, suspension and expulsion can cause complications in the obtention or renewal of study permits.

Another disconcerting trend the Centre has observed is that sanctions are also being applied for lesser offences in the Code, such as the possession of a cellular device, even when it is off, during an examination or tearing pages out of examination booklets. This may be attributed to stricter interpretations of lesser charges outlined in the Code. Students who are sanctioned for such offenses are impacted nonetheless as minor transgressions have permanent implications for their grades, transcripts and academic careers.

It is within this context that the Centre launched the Intent Clause project. The project is divided into five phases. The first phase, which has been completed, focused on researching academic misconduct policies at other Canadian Universities. The Universities selected for comparison were as similar to Concordia as possible in terms of structure, student population and context. Thus far, it has been determined that only four out of

the twenty universities have an Intent Clause in their respective Codes of Conduct, but there is a great deal of variance in how the other Universities deal with the issue of academic misconduct. Some are significantly less punitive and more education-oriented than others, which have the benefits of enhancing the relationship of trust between students and the University and providing students with the tools necessary to avoid future instances of misconduct.

As a result, the Centre felt that this variance would also be another important area of research and that it was necessary to broaden the Intent Clause campaign beyond only seeking the inclusion of an “intent to deceive” clause in the Concordia Academic Code of Conduct. The Centre still maintains that the lack of an intent clause is a grave omission in the Code and that all efforts should be taken to rectify this. At the same time, through its research of other Universities, the Centre has observed that alternative methods could also be helpful in addressing Academic Code cases at Concordia.

Thus, it is our position that University interventions in cases of academic misconduct, particularly when mitigating circumstances are present, should be adjudicated in a manner that is both educational and preventative in nature, rather than merely emphasizing the penal aspect. For example, it may be more effective for University administrators to work with the student charged with an alleged academic offense by developing a learning plan to prevent repeat offenses instead of looking to punitive measures such as failing the student and assigning additional courses, which add stress but do not teach the student how to avoid misconduct in the first place.

The second phase of the project, which has also been completed, was a review of case files at the Centre. In August 2011, the Centre took a random sampling of 406 misconduct cases in order to enable the Centre to assess the educational experiences of its clients, prior to and during enrollment at Concordia University, their personal perspectives about their alleged violations and how being charged under the code impacted their academic and life experience. The Centre was also interested in determining the factors that may increase a student’s risk of being charged with academic misconduct, such as difficult personal situations, educational background, year of study and so on. Unfortunately, the Centre was unable to do so conclusively due to limited data regarding the abovementioned factors. As a result, the Centre, working in conjunction with the CSU Network Administrator, elected to institute a new data management system capable of measuring

these necessary dimensions so as to have more conclusive findings in the future.

However, the random sampling did prove to be fruitful and provided the Centre with some interesting conclusions:

Out of 406 academic misconduct cases, 234 involved plagiarism. This means that approximately 58% of the Centre’s misconduct cases are plagiarism cases, by far the offense that students are most often charged with. Cases involving other offenses distantly followed, such as cheating, represented at 20%, unauthorized possession of cell phones and other materials at 13%, unauthorized collaboration at 8%, and finally other offenses, such as personation, which accounted for approximately 1% of the sampled cases.

Furthermore, through this sampling, the Centre was able to draw on specific case studies in which a more nuanced approach to dealing with alleged misconduct, had it existed within the Academic Code of Conduct, would have benefited particular students. The following are narratives of such instances. Identifying information such as names, course codes and program information has been changed to preserve confidentiality:

Mary Anne accidentally copied a paragraph from another student’s posting on the discussion board for an online Religion course and submitted said paragraph along with her posting. It was clearly a mistake and not intended for academic gain. Nonetheless, she was charged under the Academic Code of Conduct. The student explained to the Associate Dean that she had used the other student’s quotation to refer to as she developed her thoughts for her own posting, much like referring to an email before replying to it. The other paragraph posted was not related to the posting Mary-Anne had written for course participation marks. Subsequent to the interview with the Associate Dean, the charges against Mary-Anne were upheld; she was given a letter of reprimand as a sanction, along with a permanent notation on her student record.

Faisal tore out a piece of paper from his exam booklet because he felt that his work appeared untidy and he wanted his exam to “look nice” for grading. He was not aware that his actions constituted a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct as he was both late to the exam (missing the presentation of exam instructions) and he was feeling extremely anxious. Faisal was previously diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and was prone to panic attacks. Due to his tardiness, he neglected to read the instructions on the examina-

tion booklet which indicated that “tearing or mutilating an examination booklet” was an academic offense. The invigilators, upon seeing Faisal’s actions, filed an incident report as per Concordia policy. The charge was upheld by the Associate Dean and the student was given a letter of reprimand as a sanction, thus officially counting as his first offense, within his first semester at Concordia.

Paul was a member of a team assigned with the task of creating a design for a major highway. Part of this project was to also complete a written report based on the group’s findings. On the day the written report was due Paul discovered that it was not yet completed. He gathered his team together in a computer lab to complete the assignment. Another member of the team, Stewart, without the knowledge of Paul, found a written report submitted by another team online. The team in question had taken the course a year prior and their report contained elements useful to the highway report. Stewart incorporated one of the answers from the other team’s report into his own team’s work. Paul was not involved in the written portion of the project, nor did he review the report prior to submission. However, in the coming weeks Paul was charged with plagiarism along with his other team members. The Associate Dean maintained that the whole team was responsible for submitting the assignment. She also argued that Paul had signed a document prior to submitting the assignment that certified other students’ work, outside of the team members, was not relied upon. Therefore, one team member looking at another group’s report, without his/her own group’s knowledge, violated this agreement. The Associate Dean held Paul responsible because she felt that he should have reviewed the assignment and have been able to detect the plagiarized portion. Thus, the charge was upheld against Paul. The other members of the team failed the course, while Paul was received an overall grade reduction of 20% from the course. The student sought a hearing before an Academic Hearing Panel in an effort to have the charges against him dismissed. The Associate Dean stated that she gave Paul a lighter sanction than the rest of his team because she believed Paul was unaware of the plagiarism. Paul’s advocate argued that the student could not be held accountable for something he was not even aware had occurred. The charge was upheld at the hearing level and the sanction of a grade reduction of 20% in the course was confirmed by the panel.

Huang graduated from high school in China and decided to come to Concordia as an international student. He began his studies at Concordia with the Centre for Continuing Education Language Institute and was later admitted into the department of Pure and Applied Mathematics. Throughout his short career at Concordia, Huang struggled with overcoming language

barriers, cultural differences, and unfamiliar study methods in the classroom. One major obstacle came in the form of a project assignment in an elective course during his first year. Huang did not understand what to do and felt that he could not seek help from the professor or T.A because he had significant difficulty expressing himself in English or French. As such, he decided to ask a friend for help with his assignment. The line between obtaining help from a classmate and unauthorized collaboration, an offense under the Academic Code of Conduct, was unknowingly crossed. The student accepted his mistake at the Academic Hearing Panel and told the truth about what had taken place. The Panel upheld the charge and the student was expelled due to the fact that this incident was his second offense. At the time of his expulsion, the student had completed only four courses at Concordia.

These above case studies demonstrate that implementing a Code with an emphasis on academic fairness would benefit students in similar situations.

The third phase of the Academic Fairness Campaign, currently underway, is to research academic works on the issue of academic misconduct, its causes and various perspectives on how to best address the issue. Preliminary research has demonstrated that various universities and academics nationally and internationally note a general rise in plagiarism in universities and find foreign students to be disproportionately represented amongst those charged with the offense. The experience is echoed by the University of Toronto, in which legal aid clinic lawyer Karen Bellinger states that international students make up about 12 per cent of the total student body at U of T, but are involved in over 50% of her academic misconduct cases (Bradshaw and Baluja, 2011).

Other findings supporting this perspective include a University of Windsor report from 2008-2009 in which Academic Integrity Officer Danielle Istl indicates that one in 82 international students were accused of academic misconduct, compared with one in 300 domestic students. The following year, the percentage of international students accused was more than three times higher than that of domestic students (Bradshaw and Baluja). Given the sense that international students appear to be more at risk for being accused of plagiarism, it is important to assess the reasons why this may be the case. The research suggested the following:

- International students from certain regions tend to have different notions of what plagiarism is due to different educational values and backgrounds (Robert Gordon University).

- Educational experience varies from country to country; in some countries, the focus is on memorization and repeating back word-for-word, more value is also placed on product rather than process, and there is no education on referencing conventions (RGU).
- Moreover, many international students whose maternal language is not English encounter problems with the language (i.e. lack of self-confidence in using the language, difficulty navigating jargon). Their difficulties present major disadvantages when trying to write an essay (RGU).
- Studies by Alberta University in 2001 found that although the international students they interviewed might claim to know what plagiarism is, they often demonstrated confusion when it came to stating whether specific cases were plagiarism or not. They also were unsure of the difference between appropriate paraphrasing and plagiarism (Bamford and Sergiou).

The Centre also explored academic studies that examined different ideas of education cross-culturally. As with other studies, the Aberdeen Business School of Robert Gordon University concluded, based on a qualitative study of a sample of its student body, that educational norms and values differed from region to region. According to RGU, “Confucian” cultures such as China, Japan and Korea do not emphasize on individual ownership of text or ideas and “original thought and deviation from the original text”. Furthermore, both Confucian and Indian cultures regard information available on the internet as common knowledge. Other differences include an emphasis on learning through memorization and storytelling, where verbatim quoting is often prized and/or rewarded. Indeed, quoting a professor verbatim is widely viewed as mark of respect. Such educational values may thus be found in African, Arab and Confucian based cultures. Finally, Asian cultures value group collaboration, and students “extend such custom of group cooperation to their academic studies”, which in the West may be viewed as cheating or collusion (RGU).

As mentioned, this third phase also allowed the Centre to discover useful strategies in addressing academic misconduct in an educational and proactive fashion. Such strategies could be incorporated into Concordia’s method of dealing with plagiarism. For example, Universities must recognize that students need to “acquire new norms, knowledge and strategies of coping to enable them adapt to the new community or environment” (RGU). Hayes and Introna also present ideas to consider when dealing with international student plagiarism cases. They promote a “working together” method between professors and students because unintentional

plagiarism should not necessarily be associated with a breach of academic integrity. Also highlighted by Hayes and Introna was the concept of “patchwriting”, the use of a collage of other people’s terms and phrases (RGU uses the term “interlanguage”), as a necessary step in language-learning for foreign students. This necessity must be acknowledged by the academic community. That is not to say that plagiarism should be taken lightly, but rather that it is education and academic “acclimatization” that would enable students to avoid unintentional misconduct.

Hayes and Introna also posited the following claims:

- Both the “ideological basis of the notion of plagiarism and the alienation from the assessment task” may lead to plagiarism, intentional or unintentional.
- Instructors need to understand the cultural and educational context of foreign students and make clear the differences in the notion of plagiarism in the Western academic setting.
- Educational institutions must address the issue of academic alienation. Professors should endeavour to demonstrate that the work is meaningful, fairly assessed and that there is value to the students’ input.
- There must be recognition of the fact that “patchwriting” is an important step in learning a language and material. Professors should recognize the presence of “patchwriting” and explain the importance of citation when patchwriting is done. Universities should create services specifically aimed at helping students move from patchwriting to independent writing.
- Importance of academic integrity should not overshadow the concept of fairness that is owed to students who are not necessarily behaving with a lack of integrity in certain cases of academic misconduct.

In sum, Universities, including Concordia, should endeavour to:

Create teachable moments out of seemingly bad situations. If an international student – especially a new student – is suspected of plagiarism, do not automatically assume intent to be dishonest. If the student explains the process of how they completed the assignment, you may see cultural conventions at work and have the opportunity to explain that the practice is unacceptable. Adopting an educative approach to plagiarism is preferable to one based solely on punishment (University of the Fraser Valley, 2011).

The fourth phase of the Academic Fairness campaign is to interview University faculty and administrators and obtain their input about enhancing

academic fairness in the process of adjudicating academic misconduct cases. A successful reworking of the Academic Code of Conduct will have to address the concerns of those who work with the Code on a regular basis. This phase is slated to start in November. The final and fifth stage will be to present the findings to Senate and other interested members at the University.

NGO Outreach Project

The CSU Advocacy Centre has observed that its clients can benefit from services offered by community and non-governmental organizations in addition to the services offered at the University. In order to provide a comprehensive service to students, the Advocacy Centre has launched the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Outreach project. This project is an ongoing venture and the first phase was completed in July 2011. The first phase of the project involved researching resources and services offered through registered NGOs within the Greater Montreal area. In the second phase of the project, the Centre intends to contact each NGO individually to accomplish the following:

- Discuss the possibility of creating a partnership
- Become well-versed in the services, mission statements, and initiatives of the NGO
- Attain materials which promote the service
- Discuss opportunities for possible workshops
- Discover means of referring students to particular NGO services
- Possible collaboration on projects that serve the interests of Concordia undergraduate students

The Centre is exploring NGOs with a variety of mandates, including human rights and social justice organizations, organizations that focus on community development, organizations that focus on developing the skill sets of students and individuals, organizations that provide social services and organizations that provide tutoring resources.

Privacy Rights Campaign

Recently, the Centre, along with the CSU President Lex Gill, made a formal representation to the University regarding student privacy rights protection, specifically pertaining to the fact that private information on a student's official transcript was being released to employers. We asked that this sensitive information be removed from the official transcript. The University, as a result of these concerns raised, modified the practice of including a student's permanent code on the official transcripts as it reveals information about a student's date of birth and sex. The Centre hopes to

continue working with the University in order to further protect and safeguard the private information of students. Furthermore, the Centre will launch a privacy information campaign to empower and educate students about what information should and should not be shared. This campaign will be done in partnership with the CSU Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank.

TRENDS

In a previous report, the Centre noted that many students were aware that the Centre dealt with cases relating to the Academic Code of Conduct, Code of Rights and Responsibilities, student and re-evaluation requests, in addition to providing Commissioner for Oaths services. However, students were less aware of the Centre's other services such as academic integrity education, policy analysis, helping students with Concordia's regulations and the offering of mediation services. Due to awareness campaigns launched by the Centre on this issue, students have since availed themselves more frequently to advocacy services that emphasize on prevention. The Centre continues to promote these other services by establishing an increasingly visible profile on campus through promotional materials, campaigns and maintaining a presence at various events such as Orientation.

In the interest of maximizing the quality of CSU services for undergraduate students, the Centre continues to collaborate with the CSU Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank to help students contending with issues that fall under both mandates. The Centre also collaborates with the CSU Legal Information Clinic on cases with both academic, legal and charter dimensions.

CONCLUSION

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In the past year, we have rigorously worked at improving quality of service, developing and promoting the Centre, and conducting policy analysis aimed at achieving fairness and social justice inside and outside the University context. The expansion to Loyola means that the Centre is now extending its services in a convenient way to more students, making it more accessible. Our multi-faceted and individualized approaches mean we can deal with cases in a more nuanced and effective manner.

We will continue building on ongoing campaigns, as well as introducing new initiatives that include creative solutions to current and future challenges the Centre and the students it represents face. We also seek to promote the student perspective both within the University and the greater Montreal area through campaigns and partnerships that focus on promoting knowledge, empowerment and change as needed. We believe that the resulting CSU Advocacy service is more meaningful for students and enhances our goal of student empowerment and social justice. By creating this environment within the University, we believe, students can more effectively promote it outside the academic setting.

It is an honor and a privilege to support students in difficult times and to help them inform themselves. Our mission would not be possible without a CSU Executive dedicated to improving the student experience and partners devoted to ensuring everyone, including students, have access to the tools required to advance inside and outside the University. We look forward to future semesters in which we can continue to assist students in making their academic careers run smoothly.

This report was put together through the collaborative efforts of the CSU Student Advocacy team, Lisa White, Coordinator, Fadi Rizeq, Student Advocate, Noelia Gravotta, Student Advocate, Andrij Filipowich, Student Advocate, Philip Fry, Student Advocate 2010-2011, Sumaiya Gangat, 2004-2011, Nida Rehman 2009-2011.

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