



**Concordia  
Student Union**

Written and Presented by :  
Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis, Aloyse  
Muller, Sophia Sahrane, Rami Yahia,  
Lana Galbraith, Marcus Peters, Rachel  
Gauthier, Thomas David-Bashore

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**END OF YEAR REPORT  
2017**

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## 1 About the organization

The Concordia Student Union (CSU) is an accredited student association with over 35,000 members. With accredited status, the CSU seeks to improve the material condition of students through representation, advocacy, campaigning, and providing critical services: the Advocacy Centre, the Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank (HOJO) and the Legal Information Clinic. The CSU also contributes to student life by coordinating over 70 student clubs and sponsoring numerous social and academic events throughout the year.

The organization is divided into three branches: the Council of Representatives, the Judicial Board, and an Executive. At Concordia University, the CSU represents undergraduate students from all four faculties including independent students on senior governing bodies including the University Senate and the Board of Governors. Furthermore, the union is affiliated with external organizations both on and off campus such as CCSL, SAF, and AVEQ. The CSU offers a Fall and Winter Orientation, bursaries, free public phones, special project funding, commissioners of oaths, free lunch at Loyola, Health & Dental coverage, and many opportunities for undergraduate students to get involved on their campuses.

## 2 Summary of the Summer and Fall semesters

### 2.1 Training

Officers of the CSU undergo training in order to be able to fulfill the responsibilities of their office and carry out the mandates given by the student body. In addition to training for specific activities, special attention is given to address topics such as power dynamics and consent in order to promote a more sustainable culture and work environment. As such, the CSU now has mandatory consent training for its executive and councilors, as well as a mandatory bystander intervention training for its executive.

### 2.2 Executive training

The executive team underwent consent, bystander and power dynamics training provided by the Centre for Gender Advocacy. In total, the executive completed 9 hours of anti-oppression training but additional training could improve the Executive's ability to address these important issues with knowledge and competence. Several executives also took the Server Intervention Program (SIP) training provided by the Dean of Students Office.

### 2.3 Council training

Councilors were offered a series of workshops in June to educate them on their duties as members of the CSU's board of directors. These workshops covered board of director roles, university structures, power dynamics, and Robert's rules. In October, the Council Retreat was used to bring councilors up to date on the major projects of the CSU. This was necessary for them to have an in-depth understanding of the long term vision for the organization, as well as projects which span multiple mandates, such as the housing cooperative. Finally, a consent training session was offered in November, as it could not be scheduled earlier. Another consent training session will take place in the winter term for the new councilors elected during By-elections to attend.

## 2.4 Orientation training

It was crucial that we had all orientation staff trained on safer spaces, bystander intervention and the safe serve program. An entire day was dedicated to training one week prior to orientation. In the morning, the staff received bystander intervention training by Mandy Rae Perry and Jasper Birth. In the afternoon, the Dean of Students office led the training on the safe serve program. The day ended by a training on the equipment that would be used during Orientation. It was important for staff coordinators to get to know their team; having staff try BBQs was a good test to see which staff members felt comfortable around the heat.

The Waste Busters were provided with a training from the Orientation Sustainability Coordinator and Faisal Shenib from Concordia's Environmental Health and Safety department on what items go into which bins. We also held a practice run on waste audits to get volunteers accustomed to their role, get a better idea of why their role is so important, and practice for when they would be auditing the Orientation events' waste.

## 3 Workplan updates

### 3.1 Sustainability Coordinator

The CSU Sustainability Coordinators of the past have focused primarily on environmental sustainability since the inception of this position, though implementation of environmental and social sustainability policy for the union is the actual mandate of the position. This year there has been an attempt at including economic and social aspects in the CSU's view of sustainability. This was achieved through the support and organization of various events and groups and a review of the CSU's internal structures.

While there is one position dedicated to sustainability within the CSU, ideally it is the responsibility of all executives to prioritize social, economic and environmental regenerative structures. That said, it was useful for me to know everything that was happening within the CSU, the concordia community and within the concordia administration at all times to not only be able to connect those with similar goals and missions but to also keep ourselves accountable to our mandates. Because of this one of my goals was to give more specific mandates to the CSU so we could further push for progress within the university and hold ourselves to a higher standard.

#### 3.1.1 Sustainable Foundation and Infrastructure

Concordia University's Board of Governors passed its Sustainability Policy due to the work of the Teaching, Learning, and Research Sustainability Committee and the Operational & Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee, both of which the Sustainability Coordinator was a member. Once that was passed, the committees planned a public consultation so that the university's sustainability governance structure priorities to work on in a sustainability plan.

The CSU now has a mandate to work with the university on providing all undergraduate students with curriculum on sustainability and indigenous studies. As the university's plan is in the process of being made this was opportune time to make a big move like this in terms of demands by the

undergraduate population. Sustainable Concordia and the Sustainability Action Fund who each have seats within the sustainability governance framework support this as well so the tracks have been set to put this issue in motion and catch up to other universities in Canada.

The Sustainability Committee and councilors were given a presentation on the CSU's sustainability policy at the beginning of the school year. We tried following it as closely as possible during Orientation when a large part of purchasing took place. There is no such thing as ethical shopping under capitalism, however there are measures that can be taken to mitigate harm to the environment and people, and that reasoning is given for each policy to better inform those who need to interact with it. Edits have been made to the policy that will be presented to council in May. Once this is done the sustainability coordinator will be presenting the policy to the incoming executive. This will allow for the Sustainability Coordinator to be less of an information gatekeeper.

In terms of accessibility, a scent-free policy was approved by the sustainability committee and the policy committee. We are working on the implementation with the services now. A work order was placed to make the 7th floor office have an automatic door. In the meantime, one of the phones on the 7th floor of the Hall building has been lowered to make free calls more accessible to wheelchair users.

Something very important to me was supporting CSU staff and providing stronger human resources for them. The Student Life Coordinator and I have been doing research and assessing the needs of the CSU in different ways over the past few months but concluded that at the moment as CUPE is not interested in the idea it wasn't something we could tackle especially as CUPE negotiations were happening this year.

### 3.1.2 Support Groups Promoting Sustainability

Support has also been given to projects like Hoodstock, Divest Concordia, Disorientation, Off the Page, A Haunting, Bite Me and Transitions. Due to a budget line specifically for anti-colonial events it has been easier to put more of an emphasis on racial and ethnic issues which the CSU hasn't tackled so much in the past. The External and Mobilization Coordinator and I have also been present for some of the planning of First Voices Week, an initiative spearheaded by the First People's Study Member Association and the First Peoples Studies department.

Most of the support provided has been financial, however printing and logistical support has been given to the Concordia Food Coalition, the Sustainability Action Fund and the Centre for Gender Advocacy for their events and workshops. I have also been attending FLAC meetings and have been allowed on their listserv to better offer the CSU's support to other fee levy groups as well. I have also been present for Sustainability Hub meetings to get a better understanding of the climate amongst sustainability groups on campus. By being present in these two different groups I have hopefully made it clear that I am available to support the groups involved whenever they need so they can better serve the student population.

One very useful way the Sustainability Coordinator can support sustainability groups is through the Food Systems Special Project Fund. This year there were no applications towards the fund but the Greenhouse has expressed interest in applying next year. There has been ongoing communication between myself and the Greenhouse discussing the application process and I will be introducing the new sustainability coordinator to the issue during training.



The Concordia Co-op Bookstore is also seeking funding for renovations to their space to allow for more space for books. Currently there is no formalized process for applying to the SSAELC fund so we thought of creating an application similar to what is expected of the FFSPF for this community group. They were too busy throughout the school year to further discuss what we could do but now that the semester is over talks have opened up again and I will also be introducing this issue to my successor.

The coordinator worked briefly with the Dean of Students Office on promoting sustainability during Frosh/Orientation for other student groups so that they can have more support when it comes to “ethical” purchasing and waste management as it’s an issue that isn’t often tackled by them, and they could benefit from resources developed over past years by the CSU.

Other collaborations include the Concordia Farmer’s Market which I am now developing a contract with that would involve the CSU allocating a maximum of 8000\$ a year for the next five years to. This will allow for the market to have stability and give student the opportunity to buy fresh, organic and local food year-round.

### 3.1.3 Sustainability Events

In the first semester, I planned two events that centered around Gender Neutral Bathrooms with the Centre for Gender Advocacy. Both events were organized with the help of the Centre for Gender Advocacy; The first was a panel on Gender Neutral Bathrooms moderated by Gabrielle Bouchard from the Centre for Gender Advocacy. Also present were Johanna Fraser-Carrier from Ontario and two local speakers: Valerie Jeffcott and Julien Rose Johnson.

The second event was a scavenger hunt across the Concordia campus that would compile all of the room numbers and accessibility information of each space in hopes of creating an app or map that would make information more readily available to those who require gender neutral bathrooms. Unfortunately this event was not well attended.

So far these events have facilitated conversations with Concordia facilities on the necessity of gender neutral bathrooms on campus. Hopefully these discussions will continue in the new school year.

I also planned a third event with the Centre for Gender Advocacy called Have Your Say. It was an open forum for survivors to give their input on how the university and the quebec government can better support them. From this a report was written which can be used in the future to better guide campaign demands surrounding sexual violence on campus.

I collaborated with the Sustainability Action Fund for the Room to Grow event that celebrated 10 years of sustainability on the Concordia campus. We agreed that the CSU would help partially fund the event, help with logistics and communications.

Another more hands on collaboration includes the Transitions conference with the Concordia Food Coalition. This conference has run for quite some time now and I helped with logistics, funding, ticket sales, communications and more. The conference was a hit and I expect it to get even better next year as it has since its inception.

This year’s theme for Connecting Landscape was Decolonizing Through Art. We hired two facilitators Aidan Thorne and Christale Terris to create a curriculum and support participants and

facilitators. Through this project we received a 1500\$ grant from CCSL which will be used for supplies and tools that can be used for the years to come.

### 3.2 Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator

Throughout the 2016-2017 academic year, the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator has been able to move ahead on most the most important goals of their WorkPlan presented and approved by Council in September 2016, and they were also able to reassess and adapt certain projects due to ongoing developments.

For example, they have been organizing around anti-black racism with multiple individuals and groups on campus and in Montreal. This has included the creation of the Black Studies Collective, a collective of students, undergraduate and graduate, as well as professors, and community members organizing events, social events and speaker series, in order to discuss Black Studies and its significance in Canada, what it would look like, what it would address, and the need for it. The Black Studies Collective was led by our Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator The CSU, through multiple of its standing committees, notably, the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) Initiative committee, the External Committee, and the Student Life committee, has been funding multiple student-led and community events addressing issues of racism in general and anti-black racism in particular.

A lot of energy was also spent on reviewing the CSU's Standing Regulations and By-Laws. Some of the work put into them was mostly formatting; so many articles in the Standing Regulations and By-Laws have been added or taken away with little thought on where those articles were mentioned or referenced. Along with Policy Committee, we were able to review most of these policies to format the documents and hopefully make it easier on future Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinators to navigate these policies, add to them, review them and/or change them while not compromising the structure of the documents and making them more accessible.

The Academic Caucus have continued to meet regularly in order to ensure preparedness and informed participation at the Senate over the Winter semester. Important discussions that have started the 2016-2017 academic year was the renegotiation of Student Senator eligibility criteria, in which we have made a lot of progress. Students who had been charged under the Code of Rights and Responsibility or the Academic Code of Conduct were not eligible to sit on Senate, but they now are, an equally important question that will have to be addressed is the intelligibility of independent students and students under conditional standing. The Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator was also able to sit on the review committee for the Code of Rights and Responsibilities, nothing contentious concerning student rights was changed, and there was consensus amongst committee members concerning adopting better practices when dealing with sexual violence cases. There were also talks of adopting a safe space policy, the university is still not familiar with how problematic labelling a space 'safe' is, and the use of 'safer' instead.

An issue we encountered this academic year was successfully planning the Annual Academic Congress. The Student Congress was organized by the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator and the External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator with the help of the Concordia Student Union staff, and was going to happen as planned, but unfortunately, only two (2) student group representatives on campus confirmed their attendance. This set-back at least is a learning opportunity for future Academic

Affairs and Advocacy Coordinators, which we will make sure to convey, on outreach and better communication amongst other student groups on campus.

### 3.2.1 Organizing around Anti-Black Racism

The Concordia Student Union's Academic Affairs and Advocacy has been organizing around anti-black racism with multiple individuals and groups on campus and in Montreal. This has included the creation of the Black Studies Collective, a collective of students, undergraduate and graduate, as well as professors, and community members organizing events, social events and speaker series, in order to discuss Black Studies and its significance in Canada, what it would look like, what it would address, and the need for it. The Black Studies Collective was led by our Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator. The CSU, through multiple of its standing committees, notably, the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) Initiative committee, the External Committee, and the Student Life committee, has been funding multiple student-led and community events addressing issues of racism in general and anti-black racism in particular.

Here are some of the initiatives that have been supported, organizations with whom the current Executive teams has established relationships throughout the year, and with whom next year's Executive team will keep working with:

### 3.2.2 Hoodstock's Black Summit

Hoodstock is an initiative in Montreal Nord, which has a racialized population of 60%, around issues experienced by their racialized communities, as well as broader social-political issues affecting society as a whole. Every year, for the past three years, they have organized a Black Summit, a day full of panels on Black histories, Black socio-political and economic issues, and intersectional perspectives on these issues as well activities and promotion of small racialized businesses. The Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator, in an effort to make the CSU more representative of Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Colour on campus and in the broader Montreal community, reached out to Ted Ruthland, a Geography and Urban Planning professor at Concordia and a main organizer for Hoodstock to offer the CSU's support, in any way the Hoodstock collective saw appropriate. The CSU's contribution to the event was mostly financial, as we only joined the project a few weeks before the event date. The External and Mobilization Coordinator as well as the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator have been in contact with two of the main organizers of the Hoodstock and Montreal Noir collective to collaborate on further projects, and craft events for Concordia students and a campus environment.

### 3.2.3 Take care of yourself

Take Care of Yourself is a two week installation exploring the subject of healing, self-care, and community-care amongst racialized communities. The installations only feature racialized artists presenting work that somehow embodies self-care and healing, or work that have resulted from their healing and self-care processes.

Three (3) of the main events, the first one, *Shim El Yasamin*, is an installation of live jasmine garlands by Dana El Masri. Here is her project description:

The sense of smell triggers over 80% of our emotions, with the ability to change one's mood. In a world filled with audio/visual stimuli, our 5 senses (and beyond) are not being utilized to their full potential – we run the risk of losing ourselves and what makes us truly human. By paying more attention

to our sense of smell, we change our perspective of how we experience the world around us and most importantly, ourselves.

By being mindful of this sense, and our breath, one can embrace the moment and therefore become more in touch with oneself.

Jasmine has the power to bring people together, and has been a symbol for hope and freedom as demonstrated in Tunisia's 'Jasmine Revolution'. Its scent is beautiful, with aroma therapeutic properties – healing, calming, and historically an aphrodisiac. It helps relax the mind, relax emotional stress, reduce depression and fight insomnia. Jasmin has been used in a multitude of different ways by a multitude of different peoples and cultures for its healing properties. In the current socio-political climate, with the rise in power (or rather the now more visible) of fascists, the increased state-sanctioned policing and violence of racialized bodies, when a lengthy and hard struggle/fight is awaiting us, healing and self/community-care is a necessity.

The second event is a 2 Channel HD Video Installation titled *Syria*, by Khaled Sabsabi. Here is an abstract of the audio-visual installation:

Sabsabi's *Syria* (2012) is a provocation to those who hold an entirely reasonable expectation that a label exists to act as a logical descriptor of its referent. Let's be clear: *Syria* is not about *Syria*. The work signals Sabsabi's fascination with the ways by which beneath the surface of things there can exist a metaphorical structure opposed to that surface. For instance, the way a visually complex abstract image of bustling lines and jostling forms doesn't necessarily convey a buzzing randomness but instead unveils the balance of nature's elementary simplicity, or the symbolic means by which the underlying moral structure of foundational myths runs perpendicular to the chronological unfolding of events. *Syria* is a title that illustrates the inadequacy of words to define that which is beyond them.

The third event is a panel discussion on self-care, intersectionality, and struggle moderated by the curator of *Take Care of Yourself*, Sundus Abdul Hadi. Here is the description:

In the years leading up to Trump America, a growing consciousness has been unravelling in regards to systematic racism and violence against people of color. The collective witnessing of racialized violence has seen the concept of "self-care" re-emerge. In the words of Audre Lorde, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." The approach to self-care in this project is an intervention in the form of coping with the difficult situations people find themselves in during these trying times.

A safe(r) mediated space of self-care narrated by transcultural media-makers is a necessary tool in remedying the collective grief manifesting in the margins. The consequent politicization of self-care is a concept that many artists are consciously cultivating, giving the audience and/or participants a sense of empowerment in light of traumatic personal or global events. There will be a panel discussion with 3-5 artists and media-makers (TBD) on the topic of self-care, intersectionality and struggle. Discussions will span the concept of collective grief and collective healing. These events will try to showcase the importance of self-care and healing as a community in resisting colonialism, oppression, and the far-right.

### 3.2.4 Collaboration with Robyn Maynard and other Afrofeminist

Robyn Maynard is a Black feminist who has spent years documenting racist and gender-based state violence. Her main areas of focus are anti-Black racism and the criminalization of drugs and sex work. She has spent the better part of the decade doing frontline harm-reduction outreach work in Montreal, and continues to provide trainings for health and social service providers on the harms created by systemic racism, criminal laws and stigmatization.

She is currently completing her first book *Policing Black Bodies: State Violence and Black Lives*, for Fernwood Publishing, 2017. In this groundbreaking work she addresses the historical and current realities of state violence against Black bodies in Canada. The work examines the evolution of anti-Blackness in Canada, addressing slavery, border regulation, law enforcement, policing, schools and child welfare, incarceration and immigration detention. Following the dictums of the Black Lives Matter movement, the book approaches state violence against Black persons in Canada from an intersectional lens which centers, whenever possible, the experiences of those most marginalized within the Black community: youth, migrants with precarious status, Black cis and transgender women, sexual minorities and those stigmatized by real or perceived links to illicit economies.

Maynard's past work has involved full-time street-based outreach with sex workers at Montreal's non-profit organization Stella, doing harm-reduction, rights-based education and medical, legal, and social service accompaniments surrounding health and anti-violence. Maynard advocated for the decriminalization of sex work representing Stella at the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights at Parliament Hill. Past work also includes streetwork and group home outreach with youth at Montreal's youth non-profit Head and Hands.

A harsh critic of systemic racism in all of its forms, Maynard has been involved in grassroots organizing against police violence. Most recently, she helped co-found Montreal Noir, a Black activist group committed to combatting anti-Black racism in Quebec, and is a part of the Black Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance. In 2010 she helped found Justice for Victims of Police Killings, who work alongside several families of victims of police killings to demand an end to police violence and impunity. As a youth, she helped create Project X, a group that supports racialized young persons around racial profiling in Montreal's NDG borough. Robyn Maynard continues to be a frequent public commentator on racial profiling whose voice is featured frequently in local and national media including CBC News, CTV News, the Montreal Gazette, Vice Magazine, and APTN.

Her writing has appeared in activist and mainstream media, as well as in academic periodicals, including the Toronto Star, The Montreal Gazette, the Feminist Wire, Le Devoir, Briarpatch, Upping the Anti, Shameless, The Dominion, Canadian Dimension, Atlantis Journal, 2bmag, and Canadian Women's Studies Journal. She has also written and contributed to several important community resources, many of which are distributed around Canada. Additionally, her writing is featured in several book anthologies including *Feminism for Real* (2011), *Border Imperialism* (2013) *Critical Approaches to Harm Reduction: Conflict, Institutionalization, (De-) Politicization, and Direct Action* (2016) and *Sex/Work: Regulation, Agency, and Resistance* (UBC Press, forthcoming 2018).

She has participated in many panel discussions on campus this year, notably during Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG) Concordia's Disorientation, and The Center for Gender Advocacy's Thick Skin event series.

Since the start of this executive team's mandate, the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator has been working on creating a budget for themselves, this effort was significantly slowed down throughout the first six months of the mandate, but the budget was finally approved by the Council of Representatives on November 23rd, 2016. This budget was first requested in an attempt by the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator to be able to fund and support their own projects as well as Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Colour initiatives and struggles, since the CSU is predominantly white and is very unaccessible to BIPOC individuals and organizations. Once the allocation of that money was approved, a change in the Standing Regulations was proposed by Policy Committee in order to ensure that the allocated amount of money would exclusively be used for BIPOC initiatives and issues, and the committee would exclusively be composed of racialized individuals and chaired by a racialized member of the CSU executive team. In the event that no racialized person is part of the executive team then the money would be added to the following year's budget line, ensuring that the money be used for BIPOC initiatives and be managed by BIPOC individuals. This will provide a secure source of support and funding for BIPOC initiatives on campus, without having to apply for funding from all-white or predominantly white committees and justify the need for money for BIPOC struggles, a practice which perpetuates problematic concepts of colonialism, racial hierarchy, and white supremacist power dynamics.

We have had the chance, through the BIPOC committee, over the course of one semester, to fund over a dozen initiatives. Here are some of them:

Israeli Apartheid Week  
Black Women Wellness Summit  
Black History Month Rap and Poetry Event  
Clap Back/Talk Back  
Take Care of Yourself  
150th "Canada Anniversary" - *While no one was looking*  
Sisters in Motion II  
Sayaspora  
Racine Librarie

### 3.3 Internal Affairs Coordinator

The 2016-2017 CSU fiscal year and executive mandates are coming to an end. It is important to document the challenges that the internal affairs coordinator has faced in order to make sure that the upcoming executive can either pursue and solve them or avoid them if possible. It is also important to pass on the institutional memory so that the transition can happen smoothly.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the board of the CSU approved the internal affairs work plan. Executives are expected to accomplish what is listed in the work plan despite the constraints that are imposed on them. These constraints can either be due to the dynamics between the university and the union, the learning curve or even due to the limited time that executives have in during their mandate.

The Internal affairs work plan consisted of the overarching club portfolio which contained day-to-day activities with clubs, clubs gala and clubs orientation. The work plan also included the objective of increasing student space, expanding on the CSU's BDS position and building a makerspace.

In terms of day to day activities and funding, the internal affairs coordinator hired a clubs coordinator who mostly dealt with communicating with clubs and sending them newsletters. The clubs coordinator has come in extremely handy, since the other parts of the internal coordinator portfolio might cause a lot of delay when it comes to answering basic questions to clubs and the clubs coordinator is able to chime in and solve problems for student groups. In terms of funding, the clubs budget in 2016-2017 is expecting a surplus and in order to make sure that student funds are well invested, the executives have decided to redistribute the clubs fee-levy in order to support the other CSU services and budget lines that needed the money more. One issue that the internal affairs coordinator noticed this year is that the cheque reimbursement system is way to slow and not advanced enough. The budgets are stored in excel spreadsheets which limits the accessibility to club budgets, since the spreadsheets could only be open once at a time. The internal affairs coordinator encourages the upcoming coordinator to develop a software that would be able to automate this task in a transparent way. Students should be able to see where their cheque requisition is at all times.

Club orientation this year was a success, over 50 CSU groups were on the terrace recruiting members. Club orientation is a great opportunity for the executive to meet every group and to remind them to send the club budget. The club manual was also published and given out to the new students. One issue that the coordinator encountered was that some groups had the wrong contact information in the manual. It is important to ask the groups to confirm that the contact information in the manual is still accurate.

The makerspace project has been a projected that had to be refocused mainly because it was a bit of a challenge to get the support from different groups in the Concordia community to get on board. The Concordia community already has a makerspace, however it isn't catered to students that want to develop tech related skills. It is catered to groups and individuals that want to build and start a for-profit business. The Refugee Centre approached the internal coordinator in order to build a makerspace in their office space and to help them promote it. The internal coordinator helped The Refugee Centre shop and build their makerspace which will be up and running in the upcoming fall semester.

The BDS movement is growing at a fast-pace and many groups on campus are currently trying to build momentum for a larger group. The internal affairs coordinator was approached by a collective of staff and faculty in order to establish an organization. After working with them for a couple of months, it was decided that the internal coordinator would instead invest time and effort with students who have much more experience with the BDS movement and that seem more focused on the real issues affecting Palestinians.

### 3.4 General Coordinator

As the mandate comes to a close, it feels as if the year has both been incredibly full and has gone past so quickly. In summarising my report for this document, touching on major parts of my year that are not covered elsewhere, it feels insufficient to not write down all of the little correspondences and interactions that make up the day-to-day. It is also daunting to try and itemise all of the bigger things that have gone into the past twelve months or so of my life and my colleagues lives. So, please consider this a quick snapshot against my (pardon the pun) *general* responsibilities as General Coordinator: to advancing undergraduate interests within the University and outside of it, being as

accessible a primary representative as possible and dealing with student concerns and priorities as best I can as they come.

As detailed in sections further on in this report, in my capacity I've been able - especially throughout this past semester - to collaborate to bring important initiatives to their conclusions or well on their way to fruition. This includes the months-long collective agreement negotiations with the CSU's CUPE union representatives, the Request for Proposal process for the coming health and dental insurance plan contract, the future CSU Housing Co-op and Daycare projects. I have continued my representative role in several arenas: as Senator and member of Senate's Steering committee, as Governor and member of the Board's Real Estate and Governance and Ethics committees, as member of the Concordia Foundation's Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee, as well as sitting on numerous other advisory committees as they have come up. I have also had the pleasure of attending AVEQ congresses throughout the year as a member of the CSU's delegation; beyond periodically re-instilling my faith in the power and the potential of the broader student movement, it has been constructive to contextualise our own priorities - such as the effect of austerity on access to education, the deregulation of certain tuition, and the student-based struggle against climate change - against the shared context of our colleagues across the province. My own work has been enriched through this collaboration, and I look forward to seeing what the relationship between the CSU and AVEQ will yield in the year to come.

Student space has continued to be a major point of work this year, not only in terms of our services and projects which are being built or are being renovated, but in terms of protection of these spaces at our campus and ensuring that student use retains its priority in all discussions concerning them. With the renovations to the Hall mezzanine imminent, conversations have been held to advance the vision of space which allows students to gain multi-purpose use and to maintain the floor as what is fundamentally a place shaped by students and for students. In negotiations regarding the 7th floor as well and the expansion of University-run Student Services, we have pushed the University to not sacrifice student needs for a streamlining of their aesthetic vision of the building. Tangibly, this has included ensuring that the space used for prayers hosted by the Muslim Student Association is not impeded or minimised, and that serious conversations be held with the University in anticipating of increased capacity needs as Ramadan moves earlier into the calendar year. The University does not exist without its students, and spaces where students can gather, learn from each other, and mobilise requires constant vigilance from student representatives.

One of the broad thematics that emerged this past year regarding priorities has been advocacy for vulnerable members of our student community, whether as a matter of accessibility or of systemic oppression which manifests both outside and within our institution. The campaign against tuition hikes for undergraduate students in deregulated programs was successful - for the time being - and it becoming a major priority over the last half of the Fall semester reflects not only the CSU's responsibility to defend its population which is by far the most financially precarious, but is a call for current and future student representatives to centre international students and their particular barriers in all research and campaigns regarding access to education and services.

Our positions - first from our Council of Representatives, and now from our membership through popular referendum - for Concordia to develop a commitment to becoming a 'solidary campus' speaks to our own concerns with Canadian Border Security Agents on campus this past year, and to ensuring that our University community can be a place where our members who have the least security can consider themselves to be home to study, work and grow.



In March, we stood in solidarity with our Concordia community in the wake of threats which targeted us all, and threats which perpetuated violent and oppressive discourse towards members of the Muslim community. We mobilised to offer what resources we could for students who could not return to campus or to their studies as if it was “business as usual,” and we pushed the University to communicate the need for academic accommodation for all students in the days following the threat.

In the past few weeks from the writing of this report, we have taken on the #BringBissanHome campaign, putting pressure on the Canadian government and the University to ensure that a Concordia graduate student, still unable to secure exit visas from the Israeli government to leave Gaza after visiting family, can come home to continue her studies here and to be able to be tended to after a high-risk pregnancy.

On a personal note, it has been a genuine pleasure to have worked in my capacity as General Coordinator this year. It has not been a glamorous job, but I would not have traded for anything else the opportunity to help do good for my peers and the student community around me. I have been extremely lucky to work with an amazing, passionate team of executives and to support their mandates and projects, and we have been equally fortunate to have worked with the members of our Council of Representatives who have given us invaluable feedback, participation, and collaboration in representing the undergraduates of Concordia. I look forward to training the incoming group of Executives and helping them prepare for a sometimes exhausting but ultimately rewarding year of supporting our constituency.

### 3.5 Finance Coordinator

Upon beginning my term in December 2016, I formulated a work plan to complete the following projects: To reassess the structure of CSU fee-levies, and to put financial changes to referendum in the 2017 General Election if necessary; To improve and codify financial protocols; And to complete an RFP Process for the Student Health and Dental Plan. The most important of these projects have been completed, and recommendations will be issued to continue improving financial protocols over future years.

The first project – reassessment and reallocation of CSU fees – was completed, and a referendum question was passed at the General Election which should allow future executive teams to use finances more efficiently, and which more accurately reflects the financial needs of different departments. More information is available below, under the *Elections* section.

The second project – the Health and Dental Plan RFP – was completed, and Council approved a continued relationship with ASEQ, the CSU’s health plan provider since 1996, at a reduced cost to students. More information is available below, under the *Services* section.

The final project – improvement and codification of financial protocols – was partially completed. New reimbursement forms were created, standardizing the reimbursement process for all departments. These forms will be further revised during the training period in order to receive input from the incoming executive team. Revising forms was only a very small part of this project, which I quickly realized was far too ambitious for my partial term. The main challenges were, first, that revising

financial procedures on this scale must be done at the beginning of a mandate (ie. Starting in May), as starting it later goes against learned habits of staff and executives; and second, that the project is simply too time-consuming to be anything but a year-long endeavour. In fact, it is likely that this would be an ongoing process over multiple years. Though I was not able to complete it, it is vital to codify financial protocols, as many financial processes are a product of convention, rather than written policy. While this has been working so far, it runs the risk of missing important steps or information if high-quality training is not done for each new Finance Coordinator. To this effect, I am preparing recommendations to continue this project to the incoming Finance Coordinator and, if they decide to take on the project, it will be a major focus of our training in May.

In conclusion, it is my belief good work was done with limited time. The fee reallocation should ensure that student money is spent more efficiently, while the Health and Dental Plan RFP will result in a decreased financial burden to students. Improving financial protocols is important, but its non-completion will have negligible financial impact.

### 3.6 External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator

While this mandate is not yet quite over, and many events are still unfolding, it is time to look at this back and assess the success or lack thereof of the goals I had set myself at the beginning of the mandate. As I am writing, I am still working on a couple of events, and on some campaigns activities such as the #BringBissanHome campaign and the information campaign in collaboration with the LIC regarding changes in immigration practices by the government, however all of my major projects have been completed, or are in the last stages of completion. Apart from this, I am now planning the transition and the training of my successor, as well as looking forward to having the time to take care of a few housekeeping tasks such as the creation of a more efficient internal booking system for CSU equipments.

#### 3.6.1 CSU climate justice and divestment campaign

In June the Council of Representatives voted to mandate the CSU to campaign for climate justice, with a focus on indigenous issues and struggles, and for divestment from fossil fuels, specifically targeted at Concordia University's investments. The campaign for divestment had been active for some years on campus led by Divest Concordia. By adding the CSU's efforts to this campaign we were hoping to add strength and to push Concordia to finally take a responsible attitude towards our future in its investments.

The campaigns itself is described more in details in the 'campaigns' section, however I will take this opportunity to comment on the CSU's role in it so far. My main focus during the summer, in collaboration with the campaigns department, was to prepare the groundwork so that the mobilization could start right away during the fall. This included defining the parameters of a research document to support the campaign, undertaken by the CSU researcher, developing content for the information materials (flyers, posters, social media, etc...), and their design by the CSU graphic designers.

An important aspect of the campaign was to develop the membership of Divest Concordia. While the CSU can contribute important resources to the campaign, the campaign itself can be a success only if students get involved and carry the movement. To this effect a lot of attention was given to the

creation of a balanced and sustainable relationship between the CSU, Sustainable Concordia, and Divest Concordia. We spent a lot of efforts in organizing workshops and events just prior and during the first weeks of class, and as the transfer of knowledge and skills progresses between more experienced and new activists, the CSU can progressively step back to a more supporting role in the direction of the campaign.

I had to step back significantly from working on this campaign during the second half of the fall semester, in order to focus on the tuition hikes campaign. I was able to resume a more active support role during the winter semester, and I am confident this renewed group of engaged students is now equipped to carry on the struggle for divestment.

It will be up to the new CSU team to define its relationship with Divest Concordia, however I strongly recommend to keep the CSU actively engaged in the campaign. This must be done at institutional level where the CSU has access to several lobbying and pressure position as student representative, as well as an active support in terms of funding, and logistics, to the activists' work, without encroaching on their decision-making.

### 3.6.2 International students tuition hikes

Since the beginning of our mandate we suspected that a tuition increase was going to be put forward by the University administration at some point. To prepare for this, I had begun to try to inform and set up a coalition with the faculty student associations during the summer, with mixed success, due to both the absence of many association executives and the hypothetical nature of the hikes.

When we finally caught wind of the administration's plan to pass these hikes during the fall semester, in collaboration with the Campaigns Coordinator we organized a campaign to inform and mobilize students against these hikes, and hired two part-time campaigners to assist us. The campaign itself is described in more details in the 'campaigns' section.

Regarding the creation of a coalition of student associations against these hikes, I had once more a mixed success. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) was an active supporter, the Engineering and Computer science Association (ECA), the Arts and Science Federation of Association (ASFA), and the Fine Arts Students Alliance (FASA) all opposed the hikes and supported the campaign to varying degrees. However, the Commerce and Administration Students' Association (CASA) executive refused to take a stance, despite the fact that their numerous international members were directly impacted by these hikes.

As these hikes were defeated, this campaign is now completed on a victory! However the administration is bound to try again, probably next year.

My work in the winter session has been consequently more focused on the equipment of the CSU to face the next time these hikes will be proposed. This has included working with the campaigners to publish an in-depth analysis and report of our campaign for reference for future teams, the commissioning of a research on Alternative & Equity Board structure which is nearly completed, that the CSU will be able to use to advocate for a reform of the Board of Governors, the inclusion of the deregulated programs of studies as a priority for AVEQ in terms of research and advocacy, and the strengthening of the Campaigns department.

### 3.6.3 Engage and inform students through socio-political event

I had chosen to focus my energies primarily on the organization of mobilization campaigns, rather than on Speaker Series. This was reflected in my work plan, but due to the addition of a sudden full-blown tuition hikes campaign during the fall, the organization of other speaking events consequently suffered.

Throughout the year I chose to mainly collaborate with other organizations or support existing initiatives rather than organize speaking events myself. Thus, degrees of involvement varied from active planning and organizing, to more logistical support such as bookings, promotion, funding, and facilitating logistics. This was also done with a philosophy to use the CSU's human and financial resources to facilitate the organization of events by people more qualified, or affected by a specific issues.

These collaborations, in addition to all the Divest events, included in the fall and summer support for Hoodstock, Decolonize Palestine, the Gender Neutral Washrooms events, and financial support for a number of other events in line with the CSU positions. The initial co-organisation with Sustainable Concordia of a conference on Post-Carbon futures was left entirely to them as they chose to focus on the educational content and ourselves on the mobilization part of the Divest campaign.

The main event of the winter was no doubt Anti Consumerism week, a full week of workshops and talks. This was quite a success, with all the workshops "sold-out" (they were free of course). The credits for the organization of this logistical nightmare should go the Campaigns department. We are currently in the process of producing a report to ensure institutional memory, and to produce recommendation towards more effective ways to organize this kind of event in the future.

Other collaborations this winter included the First Voices week organized by the First Peoples Studies MA and the Indigenous Students Council in January, and the series of workshops Learn to resist on how to resist the far-right, which saw some practical applications when said fascists groups tried to disrupt it. I also provided logistical support for numerous events, ranging from a Hip-Hop panel on migrant justice to Israeli Apartheid week. The talk we co-hosted this winter that has a special place in my heart is the Causerie with Robert King and Albert Woodfox, two former political prisoners, members of the Black Panthers, and knows as part of the Angola 3. Unfortunately Woodfox was not able to come, but we are collaborating with the Montreal Nord collective that organized it to have him come in May. In the winter, this included First voices week,

A notable collaboration is the organisation of four Rap Battles for Social Justice. The first one took place in September on Climate Justice, the second against Police Brutality in February, the third against Consumerism in March, and the last one against Borders will take place at the end of April. These events were all great success, in terms both of attendance and of quality, and enacted in an admirable way the marriage between art and activism.

Quite a lot of work we end up doing does not fall squarely in our portfolio or work plan, thus it is not necessarily relevant to elaborate at length on them. I will just mention some of the most campaigns related I worked on this past session. I have been called to offer support to BDS Concordia, a nascent coalition of groups and individuals that seek to better coordinate and strengthen the BDS campaign on campus, I worked extensively with the MSA, to safeguard their prayer space on the seventh floor that was threatened by the university 7th floor renovations, and again in more distressing circumstances after the bomb threat. A big focus of my work has been international students, with the tuition hikes

campaign, but also investigating what could be done regarding their health plan, working with the International Student Office to develop a pilot workshop to showcase to them the Concordia community, and working more recently with the LIC to publicize and contests the recent discriminatory practices of Immigration Quebec regarding the obtention of the CSQ, as well as inform international students. Currently, we are working on the #BringHomeCampaign with Tadamon! and her family.

#### 3.6.4 Support indigenous initiatives on campus

I have been trying throughout this semester to support and give priority to indigenous initiatives on campus, despite my lack of a deep knowledge of the struggles and oppressions that indigenous people face on Turtle Island. To this effect, we have provided support and funding for the First Peoples Studies Member Association in their initiatives, notably for the organization of the upcoming First Voices week. Similarly, I tried to prioritize funding for projects featuring indigenous issues, by indigenous people.

Another project I inherited from my predecessor is the realization of an Indigenous Art Mural on the 7th floor of the Hall building. Following the creation of a committee, a call for submission from artists was sent in November, and extended until early January. Due to the relatively low numbers of applications, and the lack of availability of the committee and myself, this project was shelved for the time being.

#### 3.6.5 Develop the CSU's campaigns ability

The CSU has the infrastructure and the resources necessary to engineer and plan campaigns, but lacked the human resources to carry them out. Indeed, the most crucial aspect of a campaign is outreach. The creation of a campaigns department went a long way towards addressing this aspect (this is covered in the 'hiring' section). In order to have better visibility, I have started an inventory of the poster spaces on campus with a few others, which completion is one of the few small projects I intend to wrap up in May. I also collaborated in the setting up of two TV screens on the 7th floor of the Hall building, which are used to advertise CSU events and services.

On another note, I worked on the creation of the Community Action Fund (CAF), which was successfully approved by referendum in the November By-elections. Throughout the winter session the regulations regarding the use and the administration of the fund have been developed and adopted. QPIRG Concordia, CURE Concordia, Sustainable Concordia, and the Centre for Gender Advocacy have accepted to be partner organisations of the fund. A provisional committee has now been formed to formulate the last logistical details and create a CAF Handbook that will guide the committee, as well as a clear procedure to follow for applicants. This Fund will hopefully enable grassroots organizing to thrive on campus when operational in June 2017.

#### 3.6.6 Provide effective provincial representation

Since last year, the dust has somewhat settled on the provincial student movement landscape, to use the words of my predecessor. The UEQ has not managed to expand its membership beyond a core group, far from the hegemonic position its predecessor the FEUQ occupied, and AVEQ has proven to be a solid alternative, although a nascent one that still requires more affiliations. For more on AVEQ, refer to the 'external organization' section.

As part of my mandate, I have assisted and actively participated in AVEQ's meetings, as well as its board of directors. This a crucial time for the organization, when we must both push for the interests

of our members through this provincial organisation, and work collaboratively to ensure its development. Much remains to be done, but AVEQ's recent work bodes well for its future. Most importantly it has managed to give a much needed alternative to existing provincial organizations, both in its representation and discourse, and in its internal processes.

I also attended the annual general meeting of the FEUQ, where the necessary steps towards its final dissolution are dragging on. A suspect plan to transform the FEUQ into a "charity organization" was presented once again, after having been voted down repeatedly the previous year, but following our mandate it was discarded once again. This experience was enlightening in its atmosphere by contrast with AVEQ's collaborative and healthy environment in terms of practices, and in my view validated the decision of the previous executive to invest the CSU's resources and energy in developing an alternative association to UEQ, FEUQ's spiritual successor. Characteristically, the work on dissolving the FEUQ is dragging on, and after a full year it still has not been dissolved.

Over the summer and fall, I have also met casually with other student associations from Montreal, especially SSMU, the CSU's equivalent at McGill, and from the rest of the province. The CSU also took part as an observer in the 15 now! Coalition, which campaigns for a \$15 in Montreal, but I had to discontinue my attendance in the fall as my workload increased.

The winter session was quite heavy with external meetings. Apart from the regular meetings with AVEQ's Assembly, committees, and regular follow-up with their executive, we engaged in several representation mainly on the subject of sexual violence on campuses and unpaid internships. Regarding the sexual violence consultation organized by the Ministry, we organized within AVEQ with groups of survivors, but also met other student associations in Sherbrooke, and organized our own consultation on campus, which were spearheaded by the Sustainability Coordinator. Regarding the internships, we went to a conference in Trois-Rivieres, and subsequently started to attend the Comité de Travail Spécial on the subject as observers.

I am glad to announce that the hard work put by the previous CSU executive team and ours to build a solid alternative in terms of provincial representation has paid off, and that with the affiliation of Chicoutimi, the future of AVEQ is now secured!

## 3.7 Student Life Coordinator

It has been a very busy year! But, I guess every executive going through a year in the CSU would start their work plan update this way. I have spent the majority of my time working on both orientations with the remaining of the time spent working on Reggies and various events. I have also really enjoyed working with the creative team (the graphic designers and the communications coordinator); their work is very impressive and inspires so many ideas.

### 3.7.1 Fall Orientation

Planning orientation is definitely the highlight of my mandate. The challenge and the team have made working on this major project a great experience. Fall Orientation totalled 29 events over 9 days. Morning coffees were offered every morning over the first two weeks of class. The info booth took place the first week as well as the street fairs, the Loyola Kick-Off concert and the EMAC on the Square event. The second week was filled with Wellness day events, Loyola Day and the Final Concert. For more in depth details about Fall Orientation, please refer to the Post-Mortem.

### 3.7.2 Winter Orientation

Planning Winter Orientation was a breeze compared to Fall Orientation. My team and I had gained the experience necessary to overcome several challenges and to navigate the University structures. Some challenges that we did face were pertaining to booking spaces. Because of the Christmas break, several University offices in charge of spaces required us to book more in advance but this information was not communicated to us. The clubs and community fairs were a great success and the photobooth at the fairs was extremely popular. I would definitely recommend future teams to continue to plan a winter orientation.

### 3.7.3 Special Projects Funding

The Student Life committee is responsible every year for allocating funds to projects that enhance student life on campus. Reviewing all the projects every round is a task that I look forward to every time. It is truly inspiring to read about all the projects students are planning on campus. Concordia has a lot of students that invest so much time in extra-curricular and I wish that we could fund every single project. The committee has the tough job of deciding which projects get funding and which projects do not. I believe a clearer guidelines could be developed in the future to help students navigate through all the funding bodies.

### 3.7.4 Various Events

As part of my work plan, I had mentioned I would be spending time organizing various events. Throughout the term, I have worked on the HIV/AIDs event and have started working with several students on events that will be taking place during the Winter semester. The HIV/AIDS clinics were great. All the spots at the downtown campus for testing were booked and students were truly enthusiastic about the opportunity to get tested rapidly on campus. During the winter semester, I planned the Winter Carnival, two more HIV/AIDS Rapid Clinics and a talk with A Tribe Called Red.

### 3.7.5 Reggie's Board

The transition on Reggie's bar into a solidarity cooperative has definitely kept me busy. A lot of housekeeping and groundwork needs to be invested in the co-op in order to ensure it is in a good place for the next team. I became President of the Co-op in November and have been spending a lot of time on the bar since. This presents several challenges since the board has a lot of work ahead. The bar needs to have more procedures and policies in place. Considering the fact that board members have been so busy dealing with the operations during the year, most of the policy work will be done during the summer.

## 3.8 Loyola Coordinator

As we approach the end of our mandate, it is important to reflect on the mandates, campaigns, and ambitions that drove each of us to collectively pursue a position within the CSU executive. I ran on certain campaign promises, and I believe I have fulfilled what I set about to do, at least for the most part. With the benefit of hindsight, I can divide my work of the past year into four separate categories: Student spaces, data projects, community support, and events organizing. All of my work within these categories was pursued with the long-term best interests of students in mind.

### 3.8.1 Student spaces - Loyola Free Lunch Renovations

The most widely used and best student program at Loyola is by far the Free Lunch program, which serves an average of 300 students a day for the fall and winter semesters. Programs such as these are the envy of other universities, and push the limits of sustainability, efficiency, and student empowerment. With this in mind, and with my new position on the Hive Café's Board of Directors, I set about exploring how to best support the program.

The CSU is the primary funder of the Loyola Hive Free Lunch, operating through 2 separate grants totalling approximately \$50,000 a year. In terms of efficiency, this translates into a total cost per plate of less than \$1. All the meals are vegan and include gluten-free options. The space the service operates out of, however, is somewhat less than adequate. The counter is made of a synthetic red material that is slowly disintegrating, some of the facilities below the counter are broken (ex: a bar fridge), and the sinks in the counter, while efficient for basic kitchen tasks, are not designed to support 1-200 people washing their dishware every day.

Through working with the Loyola Committee, we contracted the firm Bernard & Assoc. to get quotes on the renovation of the counter space, as part of a proposal that would renovate the rest of the SC-200 space. While we originally had plans to install television screens, projectors, and a new sound system in the space as well, we eventually were forced to remove the electrical renovations from our plans (the building is at full electrical capacity).

The renovations of the counter are wrapping up, and should be constructed over the summer (if the tendered firm does not complete the construction within the timeline we have allotted, they will be delayed until the winter). The improvements include:

- Replacing the existing countertop: The existing (red, synthetic materials) counter will be replaced with a custom stainless steel model.
- Lowering the counter: We will be lowering the free lunch serving counter (on the right as you exit the office). The reasoning was that the current serving counter is actually several inches higher than the opposite counter (with the sinks) which is the standard height, so we would in fact be making both units level.
- Free Lunch Serving area: There is included a special indented area for large bowls and soup pots to be placed for serving.
- Extended Counter: The serving counter is scheduled to be extended a few feet, so the Dish Project will actually be gaining more storage space underneath, compensating for any potential loss from the counter being lowered.
- Fridges: We will be removing one of the fridges (the unused one on the far left of exiting the office beside the 2-basin sink) and leveling the counter in that area, although the other fridge (on the front counter) will remain as per everyone's input.
- Sinks: The current sinks will be replaced with larger, 3-basin sinks (along with the sink in the kitchen), and space will be left for future installation of a dishwasher (should the electrical capacity of the building ever allow for this).

### 3.8.2 Student spaces - Loyola Clubs Spaces

When I received my keys for the CSU spaces in the Loyola campus, I noticed that we had several unused rooms in the SC building basement, which had fallen into disrepair for quite some time. They



were in some cases packed to the ceiling with junk and refuse, including almost 2 pallets worth of old beer well past its best-before date. There were three rooms in total: a forgotten office for the Judicial Board, an old club's office of the Pagan Student Society (which did not exist as a club at the time), and a smaller windowless room which I couldn't identify. I spent months cleaning out the rooms, designating the smaller room as a storage space and moving all the materials that couldn't be immediately recycled or discarded inside. With the aid of the Clubs Director, the Sustainability Coordinator, and a dedicated councillor (Alex Milton), I cleaned out the former JB and PSS offices, filed a work order with custodial services to clean the carpets, and refitted them with furniture. They are currently in the process of becoming shared office spaces for a total of 4 Loyola-based CSU clubs. The storage room will continue in its current function, and can be used for orientation and general storage purposes.

### 3.8.3 Student spaces - G-Lounge Café

The G-lounge Café is a Café that has run out of the Guadagni Lounge at Loyola Campus. The lounge is run by the Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC), a loosely-organized group consisting of a mix of fraternities and sororities from multiple universities across Montreal. After a request was made from a CSU councillor who was involved with the IFC, I set about investigating the G-Lounge to see how the CSU could aid in the café, which I was told was struggling to stay afloat. After investigating, I summarized the café's situation as follows:

The good:

- Non-for profit coffee and snack counter at Concordia that has existed since the 70's
- Operates a beautiful space at Loyola campus which is regularly used by students
- Has made successful efforts towards sustainable sourcing of food and coffee
- Gives IFC members a hands-on opportunity into café management

The bad:

- Previously able to take on more staff and operate with relative efficiency, has since fallen on hard times
- Does not pay rent (in a technical sense) or labor (all work is volunteer), both of which are the biggest expenses for any café, yet still ran a deficit last year
- Does not have a stable bookings system
- Does not have stable institutional memory (aka prolonged staff turnover that allows for smooth operations via knowledge transfer)
- Has little-to-no financial bookkeeping
- Recently in competition with Tim Horton's

With this assessment in mind, I pursued contact with the Café management and IFC, which followed the following timeline:

- October 4<sup>th</sup> - Met with Café Managers, set up meeting, discussed the G-lounge as a whole
- October 18<sup>th</sup> - Met with CSU General Manager (MBA, CPA, high levels of experience in food industries, help set up Hive Café, Reggies's) to discuss G-Lounge situation and get input on the best way to aid the café, he recommended gathering as much information as possible

- October 20<sup>th</sup> - Met with café management to go over by-laws, policies, financial record, and any relevant paperwork to make an informed decision. Noted a severe lack of record-keeping on the behalf of the café. Emailed IFC general email to set up meeting – no response
- November 28<sup>th</sup> - Forwarded previous email to IFC Chair, who promptly forwarded it to President and VP Finance, no response
- December 13<sup>th</sup> - IFC President responds to emails, I replied on the 15<sup>th</sup> requesting a meeting, no response

With the persistent lack of communication on the issue, I set about meeting with the IFC council which I was eventually able to do for their February regular meeting. I presented a proposal to have the CSU invest in the space by replacing their dysfunctional café counter with the Hive Café, thereby installing a working café model and hopefully reinvigorating the space. This proposal was received without remark, and to my knowledge no decision on the matter has yet been made.

#### 3.8.4 Student spaces - Bus Shelter Renovations

An external initiative regarding the reconstruction of the Loyola Bus Shelter was underway in the spring of 2016. I attended the meetings and helped the organizers navigate the levels of Concordia's facilities, with the interest of contributing to the project further down the line, and potentially adjusting it to better suit the needs of students (the shelter is primarily used by students). The project was attractive in that it was designed to be fully powered through solar panels and incorporate impressive sustainability practices, however it went on hiatus due to internal issues in the winter semester. Although I have not heard from the organizers since, I believe the CSU should continue to support this project, as it could potentially benefit the large number of students that use the shuttle bus.

#### 3.8.5 Data Projects - Loyola Accessibility Audit

The Loyola Accessibility Audit was a product of a many meetings between the Loyola Committee, the Sustainability Committee, and CURE (Community-University Research Exchange). It was designed to produce hard data on the accessibility of Loyola campus, which anyone who frequents knows is among the worst-designed spaces in regard to physical accessibility alone. (For more information, see the "Events" section).

#### 3.8.6 Data Projects - General Undergraduate Survey

The General Undergraduate Survey polling period ended two weeks ago, and we received a total of 2974 responses over a month, representing an excellent sample size of undergraduate students at Concordia. We will be cleaning and beginning to analyze the data in the next month for eventual publishing of the raw data set and accompanying report. There are many issues that I have noticed while appraising the data, which mostly can be attributed to some of my oversights with the forming of questions and in some cases will result in the removal of questions (and their accompanying datasets) because they have been rendered invalid. An example of this is in one case I accidentally inverted the scale of "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree" for a single question in a series of questions with the same answer structure, compromising the validity of the feedback. These kinds of errors, while unfortunate, are nevertheless expected consequences of the first rendition of the survey, and will hopefully be phased out in later attempts, should the GUS continue in future years. The incoming reports will outline all of these errors, the limits of the data, and other issues, and will be delivered to both council, the CSU's services, and the Center for Gender Advocacy (one of the primary stakeholders),

and eventually published on the site. The survey was designed with the long-term in mind, and will hopefully run in future years for the creation of an open-access longitudinal dataset on the students.

### 3.8.7 Data Projects - CSU Survey Application

The other half of the survey, namely the open-access data application being constructed by our contracted web developer (Muhammed), is well on its way to completion, and I have been able to meet with him on a semi-regular basis to keep tabs on its progress. This application will be hosted on the CSU's website, and will allow anyone to manipulate the survey data live and come to meaningful results, regardless of their background in statistics. The intention of this initiative is to allow student groups, associations, advocacy campaigns, and others to form empirical observations on student issues, and therefore bolster their insight into student needs.

The 'back end', which consists of the coding, manipulations, permissions and admin control, etc. is almost entirely complete, while the 'front end', or the user interface which will be displayed on our website, is near completion, pending an aesthetic overhaul by our graphics designers. I am confident that the application will be completed in time for the end of my mandate.

### 3.8.8 Community support – Divest Concordia

As a founding member of Divest Concordia, I was happy to work in the summer with the External & Mobilization Coordinator towards making divestment the annual campaign of the CSU. I worked with Divest Concordia primarily in the Fall semester, which ended with a CSU referendum campaign on divestment in November of 2016. I campaigned hard with the rest of the members of Divest for the mandate, and we were successful, with over 80% of students in favor of the CSU supporting divestment. I am happy to see the campaign grow and become more intersectional, and I plan on continuing to work with the group after the end of my mandate with the CSU.

### 3.8.9 Community support - Dish Project

The Dish Project is an initiative that provides free dishware to Concordia-based events and organizations at both campuses in order to reduce waste. Users of the service need only book the dishes, after which they designate a pickup/drop off point. They don't even have to wash the dishes themselves, as the project coordinators take care of that with their on-site dishwashers. The Dish Project was originally a working group with Sustainable Concordia, but they approached us in the fall for support, as Sustainable Concordia, which we have a long and positive relationship with, was moving in a new direction and was unable to financially support the project. I pursued and received a mandate from council to establish a contract with the Dish Project along the same lines as our existing contract with the Free Lunch, and spent several months working with the Dish Project Coordinator to write up a fair contract. In interest of full transparency, we put the reallocation of funds in a separate referendum question in the 2017 general elections for students to decide, and students overwhelmingly supported the funding of the project. We have since signed the contract, and now the CSU will fund the Dish Project through a contract donation to Sustainable Concordia, which will continue to host the service. It is my hope that the support of the CSU will increase use of the service by students and student groups on both campuses, and therefore improve the overall sustainability of Concordia.

### 3.8.10 Community support - Hive Café

Upon entering the CSU as an executive, I was obligated to fill the CSU's support member seat on the Hive Café Solidarity Cooperative's Board of Directors. At the time, the Hive was in a bit of a crisis, as

it was projecting a deficit of over \$100,000 at the end of the following year, and therefore needed to undergo major restructuring. My first work with the Hive was lending support to this process, which was ultimately, successful, as the Hive is now projecting a break-even surplus for the year. I spent the rest of my time with the organization primarily engaged in the marketing committee, in an attempt to promote the business as a model alternative to the corporate campus of Aramark.

### 3.8.11 Community support – CUTV

I joined the CUTV Board of Directors in October of 2016, as I have long been interested in film. I think it is important for CSU executives to sit on the boards of at least one fee-levy group, as they are the larger part of the Concordia community, and are highly engaged with students. In my time at the organization, I worked with reorganizing the policies and finances, and spearheading the purchasing of a camera drone, which we will be turning into a new service to film and promote Concordia events (Stinger's games, orientation, etc.) I plan on continuing to work with CUTV into the future, and look forward to where we can take the organization.

### 3.8.12 Events organizing

I spent a lot of time organizing different events at the Loyola and downtown campus, including with divest, the aforementioned audit, the anti-surveillance workshop/panel, and the climate clock panel. I will not go into detail on these (please refer to the "events" section), but I felt they were worth mentioning as they were both enjoyable to organize, and important for continuous engagement with the student body.

Overall, I have been honored to serve this past year as the Loyola Coordinator for the CSU. This position has given me a wealth of experience and insights which I know will continue to influence me in the years to come. I hope that the projects and direction of the union continue well into the future, and that the executives of the CSU continue to protect and promote student interests in collaboration with council, senate, and the wider Concordia Community.

## 4 Events

### 4.1 CSU Orientation 2016/2017 - Kick Off

#### 4.1.1 Fall Orientation 2016

Fall Orientation was a very large task to undertake. 29 events in 9 days was definitely a big challenge that I was only able to overcome with the tremendous help from my team. The Orientation Coordinators were the best teammates I could have wished for to spend the summer months planning Kick-Off.

The most important thing I can highlight in this report about orientation, is the importance of taking notes throughout the summer to help with the writing process of the post-mortem. Post-Mortem documents are essential for future teams to help them with their orientations and to prevent them from making the same mistakes.

For more information on Fall Orientation please consult the Post-Mortem.

#### 4.1.2 Winter Orientation 2017

Winter Orientation was a great success and a lot of fun to organize. After planning for fall orientation, we had gained a lot of experience and connections that greatly helped us plan the winter

orientation. The turnout at events were great. Students were excited to see there was an orientation for the winter semester and were excited to hear about opportunities for involvement. The best events in terms of student participation were the two tabling fairs - clubs & community - and the event hosting Juliana Huxtable in the D.B. Clark.

We strongly encourage future execs to plan a winter orientation and give every possibility to students for them to get to know the Concordia community as well as develop ties with other students. For more information on Winter Orientation please consult the Post-Mortem.

## 4.2 Gender-Neutral Bathroom hunt

There were two events that took place surrounding gender neutral bathrooms in October; the first was a panel on Gender Neutral Bathrooms moderated by Gabrielle Bouchard from the Centre for Gender Advocacy. We also brought in Johanna Fraser-Carrier from Ontario, who is pursuing her PhD in Communication and Culture at York University where her current research focuses on issues of gender representation in media. Her MA research focused on the problematics of the gender binary as it is manifested in our cultural architecture, with particular emphasis on gender accessible washrooms in public university spaces in Canada. We also brought two local speakers: Valerie Jeffcott and Julien Rose Johnson. Valerie Jeffcott is an activist and the former chairperson of The Hive, Dawson College's Gender Advocacy Centre. She spends her time studying linguistics, cooking, and hacking gender. Julien Rose Johnson is a 2nd year women's studies student at the Simone De Beauvoir Institute, a board member at the centre for gender advocacy and an active member in the trans activist community. They fought Dawson CEGEP's administration for 2 years to gain accessible gender neutral washrooms for the population of ten thousand students and currently write a trans rights column in the Concordia newspaper The Link.

The second event was a scavenger hunt across the Concordia campus that would compile all of the room numbers and accessibility information of each space in hopes of creating an app that would make information more readily available to those who require gender neutral bathrooms through a map of some kind. Unfortunately this event was not well attended, but the panel was very well received.

## 4.3 Organizing around anti-black racism

These past few years have served to expose the institutional racism that plagues North American societies, and although most people think these issues are exclusive to the United States, racism is alive and well in Canada. Here are some events that the CSU took part of or supported actively:

### 4.3.1 Hoodstock's Black Summit

Hoodstock is an initiative in Montreal Nord, which has a racialized population of 60%, around issues experienced by their racialized communities, as well as broader socio-political issues affecting society as a whole. Every year, for the past three years, they have organized a Black Summit, a day full of panels on Black histories, Black socio-political and economic issues, and intersectional perspectives on these issues as well activities and promotion of small racialized businesses. The Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator, in an effort to make the CSU more representative of Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Colour on campus and in the broader Montreal community, reached out to Ted Ruthland, a Geography and Urban Planning professor at Concordia and a main organizer for Hoodstock to offer the CSU's support, in any way the Hoodstock collective saw appropriate. The CSU's contribution to the event was mostly financial, as we only joined the project a few weeks before the event date. The External and Mobilization Coordinator as well as the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator have been in contact with two of

the main organizers of the Hoodstock and Montreal Noir collective to collaborate on further projects, and craft events for Concordia students and a campus environment.

#### 4.3.2 BIPOC Committee & Budget

Since the start of this executive team's mandate, the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator has been working on creating a budget for themselves, this effort was significantly slowed down throughout the first six months of the mandate, but the budget was finally approved by the Council of Representatives on November 23rd, 2016. This budget was first requested in an attempt by the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator to be able to fund and support their own projects as well as Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Colour initiatives and struggles, since the CSU is predominantly white and is very inaccessible to BIPOC individuals and organizations. Once the allocation of that money was approved, a change in the Standing Regulations was proposed by Policy Committee in order to ensure that the allocated amount of money would exclusively be used for BIPOC initiatives and issues, and the committee would exclusively be composed of racialized individuals and chaired by a racialized member of the CSU executive team. In the event that no racialized person is part of the executive team then the money would be added to the following year's budget line, ensuring that the money be used for BIPOC initiatives and be managed by BIPOC individuals. This will provide a secure source of support and funding for BIPOC initiatives on campus, without having to apply for funding from all-white or predominantly white committees and justify the need for money for BIPOC struggles, a practice which perpetuates problematic concepts of colonialism, racial hierarchy, and white supremacist power dynamics.

#### 4.4 Loyola Harvest celebration

The Loyola Harvest Celebration was an event organized primarily by the administration's office of External Affairs to celebrate the campus's 100th anniversary. It was the result of funding that was made available by the administration to be dispersed at the discretion of the Loyola Quartier committee, a group made of representatives from the campus. I worked with Paige, the core organizer, on general outreach for the event. This included working with the CSU's graphics designers on the designs, putting up posters, and delivering flyers to the surrounding community. The event was designed as an all-day outdoor celebration, and included activities for children (it was very family-oriented), a football game (Concordia Stingers vs McGill Redmen), a farmer's market, several meals, and many other activities.

Despite our best efforts, however, there was little we could do when an event that was designed from the beginning to be outdoor suffered a severe thundershower. While the activities were moved indoors for the most part, attendance suffered substantially and some events had to be cancelled altogether. The Stingers also lost the game 21 – 8. On a more positive note, we received plenty of good feedback from those that attended, which was primarily small families and members of the surrounding community. They expressed gratitude that Concordia hosted such an event, and inquired if there were plans to make this an annual celebration. Overall, I consider the Harvest Celebrations to have been unsuccessful due to unavoidable circumstance, but nevertheless to have had a positive impact on student and community life at the campus.

#### 4.5 HIV/AIDS rapid testing Clinic

The HIV/AIDS rapid testing clinic event was an event that had taken place last year at the Sex Exposition organized by CUPA. The testing clinic is organized by Health Services and they are the ones that approached me this summer to plan this event. We got together with CUPA and Queer Concordia to have this event bring as many groups on campus as possible. The testing clinic offers the opportunity

for students to get tested and have their results in less than 20 minutes. Usually students would have to wait a minimum of 10 days. The clinic also served to de-stigmatize getting tested. It is important that people feel comfortable getting tested and aren't scared of talking about it.

Due to the great success of the first two clinics in November/December, we decided to organize two more clinics: a third one in March downtown and one at Loyola in April. All clinics at the downtown campus were very successful. The clinic at Loyola did not attract as many people and the turn-out was less than we had hoped. This might have been caused by the lack of advertisements or the fact that the clinic was on the last day of the semester. I strongly recommend future teams to continue with this initiative.

#### 4.6 Connecting Landscapes

Connecting Landscapes is a pilot project that started in the Winter of 2016 as a tool to help build social sustainability on campus. The project aims to teach students about a social justice issue each year while allowing them to explore their creativity. No experience was required of participants. This year we will explore colonial resistance and are creating a final piece as a celebration of resilience. Inspired by the Mexican art collective Luz y Fuerza, we are making our own version of their open source projectors for a multimedia installation. The final art party is on May 1st. Speakers included Kenneth Canadian, Swarm, Florence Yee, and Malek Yalaoui. Two coordinators were hired for an honorarium to help build the projectors and support participants and speakers. Many thanks to Aidan Thorne and Christale Terris.

#### 4.7 Have your say

On the 16th of March, the Concordia Student Union and the Centre for Gender Advocacy partnered together to hold an event called "Have Your Say" in response to the higher education ministry of Quebec's consultations tackling sexual violence on campus. Higher Education Minister H  l  ne David announced in the Fall that by the end of March 2017 consultations would be conducted in Montreal, Quebec City, Gatineau and Saguenay. The Montreal consultation took place on March 20th.

Concordia students, staff, faculty and community members were able to give their input on how the provincial government and Concordia University could prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus both in person at this event and through a survey that was distributed online. At the event we provided a presentation by an AVEQ (Association for the Voice of Education in Quebec) representative who had been to some of the previous consultations to give more context to participants and get a better idea of what was happening on other campuses. The survey was sent out shortly after the event for those who couldn't make it or didn't feel comfortable discussing their experiences in an open space. The survey questions were the same as those used to spark discussion at the in-person event however the survey allowed for space to self-identify in whatever way the respondent felt comfortable doing in case it was pertinent to their answers.

The following were all the questions asked both in person and online:

1. Have you accessed support services at the university (Sexual Assault Resource Centre, Counselling and Development, Health Services, Ombudsperson, Office of Rights and Responsibilities, Security, etc.)? Did you find them helpful? Did you feel supported? Why or why not?

2. What would make you feel safer as part of the Concordia community? This could include the environment during social activities and in the context of studies.
3. What would you want to see changed in order for the university to manage complaints and reports of sexual violence more effectively?
4. What does justice in relation to sexual violence on campus look like for you?
5. In a perfect world, what should sexual violence prevention look like?
6. In a perfect world, what should survivor support look like at universities?

Accessibility to the downtown Hive Solidarity Co-op where Have Your Say took place was clear and there was contact information provided for those who had further questions. Unfortunately due to time restrictions and the campus closing due to the weather we were only able to publicize the event online.

Roughly 15 people participated at the event itself and 10 people responded to the survey. Often recommendations came from a place of personal and/or professional experience. Recommendations to both the Quebec Government and Concordia University were compiled together in one document that will hopefully give better guidance towards what kind of things they should be doing to support survivors.

#### 4.8 Winter Carnival

The Winter Carnival was an event planned on the hall terrace to kick-off Spring break and to celebrate winter.

The event included an inflatable dome that was used to have the bar and give a warm space for people to get shelter from winter. We had hoped to have inflatable games such as hockey and basketball but because of the snow, there wasn't enough space on the hall terrace. The Dean of Students office, which takes care of renting the hall building, did not take into account snow removal when giving us the space. This is something that must be planned ahead of time for a future event on the hall terrace in the winter. We also encountered an electrical problem where the dome, music and lighting were taking up too much electricity for the capacity of the hall terrace. The event had local DJs that all identified as female and had a VJ that was projecting on the psychology wall.

It was a great experience to plan an event outdoors in winter and I hope that this kind of event gains momentum throughout the years. I would suggest the future team to plan ahead of time and think about all the eventualities under winter conditions.

#### 4.9 Loyola Accessibility Audit

The Loyola Accessibility Audit was carried out on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Although predictably suffering from a low turnout (it was, after all, carried out at Loyola), it nevertheless was a success, and produced information on the campus that will guide future efforts towards sustainability.

After meeting and working with CURE on the accessibility audit form, we found it required a bit of an overhaul, as it was largely designed to be conducted before events and therefore had many irrelevant measures/categories (ex: inquiring about the use of smoke machines). The Loyola Committee worked to recreate the document to better suit the needs of an audit based at Concordia, which also



included adding a few categories recommended from meetings between CURE, the CSU Sustainability committee, and the CSU Loyola committee. The revamped form can be used as a template for all future audits, and for purposes of clarity includes a section to clearly indicate which area of the campus is being audited, as well as a map. It is the hope of the Loyola committee that this form will be put to use in the future, and we intend on having it uploaded to the CSU website in some fashion before the end of our mandate.

#### 4.10 Anti-Surveillance Panel & Workshop

In recent years, and following the Snowden revelations, more and more activist communities expressed a growing concern over their digital security. In the wake of the United States elections, these concerns ceased to be restricted to activist circles and began to include members of many more minority groups. The issue of government surveillance has transformed immensely in the past decade, as it is now a commonly known fact that the so-called 'Five-Eyes Alliance', which includes the United States as well as Canada, actively collects information on the internet and telephone communications of their entire collective citizenry. This information is often utilized in investigations immunized from democratic oversight, a process developed secretly in the United States and later replicated in Canada through the implementation of bill C-51.

The Anti-surveillance speaker series & workshop attempted to address all of the issues related to government and private surveillance, as well as basic practices of information security and threat-mapping. The panel included a broad diversity of voices, which covered the legal, technical, hands-on, and macro-vs-micro issues in relation to global surveillance. The panel was organized in collaboration with members of the CCLA (Canadian Civil Liberties Association), as well as other hacktivist organizers based in Montreal. The event was open to the public, and took place in March at the Concordia downtown campus.

The panel was designed as a short introduction to all the above-mentioned issues, but focused on the Q&A period. The reason for this was twofold, firstly because the breadth of the topic necessitated a summary, and secondly because people tend to have a wide variety of experiences in relation to surveillance that are often best addressed through a dialogue as opposed to an academic-style lecture. We had reached out to several potential panelists, perhaps most notably Biella Coleman, who is an anthropologist based at McGill, the world's foremost expert on Anonymous, and on the board of TOR – an anonymous internet browsing VPN.

The workshop immediately followed the panel, and was designed to be a more hands-on approach to the issue of surveillance. At the end of the workshop, we distributed security keys as a tangible takeaway to all the attendees. The security keys are designed for two-step verification processes, which requires anyone logging into their computer/email/security interface of their choice to verify their identity with a physical key – making their information extremely secure. These physical takeaways hopefully inspired the attendees to practice what they've learned, as well as further instilled the information presented.

#### 4.11 Climate Clock 2017

The Climate Clock 2017 was a panel discussion centered around climate change, and featuring a diversity of voices on the issue – both personal experiences and scientific analysis. The event was centered around a literal climate clock, which was produced by the Montreal-based artist David Usher

(who sat on the panel), and based on scientific research conducted here at Concordia by professor Damon Matthews. This clock represents an in-depth study of the literature on the climate crisis, which was used to develop a prediction for when we as a global community will surpass the 2C temperature limit. The 2C limit is recognized by the scientific community to be the point at which climate change's worst effects become irreversible, and so our trajectory towards this tipping point is a crucial part of any conversation on climate change. The panel discussion was designed to contextualize this abstract, impersonal scientific literature into tangible, highly personal narratives, and thereby transform people's perspectives on what climate change really means.

As was previously mentioned, the centerpiece of the panel was the climate clock, which depicted several metrics quantifying the time remaining before we hit the 2C limit. (The clock itself can be found by going to [climateclock.net](http://climateclock.net)). For the two-week period leading up to the panel, this clock was projected onto the building located at 2157 Rue Guy, which is just across from the GM building on Maisonneuve, using an industrial-grade projector rented from the company Playmind. This was the second year this initiative was carried out. In addition to the unprecedented capacity of the projector to depict the reality of climate change, the project was also shaped as an experiment in the usage of an industrial projector for the long-term interest of setting up a permanent installation.

The panel itself took place in H-110, on March 18. The speakers included David Usher (Montreal cultural figure who helped designed the clock), Clayton Thomas-Muller (an indigenous activist with 350.org based in Winnipeg), Corinne Le Qu  r   (Director of the Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research), Vanessa Gray (an Indigenous member of ASAP based in Sarnia). The event was moderated by Kristen Perry (Mobilization Coordinator for AVEQ).

## 5 Campaigns

### 5.1 Fossil fuels divestment

Divestment is the act of selling all of one's shares of a given company or type of asset for an explicit political or social reasons. Students demand that administrators no longer invest their endowments into companies that extract and profit from fossil fuel resources like coal, oil, or natural gas. As of December 2016, the total amount marked for divestment exceeded \$5 trillion, showing the incredible momentum of a campaign less than a decade old.

The fossil fuels divestment campaign has persisted at Concordia since 2013. The campaign was successful in quickly getting the CSU onboard, allowing for internal dialogue with the administration which resulted in the establishment of an SRI working group. With internal and external pressure on the administration, the campaigners managed to get a \$5 million commitment by Concordia to invest in SRI's (socially responsible investments)– a partial victory for the campaign. Since then, the membership of Divest Concordia has swelled, and many actions, demonstrations, workshops, and social events have taken the group a long way. The SRI working group has resurfaced as an official committee – the JSIAC, or Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee.

In June of 2016, council approved the fossil fuel divestment campaign to become the annual campaign of the CSU. This coincided with the creation of the CSU campaigns department, an expansion of the existing position of Campaigns Coordinator to include two part-time positions of Campaigns Assistant(s). In addition to these developments, Sustainable Concordia (a fee-levy organization on

campus) had similarly endorsed the divestment campaign, to the extent that the organization was working full-time with Divest Concordia and pushing for fossil fuels divestment. The fossil fuels divestment campaign entered the 2016 semester with a strong launch, with a summer 101 and integration into the CSU orientation. The outcome of this mobilization was a successful referendum campaign with the CSU, mandating the union to lobby for sustainable investment practices and actively support Divest Concordia.

For many campaigns, divestment from fossil fuels is only one pressure tactic in the broader struggle for environmental and social justice. The most effective campaigns make demands for real improvements in the lives of people being impacted by fossil fuel extraction and climate change – working in solidarity with frontline communities – along the way to divestment. This is the approach Divest Concordia has been increasingly adopting (including through participating in workshops such as ‘Divesting from white supremacy’ during the summer 101), a positive development that allows the intersectional roots of the climate crisis to become the focus of the campaign. As the highest representative student organization at Concordia, and with the most access to administration bodies, the CSU is in a strong position to advocate for fossil fuel divestment. Thanks to the successful referendum campaign, this task now bears the weight of a popular mandate. Students at Concordia continue to be the fulcrum of social and environmental justice initiatives, and it is up to future generations of students to ensure that this pressure continues, and real progress is made towards a more sustainable and socially-conscious university.

After the successful mobilization of the fall, the divestment has directed its energies outward along several axis. Student engagement has been ongoing, through tabling, and public art-making sessions. Quite a number of workshops were organized, on divestment and other climate justice issues, as well as on decolonization of activism.

No direct actions were organized on campus this session, but the people involved in the campaign took part in several protests organized in Montreal by other groups. The efforts of the campaign have been focused on reaching to and starting to apply pressure on the Foundation and the Board of Governors, through the sending of mail and postcards from students, and trying to approach them in their meetings. Unfortunately, since the tuition hikes demonstration the Board has cut itself even more from the people it is supposed to take care off, by increasing vastly the security presence around their meeting, blocking access to the whole floor of the GM building.

We also mobilized in collaboration with Sustainable Concordia for the Sustainability consultations organized by the university. Those follow the adoption by the Board of a Sustainability Policy for the university, and were supposed to guide the redaction of an action plan for the university to adopt in the fall. Despite not being on the agenda, divestment was an issue raised by so many of the attendees that it was added, and the strong mobilization for these consultations paid off.

This year has been a slow build up in terms of mobilization and pressure. Between Divest Concordia’s mobilization, the sustainability consultation, Université Laval pledging to divest, and other institutional progress, we are closer to achieve our goal, but it is now time to escalate tactics in order to force the desired change.

## 5.2 Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee (JSIAC)

The Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee (JSIAC) of the Concordia Foundation Board has met four times since the beginning of the CSU's 2016/17 mandate. Active student members of the JSIAC were comprised one representative from Divest Concordia, and one representative from the CSU; this year, the representative was General Coordinator Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis. Though the JSIAC - and the \$5 million 'green' investment portfolio it monitors - was originally borne from student-led pressure for the Foundation to divest from fossil fuels, the conversations and presentations have taken a broader look at the possibilities for sustainable investment. For example, in the fall of 2017 a presentation was given regarding the general potential of impact investment, and in the winter of 2017 representatives from the CSU, UTILE, and the PUSH Fund gave a well-received presentation on the CSU's cooperative housing project as a tangible example of Concordia- and Montreal-focused impact investment. However, representatives on the JSIAC have ensured that divestment remains a continual point of conversation.

In the summer of 2016, a presentation was given to the JSIAC by Divest Concordia member regarding divestment from fossil fuel portfolios by higher education institutions. Following this presentation, a research report from a Concordia graduate student was commissioned to explore sustainable investment strategies and case studies for universities. This report was presented to the JSIAC in the winter of 2017, and was encouraging in its outlook for divestment as a scenario forward. At the most recent meeting of the JSIAC at the end of March 2017, the agenda was dedicated to the initial conversations for actually crafting recommendations for the Board - fulfilling the "advisory" mandate of the Advisory Committee - and this conversation unsurprisingly focused on divestment. There will be a final meeting during the 2016/17 CSU mandate of the JSIAC in late May, and the Committee will hear back from the Board's Investment Committee regarding these aforementioned conversations at the JSIAC level. There is potential for the Concordia Foundation to take further steps on the road to full divestment, but pressure will need to continue from both the CSU and from broader student campaigns in order to maintain divestment as a priority from the Concordia community.

## 5.3 International tuition hikes

Since 2008, six programs of study have been deregulated for international students in the province of Quebec: engineering, computer science, business, law, mathematics, and pure sciences. Deregulated means that tuition fees in these programs are no longer set by the Quebec government, but left at the discretion of the universities themselves, and that for these programs the universities can keep the entirety of the tuition fees collected, whereas in regulated programs they are bound to share these revenues with the provincial network.

During the fall, the CSU became aware that the University was planning to increase the tuition fees in these programs at Concordia. Despite repeated calls for clarification, the University administration refused to divulge any substantial detail about these increases, which it had been planning under the name of "cohort pricing." For more information about cohort pricing and the concerns it raised financially and academically for impacted international students, visit [csu.qc.ca/tuitionhike](http://csu.qc.ca/tuitionhike).

As soon as we became aware that the University was planning to adopt these increases during the fall, for implementation in the fall 2017, we reached out to the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the faculty student associations in order to present a unified front. The Association for a Voice in Education in Quebec (AVEQ) also offered a much needed support throughout the campaign. As the Concordia administration had refused to release any information, displaying a stunning lack of

transparency, and took the route of foregoing both student and Senate consultation on the matter, the CSU's duty towards its membership was to defend international students' access to education.

We launched a campaign to inform and mobilize undergraduate students around this issue, and hired two international students to help us in these efforts. Information material was produced, pamphlets, posters, as well as a social media campaign. We organised several information sessions on the downtown campus, and at Loyola. In collaboration with the Engineering and Computer science Association (ECA) we organised a town hall on the Hall building mezzanine, so as to offer a platform for students who were otherwise given no venue to speak up their concerns. Along with CSU organised campaigns activities, we also supported independent efforts by students, such as the Red Day organised by a JMSB student on the day the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors was scheduled to approve the proposal.

Despite all our calls for open discussion and transparency, the Concordia administration decided to go ahead and present the proposal for approval to the Board of Governors on December 14, releasing this proposal to the public only two days before the meeting. We cannot but find this timing suspect, in the middle of the exams period when students are focused on their finals. A last ditch effort to have the issue addressed institutionally at the Senate by student representatives was shut down once again by the administration.

The day of the Board meeting, we organized a demonstration to protest both these tuition increases and the deplorable process the administration had chosen to take. As a few students courageously took it on themselves to picket the meeting to have the proposal deferred until proper consultation had been done, the protest moved to the administration building. Nevertheless, the meeting took place, but the proposal was narrowly defeated, failing to reach the 60% threshold to pass.

We are relieved that the implementation of these tuition increases was averted for this year, but it is a dire warning for the upcoming years. We can expect that the Concordia administration will present a similar proposal again next year. Sadly, this inscribes itself in an ever-increasing logic of the privatization of our education system, where such decisions are left in the hands of the corporate interests that have a majority on Concordia's Board of Governors.

It is in order to address this structural issue that we have commissioned a research report on Alternative and Equity Governance, so that the CSU will in the future be better equipped to push for a more democratic, inclusive, and transparent Board of Governors.

At the time of this writing, no further proposal to increase the tuition fees for international was submitted to the Board. There remain two Board meetings however, in May and in June, and we can only hope that Concordia will not take the disastrous route they chose in 2008 and 2010 when they voted on increases in June, which had the effect that some students had to go back to their country upon arrival, due to their inability to pay the fees, as they were higher than what they had signed up for.

Mobilization at the local level must continue, but the solution to these hikes can only be found at the provincial level, with the abrogation of the deregulation. Sadly, this is not the route the government seems to want to take, as a report published in February advocated for the extension of the deregulation to all programs of study for international students. This is why we have made it a priority through our work with AVEQ, which has already commissioned a research on the subject, and should commission several more.

Ceci n'est qu'un début, continuons le combat!

## 6 Accessibility

Accessibility can mean many things in relation to the CSU. Web accessibility, physical accessibility, and social accessibility are all topics that the executive have had on our minds throughout our mandate.

The Sustainability Coordinator and the Loyola Coordinator were in contact with the Access Centre for Students with Disability, which was more than willing to help us reach out to students with access needs. We've been able to take in their feedback on our web accessibility to post our community handbook and agenda in PDF format to better serve the visually impaired and those who have certain learning disabilities. We have also updated our "Resources" page to be much easier to navigate and are hoping to make much bigger changes in the future on our website to not only update it but also to make information more accessible and easier to understand.

As mentioned before, in terms of physical accessibility, one measure we took was to lower one of the phones on the 7th floor and we have drafted a Scent-Free Policy for our office spaces and services. We are also in the process of changing the front door of the Hall 7th floor office to be automatic.

In terms of events; part of the gender-neutral bathroom campaign focused on accessibility in that it took into account physical accessibility and parental accessibility. During the Winter Semester, the Loyola Coordinator held an accessibility audit of the Loyola campus with the help of CURE, QPIRG and the Sustainability Coordinator.

Some members of the executive met with architects that are working on making the University more accessible. We inquired as to the possibility of making the Loyola Hive more accessible through a chair lift or elevator, but as the university's willingness to invest in the renovations and power capacity of the SP building has not changed we were not able to make any changes on that front.

On a different note, inclusivity is also something we focused on as an accessibility issue. Through the adoption of different positions, budget lines and committees we tried to reach out to as many marginalized groups on campus as much on campus to let them know that their voices and engagement are valued at the CSU. The 15\$ minimum wage mandate, the intersectional feminist position, the efforts in creating a black studies program, the BIPOC budget line and committee, etc. were all attempts at making the CSU more accessible in their own way.

## 7 Outreach

### 7.1 Student Handbook 2016/17

The Student Agendas are distributed for free every year by the CSU, and are one of its primary outreach tools to undergraduate students. They provide information about the CSU, its services and campaigns, student groups, the university, tuition and other fees, and resources on campus. In addition to the Student Agenda, we also produced a Community Handbook, which offers more detailed information about every student group on campus as well as university resources.

In total, we printed 13,500 Agendas and 3,000 Community Handbooks. They were available throughout the year at the CSU receptions, but the main distribution periods were the fall and the winter Orientation. Unfortunately, despite reducing the quantities from last year, we did not manage to distribute as many Agendas as we had projected. To ensure a good distribution we partnered with the Libraries, but we would recommend trying to also partner with the Bookstores, and reducing the quantities by at least 2,500 copies. The increasing use of online agendas may require to further reduce the number of copies in the future, and we would recommend assessing the feasibility of an online version.

The completion of the Agenda as well as the Community Handbooks was a huge undertaking. We compiled texts and documents on various important resources students need on campus, on ways to get involved and ongoing campaigns, as well as financial information. We also gave honorariums to students to write the monthly political pieces that we inserted at the end of every month so that students can inform themselves on various topics, ranging from hetero/cissexism and accessibility all the way to migrant justice and climate justice. Following last year's example, we also included an updated map of both Concordia campuses with a list of all the gender neutral and wheelchair accessible washroom available.

As has been the case for some years now, it was decided that we would not include any for-profit corporate advertisement in the agenda and only invite advertisement from Concordia services and non-profit organizations. In adopting this strategy we successfully raised \$8,500 in ad revenue and were able to give off 8 free page advertisement spaces to non-profit groups on and off campus. This also allows the Agendas to be aesthetically pleasing, compared to many student agendas that are more of an ads magazine than an item to be enjoyed by the students. In interest of giving better visibility to the Concordia community, free banner spaces were also provided to fee-levy groups.

## 7.2 Communications

The communications positions has been closely integrated with the graphic designs team in order to have a uniform message about the CSU that is communicated to the members. This new shift, has been possible highly due to the office move that we did in the beginning of our mandate. We strongly suggest to keep the communications coordinator in the same office as the graphic designers so they can continue to work together.

Newsletters have been going out every week with events from the CSU or groups on campus. The theme of the newsletter is modified if there is a campaign in the CSU or a special event.. The communications coordinator is also responsible for answering facebook and twitter comments and messages. This helps the executive team tremendously with answering students as fast as possible.

The CSU relies heavily on digital media to communicate with students. The facebook account is definitely the most used account. The team is constantly trying to improve the website visually but also its organization. There is so much content on the website that it is easy to get lost and become impatient for students who are looking for something specific.

## 7.3 Office Hours

Throughout the year, each executive maintained the 4 open office hours per week, where students can drop in without an appointment to ask questions related to each executive's portfolio and request information about CSU's operations. Very few students came to these office hours, and many of

those who did are already involved in the CSU (such as Councillors or Standing Committee members). This means that, in their current state, office hours are less of an outreach tool for connecting with new CSU members, and more of a tool for giving involved students additional information.

Though office hours are posted on the CSU website and near the offices, it is possible that students do not know when they are. However, it is also possible that students simply ask their questions at CSU Reception or online, regardless of time. Future executives may wish to more heavily advertise office hours, or focus on other forms of outreach to connect with members.

## 7.4 Poster Space and TVs

Throughout at least the past decade at Concordia, the administration has systematically been removing poster boards from the Hall building in the downtown campus, while poster space at the Loyola campus has been left to deteriorate. This results in increasingly limited outreach for student and community groups, an issue that already plagues too many associations, clubs, and campaigns. On the same note, organizational outreach has slowly been evolving to digital formats – social media has become one of the dominant form of communication to students and student groups. To accommodate the newer digital formats, pushing for new poster boards must include pushing for increased space for digital outreach – namely television screens.

With this in mind, we put back in commission the two television screens on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor to advertise the CSU services and generate outreach for key events/campaigns. We hope to work with community groups well into the future to continue setting up television screens on multiple floors and in multiple buildings, enabling an increased capacity for student and community groups at Concordia to reach out to the student body.

For the downtown campus, efforts are currently being made to increase the poster space in the Hall building, which will be developed with the renovations already planned for the building. The conversations on this topic are ever-evolving, and will carry over into the next mandate, but we hope to at the very least have a small increase in the amount of poster space at the downtown campus, and the placement of a few additional television screens. The Loyola campus, as indicated in the Loyola Coordinator report, is already a point of conversation with the administration regarding increased poster space.

# 8 Clubs

## 8.1 Clubs Finances

Club budgets underwent only slight adjustments since last year. As an addition to the club budget tracking software, a column has been added in order to track hospitality bookings. This made it significantly easier to know how much money clubs spend on room booking charges. The current structure of club finances is somewhat lacking in transparency. Budgets of individual clubs are separated from the regular budget that is monitored by the Finance Coordinator. In order to address these issues, the Finance Coordinator and the Clubs Coordinator will be investigating alternative ways of managing club finances.

## 8.2 New Clubs

The clubs and space committee has approved the creation of the following new clubs:



- Indigenous Student Council
- Mauritius Club
- Iraqi Student Association
- Concordia Film Union
- Moot Law Society
- Collabradatory
- Artopia
- Concordia Data Intelligence Club

### 8.3 Clubs Communication

The Clubs Coordinator sends out newsletters approximately once every two weeks to every club e-mail address. In the newsletters, we include reminders for funding body deadlines, such as CCSL and Sustainability Action Fund. Whenever the CSU is working on an important initiative (for example the international student tuition fee hike) we reach out to all of the clubs in order to encourage them to get involved with our campaigns.

## 9 Project updates

### 9.1 Housing Update

In February 2017, it was publicly announced that the City of Montreal would be investing \$500,000 in the PUSH (Popular University Student Housing) Fund, the rotating fund from which the CSU Housing Project is being made possible, and which the CSU provided an initial investment of \$1.85 million in the spring of 2016. The details of the CSU Housing Project were also made public at the same time: with leases anticipated to start in the summer of 2018, the Housing Project will be located in the Plateau-Mount-Royal borough on Papineau Avenue, between Rachel and Sherbrooke streets and immediately facing the east end of Park Lafontaine. The Housing Project will be high-quality new build, with 150 beds available perpetually below average market rates and the ability for tenants to manage their own collective living conditions, with priority given to active CSU members for all spaces.

The General Coordinator has been meeting regularly with representatives of UTILE and has been in frequent communication with members of the housing project's provisional committee in order to receive updates and provide feedback on the future CSU housing project. Earlier this year, much of that communication and feedback regarded the logistics of final location, room design and disbursement as it would relate to demand and to overall price modulation, and developing institutional and policy-based foundations for the CSU and UTILE's continued partnership. UTILE and the PUSH Fund continue to receive new major sources of investment external to the CSU.

Members of the CSU Executive have been meeting with members of both UTILE and of HOJO to make sure that the Project is moving forward with its initial mission of accessibility and empowerment for Concordia undergraduate students at its core, and well as ensuring that the Project is in line with the needs and realities of our student body. We have also been drafting a promotional contract between UTILE and the CSU with an eye to maintaining into the future the partnership and shared responsibility for the Project after it is completed.

During the winter of 2017, the CSU again partnered with UTILE in the dissemination of their PHARE (Prospection des Habitudes et Aspiration Residentielles Etudiantes) market survey to our undergraduate members, in order to contribute to valuable data on housing challenges and realities for students across the province. The findings from the 2017 report will build on the analysis from the 2014 PHARE survey, providing longitudinal data not only useful to the CSU in the future regarding our own students' needs, but for the broader challenge of ensuring adequate and affordable housing for students throughout Quebec.

## 9.2 Daycare Update

As our mandate began in June 2016, the Daycare permit application had already been submitted to the Ministère de la Famille, so all there was to do for the current executive team was to change the application's name holders from the previous to the current Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator and the General Coordinator. The AAC and General Coordinator also had to be investigated by the Service de Police de la Ville de Montreal to complete the application, as no holder of a daycare permit can have criminal charges (past or present).

In early November, we got word from our assigned case worker from the Ministère that upon making some mandatory architectural changes, we had officially received the CSU daycare permit. Our General Manager then started looking for quotes for the demolition of the space the CSU acquired for the daycare. We were concerned with the construction happening on Bishop street, as it might slow down our efforts on the daycare, so we met with the University administrators and the city's representatives to coordinate our efforts to make sure the city's construction would not interfere with ours. All relevant decisions were sent to council for approval.

As of now, demolition of the building is over and we are receiving quotes for starting construction. In the meantime, we have continued receiving emails and calls from interested student-parents, all of whom are now on the mailing list for the Daycare. The Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator has also contacted the Early Childhood and Elementary Education program at Concordia University in order to have them consult on the next steps we will have to take, this included having to send out a job offer for a Daycare Coordinator, the types of activities that will be adopted and integrated into the Daycare's day-to-day, etc.

In mid-February, the Academic Affairs and Advocacy with the help of the Communications Coordinator started organizing outreach efforts for the upcoming opening of the CSU Daycare. A 'game-plan' was created for the signing up campaign, to hire staff, etc. This work will probably not be finished by the end of our mandate, and will have to be passed along to the incoming Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator during our training in May.

## 10 Elections

### 10.1 Bylaw Changes

Amendments to the Special Bylaw I of the CSU Bylaws - which governs both the levy of CSU fees from its membership and the admissible uses of the Student Spaces, Accessible Education, and Legal Contingency (SSAELC) Fund - was submitted to approval by the membership through referendum in the November By-election of 2016. These amendments provided for some housekeeping in the admissible uses of the Fund, and the creation of a Community Action Fund.

The housekeeping amendments erased mentions of the former Union Building Fund, already defunct and superseded by the SSAELC Fund, and of the separate uses still outlined between these two funds. This allowed to clarify the admissible uses of the SSAELC Fund.

The Community Action Fund, constituted by this Bylaw amendment, will enable the CSU to provide financial support to on and off-campus initiatives supported by its Position Book. It will be constituted of up to \$50,000 annually drawn from the interests generated by the SSAELC Fund, and will be operational as of June 1st, 2017. The CSU Policy committee will develop policies during the winter semester to ensure the proper administration of this Fund.

## 10.2 November By-Elections

In the fall of 2016, the CSU Council of Representatives appointed Stephani Moukhaiber as Chief Electoral Officer of the Union, prior to the November by-elections. From the CEO report for these by-elections, as submitted to Council for approval in January 2017:

- The Arts and Science Councilors elected were: Sara Betinjaneh, Rowan Gaudet, Agunik Mamikonyan, Julia Sutura Sardo, April Tardif-Levesque.
- The School of Business Councilor elected was: Omar Riaz

The following referendum questions were approved:

- “Do you agree to increase the fee levy of QPIRG Concordia by 8 cents per credit to a total of 39 cents per credit indexed to inflation in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for Canada, effective January 2017?”
- “Do you, as a Concordia undergraduate student, agree with Divest Concordia's demand that Concordia University remove all its investments that are currently tied to the fossil fuel and related industries and reinvest this money in a socially and environmentally responsible manner?”
- “Do you, as a Concordia undergraduate student, mandate the Concordia Student Union to actively support the fossil fuels divestment campaign on campus until such time as Concordia University commits to full divestment from fossil fuels and related industries?”
- “Do you, as a Concordia undergraduate student, agree with the amendment to the CSU Special Bylaw I, as outlined in the document “Amendment to Special Bylaw I”?”
- A total of 635 students voted

## 10.3 Implications of key referendum questions

### 10.3.1 Migrant Justice

Following the presence of two CBSA agents on the downtown campus in November, allegedly looking for information on a student, the CSU adopted a number of positions in favour of people's right to freedom of movement, and against the presence of immigration agents on campus, as well as the sharing of any information with immigration services.

The position for Concordia to become a sanctuary campus successfully passed by referendum at the occasion of the March General elections, confirming the student body's will to have Concordia neither allow CBSA agents on its premises, nor share any information on its students, staff, and faculty to immigration services. The CSU also adopted the Solidarity City declaration, and is currently in the process of implementing it to the best of its abilities.

### 10.3.2 CUSACORP referendum

This year's CSU annual Elections saw a referendum question asking students to remove Special By-Law C from the CSU By-Laws. Special By-Law C pertained to CUSACORP, a CSU subsidiary who used to be in charge of Reggies before its renovation. CUSACORP was dissolved and no longer exists, meaning that Special By-Law C was no longer relevant or applicable. Striking it from the By-Laws was administrative work for the Executives of the CSU, the course of action to take after CUSACORP was dissolved.

### 10.3.3 Financial Changes

**Question:** Do you as a member of the CSU approve of the following reorganization of fees currently levied by the CSU, effective for the Fall semester of 2017: A decrease in CSU Clubs of \$0.06 per credit, an increase in the CSU operating fee of \$0.05 per credit, an increase in HOJO of \$0.03 per credit, an increase in Advocacy of \$0.02 per credit, and a decrease in SSAELC of \$0.04 per credit.

Changes resulting from this question:

	2016-17 Fees	Projected 2017-18 Fees after CPI	Proposed Increase (decrease)	Projected 2017-18 Fees after Changes
Operations	1.99	2.02	<b>0.05</b>	2.07
Clubs	0.25	0.26	<b>(0.06)</b>	0.20
HOJO	0.20	0.21	<b>0.03</b>	0.24
LIC	0.17	0.17	0.00	0.17
Advocacy	0.21	0.22	<b>0.02</b>	0.24
SSAELC	1.01	1.03	<b>(0.04)</b>	0.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.91</b>

This question arose from a structural surplus in clubs and projected structural deficit in other departments. In past years, the clubs department has not come close to using its entire annual fee-levy, culminating in a projected \$87,700 surplus this year alone. This, coupled with increasing expenses in other departments, namely in salaries, prompted the Finance Coordinator to research a new fee-levy structure which would more accurately meet the needs of all departments while allowing for expansion of services in future years.

The question is designed to return the projected operations surplus to 2%, a number used in past years to provide a buffer for unexpected projects and expanded initiatives, while keeping a projected \$30,000 surplus in clubs, allowing for new clubs to form and for existing clubs to expand. While small deficits are projected in HOJO, LIC, and Advocacy, they may be mitigated by careful financial management and, if necessary, offset using funds from Operations.

## 11 Internal Bodies

### 11.1 Senate

Senate is Concordia's highest decision making body on all issues of Academic Governance. It is composed of 53 voting members, 12 of which are undergraduate students. The undergraduate representatives of Senate are either elected or appointed by Council. All of the Senators become members of the CSU's Academic Caucus. The CSU General Coordinator and the Academic Affairs and Advocacy

Coordinators are appointed to Senate by the Standing Regulations. The AAC also oversees and directs the work of the Academic Caucus.

The Fall 2016 semester has been an eventful one on the university Senate. The Ad Hoc Committee on Senate Eligibility Requirements presented their recommendation to Senate; that, to be eligible to sit on Senate, student senators must be enrolled in a program (therefore excluding independent students) and must be in good standing. It was voted in with a simple majority, and adopted at the next Board of Governors meeting on December 14th. Amongst the three elected undergraduate Senate representatives, three councilors were appointed to Senate, and three representatives were appointed by the CSU's appointment committee.

Much of this year at Senate has been oriented towards curriculum changes, each undergraduate senator going through their own Faculty's changes. So far, Senate has distinguished itself not by what it addressed, but by what it did not address. Senate has failed to give any update on the Strategic Directions, making the last time it was brought up to Senate, May 2016, it has also failed to answer questions arising from appointment of the Provost Interim as Provost. Finally, it failed to answer the undergraduate Senator's questions concerning the International Student Tuition Hike, and even silenced the topic altogether.

As for the Winter Semester, Student Senators were able to intervene on less contentious issues as well as standing in solidarity with other members of the University, such as some professors from the History Department trying to use Senate for its main purpose, as a platform to discuss academic issues. Their issue was concerning the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies, one of Concordia's Research Unit, and the appointment of a non-academic member of the university as its Coordinator. Undergraduate Student Senators were able to lend their support in giving the professors who approached us with speaking rights, follow up questions to the administration's deflected answers, and introducing the concept of using Senate as a platform for all members of the university when it came to academic affairs, an avenue not only used by undergraduate Student Senators.

Finally, many efforts were also made to invite graduate Student Senators to this year's Academic Caucus, but unfortunately, we were not able to collaborate with graduate students as much as we could have.

## 11.2 Board of Governors

The CSU representatives on the Concordia Board of Governors this year have been Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis as primary undergraduate Governor, and Terry Wilkings as appointed alternate Governor. Lucinda as of December 2016 has been a member of the Board's Real Estate committee and its Governance and Ethics committee, and Terry Wilkings has been a member of its Finance Committee and its Executive Committee.

In lieu of an official meeting, the annual Board retreat was held on January 19 2017, which this year was a thematic afternoon concerning the University's "Get Your Hands Dirty" Strategic Direction, manifested through conversations on co-op programs and internships and how they can be better integrated at Concordia and in its curriculum. We were able to speak directly to and hear from the experiences of students, which was the most crucial part of the afternoon.

Though the tuition hike for undergraduate international students in deregulated programs failed at the December 2016 Board of Governors meeting, the undergraduate representatives have maintained the CSU's position of its untenability should a similar proposal be presented again. We have as of yet been unable to determine what the University's administration's plans are for rectifying their deficit, but the current undergraduate representatives' terms do not end until Fall 2017 and so the current vigilance will continue. However, it is imperative that the CSU in the next year - and the years to come - remain aggressive and steadfast in upholding their given positions for accessible education at the Board level, in whatever guise it may appear.

There has also been concern, especially from student Governors, regarding the increased security for the Board, as of the first regular meeting of 2017 on March 8. At both the March and April meetings, increased security have been present on the lobby of the GM building and on the floor where meetings are held, with access to this floor during meeting times provided by an exclusive elevator with ID checks and a security guard present. Originally, this was contextualised within heightened security concerns in the week following the events of March 1, however at the April Board meeting it was more or less confirmed that these measures have been in response to the student-led efforts to communicate to Governors the widespread discontent regarding the proposed tuition hikes before the December 14 2016 meeting. The student Governors, as well as some faculty and external Governors, are concerned by this - particularly in light of current concerns regarding the transparency and accessibility of the Board to the community that it makes decisions on behalf of - and we recommend to incoming student Governors that they actively encourage a Board culture which is less afraid of interacting with the members that it represents.

### 11.3 Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL)

The Concordia Council on Student Life is a University chaired committee that looks at student services and gives funds to student projects. There are more administration seats than student seats on this board which make it difficult for students to try and impose changes. This committee is mostly used as a transparency tool for the University but transparency is often lacking since documents are diluted before being brought forward.

Secondly, student requests are not heard with as much importance as it should - a committee that oversees student life should give more importance to student voices. We strongly encourage future teams to continue to participate at this committee and to challenge the administration.

### 11.4 Library Service Fund Committee (LSFC)

The Library Services Fund Committee is composed at parity of undergraduate students and university staff, and administers the use of the Library Services Fund, which collects a fee of \$1 per credit "for the purpose of providing additional or improved library resources." These services include among others the 24-hour access to both Vanier and Webster libraries, the course reserve rooms, and the laptop/tablet loan program.

The past year saw the expansion of the laptops and tablets fleet, the extension of the laptop loan period to 8 hours, and the introduction of 3 days' loans for laptops at Webster. We are waiting on the results of the portable standing desk pilot project, and the possibility of implementing napping spaces in the libraries is still under review.

A new branding and communication strategy has been implemented, as well as a new, more user friendly website, to improve the visibility of its services, or rather its provider. This is important as students pay directly for the service through the fee-levy mentioned above.

Talks about the modalities of an eventual renewal of the contract through referendum are ongoing, as the agreement that created the LSFC will expire in the fall 2019.

For more information on the Library Services Fund, please visit: [library.concordia.ca/about/lisfc](http://library.concordia.ca/about/lisfc)

## 12 External bodies

### 12.1 AVEQ

The Association for a Voice for Education in Quebec (AVEQ) is a new provincial student association of which the CSU is a founding member. Since its official founding in May 2015, AVEQ has increasingly shown the relevance and need for a third provincial association that is able and willing to carry the voices of those associations that too often have been left on the margins of the student movement: the Anglophone and regional student associations.

The CSU, AGE CAR (Rimouski), and MAGE-UQAC (Chicoutimi), are currently members of AVEQ, and on its board of directors. Prospective members and observers around the table include the GSA, associations from McGill, UQAM, Trois-Rivières, Québec City, the ETS, and Sherbrooke. More affiliation campaigns are expected in the fall 2017.

Since its foundation, AVEQ has held four Member's Assemblies, in July and October, January, and April. At these occasions the member associations deliberate and define AVEQ's campaigns, researches, priorities, and strategies in its defense of students' interests. Over the course of the semester AVEQ has been offering a refreshing alternative to the voice of the UEQ, a student federation created from the collapse of the FEUQ in 2015, with its advocacy for free education. AVEQ also organized a Mobilization Camp in October for students of its member associations, where a multitude of workshops and presentations on social justice issues and the student movement were held over a weekend near Shawinigan.

AVEQ has been implementing its annual campaigns against austerity, for climate justice, and against sexual aggressions on campus throughout the semester by supporting and relaying initiatives on local campuses. Their help and support in our campaign against the tuition hikes for international students in deregulated programs of study was decisive both on the ground and in terms of coverage. Likewise, they did an excellent job of informing us and representing our positions at the occasion of the consultations on sexual violences on campuses organized by the Ministry of Education this spring, by working closely with groups of survivors, and putting their voices at the centre of their representation.

In terms of research, their research on the mandatory health plans for international students has been completed, and AVEQ has held several press conference on the subject, as well as started lobbying the government for access to the RAMQ for international students. A research on the impacts of austerity on regional universities, and one on the potential impact of the Energy East pipeline project have been completed, and will be published shortly, and other research projects have launched, on

intellectual property protection for students, democratization of data access, and on the deregulation of programs of study.

Two more affiliation campaigns took place this year, from the GSA, which was unsuccessful in our view due to a lack of proper mobilization, and from MAGE-UQAC which succeed.

At the occasion of the last Assembly, a full executive team was elected for the upcoming year, and two annual campaigns chosen, for climate justice and for accessibility to education.

We are glad to see that after two consecutive years of work and involvement on CSU and the other associations' part, our efforts have paid off. As an organization, AVEQ is now in a position where it is sustainable, financially, in terms of membership, and also in terms of culture of active collaboration, both between AVEQ and its member associations and between the associations themselves. For those familiar with the Quebec student movement, it was no easy task to open a third way, which would enable the voices of the region and the anglophones to be represented.

## 12.2 Burritoville

The CSU holds a seat as a supporting organization on the board of directors of the Burritoville Solidarity Co-op. Due to financial difficulties the Co-op had to close in June 2016. Despite the fact that the Co-op is no longer active, its legal structure remain as outstanding debts need to be dealt with. A smaller board structure was adopted in June to reflect this status, and later in the summer the CSU granted it funding to cover legal costs incurred in the closing process. We followed up throughout the year with the Co-op to offer support, and expanded the mandate of our initial grant to allow it to repay the remaining debts it owed to the government.

## 12.3 CEED

CEED (Community. Empowerment. Education. Development.) is a fee-levy at Concordia that had a seat reserved for the CSU on their Board of Directors. Unfortunately, this year, no executive or councilor presented themselves in the goal of representing the CSU on the CEED Board. We hope that in the future this seat will be filled as it is very important to maintain relationships with fee-levy organizations.

## 12.4 FEUQ

The Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec (FEUQ) is a provincial student association, now defunct, of which the CSU is still technically a member. The FEUQ ceased all political activities in 2015 and is no longer collecting fees, and we are now represented by AVEQ. Members of the CSU executive team attended the FEUQ's Annual General Meeting in September, in which the disposal of its archives and remaining assets was presented, which needed to be finalized before the organization's complete dissolution. This process has been lengthy, considering the 25 years of existence of the organization, and opaque, which is in line with its reputation.

## 12.5 Hive Café

The Hive Café was facing a difficult situation at the beginning of the 2016 fall semester – it had run a consistent monthly deficit throughout the 2015/16 year, which was only offset by subsidizing contributions from several organizations (including the CSU). However, these subsidies were not projected to continue, and regardless could not be factored into the financial sustainability of a serious business model. Restructuring of the café – both in financial practices as well as in operations – was the



obvious solution, which was developed between the CSU, the Hive Board, and other stakeholders. These adjustments were difficult in that they involved the lowering of wages for workers and coordinators alike, which went against the values of both the CSU and the Hive, but were deemed necessary for the overall continuation of the co-op. In addition to this, the final disbursement of the initial start-up loan to the Hive from the CSU was restructured to be issued out in separate payments, contingent on the financial sustainability of the new business model.

As these changes were set to take place in September, we have since had four months to review their effects on the Hive's bottom line. We are pleased to say that these changes have been overwhelmingly effective, with the café ending each month with a surplus of several thousand dollars. These developments will hopefully push the wages to increase over time, and allow the Hive to flourish as both a sustainable food provider and an exemplary employer – setting the bar for the corporate food providers on campus.

Following the multiple mandates by both the membership and council on the topic of sustainable food practices, the CSU will continue to support the Hive in a financially responsible and socially conscious manner. However, we would like to stress that this support should avoid direct subsidizations, so as not to infringe on the observable feasibility of the café's business model. The eventual aim of this model is for students to encroach on Concordia's food system as a whole – territory presently dominated by multinational corporate food providers (IE Aramark). This would open the food supplier bidding process for a system that is local, healthy, sustainable, and student-controlled. With the continued success of the Hive Café's business model, we are encouraged that this goal may not be as far off as it would otherwise seem.

## 12.6 Reggie's

Reggie's will be celebrating its first year as a Solidarity Cooperative in June 2017. This past year, has definitely been a learning curve for the board of directors, the management, the staff and the members as to the new functioning and culture at Reggie's.

The board has been working very hard this year to try and implement as many changes and procedures as possible but still has a lot of work ahead. It is, for the majority of the board members, the first time we are managing a restaurant/bar and this has resulted in a very steep learning curve.

The board's focus during the second half of the year has been towards building solid grounds and procedures for the future. It is important to have clear processes and goals to ensure a smooth transition with the next incoming board members in November. The board has also been working on the transparency and accountability. We wish to have everything in place by this summer so that members can become a lot more aware of the decisions that are taken. We have been publicizing the meeting times on Facebook to encourage members to attend but very few members have been coming. Like any restaurant/bar, there is a lot of work that needs to be accomplished. The board really hopes that the bar will continue to be inclusive and work on becoming an even greater safer space for students to feel comfortable.

## 12.7 Sustainability Action Fund

The Sustainability Action Fund celebrated its tenth year as a fee-levy group this past spring. As two representatives of the CSU are required to sit on the SAF board, we were happy to support them

through their week of events. We specifically helped them with the Room To Grow Event with was a talk by Equiterre founder followed by a panel of alumni and community members that discussed the past 10 years of sustainability at Concordia.

On the front of the organization itself, this year was one of the first in a while in which we nearly reached the limit of the budget allocated towards special projects which is good as it means that we as a board have been budgeting properly. Projects we have funded include the Concordia Creative Reuse Centre, the CEED Photo Series and much more. The organization is going to have a visioning this summer to re-evaluate the fund's strategic direction as we go into a new decade of funding sustainable projects on campus.

## 13 Services

### 13.1 The Advocacy Center

The CSU's Advocacy Centre provides information to students on their rights as students here at Concordia University. The Centre not only support and represents students in cases of academic misconduct or in the application of Concordia's Code of Right and Responsibilities, it also provides support and help in nearly all the endeavors that students may have to engage in within the University. Our advocates are experts in the University's structure, procedures, and bureaucracies, and they can offer guidance, support and direction to anything that students may need to get done while here.

In early August, the CSU Advocacy Center, with the support of the CSU executive team signed a contract with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) for the Advocacy Center Coordinator to help the GSA establish their own Advocacy Center. The contract in no way affects the CSU, the CSU Advocacy Center or its Student Advocates, the Advocacy Center Coordinator simply applies his knowledge of the Advocacy Center's structure to train Graduate students into becoming advocates. The CSU executive team was involved as the organization the GSA would transfer the funds to create the GSA Advocacy Center to, so that the Advocacy Center Coordinator would retain control over the Advocates and GSA Advocacy Center Coordinator hours worked and salary.

### 13.2 Off Campus Housing and Job Bank (HOJO)

The HOJO is a unique service here at the CSU that has seen substantial change since its inception in the 1980s. Originally developed as a resource for posting jobs and housing, the important changes in information technology over the past decade, and the strong core of advocacy contained within the CSU, have increasingly shifted its mission towards a strong representation of the rights of students as workers and tenants in the province of Quebec. HOJO today is a leading organization on the legal rights of students under provincial law, and it provides vital support to students in what are amongst their most important off-campus needs, income-making work and a safe, healthy place to live.

HOJO will be moving across the mezzanine by the end of the Winter 2017 semester because the University will be renovating the mural on the Mackay side of the Hall building. When approaching us, the University representatives assured us that since the force was somewhat forced, they would cover the cost of the renovations needed in the new space, as well as for the move. Unfortunately, they were not willing to make the necessary renovations to make the space workable environment for the HOJO staff. At this point, along with the CSU General Manager, the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator, General Coordinator met with the University to make a proposal; the CSU would be in charge of the renovations and the move, and the University would pay a portion of the cost. This was

done to ensure that HOJO be moved into a healthy, functioning, workable environment, as currently, the space they occupy has very poor insulation, which causes the staff to wear their winter coats in the winter. The renovations will also include a closed office for the HOJO Coordinator, as they are the only Services Coordinator without one, and they often deal with more sensible cases.

The General Coordinator, along with the Academic Affairs and Advocacy Coordinator, the CSU's General Manager, and HOJO's Coordinator have officially signed an agreement to split the cost of construction with the University and to start the renovations as soon as possible. That decision has been approved by Council, and so have the quotes from contractors, and construction should start in the next few weeks.

### 13.3 Legal Information Clinic (LIC)

The LIC provides free, accessible legal information to any Concordia undergraduate student. Staffed primarily by volunteers from law programs across the province, the LIC offers students a clear picture of any situation they find themselves in, under both Quebec and Canadian law. The LIC is led by a Coordinator who is a prominent Montreal lawyer and advocate. Working alongside the volunteers, the LIC's team is able to provide a clear breakdown of what a student's legal options are in any variety of situations. Unlike legal advice, which can only be provided by a lawyer to their client, legal information seeks to inform students about all of the options or avenues at their disposal, without counseling them on which of these options they should take. The Clinic also works with a network of established Montreal lawyers to provide referrals and affordable consultations with students in need. The organization of the LIC, particularly its reliance on volunteers, means that each semester is a unique team. This means that continuity in the only two permanent staff members (coordinator and assistant) is of incredible importance, since they need to orient and train new individuals every semester.

The LIC has been very active recently in fighting for the rights of International students, recently, the LIC and CSU in collaboration with CRARR, the Center for Research-Action on Race Relations, and David Chalk, have organized a press conference denouncing the Ministry of Immigration of Quebec for its unjust treatment of International students when it came to their French language courses and skills, using them as scapegoats for the poor quality of the government's French language courses.

### 13.4 Services at Loyola

The CSU's services at Loyola are the most underutilized in the entire university. While it is necessary to offer our services at the campus in interest of accessibility, it is commonplace to have an entire day go by without a single student setting up an appointment. This is likely because of the extremely low overall use of the campus by students and student groups, the low outreach of the campus in general, and the severe underperformance of the café hosted within the building that the CSU offices are located within.

In order to address this issue, we are attempting to reach out to the operators of the G-Lounge café, namely the IFC, in interest of exercising our mandate to support sustainable student run food initiatives on campus. These conversations have yet to manifest in a meaningful way, speaking to the lack of organizational capacity on the behalf of the IFC. Other initiatives at Loyola, including renovations and increased poster space, are also hoped to have the cumulative effect of increasing student participation at the campus. We look forward to working with community and student groups to bring more life to student spaces at the campus, and in so doing improve quality of service at Loyola.

### 13.5 Free Phones

The CSU has had free phones on the 7th floor for several years now. It is an important service to provide for students. At the beginning of the year, we had half of the phones uninstalled. With the rise of cellphones, we saw a decrease in the usage of the phones; considering that each phone represented large expenses each, we decided it would make more sense to only keep three phones. We also had one of the phones installed at a lower level so that a person in a wheelchair could use it. Accessibility is a priority this year within our team, and this seemed like a natural improvement.

### 13.6 Health and Dental Plan

This year, the CSU completed a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the student group health and dental plan. The last RFP was done in 2009, and was not exceptionally thorough. This year, the RFP was made to be as thorough and transparent as possible, and resulted in a decision to keep the same supplier, StudentCare / ASEQ, but at a minimum 7.7% savings to students while keeping the same coverage. The new contract will be finalised and signed in early summer, and will come into effect September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

To create the RFP and evaluate proposals, a committee was formed which included the Finance Coordinator, General Coordinator, one Council Representative (Rowan Gaudet), one Finance Committee Representative (Christina Massaro), and the General Manager (non-voting). The committee built the RFP, which was posted on the CSU website and sent out to likely bidders on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Proponents were allowed to submit any questions, which were answered and shared anonymously with all proponents by the Finance Coordinator and General Manager. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, six proposals were received and shared with all committee members.

The committee evaluated all proposals using a comprehensive scoring system, and met to discuss each individual's scores. At this point, two proponents were disqualified for submitting insufficient information and not meeting the basic requirements of the RFP. The three highest-scoring candidates were asked to give in-person presentations to the committee, after which the committee re-evaluated their scores and chose StudentCare as its recommendation to council for the following reasons:

- Competitive pricing,
- Has consistently delivered services effectively and efficiently to CSU members,
- Offers the most comprehensive services of any proponent,
- Has a superior network of service providers,
- Poses a low risk to the CSU,
- Offers the potential to improve services in coming years.

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, Council chose to approve the Committee's recommendation that the CSU continue its relationship with StudentCare. The committee will meet once more during the summer to set a final cost of the plan, and finalize the contract with StudentCare. The maximum final cost to a student enrolled for a full year starting on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 will be \$74.50 for health and \$105.50 for dental.

## 14 Human Resources

### 14.1 Collective Agreement

As the past collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the CSU and its staff union (CUPE 4512) expired in 2016, a new agreement had to be negotiated for 2017-2021. The negotiations, though thorough, were amicable, and an agreement was made between the negotiating teams on April 13<sup>th</sup>, pending ratification by the CUPE 4512 members and CSU Council. The CSU negotiating team was made up of the Academic & Advocacy, Finance, and General Coordinators, the General Manager, and the CSU's Lawyer, Philippe-André Tessier. The CUPE 4512 negotiating team was made up of the CUPE 4512 President, the CSU Administrative Coordinator, and the CUPE 4512 Lawyer, Hans Marotte. The teams met many times over the course of the year, and went over every section of the agreement.

### 14.2 Hiring

There has been a lot of hiring this year at the CSU. In June, as our team was coming in, we were also welcoming many new staff. In order to hire unionized staff, a hiring committee is typically formed with two executives and two representatives from the union. Since the beginning of the mandate, the following positions have been filled:

- LIC Administrative Assistants
- HOJO Assistants
- Two Tuition Hikes Campaigners
- Communications Coordinator
- Student Advocate
- Advocacy Administrative Assistant
- Receptionists
- Clubs Coordinator
- Campaigns Assistants
- Campaigns Coordinator
- Orientation Coordinators
- Orientation General Staff
- Graphic Designers
- IT Director (in process)

### 14.3 Campaigns department

This year saw the creation of a Campaigns department for the CSU. Following the needs assessment realized by the previous Campaigns Coordinator, and with the advice of the outgoing External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator, it was decided to create two part-time Campaigns Assistant positions in addition of the existing Campaigns Coordinator position, which was expanded. These two positions are designed to take part in the development and implementation of the CSU's campaigns during the fall and winter semesters.

A new Campaigns Coordinator was hired in June, and the two Campaigns Assistants in mid-August. Thanks to this addition, we are now able to more effectively reach out to our membership, and develop sustainable collaborations with organizations and people working on campaigns and political events supported by the CSU.

The campaigns department team saw the addition of two Campaigners in November for a month and a half contract, to help us inform and mobilize our members against the University's proposed tuition hikes for international students in deregulated programs of study. This enabled us to create this new campaign on a short notice without jeopardizing the hard work of the campaigns department on the CSU's annual divestment campaign. We also contracted a research in March-April, to study best practices and how to reform Concordia's Board of Governors.

In April, the people working in the Campaigns department and myself started a thorough review of our work during the year, and how to improve it for the future. This is still ongoing, but we have already amended the job descriptions so as to better reflect the work done, and we are in the process to create a Campaigns researcher position. Another recommendation for next year would be to hire three Campaigns Assistants, and move towards a more project-oriented task distribution.

#### 14.4 HR Department Research

The Student Life Coordinator and the Sustainability Coordinator talked to different HR firms for advice on how we could improve HR at the CSU but CUPE was not interested in making any changes and instead suggested that we work on bettering HR in the collective agreement.

### 15 Policies and Positions

#### 15.1 Non-hierarchical executive structure

The Bylaws have been officially updated to reflect a non-hierarchical structure within the executive. Changes include having the executive positions in alphabetical order and the process of making a decree. This is in the interest of encouraging dialogue, consensus and collaboration within the executive.

Changes have also been made to the Standing Regulations to reflect this structure.

#### 15.2 Gender-neutral by laws

All Bylaws and Standing regulations have been updated to be gender neutral. The council minutes are now also gender neutral. The collective agreement has also become gender neutral. This is all in the interest of gender accessibility at the CSU.

#### 15.3 Sustainability Policy

Changes suggested by the sustainability committee will be presented at the May council meeting. The policy will have minor updates to reflect the needs of the CSU as they are now.

#### 15.4 Scent free policy

The Sustainability Committee drafted and approved a scent-free policy largely based on Concordia Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG)'s after getting the feedback of each CSU service's coordinator. The purpose of the policy is to make the CSU and its services more accessible to those who are scent sensitive. The policy committee has also approved it and we are in the process of implementing it.

## 15.5 Migrant Justice

Following the presence of two CBSA agents on the downtown campus in November, allegedly looking for information on a student, the CSU adopted a number of positions in favour of people's right to freedom of movement, and against the presence of immigration agents on campus, as well as the sharing of any information with immigration services.

The position for Concordia to become a sanctuary campus successfully passed by referendum at the occasion of the March General elections, confirming the student body's will to have Concordia neither allow CBSA agents on its premises, nor share any information on its students, staff, and faculty to immigration services. The CSU also adopted the Solidarity City declaration, and is currently in the process of implementing it to the best of its abilities.

## 16 Finances

### 16.1 Financial position

The CSU's finances are in an overall positive position, with all departments projected to end in surplus at the end of the fiscal year. While some lines went over budget, any deficits were more offset by savings within the same budget category. This is largely due to the financial prudence of the executives, administrators, and department coordinators, and to a variety of small cost-saving measures. This financial responsibility should allow for more ambitious projects in future years, especially with the financial changes passed by referendum (see the *Elections* section of this report).

The unique character of the CSU means that our primary source of revenue, student fees, are somewhat unpredictable and do not fully come in until the last weeks of the fiscal year. Generally, caution is used when creating the budget, so we expect to receive equal or more fees than are budgeted. That said, we cannot accurately predict the final position until all fees come in during the month of May.

### 16.2 Fund Committee

The Fund Committee overseeing the CSU's Student Space, Accessible Education, and Legal Contingency (SSAELC) Fund had the following members during the 2016/17 year: Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis (CSU General Coordinator), Marie-Maxime Gélingas-Délisle (CSU Council of Representatives), Robert Henri (CSU General Manager), Michael Simkin (external lawyer) and Jason Prince (Concordia faculty representative). The Fund Committee was the final point of approval for all motions regarding the SSAELC Fund passed by the CSU Council of Representatives, and acted as the accountable final step for significant disbursements from this Fund. Costs approved by the Fund Committee during the 2016/17 year included those related to the demolition and construction of the future CSU Daycare space, the relocation and renovation of the the CSU's HOJO offices on the mezzanine of the Hall Building, and for renovations to the 7th floor of the Hall building related to CSU space and to the renovation of the CSU's Legal Information Clinic. The SSAELC Fund has maintained its mission to ensure that resources are available for projects and spaces which tangibly and directly serve undergraduate students, and the attention given by the members of the Fund Committee has been integral to ensuring that mission.

In November 2016, in light of the CSU's commitment to ensuring that all CSU investments are in line with positions given to us from our members, the Fund Committee and other members of the CSU Executive were present for a presentation from sustainable investment managers Jarislowsky Fraser in

November 2016. In the winter of 2017, the CSU Council of Representatives approved of approximately \$3 million - thirty percent - of the SSAELC Fund's investments to be managed by Jarislowsky Fraser, which is in addition to \$5.3 million already with Lester Asset Management. With a second manager for the SSAELC Fund's assets, everything beyond the approximately \$1 million remaining liquid will be invested in line with relevant CSU positions, including negative screening for non-renewable resource industries and for companies blacklisted by BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanction) campaigns. However, since there is no true ethical investment and since the CSU Positions Book is always in the process of addition and refinement, future CSU Executives, Councilors and members of its Fund Committee will have to work to ensure that our SSAELC assets are being managed as stringently and as true to our positions as possible.

The Fund Committee has also had preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of setting aside some of our SSAELC investments to be dedicated towards community-based social economy impact investment; it is recommended that these discussions continue into the next year.

A report from the Fund Committee regarding the SSAELC Fund and the Committee's activities will be completed and presented to Council before the end of the CSU's current 2016/17 mandate.

## 17 Conclusion

This has been a year of hard work and great accomplishments. While not everything came easy, the day-to-day operations and projects of the CSU was vital for representing students within the University.

We are glad that our work this year on the Housing Coop and Student Daycare will give students access to affordable, high quality cooperative housing, and will improve services to student parents. However, our most important work this year was in successfully fighting against a tuition hike which would have severely limited access to education for international students. Though the CSU has many responsibilities, its first and most important task is ensuring that Concordia's education is affordable and accessible to students. Threats of increased tuition are common and constant, and it is the task of every future executive to represent students and make education as affordable as possible.

We would like to thank the students for trusting us with the responsibility of leading the CSU, and for trusting us to represent them within the University. We would also like to congratulate the new team on getting elected, and wish them the best of luck in the coming year. Being an executive is rewarding and at times difficult, but we remind ourselves every day that we are here for students first, and ourselves second.