



Concordia Student Union – Council of Representatives

**CSU Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, April 30th, 2015
CSU Lounge, 18h30, S.G.W Campus**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Presentation of Chief Electoral Officer's Report**
- 4. Presentation of Financial Statements**
- 5. Appointment of Auditors for 2014-2015 Fiscal Year**
- 6. Presentation of Outgoing President's Report**
- 7. Adjournment**



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CSU Annual General Meeting Wednesday, April 30th, 2014 CSU Lounge, 18h30, S.G.W Campus

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting is called to order at 17h47.

2. ROLL CALL

Annual General Meeting Chairperson: *Mat Forget*
Annual General Meeting Secretary: *Caitlin Robinson*

Lydia Belhimeur, Katherine Bellini (VP Clubs & Internal Affairs), Jeremy Blinkhorn (Arts & Science Councillor), Charles Bourassa (VP Student Life), Anas Bouslikhane, Marie Brière de la Hosseraye (Independent Councillor), Jessica Cabana (VP Sustainability), Kira Cormier, Rosemaryellen Devling, Mat Forget (CSU Chairperson), Anthony Garoufalis-Auger (VP External & Mobilization), Tulandi George, Jana Ghalayini, Sanaz Hassanpour, Angisel Kiermaier, Vincent Labrecque, Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis (Arts & Science Councillor), Kenza Mejjah Alami, Marion Miller (Fine Arts Councillor), Patrick Morella, Heather Nagy (VP Finance), Alanna Lavoie, Mohammed Nasser, Terry Ngala (Independent Councillor) Renee Obregón, Sanay Ortiz, Jason Poirier-Lavoie (Arts & Science Councillor), Benjamin Prunty (President), Michelle Pucci, Thomas Radcliffe (Arts & Science Councillor), Marc Richard, Caitlin Robinson (CSU Secretary), John Talbot (Arts & Science Councillor), Terry Wilkings (VP Academic & Advocacy), Gabriel Velasco (VP Loyola), Rami Yahia (ENCS Councillor)

3. PRESENTATION OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Mohammed Nasser: The first section is the total number of votes per candidate and the referendum questions. We had seats contested for Council, the Senate, executives and also referendum questions. In terms of the executive positions, **Terry Wilkins** ran uncontested, for VP clubs Lori Dimaria won, VP finance Anas Bouslikhane won, for VP External **Gabriel Velasco** won, for VP Student Life **John Talbot** won uncontested, VP Loyola Chloë Williams won uncontested, and for VP Academic and Advocacy **Marion Miller** won uncontested. Only three (3) positions for the executive were contested. For Arts & Science there were fourteen (14) seats available and fifteen (15) people ran. For JMSB there were five (5) seats available and four (4) candidates, for Fine Arts there were three (3) seats available and three (3) candidates, and for ENCS five (5) seats and seven (7) candidates. There were four (4) Senate seats but only two (2) faculties saw people running – ENCS and JMSB. There were two (2) candidates and one (1) was victorious. All of the referendum questions passed except the one regarding the Health and Dental plan. The ones which passed were about CSU structural changes in terms of finances, fee indexation, the big renovation project, the special bylaw referring to the Health and Dental plan, privatization, the greenhouse and the Popular University Student Housing (PUSH) fund. Section D is about the expenses – they were on par with the expenses last year. The main cost was security, which amounted to half of the cost. The other costs were for clerks, ballot counters and Deputy Electoral Officers (DEOs). The only cost



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which not 100% accurate was the Rubiks ballots as they have not invoiced us yet because they are so busy. I approximated \$3 000 based on previous years. All other costs are accurate, and this will be paid sometime in the future. Section E was a summary of the returns of expenses. With regards to the candidates, most did not spend money on campaigning. There were thirty (30) candidates running and only seven (7) or eight (8) spent money and filed their expense claims. For the executives, there was only one full slate and they stayed within their budget. In terms of referendum committees, there were eight (8) committees but only four (4) spent money. Only two (2) candidates did not file their expenses, and were disqualified, but they were not elected into their positions to begin with. Section G – this was a very calm election, there were not very many complaints, and most were made by myself. The first was against the Yes Committee for the Greenhouse for placing a poster on top of another poster. I gave a warning to the chair of the committee. I made a complaint by myself to someone who put posters up without my approval – she was not sanctioned because she did send them to me, but just did not wait for my approval. She also put her poster on top of someone else's, but there was no clear intent and the matter was solved right away. There was a complaint against Anas for his biography – someone was worried that he was misinforming the voters by how he referred to his specialization in JMSB, but he changed it right away. The last complaint was made against myself by Vicky who complained about the ballots with the executives running uncontested as there was only the name and “Abstain” and she said that this was not fair in case people wanted to vote “No”. Section H – overall there were 1 254 votes, one-third (1/3) of last year's turnout. The reason why it is lower is because it was very uncontested and there were very few seats and positions running contested. There was a lot of stuff which should have been done better to increase the promotion of the elections. The total cost was very similar year though. The CSU did an amazing job helping me. The clerks hired were recommended to me by last year's CEO and had experience. I decided to have three (3) DEOs. Two debates were held – one downtown and one at Loyola, and they did not get a lot of people in attendance. Again, this could be because they were running uncontested. The database we use for the elections was down for most of the first day – the method used was called provisional voting where voters put votes in an envelope with the student's ID and name. There were several complaints about people putting names and IDs. We had an individual who showed up just to yell at the clerks and security guards. Thankfully, the security guard was experienced and handled it. In the LB-building a clerk followed procedure wrong, but thankfully the way they did it had no effect on voting itself. I take full responsibility for this. All of the clerks had a mandatory training and were given standard operating procedures to follow. In terms of my recommendations, the first thing that I noticed was that we got complaints from people who thought we took up too much poster space – I took all of the boards and labelled them for the CSU elections. I was very inexperienced and did not know how that works. Based on the amount of nominees running, the CEO should take only what is necessary and not exceed that. I received an unofficial complaint from one candidate who thought that poster space should be allocated in the Faubourg building, as he felt that he could not reach out to people in his faculty. Another thing which was a bit confusing was the ballot recount procedure – there is a rule which says that if the margin of victory is within fifty (50) votes, there is an automatic recount. I felt that this was necessary for the referendum questions and the executives, but for Council and Senate it will always be within fifty (50) votes so maybe it should be within five (5). This was actually changed from five (5) to fifty (50) and I recommend that we change it back just for Council and Senate. Last year my predecessor André-Marcel Baril recommend that we hire a media specialist. As the CEO I am not an expert in marketing. My last recommendation – and I talked to **Ben** about it – is about the CSU referendum questions, the ones brought forward directly from the CSU. I felt that there was conflict because one of the methods of campaigning was putting a link to the CSU



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website, and I cannot account for the cost of that website. If there had a been a No campaign running against it, I would incur for this cost but for not the Yes side. I feel that this is something which should be discussed and elaborated upon. Lastly, the breakdown of votes per location per day – the Hall lobby was the most popular voting location, the Hall 4th floor and LB building were pretty popular, and after that the other locations decreased in popularity. Loyola was unpopular and so was the VA-building as there are not as many people are there. The total was 1 254 votes.

4. PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Heather Nagy: These are CSU and CUSACorp's audited financial statements for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The general operations fund in the 213-2014 year suffered an operating loss of over \$300 000. Thankfully the next number beside it is the \$860 000 positive number which means that overall we ended up in a positive financial cash position. This is mostly because of the Student Space, Accessible Education and Legal Contingency (SSAELC) fund which collects roughly \$1 million per year. This financial year I was not actually around, so the analysis came from our software, our accountant and our General Manager. There was a \$45 000 overestimation in student fees collected. The budget of that year thought they would get \$1.28 million and they got \$1.24 million, so that hurts us in terms of revenues. There was also a shortfall in terms of handbook advertising revenues of \$45 000. As for the expenses, what blew the categories of revenues versus expenses to that operations loss was that the administrative salaries were significantly underestimated. It ended up being close to \$400 000. This was all the staff of our main office as Advocacy and HoJo have their own budget lines. This was a \$120 000 hit for our expenses. The Orientation expenses were \$75 000 for the year, including salaries, and that totalled \$320 000, which was an underestimation of close to \$150 000. It is bad for an organization to have an operations loss which is so high, but there were some issues like Orientation spending which could have been some mismanagement of funds. As a person who experienced Orientation this year, it is difficult to keep track of expenses. The honorariums of final concert artists was significant. The underestimation of administrative salaries was a significant factor due to the new General Manager who had only just come on at that time, and there was a financial restructuring which was about to take place – there is a lack of institutional memory.

Jason Poirier-Lavoie: The first pages of both reports are missing.

Heather Nagy: Those were the recommendations to management for changes and I can give you them. We instituted most of these through the Policy Committee due to the Newtown report, and we are now fine-tuning them. The next thing is the CUSACorp report. As you all know, Reggie's has been closed for the entirety of this year. During those two months there was a \$15 000 loss. This is not surprising as the history of CUSACorp is that it has lost lots of money over the years, has been difficult to manage, has had staff problems and other issues. The end of mandate report stipulates the year-to-date actual finances of this year up to this current day. As you just heard from the CEO's report, the redistribution of the CSU's global fee levy was passed successfully, as was the question of indexing the CSU's current fee levies to the CPI, which allowed us to make a clear transition into the model we are using now – restricted fund accounting. This mean that every dollar collected for a particular fund only gets spent on the expenses incurred in that fund. This is different from what there is now, because all of our funds like HoJo, LIC and Advocacy are all in our operations budget. Most reports I have produced have followed this format. Executive salaries and expenses were under-budget. Our fiscal year is ending at the end of the month so



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everything in the year-to-date actuals is where we are now, and everything in the second column is what we budgeted for June 5th. In terms of administrative office expenses – financial and legal fees were under-budget. Student engagement initiative like campaigns, speaker series, student life initiatives, Loyola initiatives, etc. are right now sitting under-budget at \$174 000. We might creep a little over the budget. The total revenues versus total expenses keeps us in a positive cash position, but this is only the operations budget and does not consider the other budgets where there are deficits. HoJo has its own fee levy, and as it stands in this fiscal year, they only have a \$20 000 revenue from the Graduate Students' Association fee levy which is also partly a CCSL grant.

Gabriel Velasco: Are the salaries for HoJo in the salaries and benefits category?

Heather Nagy: No, we have divided them out already to show what the restricted fund accounting will look like. The next page talks about Advocacy which has its own fee levy. They incurred \$200 000 in revenue and were significantly under-budget. They were supposed to hire an extra advocate but that did not happen. Overall there is a surplus of \$120 000. It is sort of confusing to use this model without having moved to it yet though. The LIC, as it stands now, has no fee levy so its revenues are \$0 and it has expenses incurred at 90 000\$. As for the clubs, we collect a fee levy right now which is \$183 000 of revenue. The expenses are still under-budget, totalling \$112 000. There are some clubs' expenses which still have to come through, particularly the Clubs Gala which will cost a couple of thousand dollars. In terms of the International & Ethnic Associations Council (IEAC), we collected their revenues of \$44 000. Their total expenses to date are \$17 000, so there is a surplus. The IEAC has now broken off from the CSU so we will no longer be collecting that fee. Last, in the SSALEC fund we have collected \$1 million and still expect to collect more. I was speaking with the accountant and the General Manager before this meeting, and the interest has been wrongly categorized with our bank to make sure what is being accumulated is correct – this will be inflated. The total expenses have been about \$500 000. After the IEAC category we see the Surplus/Deficit and right now in the green \$130 000 which is great because we projected a loss of \$143 000. Right now we are still in a positive position. That could change though, as our average monthly expenses vary between \$135 000 and \$175 000, largely due to salaries and operations things like telephones and other administrative things, so we will see.

Mohammed Nasser: With respect to the clubs, they still have \$70 000 to spend in order to reach the budgeted amount. How much is allocated to Special Clubs Funding (SCF)?

Heather Nagy: I believe that **Kate** put aside \$25 000 in SCF and not much has been used – maybe less than half. With all of the changes happening for the next fiscal year, the operating budget will have quite a large cushion. This leads to better transparency, better fiscal responsibility and significant collection from students dedicated to student space, accessible education and legal contingency.

5. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2015-2016 FISCAL YEAR

Heather Nagy: We are mandated in the Bylaws to review our auditors every three (3) years. This year was the last year of a three (3)-year term, and we formed a committee, went through the tender process, accepted proposals from accounting and auditing firms and looked at how many hours they would dedicate to us and the cost. This is a brief summary of what has happened in the last month with myself and the Finance Department of the CSU, which is comprised of me, the accountant and the GM. I



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am also a member of the Finance Committee which **Marcus** and our president sit on. We put out a request for proposals (RFP) following the tender process of 2012, but tweaked a couple of things like asking if the firms have experience in restricted fund accounting. We looked over the proposals individually, gave them individual scores and met to discuss at length. There was a bit of a divide on the committee, so we decided to ask one of the auditing firms we had never met before to come in and meet with us. They came in, met with us and were great, but unfortunately had underestimated the amount of hours they were going to dedicate to the CSU for audited statements, which was 30-50% less than the other two. We recommend our current firm, as they have a lot of technical and educational expertise in terms of not-for-profit groups which surpasses that of the others. The committee has prepared the following resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the firm Deloitte be nominated as the auditors for the CSU and CUSACorp Management Ltd. for the three (3)-year period, year ending May 31st, 2015, May 31st, 2016 and May 31st, 2017 at the Annual General Meeting scheduled April 30th, 2015.

Seconded by **Terry Wilkings**.

Terry Wilkings: I was a non-voting member on the committee and just wanted to echo some remarks **Heather** made. We did our due-diligence in terms of reviewing all of the submissions, and we did have a meeting with Fuller Landau, but unfortunately their responses to some of the specific questions did not meet our criteria. This was a safe decisions and I do not think that you will regret it.

VOTE

In favour: 18

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 1

Motion carries.

6. PRESENTATION OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Benjamin Prunty: I would like thank everyone who come out for coming out. It has been a real pleasure to work with the students this year. We were able to have the full Community Matters team elected and that created lots of stability and a great dynamic, good faith on Council and with the membership. I will go over a non-exhaustive kind of list in this report. We reduced our budget significantly and used educational components during Orientation. We shut down the street and this was the first time we have done that in a long time. It was a difficult process, but the university was helpful. The theme was "Get to Know Your Community" and it was not clear what they were up to, and so we provided space and resources to do this. We finished off with A Tribe Called Red at the final concert and went out with a bang for sure. **Charles** worked really hard on that and so did other members of the team. We distributed agendas and emphasized campaigns with content about Concordia. We collaborated with Counselling and Development and the students seemed pretty happy. The climate change campaign had an impact around the province and **Anthony** worked on this. A group called ECO with 150 000 students signed on, and this is a pipeline resistance group called Étudiants contre les oléoducs. The divestment campaign had a partial victory too. If you ask me whether this was greenwashing or not, I would have a hard time responding, but there was a lot of media attention and so this was somewhat of a public relations win



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and we made some progress. We brought in Bill McKibben who spoke with Alan Shepard and Vandana Shiva, who went between fossil fuels and the food sovereignty campaign, spoke about “soil not oil” and filled the house. There is a new sustainability network in the works which will hopefully take off in the next year. There is a food system reform campaign and we are pushing for a student-run food system from farm to plate. There was the BDS sanctions which incurred a fierce debate, there was a record-breaking by-election with a turnout of 25 000 students, and we recognized that the state of Israel is the aggressor occupying Palestinian territory. Series of referendums, all major projects were approved conceptually and some directly. The students support the direction we are taking. We ran questions on public sector budget cuts and privatization, and this gave us a strong mandate to fight austerity. We supported striking students pretty heavily as well. Some students are facing tribunals which is somewhat of an existential threat to students in general. It is important to stand on the front lines with them. On top of that, we restructured our finances and has the Health & Dental plan restricted. Our Operations budget was reduced and we made that money up by reallocating funds into other operations – we moved 50 cents from the Student Space, Accessible Education and Legal Contingency (SSAELC) fund, and the university switched its system of handing out money. In any event, there is a cash flow issue and if it does not come right away, it will come in some way. We are moving on from the referendums and \$4 to \$5 million was spent from the SSAELC fund this year. In terms of the Fund Committee, we are dealing with investments and not just in GICs – there are positive and negative screenings involving good gender policies, environmental policies, and negative are like not investing in conflict in Palestine, not investing in fossil fuels or arms. We went through the firms and Lester Asset Management was best suited to our needs. If we want to end this relationship there is no problem as they are very flexible, more than other groups and banks. Before I go into other campaign promises, I just want to say that I regret that we were not able to provide additional funding to Fine Arts and ENCS groups which was a campaign promise, but sometimes things fall through the cracks and other things come up like the BDS and food system SPF. We created incentives for autonomous groups. If there is a good business plan and a proposal meets the policies, there is willingness to work with these groups. There are lots of different student groups which could make use of the funds. We tested this out with the Concordia Food Coalition (CFC) and they are testing this out with the Burritoville project. There is a strong conceptual report the from membership and the graduate student membership, and the CSU helps groups who do not necessarily have the support that other groups have, like student parents. Our VP Academic & Advocacy was working on that all year. We worked on Reggie’s and the Hive and ran a referendum question through the membership since it was worth \$1.8 million. They said yes and I think that everyone knew they would, but it is not good practice to make those kinds of assumptions. The Hive and Reggie’s will be completely renewed as of next year. This is an investment for about ten (10) years, and hopefully it will persist for at least ten (10) years. If you look at the audit, CUSACorp is not in good shape and my recommendation is to abandon it – there will be no adverse financial affects to do this, though we predict adverse financial effects if we keep it since they have a giant debt. On top of that, we have the Greenhouse where we did feasibility studies, were presented with three different models and had strong support with referendums – consistent support at 80% all the time – and there was never any real opposition. This is always encouraging. We are ready to move forward with grant writing and team building. It will be expensive but someone has to pay for it. Hopefully there will be grassroots mobilization for students to have the university pay for this. This would transform Concordia’s food system and would put us on the map. It would provide healthy and local food, internships and general community support. The Hive is also a part of the food system – it is a democratically derived project – there was a petition, a referendum question and now the launch. Now it has over 3 000 members and revenues exceed



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expectations, though labour costs exceed projections. We projected a loss is about \$25 000, and the actual amount was \$10 000 to \$15 000 less than projected. We have a great team running this and the free lunch has improved and definitely revived Loyola campus – it is now open eight (8) hours per day, whereas before it was only open one (1) or two (2) hours. This project represents student organizing power and empowers us to think bigger. For the housing cooperative, the project hit some milestones and received conceptual support. We were working with UTILE and are looking to put in \$1.85 million to the project, and because of this we have secured another \$1.5 million in investments because we have shown our commitment. We will house 100 to 150 students by August 15th and will help fight gentrification for housing at 25% below the market median. I really think that in 50 years the province will not be the same, and we will perpetually produce student housing coops over time. On the clubs side, there were very active clubs and a new energy and diversity since about twenty (20) new ones emerged. There are space changes and renovations on the way, and that puts us at about 93 clubs. We have changed the clubs coordinator position from part-time to full-time. In terms of human resources, lots of changes were made here. Human Resources negotiated quite a few things, changed in relation to the needs of the Union and leading up to the collective agreement negotiations, if we can take care of some smaller things today, negotiations will go easier tomorrow. The CUPE president said nice things about us and during a deficit year we have to say “no” to things, and to receive this kind of feedback is quite positive. The stability of the executive and the good faith allowed us to work more closely.

Terry Wilkings: It is also worth mentioning that we have this new website.

Benjamin Prunty: We changed the website with few costs, used internal staff and it was a fraction of what we had expected it to be.

Student: Will previous years’ financial statements be available through the website?

Benjamin Prunty: At some point, yes, and if you want anything specific we will send it out.

Heather Nagy: We are having them formatted and they will be up soon. Thanks to **Ben** for bringing up the fact that the financial transactions have changed significantly. That is also something that could significantly help our cash flow and that of all other student groups. I am still reluctant about their processes and whether or not we can actually use those funds because we do not know the amount of students dropping out. We have a meeting with the head comptroller of Concordia this week and we will disseminate this information.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis moves to adjourn

Seconded by **Jeremy Blinkhorn**.

VOTE

In favour: 19

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0



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Motion carries.

Meeting is adjourned at 19h11.



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**CSU Annual General Meeting
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CSU Lounge, 18h30, S.G.W Campus**

Summary of Motions Carried

The following motion was carried:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the firm Deloitte be nominated as the auditors for the CSU and CUSACorp Management Ltd. for the three (3)-year period, year ending May 31st, 2015, May 31st, 2016 and May 31st, 2017 at the Annual General Meeting scheduled April 30th, 2015.

– Heather Nagy (Terry Wilkings)