

Regular Meeting
CSU Council of Representatives
Wednesday March 9, 2011 at 6:30
SGW H-760

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Approval of the agenda
4. Approval of the minutes and business arising
5. Chairperson's report
6. Executive resignation
7. Financial Report
8. Executive Reports
 - 8.1 President
 - 8.2 VP Loyola and Advocacy
 - 8.3 VP External and Projects
 - 8.4 VP Student Life
 - 8.5 VP Clubs & Outreach
9. Standing Committees' Reports
 - 9.1 Clubs and Space committee
 - 9.2 Events committee
 - 9.3 Custodial and Services committee
 - 9.4 Appointments committee
 - 9.5 Sustainability committee
 - 9.6 Academic committee
 - 9.7 External & Campaigns committee
 - 9.8 Finance committee
10. Report from University bodies
 - 10.1. Senate
 - 10.2. Board of Governors
 - 10.3. CCSL
 - 10.4. Women's Caucus
11. Unfinished business
12. New Business
 - 12.1. Appointments to Space and Student Center Committee
(Students at large and Councillors)
 - 12.2. Motion for Religious Expression
 - 12.3. Motion for CSU International Service Bursary
13. Question period & Business Arising
14. Announcements
15. Adjournment

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:54pm.

2. Roll call

Councillors:

Melanie Hotchkiss	Tomer Shavit	Teresa Seminara
Alison Revine	Yaniv Gidron	Aaron Green
Tamara Gordon	Johnnie Vu	Luis Cordero
Stephen Brown	Fernando Barbosa	Menachem Freedman
Rasim Hafiz	Carlos Puerta	Jean-Francois
Asma Omar	David Feldman	Baillargeon
Michaela Manson	Alexandra Baptista	
Joel Suss	Alex Gordon	
	Adrien Severyns	Rami Khoriarty
	Heather Lucas	

Executives:

Andres Lopez

Hassan Abdullahi

3. Approval of the agenda

Abdullahi/Seminara: To include CEO's statement in agenda point 6.

Gill/Suss: As a friendly amendment- as it relates to approval of the minutes, point 4, it should be placed under approval of the minutes and business arising.

Abdullahi/Seminara: Further amendments- Point 8 to be CFS; Point 9 to be the presentation by LIC; Point 10 to be the presentation by 5 Days for the Homeless; Under new business, appointment of University Governance Committee to be 12.2.

Passed.

Freedman/Abdullahi: Motion to add to agenda, after Chairperson's Report, creating a conflict mineral free campus. Passed.

Manson/Freedman: Financial committee discussion, originally 9.8, to top of agenda for committee reports. Passed.

Freedman/T. Gordon: To move 12.3 motion for CSU International Service Bursary to point 7, to just before Executive Resignation.

Green/Cordero: Calling to question. Passed.

Green/Omar: Motion to approve the agenda. Passed.

4. Approval of the minutes and business arising

(Read by Chair)

CEO Statement to Council

This is a statement regarding my decision not to include the fee-levy referendum questions for Void Magazine and Queer Concordia in the Announcement of polls that was posted March 4, 2011.

Based on my communication with CSU Council, it was my understanding that the approval of the application for fee-levy referendum for both Void Magazine and Queer Concordia were subject to a condition that both of these entities be incorporated. This was not the case on March 4, 2011, the final day to post Announcement of polls.

As you know, the CEO is required under sections 153 and 154 of the CSU Standing Regulations to ensure compliance with the regulations. Therefore, relying on section 136 of the CSU Standing Regulations, the questions were not included in the Announcement of Polls given that all of the conditions required by this section had not been met, including the incorporation of the applicant group and submission of a question for approval by the CSU and the CEO.

It has now been suggested to me that the applications for referenda were in fact approved by CSU Council. In order to ascertain the facts, I have reviewed Council's minutes of January 12, 2011 concerning Void Magazine and Council's minutes of February 9, 2011 concerning Queer Concordia.

Unfortunately, in both cases, the minutes are ambiguous and deficient as regards the requirements of the Standing Regulations namely in that there is no transcription in the minutes of the actual language of the questions adopted by Council. The minutes are the official record of the decisions taken by Council and all resolutions adopted by Council should be transcribed word for word in the minutes.

In the case of Void Magazine, there is a mention made in the paragraph summarizing the presentation by Void Magazine's representative that "Void is not incorporated at the moment, so this question will be dependant on whether it becomes incorporated."

At the end of the section on Void Magazine in the minutes, we see that councillors Cox and Husen called the question and then there follows the mention "motion passed".

Again, absent from the transcript is the actual question, as well as any caveats regarding their unincorporated status, as mentioned above. In this regard, the resolutions are deficient as they a) lack the approval of a specific question and b) fail to invoke the notwithstanding clause of Article 282 regarding the absence of incorporation.

In the case of Queer Concordia, we are also lacking the actual wording of the resolution that was before Council, but there is a mention that an amendment was proposed by Councillor Gill and passed, the amendment to read that "the referendum questions should be accepted, pending that they meet all requirements by the vote".

Presumably, “meeting all requirements” included an incorporation requirement which is consistent with the information transmitted to me by CSU council at the outset, although the discussion concerning Queer Concordia does not actually refer to incorporation, as opposed to the discussion concerning Void Magazine.

As outlined above, there is no evidence from the minutes that Council ever actually considered a draft question and approved it. Again, sub-section 136d) of the Standing Regulations require that a group requesting a new fee-levy must prepare a draft question to be approved by Council and the CEO.

The minutes refer to a mention by Councillor Cox as follows: “Regarding the fee-levy question, it is our role to work on the wording”.

Actually, under the Standing Regulations it is in fact Council’s duty to adopt a specific wording in order for the referendum question to be put to a vote. This is not a matter that may be deferred to a later time. The standing regulations require that the wording be approved by both Council and the CEO, which means that Council and the CEO must agree on a specific wording.

There is no point, and it is not my role, to lay the blame on anyone for the current situation. My only intention is to ensure the legal requirements are met in order to allow Council’s intent to be carried out and to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

Therefore, in an attempt to rectify the situation, I would like council to consider resolutions to be adopted to correct the various legal problems that have arisen as outlined above, including the requirement of the adoption of the notwithstanding clause under section 282 of the standing regulations where counsel is waiving the application of various requirements of the Standing Regulations, particularly regarding the incorporated status and now, the legal delays.

I therefore recommend that if in fact it is the intention of counsel to allow the applications for referenda of these two groups, then the attached resolutions be considered by Council for approval without delay.

Needless to say, it is necessary that the actual specific wording of these resolutions be transcribed into the minutes and it is suggested that, going forward, the actual wordings of all resolutions be so transcribed in order to avoid a reoccurrence of the present situation.

Furthermore, I would also suggest that in the future, the Custodial Committee and Council ensure that actual wordings of referendum questions be approved by Council in each case and, from an administrative point of view, that the CEO has been consulted beforehand.

Manson: Would like the proposed resolutions by the CEO to be presented, unless there is anyone from either VOID or Queer Concordia who would like to make a presentation.

Patris (Queer Concordia): He is a member of faculty, a student, and a member of the CSU. He acknowledges the CEO statement and agrees that there were problems with the minutes. Queer Concordia would like to make representation and have a test of the original motion presented at council a month ago. We can also make representation of the

amendment made by Gill. He has seen the most accurate recording of the council meeting- CUTV footage. Queer Concordia does acknowledge the deadline to apply for incorporation. There was a miscommunication. The resolution proposed by the CEO does seem like the best way to move forward. Queer Concordia fulfills all the requirements. Though the motion says that it is waiving a requirement, we will agree with that wording though as it is a registered CSU group, it did not need to submit a petition. Regarding the deadline to apply for incorporation, the reason for delay is that on Feb 14th, there was a reform at the Quebec organization in charge of incorporation, creating delays in the official registration. The corporatization of Queer Concordia should be received in a few days, and student groups should not be penalized. Please take this into consideration.

Gill: Would like to amend the minutes to reflect the wording of the actual motion. To approve the referendum question as long as they are incorporated by that time. Both referendum go to ballot and they should be incorporated by the time they go to ballot.

Patris: As a friendly amendment- to include the original question that was brought forward by the group. Do you approve a 2 cents per credit increase in fee levy for Queer Concordia for the purpose of creating an accessible service centre?
Passed.

Manson: To approve the 2 motions by omnibus (read by Chair below).

First motion:

CONCORDIA STUDENT UNION
COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEER CONCORDIA

WHEREAS Council considered and approved on February 9, 2011, that a fee-levy question for Queer Concordia be put to the members of the CSU in a referendum to be held concurrently with the upcoming Annual General Elections;
WHEREAS the minutes of Council do not reflect the approval of a specific question, contrary to Section 136 of the Standing Regulations;
WHEREAS this has lead the Chief Electoral Officer to refuse to include the Queer Concordia question in the Announcement of Polls;
WHEREAS it is desirable to correct any procedural problem to allow Council's intent to be carried out;
BE IT RESOLVED to confirm that Queer Concordia's request for a fee-levy referendum has been approved and that a fee-levy referendum question be put to the members of the CSU in a referendum to be held March 29, 30 and 31;
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the referendum question be as follows:
"Do you approve the collection of a fee of 2¢ per credit to fund the operations of Queer Concordia, which fee shall be refundable in accordance with Concordia University's Fee Payment, Refund and Withdrawal Policy?"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the results of an eventual favourable vote on this question only be put to the University's Board of Governors upon the incorporation of Queer Concordia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Electoral Officer be and is hereby instructed to consider the question of his approval of said question without delay and, should he approve it, post an amended Announcement of Polls;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, notwithstanding Sections 160 and following of the Standing Regulations, to waive and extend any delays that might have expired in the circumstances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 282 of the Standing Regulations, the foregoing motions operate regardless of Sections 136 and 160 of the Standing Regulations;

March 9, 2011

Nota bene : Requires a 2/3 majority vote.

Second motion:

CONCORDIA STUDENT UNION
COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES
VOID MAGAZINE

WHEREAS Council considered and approved on January 12, 2011, that a fee-levy question for Void Magazine be put to the members of the CSU in a referendum to be held concurrently with the upcoming Annual General Elections;

WHEREAS the minutes of Council do not reflect the approval of a specific question, contrary to Section 136 of the Standing Regulations, and allude to an incorporation requirement;

WHEREAS this has lead the Chief Electoral Officer to refuse to include the Void Magazine question in the Announcement of Polls;

WHEREAS it is desirable to correct any procedural problem to allow Council's intent to be carried out;

BE IT RESOLVED to confirm that Void Magazine's request for a fee-levy referendum has been approved and that a fee-levy referendum question be put to the members of the CSU in a referendum to be held March 29, 30 and 31;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the referendum question be as follows:

"Do you approve the collection of a fee of 2¢ per credit to fund the operations of Void Magazine, which fee shall be refundable in accordance with Concordia University's Fee Payment, Refund and Withdrawal Policy?"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the results of an eventual favourable vote on this question only be put to the University's Board of Governors upon the incorporation of Void Magazine.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Electoral Officer be and is hereby instructed to consider the question of his approval of said question without delay and, should he approve it, post an amended Announcement of Polls;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, notwithstanding Sections 160 and following of the Standing Regulations, to waive and extend any delays that might have expired in the circumstances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 282 of the Standing Regulations, the foregoing motions operate regardless of Sections 136 and 160 of the Standing Regulations;

March 9, 2011

Nota bene : Requires a 2/3 majority vote.

Green/Hafiz: Would like to encourage council to vote in favour.

Freedman: When exactly would they have to be incorporated by?

Patris: A friendly amendment- the wording would be: “Do you approve the collection of a fee of 2 cents per credit to fund the operations of Queer Concordia, which shall be refundable in accordance with Concordia University’s Fee Payment, Refund and Withdrawal Policy?”

The same wording amendment would apply to Void magazine: “Do you approve the collection of a fee of 2 cents per credit to fund the operations of Void Magazine effective of the fall semester 2011, which fee shall be refundable in accordance with Concordia University’s Fee Payment, Refund and Withdrawal Policy?”

Chair: It has been asked by CUTV for councillors speaking to stand so that they may be caught on camera.

Jack Allen (Void Magazine): 750 signatures were submitted last council meeting but have been contacted by the president on March 4th that it was not submitted, though caught on CUTV footage. The council should keep better track of documents received.

Abdullahi: Just to inform council and everyone else, according to section 4.1.36, any non-CSU groups seeking any fee levy should have submitted its application to the custodial and services for review and approval at least 3 months in advance, and this procedure was not followed by either VOID or Queer Concordia. However, council has approved this regardless of that motion and therefore any documentation related should have been presented to custodial and service committee, not to council. However, again, Council has approved it.

Patris: Abdullahi is correct, that standing regulation does exist. However, the Queer Concordia has been around for many years and is a registered CSU club. That standing regulation should not affect us. That standing regulation was made to ensure that unknown groups get support.

Abdullahi: To clarify, according to section 134, it is for any referendum- even for CSU groups, any referenda seeking any fee levy should have submitted its application to the

custodial and services for review and approval at least 3 months before it is to be considered by council. This is for any referendum. Council made exceptions to accept these.

Manson: If this is the procedure that was to be followed, why was this not brought up at the last meeting?

Gill/Hotchkiss: To call to question- Passed. Call to question the 2 motions- Passed.

Freedman: Would like to stress the importance of reading the minutes to ensure that when motions are made, they are accurately presented.

Abdullahi/Omar: Motion to approve the minutes. Passed.

5. Chairperson's report

Chair: Happy to see so many people interested and involved. However, as there is much to get through, please all be patient.

6. Conflict Mineral Free Campus

Aidan Pine and others from the Concordia Initiative for Conflict Free Campus: Started in October, looking for student groups to sign the petition to raise awareness for conflict in the Congo. Started in 1995, following a genocide, in order to fund armed groups mine operations began. Minerals taken from Congo, used in making consumer electronics. Since 1998 when the war officially started, 5.4 million deaths and 300,000 reported rapes. We are proposing that, as Concordia has more than 158 annual contracts with electronic companies, worth millions of dollars. We want to recognize the role Concordia plays by purchasing these electronics. We are hopefully meeting with the BOG in March, and we are asking for people to sign the petition. We have already gained support from several groups and associations at Concordia. The next logical step seems to be getting the support of the student union.

Petition: "Concordia University is aware and concerned about the crisis taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Concordia University also recognizes the role that conflict minerals play as one of the primary drivers for this unspeakable violence. As an institution that makes significant annual investments in electronic products that likely contain these minerals, we realize our own responsibility and indirect link to the situation. We call on all electronics companies with whom the university does business, to trace the precise sources of their minerals as well as to clean up their supply chains by having third party verified examinations. We would also like there to be a mineral procurement certification scheme in place that builds on the Kimberley Process. We will consider future policies that this institution can adopt to help combat the problem."

Student: CSU has done a great job regarding green issues and promoting sustainability. More universities should make this initiatives.

Patris: This initiative was taken from Stanford University who successfully did this campaign.

A. Gordon: This is a great initiative. Are there any companies with concrete evidence of use of such minerals?

Conflict Free Campus: No company can deny that they use such minerals and that is enough. Our point is that we would like to send a letter to the companies regarding the concern. It is to exert pressure.

Freedman: There has been a horrendous amount of violence against people in Congo. The least we can do is support this and hopefully we will be supported by the BOG.

Simon (Student): What is the exact stated goal of the petition and how will you know that you achieved it?

Aidan: Our goal is to formally and publicly acknowledge the situation. We would like to send this letter to show that we are interested in investing in companies that care about and show interest this initiative and disinvesting from companies that do not. It is just a start but it has to start somewhere.

Barbosa/Gill: Would like to encourage councillors to vote on this. Motion to support Concordia's Initiative for Conflict Free Campus. Passed.

Aidan: There is an event coming up to support this initiative: an international conference. ConflictFreeConcordia.com for more information.

7. CSU International Service Bursary.

Freedman: This was sent to council but he will go over for everyone here. He has had the opportunity to go abroad. One regret is that it is extremely difficult to find funding for individuals to go volunteer abroad. CVAP at Concordia is a great program but it is still difficult for individuals to find funding. It is important to give undergraduates the opportunity to go abroad. To add two bursaries of \$500 for students who wish to volunteer abroad, signing a contract between themselves, CSU, the company they will be working for. The volunteer work will be full-time unpaid work for three months. By implementing this bursary we would be providing students with the opportunity to go abroad for volunteer experience, adding to their education.

International Service Bursary –Descriptive Plan

What is the CSU International Service Bursary:

- Two \$500 awards made to Concordia students who commit to spending at least three months over their summer volunteering with a particular humanitarian aid NGO (non-governmental organization) abroad.
- Bursaries will be awarded on the basis of both merit and need. In other words, applicants will have to prove the merit of the work they will be doing and their suitability

for the role they will be filling, in addition to demonstrating an objective need for financial support.

- The award can cover air fare or other expenses. All expenses must be accounted for upon return to Canada.
- Applicants must provide a cover letter explaining how they will offer a unique contribution to their intended NGO.
- Before departure and receiving the award, the student must sign a three-way understanding between her/himself, the CSU and the volunteer organization committing to a three month, unpaid commitment.
- Upon return, all bursary winners must write a two-page double-spaced testimonial of their service and describe how the CSU bursary helped them achieve their goals. They are encouraged to submit op-eds to student media to inform other students about the issues they encountered abroad.

Why the CSU needs this bursary:

- Volunteering abroad provides invaluable skills for Concordia's best and brightest. For students competing for high level scholarships such as the Rhodes Scholarship, experience abroad is a must. These volunteering experiences allow students to exercise new language skills, leadership skills and professional skills in an environment that is challenging and new.
- Volunteers will be ambassadors of Concordia University and the CSU. Whether they are in Brazil, Nepal or Rwanda, Concordia ISB volunteers will represent our community as one with globalized and humanitarian interests. The bursary is a symbol that the CSU cares about the most pressing problems in the world and is willing to invest in those students who want to help.

Why students need these bursaries:

- While an effective volunteering position should always be free, transportation, especially to developing world countries, can be very costly. Often NGO's will not be able to subsidize the cost of travel or living expenses on their own budgets, which are directed towards aid.
- Little to no bursaries are available for independent-minded students who want to intern with NGO's abroad. Often, money offered by universities is channelled into their own 'group' programs, which, while beneficial, do not allow students with particular skills to go where they are needed most.
- It needs to be emphasized that the CSU will not be paying for anyone's tropical vacation. All applicants will need to commit to a full 3-months unpaid volunteering position in a foreign country and will sign a contract to that effect.
- The purpose of this bursary is to level the playing field. Students with large savings accounts or heavy financial support are able to gain experiences and educations that give them a huge advantage when it comes to applying for graduate programs and jobs. The

CSU International Service Bursary would be one small step into helping less privileged students access these special and life-changing opportunities.

Relevant Motion:

Whereas the Concordia Student Union is mandated “to distribute thirty (30) bursaries, valued at \$500.00 each, to Concordia Undergraduate students selected by the Academic Committee in accordance with the guidelines set out in the ‘CSU Bursary Distribution Policy’” CSU standing Regulations, Annex A, 1.1).

Whereas the stated purpose of these bursaries is “to help students with demonstrated financial need alleviate some of the pressures associated with the high costs of postsecondary education and to recognize their achievements whether academic *or extracurricular*” (ibid., emphasis added).

Whereas spending a significant period of a summer volunteering abroad is becoming an increasingly important element of a postsecondary education and constitutes an impressive extracurricular achievement.

Be it resolved that the Standing Regulation 'Section 5.1, Bursary Awards' be amended as follows:

1 Amendments are in bold. Original statement:

Section 5. Standing Bursary Awards

5.1. There shall be nine (10) Standing Bursary Awards distributed by the CSU, namely: Arts and Science Student Bursary; Engineering and Computer Science Student Bursary; Fine Arts Student Bursary; Independent Student Bursary; John Molson School of Business Student Bursary; Concordia Student Athlete; Outstanding Contribution to Concordia Student Life; Outstanding Academic Achievement; and Outstanding Contribution to an External Community; and Female Leadership at Concordia.

Section 5. Standing Bursary Awards

5.1. There shall be **eleven (11)** Standing Bursary Awards distributed by the CSU, namely: Arts and Science Student Bursary; Engineering and Computer Science Student Bursary; Fine Arts Student Bursary; Independent Student Bursary; John Molson School of Business Student Bursary; Concordia Student Athlete; Outstanding Contribution to Concordia Student Life; Outstanding Academic Achievement; and Outstanding Contribution to an External Community; and Female Leadership at Concordia; **and the International Service Bursary.**

Be it further resolved that a minimum of two (2) International Service Bursaries be awarded each year, pending the application of appropriately qualified students, as described in the 'International Service Bursary Descriptive Plan'.

Be it further resolved that all changes above are to take effect in academic year 2011-2012.

Freedman/Hafiz: Proposing a motion to make a change to the standing regulations to add these bursaries. Normally this would have to be submitted to Custodial Committee but as we are approaching the end of the school year and would like to see this take place this school year, he is presenting it here. Would like to apologize to the Custodial Committee. Has spoken to members of the CSU and found support, Abdullahi for one, who is responsible for bursaries, for one.

Abdullahi: Would like to motivate on behalf of this motion. Has discussed this with Freedman. If council approves this motion the bursaries will be incorporated and given out next year.

T. Gordon: Commands Freedman for bring this motion forward.

Green: There are many opportunities to volunteer abroad through Concordia and this bursary would be a good way of showing CSU's support.

Freedman/T. Gordon: Calling to question. Passed.

6. Executive resignation

Pudwell: (reads resignation letter below)

To the Concordia community, the Concordia Student Union Council of Representatives, the staff of the CSU, and the current CSU Executive,

It has become increasingly clear to me that completing my mandate as Vice-President Sustainability & Promotions of the Concordia Student Union is no longer feasible. The union continues to move in a direction that directly conflicts with my values and this is a path that I cannot support.

The following letter will outline some of the issues that have led me to this decision.

The union needs to engage in meaningful participation with its members, and acknowledge the need for accountability. This year, on several occasions, decisions were made by the students and community, and not upheld by representatives.

The Student Centre

Before November's student centre campaign I was lead to believe that the executive had been working to change the exploitative currently existing contract with the administration (a contract that had already been voted down by students in March 2010). However as the student centre campaign began it became clear that changes had not been made and that some executives were working with the administration to push the current, flawed agreement and the Faubourg building.

The students voted (once again) against the student centre; the message was clear: the agreement is insufficient, and the Faubourg is not an appropriate answer to the challenges of student space. Students demanded to be included in the process, and yet, to this day no meaningful consultation has taken place and the executive continues to try to push a failed contract and a failed building on students. As an executive I have been excluded from these discussions and was never consulted about the contract nor the building choice, despite having voiced my concerns on several occasions.

University Governance

More recently, students voted on several motions (at the IGM, and then later at council) with regards to university governance. These motions, including a demand for the resignation of external community members on the BoG, specifically Peter Kruyt, have not been upheld by the student representatives at the board. The representatives have failed to make these wishes clear, and at the most recent meeting, failed to say anything

at all. Council has yet to receive a written report from any BoG representative, despite their clear and codified duty to do so. These reps must be held accountable for their actions (or lack- there-of).

Potential Financial Mismanagement

The executive were recently presented with a financial update which indicated that nearly every budget line had been over-spent. We were told not to speak to anyone about our current financial situation, and were presented with no solutions. When I sat down with the VP Finance I was told that items that were never intended to fall under my budget line had been placed there. I was

further told that both the sustainability and the promotions budget were now, due to this move, overspent and that I could have no more expenses for the rest of the year. With over half a semester left in office this left me in a position in which planned projects and promised support/funding fell through.

Later, when the executive were asked by various students and councillors to present a budget update, the executive failed to do so. To be clear, even councillors who requested this information and have a legal right to access it were not given access to information regarding the union's finances. A week later a second executive meeting was held in which I was told that the budget that had been originally presented was entirely fabricated. After that point, and because they assumed information had been "leaked," executives were told that no one would be allowed to see their budget. I have been consistently denied access to the most basic financial information regarding the union's operations, and even my own budget. Because of this secrecy I am still unaware of the CSU's current financial status, despite having done everything in my power to find out. I question whether student money has been spent with respect for our members or in consideration of the law.

Questionable Alliances

Former President of the CSU, Amine Dabchy, continues to be heavily involved in the decisions made by the Executive. As a BoG representative he has clearly disregarded the needs of students on multiple occasions and failed to report to council (as required by CSU bylaws) on his actions on the board. His close relationships with various board members and alumni representatives seem to play a more predominant role in his decisions than that of the students who he is supposed to represent.

I have expressed my concern for Dabchy's involvement with the current executive on numerous occasions, to both Heather and the entire executive, and yet, he continues to seemingly puppeteer the union to his will. Dabchy is frequently in the office and even has the ability to call executive meetings. I am uncertain whether this remains the case, but for a considerable time during my mandate, Dabchy even retained his own key to the CSU office. I have also been told by numerous students that Amine and some members of the current executive are currently attempting to put together a team for the upcoming CSU elections, and it is my fear that the CSU will continue to be used for the benefit of certain individuals rather than the student community.

Lack of trust or respect

I can no longer continue to work in an office in which I feel so uncomfortable. A lack of trust and understanding has created a hostile environment which is no longer conducive to productive work and creativity. There have been attempts to police my work schedule, my whereabouts and my friendships. Our communication has eroded to the point that I am unable to do my job. Moreover, it seems that the executive has developed an almost overt animosity towards student leaders on campus who have challenged their decisions. My presence at the CSU has been met with very little support from the executive. I have often been silenced under the guise of "executive solidarity"; the executive was expected to always send a single message and to never speak out of line. This is not what I was elected to do. The executive is elected as a team that represents the entire student body,

we are meant to each represent a larger group of students. This silencing of genuine moral dissent is not healthy and will only further alienate students. The union should not aim to keep the status quo but to better the university and represent ALL of its members. Recently however, representation has been confused with tokenism. I would caution students that the only way they can be truly represented is if they *demand* that representation—and refuse to settle for platitudes or superficial gestures.

My resignation will likely be met with criticism. Many will attempt to turn this issue into something it's not: I will be accused of “not fulfilling my duties” or attempting to “damage the reputation” of the union. At this point, I know students are smart enough to recognize these sorts of accusations for what they are: heavy handed attempts to damage my character, rather than a discussion about legitimate issues of democracy, accountability, and good governance.

I hope that my resignation will encourage the current CSU to re-evaluate their actions, and to turn back to the students. We are all implicated in these failures; the CSU is only as strong as its members, and we must continue to expect more. Please consider this my formal resignation from this position as Vice-President Sustainability and Promotions of the Concordia Student Union, effective immediately.

To the students, it has been an honour to serve you so far, and I hope that in my actions you have found some sort of representation. To those who have supported and worked with me, your integrity and perseverance continues to inspire, thank you. I hope to continue to work, in whatever capacity I can, to advocate for a better campus, a better union, and a better community.

With great respect and high hopes,

Morgan Pudwell

pudwellmorgan@gmail.com

Lucas: (reads response letter below)

Dear Concordia Students,

It is with great sadness and shock that we write to inform you of the sudden and unexpected departure of Ms. Pudwell, our Vice-President Sustainability and Promotions of the Concordia Student Union. This resignation comes to us as a surprise with nearly 12 weeks left in our mandate with significant future events and activities on behalf of our students. We have drafted this informative letter to address the issue briefly. However, we encourage everyone to attend next week's council meeting, a venue best fit for discussing the current situation in-depth.

Since the return from the holiday break, we all have had our hands full fulfilling our mandate of bringing Concordia together to the student body that entrusted us with the responsibility to represent each and every undergraduate student. The CSU has hosted many activities in collaboration with other student groups on campus spanning from educational speaker series with Martin Luther King III, free coffee and snack break during finals and informative campaigns such as women's week that is to come in the following week.

We would like to stress the importance of the values we hold of being accountable and receptive by presenting a transparent budget, (made available online) and with our current VP Finance, Ramy Khoriaty, who made every budget line available to students and any press. There has been nothing that we have done that has gone beyond the will of the students we represent.

In this respect, we would like to provide insight to the concerns and doubts brought forward by our former Vice-President. Of grave concern to us is the baseless accusation of financial mismanagement. We have taken great lengths to ensure financial accountability and transparency. In this regards, we have made every budget line available to the student press and student body, restricted three of our executive budget lines due to overspending and prepared a comprehensive financial report which is due to be presented in the upcoming council meeting which will then be made available online for all to see.

Secondly, for matters of University governance, we held an Informal General Meeting (IGM) to gather feedback from students on the issue, for hearing their concerns was of primordial importance to us. Their concerns were immediately put forward to the CSU council, which unanimously adopted all resolutions passed at the IGM. Since then we have been working diligently in cooperation with student senators, student members of the board of governors (BoG) and with faculty members to demand information, answers and ultimately a more responsible governance of our university's affairs. With little response from the BoG we have established the need for a detailed governance review package that will clearly outline the position and demands of the students

Concerning the complexities and confusion surrounding the student center, we have done our very best to make our position clear to all students and will continue to reiterate our stance. We have not and will not make any concessions regarding the student center

project without broad public consultations. It has become evident in the last referendum that there are several issues that need to be addressed before this project can move forward. As such we have established a committee composed of CSU executives, councillors and students at large whose mandate is to call for and oversee public consultation.

For the paragraphs elaborated above sheds light to readers, none of it could be qualified as news for the outgoing Vice-President for she was conscientiously informed by her fellow executives on the operations and recent developments in the many informative executive meetings held in the past months.

On the same note, we also would like to inform all students, that our open door and open mind policy is effective at all times regardless if you are an undergraduate student, a community member, a professor, graduate student, or a current student representative. We answer questions on demand every day in office, during our monthly townhall meetings and in front of our Council of Representatives.

Finally, the former CSU president has access to the Student Union offices just like any other student currently studying at Concordia; he however maintains a key for he serves as president of CUSACorp, assisting in the operations of our student-run campus bar. Subsequently, he also serves as a student representative on BoG, and has been providing valuable feedback necessary for our governance review package.

For her nine months of service, we thank Ms. Pudwell for what she had to offer to the student body. We wish her well in her future endeavors and we hope her resignation draws no ties to the upcoming elections. It is quite unfortunate to suggest that anyone, including the CSU, would resort to an attack on Ms. Pudwell's character. It is clear that the duty of the students and the CSU councillors is to constructively evaluate the performance of the executives and hold them to account.

As our commitment towards being transparent and accountable compel us, we hope Ms. Pudwell upholds the values she has stated and makes herself available for questioning on her recent actions at next week's council meeting on Wednesday March 9 in H-760 at 6pm.

In solidarity,

Heather Lucas, President

Adrien Severyns, VP External and Projects

Rami Khoriaty, VP Finance and Clubs

Hassan Abdullahi, VP Advocacy and Loyola

Andres Lopez, VP Student Life

Chair: (Reads response by Amine Dachby below)

For the Concordia Community

March 7th 2011

This statement will comment on the resignation of Morgan Pudwell from the Concordia Student Union Executive and some of the points raised in her resignation letter. Let me begin by first thanking Morgan for her service to Concordia Student Union and wishing

her the best in her future endeavours. As a fellow student leader I understand the sacrifices we each make to improving our university and I want to acknowledge Morgan's service to students.

In Morgan's resignation letter, she made several remarks that I found needed a response. First and foremost, I think it's important to clarify my current volunteer obligations with the Concordia Student Union. I currently serve as the President of CusaCorp and have several obligations relating to the over-all management of Reggie's and the Java U space that make it imperative that I work closely with the CSU executive and staff members. In addition, I was elected to serve on the Board of Governors and have been working with CSU executives to help repair our university's governance structure and improve accountability at the board. Furthermore, I make no apologies for maintaining working relationships and indeed friendships with many councillors, executives, and involved students. Indeed, I take great pride in having worked with fellow student leaders in improving our student union in the past two years. Although it's not perfect, with greater student involvement, I believe we are ultimately heading in the right direction.

I have always made myself available to CSU councillors, executives, and fellow students if they had any questions or concerns. I most recently attended the January council meeting to give an update on the University's governance issues and made myself available to answer questions councillors had. Going forward, I will prepare a written update on Board activities and submit it to council. I will also continue to be available to my fellow students if they should have any questions or suggestions.

Unfortunately, Morgan made several remarks that were unsubstantiated and that sought to exaggerate or malign my involvement with the Concordia Student Union. As a student leader, I respect my fellow student leaders and do not wish to engage in personal character attacks or questioning of their motivations or dedication to improving our University. Such behaviour helps breed cynicism and does not provide a constructive outlet to addressing real issues.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my personal thanks for Morgan Pudwell's service to students and again wish her the best in her future endeavours. I would like to emphasize my commitment to helping to improve our University and encourage students to get involved with their student union in accomplishing this goal.

In Solidarity,

Amine Dabchy, CSU Board of Governor Representative

CusaCorp President

CSU President 2009-2010

Lucas/Omar: Motion to go into closed session, given the fact that the nature of what we are going to talk about is very personal and sensitive information, as this is a human resources (HR) issue. However, financial issues will be addressed in open session.

Pudwell: As the person to be discussed, I welcome everyone in this room.

Abdullahi: Its important to point out that there is a lot of personal and sensitive information, besides about Pudwell. However, allegations about financial mismanagement will be discussed in open session.

Gill: Would like to note that she not sitting at the table and has chosen to sit with the students where she feels more comfortable. Everyone in the room is here and deserves to hear what is discussed. I hope that students do not leave if there is a motion to go into closed session.

Suss: Students came to hear these issues of resignation and implications brought up. It is important that students who came to see this be allowed.

Manson: As a union that calls for transparency, it would be hypocritical to go into closed session.

Pudwell: If this is going to be spoken about as an HR issue, the students in this room are my bosses, not the executive, or were.

Freedman: Transparency is important. Many issues to be discussed have to do with the elections coming up. As those attending the meeting right now and involved in the upcoming elections, they may not speak about the elections as that would be campaigning and that is not allowed until campaign season. One good reason to go into closed session is so that we can have a frank discussion regarding the elections without getting anyone into trouble with the by-laws. And we do need to have a discussion about how this may relates to elections.

Gill: This is about Morgan, not the elections.

Omar: The closed session will only be to discuss Morgan, her relationships with the executive, and personal into. Issues regarding the finances and the student centre will be discussed in open session. Closed session is absolutely reasonable.

Shavit: To call to question to go into closed session. Passed.

Student: This is a travesty. Students should stay.

Chair: We are following the rules.

Barbosa: Councillors here were elected to represent the students here. When we are talking about topics such as finances, it will be in open session.

Chair: As the motion for closed session was passed, we must follow. There should not be further discussion.

Brown: We were elected to represent the students. Freedman was correct that there are serious allegations in place and the timing of these issues is related to the elections, and we must all at least acknowledge that possibility. If we have a sit-in, security will have to be called and nothing will get done. Perhaps we can take a 5 or 10 minutes recess to come up with guidelines on how we can do this in a civilized manner in a legal way. Students can talk to us and tell us what they want discussed in the open session.

Chair: There is a speakers list. Since Brown could speak, we should continue.

Abdullahi: There was a point of order. A vote was taken to go into closed session and it must be followed. We cannot proceed. We must uphold the rules.

Chair: According to Robert's Rules, we cannot proceed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm due to trouble regarding closed session.

