

Association of McGill University Support Employees
Syndicat

Public Service Alliance of Canada local 17600

Annual Report 2013 – 2014

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Executive Committee Report

Introduction

The AMUSE Executive Committee has worked hard over the past year to make steps forward in developing the local, and finessing our advocacy and outreach work.

As our union grows bigger, the needs have changed, as well as our capacity to serve our membership. This past year saw significant growth in that capacity, particularly in steadily improving labour relations and outreach.

This year we also saw our Board of Representatives grow to a full twelve members for the first time, as well as a higher level of engagement in Board meetings than in the past. Everyone involved should be proud of these achievements.

I. Executive Committee (January 31st, 2013 – January 28th, 2014)

The Executive Committee was elected at the 4th Annual General Meeting in January 2013, with an Interim Vice President appointed by the Board of Representatives in August. The members were:

Jaime MacLean, President

Joan Moses, Vice President – resigned August 2013

Luke Walker, Communications and Secretariat Officer

Justyn Teed, Treasurer

Agatha Slupek, Labour Relations Officer

Ben Stidworthy, Interim Vice President – appointed August 2013

Our Executive Committee started the term with the goals of improving our outreach strategies in order to better enforce our Collective Agreement through education and the distribution of materials (pay scales, information in regards to benefits, etc.) so that members are able to recognize when their rights under the Collective Agreement are being infringed upon. This outreach also serves the purpose of making direct contact with members in order to advocate for the amelioration of their working conditions.

This year the Executive Committee also made it a goal to work on the union's governance structures and explore methods to maintain institutional knowledge

while ensuring that we meet our mandate to best serve our membership. This consisted largely of working to update existing internal policies and create new policies and is a project that will need to be continued into 2014.

This Executive Committee also began working amid a tense political climate on campus, in the wake of the administration's 'protest protocol', the Protocol Regarding Demonstrations, Protests, and Occupations. We worked with the Inter Union Council to raise awareness of this procedure that limits freedom of expression and freedom of assembly on campus, however the protocol was approved by both the Senate and the Board of Governors. To our knowledge this protocol has never been applied to a student or staff member, however if it is used to penalize any of our members we will be able to grieve that action. It is still worrisome that students do not have any clear recourse or power to combat this protocol, which should be a concern to all campus unions as students have offered significant solidarity and support during labour disputes in the past.

II. Mobilization and Outreach

prepared by Ben Patrick Stidworthy, out-going Vice President

a. Implementation of the Collective Agreement

Mobilization is a high priority for the Executive Committee because union's strength derives from an informed and mobilized body. An important aspect of the Executive Committee's mobilization efforts has been to inform the AMUSE membership of the details of the Collective Agreement ever since it was first signed in 2012. This is a vital and difficult task. An AMUSE member with knowledge of the Collective Agreement is able to evaluate whether the labour practices of their workplace are in concert with the Collective Agreement. The Collective Agreement is valuable only if it can be enforced and this is the task of all members of AMUSE. In addition, mobilization also involves educating members on how AMUSE functions, how members can become involved, and what services AMUSE can provide. Unfortunately, the AMUSE membership is a large and spread-out group across campus. There is a high turnover the AMUSE membership, many of whom have irregular hours. This makes the task of on-the-ground outreach difficult, but many mechanisms are currently in place to ensure that AMUSE members are aware of the union like the newsletter, Facebook group, posters, website, and Outreach workers.

b. Outreach Team

Since 2012, the Executive Committee has hired two to four Outreach workers to perform 'door-to-door' outreach. Currently, there are two Outreach workers responsible for the tasks described above. While the internet-based mobilization efforts are indispensable, there is no question that in-person contact with AMUSE representatives is extremely valuable for the membership. Outreach Workers are knowledgeable in regards to the Collective Agreement and are able to introduce members to the union as well as relevant sections of the agreement. This became an important way to check whether members were receiving newsletters, and whether the Collective Agreement was being applied appropriately.

Recommendations: All mobilization efforts should continue as they have been implemented. The recommend changes to the Executive Committee should allow for more focused outreach efforts at the hands of the Media and Communications Officer. It is vital that more delegates to the Board of Representatives participate in on-the-ground outreach efforts. For more information, see the recommendations in the Mobilization Committee Report.

III. Labour Relations

prepared by Agatha Slupek, out-going Labour Relations Officer

The main task of the Labour Relations Officer (LRO) is to act as a liaison between McGill Human Resources (HR) and the membership, to provide advice and advocacy when problems arise in the workplace that affect the working conditions of those deemed casual employees. This past year was the second year AMUSE has been working with a Collective Agreement (CA), whose consistent, adequate, and just implementation remains one of the primary concerns of the LRO. AMUSE members' working conditions, rights, and rates of pay changed when the agreement was signed, and rates of pay and legal holiday compensation percentages changed again as stipulated in the CA in June 2013.

Questions and problems usually come to the LRO's attention after members contact AMUSE directly, usually in e-mails to the LRO or the Communications Officer. Nevertheless, problems did come to our attention during informal discussions with members at AMUSE events, like budget-cut information sessions, drop-in coffee hours on campus, or through contact with one of our

hard-working outreach coordinators. One method of soliciting member contact and questions was the inclusion of a “CA Spotlight” into some of the newsletters, which, if worded colloquially and inclusive of the word PAY, usually prompted a few member e-mails, which in turn resulted in the discovery of issues later to be brought to HR. Individual questions tended to focus on issues of compensation as well as job-classification, as HR has yet to become wholly adjusted to the CA, notably on the issue of rate-of-pay, both for part-time and full-time workers albeit in different respects.

Many issues were resolved simply by members’ speaking to their supervisors. Sometimes supervisors would request to speak to the LRO, or simply to view the e-mail correspondences in which the LRO explained the relevant AMUSE member’s rights in a given situation. Members were usually comfortable bringing the issue up with their supervisor, but were encouraged to follow up with the LRO if there were further questions or if it seemed the problem would not be so resolved and should be advanced to the Labour Relations Committee (LRC), which meets every month, or to a grievance. In many cases the member in question would be hesitant to press things further en lieu of the budgetary-situation in their department or the impending possibility of an advancement in their Hiring Unit, however, in these cases, the LRO makes sure to follow-up with a member and needs to be sensitive both to the pressures and uncertainties faced by workers and the pressing need for the Union’s CA to be respected and for workers to be receiving adequate benefits where applicable.

Labour Relations Committee, Grievances, and Member Cases

LRC meetings functioned as a space of discussion between HR and AMUSE each month. Typically, the LRO, the President, and AMUSE’s PSAC advisors, Jean-Michel Fortin and Alexandre Leduc, would attend and meet with Robert Comeau, Director of Labour and Employee Relations at McGill. AMUSE set the agenda, which usually brought up several questions from membership that needed further investigation or action from HR, like pay adjustments. Additionally, the agenda contained items related to the collective agreement and HR’s associated responsibilities; for example, AMUSE inquired at each meeting on the progress regarding Appendices C and D, which stipulate the formation of a committee to provide certain members with ID cards and library access and providing members access to other employee benefits.

We were able to come to an agreement on Appendix C at May’s meeting of

the LRC. Non-student AMUSE members are now eligible to request access to a temporary ID card which lasts the period of one academic year and is the equivalent to the Service Provider Card given to contractors working on campus. This is great and many members have already requested to be issued, and have been issued, these cards. Progress has been made on Appendix D, albeit significantly less conclusive than the agreement made on Appendix C. The University has recognized in several LRC meetings that it is not impossible to provide AMUSE members with access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) currently being offered to other employee groups. The University has provided AMUSE with the total estimated cost of AMUSE's having access to the EAP, which is between \$34000 and \$37000 CAD, depending on whether this is granted to Group 1 and Group 2 employees, or simply to the former. (The last discussion that will take place prior to this Annual General Meeting on the matter will be on 21 January 2014 and so any developments will need to be subsequently added-in to this report.)

On the issue of office space, which is also carried over from last year's LRC meetings, there has been varied progress. A tentative date of February 1st has been floated about for the office's being available for visit, and the address of 517 des Pins has been given as the location of the office. LRC meetings have continued to be less productive than would be ideal for this LRO, however, it appears HR has begun to take at least some of AMUSE's concerns seriously. Continued pressure and preparation of relevant information in advance to LRC meetings should be maintained by the in-coming LRO. It may be that, in the absence of a formal procedure for the resolution of problems or the addressing of issues brought to LRC, the incoming LRO be prepared to simply file more grievances, whenever this is deemed to be an avenue to be pursued upon consultation with both the Executive Committee and the PSAC advisors.

The LRC was also a space to discuss specific workplace problems for individual members. Typically, these discussions were about a member who was receiving an inaccurate rate of pay, was fired from their job, or was being inadequately compensated. In most of the instances of inadequate compensation or uncertainty nearing the end of a contract, the member would meet separately with the LRO and their case would be discussed first via email and second during the next LRC. In most cases, central HR would usually intervene with the supervisor or the HR representative in that department, who would join the discussion and in some cases address the situation to the member's satisfaction. In a few instances, AMUSE found itself in the unfortunate position of having no

recourse to labour law or to any provision in the collective agreement, such as with a termination of a contract, the schedule of work of employees, and the relationship between AMUSE's and MUNACA's CA. In such cases the options available to AMUSE were explored by the PSAC advisor and the LRO and the case either left ambiguous or resolved in conversation with HR. As is customary, in all cases, the LRO, AMUSE, and PSAC worked in the interest and acted only with prior and informed consent of the member in question, and aimed for the resolution that the member had expressly requested or agreed to. While AMUSE on many occasions entered into step one of the grievance procedure outlined in Article 12 of the CA, only once did a problem advance to the point where a grievance was filed on behalf of a member during the past year. This grievance is as yet un-resolved, but has been referred to arbitration.

The grievance questions the legality of Article 22.01 of the CA; which states with respect to full-time employees with a contract of at least six (6) months that they "will receive the entry level salary for the position as defined in the MUNACA CA," but then that "The employee will then be eligible to a salary increase at the same date and by the same percentage as all the other AMUSE members." The way the LRO and the AMUSE Executive Committee read this article results in the increase of the rate of pay of the AMUSE member in question whenever the entry level salary for their position changes in the MUNACA CA. HR is reading this article as freezing the entry level salary at the time of hiring date, with casuals working full-time only receiving the 1% increase/year that is applied to part-time AMUSE members. The result is that someone hired into a full-time position after the June period will be making significantly more than someone hired into that position in March, which is arbitrary and may be an illegal discriminatory measure. More news on this grievance will be available to the Board following arbitration.

Another notable case brought to by AMSUE to the LRC involved the replacement of one (1) senior-level MUNACA position with two (2) casuals, with the result that these members were severely underpaid for the work they had completed. AMUSE was smart to bring this issue to the table shortly following the end-of-contract of the member in question, as they were able to receive backpay for 9 months of time worked and faced no repercussions or otherwise undesirable situations at the workplace. These situations can be better picked up on if AMUSE remains in close contact with MUNACA, which has an up-to-date list of their members on leave that will help the in-coming LRO help AMUSE members and bring the University's breaches of CA rights to light.

Collective Agreement Assessment

Having worked with the present CA for the past year, it seems appropriate here to touch on a few articles that have been invoked by either the LRO or HR and have proven to be either ambiguous as to their application, or potentially detrimental to AMUSE members as currently written or as currently being interpreted and applied. Most of these ambiguities or seeming injustices arise from the lack of a 'generic job descriptions' list for AMUSE members and the non-specification of the relationship between the part-time and full-time groups, as well as with the MUNACA CA. These are:

Article 17.02, which states that the probationary period for part-time employees is three (3) consecutive academic terms, where the summer may count as a term or be exempted from the calculation. It also states that "probationary period is recognized by hiring unit." In my view, the specification of a probationary period and the simultaneous inclusion of a measure of discretion to the hiring unit is contradictory and we should work to resolve this. The majority of AMUSE members working part-time are either signing a contract with the length of one (1) academic year, else are signing a new contract every academic semester. With an eye to keeping the identities of employees as employees and employees as student separate, it may be useful to determine an across-the-board probationary period better suited to those members of AMUSE working part-time whose jobs may, depending on the specific position and the hours work, be reasonably maintained as being sufficient in frequency and breadth of work to be evaluated after sixty (60) days worked, as stipulated in Article 17.01 in reference to full-time employees. The absence of a fixed probationary period for part-time employees and the absence of a clause which guarantees a letter-of-confirmation that an employee has passed such a period allows supervisors to manipulate this clause effectively enough, with the result being that an employee deemed unjustly to have not passed their probationary period cannot access the grievance procedure.

Article 20.02 – This article states "The supervisor shall determine work schedules [...and that] This does not guarantee, in any way, a fixed schedule or a minimum amount of working hours per week." This article is currently being applied to part-time and full-time employees, which allows full-time employees to effectively be disregarded as having any rights peculiar to their full-time status, which appears to me as both contrary to the spirit of the initial

distinction between these groups and results in significant loss of pay for full-time employees in the summer period especially. On my view, it should not be applied to full-time employees.

Article 22 – This article has to do with salary structure. As mentioned in the previous section on Grievance and Member Cases, this article must be further specified in the next round of collective bargaining. The way Article 22.01 is currently being applied results in an unjustifiable discrepancy with respect to the rate of pay of two workers completing the same position, where the worker who has worked in a position longer is making less. The University currently disagrees with the Union about this matter and it is important that this be resolved. This points to the larger issue of negotiating a Collective Agreement which makes consistent reference to or clarifies AMUSE's relationship with MUNACA. Article 22.01 which stipulates rates of pay for full-time employees of less than six (6) months appears to make sense, but has resulted in the signing (intentional or not on the part of the University) of 5 month and 29 day contracts, with the outcome of AMUSE members being paid at a rate much lower than that of their MUNACA counterparts for what is often a position of similar complexity. LRO should not be hesitant to try to grieve or contest such contracts. Article 22.03 specifies the rate of pay for part-time employees. As it is currently being applied (or mis-applied), there is no standard for determining the appropriate class-membership of positions. The LRO and the future bargaining committee members should be sure to work on getting this clarified.

Recommendations for the Future

The LRO position is a rewarding and ever-challenging position. LRC meetings typically have a substantive agenda and most issues do not get resolved within the span of one meeting. This position requires a significant time-commitment on the part of the LRO, as well as a willingness to devolve some research or other tasks to other members of the AMUSE team, be they the outreach coordinators or other members of the Executive Committee or Board. Although HR continues to be under-staffed and respond to requests either infrequently or slowly, it is important to continue to follow-up with agenda items and prepare information and arguments that make a strong case for AMUSE. The in-coming LRO may find it useful to strike a committee to help in this work. This would increase the accountability of the position and allow for a collective brainstorming as to methods by which to attack issues facing AMUSE members which could prove very effective and useful. LRC meeting-dates are set in

advance and it could be useful to have a committee review the items being brought to the table beforehand. Another recommendation would be that the LRO, along with the president, not sign the 'suspension of delays' request given by the University to AMUSE over the summer months. If the in-coming LRO foresees their presence in Montreal for the summer, there is no need on this LRO's view to sign the suspension of delays. This allows the University to delay responding to requests and member issues brought forth by AMUSE. This summer will also involve the beginning of a Negotiating Committee; the in-coming LRO should plan to be in Montreal for the summer, as this will consist of a large time-commitment. Another recommendation for the in-coming LRO is that they maintain frequent contact with the PSAC advisor available and make sure to clarify the relationship and shared or separate responsibilities of each. This would allow for a better united front at meetings of the LRC, as well as increase the cogency and strength of arguments put forth.

IV. Administration

This year the University Administration continued to hold bimonthly meetings with employee groups (including AMUSE, MUNACA, SEU, AMURE, AGSEM, MUNASA, and MCLU) for the purpose of consultation with labour unions and employee associations. These meetings arose out of the University's budget cut plan which were implemented in the Spring and included the voluntary retirement program which was offered to permanent employees aged 60 and over in an attempt to cut 200 to 300 positions at McGill. The affects of these budget cuts on the AMUSE membership was never a focus, nor were the affects acknowledged to a great extent, and in the months afterward we saw a cut in hours to part time workers and a cut to the number of positions available over the summer (mostly affecting jobs available for students). At first these consultation meetings were attended by the Principal, Heather Munroe-Blum, as well as the VP Finance and Administration, Michael Di Grappa, and the Provost, Anthony Masi, however after the first few meetings the Principal did not attend.

These consultative meetings have never had agendas or action plans, and consisted of a presentation by the senior administrators with an opportunity to ask questions, which mostly did not yield information further than that already available. In theory, maintaining open communication between unions and the administration is positive, however the conversations at these meetings have never yielded results or improved the relationship.

V. Communications

Prepared by Luke Walker, Communications and Secretariat Officer

I was voted in as Communications and Secretariat Officer at the AMUSE Annual General Assembly in January, 2013.

Since starting this position, the bulk of my efforts were devoted to: (1) preparing AMUSE Newsletters, (2) working with our web developer to redesign the AMUSE website, (3) the hiring of a new translator, and (4) taking minutes at the AMUSE Board of Representatives meetings and AMUSE Executive Committee meetings, along with other administrative tasks.

AMUSE Newsletter

Since assuming the Communications and Secretariat Officer position with AMUSE, twenty newsletters have been sent out to our membership. Because membership lists change and we receive membership forms regularly, coupled with the fact that certain mailing groups become outdated, the amount of emails sent out for each newsletter can fluctuate; however - as you can see in the table below – the view rate of the newsletter hovers around 25-30% (the one exception being the “Message in Regards to the Budget Cuts” which, understandably, generated more attention).

The bounce and subscription rate is very low, which is encouraging; as is the response - in the form of emails to the Communications Officer - from members regarding the content of certain newsletters specific to their working situation. The introduction of the “CA: Spotlight” to some of the more recent newsletters seems to have engaged some of our members in a more relevant way and is something I would certainly recommend continuing.

Date	Newsletter Title	Emails Sent	Emails Viewed	Viewed
10-Feb-13	Results of the AGM	2084	600	29%
28-Feb-13	AMUSE Movie Night	2820	732	26%
11-Mar-13	Coffee with AMUSE this Monday!	3074	736	24%
17-Mar-13	Labour Events at McGill	2830	737	26%
08-Apr-13	Coffee with AMUSE this Monday	2754	689	25%
14-Apr-13	Message in regards to Budget	3191	1266	40%

	Cuts			
30-Apr-13	May Day	2730	741	27%
18-May-13	Coffee with AMUSE this Tuesday	2269	576	25%
19-Jun-13	Upcoming Events with AMUSE	2758	654	24%
01-Jul-13	How will the budget cuts impact you?	2851	634	22%
27-Jul-13	Upcoming Events with AMUSE	3121	727	23%
24-Aug-13	Upcoming Events with AMUSE	2725	643	24%
24-Sep-13	Upcoming Events with AMUSE	3121	727	23%
02-Oct-13	AMUSE & AMURE Open House	2306	577	25%
15-Oct-13	AMUSE is Hiring!	2825	726	26%
28-Oct-13	Labour Week Fall 2013	2772	664	24%
17-Nov-13	CA: Spotlight - The Holiday Issue	1963	512	26%
27-Nov-13	Drop-In for Coffee with AMUSE	2420	688	29%
22-Dec-13	Happy Holidays from AMUSE!	1069	299	28%
15-Jan-14	Upcoming Events with AMUSE	2374	703	30%

Website and Web Developer

In February 2013, we contracted Forrest Higgins (who has worked with AMUSE before) to redesign the AMUSE website – hoping to make the website more interactive, accessible, and bilingual. At first, the process was slow; however, there has been significant progress in the past few months as it pertains to the revamping of our website.

The status of the redesign as of January 18, 2014 is as follows:

The page structure of the site has been reorganized and our developer has consolidated many small pages that only had a few lines of content into their parent pages. This reduces the width of the page titles on the main navigation menu, which is important because the new theme template is a sleeker design requiring fewer tabs.

During this reorganization process, the developer and I have been locating pages that require updated content and/or have not been translated into French. Once the new theme is fully operational, the content needing to be translated will be forwarded on to our French translator, Patrick DeDaw.

According to our developer, the only remaining things for the new theme - beyond the page reorganization and choosing posts for the featured slider - is to reposition the footer union logo images/links to the sidebar along the right-hand side. As it stands, these do not fit properly in the footer of the new theme. Once this is completed, the new site will be ready to use and viewable to the public; however, there will be further optional refinements as we get used to the format.

Before handing over my portfolio to the next Communications and Secretariat Officer, I will organize a meeting between myself, the new executive member overseeing the website, and the web developer – so that any questions and information can be cleared up moving forward. I am excited with the progress made on the website and look forward to see how it evolves over the next year.

French Translator

In December 2013, AMUSE hired a new translator, Patrick DeDauw, after our previous translator indicated that she would be stepping down. The contract with Patrick, which runs until April 30, 2014, will involve the translating of AMUSE documents/newsletters and, once the new website goes live, content from our website that is only in English.

The major pages on our website that require translation are as follows: Structure of the Union, Collective Agreement (the agreement itself is available in French), Temporary IDs for AMUSE Members, Know Your Rights, Quebec Labour Code, Resource Page, and Solidarity. Before handing over my portfolio, I hope to have an exhaustive list of content on our website that requires translation into French.

Meeting Minutes and other Administrative Duties

I took meeting minutes at all Board of Representatives meetings and Executive Committee meetings since assuming the position of Communications and Secretariat Officer (with the exception of the August BoR meeting). Since the newsletters are sent out from the Communications email address, I would often be the first point of contact for members, responding to their emails or referring/forwarding their inquiry to the relevant Executive member.

Difficulties/Recommendations Moving Forward

My greatest difficulty while being Communications and Secretariat Officer was, most certainly, the Secretariat aspect. The administrative and organizational responsibilities under the Communications and Secretariat Officer's portfolio can be demanding, and staying on top of these duties (in addition to my other obligations outside of AMUSE) was something I ultimately failed at. The proposed reorganization of the executive positions is a practical way of addressing this problem that I experienced. For this reason, I recommend that membership support the proposed reorganization.

VI. By-Laws and Policy

Over the past year we have attempted to build our internal policy in order to become more transparent and consistent. This work was done by the President along with the By-Laws and Policy Committee (see the Committee report for more information).

In the Summer the Equity Committee drafted a policy with the goal of recognizing and creating space for all of the members of AMUSE, which was approved by the Board. In the next year we hope that the Equity Committee will be able to work on acting out the ideas contained in this policy.

Other policies that have been drafted but not yet revised and approved by the Board include a Hiring Policy, an Executive Committee Agreement, a Board Agreement, and a Conflict of Interest Policy. The goal of each of these policies is to ensure that each member involved in the union has a clear understanding of the regular procedures of the union and to ensure consistency in decision making.

There have also been new By-Law changes proposed as a motion at the 2014 Annual General Meeting that contain a few clarifying texts in the articles concerning the Board of Representatives (article 11) and the Stewards and Committees (article 14), as well as massive changes to the articles concerning the Executive Committee (articles 12 and 13). After four years of functioning as a union, we found that the Vice President and Communications and Secretariat Officer positions to be difficult for the individuals in these positions. The Vice President position is poorly defined with unclear tasks, and although it in practice has been a position that is devoted to mobilization and outreach as

well as supporting the projects of other Executive Officers, in practice it has been difficult to maintain clear expectations. The duties of the Communications and Secretariat Officer have proved to be too much for one position, with many of the secretariat duties being neglected in favour of supporting mobilization and maintaining regular communications. The proposed solution to this (to be voted on at the 2013 Annual General Meeting) is to combine these two positions and separate the tasks that are best suited to be in one position (rather than being spread over two), creating an Internal Affairs Officer and a Communications and Outreach Officer position. We hope that these changes will help the Executive Committee to function more efficiently, however these portfolios may need to be reevaluated throughout the year and perhaps modified at the next General Meeting.

VII. On Campus Councils

The Inter Union Council continued to meet over this past year, however not as frequently as in the past. The IUC began meeting in the year before the 2011 MUNACA strike and during this time we felt that it was necessary to build inter union solidarity on campus. The IUC was incredibly active during the strike and maintained momentum afterwards, however over this year it met less frequently and was more poorly intended in the past. The IUC should be revived over the next year as inter union solidarity at McGill is the best strategy to build bargaining power and the relationship built through these meetings, as well as through working together on projects, made considerable gains. Sharing information and strategies regarding negotiations and general labour relations has been invaluable in the past and we should focus on building strong relationships with other unions at all times, not just during strike periods.

One notable achievement of the Inter Union Council this year has been Labour Week, a week long event series devoted to labour struggles in the university sector as well as outside the campus community.

A second on campus council was created this Summer, called the Citizen's Council. This is an initiative of MAUT (the McGill Association of University Teachers, the employee association that professors and librarians may join) that came out of their inquiry into the events of November 10th, 2011. The Citizen's Council includes representatives from MAUT, SSMU, PGSS, AMURE, AMUSE, MUNACA, MUNASA, AGSEM, and MCLU, and is still in the process of

developing goals, but in general is working to bring voices of staff and students together to address issues that have been ongoing problems at McGill. Broadly, these include governance, transparency, and accountability. The CC met with Principal Suzanne Fortier in January 2014 to bring a list of concerns and address these concerns broadly as well as with concrete ideas.

VIII. External Groups

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)

This year our relationship with the PSAC, our parent organization, has changed notably. Due to an excessive work load, our advisor, Jean-Michel Fortin, has stepped back from his direct involvement in AMUSE and continues to advise us in labour relations but is not offering general support. Since September we have begun working with Alex Leduc as a secondary advisor, who is able to attend our Executive Committee meetings as well as Labour Relations Committee meetings, but is not able to advise us on labour relations since he does not have as much experience as Jean-Michel.

The issue of our contract with the PSAC has also arisen since December. Every Directly Chartered Local (DCL) of the PSAC is required to sign an agreement outlining the details of the relationship, however in our case this agreement was never brought to us and therefore never signed. Before we sign this agreement we plan to meet with the Regional Executive Vice President, Magali Picard, to discuss the details and the areas where we see that the PSAC has not been meeting the criteria outlined, mostly in the services offered to AMUSE. We have been disappointed with the level of commitment that we have seen from the PSAC in offering courses for our members and engaging our membership in general. Although we value the autonomy that we have to serve our membership in the best way we see fit, we could also fulfill that mandate better with more support from the PSAC Regional Office.

Conseil Québécois des syndicats universitaires (CQSU)

Unfortunately, we were not able to attend any meetings of the CQSU, one in January 2013 in Quebec City and one in September 2013 in Sherbrooke. The distance and short notice made it difficult for any representatives of AMUSE to attend, however this year it would be recommended that AMUSE attempt to participate in the CQSU as the knowledge sharing and solidarity gained from this participation would be significant. If no Executive Committee member is able to participate, a good alternative would be assigning a Board member to

be the AMUSE representatives to the CQSU. This might actually be better, as this representatives could have more time to contribute to than an Executive Officer.

At this point AMUSE is not a member of the CQSU but is able to participate as an observer. Becoming a member would require a vote at a General Meeting and paying dues to the CQSU, however in the past they have been open to discussing the percentage or amount of dues that we contribute.

Fédération de travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)

In November 2013 the FTQ held a national convention, bringing together all member from across Quebec. We chose not to send any delegates due to the cost (a 300\$ registration fee plus the travel to Quebec City and accommodations for the full week of the convention plus liberation for members' missed work days), as well as the limited availabilities of our Executive Officers. It would, of course, be ideal that AMUSE be able to participate in external groups and maintain relationships with other organizations, however our ability to do so is limited and we have, at this point, not prioritized FTQ involvement.

IX. Beginnings of talks with MUNACA re: merger

After passing a motion to pursue talks with MUNACA regarding a possible merger, we formed a Merger Committee in February 2013. The merger committee has been open to as many members who wished to participate and discussed a general vision and ideas for the new union, starting with possible political structures. Two members from this committee met with representatives from MUNACA to discuss the idea of a political structure as a starting point from which to start discussions, however after this meeting we were not able to meet with MUNACA a second time because of MUNACA's desire to settle agreements with the PSAC before proceeding with these discussions.

In November 2013 our PSAC advisor, Alex Leduc, set up a presentation from a representative from UNIFOR, the union formed by the CAW and CEP to talk about the experiences of UNIFOR in merging two distinct unions. There has not been any action taken in this issue since that time.