



# MCGSS Annual Report | 2013- 2014

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**President**  
**Lucy Lu (2013) / Maeghan O'Neill (2014)**

It was truly a blast to serve as President of MCGSS again for the Summer and Fall 2013 semesters. The months flew by so fast but I think we were able to accomplish quite a lot as the MCGSS student council. We worked over the summer to complete the renovations to the grad lounge – the walls were repainted; the sofas, fridge and microwave replaced; and a foosball table and two comfy chairs added. I'm glad to see that many more grads are using this space now. In August, we held McGill's first ever Sustainable BBQ in collaboration with Green Drinks Ste. Anne. Grads enjoyed lots of fresh and delicious veggies, fruits, and corn-on-the-cob – all sourced locally from the Mac Horticulture Centre, the Mac Student-Run Ecological Gardens, and local farms. November saw another first for Mac campus – the first ever flu shot clinic. With the help of MCSS, ASEQ and Blue Cross, we were able to make this event free for all students at Mac. It's an excellent way to promote student health, and I'm sure the event will continue for years to come. Our regular events were also very successful and well-received – the strawberry social in July, white water rafting in August, orientation and welcome BBQ in September, the holiday lunch in December and, of course, our monthly bagel breakfasts. With the end of my graduate studies nearing, I was sad to resign from the student council. It was a great run with a wonderful team, and I wish the best for the next year!

Lucy Lu

MSc Parasitology

It has been an absolute pleasure to work on the executive committee of MCGSS for the 2013-2014 year. I began my term in summer as vice president and was acclaimed as president in January of this year. During my time as vice president I was heavily involved in organizing events including BBQs, bagel breakfasts, holiday lunch, and the ever popular white water rafting. I am also proud to have been involved in the renovations to the grad lounge and our first ever sustainable BBQ.

My term as president has been short but I think we have achieved some important goals and set a precedent for the following term. We kicked off the new semester with winter orientation where we met many new faces. We also continued the ever popular bagel breakfasts and coordinated with PGSS to offer a multitude of exciting events such as; snowshoeing, skiing, curling, tubing and the upcoming sugar shack and Toronto/Niagra trip. Extracurricular events are of great importance to me since I believe they help to build-up the Mac student community and are a much needed break for Mac students from the stresses of grad life.



Communications are an essential component of reaching out to the student body. In 2014 we endeavoured to increase the ease of information relay between council and grads. To that end, we have completely revamped our website - it is now more visually appealing and easy to navigate. We are also working towards enhanced email communications by adopting a newsletter format.

We have also restructured the way our finances are handled in an attempt to attain greater autonomy. This required reorganization of our by-laws to reflect these changes. We now have a greater ability to monitor and distribute our funds.

I am very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with such kind, supportive and hard-working people on this year's council. I want to thank each of them for their dedication and collaborative spirit. I wish the best of luck to future MCGSS council!

Sincerely,

Maeghan O'Neill

PhD Parasitology



**Vice President  
Vaibhav Gupta**

My election to the office of Vice President of MCGSS in January 2014, was my first experience with any student society or politics. Irrespective of the fact, my experience with MCGSS was a thoroughly enjoyable one.

For my duties, I was supposed to assist the President and represent her in her absence besides supporting the other council members whenever they would require my assistance.

As always, MCGSS continues to strive for more graduate student events. Besides participating in the organizing of the traditional monthly Bagel Breakfast and Summer BBQ events, I also contributed towards the Founder's Day celebration here at the Mac Campus. Constant interaction with other graduate students during these events enabled me to get introduced to many and eventually befriend some.

It was noted that Career And Planning Services (CAPS) were able to hold only a few of their workshops here at Mac Campus as compared to the Downtown Campus. I was able to discuss the issue and convince CAPS to hold more number of workshops here at Mac Campus which would allow more of the students located at Mac Campus to participate in these workshops and acquire new skills.

To improve the quality of the services available to the graduate students, we plan to improve the décor of the graduate study room and make it more conducive to learning. Though the exact plans are still being formulated, this step would surely boost up the utility of the grad study room.

There were some amendments made to the by-laws of the constitution of the MCGSS. This is just another step towards promoting transparency between the graduate student community here at Mac and the MCGSS.

This short but interesting tenure exposed me to various facets of the campus which would have passed unnoticed otherwise. I was more aware of the happenings at the campus and was able to contribute to them in my own little way. I came in contact with many students and staff involved in the Mac Community and am now connected to wider network of people in and around the campus. I was able to hone my interpersonal and management skills, which will be an asset to me in the future. I would like to thank my fellow council members for helping me out throughout and the graduate student community at Mac for their continued support to MCGSS.

Sincerely

Vaibhav Gupta



**Secretary**  
**Rebecca Chin**

I was elected MCGSS Secretary for the 2013-2014 academic year. My responsibilities were to book facilities and order food for the council meetings, remind council of upcoming meetings, record the meeting minutes and ensure that agenda items were addressed, disseminate the minutes to fellow council members, and post them to our webpage. Updating and maintaining the web page was also part of my responsibilities. With the help of our President, we updated the look of our web site to make it more attractive which has resulted in high traffic on our site. I was responsible for posting the minutes on the site, and keeping the "Events" section of our web site up-to-date.

I was involved in the issue of bringing more Skill Sets courses to Mac campus. I brought this issue to Council who in turn reached out to their peers to gauge interest, and contacted the Coordinators of Skill Sets in order to see what could be offered at Mac. There does seem to be an interest in having more Skill Set courses offered at Mac, yet the hindrance to scheduling them is that it requires significant notice (approx. 3 months) before they can be offered; therefore, this is still an issue that is being followed-up on, with the aim to have courses offered in the Fall of 2014.

While the Grad Lounge had been re-vamped just prior to my joining the Council, I spearheaded a team that evaluated what improvements could be made to the Grad Study Room. We were aware that the room was not being used to its full potential, therefore, we wanted to make improvements so that it could respond to the needs of our grad population. Some minor changes have been made so far (such as moving our fridge into the room and providing other kitchen supplies), but due to Faculty budget limitations, no major changes can be made (an example of a possible change is to install counter-height desks to allow students to have the option of standing while doing computer work, rather than always sitting).

As an executive member of council, I was involved in the monthly bagel breakfasts where I helped prepare the food and set-up for our fellow graduate students. I also attended the winter orientation in order to welcome new students.

I was also the Grad representative on the International Development Committee in order to represent the interests of grad students; however, there weren't any meetings called while I was on Council.

I enjoyed being part of the 2013-2014 MCGSS Council and contributing to student life. I hope to be able to continue to do so next academic year too!

Cheers!

Rebecca Chin  
MSc Bioresource Engineering



**Public Relations Officer  
Ivy Mak**

I joined the MCGSS council at the beginning of the school year as the Department Representative for Dietetics and Human Nutrition. It was not until Jan 2014 that I was acclaimed as the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the executive council. It has been a truly rewarding and extraordinary experience to be serving on council despite my very short tenure period.

My main duties as PRO were to keep students informed on upcoming events and workshops organized either by MCGSS, or co-hosted with PGSS downtown; and to assist in hosting activities including the holiday lunch and monthly bagel breakfasts. I am also responsible for communicating and responding to enquiries from Mac Grads through our MCGSS emails.

Our department representatives also play central roles in bringing Mac Grads closer to PGSS. Each month, three to four department representatives represent MCGSS at PGSS council meetings and have the right to vote. It is therefore my duties to make sure representatives from all departments have equal opportunities to attend such meetings, and adequately reflect opinions of our study body. We are now working on having PGSS council reports available to all Mac grads through our website, in order to promote interest, awareness and participation in council activities.

Aside from council responsibilities, I sit on the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee as the grad student representative. Seeing the administrative changes in our graduate office with an attempt to centralize most processes, my role is to communicate students' needs to the committee, and to also let students understand the position of the committee on certain issues, and strive for mutual comprehension between both parties.

Being able to serve on MCGSS council is a truly prestigious opportunity that brings gratifying experiences. I have enjoyed my involvement in student governance, and believe a responsible and well-informed council is essential for building a fruitful graduate experience. I feel fortunate to be able to work in the executive committee this term and look forward to another great year ahead.

Ivy Mak

MSc Thesis Dietetics and Human Nutrition



**Faculty Representative**

**Rachel Krause**

I joined the executive committee of the MCGSS as the Representative to the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences in June 2013. In this role, I attended monthly faculty meetings, and reported pertinent information back to the MCGSS council. I enjoyed the opportunity to get to know some of the characters and issues at Macdonald Campus. It was especially gratifying to see the faculty and staff come together after some challenging staffing and funding transitions over the last couple of years.

I was also responsible for coordinating graduate students to sit on the 15 committees at the Macdonald Campus which have grad representatives. I was impressed by the willingness with which graduate students from across the campus volunteered to represent their fellow grads on these committees, and had no difficulty in filling the various positions.

I also actively participated in various activities of the MCGSS. The highlights for me were, of course, the food! The monthly Bagel Breakfasts were really fun and a great opportunity to connect with other grad students, and the Holiday Lunch was delicious (and a lot of fun to help prepare)!

I have had a great time serving on the executive committee of MCGSS, first under the leadership of Lucy Lu, and then (after a seamless transition!) Maeghan O'Neill. It has been a great pleasure and honour to serve with the wonderful members of the MCGSS council, on behalf of the graduate students of Macdonald Campus.

Sincerely,

Rachel Krause  
PhD Parasitology



**Treasurer**  
**Peter Tikasz**

- ❖ Created and maintained the MCGSS and PGS LF budget
- ❖ Worked on the transfer of funds (both MCGSS and PGS LF) from PGSS account to a CIBC account
- ❖ Member in charge of the Travel Grants
- ❖ Member on the Committee of the Athletic Improvement Fund
- ❖ Member on the Committee on the Building Maintenance Fund
- ❖ Took part in organizing MCGSS events (i.e. bagel breakfast, holiday lunch)
- ❖ Worked on potential events with MCSS
- ❖ Worked with MCSS on the flu shots
- ❖ Organized the Mac Talent Show (4<sup>th</sup> year)
- ❖ In charge of a High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) every weekday at noon at the gym
- ❖ Salsa dancer during free time





**Environmental Advisor**

**Nikita Ivanov**

During the last year MCGSS has been actively supporting different environmental activities across MacDonald campus. Our society has been promoting several eco-friendly sustainability programs among graduate students. All MCGSS events that took place on campus (such as Bagel Breakfast or BBQs) have always been conducted with respect to our recycling policies. Students are always asked to bring their own plates and cups in attempt to minimize environmental impact. Sustainability groups like Gorilla compost invite all interested individuals to help us make our campus a better place. As always, we got plenty of ideas and plans for future improvements, so we encourage grads to join us and be involved.

Sincerely,

Nikita Ivanov  
MSc. Parasitology



**MCSS Representative**  
**Phillip Zanet**

I volunteered myself to MCGSS and fulfilled the position of MCSS Representative for the 2013-2014 term. This was my first year as a member of an executive committee and I learned many things in terms of leadership, budget management, relations and negotiations and responsibility. I have taken every single opportunity I could find to get involved and help my campus graduate community to flourish. Whether I was a cook, organizer, laborer or doorman, I fulfilled my duties with great pride and satisfaction.

My main duties as MCSS representative consisted of attending both MCSS and MCGSS council meetings and act as a herald to keep both parties up to date with our current decisions and events. Even though I had no voting rights, I tried my best to steer their decision making towards more beneficial outcomes for both undergraduate and graduate student societies. I exchanged reports and minutes between parties and tried to explain to each other what direction they were headed in and how our societies could either cooperate or clash and how to resolve it.

In addition to my duties as MCSS representative, I played a very active role in almost all MCGSS events. I cooked during both the regular BBQ and sustainable BBQ events, helped supply and set up the bagel breakfasts, holiday lunch and also helped set up during orientation days. My only regret is not having organized or suggested more events to get involved in.

This has helped me to grow considerably and better understand our policies, politics, budgets and of course, how to better treat our students. I better understood what it took to be and follow a leader, to organize and set up events, to better get involved with our society and learned more about my peers. I hope my optimism, cheerfulness and motivation will be passed onto my successor and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Phillip Zanet

PhD Parasitology