

# BY-LAWS OF THE MACDONALD CAMPUS GRADUATE STUDENTS' SOCIETY

*Macdonald Campus, McGill University*

*Adopted in April 1995*

*Amended in February 2014*

*Amended in January 2016*

*Amended in October 2016*

*Amended in January 2019*

*Amended in April 2021*

*Amended in May 2024*

The use of the male gender in these by-laws is in no way intended as discriminatory.

## 1. DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF THE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

### 1.1. President

- 1.1.1. The President is the Chair of the Students' Council, and shall call and preside over all meetings of the Students' Council and Students' Society.
- 1.1.2. At all meetings of the Students' Council and Students' Society, the duties of the President shall be as follows:
  - 1) To call the meeting to order as soon as a quorum is present.
  - 2) To conduct the meeting in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws and *Robert's Rules of Order*.
  - 3) To announce the business before the assembly, in the order in which it will be acted upon.
  - 4) To call the roll to be recorded and the minutes to be presented.
  - 5) To receive and submit for discussion, all motions made by the members.
  - 6) To state and put to vote all motions, and to announce the result of the vote.
  - 7) To present all messages and communications, or announce such to be done.
  - 8) To certify by signature, all acts, orders, and proceedings of the meeting.
- 1.1.3. Other duties of the President include:
  - 1) To oversee and coordinate the functions of the Students' Council, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws.
  - 2) To present the Constitution and By-Laws at the first meeting of the Students' Council to be held at the beginning of each Term of Office.

- 3) Shall, in conjunction with the Vice-President, represent the Society to bodies and individuals within and outside the University.
- 4) To prepare the annual report of the Students' Council and present it at the last Students' Society meeting of the year.
- 5) Act as a co-signing officer (i.e.. sign all accounts, contracts and cheques regarding MCGSS).
- 6) At the end of term of office, to hand over in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to the office.

## 1.2. Vice-President

- 1.2.1. Duties of the Vice-President shall be as follows:
  - 1) To be the coordinator of social events organized by MCGSS.
  - 2) To replace the President in the absence of the latter.
  - 3) Shall perform the duties of President in the absence of the President.
  - 4) Shall, in conjunction with the President, represent the Society to bodies and individuals within and outside the University.
  - 5) Shall organize the Annual meeting.
  - 6) At the end of term of office, to hand over in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to the office.

## 1.3. Secretary

- 1.3.1. The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:
  - 1) To record the minutes of all meetings of the Students' Council and the Students' Society, to read the minutes at all meetings of the Students' Council and to keep them for the inspection of the members.
  - 2) To give due notice to the members of the time and place of each meeting.
  - 3) To prepare for the members of the Council, type copies of the Agenda which is to come before the meeting, in the order in which business is to be conducted.
  - 4) To keep a book containing the Constitution, By-Laws, and election rules.
  - 5) To call the roll when requested and to make a list of all present and absent members.
  - 6) To act as secretary of the Executive Committee, the Council and the Society.
  - 7) At the end of term of office, to hand over in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to the office.

## 1.4. Treasurer

- 1.4.1. The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:
  - 1) To take charge of all money belonging to the Students'

Council, disburse monies on warrants signed by the Treasurer of the recognized student organizations; obtain receipts, present financial statements when requested, and render a yearly report at the last Students' Society meeting.

2) To prepare budgets and financial statements to present to council; to keep council apprised of its financial situation; and also to manage the Students' Society's monies by the most secure and profitable means possible.

3) To present to Students' Council for final approval, of budgets, requests for funding and proposed expenditures.

4) To be a co-signing officer (i.e. sign all cheques and contracts binding the Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society).

5) To oversee proper billing to students, organizations and others for services rendered, and purchases made.

6) To review and ensure compliance with the Financial Policies contained in these By-Laws.

7) To arrange quarterly account verifications by PGSS and to review these verifications and present the results to Council.

8) At the end of term of office, to hand over in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to the office.

#### 1.5. Public Relations Officer

##### 1.5.1. Duties of the Public Relations Officer shall be as follows:

1) To be the coordinator of MCGSS communications such as the publication of a newspaper, journal, advertisement, etc.

2) To assist the meetings of the PGSS Council and thus be the MCGSS representative for this body.

3) To ensure that each departmental/institution has a representative(s).

4) To ensure that MCGSS is fully represented at the meetings of the PGSS council.

5) At the end of term of office, to hand over in good order, all books, papers, and records pertaining to the office.

#### 1.6. Environmental Advisor

##### 1.6.1. Duties of the Environmental Advisor shall be as follows:

1) To promote environmental awareness within the MCGSS.

2) To be responsible for actively investigating environmentally responsible options for purchases of the MCGSS as well as assist in the development and progress of the Executive's approach to waste minimization and recycling.

3) To assist the organizers of the different activities of the Society by acting in an advisory capacity to promote

environmental responsibility

4) To monitor on the environmental performance of the activities of the MCGSS, and present a report to Council once a semester

5) To liaise with appropriate student groups and faculty committees in respect of environment issues, as well as encourage and support student initiatives in environmental issues

6) To act as the MCGSS representative to the Macdonald Environment Committee following the directives and policies of the MCGSS President, Executive, and/or Council;

7) To hand over to their successors, in good order, all books, papers, and records pertaining to their office.

1.7. Representative to the Macdonald Campus Students' Society (MCSS).

1.7.1. Duties of this Representative shall be as follows:

1) To attend all MCSS Council meetings and inform the Students' Council and Executive of all relevant business of MCSS.

2) To report the policies and actions of the Students' Council of MCGSS at the meetings of the MCSS Council.

3) To promote participation of graduate students in MCSS activities.

4) To hand over to their successor, in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to the office.

1.8. Representative to the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

1.8.1. Duties of this Representative shall be as follows:

1) To attend Faculty Council Meetings and ensure the necessary communication the MCGSS and Faculty Council.

2) To report all Faculty Council Proceedings to the Executive of MCGSS.

3) To aid the Executive of MCGSS to carry out the functions of MCGSS.

4) To ensure MCGSS to send representatives to fill the positions of MCGSS in Faculty and non-Faculty committees.

1.9. Department/Institution Representatives

1.9.1. Duties of the Department/Institution Representatives shall be as follows:

1) To represent the Students' Society to these bodies, and to inform and

report to the Students' Council of all relevant business arising from them at each council meeting.

2) To assist members of the Executive in the performance of the business of council, including (but not limited to) advertising all MCGSS events to their respective departments, and attending and participating in set-up and take-down of at least one MCGSS event per semester per departmental rep.

3) To plan, organize, and run, a minimum of one departmental event per semester.

4) To assist the meetings of the PGSS Council, and thus be the MCGSS representatives for this body, following a schedule set by the Public Relations Officer in agreement with department/institution representatives.

5) To hand over to their successors, in good order, all books, papers and records pertaining to their office.

6) To attend MCGSS council meetings.

## 2. STANDING COMMITTEE

### 2.1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### 2.1.1. Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called by the Chair as the occasion arises.

#### 2.1.2. Members

1) President

2) Vice-President

3) Secretary

4) Treasurer

5) Public Relations Officer

6) Environmental Advisor

7) Representative to the Macdonald Campus Students' Society

8) Representative to the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

#### 2.1.3. Duties

1) To prepare a statement showing the allocation of its funds to the societies receiving budgets.

2) To undertake planning and establishment of priorities for the Students' Council, subject to the approval of Council.

3) To ensure representation of MCGSS in campus activities.

4) To inform the Council and Society members on political, academic,

financial and socio-cultural happenings on campus and at the University.

5) To organize social, cultural and other community-building activities of interest to Society members

#### 2.1.4. Procedure

- 1) Budgets: The President of the Executive Committee will receive budget submissions. The budgets will be considered by the Executive Committee and must be given final approval by the Students' Council.
- 2) Quorum of the Executive Committee will consist of fifty percent plus one (50%+1) of the total membership.
- 3) The Executive Committee has the authority to approve expenditures in cases of urgency, without prior approval of Students' Council.
- 4) All decisions of the Executive Committee must be ratified by the Students' Council.

### 3. FINANCIAL POLICIES

As the representative body of Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society (MCGSS) Incorporated, the Students' Council is in-charge with distributing the Society's money amongst student groups requesting funding, as well as for the functioning of the Council. The distribution is meant to be as fair and efficient as possible and to avoid abuse; hence the following Financial Policies:

#### 3.1. Budget Procedures

- 3.1.1. The Treasurer shall present a comprehensive budget for the Students' Society at the beginning of each academic year and present it to the council quarterly, including the list of all transactions. Once approved in Council, the budget will be considered official policy and may only be deviated from by a vote in Council.
- 3.1.2. Only expenses which are budgeted and approved by Council will be paid by the Students' Council. In all cases, proper receipts are required.
- 3.1.3. All contracts binding the Students' Society must be signed by the Treasurer and the President.
- 3.1.4. The MCGSS shall operate a separate bank account for each of its funds requiring two signing authorities for disbursement.
- 3.1.5. The signing authorities of MCGSS shall be as follows:
  - 1) The President
  - 2) The Treasurer
  - 3) An executive member appointed by the Students' Council

- 3.1.6. All cheques must be signed by the President and Treasurer and disbursed only in accordance with the Financial Policies in these By-Laws. In the absence of one of them, a designated signing authority (3.1.5.3) will serve as co-signer.
  - 3.1.7. One (1) week prior to the end of term all signing authorities, both current and future, are required to go to the bank to transfer signing authority.
  - 3.1.8. Co-signers are authorized to sign a cheque limited to 300\$; beyond this limit, they have to get the prior approval of a majority of executive members. For transactions of \$1000 or more, pre-approval is required from the executive council and the PGSS Student Life Coordinator or PGSS accountant.
  - 3.1.9. A MCGSS expense form must be completed, printed and filed for verification purposes for each transaction.
  - 3.1.10. Quarterly account verifications will be completed by PGSS, for which the Treasurer and President will supply all information pertaining to the MCGSS accounts.
  - 3.1.11. It is possible for a member of the Executive or Students' Council Staff to have money advanced without prior authorization in cases of urgency, limited to \$300, provided a receipt is submitted no later than 10 business days following the request. All such disbursements must be ratified by Students' Council, failing which responsibility for the expenditure reverts to the individual concerned.
- 3.2. Budget Guidelines
- 3.2.1. Executive Committee meetings should be held regularly; clubs and organizations requesting financial support must submit a budget request to the Treasurer one week prior to these meetings.
  - 3.2.2. Funding requests may be submitted at any time during the year, however beyond the merit of the proposal itself, allocation will be on a "first come, first serve basis". Budget re-submissions may be reconsidered.
  - 3.2.3. Students' Council will administer three specific programs:
    - 1) The Scientific Acknowledgment Award:
      - a) A grant given to defray a part of the travel costs

associated with the presentation of papers, posters and performances at conferences.

b) The Council shall grant up to five (5) awards; two (2) for local and three (3) for national or international conferences. A maximum of \$100 for local conferences and \$300 for national and international conferences will be awarded, but the number and amount are subject to the availability of funds.

c) Members of MCGSS can apply for the award for more than one conference. However, there is only one application allowed per applicant per conference.

d) Each award winner can obtain only one award per academic year

## 2) Post-Graduate Student Life Fund (PGSLF)

a) Upon request by departmental representatives, this grant is given to fund social activities involving graduate students of that particular department.

b) This fund will also fund a portion of the activities organized by the MCGSS for all Macdonald Campus Graduate students.

c) The amount accorded to each department shall be calculated in September, according to enrolment data.

d) For graduate student departments located at the Macdonald Campus, MCGSS will collect up to 30% of the graduate student departments' allocated PGSLF amount for partial funding of MCGSS activities and programs.

e) Graduate student departments located at the Macdonald Campus can change how much MCGSS can collect from their respective Post-Graduate Student Life Fund between 0% and 30% by speaking with the MCGSS Treasurer, the MCGSS Students' Council or the MCGSS General Assembly before the MCGSS Budget is approved by the MCGSS Council

f) Guidelines pertaining to eligibility, fund allocation and budgeting are in accordance with the Macdonald Campus PGSLF Regulations.

## 3) MCGSS Recognition Award

a) This award is given to any person to recognize his/her good will and cooperation with the Society's businesses.

b) Nominations for the award will be received by the



Council and used as a basis for deciding upon the successful nominee.

c) The award consists of a certificate and a memento chosen by the Council.

3.2.4 Students' Council will consider other funding requests based on individual merit.

#### 4. FINANCIAL POLICIES FOR STUDENTS' COUNCIL MEMBERS

4.1. Expenses incurred by members of Students' Council while doing Council business will be paid upon approval by Council as follows:

4.1.1. Long distance telephone calls will be fully reimbursed with proper receipts.

4.1.2. Gas expenses of \$0.10/km will be reimbursed to Council members using a private vehicle. No traffic violations will be paid by Students' Council.

4.1.3. Transportation and accommodation expenses for Council members travelling on Council business, provided such are as economical as reasonably possible.

4.1.4. Food expenses to a maximum of \$6.00 for breakfast, \$9.00 for lunch and \$12.00 for dinner. Exception may be permitted for special occasions, as judged appropriate by Council.

#### 5. FILLING OF VACANCIES

In the case of vacancies of the executive, the vacant position will be filled by a Council member, provided the Council approves such a nomination.

5.1. Notwithstanding articles 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 of the Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society Constitution, a by election shall be held within a month of the occurrence of a vacancy.

5.2. Notwithstanding articles 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 of the Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society Constitution, if a position of the executive become vacant, it shall be filled by a member of the Students' Council provided the nomination of this member by the Council. The nominated Council Member will hold office until the election at this position of a Member of the Society.

5.3. Student representatives shall be nominated by each department at the end of the academic year. Each department may have up to four (4) student representatives, who shall be appointed by the department or nominated on a first come, first-served basis by the nomination deadline.

- 5.3.1. If more than four (4) students wish to be representatives by the nomination deadline, elections shall take place according to departmental regulations.
- 5.3.2. Each department will only be allocated two (2) votes per council, and voting cards will be distributed prior to the start of council.
- 5.3.3. Quorum will still be counted as a maximum of two (2) voting seats per departmental representation at council, and any supplemental accompanying student representatives shall be present as non-voting members of MCGSS.
- 5.3.4. Purchases made by the representatives on the behalf of the department should be approved, by signature or by proxy, by all of the departmental representatives.

## 6. ELECTION RULES

### 6.1. Election Period

- 6.1.1. In accordance with article 3.3 and 4.4 of the Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society Constitution, the Election Period shall be held in March of each year.
- 6.1.2. Ten (10) working days prior to the beginning of the Election Period, the Students' Council shall decide on the dates of the Nomination Period, and the Annual Society Meeting.
- 6.1.3. The Election Period shall begin with the Nomination Period. This Nomination Period shall extend for at least ten (10) working days and end two (2) days before the Annual Society Meeting.

### 6.2. Election Officers

- 6.2.1. In accordance with article 4.4.1 of the Students' Society Constitution, the election shall be presided over by a Chief Returning Officer and two (2) Co-Returning Officers. The Student's Council shall nominate them among the members of the society at the same time as the Election Period is decided.
- 6.2.2. The Returning Officers must remain completely neutral and impartial during the election period.
- 6.2.3. The following duties shall be performed by the Returning Officers (referred to as "they" below):

1) With the help of the sitting council, they shall inform the

Society Members of the Election Period.

2) They shall inform all candidates of the rules and procedures relating to Students' Society elections.

3) They are responsible for insuring that the campaign and voting are fair and honest; specifically, insuring that these rules are applied and enforced.

4) They are responsible for interpreting these rules, judging appeals, and ruling on related situations for which provision is not specifically made in the rules or in the Student's Society Constitution and By-laws.

5) They shall receive nomination forms, and verify them for accordance with the Constitution of the Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society.

6) At the Annual Society Meeting, they shall announce the nominations received and accepted. They shall also announce the beginning of the Campaign Period and the date of the assembly for the candidates' speeches.

7) They are responsible for organizing and supervising the polling booth for Election Day, including assuring that those working at the booth (Election Officers) are aware of these rules and conduct the voting in an impartial manner, in accordance with these rules.

8) They are responsible for counting the ballots and announcing the results as soon as possible.

9) They shall verify financial reports of campaign expenses of candidates.

10) Within ten (10) working day of the end of the Election Period, they shall report in writing to the Student's Council their actions and decisions during the Election Period.

### 6.3. Nominations of candidates

6.3.1. A candidate must be a member of MCGSS.

6.3.2. Nominations shall be submitted to the Chief Returning Officer by the end of the nomination period.

### 6.4. Election Campaign

6.4.1. The Campaign Period shall extend through five (5) working days after

the Annual Meeting of the Society at which the Campaign Period shall be officially announced. No Campaigning should be allowed outside of the Campaign Period.

6.4.2. The Students' Council will determine a maximum budget to be spent by each candidate. Each candidate must be able to justify their expense to the Chief Returning Officer at all time. All the material used for campaign must be approved and stamped by a Returning Officer (and the Macdonald Campus Students' Society for posters) prior to circulation.

6.4.3. Campaign is restricted by the following rules:

1) Campaign material should not be produced professionally.

2) All campaign material - posters, flyers, photographs, etc. - must be removed from all locations at midnight (12:00am) before election day. It is the responsibility of each candidate to make sure that campaign material is removed by this time. No pictures of the candidates will be accepted at the polling booth.

3) No advertising in the Mouthpiece should be permitted.

4) Campaign articles in the Campus newspaper should be permitted, provided the Campus newspaper is published before election day. No articles should be permitted in the Campus newspaper if it is to be published on election day.

5) It is up to each individual candidate to verify with building directors of the various buildings on campus as to whether the posting of flyers and posters is allowed, and to abide by their rules and regulations.

6.4.4. Campaign Speeches

1) Campaign speeches in classes should be permitted at the discretion of the instructor of each class. Permission must be requested to the instructor.

2) Candidates will be allowed a campaign speech in an assembly to be called by the Chief Returning Officer. This assembly could be included in the Annual Meeting of the Society. Each candidate will be permitted a specific time period for his/her speech, to be determined by the Chief Returning Officer, who will Chair the meeting. Candidates will be advised of the date, time and location of the

assembly.

#### 6.5. Voting period

6.5.1. The day after closure of the Campaign Period, a vote by online voting or without an in-person vote by ballot shall be organized. This shall be referred to as the Voting Period.

6.5.2. The voting period will extend for five (5) working days, beginning immediately after the end of the Campaign period. The in-person vote by ballot may be shorter than the Online voting period, considering that it must be held within the same period.

6.5.3. The Chief Returning Officer can nominate Elections Officers in order to help supervise the polling booth and accept the vote of the Students' Society Members. All members of the Students' Society are eligible to vote as set out under "Election of Members" Article 4.4 of the Students' Society Constitution. At in-person polling booths, the Elections Officers present shall require presentation of a valid student card as identification, and shall check voters off a list of registered students. The Online voting platform used must allow all the Students' Society members to vote, while rejecting access to parties without voting rights by requiring identification, such as via McGill login credentials.

6.5.4. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

6.5.5. Clear instructions for marking of ballots shall be posted, in both English and French, at the polling booth and on the Online voting platform.

6.5.6. Immediately after the closure of the voting period, the Returning Officers shall count the ballots in a private room and verify online results. Each candidate or a designated representative may be present as an observer at the counting of the ballots and online verification.

6.5.7. Elections results must be presented to the Students' Society member within the 5 working days following the election.

#### 6.6. Appeals

6.6.1. If a breach of these regulations is alleged to have occurred, the allegation shall be made in writing to the Chief Returning Officer, signed by at least two members of the Students' Society, and detailing which rule was allegedly violated, by whom, when and how. Such allegations shall then be investigated by the Returning Officers, and ruled by majority vote if necessary. If a substantiated breach of the

Students' Society Constitution and By-Laws has occurred, the Returning Officers will take one of the following actions: (based on majority vote, if necessary)

1) If the offence is judged not to have had a significant impact on the fairness or the final result of the election, the Returning Officers may make a public reprimand to the offending candidate, or;

2) If the offence is judged to have had a significant impact on the fairness or the final result of the election, the Returning Officers may declare the election null and void and call a subsequent vote for that position as soon as possible. In this case, the offending candidate will be ineligible to run in this election only. No new nominations will be accepted at this time. If there were only two candidates originally, the non-offender will be elected by acclamation.

6.6.2. Appeal of the rulings of the Returning Officers or requests for recounts of ballots may be made to Students' Council, which will make the final disposition of the appeal. Such appeals must be made in writing within three working days of the ruling, or of the election in the case of recounts.

6.7. Notwithstanding these Election Rules, the final responsibility for knowledge of, understanding of and compliance with these rules, as well as for honesty and integrity in campaigning, rests with the candidates themselves.

## 7. TERMS OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

At least two department representatives will always be present at the council to ensure complete representation of voting rights.

7.1. Council members with three consecutive absences without sending regrets before the start of the council will be removed from their duties.

7.1.1. MCGSS will not classify regrets as reasonable or unreasonable, sending regrets alone will be accepted.

7.1.2. In the case that a Council member sends four consecutive regrets, the case will be brought to Council where the Council member in question will be able to justify the reason for their absence and the Council will decide whether the Council member is allowed to remain in this position or will be removed from it.

## 8. AMENDMENTS TO THE MCGSS BY-LAWS

- 8.1. The MCGSS Council may amend the MCGSS By-laws from time to time.
- 8.2. To do so, the proposed amendments must be given to all Council members at least 10 working days before the Council meeting and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.