



September 27, 2013

Dear Associate Vice-Principal Couvrette and Provost Masi,

The Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) of McGill University Legislative Council voted at the September 18 meeting to take a stance of disapproval against the erection of the new barriers at the Milton Gates, expressing concerns about accessibility, the consultation process, community relations, utility of the gates, and cost.

After consulting with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), it is evident that these gates do not follow the principles of Universal Design, one of which is "Size and Space for Approach and Use: appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility."¹ The barriers do not consider many groups of people who enter through the Milton Gates, including but not limited to, people with physical disabilities, people with strollers, and children. The AUS has an Equity Policy, which states that the "AUS strives to create a community that exceeds social standards of equitable treatment."² Because the barriers do not consider the needs of disadvantaged groups on the basis of physical ability and size, it is within the scope of the AUS to write such a statement to improve community standards.

The Arts Undergraduate Society, an incorporated student association that represents all B.A. and B.A. & Sc. students on campus, was neither consulted nor informed about this project. We find this problematic, as we represent 7,692 unique stakeholders in the McGill community.

Furthermore, these gates represent a symbolic division between McGill's campus and the Montreal community, namely the neighbouring Milton-Parc Community. It is important to consider the ramifications of the subliminal messages that these gates conjure for those who come to campus.

The article in the McGill Reporter states that the Gates were installed to reinforce the "walk your bike" rule on campus.³ Regarding the utility of the gates, bikers' abilities to bike directly through the gates or remount their bicycle after dismounting illustrate that the gates do not achieve their desired purpose.

We, therefore, question the dedication of financial and time resources to this project. We believe this money could have been better spent on projects that would have a more positive impact on the McGill campus.

Based on the aforementioned concerns, the Arts Undergraduate Society Legislative Council disapproves of the barriers at the Milton Gates. Before any future projects are considered and implemented to improve the safety of all members of the McGill community, we ask respectfully that you consult with students and consider the abilities, needs, and preferences of all members of the campus community.

We look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Fletcher".

Justin Fletcher
President, Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University
Written on Behalf of AUS Legislative Council

¹ <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/policies/universal-design>

² <http://ausmcgill.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Equity-Policy-Bylaws.pdf>

³ <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2013/08/new-barriers-go-up-to-make-campus-safer/>