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**Frosh Report of the Equity Commissioners, AUS Council September 23rd 2015**

The AUS Equity Commissioners experienced vast improvements in cooperating with the AUS Frosh Coordinators this year. Generally, noted violations of the Equity Policy from the 2014-2015 Frosh Equity Report were remedied and accounted for in an effort to better integrate and legitimize the role of the commissioners in the Frosh planning process. In particular, the newly institutionalized role of the Director of Inclusivity as the main point of liaison between the coordinators and the commissioners proved to be very successful. Our report will cover the events of Frosh in the form of a personal account as experienced real-time. Thus, this report is subject to unavoidable bias caused by information asymmetry innate to our position. In order to safeguard against these biases as much as possible, we sought secondary opinions of Frosh through a diverse range of other participants such as leaders, Froshies, and o-staffers throughout our experience.

Sober Alliance Program – *“work within the system to change the system”*

* Designed to promote a more inclusive, sober-friendly community without segregating participants from the events of Arts Frosh
* Froshies seeking a sober experience are ensured placement in a Frosh group with one self-identifying sober leader to protect against status-quo of “alcohol-induced” fun through alliance and leadership
* Overall, successful integration of sober culture in Frosh
  + E.g. When asked how she felt about her Frosh experience as a sober-participant, she said: “None of my friends are here and I don’t like to dance but I feel like everyone at Frosh really cares about me because they always check up on me and include me in things anyway. So I’m having a good time.” (quote taken during Olympia, September 6th 2015).
* **The “Double Burden” of Sober Frosh Leaders** 
  + Co-leaders assigned the sober leader as the designated “responsible” one in charge of all the “boring” aspects of Frosh
  + Exhaustion caused by entertaining sober participants in addition to fulfilling the general responsibilities of a Frosh leader
  + The social costs we feared sober Froshies would experience were instead experienced by the sober leaders
* Suggestions
  + Consider the possibility of *a homogenous sober frosh group* in replacement of the Sober Alliance program depending on concentration of interest
    - A “Sober Frosh Group” has proven to be successful according to the Science Undergraduate Society Frosh coordinators
    - Fear of public stigma not as significant as originally expected, possibly due to irrelevance and anonymity of sober participants to the rest of Frosh
  + Alternatively, include *a minimum of TWO sober Frosh leaders* in a Sober Alliance group to share responsibilities and offer mutual support; and implement a *mandatory training session* for Sober-Alliance groups that outline specific guidelines and expectations from these groups
    - **AUS Equity Commissioners could help to contribute and draft these sessions if need be**

**Day 1**

Group Formation

* Overall reduction in inappropriate chants and rowdy behavior
* Beginning to see results of the trickle-down effect of an equity-oriented Frosh
  + E.g. Frosh leaders held each other accountable by, for example, rejecting the over-sexualizing of icebreaker games suggested by a fellow co-leader
* The Equity Commissioners were asked to entertain sober Froshies until Director of Inclusivity led them to their groups
  + We often met up with these sober groups and Froshies periodically throughout Frosh and the initial contact proved effective in maintaining good relations
* On a personal note, the Equity Commissioners had a hard time integrating within the Frosh community due to general confusion over our role and legitimacy in Frosh, which hindered our ability to observe Frosh interactions in an open and comfortable way
* **Suggestions**
  + Introduce AUS members or the purpose of the “Grey Shirts” during Frosh and O-Staff training
  + Include graphic of the AUS Grey T-shirts in Frosh pamphlets and indicate our position as AUS members designed to oversee Frosh and ensure operations are running smoothly
  + \*NOTE\* on the Stigma of Equity
    - Although positive changes in the culture of Frosh and the backing from Frosh coordinators render complete anonymity unnecessary, be warned not to “out” the role of equity in Frosh as enforcers that are policing people’s ability to have “fun”.

Montreal Pub Crawl

* Difficult to provide overarching view of this event due to logistics of its organization
* Both Equity Commissioners followed Group 20 (one of the Sober Alliance groups) for the duration of the East Route
* Initiatives led by Frosh leaders to replace beer with water for drinking games
* Chanting Incident
  + Chants – appropriate or not – were mostly limited to the inside of venues except for a “chant-off” that broke out between on Arts Frosh group against a Management Frosh group
  + Local store owner appeared distressed and complained about the noise
  + Forced Equity Commissioner, Kelsa Ferguson, to intervene and cut off the chants. The involved leaders apologized to both the store owner and Kelsa, and the crawl continued on as normal
* Montreal Pub Crawl was exhaustive for many of its participants who expressed tiredness, boredom and/or hunger throughout the duration of the event
* **Suggestions**
  + If logistically viable, organize the pub crawl a day or two into Frosh rather than the very first day
    - Sets the initial tone and culture for Frosh
    - Turned off many sober participants who assumed the entirety of Frosh would continue in its likelihood
  + Integrate food stops along with drinking stops instead of all at the end
  + Integrate stops that focus on activities outside of drinking
    - E.g. dance party stop, a throwback sing-along stop, etc.
  + Alternatively, reconfigure “pub crawl” to include less venues and more participants at those venues to save time, reduce boredom, and provide more sober-spaces for people to rest and mingle

All Faculty Concert

* Acknowledgement of the shared responsibility of this event with faculties outside of Arts
* Requested by the Arts Coordinators to attend New City Gas rather than Club Soda due to capacity concerns
* The shuttle bus moving participants from Club Soda to New City Gas proved relatively inefficient due to long wait time (approx. 45 minutes for those at the end of the line) inspiring most to walk to the venue
  + Walking distance is approx. 30-40 minutes
  + Confusion and loss of direction resulted in Froshies that went unaccounted for in and around the Montreal area, potentially causing harm to the participants as well as locals
* Upon arriving at New City Gas, the Arts coordinator was misinformed about the venue’s capacity and denied at least 50+ Froshies from accessing the event
* Navigating inside the venue, particularly in accessing MSERT, proved nearly impossible due to high concentration of people and confusion
* The Chill Zone and the Red Frogs proved VERY useful (to the point of necessity) and we HIGHLY recommend the continued implementation of these resources
* Suggestions
  + Select a closer venue to ignore necessity of ineffective bus system altogether
  + OR, input accountability mechanism to-and-from long distance venues via volunteers or O-Staffers stationed at different intersections to guide walkers

**Day 2**

Tailgate

* Very low-key; low or ad-hoc attendance by Frosh groups
* Provided convenient time of rest and self-care for both the leaders and Froshies after events of Day 1

Alouettes Game

* Denied access to this event due to concerns over capacity
* From secondary sources, the game proved to be another low-key event with low or ad-hoc attendance
* Fears over chants and rowdiness were not realized on any level

Drink Deals at Frappe

* Initially expected to be a low-key night event for participants insistent on partying even after the football game and recommended not to attend

**Day 3**

SSMU Day

* Maintained excitement and culture of Frosh throughout first day of classes, contributing to greater sense of school spirit and community

Boat Cruise

* Attended first boat cruise scheduled at 5:30pm due to capacity concerns for the second boat cruise
* Concerns from O-Staff
  + A number of Arts O-Staffers have expressed general discontent over their treatment by the organization committee throughout Frosh
  + An issue of pay inequity?
    - Felt they were over-charged for the lack of access (or certainty of access) they had to the scheduled events and resources
  + However, changes in the budgeting of Frosh meant that certain privileges that O-staffers had in the past would no longer take place given that it drove AUS into a financial deficit
  + Frosh no longer a “free party” for senior students to attend requiring minimal responsibilities for maximum fun
* Problematic DJ
  + Tried to excite the crowd through inappropriate means but remedied behavior upon request
  + E.g. “Take your shirts off!”
* Froshies that needed a break from the music and dancing had a hard time finding an area to rest and converse
* **Suggestions** 
  + Address the inherent uncertainty of accessing certain Frosh events to the O-Staff position prior to hiring process and express greater appreciation/gratitude for their services throughout training and Frosh (i.e. make them feel important!)
  + Overview expectations of the performance with the DJ a priori
  + Establish better communication with the boat cruise crew by designating liaison position to manage minor problems throughout event
    - E.g. There were many free spaces available on the boat for Froshies to rest and converse, but due to the loud volume of speakers these areas proved unsuitable. If we knew how to turn off the sound of these speakers, the boat cruise experience could have been significantly better for claustrophobic and tired individuals.
  + Note on the Role of the Equity Commissioners According to the Equity Policy
    - An incident occurred during this event that confused the role of the Equity Commissioners from mediators of crisis to direct interveners of crisis. This compromised our adherence to the Equity Policy in serving as a neutral –essentially uninvolved – body at Frosh designed to mediate complaints *after the fact*
    - We in no way blame this confusion on any of the involved parties (i.e. the Arts co-coordinators), due to the sensitive and unexpected nature of the incident
    - However, we wanted to suggest a more integrative crisis-management training program for the incoming Frosh coordinators in liaison with Bianca Tetrault, McGill’s Harm Reduction officer, so that Coordinators, Leaders, and O-Staffers feel better prepared for crisis situations
    - To be clear, **the Equity Commissioners are ALWAYS willing to directly engage in conflict and compromise our neutrality if necessary** – our only hope is that, in the future, people would feel confident in their own abilities and resources so as not to find us necessary at all!

La Mouche

* Unable and recommended not to attend for purpose of self-care and rest

**Day 4**

Beach Day

* Acknowledgement of the fact that this event is SSMU-organized and not reflective of the efforts made by Arts coordinators
* Excessive Wait-Time
  + The wait time for loading on the busses was excessive and unfair
  + Lasted as long as 2-3 hours for most groups and in extreme cases, 3-5 hours
  + Inefficiency of the number system by lack of transparency and rule-breakers
* Public Urination
  + Most groups were forced to wait in line as early as 7:30am in the morning and spent the entire wait-time drinking alcohol to keep occupied
  + The duration of the trip to the venue was approximately 1.5 hours
  + Provided mode of transportation (i.e. school busses) did not have access to an indoor bathroom
  + Resulted in people urinating in bottles and disposing them out the windows which often sprayed back onto others creating an unsanitary and upsetting atmosphere
  + As well, there were several requests to pull over on the side of the highway so that “desperate cases” could urinate in public spaces resulting in conflict between those that opposed such an idea, and police intervention in at least one case (for public urination)
* Separation and Uneven Distribution of Frosh Groups
  + The bus that the Equity Commissioners lacked were loaded on lacked an entertainment system and consisted of a wide diversification of participants, creating a generally unsafe atmosphere
  + Majority were Arts O-Staffers, two Frosh leaders that got separated from their Frosh group, and a scattered number of stray Froshies
  + Sexual chants, rowdiness, and peer pressure to drink all demonstrated most notably by these Arts O-Staffers
  + Froshies seemed visibly uncomfortable by the entire experience
* Experience at Beach Day ran a lot smoother: Chill Zones offered water, sunscreen, and snacks; wide space meant greater diversification of activities for different types of Froshies with different interests
* **Suggestions**
  + Have a bus entirely for O-Staff to ensure better Froshie-to-staff ratio and safeguard against inequitable social power dynamics
  + Offer better vegan/vegetarian options
    - Green salads are NOT desirable nor helpful for drunk vegetarian Froshies!
  + Discuss bus etiquette with leaders and o-staff more thoroughly

Outdoor Movie with Pizza

* Nice, quiet, and much needed after the events of Beach Day

**Day 5**

Breakfast on the Mountain

* Great event!
* Food provided this year was more substantial than previous years but lacked options for vegans since the breakfast sandwich and muffins were not vegan/celiac friendly

Picnic at Tam Tams

* Another inclusive low-key event designed to recharge and bond with each other on a more personable level

Olympia

* Lack of Water Available
  + The only water available to Froshies and leaders at this time was from the Red Frogs at the Chill Zone, or from the sink in the restrooms
  + When asked, the bar staff responded that there was indeed water available at the bar on the upper level, however upon arriving that bar was closed.
* Froshie/Leader breach of contract
  + There were many Froshie/Leader hookups observed during this event in particular
  + Upon becoming a leader, it is stated that leaders and Froshies cannot be romantically intimate during the duration of frosh
  + Enforcing this becomes problematic, particularly in the club setting where it is difficult for Coords to be present/ find the people who are partaking in this
  + The upper level was often used as a setting for this to take place due to the lack of lighting and lack of people
* General Rowdiness and Inappropriate Behavior
  + During the duration of the evening, there was an incident where a Froshie acted inappropriately in concern to the personal space of others around them
  + These acts were reported to Kat, the Director of Inclusivity, and the Froshie was dealt with appropriately
  + Some Frosh participants posed safety concerns by “dangling” their legs off of the upper balcony
    - This however was shut down fairly quickly by Olympia security
* **Suggestions**
  + Confirm with the bar that there will be water available during the event
    - The Red Frogs were doing a good job of providing water, however the station did become quite busy at times
  + Discuss ways in which to decrease Froshie/Leader hookups for future years
    - Have larger repercussions as incentive?
  + Close off the upper balcony to limit safety concerns as well as a location for Froshie/Leader hookups

Overall, Frosh was viewed as quite successful from our Equity Commissioner standpoint. We had a positive experience working together with the Coordinators, especially with the new position of the Director of Inclusivity. It is clear that the culture of Frosh has vastly improved each year since we were Froshies ourselves, and we believe that it will continue to improve and become more inclusive in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelsa Ferguson

Nicole Kim

AUS Equity Commissioners 2015-2016