**Report of the AUS VP Academic – September 9 2015**



Hi! My name is Gabriel and I will be this year’s VP Academic. I’m entering my fourth (and hopefully last) year here at McGill, studying Honours Political Science, as well as majoring in Economics and minoring in East Asian Studies. When I’m not trying to find a thesis for my upcoming research projects I enjoy playing music (hit me up if you want to jam one day) and reading 20th century French literature (hit me up if you’re into Emile Zola).

For those who don't know, the VP Academic is responsible for the educational, curricular and academic affairs of the AUS. They represent and advocate for the interests of all Arts students at Faculty and Academic committees and serve as a liaison between the AUS Legislative Council and General Assembly, and the broader Arts Faculty administration. They also closely supervise Academic ressources such as but not limited to the AIO, OASIS and the Essay center while chairing the Academic Affairs Committee, the Library Partnership Committee, and finally the Arts Student Employment Fund Committee.

**Summer recap:**

I spent the whole summer working for Quebec’s pension fund which confirmed a very important thing: *your BA degree will open doors in a lot of places that you would have never considered****.*** This really increased my desire to provide Arts students with more resources to network and to give Arts students a better idea of the opportunities that await them after graduation (I will go back to this point later in the report).

While working was very intense, I still had the time to think about my projects for this year and I also was able to meet different members of the administration to give them an idea of what my projects are, and how the AUS can collaborate with them.

**Orientation week**

Jacob and I spoke in front of a good number of first year students about the AUS and the services we provide. It went well and I was able to meet a lot of first year students that just couldn’t wait to get involved! I also set up and tabled for the OASIS-AUS departmental fair last Wednesday. Unfortunately the turn out was lower this year because Frosh was happening at the same time. This is not something anyone had control over (frosh being one day longer than before), but we will make sure there is no time conflict when it happens again next year. However the event was still a success and I’ve received from positive feedback from some students already.

**Essay Centre:**

I will be meeting with our two new coordinators: Isabella Shraiman and Sarah Kemp sometime this week to kick off the Essay Centre in late September. We will also be brainstorming solutions to a couple of problems that were brought up by past coordinators (namely better advertising, better reaching out to first years). We will also be conducting a callout for tutors through our listservs.

**Peer tutoring**:

Get your VP Academics to contact me ASAP about starting up or receiving funding for your programs (pay your tutors, we have the budget!).

However…

**Stipends review:**

The VP Finance and I have noticed some irregularities on stipends attribution last year. Some tutors had received stipends up to 5 times larger than others and most of the time it is hard to justify such amounts. The VP Finance and I talked to the President and we realized that we couldn't impose a monetary reward per hours worked for a number of reasons I will explain orally. Instead I will explain at the first DART of the semester that the VP Finance and I will be paying a closer attention to how the stipends are awarded.

**Arts Student Employment Fund (ASEF):**

Unlike last year, there was no rollover high enough to form the ASEF Committee for this Fall. However I will be introducing a motion in the next couple of weeks in order to set some sort of streamlining in case there is a budget surplus, so all the resources aren’t spent immediately and can be rolled over throughout the years.

**Faculty Committees:**

I sent a callout to departmental presidents, VP Academics and VP Externals to try to fill out spots on Faculty committees (Faculty of Art Council, Curriculum Committee and Committee on Student Affairs) and on my own portfolio committees. I’ve gotten a handful of responses so far, but I’m having trouble finding spots for the **Faculty of Arts Council** and the Committee on Student Affairs, as well as the following program review committees:

* African Studies (2)
* North American Studies (2)
* Quebec Studies (2)
* History & Philosophy of Science (2)
* Religious Studies (2)
* Industrial Relations (2)
* LatinAmerican&CaribbeanStudies (2)
* Women's Studies (2)
* Indigenous Studies Program Com (2)

If you’re interested, send me an email ASAP. I have until the 14th of September to fill out the spots. I will also be contacting departmental VP Communications to have a callout included in their listserves, and another callout will be sent out in the next AUS listserve.

**Portfolio committees:**

I also sent out a callout for my own portfolio committees. These include:

* Academic Affairs Committee (AAC)
* AUS-Library Partnership Committee (AUS-LPC)

This year I plan on using the AAC as a sounding board for ideas and initiatives, as a caucus of student representatives on Faculty Committees and as a delegation group to assist my portfolio projects.

I have a bunch of interesting projects that I want to set up this year, and I will need all the help I can get. These projects include but are not limited to:

* The creation of an institutionalized data collection mechanism, where we would send out surveys to Arts students to get a better idea of what their needs and also to get feedback on the ideas we will be presenting to them
* Pressing for more grade transparency and advocating for increased academic rights for students
* A networking event tailored to arts students!

**Networking/rebranding the McGill B.A.**

The VP Communication and I have been in contact with Brandy Jugandi from OASIS for the past couple of weeks. She is a new hire that is working to help out Arts students with better understanding the value of their B.A. degree. Meeting her was very nice opportunity to get one of my projects started: having an institutionalized networking event going in conjunction with Work Your B.A. I will be meeting the MUS VP Corporate Affairs to get a better understanding of how it’s done at Desautels, will also be meeting with CAPS to see how we can collaborate on that project and of course I will be in contact with the VP External (who is organising Work Your B.A.)

**Archiving and Journals:**

Throughout all summer long I’ve been in contact with a student called Faraz Oman, who brought up the idea of archiving for all AUS sponsored journals. It was another happy coincidence as one of my election promises was to work closer with departmental VP Academics to incite them to launch their own journals (for smaller departments). Archiving will be a great way to create a sense of legacy and hopefully will encourage VP Academics to work on their departmental journals.

**Budget:**

I met with the VP Finance this summer to plan out my budget for this year. It is slightly above the ones from the previous years, but this is mostly pre-emptive seeing I will be setting up the new initiatives that I’ve mentioned before.

**Departmental Academic Roundtable (DART):**

I hope to hold at least two DARTs this semester with different VP Academics/equivalents from each department. I will go over their roles and how the AUS can help them with their projects throughout the year. It will also be a good occasion for everyone to meet and this will hopefully foster some inter-departmental projects. I will also go over my various projects to get some extra input, and I will go over some aspects of Faculty representation and advocacy.

I will also invite Samuel from the AIO to come present himself and for him to make contacts at the departmental level, which was something that he found was lacking beforehand.

The first DART will probably be held in late September, and I am aiming for a second one in November.

**Meetings:**

I met with Lucy Lach, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs 2 weeks ago with Jacob to discuss the AUS-OASIS partnership. We should be meeting sometime again this semester to see how we can help each other out. I also met with Interim Dean Hudson Meadwell with Jacob to discuss issues pertaining to both the AUS and the Faculty. We will be meeting on a monthly basis to mutually update each other on the progress of our projects.

Jacob and I also met with Mr. Justin Fletcher from services learning teaching to talk about a new initiative called “thank a prof”. More information on that project later hopefully!

**Contact:**

* Email: academic.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
* Office Phone: 514-398-1993
* Personal Phone: 514-983-2510
* Office Hours: TBA by next week (Arts Lounge, Leacock B-12)

I look forward to working with all of you this year!

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriel Gilling