



## AUS VP Finance Selection Info Package

At the last two AUS Council meetings (on October 7th and 21st) there have been open discussions regarding changes to the AUS VP Finance selection process. This is continuing a conversation that has been happening within the AUS for at least ten years, if not longer. At this point we are considering all options and looking for as much input as possible. The AUS has organized a Town Hall on November 2nd (at 6:30 PM in the Arts Lounge) to discuss all our options in detail and receive feedback on them from students. Then, AUS Council will review the proposals and the feedback and vote at its November 4th meeting on which option to put to students in the fall referendum period in late November.

### **Background: AUS Financial History and Duties of the AUS VP Finance**

The AUS is legally recognized by the Government of Quebec as both an accredited student association and as a non-profit corporation. The AUS has an annual budget of over \$875,000 and while around half of the revenue comes from student fees, the other half consists of smaller contributions from various sources such as SNAX, event ticket sales, locker rentals, and more. Each year the AUS works hard to track these revenues (and expenses), file taxes, complete annual audited financial statements, and perform other complex financial management tasks.

AUS VP Finances are nominated and elected by general election like any other AUS Executive. However, the VP Finance position is unique among AUS Executive positions in that it is mostly administrative and there are many specific, technical skills required for the job. These include a background in accounting, knowledge of tax-filing, and experience with auditing, to name just a few. These skills and background are not always easy or quick to learn and what the AUS has learned from the past is that the AUS' financial situation is highly dependent on whether the VP Finance who is elected that year happens to have the technical skills required for the position. The success of a few recent VP Finances (eg. 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) shows that there are Arts and Arts & Science students capable of not only performing the duties of the AUS VP Finance but excelling in the position, however a 100 word election blurb is not sufficient to test a candidate's qualifications.

While this year the AUS' financial situation is stable and students' money is now very well managed, the AUS unfortunately has a long history of financial mismanagement. The AUS did not file taxes from 2008-2012 which resulted in the government freezing \$120,000 from the AUS bank account. In that time period the AUS also violated its Memorandum of Agreement with McGill by failing to send McGill its audited financial



statements. As a result, McGill withheld student fees from the AUS and AUS services and events were compromised. In 2014-2015 there was significant turnover in the VP Finance portfolio and the AUS experienced a \$30,000 Frosh 2014 deficit and \$65,000 overall AUS deficit which were only uncovered during the audit this past summer.

It's clear then that having an AUS VP Finance that does not have a proper grasp of accounting can lead to severe consequences. The AUS has obligations not only to the government but to every AUS member whose student fees go towards the AUS. In order to best protect students' money from further financial issues, it may be necessary to put in place a system which ensures that the VP Finance is adequately qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of their position. The AUS is currently considering the following options:

### **Options Moving Forward and Potential Changes to AUS VP Finance Selection Process**

- **Retain Status quo:** Candidates running for AUS VP Finances will continue to need to only fill out the nomination package and the VP Finance will be elected through a general election
- **Screening by Committee:** Candidates for AUS VP Finance will be interviewed by a special committee of experts familiar with AUS Finances and the necessary financial management skills (such as outgoing AUS VP Finance, SNAX Manager, Financial Management Committee members). In rare circumstances this committee could then choose to veto candidates who objectively do not meet the required technical skills requirements for the VP Finance position. Candidates approved by the committee would then be elected through a general election. Veto decisions could be appealed to AUS Council if the candidate believes that the committee's veto decision was unfair.
- **Screening by Council:** same process as outlined above except instead AUS Council, not a special committee of AUS financial experts, would interview candidates before deciding whether to allow them to run in the general election for VP Finance
- **Selection by Council:** the outgoing AUS Legislative Council (made up of AUS Executives, committee representatives, and departmental student association representatives), will appoint the AUS VP Finance for the following year
- **Raise AUS Base Fee to hire External Bookkeeper:** The AUS could hire a part-time bookkeeper to take on some of the accounting and tax filing duties of the AUS VP Finance. However, there are a few drawbacks to this option: 1) the AUS would have to raise student fees to pay the bookkeeper; 2) not all responsibilities could be shifted to the bookkeeper, so the AUS VP Finance would still require some technical skills; and most significantly, 3) the AUS attempted to do this in the past and the change failed because the external bookkeeper lacked sufficient knowledge of the AUS' operations



Any of the changes listed above require an amendment to the AUS Constitution and can therefore only occur through a referendum. We invite you to let the AUS know what you think about these proposals by attending the Town Hall November 2nd, attending AUS Council on November 4th (6 pm in Leacock 232), contacting your representatives (contact information is below), and voting from November 20th- 27th in the fall AUS referendum!

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Hours</b>	<b>Email Contact</b>
President	Jacob Greenspon	Mondays 10:15-11:30 and 1:00-5:30; Tuesdays 1:00-2:30; Wednesdays 1:00-2:30; Fridays 10:15-11:30	president.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP Academic	Gabriel Gilling	Tuesdays 10:00-11:00; Thursdays 3:00-5:00; Fridays 1:00-3:00	academic.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP Communications	Elaine Patterson	Mondays 12:00 to 2:30 and Wednesdays 12:00 to 2:30	communications.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP External	Becky Goldberg	Monday 12:00-2:00, Tuesday 11:00-1:00, and Thursday 11:00-12:00	external.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP Finance	Mirza Ali Shakir	Tuesday 12:00 to 3:00 and Thursday 12:00 to 3:00	finance.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP Internal	Maria Vedeshkina	Monday 11:30-1:00; Wednesday 11:30-1:00 Tuesday 1:30-2:30, Thursday 1:30-2:30	internal.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
VP Social	Christine Koppenaal	Monday 9:30-12:00 and Wednesday 9:30-12:00	social.aus@mail.mcgill.ca
Arts Rep to SSMU	Adam Templer	Monday 12:30-1:30, Wednesday 12:30-1:30 and Thursday 12:00-1:00	artsrep2@ssmu.mcgill.ca
Arts Rep to SSMU	Lexi Michaud	Monday 4:00-5:00 and Thursday 1:00-2:00	artsrep3@ssmu.mcgill.ca
Arts Rep to SSMU	Gabriel Ning	Tuesday 2:30-3:30 and Thursday 2:30-3:30	artsrep4@ssmu.mcgill.ca

Anonymous feedback is possible via this link: <http://ausmcgill.com/arts-rep-feedback/>