

# **Arts Frosh 2016 Equity Report**

*We would like to acknowledge that we are currently on the traditional territory of the Kanien'keha:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations. We recognise and respect the Kanien'keha:ka as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today.*

## **Intro**

Arts Frosh 2016 was the most inclusive frosh we have witnessed in the past few years. It was evident that the coordinators had a utilitarian approach in wanting the most people to have fun, not just a select group of people. That said, there is always room for improvement in equity and inclusivity. To this point, this report is designed to outline the frosh events we attended, and offer suggestions for next year's coordinators.

## **Training**

Frosh leader and O-staff training was great. The ideas of consent, active bystanding, and "the golden rule," were executed very well. Moreover, the consent video that all froshies had to watch was amazing! It was well received by froshies.

## **Group Formation**

Group Formation, which occurred on Wednesday August 31st, was well organized in regards to bracelet separation, ropes and timing. The process which usually takes approximately 2 hours was finished in 45 minutes, partially due to inclement weather. As a result of the expedited process, a few groups had gender imbalances, such as two males in a group with 29 girls, and some groups only had a few froshies in general, only about 12-15. Both we and the O-Staff were looking for groups that were heavily imbalanced or smaller than usual, and as we relayed this information to the coords changes were being made with the interest of the froshie in mind. Coords mentioned that if we poach froshies from their original groups, it would "traumatize" them because even the first five minutes of bonding with the group is enough time

for froshies to develop a connection with the group. While it was good to form groups quickly so that groups can start bonding, it would have been better if they took their time with the group formation regardless of inclement weather so that fewer froshies would have to be switched.

### **Carnival**

The Carnival on Lower Field is intended to be a non-drinking event. As such, it is an activity that caters to all froshies, however it had a very low turnout, which can likely be attributed to Boat Cruise being in an overlapping time. We suspected that the groups on the earlier Boat Cruise were hosting group rallies at the same time as the Carnival. Perhaps if Boat Cruise was later in the day or the Carnival was earlier, it would attract more people and get them involved in an on-campus, alcohol-free activity. In addition to that, styrofoam containers were being used for the free poutines. Styrofoam is not sustainable for the environment, so we would suggest a recyclable or compostable container as a replacement.

### **Boat Cruise**

The main issue at Boat Cruise was that Red Frogs, a major harm reduction group, was not allowed on the boat although they were present off the boat. This was due to the fact that Red Frogs would have been giving out water and since the boat sells water, they did not want Red Frogs to take away any potential business. While water was available for emergencies and there was free water available just off the boat, it would be ideal to have free water available on the boat for harm reduction reasons. For the contract with cruise next year, adding a clause allowing Red Frogs on the boat to at least give out snacks (if not water) would be beneficial.

### **Montreal Crawl**

The idea behind calling it the Montreal Crawl in lieu of the Pub Crawl is to make it more inclusive. The crawl itself was inclusive, but there are a few minor changes that can make it much more inclusive for the future. We went to five stops on the East Crawl: Cafe Campus, Freshii, Chef on Call, BDP, and Gerts.

The vibe at Cafe Campus was nice. There was a drinking game consisting of mostly beer, which is fine, but there was no option other than water for non-alcoholic beverage. Instead of asking if people prefer beer or water, you could set the cups of both beer and water on a table and let people pick their cup, rather than having the social pressure to say “yes I want a beer.” Also, Cafe Campus is highly inaccessible to folks with a physical disability. A venue that is wheelchair friendly would have been more suitable.

For the food stops (Freshii and Chef on Call), the food was set on the table, and froshies went and picked it up. There was no game or activity involved. We understand that the food stops may have been designated as “chill” spots where there is not a lot of activity. That said, having a game/activity at a food stop would have normalized eating and having fun. The food stops were a bit dull, so they could have been much more hyped, which would have aligned with our harm reduction values. Examples of food games include donut on a string, cookie decorating, etc.

At BDP, froshies were playing flip cup, and they seemed super into it!!! Again with the alcohol, there was water available if you went to the side and poured yourself a cup. There was no cup readily available. It is important to normalize drinking water as much as it is normal to drink alcohol in games like these. Cups were being recycled. For next year, maybe partnering up with Compost Montreal and acquiring compostable cups will be more environmentally friendly.

Finally at Gerts, there was music and drinks, and people seemed to have a good time. There were a few froshies sitting that suggested having a more “chill” stop with drinks and “chill” music. We suggest partitioning Gerts into two different sides with the curtain (one side has loud music, other side not).

### **Beach Day**

This year, free sandwiches were being given out to everyone at Beach Day, which was extremely useful for harm reduction. There was a vegetarian/vegan option and an alternative option for celiacs, which was a salad. In regards to food options, Beach Day was inclusive, yet the bathrooms in standing buildings were not gender neutral, a recurring issue throughout most

of frosh. As an option, there were some portapotties, which were not gender specific, available in one area. This was a good way to make sure everyone feels included in regards to bathrooms.

### **Movie Night, Mont Royal & Tam Tams**

Saturday's movie and Sunday's day activities were very relaxed and inclusive, as they were not promoted as drinking events. The movie was a perfect way for froshies to be able to rest after Beach Day whereas if there was another drinking event and froshies were too tired, they would feel as if they were missing out on a major frosh event. Similarly, the mountain breakfast, Tam Tams and Picnic provided groups with the opportunity to bond on the last day of frosh while still recovering from Beach Day and getting ready for the final night event.

### **Night Events**

Most of the nightclub events had similar issues: an alcoholic bar at the "all-ages" level, and gender binary (male/female) bathrooms. Having a bar serving alcohol at the all-ages level is dangerous for the froshies who are under 18, regardless of whether froshies' IDs are checked at the bar as part of the agreement with the club. These froshies usually have not developed a tolerance or "limit" to how much they can drink without blacking out. Consequently, this promotes a culture of binge drinking and can create a lot of discomfort for those under-18 froshies staying sober. This is why we strongly urge not having an alcoholic bar at the all-ages level of frosh nightclub events.

Concerning the gender neutral options for bathrooms, we strongly believe that this could have been possible in Arts Frosh 2016. Unfortunately, it was not. Gender neutral bathrooms are trans-positive, and promote a culture of equality between *all* genders. Making a bathroom gender neutral is as simple as putting up a piece of recycled paper to cover up the "gender" sign. We understand the concern that making a gender neutral space may increase the chance of sexual assault and harassment in frosh. This is why we propose having one gender neutral bathroom and one female-only bathroom in all frosh events next year.

Furthermore, we noticed a number of people who we knew to have been non-frosh participants at events held in conjunction w/ other faculties. While we are aware that Arts Frosh

took a number of measures to prevent the entry of non-Arts-Frosh participants, we think that it is important that other faculties take similar measures. The efforts that went into creating a pre-registration consent video were very important in ensuring that frosh participants had a base of knowledge before accessing any of the events. These efforts could possibly have been undermined by the presence of non-frosh participants, for there is no way to ensure that they had the same education.

With all this said, we commend the Arts Frosh Coords for their constant active bystanding, support, and organization throughout the club events. When we had complaints or offered suggestions, they were very accommodating. The Red Frogs and MSERT were available at every club event, and were providing their services for free.

The venues for the nightclub events had nice mixtures of dance floors and seating areas, where froshies can take a break and sit down. Additionally, we saw many frosh leaders and o-staff actively bystanding, which was amazing. The training truly manifested itself during these events. Ultimately, the nightclub events were inclusive in that drinking was not necessarily a priority, but the cis-normativity was not inclusive of everyone partaking in Frosh.

### **Important Thoughts and Conclusion**

Arts Frosh as a whole has grown to include a much wider variety of more inclusive activities that don't necessarily center around drinking. There has also been the implementation of sober leaders that are grouped with froshies who choose to be sober. This program is a fantastic way to make froshies who choose not to drink still feel included in all of frosh, especially when the sober leaders do things such as have an ice cream crawl in place of the Montreal Crawl as the one sober leader did. Of the two registered sober froshies only one showed up to be in sober leader's group, however the group ended up having six or seven sober froshies. There may be more froshies interested in this option, so it would be a good idea to advertise it better before registration.

Additionally, Arts Frosh has made vegetarian/vegan/gluten free options more widely available throughout frosh when giving out food. The Director of Inclusivity (Amanda) was also aware of any diabetic froshies and had food on hand for them for most activities. With both these

precautions, froshies don't have to be limited in what they can eat or be unsafe by not eating during particularly drinking-heavy events, such as Beach Day.

An area of concern would be the music selection by the DJs, which may be more difficult to control but should still be taken into consideration when considering equity and inclusivity. The music at many events, such as Boat Cruise, contained heavy use of racial slurs, such as the N-word, which can make some froshies feel uncomfortable. There were also some events where DJs played songs that encouraged alcoholism which, if frosh is moving towards being not as alcohol-heavy, should not be welcomed.

With that being said, the major area of inclusivity in which Arts Frosh is heavily lacking is the presence of gender neutral bathrooms. The only place where this was present was the portapotties at Beach Day, and it's safe to say they were not intended as such. Adding gender neutral bathrooms can be as simple as posting gender neutral signs over existing male/female sign. This is a trans-positive effort that would help Arts Frosh make immense strides towards being more inclusive for everyone.

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