

# AUS 'State of the Society' Presentation

AUS Legislative Council September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015



# Your role as a Councilor

- ▶ Representing the views of your constituents (i.e. All the students in your department, not just in your departmental association) in AUS decisions
- ▶ Keeping the AUS Executives accountable
- ▶ Active participation in discussions at (and outside of) AUS Council
- ▶ Sitting on an AUS or Faculty of Arts committee (required by Constitution!)
- ▶ Generally, coming forward with ideas for making the AUS better

# Arts Undergraduate Society Overview

- ▶ AUS was incorporated in 1993 and accredited in 2003. This means that AUS is the **legal representative of all Arts and Arts & Science students at McGill University** (~7500 students!). As a corporation, we have certain obligations to fulfill to the government, including filing taxes and financial reporting.
- ▶ Executive Committee consists of 7 Execs (President and VPs Academic, Communications, External, Finance, Internal, Social) and 3 Arts Reps to SSMU
- ▶ Control student spaces in Leacock (Arts Lounge, AUS Office, SNAX), in 3434 MacTavish (few departmental offices) and 688 Sherbrooke (Language Lounge)
- ▶ Approximate net cash worth of \$280,000 and yearly budget of \$700,000
- ▶ Governed by AUS Constitution, bylaws and Memorandum of Agreement with McGill (MOA)(<http://ausmcgill.com/governance/constitution-and-bylaws/> )
- ▶ In French, we're "L'Association Etudiante de la Faculté des Arts de Premier Cycle de l'Université McGill"

# Brief overview of portfolios

- ▶ President (Jacob): manages AUS executive team, official spokesperson, oversees elections AUS and AUS Council, AUS corporate responsibilities
- ▶ VP Academic (Gabriel): coordinates representation to McGill, oversees academic programs and services of AUS (eg. Peer tutoring, student rights)
- ▶ VP Communications (Elaine): writes and distributes AUS Listserv, oversees AUS website, oversees French Conversation Circles, runs AUS Photography
- ▶ VP External (Becky): coordinates AUS representation to SSMU, oversees AUS Sponsorship, supervises International Student Affairs Commission
- ▶ VP Finance (Mirza): manages finances of all departments, chair FMC and AUIF and fulfil all legal obligations to McGill and the government
- ▶ VP Internal (Maria): oversees all departments, serves as the AUS ombudsperson, runs FEARC and AUsec, oversees room and lounge bookings
- ▶ VP Social (Christine): supervises planning for all events (eg. Frosh, BdA, Oktoberhaus, Grad Ball) and chairs EPIC
- ▶ Arts Reps (Adam and Lexi): sit on Excomm, represent Arts students to SSMU

# Services we Provide

- ▶ Arts Lounge
- ▶ Handbook/Agenda
- ▶ AUS Essay Centre
- ▶ Employment opportunities on campus (ASEF) & AUS positions
- ▶ Computer Labs - Ferrier and in Arts Lounge
- ▶ Funding to departmental associations and other groups
- ▶ Funding for capital improvements (AUIF)
- ▶ Laptop Lending Program
- ▶ Career Preparation Assistance
- ▶ French Conversation Circles
- ▶ Charity and philanthropy
- ▶ Arts Undergraduate Theatre Society (AUTS)
- ▶ Equity
- ▶ Website
- ▶ Listserv
- ▶ Journals
- ▶ Lockers
- ▶ SNAX
- ▶ AIO (in conjunction with McGill)
- ▶ Bar des Arts (BdA)
- ▶ ...and more!

# Events we Organize

- ▶ Frosh
- ▶ Grad Fair
- ▶ Work Your B.A.
- ▶ Arts Alumni Mixer
- ▶ Breakfasts for Graduating Class
- ▶ AUS Film Series
- ▶ Bar des Arts
- ▶ Crafternoons
- ▶ Lounge Decorating Party
- ▶ Prof Talk
- ▶ Equity Conference
- ▶ Free Coffee at Ferrier Lab
- ▶ EmbrACE Volunteer Week
- ▶ Quebec City Trip
- ▶ Focus Groups Dinner
- ▶ Graduation Ball
- ▶ AUS Teaching Awards
- ▶ AUS-SUS Departmental Fair
- ▶ Nuit Blanche
- ▶ Graduation Ball
- ▶ ...and more!

# Representation to McGill

- ▶ AUS Council
- ▶ AUS Committees
- ▶ Representation at SSMU
- ▶ Faculty of Arts Committees
- ▶ Student Services
- ▶ McGill University Administration
- ▶ Departmental Associations
- ▶ FEARC
- ▶ Academic grievance support
- ▶ “University navigation” assistance
- ▶ McLennan-Redpath Humanities and Social Sciences Library

# AUS Committees

- ▶ Academic Affairs Committee (Chair: VP Academic)
- ▶ Financial Management Committee (FMC) (Chair: VP Finance)
- ▶ Constitutional and By-Law Review Committee (CBRC) (Chair: President)
- ▶ First-Year Events, Academic, and Representative Council (FEARC) (VP Internal portfolio; Chair: FEARC Co-Presidents)
- ▶ Arts Undergraduate Improvement Fund Committee (AUIFC) (Chair: VP Finance)
- ▶ Event Planning and Implementation Committee (EPIC) (Chair: VP Social)
- ▶ Arts Undergraduate Society Environment Committee (AUsec) (VP Internal portfolio)
- ▶ Marketing Committee (Chair: VP Communications)
- ▶ Sponsorship Committee (Chair: VP External)
- ▶ Equity Committee (VP Internal portfolio)
- ▶ Arts Community Engagement (ACE) Committee (VP External portfolio)
- ▶ Fine Arts Council (FAC) (VP Communications portfolio)
- ▶ Arts Computer Lab Fund Committee (Chair: President)
- ▶ Library Partnership Committee (Chair: VP Academic)
- ▶ Arts Student Employment Fund Committee (Chair: VP Academic)
- ▶ Francophone Commission (VP Communications portfolio)

# How is AUS Funded? AUS Fees Info

- ▶ **AUS Base Fee:** This is our general membership fee. It funds AUS' operations, events, departmental associations, and FMC funds. Non-opt-out-able; per semester: \$13.50 for full-time BA students, \$6.75 for part time BA and full time BA&Sc students.
- ▶ **Arts Undergraduate Theatre Society:** This funds the operations of the Arts Undergraduate Theater Society. Non-opt-out-able; per semester: \$1.00 for full time BA; \$0.50 for part-time BA and full time BA&Sc; \$0.25 for part-time BA&Sc.
- ▶ **Arts Student Employment Fund:** This promotes research and employment opportunities for Arts students who contribute to the fee. Part of the fee is distributed by Work-Study, and part of it is distributed by the Faculty of Arts. Some of this is reserved for new professors to hire research assistants. A portion of the fee is available for groups on campus who want funding for a paid position (e.g. if SEDE wants to hire a Community Engagement Day coordinator). Opt-out-able. Per semester: \$6.50 for full time BA; \$3.25 for part-time BA and full time BA&Sc. If you opt out, you are not eligible for employment opportunities funded by this fee.
- ▶ **Arts Computer Lab Fund:** This fee goes towards computer lab resources for AUS members who contribute to this fee. It can fund improvements both to the Ferrier lab and to the lab in the Arts Lounge. Opt-out-able. Per semester: \$9.80 for full time BA; \$4.90 for part-time BA and full time BA&Sc; \$2.45 for part-time BA&Sc. If you opt out, you do not have access to the Ferrier lab.
- ▶ **Arts Undergraduate Improvement Fund:** This fee funds capital improvements to student space used by AUS members. A committee meets once each year to review applications to this fund. Opt-out-able. Per semester: \$16.00 for full time BA; \$8.00 for part-time BA and full time BA&Sc; \$4.00 for part-time BA&Sc. If you opt out, you lose access to the Arts Lounge.
- ▶ **Arts Internship Office Fee (new this year):** Passed in a Winter 2015 referendum with 86.5%, this is a five-year non-opt-outable fee levied to provide 'bridge funding' to the Faculty of Arts Internship Office to support its operations until a \$5 million philanthropic endowment is created to permanently support the AIO. Per semester: \$14.00 for BA; \$7.00 for part-time BA&Sc

# Brief AUS Financial History

- ▶ The AUS must provide McGill with audited financial statements every year. A **Notice to Reader** is the most basic financial document an organization can provide to the government. An **audit** is the highest form. AUS presented neither of these from 2008 to 2012.
- ▶ The AUS never filed taxes from 2008-2012. As a result, the provincial and national governments seized a total of **\$120,000** from the AUS bank account in early 2012.

# Years in Review 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

- ▶ McGill withheld AUS student fees for 2012-2013. This meant AUS could not pay its \$40,000 of debt unless it underwent significant financial restructuring.
- ▶ All taxes were back-filed and Notice to Readers for 2008 to 2012 were submitted in 2012-2013. McGill released student fees, finally resolving the debt issue.
- ▶ Most departmental association bank accounts were internalized to improve financial reporting measures.
- ▶ In late 2013, the audit for 2012-2013 was completed and audited financial statements were produced for the first time in 5-6 years, *marking a turning point in AUS finances.*

# Surpluses - Getting to \$265,000

- ▶ In early 2013, the government released all **\$120,000**, which AUS then put in a Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) account.
- ▶ Since McGill withheld student fees that year, AUS scaled back operations in 2012-2013. Consequently, AUS ran a surplus of **\$50,000**. This was put into another GIC.
- ▶ In 2013-2014, not only did Frosh 2014 run a **\$20,000** surplus but expenses (and hence spending) were also lower than usual. This meant AUS ran an **\$100,000** surplus.
- ▶ AUS ended 2013-2014 with GIC savings of **\$265,000**, and a primary account balance of **\$60,000**. This left AUS in a strong financial position.
- ▶ Since AUS is a Non-Profit organization, running high surpluses is not ideal.

# Year in Review 2014-2015

- ▶ In Fall 2014, AUS produced its second consecutive audited financial statements for (2013-2014), *consolidating its financial reporting measures*.
- ▶ Unfortunately, turnovers in the finance portfolio and poor accounting significantly delayed the audit for 2014-2015.
- ▶ After much time spent in the office in the summer, I am ecstatic to report that the audit for 2014-2015 will finally be going through this week. We should have our third consecutive audited financial statements soon!
- ▶ Finally, AUS ran an approximate loss of **\$50,000-60,000** this year. GIC savings are down to **\$190,000**.

# Year in Review 2014-2015 - Deficits

Event	2014-2015	2013-2014
	Net Profit (Loss)	Net Profit (Loss)
Frosh	- 30,250	13,000
Grad Ball	- 15,300	- 9,300
Bar Des Arts	- 7,500	- 7,200
Hip Hop Week	528	
SNAX	3,500	20,000
Non Frosh Sponsorship	23,790	38,500

# Frosh 2014

- ▶ No budget presented for Frosh 2014 and all spending was at the discretion of the Vice President Social.
- ▶ Vice President Finance was not present in Montreal for the majority of summer 2014 to assist with Frosh finances.
- ▶ 1377 out of 1400 tickets were sold in Frosh 2014 so revenues were not a problem.
- ▶ AUS spent \$15,000 on Clock Tower Beach, which ran at the same time as Boat Cruise. Got rid of this for Frosh 2015.
- ▶ Excess spending on Frosh coordinators and free beer tickets given away.

# Frosh 2015

- ▶ Ticket prices were raised to \$145 to accommodate an extra day of Frosh
- ▶ Saved \$15,000 by not booking ClockTower Beach.
- ▶ Made \$4,500 in beer tickets sales in Frosh 2015 compared to \$2,000 in Frosh 2014.
- ▶ Micromanaged Frosh finances and updated budget every week to keep track of all Frosh finances efficiently.
- ▶ While Frosh finances are yet to tied up completely, anticipating close to breakeven
- ▶ Effective communication between VP Finance and VP Social on budgeting.

# Interlude: 2014-2015 in review generally

- ▶ 2014-2015 was a complex, challenging, tumultuous year for the AUS
- ▶ The AUS experiences many successes:
  - ▶ Many successful and creative collaborations with the admin such as AIO fee approval and the AUS Space Project
  - ▶ Media coverage and active student response (MSP and Food Coalition) towards the SNAX controversy
  - ▶ AUS kept going even after 5 resignations and the sad loss of an Exec
  - ▶ Revamped and more complex HR policies in effect
- ▶ Troubles:
  - ▶ High turnover in portfolios (5 resignations) and no acting VP Finance and Internal for months
  - ▶ SNAX ordered to stop selling sandwiches by admin
  - ▶ Frosh ran a huge deficit of \$30,000; AUS ran a deficit of \$50,000-60,000

# Financial Year in Review 2014-2015

- ▶ In Fall 2014, AUS produced its second consecutive audited financial statements for (2013-2014), consolidating its financial reporting measures into an even stronger position than before.
- ▶ Unfortunately, turnovers in the VP Finance portfolio and poor accounting caused significant financial mismanagement. This had several consequences:
  - ▶ An inability to properly track AUS expenses and revenues in real time throughout the year because of incorrect entries into Quickbooks
  - ▶ AUS running an approximate loss of **\$50,000-60,000** in 2014-2015
  - ▶ GIC savings being reduced down to **\$190,000**
  - ▶ Significant delays to the audit for 2014-2015 due to our Auditors uncovering poor accounting (e.g. overuse of the miscellaneous expenses account, double entry of \$106,000 in revenues, inadequate training for the AUS bookkeeper)
- ▶ After much time spent in the office in the summer, I am ecstatic to report that the audit for 2014-2015 will finally be going through this week. We should have our third consecutive audited financial statements soon!
- ▶ NB: Expenses from last year will be confirmed in Audited Financial Statements

# Moving Forward

- ▶ Reviewing selection process for VP Finance to ensure they have adequate financial and accounting background
- ▶ Earlier, better completion of AUS Audit (just in: it is now finished!)
- ▶ Earlier delivery of AUS budget to Council
- ▶ Better Frosh budgeting (Frosh makes up ~25% of the AUS budget)
- ▶ Review of expenses and revenues in each portfolio so we can reduce former and increase latter by, for example, selling more food and apparel at BdA
- ▶ Improve financial literacy training for AUS Councillors so they can better understand AUS finances and hold the AUS Executives accountable