

**Constitution of the Gender, Sexuality, Feminist, and Social Justice Studies Students’  
Association of McGill University**

Last updated Oct 31, 2019

**Land acknowledgement**

The GSFSSA acknowledges that McGill University, the Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies (IGSF) and all the spaces we use, share and occupy are situated on the unceded territory of the Kanien’kehá:ka (the people of the flint). The island of Montreal, known as Tiotia:ke, has served as a site of meeting and gathering among many First Nations people. As students who study intersecting forces of oppression, it is important to contend with the ways in which gender and sexuality based oppression exist along colonial lines. It is also important to acknowledge the privilege we hold in being able to use this space for academic, social and activist pursuits.

**Definitions**

“GSFSSA” shall refer to the Gender, Sexuality, Feminist, and Social Justice Students’ Association of McGill University.

“GSFS” shall refer to the Gender, Sexuality, Feminist, and Social Justice Program at McGill University.

“WMST” shall refer to the Women’s Studies Program at McGill University.

“SDST” shall refer to the Sexual Diversity Studies Program at McGill University.

“IGSF” shall refer to the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at McGill University.

“AUS” shall refer to the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University.

**Article 1—Membership**

1.1 The association shall be known as the “Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies Student Association” (GSFSSA).

1.2 Any undergraduate student currently enrolled in a Minor, Major, Honours or Joint Honours program in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies is considered to be a member of the GSFSSA.

1.3 Membership in the GSFSSA confers the right to...

1.3.1 Participate in all activities and programs organized by the GSFSSA Collective

1.3.2 Vote in elections or referendums put forth by the GSFSSA Collective.

1.3.3 Receive official communication from the GSFSSA Collective in the form of Facebook posts, and the listserv.

1.3.4. Bring up issues or concerns regarding the GSFS program (including classes, lecturers, or professors) to the GSFSSA Collective.

1.3.5 Attend meetings of the GSFSSA Collective.

- 1.3.6 Request the official minutes of the GSFSSA Collective Meetings.
- 1.3.7 Run for a Coordinator position during a general election or by-election.
- 1.3.8 Request to be a General Member during the beginning of the school-semester.

## **Article 2 – Mandate**

2.1 The mandates of the GSFSSA shall be:

- 2.1.1 To represent the interests of the GSFSSA membership to the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS), to McGill University and Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies' faculty and staff and to promote their welfare and interests;
- 2.1.2 To foster dialogue among the GSFSSA membership and between the GSFSSA and the larger undergraduate student body;
- 2.1.3 To establish a pro-feminist and pro-2SLGBTQIAP+ presence at McGill, that is also anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-colonial, and anti-oppressive;
- 2.1.4 To endeavour to engage critically with multiple forms of intersecting oppressions, including, but not limited to, those based on gender identity, sexuality, race, class, age, ability, size, ethnicity, language, and religion in the GSFSSA's activities.

2.2 The GSFSSA shall be recognized by its members, the Arts Undergraduate Society, the Students' Society of McGill University, and the Faculty of Arts as representative of all undergraduate students registered in the program for Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies.

## **Article 3 – Membership of the GSFSSA Collective**

3.1 The GSFSSA Collective shall refer to the principal administrative body of the GSFSSA.

3.2 The Collective shall comprise of Coordinators and General Members.

3.3. The roles of the Collective shall include...

- 3.3.1 Enforcing the Constitution of the GSFSSA and ensuring it is reflective of and enables the current and future functioning of the GSFSSA.
- 3.3.2 Attending GSFSSA meetings.
- 3.3.3 Managing and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the GSFSSA, including liaisons with AUS and IGSF, programming, and administrative and financial duties.
- 3.3.4 Acting as the decision-making body of the GSFSSA.

3.4 General Members shall refer to members who are non-elected, but still contribute to the operations of the Collective.

3.4.1 General Members may be any undergraduate student currently enrolled in a Minor, Major, Honours or Joint Honours program in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies, or enrolled in a class designated GSFS class or in a class recognized by the GSFS Approved Classes List

3.4.1.1 Students not enrolled in the Minor, Major, Honours or Joint Honours program in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies shall only be

considered General Members members of the GSFSSA for the duration of the GSFS class in which they are enrolled.

3.4.2. To become a General Member, a student must respond to an invitation put forth by the GSFSSA Coordinators to all GSFSSA Members at the beginning of each semester and be approved to join by the current Collective.

3.4.3 The roles of the General Members shall comprise the roles of the Collective, outlined in 3.3

3.4.4 The General Members should be consulted by Coordinators in official decision-making processes, but shall not be the primary decision-makers in such cases.

3.5 Coordinators shall refer to members elected to Coordinator positions of the Collective

3.5.1 Coordinators must be currently enrolled in a Minor, Major, Honours or Joint Honours program in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies.

3.5.2 To become a Coordinator, a student must run in an election or by-election run by the Collective and obtain a majority of votes, either individually, or in partnership with another student.

3.5.3 The roles of the Coordinators shall comprise the roles of the Collective outlined in 3.3

3.5.3.1 Coordinators are intended to function as facilitators, and are not expected to assume sole responsibility for all tasks within their portfolio.

3.5.3.2. The Coordinators shall take on an additional role of being the primary decision-making body on official matters of the collective, defined as items pertaining to the constitution or electoral procedures. Despite being the primary decision-making body for such matters, they are encouraged to consult and discuss with the General Members of the Collective.

3.6 To remain a member of the Collective, all members must:

3.6.1 Demonstrate an on-going and active commitment to the mandates as per Article 2;

3.6.2 Provide continuous input to discussion and decision making.

3.7 Should a member fail to communicate with the Collective for three consecutive weeks during the school year or fail to demonstrate an on-going and active commitment to the mandates as per Article 2, it shall be the responsibility of the Internal Coordinator to ask them/her/him if it is their intent to remain involved in the Collective and request that they attend the next meeting.

3.7.1 Failure to respond to this probing within seven days shall be regarded as a formal resignation.

3.7.2 Failure to attend the next scheduled meeting, barring extenuating circumstances, shall be regarded as a formal resignation.

#### **Article 4 – Coordinator Positions**

5.1 The Collective shall include the following long-term Coordinator positions:

- 5.1.1 Communications Coordinator;
  - 5.1.2 External Coordinator to the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSF)
  - 5.1.3 External Coordinator to the AUS and the University;
  - 5.1.4 Finance Coordinator;
  - 5.1.5 Events Coordinator;
  - 5.1.6 Internal Coordinator.
- 5.2 In all cases, positions may be assumed by more than one individual.
- 5.2.1 Positions with more than one individual can obtain such positions in two ways:
    - 5.2.1.1 They may co-run with others in the initial election or;
    - 5.2.1.2 With the approval of a simple majority of the GSFSSA, they can run to share the position with an already elected member through a by-election.
- 5.3 Each Coordinator position apportioned in the Fall semester shall be held until the end of the Winter semester of that year.
- 5.4 If a Coordinator position becomes vacant through resignation, a member or multiple members of the Collective may assume the position for the remainder of the term, unless or until a by-election is held and the position is replaced.
- 5.4.1 If no Collective member is available or willing to assume the position, the Collective shall hold a by-election in the first half of either semester.
    - 5.4.1.2 If a position is not filled by the latter half of the semester, the Collective shall collectively assume and share the responsibilities of the position for the remainder of the semester.
- 5.5. Duties of the Communications Coordinator
- 5.5.1 Facilitate communication between the Collective and the GSFSSA's Membership;
  - 5.5.2 Administer the GSFSSA listserv
  - 5.5.3 Manage the GSFSSA e-mail and Facebook group;
  - 5.5.4 Coordinate the publicizing of events in conjunction with the Events Coordinator;
  - 5.5.5 Facilitate dialogue between the GSFSSA and other Student's Associations
  - 5.5.6 Report to the Collective at regular meetings.
- 5.6 Duties of the External Coordinator to the IGSF
- 5.6.1 Act as the primary contact between the GSFSSA and IGSF;
  - 5.6.2 Facilitate dialogue between the GSFSSA and the GSFS Program faculty and staff;
  - 5.6.3 Report to the Collective at regular meetings.
- 5.7 Duties of the External Coordinator to the AUS and the University
- 5.7.1 Act as the primary contact between the GSFSSA and the AUS;
    - 5.7.1.1 Assume all responsibility and liabilities of President, as under AUS guidelines
  - 5.7.2 Act as the primary contact between the GSFSSA and the University;
  - 5.7.3 Sit as a representative of the GSFSSA on the AUS Legislative Council;

## 5.8 Duties of the Events Coordinator

5.8.1 Facilitate the planning, organization and execution of public and internal GSFSSA events;

5.8.1.1. GSFSSA Events can be geared toward GSFS students, staff, administration, 2SLGBTQIAP+, immigrants, people with disabilities, Indigenous folks, people of color, and any allies and activist populations regardless of their class.

5.8.2 Work with the Finance Coordinator to ensure that all events remain within the budget of the GSFSSA;

5.8.3 Assist the Finance Coordinator in the planning, organization and execution of fundraisers;

5.8.4 Assist the Internal Coordinator to the Collective in planning and organizing internal Collective events.

## 5.9 Duties of the Finance Coordinator

5.9.1 Keep proper accounts and records in accordance with the AUS Financial By-laws.

5.9.2 Ensure the long-term financial stability of the GSFSSA;

5.9.3 Draft the annual budget of the GSFSSA in a manner consistent with the Arts Undergraduate Society's Financial By-laws;

5.9.3.1 The annual budget shall be reviewed and approved by the Collective;

5.9.4 Be responsible for the timely submission of all budgets and financial documents to the AUS VP Finance;

5.9.5 Be responsible submitting cheque requisitions reimbursing funds in a timely fashion;

5.9.6 Facilitate the planning and execution of fundraising activities in conjunction with the Events Coordinator;

5.9.7 Ensure that events and activities remain within the budget of the GSFSSA;

5.9.8 Be responsible in the event of misuse of funds as per AUS Financial By- Laws;

5.9.9 Be responsible for the Arts Undergraduate Improvement Funds (AUIF) and submission of this and other related university funding applications.

## 5.10 Duties of Internal Coordinator to the Collective

5.10.1 At GSFSSA meetings, the Internal Coordinator shall:

5.10.1.1 Ensure that discussion adheres to the set agenda;

5.10.1.2 Ensure an efficient flow and progression of discussion;

5.10.1.3 Encourage the participation of all Collective members present and ensure that each member's contributions are addressed;

5.10.1.4 Take an active role in maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

5.10.1.5. Record the minutes at Collective meetings;

5.10.1.6. Distribute the minutes to the Collective via e-mail within forty eight hours of the respective meeting and oversee the minutes' approval;

5.10.1.7. Write and distribute, via e-mail, the agenda for the next scheduled GSFSSA meeting at least 24 hours in advance.

5.10.2 The Internal Coordinator shall also be in charge of booking the room for internal and GSFSSA general meetings and work in collaboration with the Events Coordinator in the planning of internal events.

5.10.3 The Internal Coordinator shall also be responsible for sending a probe for intent and membership to members failing to fulfill the requirements of Article 3.6. This probe shall be sent no fewer than five days before the next scheduled meeting of the Collective.

## **Article 6 - Meetings**

6.1 The Collective GSFSSA shall meet on a routine basis for the duration of the regular class schedule of the Fall and Winter terms.

6.1.1 The schedule shall be set by the Collective of the GSFSSA by the third meeting of each semester.

6.2 Attendance amongst the GSFSSA Collective is encouraged for all members and is important for decision making and the effective and efficient administration of the Collective and its activities.

6.2.1 Attendance of a meeting can include online presence, such as a conference call.

6.2.2 Recognizing that mental and physical health is an issue that should be prioritized among the student and Collective membership, absences on such or similar bases will be tolerated. Disclosure of health issues is not required, but open communication to inform the collective of absences is encouraged.

6.2 Quorum for decisions at GSFSSA meetings shall be two thirds of GSFSSA Collective Members.

6.2.1. Decisions of the Collective shall be made using a consensus-based decision model, which shall be agreed upon at the beginning of the year and made available to any interested GSFSSA member.

6.2.2 In the event that members of the Collective who were not in attendance at the last meeting are in disagreement with any decision, they must notify the Collective of their objection within forty-eight hours of receiving the minutes of that meeting.

6.2.2 Official decisions of the Collective will be undertaken by the Coordinators as the primary decision-making body, although they are encouraged to consult with the General Members.

6.2.2.1 Official matters are defined as items pertaining to constitution amendments or electoral procedures.

6.3 Accurate minutes should be taken during each meeting in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

## **Article 7 – Finances**

7.1 The GSFSSA shall adhere to the AUS Financial By-Laws.

## **Article 8 – Amendments**

8.1 Any member of the GSFSSA may propose an amendment to this Constitution.

8.1.1 Amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Collective at least one week prior to the next scheduled GSFSSA meeting.

8.1.2 The proponent of the amendment shall attend the next scheduled GSFSSA meeting to discuss the proposed amendment.

8.1.3 Within three days following the meeting in question (Article 16.1.2), the Collective shall issue a notice of an Amendment Meeting of the GSFSSA, to be held no sooner than two full weeks after notice has been issued.

8.1.4 Notice of Amendment Meeting shall include the text of the proposed amendment.

8.2 At the Amendment Meeting of the GSFSSA, all members of the GSFSSA shall be entitled to vote on the proposed amendment.

8.3 Quorum for majoritarian voting at the Amendment Meeting shall be 10% of the GSFSSA membership.

8.3.1 If majoritarian quorum is reached, the amendment shall be passed by a majority of the members present.

8.3.2 There shall be no provision for proxy voting.

8.4 If quorum for majoritarian voting is not reached, the amendment shall be decided by the consensus of all GSFSSA members present as long as a quorum for the Collective of 80% is reached.

8.5 All amendments shall be ratified by the AUS, as per the AUS Constitution and By-Laws.

## **Article 9 - Elections**

9.1 The initial election campaigning stage shall begin and be announced in the Winter semester, will last two weeks and should end before the Official final exam period.

9.1.1 In order to announce candidacy, one must contact the Collective through email within the first week of the campaign stage.

9.1.1.1. Candidates may choose to run in pairs, in which case both individuals must email their intent to be a candidate to the Collective and their intent to run in partnership.

9.1.1.2 During this period of campaigning, candidates are allowed to stop in and introduce themselves to other students in GSFS classes and post promotional

material on the GSFS at McGill Facebook group or submit a post to the GSFSSA Facebook page.

9.2 The voting and election process shall occur at least one week after elections are announced, and must be done in accordance to AUS law and may be online.

9.3 Coordinators may choose to hold a by-election if a position becomes vacant. Should a by-election be held, it should be announced to the GSFSSA.

9.3.1 By-election candidates must submit their candidacy to the Collective email by the second, out of seven total days of the by-election campaign period.

9.3.1.1. Candidates may choose to run in pairs, in which case both individuals must email their intent to be a candidate to the Collective and their intent to run in partnership.

9.3.2 The candidates may only begin campaigning after informing the Collective. During this period of time, candidates are allowed to stop in and introduce themselves to other students in GSFS classes and post promotional material on the GSFS at McGill Facebook group or submit a post to the GSFSSA Facebook page.

9.3.3 Campaigning shall cease seven days after the by-election is announced by the Collective.

9.3.4 Following this campaigning period, a vote shall be held. The voting and election process shall be done in accordance to AUS law and may be online.

## **Article 10 – Affiliation**

10.1 The GSFSSA shall operate under the auspices of the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University (AUS) as stipulated in the AUS Constitution.