

McGill University
Social Work Student Association (SWSA)
CONSTITUTION
Updated November 2018

Section I: The Society

Article 1: Name

1. The Society shall be known as the Social Work Student Association of McGill University (SWSA-McGill) or the Association des étudiant.e.s en travail social de l'Université McGill (AÉTS-McGill), hereinafter the society or the SWSA.

Article 2: Mandate

2.1 The aim of the **society** shall be:

- a) To represent and promote the welfare and interests of all its members (as stipulated in Article 3 of the Constitution).
- b) To provide activities and services to enhance the educational, cultural, environmental and social conditions of its members.

2.2 The Society shall be recognized by its members and the Students' Society, Senate, and the Board of Governors of McGill University as representative of all the undergraduate social work students registered at McGill University.

Article 3: Membership

3.1 Regular members of the Society shall be all students registered at McGill University (Downtown campus) in the School of Social Work, subject to the payment of fees prescribed in Article 4.

Article 4: Membership Fees

4.1 The SWSA Council shall, from time to time as it sees fit, establish a Society Fee, which shall be paid by every member of the society.

- a) Members who are full time students (as defined by McGill University) shall pay the Society members fee in full.
- b) Members who are part time students (as defined by McGill University) shall pay half of the full amount of the Society fee.
- c) The society fee is \$6.00 - \$3.00 billed in the Fall semester; \$3.00 billed in the Winter semester

- 4.2 The Society fee shall be collected from each member by the Cashier of McGill University and forwarded to the society.
- 4.3 Any change in the Society fee shall be subject to ratification by the Society's members voting in a referendum called for that purpose.

Article 5: Financing of the Society

- 5.1 The financial year of the SWSA shall be the first of May to the thirtieth of April the following year.
- 5.2 The total expenditures of the SWSA in any year shall not exceed its total revenues in any given year.
- 5.3 There shall be a set of Financial Regulations and by-laws of the Society, governing the finances of the Society.
- 5.4 The accounts of the Society shall be maintained according to standard accounting practices and shall remain public at any time.
 - 5.4.1. Any member wishing to see any of the society's records must submit a request in writing to the Finance Coordinator.
 - 5.4.2. The Finance Coordinator shall respond to any requests by members to see the accounts within 10 business days (excluding holidays or weekends).

Section II: Organization

Article 6: Members of the General Council

- 6.1 The General Council shall be known as SWSA and consist of:
- a) the voting members of the Executive, as defined in article 7
 - b) a representative of each of the Social Work cohorts, as elected in accordance with article 9.
 - c) The Social Work representative to SSMU Council, as elected in accordance with article 9.
- 6.2 No member of the society may hold more than one voting position on the General Assembly

Section 7: The Executives

- 7.1 There shall be a committee, which shall be known as the Executive Committee, that will govern the Society between meetings of the General Council in a manner consistent with policies set out by the general council.
- 7.2 The Executive Committee council shall consist of:
- a) The Equity Coordinator
 - b) The Internal Affairs Coordinator
 - c) The External Affairs Coordinator
 - d) The Communication Coordinator
 - e) The Finance Coordinator
 - f) The Activities Coordinator
 - g) The SSMU Representative
- 7.3 All members of the Executive Committee, whether elected or appointed shall have one vote on the Executive Committee.

Article 8: Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee

- 8.1 All members of the Executive Committee shall meet at least one every three weeks

during the Academic year.

8.2 The Executive Committee shall have the powers of the General Council between meetings of the General Council, except that it shall not vote on motions to amend this constitution and its bylaws.

8.3 The **Equity Coordinator** shall:

a) be elected and hold one vote on General Council

b) self-identify as a member of one or more marginalized groups, including (but not limited to) indigenous persons, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women or other gender-marginalized persons, TSLGBTQ+ persons.

c) advise the General Council on equity-related matters of the Society

d) be the representative of the Executive Committee on the School of Social Work Equity Committee

e) be responsible for consulting and educating the student body on equity-related issues

f) be responsible for the organization of social, cultural and other activities for the members of the Society outside the society

8.4 The **Internal Affairs Coordinator** shall:

a) be elected and hold one vote on the General Council

b) be responsible for relations between the department and Executive Committee

c) act as internal ombudsman for the Executive Committee to the department

d) be responsible for the organization of social, cultural, and other activities for the members of the Society within the Society

e) ensure equal representation of departments under the society

8.5 The **External Affairs Coordinator** shall:

a) be a person who is functionally bilingual in English and French

b) be elected and hold one vote on General Council

c) represent the Society to outside bodies.

d) be responsible for matters relating to the interaction of the society with outside

groups, except for industry or government

e) be responsible for maintaining links between student organizations at the provincial, federal, and international levels and with other social work student associations of other universities

f) be responsible for the organization of social, cultural and other activities for the members of the Society

8.6 The **Communications Coordinator** shall:

a) be elected and hold one vote on General Council

b) be responsible for the proper publicity of all Society services and events

c) be responsible for coordinating the volunteers of all Society Services and events

d) be responsible for the coordination and distributions of all society publications

8.7 The **Finance Coordinator** shall:

a) be elected and hold one vote on General Council

b) advise the General Council on all financing matters of the Society

c) prepare the Society's budget including the budgets of the Society's committees, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Society

d) keep proper accounts and records in accordance with the Society's By-laws

e) prepare a year-end financial statement by May 31st

f) be responsible for the proper filing of tax and insurance papers

g) be responsible for relationships with government

h) chair the Finance committee

8.8 The **Activities Coordinator** shall:

a) be elected and hold one vote on General Council

b) be responsible for planning and coordinating activities for the society

c) be responsible for organizing activities for Orientation Week

8.9 The **SSMU Representative** shall:

- a) be elected and hold one vote on General Council
- b) represent SWSA-McGill on the SSMU Legislative Council
- c) be responsible for matters relating to the interaction of the society with SSMU and the larger McGill student body
- d) be responsible for the organization of social, cultural and other activities for the members of the Society

Section III: Elections

Article 9: General Elections

- 9.1 All members of the society shall be eligible to vote in society elections.
- 9.2 Elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and by-Laws.
- 9.3 Elections shall be won by a majority.

Article 10: Eligibility

- 10.1 All members of the Society in satisfactory standing, as determined by McGill University, shall be eligible to stand for election to any of the Society executive positions, or as Social Work Representative for SSMU.
- 10.2 All elected individuals must remain members of the Society throughout their mandate. If this requirement is not met, the individual in questions must resign from position.

Article 11: Procedures

- 11.1 The general election period, for the purpose of electing student representatives by all social work students, shall be held between February 1st and March 31st.
- 11.2 The polling period shall last for 1 day minimum.
- 11.3 The date of the polling period must be set by the General Council at a meeting at least fourteen days before the start of said polling period.

Section IV: Referenda

Article 12: General

- 12.1 All members of the Society shall be eligible to vote in Society referenda.
- 12.2 Referenda shall be conducted in accordance with this Constitution and by-laws.
- 12.3 Referenda shall be passed by a simple majority.
- 12.4 Referenda must have a voter turn out of at least 10% of all eligible voters to be upheld.

Article 13: Procedure

- 13.1 A referendum may be initiated either by a resolution passed by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the SWSA Council with at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of the general council in attendance, or by a petition signed by at least 70 members of the society.
- 13.2 Referendum passed will remain in effect for at least the rest of the academic year unless the decision is overturned in a subsequent student-initiated referendum.
- 13.3 In the case of a referendum initiated by the General Council, the wording of the referendum question shall be approved by the General Council a minimum of 7 days prior to the opening of the polling period.
- 13.4 In the case of a student-initiated referendum, all signatures must be submitted to the Executive Committee at least 14 days prior to the opening of the polling period. The referendum question must be clearly indicated at the top of each page of the petition.
- 13.5 All referendum questions must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Section V: General Assembly

Article 14: General Assembly

- 14.1 A General Assembly may establish, amend, or rescinding any policy of the Society except the membership fees or other financial matters of the Society.
- 14.2 A General Assembly shall be convened by the Speaker of Council, either at the request of the General Council or by a request signed by at least 20 members of the Society.
- 14.3 At least five business days notice must be given for the General Assembly.
- 14.4 Quorum for a General Assembly shall be set at 10% of the total members of the Society.
- 14.5 General Assemblies shall be chaired by the Internal Affairs Coordinator.

Section VI – General Council

Article 15: General Council

15.1 Members of the Society may refer to the General Council of the Student's Society of McGill University (SSMU), which shall have the final authority on:

- a) the interpretation of the Constitution and by-Laws of the Society
- b) the interpretation and legality of any motion passed by the General Council
- c) the interpretation and legality of referenda

15.2 Upon hearing an appeal, the General Council shall have the power to declare invalid any act of the Society or its committees' decisions, which derogate from the Constitution and by-Laws of the Society.

15.3 All decisions of the General Council shall be binding upon all involved parties and no appeals will be permitted.

15.4 All members of the society shall have the right to petition the General Council on matters falling within its authority set out herein.

Section VII – Vacancy Procedures

Article 16: Vacancy Procedures

16.1 In the event of a vacancy in the Executive Committee or representative to SSMU it will be filled in the following manner:

- a) The Executive Committee will appoint someone to act in that capacity of an interim basis.
- b) At a General Council meeting, formal nominations will be made and voting in General Council will take place.
- c) If no one runs for a particular position, the incoming Executive Committee shall make interim appointments.

Section VIII: Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 17: Language of the Society

17.1 English and French are the official languages of the Society

17.2 Members of the Society may use either official language at all meetings and in all documentation of the Society.

Article 18: Freedom of Information

18.1 All documentation of the Society and all its committees shall be public.

18.2 Requests to see the minutes and the documents of the Society and all its committee shall be addressed in writing to the Communications Coordinator.

Section IX: The Constitution

Article 19: Superseding Clause

19.1 This constitution repeals and supersedes all previous constitutions of the Society.

Article 20: The Language of the Constitution

20.1 The Constitution shall respect gender neutrality at all times.

Article 21: By-Laws to the Constitution

21.1 Appended to this Constitution are a set of by-Laws which may be adopted by the General Council as it sees fit, providing that such by-Laws conform to the principles embodied in the Constitution.

21.2 Quorum for a motion to enact, amend or rescind a By-Law shall require a two-thirds majority of General Council present.

Article 22: Amendments to the Constitution

22.1 Amendments to the Constitution shall be made by means of referendum.

Article 23: Coming to Force

23.1 This Constitution shall be voted into effect as of February 2018

Article 24: Interpretation

24.1 In the case of a disagreement in regards to the interpretation of the English and French versions of this Constitution the English version will take precedence.

Article 24.2 Definitions:

a) The **Academic Year** shall commence the first day of classes of the fall semester and end on the last day of classes in the fall semester. It will resume on the first day of classes of the winter semester and end on the last day of classes as defined by the McGill Calendar.

b) A **By-Law** (also referred to as a Term of Reference) shall be any set of rules adopted by the Society, a standing committee of the Society or a General Assembly for governing its own meetings.

c) A **coordinator** is defined by any person appointed to run a Society organizing committee or as editor of a Society Publication.

- d) A **Coordinating Position** is defined as the position held by a Coordinator.
- e) A **Department** is a group of members of the Society general population who are representative of a particular department.
- f) A **General Assembly** is a meeting of the Society in which any member of the general population may vote.
- g) The **General Council** is the General Council of the Society.
- h) The **McGill Community** shall be defined as the staff, students and faculty of the University.
- i) A **Motion** shall be defined as a proposal formally made in a meeting or assembly of the Society.
- j) An **Organizing Committee** is any committee that is responsible for the execution of an event or the fulfillment of a task that is not research-based.
- k) A **Policy** is an independent motion passed by the General Council or Executive Committee which is intended to provide a guideline for the conduct of the society or Executive Committee.
- l) **Quorum** shall be defined as the required attendance and conditions for a meeting of any official body of the Society to be opened for all subsequent transactions to be ratified.
- m) A **Ratification** is defined as the approval of a motion.
- n) A **Resolution** shall be defined as a formal statement of opinion or determination of the Society adopted by a meeting or assembly of the General Council.
- o) The **Senate** is the Senate of McGill University.
- p) A **Simple Majority** is defined as fifty percent of voters/votes plus one. An abstention shall not count as a vote.
- q) The **Society** shall be the Social Work Student Society of McGill University.
- r) The **Speaker** shall be the Speaker of Council, as outlined in the By-Laws.
- s) **SSMU** is the Students' Society of McGill University.
- t) **SWSA** shall be the Social Work Undergraduate Society of McGill University
- u) **Two-Thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) Majority** is defined as two-thirds of those present. When referring to votes, it implied two-thirds of all votes, including abstentions and spoiled ballots.

v) The **University** shall be McGill University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada.