

Special General Assembly

March 1st, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the CSU office, Sir George Williams Campus

SoPhiA would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on the traditional territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Ga-niyen-gé-haa-ga), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations. SoPhiA recognizes, and respects the Kanien'keha:ka (Ga-niyen-gé-haa-ga) as the traditional custodians of the unceded lands and waters on which we meet today.

Agenda:

1. Executive Updates / Upcoming Events
2. Motion on Participatory Grading
3. Proposed amendments to the SoPhiA by-laws:
 - a. Changing the title of “Sustainability Advisor” to “Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor”
 - b. Changing the mandate of the Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor
 - c. Three new definitions to clarify the new bursary addition
 - d. Addition of the Sheila Mason Bursary as Section XIII

Roll Call:

Call to Order at 18:42

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Chair (carries unanimously)

3. Approval of the Agenda (carries unanimously)

4. Executive Updates:

Ayesha: we have some exciting events and projects coming up. The Inclusivity Event will be happening on March 8th, International Women’s Day, and we will be having our final party of the semester at Kafein on March 15th. There is also our new interdisciplinary philosophy journal which is accepting submission, and I encourage everyone to submit something. We will be having a co-launch party with the Liberal Arts Association in early May. Of course, there is also the Sheila Mason bursary for which the deadline to apply is fast approaching. I have also been hoping to start a philosophy toastmasters weekly gathering, to give students the skills to speak in front of large groups and eloquently express themselves verbally.

5. Motion regarding Participatory Grading:

Ayesha motions to discuss the document, Francis seconds.

6. Discussion:

- a. What is the likelihood of the faculty accepting?
- b. **Ayesha:** they may be open to it, but I think at this point we should approach this more as a movement to open discussion with the faculty. It is unlikely they will be able to give a concrete answer immediately, let alone even be able to make any absolute moves.

- c. Move to amend the 4th ‘whereas’ clause of the motion, from “non-cis men” to “students”, and also amend the title from “request” to “suggest”
- d. What does request or suggest even mean here? We should discuss further and come to a decision before bringing this to the faculty.
- e. We should have the insight of the faculty on making any changes. We should mention that this is an issue of concern that is being discussed by students, and see what can be done.
- f. Perhaps we should have alternatives to in-class participation, rather than having it removed altogether.
- g. Given that the idea is to bring this forward to the faculty, we should keep the language neutral.

Room unanimously agrees to dividing the amendment

Further Discussion:

- a. the object of the amendment is the pay attention to marginalized people – we should move to replace “non-cis men” with “marginalized individuals”
- b. perhaps amend to focus/emphasize “traditionally marginalized students”

Poll:

Replacing with ‘many students’: four students in favour

Replacing with marginalized (or clearly marginalized, something to this effect): clear majority.

6. Proposed amendment

Lauren motions to amend to the fourth whereas clause: “Whereas in many instances, students, particularly marginalized ones, are often ignored...”

Motion carries unanimously

7. Further points raised in discussion:

- a. Getting faculty input, creating a discussion of alternatives
- b. Asking students why they are not participating in class, what hinders them?
- c. Laying ground rules verbally at the beginning of every semester for each class
- d. Participation is an integral part of philosophy
- e. The language and tone of the motion is negative, we should include some positive ideas of alternatives
- f. If we remove the participation marks, then we lose a virtuous part of the class. We should remove the marking, but change the structure of classes to encourage more participation.

8. Motion to amend the last “be it further resolved clause”:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT as part of that mandate, the SoPhiA executive raise concerns with the faculty and TAs regarding participation grading, discuss alternatives, propose surveying and polling students on their opinions, and formally request that ground rules be set at the beginning

of each semester. As well, request improved transparency regarding participation grading and verbal disclosure to classes on grading practices and ground rules.

Motion carries unanimously

9. Discussion regarding the new bursary program and addition to the by-laws:

- a. We need some way to ensure students do not take advantage of the bursary and falsely claim they belong to one of the marginalized groups as listed under eligible candidates.
- b. Proposal of adding a checkbox to affirm that you are a member of one or more of the eligible groups.
- c. Clearer language specifying what to do if more/less money is available during the year for the bursary, or if no applications are received.
- d. Specifying that members of the executive may not apply for the bursary, as it may be required that they sit on the bursary committee. Nor can they applying during the following years mandate, as the executive may decide to roll over the money for future candidates, in the case that no applicants are suitable or no one applies that year.

10. Motion to make the following additions and amendments to the by-laws:

- c. **The Executive, 7, b, viii:**
Changing the title of “The Sustainability Advisor” to “Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor”

Motion carries unanimously

d. Executive Position Mandates, 8, j:

The Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor: shall audit and direct the events and projects of the executive towards sustainable options and inclusivity. The Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor must also uphold the distribution of the Sheila Mason Bursary as described in Section XIII. If the position is not run for independently, then the duty of upholding the distribution of the Sheila Mason Bursary is assumed under the obligations of the Chair and Executive Coordinator.

Motion carries unanimously

e. Section I, Definitions:

New additions to include:

“Bursary”: shall refer to, a monetary award given to a deserving candidate in recognition of their work in the realm of inclusivity.

“Bursary Committee”: shall refer to, the committee deliberating upon the recipient of the bursary.

Motion carries unanimously

f. Section XIII: The Sheila Mason Bursary

39. Description of the Bursary:

- a) The **Sheila Mason Bursary** is a non-GPA based bursary designed to provide financial aid to students, specifically women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+, and individuals with disabilities.
- b) The person chosen seeks to promote diversity through both academic and community initiatives within the Philosophy program. This bursary will be awarded based upon initiative(s) made by the individual to promote inclusive thought and action within Concordia's philosophy department, and/or to prioritize the exploration of queer, postcolonial, intersectional, feminist, or race theory inside or outside of class settings.
- c) This award considers the disadvantages minorities face not only in Philosophy but throughout society, understanding that the work of underrepresented peoples are often held to standards which require significant effort extending beyond that of their peers. Applications will also be considered based upon financial need, given the way that class intersects with other forms of marginalization.

40. Candidates eligible for the bursary:

- a) Only undergraduate students enrolled in a major, minor or honours program in the Philosophy Department at Concordia are eligible to apply.
- b) Those eligible for application include: women, LGBTQAI+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, asexual, intersex, and others included in this umbrella), BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of colour), and students with disabilities, as self-disclosed.
- c) An application form must be required, and on that application for must be included a check box indicating whether the student applicant belongs to one or more of the eligible candidate groups.
- d) Those in greater financial need will be given priority.
- d) Any student sitting on the committee for the bursary is ineligible to apply.
- f) If an individual is an executive member, they may not apply for the bursary during their mandate, or during the following mandate.

41. Criteria for application:

- a) A personal statement, which must include a description of community involvement, how the individual is working towards creating an inclusive environment within philosophy, and an explanation of financial need. This must be between 500-750 words.

b) An essay on the topic of the individual's choice, however it must explore such topics including "queer, postcolonial, intersectional, feminist, or race theory", or be relevant to the aims of the Inclusivity Project and the Bursary. This essay should be between 1500-2000 words. Work that has been written for a class may be submitted.

c) One brief letter of recommendation from a teacher, advisor, employer, etc.

d) C.V., updated to include information pertinent to this award, such as extra-curricular involvement. This C.V. must also include the contact information of the individual who has written your letter of recommendation.

42. Funding and Bursary Amount:

a) The amount of the bursary will be \$400.

b) Funding for the bursary must be requested within the budget outline submitted to ASFA each year, under the section entitled "Inclusivity Project".

c) Supplementary funding is received from the Department, at the discretion of the faculty.

d) Any amounts not dispersed in a current year will roll over to the next academic year.

e) The bursary committee can give out as many bursaries as there are units of \$400.

f) Any extra budget can be (but is not limited to): rolled over to the next years bursary or spent on any related extraneous expenses, at the discretion of the bursary committee.

43. Bursary Committee

a) All members of the executive may partake in overseeing the bursary applications and decision process. However, the Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor is mandated to oversee the bursary process and ensure that this bursary process is followed each year.

b) An open and public call for the bursary committee will be made no later than one month prior to the application opening.

c) The committee positions will be filled by a majority vote at a duly convened meeting of the executive.

d) If the committee is not filled by student applicants, then executives must fill the position(s).

c) The bursary committee may be comprised of no less than four (4) people:

i. One professor

ii. Three students, including the Sustainability and Inclusivity Advisor.

c) Graduate students may sit on the bursary committee.

d) The bursary committee must ensure during every step of the process that deliberation upon the bursary recipient is done in a fair and impartial manner.

e) Any individual applying for the bursary may not sit on the bursary committee.

44. Announcement, Deadline, and Award Date:

a) The bursary availability must be announced no later than 1 January.

b) The deadline for applying is 17 March, six weeks prior to 28 April. This deadline may be subject to change for future years, if the number of applications greatly increases and more time is required for deliberation upon the recipient.

c) All applicants will be notified by email regarding the acceptance or rejection of their application no less than one week prior to 28 April.

d) The bursary will be given to the recipient in cheque form on 28

Motion carries unanimously

All changes voted on will be official put to vote in referendum during the upcoming SoPhiA general elections.

10. Adjournment

Richard moves to adjourn, Ayesha seconds.

Motion carries.

Meeting adjourns at 9:30 PM