

Centre for Gender Advocacy Annual General Meeting

April 28, 2014

6:00-9:00pm

Quorum reached at 6:10pm

Facilitator: Roddy Doucet

Minute taker: Alisha Mascarenhas

1. Introduction by Roddy Doucet

Motion to approve the introduction by Monica van Schaik

Seconded by Anaïs Van Vliet

Unanimously approved

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Luisa Ramirez

Seconded by Julie Michaud

Unanimously approved

3. Approval of 2013 Minutes

Note that Ellen Gabriel's name was misspelled

Motion to approve the minutes (with correction) by Paloma Amato

Seconded by Abby Lippman

Unanimously approved

4. Board of Directors Report

Abby Lippman (President) presents the Board Report (see Appendix A)

Question:

Gabriela C-K: Why did the logo change?

Maya Rolbin-Ghanie and Julie Michaud: The original logo was just the number '2110'. Since dropping the number from our name at last year's AGM, we needed to create something new. The new logo is meant to represent diversity of people and issues being addressed by the Centre.

Approval of Board Report

Motion to approve the Board Report by Julie Michaud

Seconded by Monica van Schaik

Unanimous approval

5. Staff Reports

Julie Michaud: Administrative Coordinator

Gabrielle Bouchard: Peer Support & Trans* Advocacy Coordinator

Bianca Mugenyi: Programming & Campaigns Coordinator

Maya Rolbin-Ghanie: Promotions Coordinator

Questions:

Gabriela C-K: Tell us more about the workshops that are given.

Gabrielle Bouchard: Always around trans* issues and realities, legal, life and social barriers. We have been receiving more and more calls from various places and organizations, including francophone universities

Phil: How do you do outreach of gender related issues to groups that don't necessarily care or are apathetic?

Maya Rolbin-Ghanie: Our expansion of outreach is concerned more with a more diverse group of people in terms of race, age, etc. When having those conversations is important to break it down and use accessible language, being open to questions and discussions and meeting people where they are at. It is an art we are always trying to hone; remembering that you are in a human to human discussion.

6. Financial Report

Presented by Julie Michaud

Questions:

Scott Carr: Is amortization budgeted for?

Julie: We don't budget for that but maybe we should.

Scott Carr: Is the contract for the location from year to year?

Julie: It is for multiple years, and this is the last year of the lease

Alisha Mascarenhas: Why the 8 cent fee levy increase?

Julie Michaud: Making up for past years where the Centre's expenses have exceeded its revenues. The Centre hasn't had an increase from undergrads since 2006, yet costs increase each year. In addition, the Centre acquired the second office in 2010. It's an additional expense which has allowed us to expand the number of activities and events that are run by the Centre.

Abby Lippman: New board will address how to use it, as the money won't be received until September.

Monica van Schaik: Was this year's fee levy increase just for undergrads or grad students also?

Julie Michaud: Just for undergrads, but grads pay 50 cents per semester

Gabriela C-K: How much will the increase amount to?

Julie Michaud: approx. \$56,000

Katharine Hall: Will you ask for an increase from grads?

Julie Michaud: Not yet, but perhaps in the future

Scott Carr: Is this a financial review or compilation?

Julie Michaud: A review

Scott Carr: Were there suggestions from the auditors?

Julie Michaud: No

Monica van Schaik: What is amortization?

Julie Michaud: Amortization is the value that assets such as computers and furniture lose each year.

Monica van Schaik: Does staff receive an annual increase in salary?

Julie Michaud: Yes, there are increases year to year (those currently on staff receive a 2% increase each year)

Scott Carr: Have there been more significant deficits in previous years? Last year was only \$3000

Julie Michaud: Yes, deficits have been more substantial in past years

Motion to approve by Emma Pietrangelo

Seconded by Johanna

unanimously approved

7. Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws

A. Proposal to change all references of the acronym “CGA” to “the Centre”.

Motion to approve by Monica van Schaik

Seconded by Maya Rolbin-Ghanie

B. Proposal to change in Bylaw 1 – Membership, 1.2(a) - Eligibility

from:

“Any Concordia Undergraduate student enrolled in the Arts and Science, Business and Engineering and Fine Arts program, having paid the fee levy is a member of the CGA.”

to:

“Any Concordia undergraduate or graduate student having paid the fee levy is a member of the Centre.”

Roddy Doucet proposes amendment to “any Concordia student having paid the fee levy...”
Motion to approve as amended by Bianca Mugyenyi
Seconded by Jen

C. Proposal to change in Bylaw 4 - Board of Directors:

from:

4.2.2. The term of office of directors shall be one year, starting at the close of the AGM at which they are elected.

to:

4.2.2. The term of office of directors shall be two years, starting at the close of the AGM at which they are elected. Student directors shall have the option of choosing a one-year term.

Abby notes that people can resign at any time if they wish

Question:

Emma Pietrangelo: Does this change when elections occur? Would someone have to wait an extra year before running?

Julie Michaud: There is often turnover from year to year, so spots are always opening up

Abby Lippman: If this were passed, terms will be staggered so that there is always room for turn over

Emma Pietrangelo: Would that mean that there is an election every year?

Abby: Yes

Monica van Schaik: How do you choose who has a one or two year term?

Abby Lippman: By personal board members' preference or pick of the draw

Julie Michaud: We plan to have the AGMs in the Fall in future years

Scott Carr: Why don't you just turn everyone over each year and trust that board members will return?

Roddy Doucet: Looking for knowledge and skill transfer so that new members don't necessarily have to be re-trained every year

Julie Michaud: No one is being forced, but encouraging long-term involvement

Paloma Amato: Are other student groups having more than a one-year term?

Julie Michaud: Yes, the Co-op Bookstore for instance, for the same reasons

Gabrielle Bouchard: The first year is so quick and often when people just begin to learn. We need more time for trainings, and so a two-year term allows for that.

Julie Michaud: Terms will be 2 years by default for community members, and also an option of 1-year terms for students

Gabriela C-K: How often do people run repeatedly?

Bianca Mugenyi: The longest people tend to stay is two years, and people rarely actively run repeatedly

Motion to approve by Julie

Seconded by Emma

1 against

4 abstentions, (including Paloma Amato)

Passed with at least two thirds

D. Proposal to change in Bylaw 4 - Board of Directors:

from:

“4.2.3. Outgoing directors are eligible for re-election.”

to:

“4.2.3. Outgoing directors are eligible for re-election and can serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. A director having served for six years will be eligible for election after a period of one year off the board.”

Jessica: Why 6 years?

Julie Michaud: We felt it was a reasonable limit to ensure that there is always opportunity for new board members to get involved.

Emma Pietrangelo: Should we extend the wait period to more than 1 year?

Gabrielle Bouchard: One year is enough- someone who has stayed for 6 years already shows their dedication and that they are wanted by the community since they would have been voted in three times

Motion to approve by Julie

Seconded by Johanna

1 abstention

Passed

8. Election of the Board of Directors

Facilitated by Skylar Nagao

Candidates:

Paloma Amato

Nominated by Julie Michaud

2nd by Bianca Mugenyi

3rd by Rose Marie Whalley

Katharine Hall

Nominated by Gabrielle Bouchard

2nd by Maya Rolbin-Ghanie

3rd by Rose Marie Whalley

Abby Lippman

Nominated by Paloma Amato

2nd Emma Pietrangelo

3rd Jeannine Ntamatungiro

Rushdia Mehreen (not present)

Nominated by Bianca Mugenyi

2nd Abby Lippman

3rd Paloma Amato

Jeannine Ntamatungiro

Nominated by Phil

2nd Maya rolbin-Ghanie

3rd Michael Perry

Julia Nadeau

Nominated by Anaïs Van Vliet

2nd Luisa Ramirez

3rd Paloma Amato

Emma Pietrangelo

Nominated by Jenna

2nd Luisa Ramirez

3rd Julie Michaud

Fabien Rose

Nominated by Bianca Mugenyi

2nd Gabrielle Bouchard

3rd Julie Michaud

Anaïs Van Vliet

Nominated by Shayna Hadley

2nd Luisa Ramirez

3rd Julia Nadeau

Rose Marie Whalley

Nominated by Emma Pietrangelo

2nd Anaïs Van Vliet

3rd Katharine Hall

Melissa Wheeler

Nominated by Abby Lippman

2nd Luisa Ramirez

3rd Emma Pietrangelo

Election Results:

Those elected to the Board of Directors are:

Paloma Amato

Katharine Hall

Abby Lippman

Jeannine Ntamatungiro

Julia Nadeau

Emma Pietrangelo

Fabien Rose

Anaïs Van Vliet

Rose Marie Whalley

Melissa Wheeler

Appendix A – Board of Directors Report

It's been another exciting year for the Centre for Gender Advocacy! We continued to build on successes of previous years and to keep important issues such as sexual assault, reproductive autonomy, Indigenous struggles, LGBTQ rights, and social justice in the spotlight.

There has been much activity at and lots of positive energy coming out of the Centre this year, and we could not have done any of this without the efforts of our incredible staff and volunteers!

Directors

Last April, Paloma Amato, Katharine Hall, Olivia Kamgain, Emelia Koberg, Abby Lippman, Dan Parker, Jayna Patel and Rose Marie Whalley were elected to the Board of Directors. During the year, Jayna Patel and Emilia Koberg resigned for personal reasons and we greatly appreciate their contributions while they were with us. Special thanks to Jayna who was able to lead us gently

through sheets with clusters of numbers so that what was initially undecipherable became meaningful measures of the financial status of the Centre.

The Board met monthly, if not more often, and most felt there was never enough time for the discussions, information exchanges, learning – and, at least for some, pizza eating -- that made us an unusually strong and mutually supportive collective. We revised the process of the meetings this year to allow for at least a half-hour of informal exchanges between Board and staff before the formal agenda began. This helped us develop better understandings of the issues facing and the activities undertaken by the Centre, and was greatly appreciated by all. We also set up practices for using email efficiently, including a policy for online voting on urgent matters between Board meetings when needed. Some changes in our by-laws were also discussed, and those related to a change in Board terms and the timing of our annual general meeting will be presented for approval.

The work of the Board and its smooth functioning are only possible because of the dedication, thoughtfulness, commitment, and more of the quite wonderful staff of the Centre. They are truly the glue that holds everything together and ensures that our energies are focused on promoting the full well-being of and justice for members of the Concordia community. They keep us aware of where we can provide leadership or support, of what issues need priority, and how we can move forward together in solidarity and with respect. Bravas and deep thanks to (alphabetically) Bianca, Gabrielle, Julie, and Maya. You are a formidable and outstanding quartet. And of course, mille fois merci to all the hardworking, dedicated, stimulating elected members of the Board. We spanned about 5 decades in ages; had a varied range of personal likes, dislikes, tastes, and passions; and diverse backgrounds, knowledges, talents, and more. But as a group, the Board was a team of equals, with the whole an expression of, but so much more than, the individual part(icipant)s.

Training and Committees

Training of Board members began soon after their elections. The aim of these sessions was to ensure members would understand their roles and responsibilities during the year, and included training related to finances (e.g., the differences between an operating and a capital expenses budget!!), meeting processes, and other necessary skills. Board members also played active roles on the Finance and Labour Committees this year. Of particular note was the process of staff self-evaluations undertaken by the Labour Committee. This was an extensive – albeit important -- experience, something that had not been done in quite some time. The process gave staff a valuable opportunity to reflect on their work, and to identify where they see their strengths as well as areas that could be improved or otherwise changed. The Labour Committee provided direct feedback to individual staff members and also prepared a report, including recommendations related to policies and practices, for the full Board. These were discussed and voted on at subsequent Board meetings and have already led to some internal changes; others are in the works. The Labour felt privileged to take part in the process and learned a great deal about the Centre through this exercise.

A parallel self-evaluation of the Board was also carried out for the first time and lessons learned will be summarized to pass on to the new Board for its consideration. The purpose of this exercise was to identify what worked well and what might be changed to strengthen further the Board. A common and repeated theme was a wish that we each had more time to do more – and great delight with the opportunities at Board meetings for learning, discussing, and developing friendships.

Activity

The Centre organized a number of well-attended and positively reviewed events and activities during the year. Among the highlights were:

1. Another Word for Gender: an intro to feminist action and organizing – an event series that took place in September and October.
2. A training series for the Peer Support volunteers in September.
3. Summer Night Screenings - An annual film screening and discussion series.
4. Thick Skin: a series on gender and racialization that took place from January to March.

A Safer Concordia

In November, our 2-year campaign to get Concordia University to create a sexual assault centre culminated with great success! The University hired social worker, JD Drummond, to coordinate the Sexual Assault Resource Centre. JD now offers support and advocacy at Concordia for sexual assault survivors who previously had nowhere to go. JD is also working to increase consent education opportunities for students, staff, and faculty. This is an incredibly important first step in creating a culture of consent at Concordia!

Staff and volunteers of the Centre for Gender Advocacy continue to offer consent workshops. They are also continuing their campaign to make these kinds of workshops a mandatory part of the Concordia University experience. As well, many events were organized throughout the year to raise awareness about sexual assault, one of which was a high profile event with Glen Canning, father of Rehtaeh Parsons that attracted a very large audience and much media attention.

Missing Justice Campaign

Missing Justice has had a very active year. The October 4th Sisters in Spirit March and the February 14th Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women were very well attended and received a great deal of media coverage. A vigil was also held in memory of Loretta Saunders, and a mural is currently being painted to commemorate missing and murdered Native women.

Peer Support & Advocacy and Trans* Advocacy

Yet another wonderful group of volunteers completed the Peer Support & Advocacy training last fall. Following their training, volunteers were able to meet by appointment with people who came to the Centre looking for a safe, free, and confidential space in which to talk through their personal struggles.

The Centre worked with a number of trans* advocacy groups to lobby the provincial government to remove the requirement of surgical modification in order to obtain a gender marker change. The final regulations removing this requirement have yet to be announced but we expect that this will happen in the near future. We are continuing to fight against other barriers to correct gender identification by taking the province to court in order to remove requirement of Canadian citizenship and age of majority in order to get a gender marker change.

Resource Library

Board member and library volunteer, Katharine Hall, has continued to refine the organization of our library. Our zine collection is being catalogued and publications are now more accessible than ever!

Interns

The Centre had 6 fantastic interns from Concordia's HIV-AIDS program working with us during the year: Jeannine Ntamungiro and Sophie Smith worked with the Reproductive Justice League; David Stamnes and Katrina Scazzosi (fall semester only) worked on the A Safer Concordia campaign; and Julie-Anne Rioux and Hubert Pelletier worked on some youtube videos for the Centre on the topics of our campaign against the provincial government's regulations concerning gender marker changes as well as on the Quebec Charter of Values. We also had intern, Joan Bancroft, from the Human Resources program at Concordia who did a great deal of research into the history of the Centre and summarized her findings in an amazing timeline showing our activities over the years within the context of the struggle for gender equality at Concordia University as a whole.

Facilitation of Community Action

The Centre is fortunate to have two locations, both of which are well used. This year, we have been able to offer our spaces, particularly the 1500 de Maisonneuve boardroom and lounge, to a number of social justice initiatives and collectives for meetings and events. We have also facilitated community organizing with the loan of equipment such as our projector and megaphone.

Action Groups

The Reproductive Justice League has continued its efforts to advocate for reproductive choice. Most recently, the campaign has been involved in organizing actions in solidarity with the New Brunswick pro-choice movement, which is fighting against terrible restrictions on abortion access in that province. The Reproductive Justice League Choir has continued to repurpose popular songs to focus on reproductive justice issues. The choir was invited to perform at a special event on reproductive justice organized by the Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances at which a wide range of community groups working on issues of reproductive, sexual, and maternal health of concern to racialized and marginalized women exchanged concerns, actions, and ideas for future strategies.

Life After Life continued its incredible and important work with girls, women, queers, and transgender people to build a viable community for people coming out of punitive state institutions who need a space to heal and support each other and a place to nurture their leadership. Because a number of key activists are moving on to other cities and opportunities, the group is dissolving for the time being.

Other

At last year's AGM, we voted to drop the "2110" from our name. People are getting used to the referring to us as the Centre for Gender Advocacy and recognizing our beautiful new logo that was designed by Martin Dubé.

The Centre provided important feminist opposition to the Parti Québécois' proposed Charter of Values. A statement was posted to our website and published in *The Link* and *The Concordia*. We also participated in protests against the Charter.

We continued to support the campaign asking for Mohammad Majoub to be freed from the security certificate under which he has been unjustly held since 2000.

In the March Concordia Student Union General Elections, Concordia undergrads voted to approve an 8¢ per credit fee levy increase bringing the undergrad fee levy to the Centre up to 37¢ per credit. We're so encouraged by this show of support for the work we do and look forward to continuing and expanding services and activities for the Concordia community!

The year's achievements are reflected in the significant media coverage of the Centre in both the alternative and mainstream press. Overall, the Centre has had a successful and vibrant year, which could not have been possible without the hard work of both the staff and our volunteers.