

Version 4.0

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McGill Philosophy Students' Association — Constitution

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Title I

The Association

Article I: Name

[1.1] The Association shall be known as the McGill Philosophy Students' Association (PSA) or l'Association des étudiant(e)s en philosophie de l'Université McGill (ADEP), hereinafter the Association or the PSA.

Article II: Aim

[2.1] The aim of the Association shall be:

- a) To advocate for the concerns of its members and to represent their interests to the Department, to other student associations (departmental, faculty, or university-level), and to the University;
- b) To enhance the educational, cultural, environmental, and social conditions of its members by organizing events relevant to their field of study and their interests.

[2.2] The Association shall be recognized by its members, and by the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS), the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), Senate, and the Board of Governors of McGill University as the official representative of all undergraduate students registered in a philosophy program at McGill University.

Article III: Membership

[3.1] All undergraduate students registered in a philosophy program at McGill University will be recognized as members of the Association.

Article IV: Definitions and Interpretation

[4.1] Definitions:

- a) A "member" is any person included in Article 3.1 and "the membership" is the totality of all such members;
- b) "The philosophy program" is McGill University's department of philosophy;
- c) "The University" is McGill University;
- d) "SSMU" is the Student Society of McGill University;
- e) "The AUS" is the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University;
- f) "The Association" is the Philosophy Students' Association;
- g) "By-law" shall mean a set of regulations in accordance with the Constitution, approved by General Meetings or General Assemblies;
- h) "The Department" is the Philosophy Department of McGill University;
- i) "The Constitution" is this document;
- j) The "Coordinators" are the members of the Coordinating Committee, including the Inter-University Affairs Representative.

[4.2] The voting procedure for General Meetings, General Assemblies, and Special General Assemblies:

- a) A "simple majority" refers to an assenting majority of 50% plus 1 of the present members;
- b) A "supermajority" or a "2/3 majority" refers to an assenting majority of 2/3 of the present members;
- c) Voting on motions shall proceed by means of votes of 'yes,' 'no,' and 'abstain';
- d) In voting procedure, abstentions shall count as neither a yes nor a no vote, merely as a refusal of the right to vote. For example, if a motion receives ten yes votes and five no votes, with seven abstaining, the motion shall pass, because even though a majority of those present did not vote yes, a majority of those exercising their voting rights did vote yes.

Article V: Finances of the Association

[5.1] The finances of the Association shall be managed in accordance with the AUS Financial By-laws, as summarized in the PSA Financial By-laws.

Article VI: Language of the Association

[6.1] English and French are the official languages of the Association.

a) Members of the Association may use either official language at all meetings, assemblies, and in all documentation of the Association.

Article VII: Freedom of Information

[7.1] All documentation of the Association and all its committees shall be public upon request.

a) Requests to see the minutes and documents of the Association and all of its committees shall be addressed in writing to the Internal Affairs Coordinator.

Title II

Organization of the Association

SECTION I — The Coordinating Committee

Article VIII: Outline of the Coordinating Committee

[8.1] There shall be a committee of the Association called the Coordinating Committee, which shall ensure that the aims of the Association (as stipulated in Article 2.1) are being carried out.

[8.2] The Coordinating Committee shall consist of:

- a) An External Affairs Coordinator;
- b) A Communications Coordinator;
- c) An Academic Affairs Coordinator;
- d) A Finance Coordinator;
- e) A Social Events Coordinator;
- f) An Internal Events Coordinator;
- g) An Inter-University Affairs Representative.

[8.3] The institutional legitimacy of the Coordinating Committee shall be drawn entirely from the Constitution, as well as the Coordinating Committee's By-laws which supplement the provisions of the Constitution.

[8.4] The only thing that distinguishes Coordinators from other members of the Association are the added responsibilities of ensuring either the completion, or delegation and completion, of the duties specified in their position's portfolio (as stipulated in Article IX).

[8.5] All Coordinators shall make an earnest effort to attend all General Meetings and General Assemblies of the Association.

- a) The members of the Coordinating Committee shall present a brief update on their relevant activities at the beginning of each General Meeting;
- b) All Coordinators shall be familiar with the entirety of the provisions of the Constitution, as well as the By-laws pertaining to their position, in order to prevent lapses in the constitutionally-mandated duties of the Coordinating Committee.

[8.6] Prior to the end of the academic year, the outgoing Coordinating Committee will train the incoming Coordinating Committee for their respective positions through one or both of the following methods:

- a) Write detailed exit reports to be accessible to the incoming Coordinating Committee;
- b) Meet in person and discuss the position in question in an equivalent level of detail as would be found in an exit report.

[8.7] In the event of a Coordinator missing three or more consecutive General Meetings without appropriate notification and rationale, said Coordinator will forfeit their position as a result of their inability to complete the tasks dictated by their positions, and be immediately removed without a vote. This will also trigger the post-removal process set out in Section IV.

- a) The Inter-University Affairs Representative is exempt from Article 8.7.

Article IX: Portfolios of the Coordinators

[9.1] The **External Affairs Coordinator** will:

- a) Act in the capacity of spokesperson of the Association;
- b) Create and sustain amicable ties with other campus and community organizations and groups;
- c) Work with the Inter-University Affairs Representative to create or sustain ties with philosophy students in Montreal, Quebec, and the Rest of Canada;

- d) Act as delegate of the Association whenever one is required (be it the AUS, SSMU, or University)—or, alternatively, ensure that a delegate is sent to represent the Association;
- e) Work with the Academic Affairs Coordinator to ensure the representation of the Association on faculty and university level committees, wherever possible.

[9.2] The **Communications Coordinator** will:

- a) Take minutes at meetings and assemblies of the Association—or, alternatively, ensure that this task has been delegated and will be completed;
- b) Communicate these minutes, or decisions reached by meetings or assemblies of the association, to the membership;
- c) Maintain the Association's web page and/or social media platform;
- d) Assist other Coordinators with the publicization of events organized by the Association.
- e) Send out a file of the new Constitution to the Association's membership in the week following a General Assembly at which the Constitution was amended.
- f) Ensure the announcement of an impending General Assembly to the membership of the Association, along with an invitation to submit motions, no less than two (2) weeks before the date of the General Assembly.
- g) Ensure the announcement of the provisional agenda of a General Assembly to the membership no less than one (1) week before the date of the General Assembly.
- h) Communicate the scheduling information of General Meetings in a given semester to the membership once a time has been chosen.
- i) Remind the membership at least once a month of the General Meetings' scheduling information.
- j) Keep the membership informed in the event of a Coordinator's removal from office in accordance with Article XIX.

[9.3] The **Academic Affairs Coordinator** will:

- a) Work with the Social Events Coordinator to organize academically-oriented events;
- b) Create and/or update materials regarding program information and make them available to the membership;
- c) Ensure that the Association is represented at departmental fairs, open houses, and other academically-oriented events of the University;
- d) Ensure the operation of a tutoring service available to the membership;
- e) Ensure that the Association is represented at the Department's Faculty Meetings;
- f) Communicate with relevant faculty should a project require it.

[9.4] The **Internal Affairs Coordinator** will:

- a) Ensure the organization of fundraising events on campus if need be;
- b) Work with the External Affairs Coordinator on any campaigns or mobilization efforts of the Association;
- c) Ensure that the lounge area is well-kept, hygienic, and stocked with coffee and/or tea;
- d) Carry any equity complaints to the AUS or SSMU Equity Commissioners, if necessary;
- e) Facilitate meetings and assemblies according to the guidelines set out in this Constitution.
- f) Be responsible for facilitating the merchandising efforts of the Association, working with the Finance Coordinator insofar as the Association's finances are relevant.

[9.5] The **Finance Coordinator** will:

- a) Prepare the PSA's budget;
- b) Keep proper accounts and records of the Association's financial status;
- c) Prepare a year-end financial statement by May 31st;
- d) Be responsible for the prompt and proper filing of tax and insurance papers when necessary.

[9.6] The **Social Events Coordinator** will:

- a) Organize at least one (1) social event per academic term (excluding the Summer term);
- b) Work with the Academic Affairs Coordinator to help with the organization of events;

- c) Ensure that there is an End-Of-Year Party;
- d) Make an effort in collaboration with the Communications Coordinator to publicize social events to the membership, and coordinate classroom announcements for larger events;
- e) Consult with the Finance Coordinator to ensure the feasibility of events;
- f) Report all expenses related to social events to the Finance Coordinator;
- g) Be responsible for working with the AUS or any other relevant organizations or people to book rooms for events;
- h) Ensure that events are accessible to all students, and that any necessary accommodations are provided.

[9.7] The **Inter-University Affairs Representative** will:

- a) Work with academic groups outside of McGill University to create and promote opportunities for inter-university philosophy discussions;
- b) Work with Espace philopolis Montreal to coordinate McGill's involvement in Philopolis Montreal and other Philopolis events;
- c) Work with External Affairs Coordinator to maintain and promote connections with philosophy associations around Quebec, Canada, and the world more generally when advisable.

SECTION II — General Assemblies

Article X: Function and Composition of General Assemblies

[10.1] The General Assembly is the highest governing body of the Association.

[10.2] All members of the Association have the right to speak, vote, and amend motions at General Assemblies.

Article XI: Powers of General Assemblies

[11.1] General Assemblies have all of the powers of a General Meeting of the Association, as outlined in Section III.

[11.2] General Assemblies have the further power to:

- a) Federate with, or de-federate from, federations of students associations;
- b) Conduct votes to strike;
- c) Amend the constitution;
- d) Hold elections.

Article XII: Scheduling of General Assemblies

[12.1] A General Assembly of the Association shall take place at least once (1) per academic year (September to April). Time permitting, it is recommended that a second General Assembly be held within the same academic year.

[12.2] General Assemblies shall be convened by a majority vote at a General Meeting of the Association.

[12.3] General Assemblies shall take place no less than two (2) weeks, and no more than three (3) weeks after, the General Meeting at which the vote or petition presentation is conducted in accordance with Article 12.2.

[12.4] The Communications Coordinator shall ensure that an announcement of the General Assembly, and an invitation to submit motions, is communicated to all members of the Association no less than two (2) weeks prior to the General Assembly.

[12.5] No less than one (1) week before a General Assembly, the Communications Coordinator shall forward to the membership:

- a) The preliminary agenda of the General Assembly.

Article XIII: Procedure for General Assemblies

[13.1] Quorum for General Assemblies is twelve (12) of the Association's members, including Coordinators.

[13.2] Notwithstanding Article 13.1, a quorum of 20% of the Association's membership is required in order to conduct a vote to go on strike.

[13.3] General Assemblies shall be facilitated by the Internal Affairs Coordinator.

[13.4] Should the Internal Affairs Coordinator be absent from a General Assembly, a facilitator shall be chosen by consensus of those in attendance. Should there be no consensus, a simple majority vote of those in attendance will determine the facilitator.

[13.5] Should a General Assembly fail to meet quorum, but meet quorum for a General Meeting in accordance with Article 17.1, the General Assembly shall become a General Meeting, with the powers and procedures outlined in Section III. If quorum is reached for neither a General Assembly nor a General Meeting, the gathering shall have no official powers.

[13.6] Motions passed by a General Assembly converted into a General Meeting in accordance with Article 13.5, and which exercise powers reserved for General Assemblies, shall be subject to final ratification at the next General Assembly of the Association.

[13.7] At least one General Assembly per year must include:

- a) A report of the Association's finances;
- b) A report from each member of the Coordinating Committee on plans and progress in their area of responsibility.

[13.8] Motions proposed from the floor at General Assemblies must:

- a) Not surpass the powers of General Meetings, as described in Article XV;
- b) Have their addition to the agenda approved by a simple majority of members present.

[13.9] Elections must be announced by the outgoing Communications Coordinator at least two weeks prior to an election to be held at a General Assembly.

- a) Elections must be held at least once a year;
- b) Victory in an election shall be determined by a simple majority of those present in the general meeting. In the case of a tie, an election shall be held between the candidates with the two highest vote counts. If the tie is still unbroken, voting continues until it breaks.

SECTION III — General Meetings

Article XIV: Function and Composition of General Meetings

[14.1] The General Meeting ensures the continued functioning, accountability, and democratic character of the Association between General Assemblies.

[14.2] All members of the Association have the right to speak and vote at General Meetings, and all members' voting power is equal regardless of whether or not they are a Coordinator.

Article XV: Powers of General Meetings

[15.1] General Meetings have the power to:

- a) Create committees and determine their membership;
- b) Appoint interim Coordinators, should a position become vacant due to a resignation or removal from office;
- c) Approve spending;
- d) Plan events and activities;
- e) Adopt mandates and official positions;
- f) Remove members of the Coordinating Committee in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article XIX;
- g) Convene General Assemblies in accordance with Article 12.2;
- h) Call elections;
- i) Create, amend, and remove By-laws in accordance with Article XVIII.

Article XVI: Scheduling of General Meetings

[16.1] A General Meeting of the Association shall be scheduled to take place at least once (1) per week during the regular Fall and Winter academic semesters.

[16.2] The first General Meeting of the academic year shall be:

- a) Scheduled by agreement amongst the Coordinators;
- b) Announced to the membership at least one (1) week ahead of the scheduled time by the Communications Coordinator.

[16.3] At the first General Meeting of the academic year, a regular meeting time shall be set in consultation with all members present.

- a) The time chosen shall be announced to the entire membership by the Communications Coordinator.
- b) At least once a month the Communications Coordinator shall ensure that the membership is reminded of the General Meetings scheduled.

Article XVII: Procedure for General Meetings

[17.1] Quorum for General Meetings is six (6) members of the Association, at least four (4) of whom shall be members of the Coordinating Committee.

[17.2] If a General Meeting fails to meet quorum as detailed in Article 17.1, the meeting shall not have any powers of a General Meeting and all agenda items will be reintroduced at the next General Meeting.

[17.3] General Meetings shall be facilitated by the Internal Affairs Coordinator.

[17.4] Should the Internal Affairs Coordinator be absent from a General Meeting, and there not be a consensus of the attendees regarding who should act as facilitator, a simple majority vote shall be held to determine the facilitator of the Coordinating Committee for that General Meeting.

[16.5] Each General Meeting must include an update from each member of the Coordinating Committee present, regarding plans and progress in their area of responsibility.

Article XVIII: Adoption and Function of By-laws

[18.1] A General Meeting of the Association may engage in a simple majority vote to amend the By-laws.

a) The By-laws document shall be updated and distributed to the membership no more than one (1) week following the General Meeting at which an amendment was passed.

[18.2] The purpose of the By-laws is to codify certain procedures or actions not included in the Constitution, but which are essential or common procedure in the fulfilment of the Coordinating Committee's duties.

a) By-laws shall not contradict any provision of the Constitution.

b) Amendment of the By-laws may entail either the alteration of a particular By-law or even the ratification or repeal of an entire set of By-laws.

SECTION IV — Removal from Office

Article XIX: Procedure for Removal from Office

[19.1] Any member of the PSA Coordinating Committee may be removed from office for impropriety, violation of the provisions of this Constitution, delinquency of duties or misappropriation of funds.

[19.2] A motion to remove a Coordinator may be put forward to the Internal Affairs Coordinator by at least three (3) Coordinators or twenty (20) members of the Association. Upon receiving such a motion, the Internal Affairs Coordinator will convene a Special General Assembly for this purpose, with the guidelines that apply to General Assemblies as set out in Title II, Section II.

a) A motion to remove the Internal Affairs Coordinator shall instead be submitted to the Finance Coordinator, with the same guidelines as set out in Article 19.2.

[19.3] The quorum requirements for a Special General Assembly shall be such that 2/3 of the Coordinators must be present, and/or 2/3 of the twenty (20) members who put forward the petition must be present. In either case, there must be twelve (12) members total present.

[19.4] The motion for removal at the Special General Assembly shall be carried out as follows:

- a) There shall be a general discussion regarding the allegations against the Coordinator in question, which may include their input, if they are present and so desire;
- b) During proceedings, the facilitator shall step in if necessary to maintain civility;
- c) Following the general discussion and prior to voting, the at-issue Coordinator shall be afforded the chance to make a final statement;
- d) Following the final statement, the at-issue Coordinator in question shall step outside and voting shall proceed in their absence;
- e) Passage of a motion to remove shall require a simple majority of members present;
- f) Passage of a motion to remove shall entail the Coordinator in question's immediate removal from office, and constitute the act of their removal.

Article XX: Procedure Following a Removal from Office

[20.1] At the next General Meeting following the Special General Assembly at which a Coordinator was removed from office, the members present shall appoint an interim Coordinator for that position, who shall remain in office until elections are held or until they are removed.

a) The confirmation of the interim member shall require a majority vote of the members present at the General Meeting.

[20.2] The Communications Coordinator shall convey the removal from office to the membership at most one (1) week after the Special General Assembly.

a) The Communications Coordinator shall convey the appointment of the interim Coordinator to the membership at most one (1) week after the General Meeting at which the appointment occurred.