

CONSTITUTION

Public Policy Association of Graduate Students
(PPAGS)



McGill



MAX BELL SCHOOL
of PUBLIC POLICY

October 7th 2020

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Article I – Name:

1. The name of the organization shall be “Public Policy Association of Graduate Students” hereinafter referred to as “PPAGS”.
2. For the purpose of external qualification and recognition, the name of the organization shall be spelled out in full, in each document where it first appears, at least once, and thereafter it may be abbreviated as “PPAGS”.
3. For the purpose of this document, “Max Bell School” refers to the Max Bell School of Public Policy, the “University” refers to McGill University, and the “PGSS” refers to the Post-Graduate Students’ Society of McGill University.

Article II – Purpose:

1. The purposes of PPAGS shall be:
 - i. To serve as the official organization representing the Membership; graduate students enrolled at Max Bell School.
 - ii. To represent and advocate for its members’ interests and concerns to Max Bell School, the University, PGSS, as well as any other required entity.
 - iii. To develop graduate student participation in Max Bell School and to promote the interests and welfare of its members.
 - iv. To provide a platform for improvement of social and educational interactions between students at the Max Bell School.
 - v. To organize academic, professional and social activities in order to foster a sense of community within the members.

Article III – The Membership

1. The Membership of the Association shall be composed of all graduate students registered at the Max Bell School and a member of the PGSS.
2. Aside from the above stipulation, PPAGS shall not discriminate in any way deemed unlawful or inappropriate by the PGSS constitution, or the University ethics guidelines.

Article IV – The Executive Team

1. There shall be eight executive positions of PPAGS, hereafter referred to as “the Executive Team”, they are:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice President External
 - iii. Vice President Finance
 - iv. Vice President Academic
 - v. Vice President Operations
 - vi. Vice President Social and Events
 - vii. Vice President Communications
 - viii. Vice President Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
2. The Executive Team shall be elected annually as per the election guidelines set out in this Constitution.
3. The Executive Team shall hold office from the third Sunday of September until the last day of the summer term of the academic year.
4. The Executive Team shall be jointly charged with the responsibility of:
 - i. Ensuring prudent fiscal management of PPAGS's funds;
 - ii. Producing Committee Meeting and General Assembly agendas;
 - iii. Producing and maintaining guides detailing procedures of individual executive functions; and
 - iv. Providing all documents generated by their respective offices to the president;
5. These responsibilities shall hereafter be referred to as the “joint responsibilities of the Executive Team”.

Article V: Duties of the Executive Team

1. The President

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the President shall:

- i. Manage the operations of the PPAGS executive, overseeing the execution of individual VP roles as well as the association's identified objectives;
- ii. Be the principal representative and advocate of the PPAGS to all external entities along with the VP External;
- iii. Be familiar with the content of the University's Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Charter of Students' Rights with respect to defending the rights of PPAGS;
- iv. Be one (1) of two (2) required signing officers;
- v. Maintain and organize all up to date documentations pertaining to the PPAGS's position as an official PGSA, its relationship to the PGSS and its Constitution;
- vi. Transmit records and documentation of PPAGS's activities required by the PGSS to the appropriate PGSS representative within the deadlines stipulated by the PGSS;
- vii. Verify adherence by PPAGS to all required regulations concerning the activities of a PGSA by the PGSS;
- viii. Call to order and chair executive team meetings; and
- ix. Conduct all PPAGS's elections, with the assistance of the Max Bell School Administration where appropriate, according the procedures and regulations specified in the Constitution (Article VIII).

2. The VP External

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP External shall:

- i. Be the official representative of the PPAGS to all external parties (such as PGSAs, PGSS, and McGill);
- ii. Represent PPAGS at PGSS Council meetings and other graduate student associations, when appropriate;
- iii. Produce and share brief reports with PPAGS Executive Team highlighting any development and decisions taken at the PGSS Council; and
- iv. Coordinate with VP Operations to ensure familiarity and use of PGSS documents, templates, and practices.

3. The VP Communications

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP Communications shall:

- i. Be responsible for official correspondence with all external entities;
- ii. Be responsible for communications strategies and advertisement of PPAGS events and important developments with respect to the wider student body at Max Bell School;
- iii. Create and oversee the regular distribution of a PPAGS newsletter to all students during the academic year;
- iv. Ensure all students are effectively receiving the distributed information; and
- v. Oversee the PPAGS social media accounts and develop a social media plan with the assistance of the Director of Social Media and Design.

4. The VP Academic

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP Academic shall:

- i. Plan and execute Academic events throughout the year, with joint efforts from the Social Media and Design Director;
- ii. Faithfully represent students' academic interests and concerns to the Max Bell School and administration;
- iii. Encourage the improvement of study conditions quality (study groups, access to library, facilities);
- iv. Liaise when necessary with faculty and staff on behalf of students;
- v. Facilitate and execute student-run publications highlighting research and written work from the student body;
- vi. Liaise with the Academic Director on all responsibilities of the VP Academic office; and
- vii. Serve as the PPAGS student representative, responsible to sit in at student admission meetings to ensure that the admissions process is conducted in an orderly and constructive manner.

5. The VP Finance

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP Finance shall:

- i. Be one (1) of two (2) signing officers;
- ii. Be responsible for ensuring all financial transactions adhere to the approved PPAGS budget;
- iii. Maintain official financial records for periodic auditing purposes, as defined in the Constitution;

- iv. Be responsible for sending financial records to the PGSS on an annual basis;
- v. Be responsible for preparing and managing the PPAGS yearly budget and final annual financial statement;
- vi. Be responsible for initiating budget increases through additional school funding; and
- vii. Responsible for setting processes and guidelines for fundraising and assist with implementation.

6. The VP Operations

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP Operations shall:

- i. Be responsible for agenda setting and taking minutes prior to and during each Executive meeting;
- ii. Ensure minutes are distributed to each Executive member following each Executive meeting;
- iii. Develop and maintain an information sharing infrastructure;
- iv. Develop and maintain a project management and action item follow-up infrastructure;
- v. Help facilitate system/technical platforms and process;
- vi. Foster a respectful and cohesive team culture and working norms;
- vii. Help support the planning and delivery of initiatives lead by other team members; and
- viii. Coordinate with VP External to ensure familiarity and use of PGSS documents, templates, and practices.

7. The VP Social and Events

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive Team, the VP Social shall:

- i. Be responsible to plan and execute social, cultural and other activities for the Max Bell School which includes
 - o One "Get to know" event at the start of the year
 - o One end of year party;
- ii. Be responsible for organizing social activities (both virtual and in-person) in compliance with the rules and laws of the Max Bell School;
- iii. Build a calendar for future social activities in accordance and update it on timely basis;
- iv. Ensure all events are advertised to the membership/the cohort at least a week prior of the event;

- v. Be responsible to uphold and pass on the traditions of Max Bell School to future cohorts;
- vi. Promote student involvement in all activities and help maintain an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

8. The VP Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the Vice President Diversity and Inclusion shall:

- i. Lead the cultivation of an environment that allows students to feel a sense of belonging, inclusion, fairness and mutual respect;
- ii. Be a resource for students that need assistance navigating resources related but not limited to: accessibility, sexual violence and harassment, and discrimination;
- iii. Be a member of the Max Bell School's EDI Working Group;
- iv. Liaise with the Association on behalf of the EDI Working Group;
- v. Update the Association and the wider student body on any important developments within the EDI Working Group;
- vi. Planning a minimum of one workshop per semester to support the cultivation of diversity and equity among students; and
- vii. Assist in the activities of, and liaise with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Director.

Article VI: Directors of the Committee

Directors' positions filled on the basis needs and interests include, but not limited to:

1. Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing

Under the office of the President, the Director of Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- i. Be the student resource to navigate the mental health and wellness services offered by the University to those in need;
- ii. Organize mental health awareness and wellness related events throughout the academic year; and
- iii. Develop and improve mindfulness and resilience within PPAGS;

2. Director of International Student Affairs

Under the office of the President, the Director of International Student Affairs shall:

- i. Be a representative for international students in PPAGS;
- ii. Be a resource for international students providing them useful information, and managing initiatives to promote their integration, in coordination with the VP Communications;
- iii. Facilitate the access to wellness advisory for international students, in coordination with the Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing;
- iv. Plan any meetups and/or events of interest for the different communities of international students in benefit and respect for cultural identity with the assistance of the VP Social; and
- v. Maintain an up-to-date database of international students in order to offer them ad hoc services and solutions.

3. Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Under the office of the Vice President Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), the Director of EDI shall:

- I. Work with the VP of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to support the cultivation of an environment that allows students to feel a sense of belonging, inclusion, fairness and mutual respect;
- II. Be a resource for students that need assistance navigating resources related but not limited to: accessibility, sexual violence and harassment, and discrimination; and
- III. Assist in planning events/workshops that help students build a working knowledge of issues concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion.

4. Director of Social Media and Design

Under the office of the Vice President Communications, the Director of Social Media and Design shall:

- i. Assist in correspondence and internal communications
- ii. Collaborate with the President and VP Communications to create and maintain social media presence for PPAGS;
- iii. Assist with the creation and design of materials for distribution to members of PPAGS and students at the Max Bell School
- iv. Assist with the design for the newsletter along with distribution and promotion

5. Academic Director

Under the office of the Vice President Academic, the Academic Director shall:

- i. Assist the VP Academic in the planning of all academic related events;
- ii. Assist the VP Academic in duties of improving study conditions;
- iii. Support the VP Academic with communication and agenda setting with the faculty and staff;
- iv. Cooperate with the student-run publications and research projects of the student body.

Article VII: Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

- i. The Code of Conduct outlines the expectations regarding members' behavior towards their colleagues and overall faculty. The association promotes freedom of expression and open communication, however it expects all members, regardless of rank, to follow our code of conduct.
- ii. If a member is found in violation of any part(s) of the Code of Conduct, they may be subject to removal from office (refer to Article VIII).

2. Compliance

- i. All members should comply with rules and regulations set out by the province of Quebec, McGill University, PGSS, and the Max Bells School of Public Policy.
- ii. The Association expects all members to be ethical and responsible when dealing with the Association's finances, partnerships and public image.
- iii. Members will abide by the decisions of the majority even though they may personally disagree.

3. Respect in the Association

- i. All members should respect their colleagues. The association will not allow any kind of discriminatory behavior, harassment or victimization.
- ii. In the performance of their duties, members shall keep a professional standard of language regarding subject matter, profanity, and respect for parties both present and absent, and shall not engage in harmful gossip or slander.
- iii. Executives must not abuse their authority. The Association expects executives to delegate duties to their directors and other members taking into consideration the member's competencies and workloads.

4. Duties

- i. All members should fulfill their job duties with integrity and respect towards students, faculty, and other external entities.
- ii. Members will commit the necessary effort, will exercise the appropriate leadership, and will assume such duties as may reasonably be required to fulfill their role in the Executive Team. The Association expects members to act responsibly and with due diligence to become familiar with the affairs of PPAGS.
- iii. Executive members may only miss three of the bi-weekly meetings per semester without prior notice.

5. Community relations

- i. Members should seek to maintain support, communicative and positive relations with the McGill community.
- ii. Members shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner in all external meetings considering PPAGS affairs.

Article VIII: Elections and By-Elections

All elections for PPAGS shall take place through the PGSS's secure and confidential online voting system and in collaboration with the Max Bell School administration where appropriate.

1. The Elections for PPAGS shall be held once per year starting on the first Sunday of September.
 - i. A Call for Nominations will be sent out with the Max Bell School Welcome Package for incoming students including information on PPAGS and the Election Process
 - ii. *All vacant positions shall be open for election and shall be notified in the Call for Nominations to all incoming students.*
 - iii. Any student of the Max Bell School may seek election for the vacant positions. The members can nominate themselves or be nominated by other members of the Society for the vacant positions. *There shall be duration for at least one week between the announcement of nominees and the Elections.*
 - iv. An Election announcement containing the names of the nominees along with the dates for the Election Campaign, one week from the Call for Nomination
 - v. The Election Campaign will run for one week after the Election Announcement
 - vi. The elected Executive Team will take office on the Third Sunday of September

2. A member is open to run for election for one or more vacant positions, however, if elected for more than one position, the member must choose only one position.
 - i. Any position that gets vacant before the maturity of its tenure through resignation, impeachment or for any other reason and requires to be filled during the year shall be filled through "by-Election" in a special General Meeting.
 - ii. *The by-elections must be conducted within two months of the position becoming vacant and will follow the same procedure as the elections, on a date selected by the executive.*

Article IX: Finances

1. The PPAGS shall conduct fund raising for any such programs or activities as mentioned under Article II or as it sees fit.
2. All finances related to PPAGS shall be documented and all financial records should be transparent for the PPAGS.
3. The Vice-President Finance shall manage the annual budget, document all financial transactions and keep financial records in accordance with PGSS guidelines with the help of PPAGS and adhere to responsibilities set out in Article V, Section 5.

Article X: Impeachment

1. Any member of the Executive Team of the PPAGS may be removed from office for:
 - i. Misuse of funds;
 - ii. Non-fulfillment of the duties outlined in Articles IV and V;
 - iii. Non-attendance of three PPAGS meetings per semester without notice or sufficient reasoning;
 - iv. Behavior contrary to the interests of PPAGS; and
 - v. Violations of the Code of Conduct or any other previously agreed upon best practices within the University, PGSS, or PPAGS;
2. Suspicions or complaints on an impeachable offence from Section 1 may be introduced by any PPAGS member or officer to the Executive Team at any time.

3. The Executive Team will need to determine the next course of action within one week from receiving a complaint:
 - i. The Executive Team will meet with the accused representative in question during that week to discuss the suspected violation and determine how to proceed;
 - ii. The Executive Team will then determine its next steps at its discretion; and
 - iii. The Executive Team will involve the Max Bell School, the University, and PGSS if determined necessary to do so.

4. If member of the PPAGS Executive Team attempts to violate any of the above-mentioned impeachable offenses in Section 1,
 - i. A warning letter will be sent to the accused via e-mail;
 - ii. The accused will have 48 hours to request an appeal by method of email/in-person before the Executive Team determines the next course of action; and
 - iii. If the Executive Team determines an act to be in violation of Section 1, the officer in question will be subject to impeachment proceeding outlined in Section 5.

5. Impeachment requires a vote of 5 out of 8 Executive Team members of the PPAGS, or by special resolution passed by 60% from all PPAGS members.

6. Impeachment proceedings may be introduced by the PPAGS membership or the Executive at any time.

7. Impeachment proceedings shall take place in a general meeting setting with 1 week notice of proceedings.

8. If an officer of PPAGS is impeached either by the Executive or by the PPAGS membership, they will be notified in writing within 1 hour of the results of the proceedings.

9. Any excluded member will be banned from attending meetings or nomination for office within the PPAGS for a period of 12 months.

10. Any excluded member has the right to appeal to the PGSS Judicial Board under section 8.6.6 of the PGSS Bylaws.

Article XI: Resignations

1. Any Executive or Director may resign at any time by forwarding a letter of resignation to the Executive Team of PPAGS by e-mail, courier or in person.
 - i. The resignation shall become effective on the date when a letter of resignation is received by the Executive Team or on such other date as it may be specified in the letter; and
 - ii. The Executive shall not unduly refuse to accept such a resignation.

2. In the event that the President resigns, the Vice-President Operations shall assume the duties of the President as outlined in Article V, Section 1
 - i. The duties of the Vice-President Operations shall be assumed by Vice-President External until a suitable replacement has been found as per Article 7, Section 4

Article XII: Emergency Provisional Council

In the event of resignation of at least 60% of the members of the Executive Team (5 out of 8 members)

1. A Provisional Council of active PPAGS members who are committed to the PPAGS mandate will be established by the remaining members at a General Assembly Meeting on a date decided in consultation with the administration at Max Bell School;

2. This Provisional Council will conduct business as usual unless instructed otherwise by the Max Bell School.

Article XIII: Adoption and Amendment

1. This Constitution has been initially adopted by a two-thirds majority vote at a General Meeting of PPAGS;
2. Amendments to the Constitution will be voted on by open ballot and shall be made by a two-thirds majority of officers and members present at a General Meeting;
3. Amendments to this constitution shall be made at a General Meeting;
4. Notice of proposed amendments of the Constitution shall be posted at least one week before the General Meeting of PPAGS;
5. Any changes of the Constitution shall be forwarded to the PGSS within one month of their implementation; and
6. The dates of any amendments to the Constitution shall be recorded in the Constitution.

Article XIV: General Meeting

1. A General Meeting shall be called once a year at the minimum by a decision of regular quorum of council
2. Additional General Meetings shall be called as necessary
3. Each General Member will have an opportunity to speak and vote at the General Meeting
4. Notice of the General Meeting shall be posted on the PPAGS's website at least one week before and diffused through additional communications channels managed by the VP Communications
5. Quorum for the General Meeting shall be 20% of the Association's Membership
6. Constitution amendments shall be presented to the Association's Membership and voted upon at the General Meeting
7. All motions require a 50% +1 majority vote
8. A General Meeting may be called by any Member of the Association by bringing forth a petition of at least 20% of members' signatures to the President.

ADDENDUM I: AMENDMENTS

1st Amendment: For the academic year 2020-2021, the Role of the President will be occupied by two members of the Max Bell School cohort in the spirit the successful establishment and transition of PPAGS in its inaugural year. October 1st 2020.



Jonathan Lesarge, President



Anil Wasif, President



Mikayla Zolis, Vice President Finance & Operations

ADDENDUM II: FOUNDING MEMBERS OF PPAGS - Oct 1st 2020



Jonathan Lesarge, President



Anil Wasif, President



Mikayla Zolis, Vice President Operations



Ricardo Chejfec, Vice President Finance



Uditia Upadhyay, Vice President Social and Events



Nayantara Sudhakar, Vice President Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Ellen Rowe, Vice President External



Leonardo Lozano, Vice President Academic



Adele Brawley, Vice President Communications



Rebecca Charles, Vice President Social and Events



Dorothy Kwok, Director of Mental Health and Wellbeing



Gina Maldonado, Director of International Student Affairs