

AGM 2011 Board of Directors Report –

Prepared by Chair and Volunteer Rep Anna Leventhal

Good evening everyone and thanks for being here. As CKUT's volunteer membership, you are the lifeblood of the station, and this AGM is designed to hear your views as well as bridge the gap between the different committees, boards, and sections of the station.

I'm here representing CKUT's board of directors, which is comprised of 12 members, as according to our station's bylaws. The constitution and federal regulations mandate that the board be comprised of 2 SSMU elected reps, 1 SSMU appointed rep, 1 PGSS appointed rep, 1 McGill non-academic rep, 2 McGill faculty reps, 2 community reps, 1 rep from CKUT Steering committee, 1 CKUT collective management rep, and one CKUT volunteer rep.

I have been serving as the volunteer rep since February 2009 and I became the chair in August of the same year.

In the past year we said goodbye to our long-serving treasurer and community rep Don Wilkie, who contributed eight years of service to the board. EIGHT YEARS. Don's left us with some big shoes to fill, and we extend our gratitude and recognition to him, in a big way.

We also say thanks and best wishes to Luc Cary and Harry Saitis, who served as student reps on the board and have since graduated and moved on.

Oh and uh SSMU rep Laurin Liu, who has left us for Parliament Hill as the NDP MP for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. Orange crush! I'm pretty sure this is a CKUT Board of Directors first.

Since the last AGM, we've had several new members appointed to the board. We're happy to welcome CKUT mainstay Gretchen King as the PGSS appointed rep, Tina Piper as McGill Faculty Rep, Carol Fraser as SSMU appointed rep, and Myriam Zaidi as an SSMU elected rep. Remaining on the board are Darin Barney, McGill faculty rep, Fortner Anderson, community rep, Niko Block, SSMU elected rep, Danielle Hay, McGill non-academic rep, and Louise Burns, sales coordinator and collective management rep. In addition the Steering Committee has one staff person who sits on the board for a 3 month period on a rotating basis.

The nominating committee is in the process of reviewing potential candidates for the new community rep/treasurer.

I would now like to give a quick summary of what the board's been up to over the past year.

Staff restructuring –

This has been an ongoing debate with many sides and opinions. I'll try to summarize it as clearly and accurately as possible.

Because the board is responsible for long-term visioning of the station, we have been trying to reconcile how to keep the station awesome in the face of financial difficulty and ongoing deficits in our budget, mainly stemming from student opt-outs. One proposal we considered was working toward a structure with fewer, better paid staff. We considered ways this could happen with the least amount of impact on the station's functioning and on staff job security. This was floated in the fall of last year. We asked staff/steering to come up with various scenarios through which the total number of staff hours would be reduced. The eventual outcome was that, while proposals were created, staff did not wish to implement them. Steering determined that the amount of hours and the number of positions currently in effect at the station were exactly what we need to keep doing what we do best, and that cutting these hours or positions and offloading the work to volunteers was not a feasible solution.

The board, after some discussion, supported staff/steering's position. Staff are what make the station what it is, and if we have to eat another deficit to keep things rolling, so be it. In general, opt-outs aside, it was a great year in terms of the funding drive, getting grants to be put toward salaries and other costs, and projects getting funded and carried out. We don't think staff should suffer because of a particularly conservative financial climate on campus and elsewhere right now.

Which brings us to –

Opt-outs, referendum

Some background: Every five years, CKUT is required to hold an "existence referendum" at McGill, during which undergraduates must vote on whether or not to continue funding CKUT with an opt-outable fee each semester.

Our next existence referendum is coming up. This November, we will be asking students to fund the station with a non-opt-outable fee.

We struck a referendum subcommittee to strategize and make sure we

win this thing. The subcommittee has been involved in planning events on campus, doing outreach, writing the referendum question, and comparing notes with QPIRG, our neighbour and fellow progressive campus organization, which is affected by opt-outs as much as (and probably more than) we are.

Let me be clear: We are in it to win it. A “NO” VOTE IS NOT AN OPTION. If there is anything you can do to promote the station on campus and let McGill students know about how amazing we are and the kind of work we do, please speak to Caitlin, Louise, Tim, Erin, myself, or any staff member. If you want to help but don’t know what to do, don’t worry, we’ll set you up.

Another item of ongoing discussion was the question of who owns the content created at CKUT. This came up because a station volunteer was suspended for having ads on a website he created for his CKUT program, and refusing to take them down after being explicitly asked to do so by members of staff and steering. We realized we didn’t have a clear policy on new media sharing and advertising, and things can get a little woolly with cross-promotion, social media, blogs, itunes, etc. We asked staff to look into this, and they came up with a policy we stand behind, which states that all content is jointly owned by CKUT and the volunteer (see the Blue Book for more details).

In general, if you want to make money off something you create at CKUT, you need to talk to your department about it. It’s just common sense and respect.

A couple bits and pieces –

The board wrote and signed a letter of support for activist and CKUT volunteer Jaggi Singh, to request leniency in his sentence from the court in his guilty plea to charges of “Counselling to commit mischief over \$5,000.”

The fundraising subcommittee submitted an application to the CRA to create a charitable organization called Montreal Community Media, whose purpose would be to raise money to channel toward CKUT’s activities. It was a great proposal, but the CRA said no. This is incredibly frustrating and disappointing to us, especially considering the amount of work that went into it, and it hints at some of the governmental policies in place that prevent us from accessing funding as a community media outlet. Major bummer. We have filed a formal objection to the CRA’s ruling and are waiting for a ruling on that objection.

And, in general, we approved a lot of reports, signed off on some decisions and letters, and tried to keep it real.

Once again, thanks for being here and continuing to fuel Montreal's best radio community. Your participation is what makes us people-powered radio.