



**PREPARATION BOOKLET FOR THE DECEMBER 3rd AND  
4th ORIENTATION CONGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR  
SOLIDARITY AMONG STUDENT UNIONS**

*Final Version*

**Location**

Concordia University  
1455 de Maisonneuve Boulevard  
Montreal

**Time**

Call to order on Saturday December 3rd at 9:00 AM

**Useful documents for the Congress (available at [www.asse-solidarite.qc.ca](http://www.asse-solidarite.qc.ca)):**

- Bylaws

- Codes and procedures

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
AGENDA PROPOSAL.....	5
RESIGNATION LETTERS.....	6
Audrey Soucy-Rouleau’s letter of resignation from the ASSÉ Women’s Committee.....	6
CANDIDACY LETTERS.....	7
Olivier Gaudreau Lacasse’s candidacy letter for the position of ASSÉ Internal Affairs Secretary.....	7
Mireille Allard’s candidacy letter for the position of Secretary General of the ASSÉ Coordination Council.....	8
REPORTS.....	9
Report on the Women’s Committee’s activities since the latest Congress.....	9
Report on the Training Committee’s activities.....	10
REFLECTION TEXTS.....	11
Reflection Text on the Outcome of the Women’s Congress.....	11
On ASSÉ’S Relevance – Appropriation of Mandates and Empowerment of New Activists	15
Concordia Anglos in ASSÉ.....	18
The challenge of deregulation.....	23
MOTIONS.....	26
1.0. Call to order.....	26
1.1. Opening.....	26
1.2. Presidium.....	26
1.3. Adoption of the agenda.....	26
1.4. Adoption of the minutes.....	27
2.0. Welcome to member associations.....	27
3.0. Congress functioning.....	27
4.0. Recommendations and orientations.....	28
4.1. Direct democracy, inclusion, centralization of power and montrealcentrism.....	28
4.2. Committees’ and Councils’ mandates.....	28
4.3. ASSÉ’s policies.....	28
4.4. Antiracist discourse and practice.....	28
4.5. Feminist discourse and practice.....	28
4.6. Queer discourse and practice.....	28
4.7. Radicalization of environmental discourse.....	28
5.0. Femmes.....	28
6.0. Elections.....	28
7.0. Finances.....	28
8.0. Avis de motion.....	28
8.1. Submission of notices of motion.....	28
8.2. Deliberation on notices of motion.....	28

9.0. Varia.....29  
10.0. Adjournment.....29  
APPENDICES..... 30  
Appendix A: Antiracist Committee Notice of Motion.....30

# **AGENDA PROPOSAL**

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- 1.0. Call to order
  - 1.1. Opening
  - 1.2. Presidium
  - 1.3. Adoption of the agenda
  - 1.4. Adoption of minutes
- 2.0. Welcome to member associations
- 3.0. Congress functioning
- 4.0. Recommendations and orientations
  - 4.1. Direct democracy, inclusion, centralization of power and montrealcentrism
  - 4.2. Committees' and Councils' mandates
  - 4.3. ASSÉ policies
  - 4.4. Antiracist discourse and practice
  - 4.5. Feminist discourse and practice
  - 4.6. Queer discourse and practice
  - 4.7. Radicalization of environmentalist discourse
- 5.0. Women
- 6.0. Elections
- 7.0. Finances
- 8.0. Notice of motion,
  - 8.1. Submission of notices of motion
  - 8.2. Deliberation on notices of motion
- 9.0. Varia
- 10.0. Adjournment

## **RESIGNATION LETTERS**

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### **AUDREY SOUCY-ROULEAU'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM THE ASSÉ WOMEN'S COMMITTEE**

*(Submitted November 2nd, 2016)*

To all concerned,

By the following, I inform you of my resignation from the Women's Committee. This resignation is effective immediately.

Yours truly,

Audrey Soucy-Rouleau

# CANDIDACY LETTERS

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## OLIVIER GAUDREAU LACASSE'S CANDIDACY LETTER FOR THE POSITION OF ASSÉ INTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY

*(Submitted November 26th, 2016)*

Hey comrades. I'm writing to you today in order to submit my candidacy on the Executive as Internal Affairs Secretary. I'm currently elected to the Regional Antimontrealcentrism Committee as well as the mobilization committee. My main interest in the position of Internal Affairs Secretary is obviously mobilization, but also in coordinating ASSÉ's decision-making bodies since I like organizing and making sure that everything runs smoothly. Also, the time spent mobilizing and being on the road have made me want to take on more responsibilities. So, in order to help the Executive and continue to exercise my new passion (mobilization), I'm submitting my candidacy as Internal Affairs Secretary.

I'm originally from Mont-Laurier and that's where I first got involved back in 2015 at AGEEM, the Mont-Laurier Cégep's student association. My mandates primarily involved organizing conferences as well as mobilization. When I was first elected, we were an almost entirely new team. So we had to rapidly learn our new responsibilities. Over the course of my two years at AGEEM, we failed to reach quorum at our General Assemblies only once, so the mobilization went pretty well. We also successfully held a one-day strike on April 2nd 2015 and adopted a solidarity mandate with the teachers union. Also during my term, I organized a panel on austerity in a local restaurant where five panelists spoke in front of about 50 students, which is a very large portion of our student population. I also helped organize a café-philosophy on humour as well as on capitalism. Finally, my experience at Mont-Laurier made me want to run for the mobilization committee, which in turn made me want to do more for ASSÉ.

I'm currently registered at Cégep à distance, so for the time being, I'm not currently a member of ASSÉ. However, I'm registered at UQAM as an independent student and I plan on taking a Sociology class and becoming a voluntary member of AFESH at the beginning of the semester.

In solidarity,

Olivier Gaudreau-Lacasse

# **MIREILLE ALLARD'S CANDIDACY LETTER FOR THE POSITION OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASSÉ COORDINATION COUNCIL**

*(Submitted November 26th, 2016)*

Comrades,

By the following, I wish to submit my candidacy for the position of Secretary General of the Coordination Council. This position has been vacant since the Annual Congress, and this vacancy has unfortunately made itself felt in the lack of coordination of this decision-making body as well as in the execution of adopted mandates. Although we've been able to find alternate solutions, the small number of people on the national team and the ensuing exhaustion have made these initiatives more difficult.

I've been elected to the Regional Antimontrealcentrism Committee (CRAMo) since the Annual Congress, and my term will expire at the Orientation Congress with the dissolution of the ad hoc committee. This will allow for more of my time to be dedicated to the national team until the end of the school year. I've attended every Coordination Council (CoCo) meeting since my election, and in addition to actively writing reflection texts for our committee, I've coordinated the publication of an edition of the Ultimatum with a member of the Women's Committee, and was also involved in the feminist mobilization weeks namely by organizing a non-mixed discussion between the women of the national team and local associations.

Regarding my experience in activism, I spent two years at St-Félicien, a wonderful association that allowed me to discover who I am as an activist. I've been studying at UQAM since September, where I was principally involved in the campaign to renew the Law and Political Science student association's (AFESPED) institutional recognition, which was lost in the spring of 2015.

My decision to pursue my involvement at the national level is primarily motivated by a desire to dedicate my time and energy in order to revitalize the national team as well as the local associations, namely by continuing my involvement in organizing the feminist mobilization weeks and by following up on mandates adopted by the CoCo more closely alongside the Committees and Councils.

I'll be attending the Orientation Congress should you have any questions.

In solidarity,

Mireille Allard

## REPORTS

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### REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LATEST CONGRESS

*(Submitted November 20th)*

The Women's Committee's activities since the latest Congress primarily concerned the following projects:

Setting aside the writing of a document on rape culture, we focused our energies on organizing the feminist training camp which took place on October 22nd and 23rd. We're particularly proud of the diversity of the workshops that were given as well as the proactivity of the folks who attended.

Once the training camp was done, we turned our attention to the Orientation Congress in the form of writing reflection texts, which we hope will be read and debated.

And, as promised, we dug up the old ASSÉ-Femmes listserv, which is similar to ASSÉ-Support but is a non-mixed space for women. If you wish to sign up, you may contact us by e-mail or by private message in Facebook and give us your e-mail address and we'll be sure to add you.

Aside from that, we were contacted by the women of the Quebec Against Sexual Assault collective in order to collaborate with them and other associations with mandates similar to ASSÉ's when it comes to feminism, sexual assault on campuses, rape culture and sexism, in the context of the government holding consultations on the topic of sexual violence in educational institutions in order to draft a bill or policy that would manage complaints related to sexual violence. Although discussions are still ongoing, we hope to collaborate with several associations and collectives that offer help to women who are victims of sexual violence (such as the CALACS) in order to generate momentum and important mobilization on the topic of sexual assault on University and Cégep campuses.

## **REPORT ON THE TRAINING COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES**

*(Submitted November 30th)*

Since the beginning of our term, the Training Committee was primarily involved in organizing the summer and fall training camps. The former of the two brought together about 30 people in La Patrie over the week-end of August 6th and 7th, whereas the latter was attended by about 70 people in Trois-Rivières on September 24th and 25th.

These two camps allowed us to take a closer look at the annual campaign on student precariousness, unpaid internships, and the 15\$/h minimum wage. They also allowed us to put forward campaigns that are often put aside, such as antiracist struggles, student housing, Divest campaigns, etc.

Other mandates had to be put on hold due to a lack of time and availability, namely the revision of ASSÉ's ABCs, the establishment of workshop templates for local use and a trainer and facilitator bank. These projects are still relevant and would warrant more attention at some point.

Finally, we've begun organizing the winter training camp, which will take place on February 4th and 5th. The exact location is still to be confirmed. Several topics will be addressed, namely research funding in Universities, student-parent issues, LGBTQA+ issues, transformative justice, the Standing Rock resistance movement, trans realities, etc. We'd also like to open spaces for discussion on the conclusions of the present Orientation Congress, as well as for the next annual campaign. We think it's important to have these spaces, namely so we can collectively analyze the exchanges that took place at the Orientation Congress with some hindsight, and also in order to stimulate reflections and discussions and therefore the participation of the student population in the elaboration of the next annual campaign. We hope to see you, so if you're interested, mark your agendas!

Please contact us if you're interested in facilitating any of these workshops or if you want to organize one or more on your campus.

In solidarity,

The ASSÉ Training Committee

# REFLECTION TEXTS

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## REFLECTION TEXT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE WOMEN'S CONGRESS

*By the ASSÉ Women's Committee  
(Submitted on November 1st, 2016)*

### 1. Outcome of the Women's Congress

During the April 25th and 26th Annual Congress, we collectively created a non-mixed feminist decision-making body: the Women's Congress. We held the very first instance of this event over the week-end of March 26th and 27th. However, our first impressions of it are somewhat mitigated. There are highs and lows!

First, we'll start with the lows. Due to loss of quorum, the Congress only held for a single day. Therefore, we started somewhat late on Saturday morning, at about 10:30 AM, and with a narrow quorum. By mid-day, we learned that the absence of some delegations the following day would mean not having quorum throughout the week-end. Some delegations had to leave Saturday at 5 PM. Since time was limited, deliberations weren't ideal. On top of that, there was a lack of preparation. Few reflection texts were sent out in advance. Few associations adopted positions in their General Assemblies and in some cases, it took a long time before for the participation of their delegates to be confirmed. Finally, with time being a factor, discussions on the topic of a feminist campaign or action plan for the coming school year were very short.

Despite all that, there were highs. It's important to highlight the fact that the Women's Congress allowed several new activists to attend their first ASSÉ Congress. And for several delegations, their participation wasn't simply limited to observing, but also speaking. This is one step further in involving women in our structures and in the external relations tasks that are frequently assumed by men. More broadly, the Women's Congress set the stage for more associations to adopt feminist positions or at least to discuss them. Also, the motions we discussed were very interesting. Caucuses were held on the topic of feminist realities in Montreal, in Quebec City, and in further regions. We also adopted a mandate for creating feminist information material, for participating in feminist mobilization, as well as a detailed position on rape culture. The exact formulations were sent out on ASSÉ-Support [in French].

Beyond simply recognizing facts, we wish to present the factors that led us to this situation, as well as possible solutions for the next Women's Congress.

### 2. Critique of the elected team

First, it would be useless to deny the influence the fall semester's mobilization had on our organizing during the winter semester. The national team's intense work mobilized our own

energies and seemingly sidetracked us from establishing a clear plan for the winter semester. Looking back, we can safely say that the massive disinvestment of an important number of elected members following the non-strike over the fall meant that a colossal amount of work fell onto the Executive Council. In turn, the Women's Congress was organized too late.

Furthermore, we also realized that there were too many instances held over the winter, which obviously doesn't encourage broad participation, especially in the first attempt at a non-mixed decision-making event. On top of all that is the distribution of tasks within the elected team at ASSÉ: no, organizing the Women's Congress shouldn't just be the Women's Committee's job! The Women's Committee operating with limited resources (varying between 2 and 3 members throughout the year, one even resigned in mid-March!) and being composed almost entirely of new activists, it was impossible for the committee to single-handedly organize all the logistics. The rest of the elected team started helping them later on.

Another mistake we made was to not properly consider the importance of the upcoming holiday when we were organizing the non-mixed Congress. We took for granted that the Easter holiday wouldn't be an obstacle when it came to student participation and quorum. Unfortunately, it appears that that was a wrong decision. For whatever reason, several women activists confirmed to us that they couldn't attend the Congress because of the long-weekend. This needs to be considered in the future.

### **3. Critique of the student associations**

As mentioned earlier, this was the first Congress experience for several women who were present on March 26th. Although a formative experience, local dynamics may have hindered their level of preparation. Several factors may explain this:

1) The position of External Affairs Secretary and the responsibilities associated with it having generally been occupied by men, we can easily suppose that the information pertaining to the different debates and tensions surrounding ASSÉ haven't been transmitted (or have been but only superficially) due to the disinvestment of male activists in the preparation of the Congress, either because they don't feel concerned with feminist issues (as it's not a part of their reality) or due to a discomfort in taking part in them (to avoid mansplaining). In either case, the facts remain the same: more work fell on the shoulders of women activists and feminists.

2) Few associations were able to hold a General Assembly for the Women's Congress, which would've allowed them to adopt new feminist mandates. Is it because feminist issues are considered to be less important than others? We couldn't say. Our only certainty is that activist fatigue is palpable at both the national and local levels (for reasons that have already been stated) which results in the demobilization of the student population.

Please note that we don't claim to know the exact causes of this lack of preparation on behalf of local associations. We're also aware that issues relating to the organization of the Women's Congress by the national team greatly influenced the reflections that should've taken

place. That being said, the impacts on the actual proceedings of the Women's Congress were undeniable. For example, there were moments of silence that required frequent interventions on behalf of the Executive, Coordination Council, or the ASSÉ Women's Committee. Furthermore, little reflection was done with regards to a proposal for a feminist campaign that was submitted by the Women's Committee on March 17th 2016. By the time we reached agenda item "Action Plan", we were about to vote on a feminist campaign on the topic of rape culture and sexual assault in school settings without having taken the time to properly reflect on this question.

#### **4. Possible solutions for the next Women's Congress**

##### Participation of local associations

In order to maximize the participation of local associations, we've thought of several solutions. First of all, we encourage associations to hold a special GA or at least an agenda item dedicated to feminist issues in order to adopt positions before the upcoming Women's Congress. Hence, the women at Congress will be better equipped when it comes to making decisions and therefore avoid systematically tabling motions that are brought before Congress and also offer the possibility of bringing forward common demands and action plans. It's always possible to ask for help and support from the national team or other student associations in the case of activist fatigue or student demobilization.

Associations where a Women's Committee is already active or where feminists are organized can stimulate participation through reflection texts and submitting political positions in the preparation booklet in advance. They may also offer help to female activists who are less experienced for preparing themselves for Congress. By collaborating or sharing ideas among women of different student associations, we're encouraging reflection and debate.

As for men, they must realize that they have to carry their share of the responsibilities and must not act like this "doesn't concern them" due to the non-mixed nature of the event. For men occupying the position of External, it's your role to share information relating to how Congress functions, the association's political positions, as well as the current debates at ASSÉ. There's always tension between the roles of student woman activist and feminist activist. Women are often confronted with this dual role. Being an ally means recognizing this division of labour and taking on some of the less visible responsibilities in order to relieve their female counterparts.

When it comes to possible solutions for the organization of the Congress, there are several to be considered.

First of all, the timing is to be reconsidered. To that end, advanced planning the dates of events throughout the year is necessary in order to better plan and organize. In order to better encourage the participation of delegates, particularly women, it'd be better to space out ASSÉ's events throughout the year. When it comes to feminist decision-making bodies, one possibility would be to hold the feminist training camp in the fall instead of in March. This would allow for those involved at both the local and national levels to renew their energy. And finally of course,

avoiding holding Congresses on holidays is necessary.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the distribution of tasks pertaining to organizing the Congress must be done differently. Obviously, this must be done in close collaboration with the Women's Committee and should include the other Committees, namely with regards to logistics, to contacting local associations and in writing motions in order to encourage debate. With these solutions, and with the (somewhat mitigated) experience of a first Women's Congress, we hope that next year's Women's Congress will prove to be a popular, fertile ground for debate and discussion, and that it will last two days!

# **ON ASSÉ'S RELEVANCE – APPROPRIATION OF MANDATES AND EMPOWERMENT OF NEW ACTIVISTS**

*By the ASSÉ Women's Committee  
(Submitted on November 6th, 2016)*

In order for ASSÉ to remain relevant as an organization, it must continue to evolve and be dynamic. However, ASSÉ, through its structure and functioning, cannot work if a blank cheque is handed over to some bureaucracy. Nor is it possible to simply hire people to do all the tasks that are necessary for the ongoing functioning of the organization, as the student federations do (not only due to a lack of financial resources but also in order to allow activists to empower themselves). This is why ASSÉ created structures for involvement at the national level in the form of committees who, alongside the Executive Council, form the National Team. This team is composed of people who volunteer their time in order to ensure the proper functioning of the organization, up to a point. Since ASSÉ is first and foremost an organization that functions because of its members, it seems problematic that associations hand the responsibility of its wellbeing to at most a few dozen people.

First, because it appears paradoxical that only a handful of people manage an association that claims to exist by and for its members. Second, this situation gives a disproportionate amount of power to this handful of people despite the fact that ASSÉ aims to be as horizontal as possible. This concentration of power among only a few people creates a particularly harmful asymmetry within an organization that's meant to function on the principle of power symmetry (and therefore in a horizontal manner). It's impossible for ASSÉ to function solely through the volunteer work of a few people, this is why the horizontality principle was implemented: so that local activists may also contribute to ASSÉ's project. Although the reasons behind the horizontality of power at ASSÉ may at first glance appear merely practical, they're also ideological: how do we remain coherent with ourselves if we're reproducing a structure similar to the one we're criticizing (capitalism and its government sponsors)?

In this text, we'll cover several issues that we consider to be important to ASSÉ's vitality as a student union.

## **Appropriation of Congress mandates by local associations**

Over time, we've witnessed a tendency within ASSÉ that appears problematic in certain regards. First, there is the difficulty or even absence of student associations appropriating mandates that were adopted by Congress. The Association for Solidarity among Student Unions is based on participatory democracy, which requires as the name suggests, the participation of its members in order to properly function. But this participation must not end with decision-making, since participatory democracy implies members' participation at all levels of the democratic process: elaborating reflections (which the current text is a demonstration of), making decisions in Congress, and also in the application of decisions.

This is why when a decision is made in Congress, each association voting in favour of it must do so in full awareness of its ability. It is also a commitment on behalf of the associations who vote in favour of a motion: they pledge to take part in the application of the decisions that were made.

Let's take an example from the most recent Congress, held on October 8th and 9th:

Be it resolved that ASSÉ coordinate four weeks of feminist mobilization on all of its affiliated campuses over November 7th through 11th, January 30th to February 3rd, February 27th to March 3rd, and March 27th to 31st.

Be it further resolved that the following themes be the following:

- Everyday sexism, division of labour, and being an ally;
- Rape culture in academic environments, namely in social events but also in daily life;
- The need for appropriate policies pertaining to denunciations and the accompaniment of survivors in educational institutions;
- Intersectionality of systems of oppression.

Be it further resolved that at mobilization material pertaining to these different topics be produced for each of the aforementioned weeks by the National Team and local associations, namely in the form of pamphlets, texts, zines, or stickers.

Since ASSÉ is, essentially, what its member associations want it to be, our understanding of this mandate is that ASSÉ's members will organize four weeks of feminist action and mobilization. Therefore, the idea isn't so much that the National Team organize the feminist weeks of action and mobilization from A to Z, but rather lend support or help facilitate communication between member associations that do wish to the organizing.

Furthermore, the mandate doesn't specify what kind of action should be undertaken. Nothing's preventing an association that doesn't have the necessary mobilization to organize a demo for example, from organizing a feminist open mic, banner drop, of handing out flyers, or putting up posters all over campus, or even mixing and combining some or all of these ideas. Of course, this list isn't exhaustive and the only limits to what actions are possible are those of your creativity. Escalating pressure tactics also means being aware of the means at your disposal and acting upon them. And if, for example, an association is able to generate a certain escalation over those weeks, by doing a banner drop first, then an open-mic in the second week, and a speaker series over the third week, and has an action during the fourth week, it demonstrates that escalation can also be done through visibility actions. Again, the only limits are the extent of your imagination.

We get the impression that the mandate that was adopted during the Coordination Council meeting on November 1st moves away from the appropriation of Congress mandates by local associations:

Be it resolved that the Women's Committee as well as Mireille organize a non-mixed meeting of the National Team and its collaborators on November 23rd in order to coordinate the feminist weeks of action to come.

We believe that this goes against the idea of appropriating Congress mandates, as well as associations' local sovereignty. If the National Team begins organizing and coordinating local associations' actions, not only do we fear this would harm local creativity, but also runs the risk of disastrous effects in the form of disempowering newer activists at the local level who would, in the long run, learn to depend on the National Team for its campaigns and actions. This isn't the combativeness our organization claims to embody. Combativeness is multi-faceted and stems from the shared desire to coordinate between local associations in such a way that each association can develop their ingenuity and their creativity in their means of action.

Again, we're concerned that this may create a form of hierarchy between those who are involved in the National Team and those who are involved in their local association. This reminds us that one of the frustrations expressed last year concerned the fact that ASSÉ doesn't sufficiently consider local struggles. Yet who is better placed to talk about local issues than local activists? The answer to this question is simple: nobody! And this is precisely why local activists must appropriate the mandates and campaigns adopted by Congress: since local issues are different from one campus or association to another, it's possible to unite under a general campaign in which every campus or association can put its specificities forward and mobilize its members according to its own realities.

### **How new activists must carry the torch and empower themselves with regards to has-beens**

New activists bring fresh ideas to their student association. Short of fundamentally changing the student association's structural and organizational foundations, new activists are ASSÉ's future, in our opinion. It's time for their voices to be heard with regards to the directions they think ASSÉ should follow. It's time for the ghost of 2012 to be left behind and for us to look towards the struggles to come. May the glorification of passed struggles come to an end so that we may commence today's mobilization based on what we've won and learned in the past.

On an individual basis, it's time for new activists who weren't around in 2012 to stop solely relying on the influence of the most experienced activists (whom we also call has-beens) and develop a culture of political autonomy. Although their teachings and shared experiences may be enriching, today and tomorrow's activists must be capable of making decisions without relying on those whose informal authority cannot be questioned. However, they must also be able to make decisions in the most informed and humble manner possible. We have to find common ground between activists' arrogance and ideological and intellectual dependency.

## CONCORDIA ANGLOS IN ASSÉ

*Patrick Blair—member of FASA(Fine Arts Student Alliance)*  
*Aouatif Zebiri—member of SCPASA (School of Community and Public Affairs Student Association)*  
*Marion Miller—member of FASA (Fine Arts Student Alliance) Aloyse Muller – member of LAS (Liberal Arts Society)*  
*Gabriel Velasco—member of SCPASA (School of Community and Public Affairs Student Association)*  
*(Submitted November 28th, 2016)*

After a large mobilisation at Concordia during the 2012 strike, the affiliation of the SCPASA to ASSÉ in winter of 2013 followed by FASA in winter of 2014 and LAS in the fall of 2014 have been an interesting learning experience on both the side of ASSÉ and for the 3 member associations at Concordia engaging with this new instance and body. However, Anglophone and Concordia involvement in ASSÉ is actually not so new, with the Concordia Student Union as a founding member in 2001 due to large mobilizations at Concordia around the WTO Summit, and continuous involvement of activists since 2010 leading up to the 2012 strike.

To generate the content of this letter, Concordia activist who are currently involved at ASSÉ invited many folks who had previously been involved as well as the newly elected delegates from our 3 associations to come together and discuss historical issues encountered by Concordian at ASSÉ, current situations and moving forwards from a Concordia and Anglophone perspective. In the end, about 12 of us met for an afternoon brainstorming session where knowledge was passed down, stories were told, and ideas emerged surrounding Concordia's future within ASSÉ. While many critiques surfaced, overall we left the afternoon with hope and energy towards continuing to work within this structure to achieve meaningful gains as student unions and activists. This text was then drafted by a smaller group of participants to summarize our discussions and proposals. We will touch on the particularities of Montreal Anglophone activist culture, our aspirations for an intersectional feminism and anti-racist dimension within the student movement, solutions towards better logistical inclusion of Anglophones and our views of possible future campaigns for ASSÉ.

### **Anglo Culture....**

Concordia student who have been involved in ASSÉ come from a variety of backgrounds and past activist experiences. Since Concordia has a very strong Fine Arts program, close to 60% of FASA members are Francophone, many of whom studied at CEGEP in Montreal. Others grew up Anglophone in Quebec, are from out of province, or are International students. But as those who have experienced both worlds can attest, the activist communities in francophone Montreal and Anglophone Montreal are two very different realities. While we do not intend to 'convert' other associations to our modes of functioning within Concordia, we hope to discuss certain areas of tension and propose solutions that could mediate the differences in activist culture and make ASSÉ more inclusive to Anglophone student associations.

### **Translation of materials**

A reality on our campus is that a large part of our members are simply not aware of ASSÉ or its functions and activities. On our end, the student associations at Concordia recognize that we have work to do on a daily basis to relate the information brought back by delegates to the membership, and actively seek to promote awareness of ASSÉ in our associations' activities. However, this is rendered more difficult by the scarcity of English mobilisation and information materials.

We would like to thank those responsible for the dramatic increase in translated materials over the past three years, and recognize that before the hiring of a translator, much of this work was done on a volunteer basis. However, we believe that simultaneous translation for Congresses and Training Camps is an urgent need as we cannot guarantee that our delegates will be able to speak and understand French, and this can be a great barrier to their participation. While we have often been able to borrow the headset kit owned by the Concordia Student Union, this kit has been much less available to us since the CSU's participation in several AVEQ instances overlapping with ASSÉ's. We believe that the investment in a simultaneous translation kit is a necessity for the continued meaningful participation of Anglophone associations at ASSÉ.

Another suggestion we'd like to bring is that a certain proportion of Training Camp workshops be given in English. This could greatly motivate the participation of members from our campus, and could diversify the range of workshops and perhaps help acustomize the members of ASSÉ to effectively working across the language barrier.

### **Intersectional feminism**

We have come to realize that the feminist discourse that is being discussed and explored throughout ASSE hasn't been fully inclusive of all different sets of feminist ideas and ideologies. The discussions on feminism between ASSE delegates have been focused mainly on traditional aspects of feminism or the common understanding of what feminism should include. This focus singles out several other elements of feminism that we believe are vital to exploring and give attention to as they are part of our society.

We believe that feminism is not a movement about white women and what they want to achieve; it is about all women: queer women and straight women and women of color and women practicing any religion, that are struggling to find their place in society, voice out their points of view and fight for their rights. By this, we firmly encourage that the discussions that take place in ASSE congresses, workshops and feminist camps and positions that are adopted for campaigns be inclusive of the struggles of all women.

Therefore, the ASSÉ we envision, through all platforms whether it is in congresses, workshops, camps and campaigns, would stand in solidarity with women of color in their struggle against racism and discrimination. The ASSÉ of our aspirations stands in solidarity with Muslim women who are struggling in maintaining their religious affiliation and are not able to

express themselves as freely as they want. As well as, fighting with Muslim women to be given the freedom of choice that other women have whether it is the freedom to wear the hijab or the burqa. Muslim women facing islamophobia in Québec are in continuous discrimination exercised on them and public harassment due to their dress code. We hope for ASSÉ, through workshops, camps and campaigns, to stand in solidarity with queer women whom are fighting for their status in our society and include them in the discussions, and most importantly respect their freedom of choice. We have seen progress on the inclusion of trans people within ASSÉ, but feel that this is still an area on which we all must seek to further educate ourselves and question how the structures of ASSÉ can be more welcoming to the trans and genderqueer population.

In this meeting, we have come to the conclusion that feminism is a movement that stands in solidarity with all women that are facing pay equity issues, domestic violence, racism, discrimination, and harassment whether by skin color, ethnicity or religious affiliations. We strongly demand that internally ASSE continuously makes sure that women are not facing any of the struggles listed above. Besides, we hope that ASSÉ will continue to stand publicly in solidarity with all women in need and establish the importance of inclusivity in its congresses, workshops, training, and campaigns.

In the same vein, we strongly support the proposal that the Women and Gender Minority Congress have the same decisional powers as any other ASSÉ Congress. We believe that further empowering this non-mixed instance within the ASSÉ structure, we affirm the importance of feminist organizing within ASSÉ and show our commitment to undoing patriarchal power imbalances in activist culture.

### **Power Dynamics and Anti-Oppression Training**

One proposal that has come of our discussions is the need for further training of all delegates in order to facilitate a culture shift within ASSÉ in order to take issues such as intersectional feminism and anti-racist work seriously. We will be proposing in a future dépôt d'avis de motion to add a mandatory 3 hour training in Power Dynamics and Anti-Oppression to take place twice per year, at the first Congress of each semester. Our vision for this training is that it would take place in small groups and be discussion based, given by external facilitators from organizations such as the PIRGs (Public Interest Research Group, such as QPIRG Concordia or GRIP UQAM). We imagine that the organization of the training would be added as a task to the Training Committee.

Further, we envision that at future training camps, more workshops could be solicited from students at the local member level, who have first person perspectives on a variety of identities or as participants in local campaigns. For example, we imagine training camps that include student parents at University, students of color in rural CEGEPs, indigenous students, and students facing difficulties with physical accessibility of their institutions. Although it has always been a point of contention within ASSÉ, we strongly believe in the need to provide honorariums to these people to recognize their time, experience and expertise, especially when we are inviting people from traditionally marginalized populations.

## **Future Campaigns**

We have sensed that, since the 2015 mobilisation that did not materialize, there has been some confusion within ASSÉ about what direction that association is going in, and what prospects exist for future student mobilisation. In our discussions, we identified a few issues that we believe we could organize around in the future.

One of the most pressing issues facing students at Concordia, and around Quebec, is the issue of so-called “deregulated programs.” (The Concordia Student Union released a text denouncing the deregulation of international student fees and the “cohort pricing” scheme, which can be read here: <https://csu.qc.ca/tuitionhike>.) Mobilisation around this issue has already begun in some of the deregulated programs. Fine Arts programs do not

fall under the deregulated programs as of now, but as the CSU mentioned in their text: “...deregulation was introduced by Quebec government with the explicit expectation that it would apply to other programs in the future.” Moreover, these deregulations of international student fees merely represent another move by the Quebec government and the Concordia administration towards further privatization of public education. We believe that allowing these international fee deregulations to continue unopposed will only signify our consent to this process. FASA will be taking a position on these tuition increases at our next general assembly, and we encourage other student associations - whether affected by these deregulations or not - to take positions against the deregulation of tuition fees.

We also discussed feminist issues that we could potentially campaign around, such as the growing problem of sexual assault on campuses. One idea that came up would be to develop a campaign that tackles the problem of sexual assault much more critically than university administrators currently do - to focus how sexual assault is tied into rape culture and patriarchy, and how current university policies are inadequate for deal with this issue on campus. In our meeting we also discussed intersectional feminist at ASSÉ, and in how we as an organization can improve our feminist practices. One issue we identified is that ASSÉ associations are often not in touch with their own students who are involved in organizing work around black and POC struggles. Many of the students involved in associations at Concordia - including FASA - are involved with anti-racist work that overlaps with (or has potential for overlapping with) their work in their student associations. We think that a good goal to work towards is to consolidate the connections between anti-racist organizing done on campuses and the work done in our student associations. In the future, this could lead towards stronger and more effective anti-racist practice at ASSÉ.

Finally we discussed the issues of environmentalism and indigenous solidarity. The connection between these two issues has become increasingly apparent in the last several months, as indigenous people and their allies from across North America have gathered at the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota to resist the Dakota Access Pipeline in the face of brutal repression from private security, state police, and National Guard forces. The Sioux Nation and their allies are resisting both the ongoing colonialist expropriation of their land and resources, and

the ongoing destruction of environment for corporate profit that the Dakota Access Pipeline represents. As the solidarity movement with Standing Rock continues to grow, we do think a discussion is warranted within ASSÉ regarding if and how we would plan to incorporate these issues into upcoming campaigns and organizing.

# THE CHALLENGE OF DEREGULATION

*Aloyse Muller - member of LAS*

*Marion Miller—member of FASA (Fine Arts Student Alliance)*

*Aouatif Zebiri—member of SCPASA (School of Community and Public Affairs Student Association)*

*(Submitted on November 28th, 2016)*

This text springs from the local reality and the challenge experienced at Concordia this year. As many of us were expecting, this fall the Concordia administration has reluctantly admitted it was planning to increase the tuition fees, starting next fall, for international students in the deregulated programs of study. They plan to implement what they call “cohort pricing,” a scheme under which every new academic year will be a new cohort, each cohort being more expensive than the preceding cohort. New international students will be enrolled in a cohort (for example the 2017/18 cohort) and pay the same amount in tuition every year, instead of seeing their tuition increase with inflation as it is the case now. It is a “price stability” purchased at the cost of several thousand dollars more in tuition every year!

Another danger of this cohort pricing is that currently the administration refuses to answer whether a student enrolled in a given cohort (say 2017/18), in the event they take longer to finish their degree, or if they decide to change their major (say in 2019/20), will then be bumped up to the new more expensive cohort (the 2019/20 one). That there may be a financial penalty for changing one’s focus of study, or for taking longer to finish one’s degree is of grave concern for us, and is in straight line with a commoditised view of the postsecondary education system. Enrol study and no more, don’t change focus, don’t go part-time and straight through the pipeline to the “job market.”

The point of this text is not to discuss Concordia’s specific situation however, but to address the deregulation program as a whole, that we see as a looming threat to a publically funded accessible post-secondary education. We want to acknowledge that a number of texts have already been produced on the subject, such as CRAA’s Memoire sur le rapport Tremblay-Roy.

Since 2008, six programs of studies - engineering, computer science, business, mathematics, and pure sciences - have been deregulated for international students, said deregulation having taken full effect as of 2014.<sup>1</sup> What this means is that these programs are not regulated by the government anymore, i.e. their tuition rate is not fixed by decree every year by the provincial government, but left at the discretion of the university.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, these programs have been gradually defunded by the government from 2008 to 2014, and are now not allocated any more governmental funding. This raises a number of issues:

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- 1 This does not include French students, who on their part have seen their tuition fees raised from the Quebec rate to the Out-of- Province rate in 2015.
  - 2 Universities are enabled to increase the tuition rate of these programs as much as they wish, the only constraint being that they cannot set a tuition rate that is lower than the tuition rate for equivalent regulated programs.

- The most obvious one is that universities have an incentive to increase tuition fees in these programs, making them less accessible. This is exacerbated by the dire financial situation universities are facing after years of cuts in their budget under the austerity regime. They are now desperate for additional revenues, and international students are -seemingly- the path of less resistance.
- The international *forfaitaire*<sup>3</sup> collected by the universities in regulated programs is then transferred to the government, which redistributes across the university network. This redistribution mechanism provides funding for universities that do not attract a lot of international students. In deregulated programs however, the universities get to keep all of the *forfaitaire*, which is a bounty for big metropolitan universities that have the capacity to attract a large international student population. Smaller, regional universities, which are already hit the harder by the effects of austerity, are being further defunded by the deregulation.
- In programs of study that accept a limited number of students, the deregulation may have for effect to close the doors to Quebec students, as they are less profitable for the university. We already have hints of this at Concordia, which has 17% of international students. In its budget presentation this year, the administration explicitly stated that they were now no longer seeking to increase enrolment, but to increase the ratio of international students as they represent “opportunities for funding.”

The deregulation of these six programs is already the source of grave concern in itself. We now witness the situation where a whole segment of the student population in Quebec is experiencing a fully user-payer version of the university. We believe that local tuition increases in these programs must be fought wherever they are proposed. This is difficult as the programs affected are generally not the most militant, if at all. Moreover, we are under the impression that the knowledge of the deregulation of these programs and its effects is relatively poorly disseminated in the student movement at the moment, maybe precisely because of the nature of the programs affected. We feel this is a lack that needs to be addressed rapidly, with a solid discourse and concrete steps. On the one hand, international students are often living precariously, facing other staggering cost for immigration, mandatory health plans, abusive housing, and their status makes it hard for them to stand up and fight back. Making the case for international students - if that is necessary - would require another full text, which we will forgo, but too often they have been left aside and sacrificed.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, this is, we believe, only the first step in a direction to further privatize the Quebec university system, and maybe the single direct threat to the accessibility of education we face now.

When the deregulation of these six programs was implemented in 2008, the governmental report explicitly stated that this was a pilot project, and that eventually the deregulation was purposed to be expanded to all programs of studies. We can thus expect there will be a tentative

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3 The difference between the international tuition rate and the Quebec resident rate.

4 Such as in 1996, when the FEUQ obtained to maintain the tuition freeze for Quebec resident in exchange of allowing for the increase of tuition fees for international students. Prior to this, there was one single tuition rate in Quebec for all students.

to expand the deregulation to all programs of studies for international students in the coming years. We also fear that this user-payer model will be expanded under one form or another to other categories of students, leading post secondary education in Quebec to be increasingly privatised.

Now that the deregulation of these programs of study has been fully implemented, this framework could be used as a backdoor to increase tuition fees for Quebec residents and out-of Province students through the deregulation of some institutions, such as HEC. In the same way that universities such as McGill called for and welcomed the deregulation for international students, within institutions such as HEC there have been calls to adopt a two-tier university system, similar to the one found in France. The French system of so-called Grandes Ecoles (mainly engineering and business schools) allows for a (almost) free post-education network, coupled with Grandes Ecoles that charge tuition rates ranging up to 15,000 euros annually (and on the rise).

After the 2012 mobilisation, it is doubtful that a frontal tuition increase by the government will be attempted in the short time. Out-of Province rates are now roughly on par with the median rate of other provinces, and thus likely to follow that median. We believe that an ever-expanding deregulation is what the student movement will face in the coming years. It serves both to increase tuition fees, and to rather than promoting a user- payer relation through the government it would do so through the institutions themselves, which is more in line with a neoliberal view of the “delivery” of education.

This poses significant challenges in terms of mobilisation. It may be harder to mobilise against a partial deregulation law than against an “honest” tuition hike. If implemented, the struggles would be mainly between the students and their administration rather than the government. This is why we believe it is important that ASSE develop rapidly a solid discourse against deregulation, and that it be shared and discussed within its members. Outreach towards the programs currently affected also seems necessary.

While the mobilisation at Concordia has already been set in motion, we invite other student associations members of ASSÉ to work on local information campaigns about these recent measure, and to consider tactics that can be used to promote a greater solidarity in the struggle to come as these measures are propagated more largely!

# MOTIONS

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## 1.0. CALL TO ORDER

### 1.1. Opening

### 1.2. Presidium

### 1.3. Adoption of the agenda

#### 1.3.1. Be it resolved that the following agenda be adopted:

#### 1.0. Call to order

##### 1.1. Opening

##### 1.2. Presidium

##### 1.3. Adoption of the agenda

##### 1.4. Adoption of minutes

#### 2.0. Welcome to member associations

#### 3.0. Congress functioning

#### 4.0. Recommendations and orientations

##### 4.1. Direct democracy, inclusion, centralization of power and montrealcentrism

##### 4.2. Committees' and Councils' mandates

##### 4.3. ASSÉ policies

##### 4.4. Antiracist discourse and practice

##### 4.5. Feminist discourse and practice

##### 4.6. Queer discourse and practice

##### 4.7. Radicalization of environmentalist discourse

#### 5.0. Women

#### 6.0. Elections

#### 7.0. Finances

#### 8.0. Notice of motion

##### 8.1. Submission of notices of motion

##### 8.2. Deliberation on notices of motion

#### 9.0. Varia

## 10.0. Adjournment

*Submitted by the Executive Council  
(Submitted November 27th 2016)*

### **1.4. Adoption of the minutes**

**1.4.1.** Be it resolved that we adopt the minutes of the October 8th-9th Congress as they are.

*Submitted by the Executive Council  
(Submitted November 27th 2016)*

## **2.0. WELCOME TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS**

## **3.0. CONGRESS FUNCTIONING**

**3.0.1.** Be it resolved that we hold caucuses for the rest of the day on the following topics:

1. Direct democracy, inclusion, centralization of power and montrealcentrism
2. Committees' and Councils' mandates
3. ASSÉ's policies
4. Antiracist discourse and practice
5. Feminist discourse and practice
6. Queer discourse and practice
7. Radicalization of environmental discourse

Be it further resolved that each caucus present a summary of its discussions on Sunday.

*Submitted by the Executive Council  
(Submitted November 27th 2016)*

**3.0.2.** Be it resolved that the adoption of motions be done in the following way:

1. That the recommendations and orientations at agenda item "5.0. Recommendations and Orientations" be adopted according to one of the three following modalities:

- a. For immediate adoption: For normal motions that become effective immediately following their adoption.
- b. For adoption as a recommendation: For motions requiring a certain level of elaboration before becoming formal motions. Unless otherwise specified, the elaboration will be done by the Executive Council and the final motions will be debated at the Fall Congress.
- c. For adoption as an orientation: For orientations requiring a certain level of elaboration before becoming ASSÉ policies.

2. That the Chair ensure that delegations specify according to which modality their motion is being submitted.

3. For resolutions requiring a notice of motion, such as modifications to the Bylaws, deliberation on these notices of motion may be done in plenaries, but may only be submitted at agenda item “8.1. Submission of notice of motion”.

*Submitted by the Executive Council  
(Submitted on November 13th 2016)*

## **4.0. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ORIENTATIONS**

### **4.1. Direct democracy, inclusion, centralization of power and montrealcentrism**

#### **4.2. Committees’ and Councils’ mandates**

#### **4.3. ASSÉ’s policies**

#### **4.4. Antiracist discourse and practice**

#### **4.5. Feminist discourse and practice**

#### **4.6. Queer discourse and practice**

#### **4.7. Radicalization of environmental discourse**

## **5.0. FEMMES**

## **6.0. ELECTIONS**

## **7.0. FINANCES**

## **8.0. AVIS DE MOTION**

### **8.1. Submission of notices of motion**

**8.1.1.** Submission of notice of motion concerning the Antiracist Committee (Appendix A)  
*Submitted by the Executive Council*

### **8.2. Deliberation on notices of motion**

**8.2.1. Be it resolved that we replace article 18 of the ASSÉ Bylaws by the following list:**

1. Determine the general orientation of ASSÉ, as well as its broad ideological and political guidelines;
2. Determine priorities relative to campaigns, and outline action plans;
3. Modify ASSÉ's Bylaws;
4. Set membership dues and the conditions governing their payment;
5. Adopt budgets as well as the distribution of funds;
6. Elect the Executive Council;
7. Impeach members of the Executive Council;
8. Ratify or overturn decisions made by the Coordination Council;
9. Approve or reject reports submitted by the Coordination Council;
10. Expel a member association;
11. Refuse or accept any and all requests to affiliate;
12. Decide whether or not it is relevant to hire employees;
13. Exercise any and all powers not explicitly delegated to other decision-making bodies or committees of ASSÉ;
14. Dismiss one or more members that were elected by the Coordination Council to an ad hoc committee or commission acting under the purview of the Coordination Council;
15. Decide whether or not to affiliate to any coalition or organization with similar aims and goals to ASSÉ;
16. By majority vote, censure or applaud any decision-making body, committee, delegate or member of the Executive;
17. Elect members of the Working Committees, the Women's Committee, the Mobilization Committee, the Newspaper Committee, as well as the Secretary-General of the Coordination Council;
18. Create ad hoc committees that will be directly accountable to the Congress as well as being under its immediate purview;

*Notice of motion*

*Submitted by the Women's Committee*

*(Submitted of November 4th, 2016)*

## **9.0. VARIA**

## **10.0. ADJOURNMENT**

# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: ANTIRACIST COMMITTEE NOTICE OF MOTION

Be it resolved that “Chapter 11: Antiracist Committee” be added to the Bylaws and that the enumeration of the subsequent articles be correspondingly adjusted.

### CHAPTER 11: ANTIRACIST COMMITTEE

#### ARTICLE 51: COMPOSITION

The Antiracist Committee is non-mixed. It is made up of students of colour elected by the Congress as well as people of colour collaborators.

#### ARTICLE 52: ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible, candidates must be a person of colour. The persons elected to this body cannot be paid employees of ASSÉ. These same persons also may not receive any salary, bursary or other financial advantage in relation to their status as an elected official.

#### ARTICLE 53: AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

The Antiracist Committee aims to promote the struggles of people of colour, Indigenous people, and immigrants in education and in society in all of ASSÉ's various bodies. It must be able to provide the Annual Congress with a report on women's issues. It may also:

1. Produce information material related to its field of intervention in collaboration with the Information Committee and Research and Academic Affairs Committee;
2. Be allocated an antiracist section inside the ASSÉ newspaper, or any other official publication;
3. Organize antiracist actions jointly with regional and local mobilization committees;
4. Assist in creating non-mixed spaces for people of colour;
5. Participate in Coordination Council meetings, where it has the right to submit and second motions;
6. Nominate one person responsible for coordinating the Committee's work, in order to establish a close working relationship with the Secretary-General of the Coordination Council and with the Executive Council.

**ARTICLE 54: CONVENING MEETINGS**

The Antiracist Committee meets at least once, when possible, between each Coordination Council meeting.

Be it further resolved that we replace the following phrases in Article 9 (Composition and Definition) in Chapter 3 (Congress) as well as Article 16 (Composition and Definition) in Chapter 4 (Women’s Congress) “The Executive Council, the Coordination Council as well as the Women’s Committee also have the right to present motions” by the following: “The Executive Council, the Coordination Council, the Women’s Committee as well as the Antiracist Committee also have the right to present motions.”.

Be it further resolved that “Antiracist Committee” be added to the enumerations of the Committees and Councils that are elected by Congress, as in the following articles:

Chapter 3: Congress, Article 9: Composition and Definition, items 2 and 3;

Chapter 3: Congress, Article 11: Powers, item 17;

Chapter 4: Women’s Congress, Article 16: Composition and Definition, item 2;

Appendix A: Election Procedures, Article A1: Scope;

Appendix D: Preparatory documents for meetings, Article A15