

Minutes of the QPIRG Concordia Annual General Meeting 2011

13 October 2011, 1500 de Maisonneuve O., 204

[These minutes are to-be-approved at the QPIRG Concordia Annual General Meeting in the fall of 2012.]

A total of 66 members of QPIRG Concordia, as well as 9 observers, signed in at the AGM. Of the 66 members, 24 were Concordia student members of QPIRG Concordia, and 42 were community members of QPIRG Concordia.

1. Facilitator introduction, presentation and adoption of Agenda

Accessibility points:

- Translation (English-French) arranged.
- Childcare arranged.
- Facilitator asks whether there is any media in the room and makes clear that media should check in with staff. Invited photographer for evening, Jackson, is introduced. If people don't want to be photographed they can check in with Jackson or staff at any point. CUTV was videotaping at the beginning of the assembly.

Process points:

Tasha Zamudio is introduced as the facilitator for the AGM.

- Reminder that everyone needs to register for the AGM, have voting cards and have one of the packages that have been prepared for the AGM.
- Request for volunteers for scrutineers to help out during voting procedures. Two people volunteer: Christianne and Graham.
- Facilitator reviews agenda, point by point, explaining each point. The agenda has been advertised and on website for ten days.

MOTION TO ADOPT AGENDA: Jean-Luc. SECOND: Lydia.

YES: 51. NO: 0. ABSTENTION: 1.

MOTION CARRIED.

2. Approval of 2010 Annual General Meeting minutes

Facilitator notes that minutes are being circulated in the meeting and that they have also been on the website for several months. They are also on the overhead screen.

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Kyle. SECOND: Mike H.

YES: 40. NO: 0. ABSTENTION: 12

MOTION CARRIED.

3. Recap of QPIRG and QPIRG Projects (staff reports, board report, core project reports)

Board report – Kayle

QPIRG has had a full and active board through the year. The year started with a competitive board election, so it was full board from the beginning. They held a training, together QPIRG McGill, and a conflict resolution training in the fall. Board members were part of all of QPIRGs activities this year. Some of the highlights were: Disorientation, Study in Action and three publications (School Schmool, At the Heart of Resistance, and Convergence (all available at http://www.qpirgconcordia.org/?page_id=1875). In addition, the Board conducted an accessibility audit - for physical accessibility - and has started to implement the recommendations. The board had a good year! Many thanks to staff. More details can be found in the Annual Report available on the QPIRG website.

Staff report - Administrative Coordinator – Ashley

As Administrative Coordinator, Ashley provides administrative support to the Board. This was a very active and successful Board; the Board was also very supportive of staff. The Board committees were very active. In addition to trainings, the Board held a visioning meeting to reflect and to strategize for the future. The Board reflected a good balance between community and student members. There were a number of resignations for personal reasons, but new people joined and they were able to keep a full board throughout the year. This is Ashley's second year working with the Board and again she learned a lot from Board members and about what works to support them. Both skills and relationships were built throughout the year.

The Policy Committee revamped and implemented the employee evaluation policy. It was a long process and labour intensive. The hiring policy was also revamped. Finally, the Policy Committee took recommendations made during the visioning process and wrote them up as proposed Constitutional amendments that will be voted on in the AGM tonight.

Study in Action took place last March and was very successful, including a well-attended opening plenary on global austerity and political repression. Many workshops and presentations throughout weekend, including performative art. Art in action component grew this year, and QPIRG is hoping to build this aspect more. The closing plenary was on community-based social justice research. Presenters came from other provinces and PIRG staff came from afar to observe and bring back ideas for their own PIRG.

A final note from all the staff. Tasha left after working for QPIRG for five years. Staff would like to recognize all her commitment and contributions to Concordia. Tasha remains active in QPIRG as a working group member. On the other hand, staff are happy and excited to have Noah join them. The transition from Tasha to Noah has been smooth; both did a fantastic job.

Staff report - Working group and programming coordinator – Jaggi

On the programming side, will just give a few highlights (more details can be found in Annual Report). The goal of programming is two-fold: reaching new students and deepening issues for existing activists. Some of the programming included Activism 101 and Community-based

Social Justice research workshops. The programming committee (Kyle and Tanya) helped organize events for newer folks such as a film screening series, skillshares, and, together with the Library Committee, a book launch series (with more to come this year).

The other part of Jaggi's work is supporting the working groups. Working groups are the heart of QPIRG Concordia. Last year there were thirty working groups and the highlights of their activities can be found in the Annual Report. Some are less visible than others, but in the QPIRG space, some of the behind the scenes work, for example work to support prisoners, is visible. For the first time this year, a working group journal was published, with contributions from each group, called *At the Heart of Resistance*. A new edition will be published in the new year. At this time of year, there is a transition in the working groups. There were twelve new applications this year, with twenty-two returning working groups. Six new working groups were accepted: Anarchist Tech Support; L'Association pour la liberté d'expression; Convergence des luttes anticapitalistes (CLAC); PROS&CONS: Drugs and criminal justice system; Right to the City; Termite Collective. During the visioning, new plans to encourage working groups to work together more made. Last year there was a working group social and this year there will be other efforts to encourage collaborations and exchanges among working groups. During the visioning, new plans to encourage working groups to work together more made. Last year there was a working group social and this year there will be other efforts to encourage collaborations and exchanges among working groups.

Convergence is a relatively new core project. It is a publication of social justice research that pulls together some material from CURE and Study in Action. It was produced for the first time last year (2010) and there is a new edition this year (2011). It is produced by a budding network of community-oriented social justice researchers on campus.

Jaggi helped coordinate Disorientation this year with Noah, who bottomlines Disorientation but had just come on as staff. Disorientation is a series of events over the course of week and the aim is to allow new students to access social justice events and networks on campus. Events ranged from a panel on radical education, tabling fair for working groups, workshops on theatre, and, together with a lot of campus and community allies, a street party at Norman Bethune Square to reclaim campus.

On a final note, it was really great to work with a lot of part-time staff this year, including Amir, Jessica, Yuseph, Siji, Dave, Rebecca, Kristin, Kerri, Alexandre.

Staff report - Finance and fund-raising - Noah

The details of finance can be found on page 26 of the Annual Report. To note some of the highlights: received grants for Disorientation; obtained work-study grants and summer job grants; Study in Action was supported by Academic Departments this year. Several Board members were on the Finance Committee this year. Jessica is the book-keeper and does a great job keeping accounts. Expenses went up this year, mostly because QPIRG did more. Expenses for projects, including the three publications, totaled \$36,000. Working groups received \$19,000.

Core project report- CURE - Siji.

Siji worked with Yuseph this year to coordinate CURE. CURE is to facilitate research projects between students and grassroots groups. This year's CURE was the biggest yet: more professors involved in cure, and excited to be involved; 65 community organisations involved

and many more in the process of developing projects. Some of the projects were included in Convergence journal and the Study in Action conference. CURE held a visioning meeting to figure out its direction. A new development was the formation of an Advisory Board, consisting of professors, students and community members. CURE has a new logo that has been launched and new publicity material; a website will also be launched soon. One of QPIRG's Working Groups, Radical Reference, has organized a research skills workshop, so that is coming up soon as well. The CURE Committee is made up of the Coordinators, Board members from McGill and Concordia QPIRGs and QPIRG staff.

Core project report - School Schmool - Kristin

Kirstin coordinated the School Schmool agenda with Kerri. This was the second year that QPIRG Concordia joined QPIRG McGill in the School Schmool project. This year they organized the agenda differently. It now has four sections: resources (e.g. mental health support, food, etc); articles and issues (introductions to various issues); group profiles; and the calendar. It is larger, and has more content. It is organized so that organizations are grouped according to themes and articles introduce the themes. There were fifty contributors, including artists. The agenda was featured in the Concordian and CKUT, which helped with promotion. With support from staff, School schmool fundraised to cover all printing costs, so they were able to offer School Schmool agendas on a donate-what-you-can basis.

Core project report - Resource library and poster archives - Dave

Two different staff worked on the library and poster project this year: first Rebecca and then Dave during the summer, from July to September. Dave worked with the library committee to order new books requested by library members. They also got new furniture to better house the Zine collection. More materials were catalogued in the alternative library database. Various promotion initiatives such as facebook and blog were undertaken and community media such as CKUT and CUTV featured the library. Work on the poster archives continued: more high resolution, scanned posters were put online and organized as a historical resource and archive of grassroots struggles in Montreal. There are plans to make the poster archives searchable by key words. It was lots of work, with a lot of great volunteers; hopefully work is continuing.

Core project report - Summer stipend project - Jean-Luc

Jean-Luc got a summer stipend project with Solidarity Across Borders. He is working on putting together a resource guide to fighting deportations in Montreal, based on experiences since 2003. The sections are: the immigration system; doing support work; direct actions; preparing for deportation; living underground (including accessing resources such as health care, and information about police racial profiling); and immigration detention. It should be coming out sometime soon.

Thanks all round to outgoing Board members, volunteers and staff!

Questions about reports

Q: Can the Centre Social auto-géré access posters online? also books?

A. Yes, posters are on the internet (qpirgconcordia.org/poster). And physical books are available from the library, not digitally.

Q: Can we get credits for doing CURE projects?

A. Yes it is possible and has been done. You have to get the agreement of the Professor you are working with.

Q. Why do you do the work you do?

A (staff). We recognize that we live in a world that has lots of injustice, and that opposing injustice is best done at the grassroots level from an anti-oppression perspective. So QPIRG is here to support people to do that.

A (member). It started with Ralph Nader as a way of doing research and mobilizing against injustice and to give different point of view from perspectives reflected in the media, since media sources have a systemic bias. QPIRG presents other side and works for social justice.

Q. Have there been attempts to resist or interfere with programming at Concordia?

A. QPIRG has a good community at Concordia, that welcomes and values groups like QPIRG. Of course, there is another vision of university, a corporate model, in which there is no room for decentralized organizations. However, we can't point to any resistance from the administration. We have strong internal processes, are transparent and very accountable to our membership. In general, we are concerned by how other PIRGs are being treated, in McGill and elsewhere, by university administrations as well as by people tied to the Conservative party. We are aware of what is possible at Concordia, but our response is to do our work really well. In general, Concordia is a place where people like this.

Q. Could you say more about Study in Action?

A. Study in Action is a student-led initiative. Originally, it was started by students who wanted to show-case their work to each other and connect it to grassroots organizing. QPIRG got more involved and it was eventually taken on as a QPIRG core project. It starts with an opening panel and undergraduates and community organizations are solicited to submit proposals for environmental and social justice presentations, workshops or art. Committee selects panels and workshops. Community-based social justice research is at its heart. The project is always looking for volunteers. This year's Study in Action will take place the first weekend in March.

Facilitator's note: The Annual Report will be available on line and at QPIRG all year and can be consulted for more details on all these reports.

4. Proposed constitutional changes

Facilitator explains process. Proposals will be presented, we can ask questions and then vote. Modifications cannot be made because changes would have had to have been posted thirty days in advance, according to the constitution.

The amendments came out of the Board's visioning meeting last June. The amendments were posted to the membership 30 days in advance and approved by the Board one month in advance. They can be seen in full at (<http://www.qpirgconcordia.org/?p=1713>). To be

adopted, constitutional amendments need 75% approval in an AGM.

Ashley presents proposed amendments.

A. In order to ensure that the constitution reflects current practice, proposed amendment to change “associate members” to “community members”. There are four references in constitution. Proposal is to change all.

B. In current constitution, there is a very brief reference to referendum procedures. This is here because of the fee levy structure; it was used for the original fee levy and subsequent raises in fee levy. The clause is out-of-date, vague and incomplete, and does not reflect the current situation at Concordia University vis-à-vis QPIRG Concordia and fee levy groups, particularly discussions by fee-levy groups concerning their autonomy from the CSU, GSA, and the administration. The new clauses on referenda outline clear procedures for both fee levy increases and other referenda, in a manner that protects QPIRG’s autonomy while maintaining transparency. It also reflects the current role of both the CSU and GSA. Proposal to remove existing paragraph and change to more detailed referenda procedures (outlined in full at <http://www.qpirgconcordia.org/?p=1713>).

C. The next amendment has to do with the timing of fee refunds. In practice, the opt-out period is set for the week after the drop-out deadline (last time students can drop courses without financial penalty) so that figures are final. However, the constitution sets up a process that means that it takes longer to return fees to opt-outs (waiting until QPIRG receives its funds from the university). This amendment better reflects when QPIRG would like to offer students their refund.

D. Amendments proposes to include more specificity as to when the Annual General Meeting will take place (sept, oct, nov, instead of just “the fall semester”). In addition, non-profit law stipulates a date if the date is not specific in Constitution.

Q. Request for clarification of #2. Does this mean that QPIRG will not be accountable to the university?

A. Like other non-profit organizations, QPIRG is accountable to its membership. What this change does is to reflect the fact that our membership is both grad and undergrad. In addition, if members ever want to run a referendum on other questions, not financial, there will be a process set out for members.

Process is that there will be a vote to adopt all four amendments. If that does not pass, then each resolution will be voted on separately.

MOTION TO ADOPT ALL FOUR AMENDMENTS: Graham. SECOND: Noam.

YES: 47. NO: 1. ABSTENTION: 0.

MOTION CARRIED.

5a) Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee Elections

Chief Returning Officer (CRO) is Roddy Doucet.

CRO explains the process for electing the Conflict Resolution and Complaints committee. The Committee consists of four QPIRG Concordia members, who have been members in good standing for at least one year. They cannot be staff or board and must be elected at an AGM. Their role is to be on hand to resolve conflict that staff and board cannot resolve. They follow a complaints and conflict resolution policy and procedure that is established and are trained.

CRO calls for new nominations.

Candidates present themselves:

•**Nora Butler Burke.** Nora has been on the committee for the last two years and recognizes the importance of this committee. She is a member of the Certain Days collective, a working group of QPIRG Concordia. She has been involved in QPIRG for eight years. She works at the community organization Cactus.

•**Laura Copeland.** (*Presented by Ashley, as Laura is stuck in a work meeting.*) Laura is running for the committee for the first time. She is a former board member who had to resign due to time constraints. She is familiar with procedures at QPIRG Concordia. She is interested in conflict resolution from an anti-oppression and social justice perspective. She is currently a graduate student.

•**Elizabeth Higgins.** Elizabeth was on the Board of Directors at QPIRG McGill. She works at Peoples' Potato. She is a member of Open Door Books. She has taken training by CoCo and had informal workshops at People's Potato in Conflict Resolution.

•**Kayle Towsley.** She can't continue on board but would like to still help out. She is part of a QPIRG working group, the childcare collective.

•CRO again asks for new nominations.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE NORA: Lydia. SECOND: Marie-Eve.

•Questions for Nora? *No questions for Nora.*

•MOTION TO NOMINATE LAURA COPELAND: Kyle. SECOND: Mubeenah

•MOTION TO NOMINATE ELIZABETH HIGGINS: Graham. SECOND: David.

•Questions for Elizabeth? *No questions for Elizabeth.*

•MOTION TO NOMINATE KAYLE: Cera. SECOND: Rushdia

•Questions for Kayle? *No questions for Kayle.*

Final call for new nominations.

Ballots are passed around by scrutineers to people with voting cards and CRO explains voting procedure: write in the candidate's name. If you oppose any candidate, circle no beside their names.

5b) Board of Directors Elections

A. Student positions

There are six student positions on the board. There are currently six people who've put their names forward for nomination.

Call for new nominations, from Concordia students only. One person puts herself forward. There are now seven nominations and it will be a competitive election.

Candidates present themselves:

Ian Bradley-Perrin Ian is an undergraduate in the Public and Oral history program at Concordia. He has been involved in organizing around Pervers cité and Radical Queer Semaine. He is also a volunteer with the Prisoner Correspondence Project.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Kayle. SECOND: Kali

•Questions? *No questions.*

Tanya. Tanya is introduced by Lydia. Tanya has been on the Board for a year and has been an active member of the programming committee. She helped organize IAW Concordia and is in Women's Studies at Concordia. She is interested in applying theory to practice.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Noam. SECOND: Claire

•Questions? *No questions.*

Kyle McLoughlin. Kyle is a returning board member. He is an undergrad in Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia. He joined in QPIRG on arrival in Montreal from the US. He has learned a lot and would like to run again to put in practice what he learned the first year.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Rushdia. SECOND: Anthony G.

Q: Where are you from?

A. From Chicago, in the Midwest of the US.

Q. Were you politicized before you arrived in Montreal or after?

A. Before.

Rushdia Mehreen. Rushdia is a graduate student. She would like to run as a grad student, to be a voice for graduate students at QPIRG. She is running because she wants to contribute to QPIRG and the community. She was on the Board last year. She is involved in Free Education Montreal, which is a working group of QPIRG.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Ben. SECOND: Elizabeth

Q. Is there a conflict between being on the Board and being a member of a Working Group?

A. (Staff answers) Board members stand aside in any decision relating to a Working Group of which they are a member. Board members must declare their interests and stand aside. The Board is very clear on conflict of interest and has clear procedures around that. On the other

hand, it is very useful to have Board members who have experience as working group members. It helps to keep organization coherent and bring the experience of board and working groups together.

A commendation of Rushdia from the floor.

Lydia Ould Brahim. Lydia is presented by Tania. Lydia has many skills and lots of experience to offer to the Board. She is a member of Recon, Open Door Books and used to work at QPIRG McGill. She is also really great to work with.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Samantha. SECOND: Elizabeth

Q: What do you study?

A. Chemistry and biology as an independent student. She is planning on going into nursing, and doing the pre-requisites at Concordia.

Christianne Kearns. Christianne is studying political science. She is interested in native rights and activism, that is what she would like to contribute. She was part of OPIRG. Concordia has a legacy to be proud of, is known in other PIRGs. At OPIRG, she tried to ban bottled water on campus and successfully raised debate on campus about privatization.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Tanya. SECOND: Lydia.

Q. What do you value in Montreal activism?

A. I have been in Montreal for two years and have been involved in NDP, as a paid organizer in the last election in Gatineau.

Q. Which PIRG were you involved in?

A. Ottawa U PIRG.

Q. Why did you come to Montreal?

A. She is a musician, so wanted to come for the music scene. Also wanted to come to French speaking community as she is Franco-Ontarian.

Erik Cippone. Eric is part of the Zeitgeist chapter. He made a number of points about capitalism (*minute-taker did not follow all of it*) and would like to propose a new economic system.

MOTION TO NOMINATE: Mike H. SECOND: Philippe.

Q. What does Zeitgeist, what does it do and what is it about?

A. Zeitgeist provides convincing evidence. It has produced some movies to present this and convince people that they are living in an illusion.

Q. What skills could you bring to the board?

A. He could bring extended knowledge, help to teach people to explain and defend

themselves. Core of activist group is about bonding. He is innovative and imaginative. This is his life so he is prepared to give a lot.

Q. What is the position of the Zeitgeist movement on political parties?

A. Politics is a matter of opinion. (*Minute-taker did not follow the answer, but no political party was mentioned and the gist seemed to be that zeitgeist would get behind a party that promoted what they thought made sense.*)

Q. Which committees would you like to participate in?

A. The event planning committee, whatever it is called.

Q. What kind of events would you be interested in helping to organize?

A. Research and skill-building. Events to inform people.

CRO asks for new scrutineer because Christiane is running. Tasha volunteers. Scrutineers pass out ballots to vote-holders and electoral officer explains that voters must write minimum of 1 and maximum of six names. If you don't want to support a candidate, just don't write the name; no need to circle "no".

B. Community Board Members

There are six community members of the board. There are currently six candidates.

Candidates present themselves.

Milena Gioia. Milena has just returned to Montreal from Ottawa where she was involved in RebELLEs. In their second year, Rebelles Ottawa became an OPIRG working group. This helped them to network and helped with funding. Now that she has moved back, she would like to be involved in PIRG. She is interested in feminism and a radical approach to mental health, "madness activism".

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Jean-Luc. SECOND: Nauss Steeves.

Q: What can you tell us about RebELLEs?

A. It is a pan-canadian network, a feminist group based on anti-capitalist and anti-colonial principles.

Taylor Lewis. Taylor was introduced to QPIRG through Study in Action. She was on a panel speaking on decriminalization of sex workers and was in the Study in Action collective. She has been part of the indigenous solidarity group and the childcare collective, both working groups at QPIRG. She is looking for new things to get involved in. She was working at QPIRG McGill.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Lydia. SECOND: Ed

Q. What were you doing at qpirg mcgill?

A. She was outreach and volunteer coordinator. Mandate was to link up student interests with

QPIRG. Did a lot of workshops and tabling.

Nauss Steeves. Nauss Steeves is involved in Anarchist Tech Support, which is tech activism, a working group at QPIRG. Nauss Steeves is involved in various kinds of activism throughout the city and is interested in knowing the basics of how QPIRG, an organization that offers a lot of support. Nauss Steeves has been involved in Queer eye convergence in Kingston and could help with computer based aspects of QPIRG.

MOTION TO NOMINATE: Cera. SECOND: Graham.

Kali Stull. Kali graduated and would like to stay involved. QPIRG is involved in many things and Kali is interested in learning about them. Kali wants to learn about how the organization works as well. At McGill, Kali was involved in Midnight Kitchen and learned a lot about collective structures, interested in learning more.

Q. What are Kali's plans if she is elected?

A. Currently she is involved in the Childcare collective and also Study in Action committee. She would lean more towards outreach. She might also like to be part of the finance committee, since there seem to be gaps there, and also because she would like to learn more about finances as well.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Kayle. SECOND: Milena.

Cera Yiu. Cera recently moved to Montreal, and started working at QPIRG McGill, where she was the community coordinator for Radfrosh. She learned a lot from that experience, made links with other organizations. She is now doing a contract at QPIRG McGill and SSMU to organize Culture Shock. She wants to run for board in order to become more involved in community and learn new skills. Before moving to Montreal she was at Guelph, where she was involved in an anti-authoritarian people of colour group. Her education in Women's studies.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Kayle. SECOND: Jean-Luc

Q. Currently part of any community groups?

A. No.

Q. Why are you interested in joining Board at Concordia and not McGill.

A. Currently not a student at either school. She would like to expand and try different ways of getting involved in the community. QPIRG Concordia is an avenue for getting involved in new things.

Jean-Luc St-Amour. Jean-Luc is involved in prison and migrant justice organizing. He would like to be able to help out with QPIRG.

Q. What QPIRG working groups are you involved in?

A. Recon and Solidarity Across Borders as well as Pros and Cons, a new group for prisoners related to drug charges.

•MOTION TO NOMINATE: Marie-Eve. SECOND: Kyle

CRO explains instructions as scrutineers circulate ballots to vote-holders: write one to six names. Circle no if you don't want someone.

6. Community Event Announcements

Many event announcements!

ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED.

Conflict Resolution Committee: NORA, LAURA, ELIZABETH AND KAYLE are elected.

Board, community positions: NAUSS STEEVES, CERA, MILENA, TAYLOR, KALI, JEAN-LUC are elected.

Board, student positions: RUSHDIA, CHRISTIANE, LYDIA, KYLE, TANYA, IAN are elected.

77. Adjournment

•MOTION TO ADJOURN: Noam. SECOND: Nadia.

CONSENSUS TO ADJOURN.