

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dean of Students

**FROM:** Mohammad Mustafa Javeri, Concordia University current undergraduate student

**SUBJECT:** Assessing the efficiency of Concordia University's Recreational/Sports and student union services

**DATE:** March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Here is the report, which you authorized on February 7<sup>th</sup> about the quality and effectiveness of Concordia Student Union and the Recreational/Sports department. The study involved a review of the initiatives taken and facilities available for recreational use as well as a thorough understanding of where the unions priority lies.

Although it is still finding its feet after an overhaul in administration, the Recreational/Sports department will look towards focusing on team mentality and unity with some help from the establishment in the form of smart investment. The Concordia Student Union on the other hand promotes peace, peer equality, a safe work environment as well as helping raise awareness on social matters. The CSU should also generate some more focus on minorities and student integration.

I am grateful towards those athletes who helped share their knowledge about Concordia's recreational facilities and sports as well as to the students in the CSU who gave their insights and provided me with valuable information.

I hope this report is sufficient in providing you with all the information needed to assess the quality and effectiveness of the CSU and Recreational/Sports department. If you have any questions or require any more information, please let me know. I may be reached at (514) 677-7630 and by e-mail at <[mustafa\\_javeri7@hotmail.com](mailto:mustafa_javeri7@hotmail.com)>. I look forward to discussing the recommendations and action plan with you.

**Enc.**

**ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONCORDIA STUDENT  
UNION AND THE RECREATION/ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT**

PRESENTED TO DEAN OF STUDENTS

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Athletics Complex (RA) at Loyola campus houses the hockey arena, gymnasium, outdoor playing fields and Stinger Dome. These facilities are modern and accessible. The Concordia Student Union is the unifying voice of the students which usually takes trivial matters into its own hands.

The Athletics Complex, as state of the art as it is, is only a shadow of the McGill sports complex which not only boasts more facilities but also greater accessibility. McGill also has a sound leadership of its Sports department which Concordia is suffering from. On the other hand, even though the CSU is a uniting force it does sometimes fail to satisfy. They seem to focus more on the worldly matters at hand than to focus on greater interaction of students.

To improve the efficiency of the Sports Department we must increase investment. That means new scouting networks and more grassroots initiatives. Furthermore, there must be greater participation and integration through competitive intramurals not just at Loyola but in Downtown as well. A change in philosophy for the Stingers is also necessary. The CSU should focus more of its energy towards creating a welcoming community for prospective Canadian students. More funds should be allocated towards the minority groups and initiatives such as safer policies and anti-rape/discrimination.

If put in to practice, the Sports department will surely reap the rewards in the long run. However, that requires stability. Higher participation rates through increased sporting activity in downtown will improve the chances of finding a top-class athlete. Greater community integration through CSU funded events would help athletes and students to interact and form bonds. This could help establish a loyal fan base giving athletes that added motivation.

We would love for these recommendations to be considered as they would overturn the fortunes of the Sports Department. The CSU would also increase in popularity if prospective students are handled with affection. If you would like to see a future Concordia alumni at the Olympics or the CSU successfully help further the bond amongst all students then this is the way to go.

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

To assess the shortcomings of Concordia University's athletics department and the efficiency of the student union.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This review paid attention to the following concerns:

- Lack of fitness facilities
- Change in management
- Strengthening community bonds and values
- Unity
- Discrimination
- Justice

It was particularly hard to find information on the Recreational and Athletics department of Concordia.

## SOURCES AND METHODS

- Concordia University newspaper
- News articles on recent Concordia Student Union activities
- Concordia and McGill's Athletics website
- Concordia Student Union website

## ANALYSIS

The findings of this study will be presented in eight categories: (1) **STIFF COMPETITION** (2) **PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES** (3) **TIMES AHEAD** (4) **UNITY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION** (5) **SAFETY PROCEDURES** (6) **ACTIVITIES** (7) **CATERING THE PEOPLE** (8) **SERVICES**

## RECREATION AND ATHLETICS

Concordia University offers its students a state of the art fitness facility (Le Gym) covering aerobics, martial arts, dance etc. with the latest equipment and experienced personalized trainers. However, it is the only gym in the downtown campus. The Athletics Complex (RA) on the other hand at the Loyola campus houses the hockey arena, gymnasium, outdoor playing fields and the Stinger Dome. PERFORM conditioning floor is also located at the Loyola campus giving students opportunities to train and take healthy weight programs. The Ed Meagher Arena is home to the Stingers ice hockey team and takes up intramural sports along with the gymnasium. Besides these arenas, two playing fields are also available namely; Sherbrooke field and Maisonneuve field.

## **STIFF COMPETITION**

Even though the University offers many facilities and training programs, there has been no notable sports alumni from Concordia University in the near past despite Quebec's long lasting reputation of integrating sports and studies.

The reason being its competitor, McGill University tends to offer more resources, history and confidence towards young athletes. For starters, Concordia has no Olympic sized swimming pools or tennis courts such as that of McGill's (Memorial Pool). Without an easily accessible and professional standard pool/tennis courts, prospective athletes who are looking to study at Concordia or earn a scholarship through swimming could get easily demoralized. Furthermore, Concordia's sports complex has no medical or neurological institute as opposed to McGill. That is a worrying sign as it highlights why Concordia are still lagging so far behind McGill in notable sports alumni. The absence of medical facilities at a sports complex not only damages its reputation, it also leads to waste of money, energy. Concordia University's recreation and athletics department must also think strategically about the location of its Athletics Complex and intramural tournaments. Apart from Le Gym, the bulk of all activities take place at Loyola which is not exactly close to the city centre. With the added pressure of studies, a student would prefer to travel a shorter distance to exercise rather than going towards the suburbs. In comparison, McGill's Percival Molson Stadium is centrally located and convenient to access.

## **PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

Despite its inferiority to McGill in the sports department, it would be wrong to say that the department is completely inefficient. Several programs and initiatives are taking place to help increase productivity and student confidence.

In early December 2016, Concordia University became one of nine schools to join the pan-Canadian Game Plan Education Network program. A product of the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network, the Game Plan offers student athletes more resources to help them succeed in both sports and education. This initiative is pivotal as it tries to promote unity amongst fellow Concordians. The personalized training gives athletes a sense of importance and confidence as well as stability amongst studies and sports. Guica (athlete in the article) even points out in the article that, "It would be nice if there was more networking for students who are athletes and aren't necessarily on varsity teams" (Litwin & Perez, 2017). Her concerns highlight the issue of a student base with not much unity. However, in the article by Kelsley Litwin and Alexander Perez they also point out how significant a role Quebec universities play to integrate sports and studies as mentioned by Elise Marcotte, "Quebec universities [have] always been really interested in supporting athletes" (Litwin & Perez, 2017).

Concordia University even started children sports camps again, bringing them back in 2015. This grassroots program not only aimed to encourage young athletes to get on the field but to give them a platform to showcase their abilities. The focus was to provide basic level training with an eye on strengthening community bonds. Ex Director of

Recreation and Athletics, Patrick Boivin hoped for his varsity athletes to showcase their skills during training and increase the reputation of Stingers as athletes and people. In the article “Children’s sports camps are back” (<<http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/stories/2015/03/10/childrens-sports-camps-are-back.html>>), Boivin talks about his wishes of broader community programming throughout the course of the next two years.

### **TIMES AHEAD**

The Recreation and Athletics Department had many more faults in it until Patrick Boivin took over and overhauled all the coaches as well as starting his own rebranding initiative. As Michael Boriero pointed out in the article, “Boivin wanted to make an impact as soon as he became director and saw a need to change the Stingers philosophy” (Boriero, 2017). He tried to instill fundamental values and create a completely new persona for the Stingers. These new beliefs did lead to a first ever and only team championship for Concordia’s men’s Rugby team in 2014. However, despite his resignation, Boivin believes he has left behind a legacy at Concordia that will bear fruit over the course of the next 2-3 years as he is quoted in the article, “I think the real impact of the changes that I was able to get people to buy into will be seen over the course of the next two to three years” (Boriero, 2017). Now it will be important to see how the Stingers cope with a change in system and the loss of great experience.

### **CONCORDIA STUDENT UNION**

The Concordia Student Union(CSU) is the highest student representative body which defends the rights of students. The CSU is extremely effective in letting its voice be heard over any sort of discrimination.

### **UNITY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION**

During the ongoing bomb scare on March 1<sup>st</sup> till the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the CSU came out in full support of its fellow Muslim Concordians. Despite many threats the CSU promised “coordinating with all relevant parties at Concordia University to ensure every student’s access and safety, and with the SPVM in their investigation” (Craig, 2017).

CSU even reminded the Muslim community of seeking support from services such as, “the CSU Advocacy Centre—which provides aid for students facing discrimination and violence—or the CSU Legal Information Clinic, which offers students legal information and referrals.” (Craig, 2017)

CSU and Muslim Student Association join hands against a proposed renovation in the Hall building at Concordia’s downtown campus. The lounges are not separated by any physical barrier hence it helps MSA generate mass numbers for Juma’ah prayer. “During the CSU’s monthly meeting on Feb. 8, the union welcomed Yann-Lazare Makayat Bouanga and Mohammed Allalou, two guest speakers from the MSA, to discuss their opposition to the proposed wall.” (Hunt, 2017)

“Since I started my mandate, the CSU has not been supporting BIPOC projects or initiatives or issues, or when they do support it, it’s very, very minimal, Sahrane said” (Hunt, 2017). CSU is looking to cater to the needs of the minorities by forming the first of its kind BIPOC committee. The committee will grant funds to BIPOC individuals and initiatives. “Sahrane also confirmed the committee will have an annual budget of \$15,000” (Hunt, 2017).

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

“The Concordia Student Union has asked their Finance Coordinator Adrian Longinotti to resign earlier today, for his “queerphobic and misogynistic” behaviour” (Caragay-Cook, 2016). This inappropriate behaviour violated the CSU’s safer space policies and forced CSU to take swift action sporting a zero-tolerance policy. Furthermore, it shows CSU’s stance towards gender equality and towards the safety of 51.9%(female) of all undergraduate students in the year 2015/16.

The CSU is taking strict measures to combat rape. The CSU consulted with the Centre for Gender Advocacy, McGill sexual assault policy and numerous online resources to help draft a safer space policy. “The policy will provide consent and power dynamics training to executives” (Fischlin, 2016). It will be provided by the Centre for Gender Advocacy or the Sexual Assault Research Centre. Out of 46644 students (2015/16), 47.25%(female) will be able to sleep tight at night.

## **ACTIVITIES**

Every year the CSU holds a street fair in the first week of school right beside the Concordia Hall Building on Mackay Street. The fair is a chance for Concordia to highlight its clubs and give students a chance to speak to club leaders.

CSU offers orientation during the first weeks of school every year with free music events during the day and parties during the night helping new students to make friends and enjoy at the same time.

For the first time since 2013, CSU will help winter students adjust into alien weather conditions and make friends easily. This however should be a constant for the CSU as it could really assist students through the depressive winter.

## **CATERING THE PEOPLE**

When Concordia University’s new Chief Financial Officer Denis Cossette announced an increase in tuition because of the school’s projected \$6.4 million deficit, the CSU created the Stop the Hike Ad-Hoc Committee. “As part of their positions book,

the Concordia Student Union is mandated to “oppose any increase in tuition fees and obligatory institutional fees for all students” (Morello, 2016).

A new nightly phone line service will be available to Concordia students. It is based on the McGill Student Nightline which has been operating since 1984. “It is a non-judgmental, confidential listening service for students for all purposes and all type of needs” (Morello, 2017)

The CSU has shown time and again that it is not afraid to stand up to the authority. In the March of last year, the CSU council passed a motion demanding Concordia to change a bylaw, “that could prevent students reprimanded for striking from sitting on the Board of Governors and Senate—two of Concordia’s most important decision-making bodies” (Caragay-Cook, 2016). The CSU once again is looking to stand up to injustice as these bylaws are not present in any other Quebec university as mentioned in the article, “These barriers exist [here],” he said. “They don’t exist throughout the province” (Caragay-Cook, 2016). However, if this law were to be passed it could encourage careless and reckless behaviour such as violent protests from future leaders.

## **SERVICES**

Besides their moral and vocal support, the CSU is extremely good at providing services such as the student bar Reggies, Hive Café and a daycare center on Bishop street with more than 70 children. The Café is non-profit and student run hence prices can be affordable. However, that does come at the expense of the taste according to many Concordians.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Recreation and Athletics department of Concordia University is lacking a leader, someone to guide them from mediocrity to greatness. To be compared to McGill while it’s obvious they need bigger and better facilities, Concordia needs and strong fan base/community to get a sense of school pride. While changes in management and countless initiatives may work in the short term, in the long term they need stability, a clear pathway and a new mindset. Whereas the Concordia Student Union is highly effective at student unity. They have developed a strong bond with student associations of all race, color and creed hence acting as their voice of reason. From protesting rises in tuition to organizing events to challenging workplace ethics, the CSU is always catering to your needs or at the very best fighting for them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RECREATIONAL AND ATHLETICS**

- With greater accessibility and integration of university facilities more students will opt towards outdoor activities.
- Introducing new sports such as sailing, swimming and tennis would increase student options and cater to individual students demands.
- Establishing a substantial scouting network of professional individuals
- Invest on the future hopes by starting grassroots initiatives
- Offer more sports scholarship
- Need for a role model for prospective students to look up to
- greater transparency in team selection
- More budget to be allotted → bring in experienced highly qualified individuals
- Organize health and fitness education classes that are compulsory
- Promote competitive intramurals through cash incentives or rewards

### **CONCORDIA STUDENT UNION**

- Improve food services at Hive Café
- Organize more events involving prospective students throughout the year
- Create a mobile application rather than a helpline service as that would benefit many Concordia students
- More focus on minorities and their issues

## REFERENCES

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### **Catering the people**

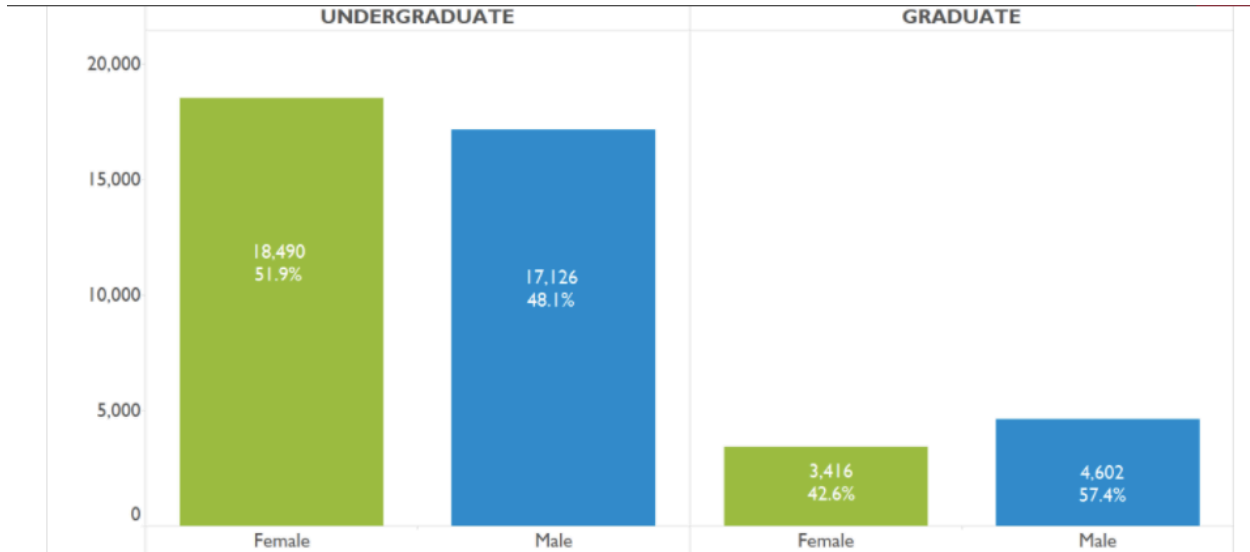
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# APPENDIX A

## Enrollment in Courses Offered for Credit by Gender 2015/16



Data Table

Enrolment in Courses Offered for Credit by Gender		%	
<b>Female</b>	<b>21,906</b>		
Undergraduate	18,490	51.9%	
Graduate	3,416	42.6%	
<b>Male</b>	<b>21,728</b>		
Undergraduate	17,126	48.1%	
Graduate	4,602	57.4%	

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS CAMPUS:** Le Gym

Activities include:

- Aerobics
- Spinning
- Dance
- Fitness and Recreation
- Martial Arts
- Personal Training
- Recreational Sports

### **LOYOLA CAMPUS:** Loyola Athletics Complex

Activities include:

- Intramural
- Yoga in the Chapel
- Kendo and Laido
- Badminton
- Open times for Students

Facilities include:

- Ed Meagher Arena
- Stinger dome
- Athletics Complex (Stadium, fields and gymnasium)
- PERFORM Centre