

SAF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 28th, 2020

[ONLINE]

Meeting Time: 13:00—15:00

Meeting Facilitator: Sebastián Di Poi

Meeting Minute Taker: Alexia McKindsey

Members in attendance:

Sebastián Di Poi (SAF)

Oliva Champagne (SAF)

Rebecca Black (SAF)

Ariel Dabora (SAF)

Courtney (SAF)

Katherine Parthimos (FASA)

Payton Mitchell (ASFA)

Holly Mark-Hilton (CSU)

Brett Cox (SC)

Krista Jäger (GSA)

Stefan Hodges (Student-at-large)

Roy Singer-Shay (CSU Council)

Members absent:

Timir Baran Roy

Jordan Landers (CASA)

1. Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

- Sebastián reads land acknowledgement.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 26th, 2020 meeting minutes:

- Moved by: Katherine
- Seconded by: Krista

- *Motion passed*; all approved.

3. Review and Adoption of Agenda

Motion to approve the September 28th, 2020 agenda:

- Moved by: Stefan
- Seconded by: Krista
- *Motion passed*; all approved.

4. SAF General Updates

a. **Finance Update**

i. Financial Coordinator Introduction

- Courtney is SAF's new finance coordinator!
 - Recently graduated and is originally from England, now living in Montreal and is excited to start at the SAF!

ii. FC Transition Plan

- Courtney and Ariel will spend the next few weeks training:
 - Started this morning with payroll and introduction.
 - Learning the various systems—Slack, Zoom functions, Quickbooks and Desjardins.
 - Financial updates, AGM presentation, budget-to-actual for the winter semester.
 - Handbook—retention document for tips and tricks Ariel has picked up working for the SAF.
- Both Courtney and Ariel will be co-organizing the next finance committee meeting, attending the AGM and the next Board of Director's meeting.

iii. Fee-Levy Update (Fall'20) - **Fall'20 Revenue Tab**

- Total Fall fee-levy revenues: ~\$98,000
 - 5% higher than we budgeted.
 - ~\$102,000 total actual.
- The budget was made thinking fee-levies were going to decrease this year.

- ECSA, FASA, CASA enrolment increased.
- Historical comparison—\$3,500 higher than usual.
- Visualization diagram (percentage of revenues from each faculty):
 - CSU: Represents independent students—saw a decrease in independent students.
 - ASFA: 46% of fee-levy revenues (undergraduate)
 - CASA: 22%
 - ECA: 18%
 - FASA: 11.9%
- Undergraduate fee-levy: 25¢ per credit (92% of revenues received).
- Graduate fee-levy: \$1.25 per semester.
- Previously forecasted a global deficit of \$5,600.
 - Increase in revenues will bring that deficit closer to a break-even.
- SAF will receive \$220,000 in fee-levy revenues for the entire year if the 5% enrolment increase holds up.
 - Fall fee-levy revenues are the largest.
 - Winter fee-levy revenues forecasts \$87,000.

iv. Opt-outs update

- Opt-outs: \$2,500 - \$3,000.
 - 1.1%—consistent with preliminary budget consumption.
 - 1,100 students opted-out—the most SAF has ever received.
 - Budgeted that 1000 students would opt-out—actual number is higher.
 - Will look on quantifying the exact opt-out amounts by the next Board meeting.
- Opt-outs were done centrally this year—students were given a form where they were able to click on which fee-levies they wanted to keep.
 - The first day the form was available, we saw the most opt-outs.
 - Opt-outs will not affect things too much, but something to keep in mind as Concordia will most likely stay online for the Winter semester.
- Fee-levy revenues are overall solid now.
 - Revenues are driven by enrolment.
 - Opt-outs to monitor with caution.
- Overall expense are pretty predictable for the year.
- Feel free to send any questions you may have about revenues or the budget to Ariel!

b. Strategic Directions update

- The SDC has been meeting over the past three months.
 - The last meeting grappled with last strategic direction.
 - Started working on sub-directions—not fully finalized.
 - These will give us an idea of the core directions SAF is looking at from 2020-2023.

i. Vision

- Vision: If you have fulfilled your mission as an organization, what does the world you created look like?
- Vision formulated by the SDC:
 - ‘SAF envisions an inclusive and collaborative University support system where student-led projects across all faculties achieve a more sustainable, more equitable future’.
 - Open to everyone for feedback!
- Olivia: The bulk of this meeting will be to discuss these Strategic Directions as we only have two projects to review for funding.
- Brett: Supports vision statement—interested in the conversations that lead up to it and how the committee came up with the part mentioning inclusivity.
 - Seb: We wanted to reflect on how SAF collaborates with the university—we ultimately support sustainable projects, but we are also entering into more formal support systems with the university.
 - Seb: SDC discussed SAF’s impact and influence on the community (funding programs through Bâtiment 7 came up as an example) and COVID-19 restricting project’s access to campus. SPC decided to open ourselves up to supporting projects with an outlook in their communities.
 - Seb: Looking back on the minutes there is a version of the vision mentioning stakeholders (admin, faculty, community members, alumni, etc).
 - Seb: SDC discussed the wording and difference between diversity and inclusivity—understanding that sustainability is very whitewashed and has colonist implications. We want to reach a diversity of students (not just in different fields of studies, but different people as well)—understanding Montreal is a diverse place, but there are barriers to working within sustainability and working on those barriers is what we want to move towards.
 - Brett: Really enjoys that.
- Olivia: Still doesn’t like wording of achieving ‘a more sustainable, more equitable future’.

- Seb: The idea with this was to work towards being more sustainable and more equitable, but understanding that we will never achieve a fully sustainable or equitable future.
- Olivia: Understands, but still think there's a better way to word that.
- Q (Olivia): Are we making the vision public? A (Seb): The vision and mission statement will be public alongside each other—we haven't had a formal vision published prior to today.
- Seb: We can tweak the wording of this amongst the staff while still maintaining the same focus.

ii. Mission

- Mission:
 - 'To build an inclusive culture of sustainability at Concordia by enabling, supporting and financing projects that tackle interconnected environmental, social and economic issues.'
- Added: 'Inclusive' in the intention of making sustainability accessible to all people at Concordia.
 - SDC felt this was lacking in the sustainability field.
- Katherine, Holly, Payton, Brett approve of the vision and mission statements.

c. Minutes from previous SDC meeting

- Strategic Directions and sub-directions the SDC decided on:
- (1) Improve support and resources for projects with long term impacts.
 - Creating networking opportunities for student project leaders.
 - Support project leaders with grant writing.
 - Expand project support through offering workshops and mentorship opportunities.
 - Connecting experiential learning opportunities (consensus not reached).
 - Ensuring stable administrative and faculty support for projects (consensus not reached).
 - Sub-directions were formulated according to the project support survey.
 - Seb: We are still trying to figure out what the mentorship opportunities will look like—trying to learn from other organization that do similar work (JSEC as an example).
- (2) Increase the accessibility and engagement of social sustainability at Concordia.

- Expanding our metrics to measure socio-economic impact.
- Promoting and prioritizing initiatives that challenge whiteness, colonialism, and capitalism.
- Creating spaces to communicate with our stakeholders about relevant social issues (consensus not reached).
- Lobbying the university for great social sustainability (consensus not reached).
 - SDC discussion: How can we be better at supporting and highlighting social sustainability and how can we measure their success?
 - Goal is to challenge ourselves in evaluating and measuring the success of socially sustainable projects.
- **(3) Enhance the resilience of the SAF**
 - Allocate more resources towards staff capacity (hours, wages, benefits).
 - Diversify funding sources of the SAF.
 - Collaborating with other groups on campus to reduce siloes.
 - Enhancing communication throughout the university to reduce overlap and project redundancy (consensus not reached).
 - This direction looks inwards towards the organization.
 - Living Labs partnership will need a lot more work from our staff members—staff will have to grow with that.
 - Staff supporting each other and projects is also necessary.
 - Focus on diversifying our own fundings so we can support more projects and our own growth.
- **(4) Strengthen support and accountability for student involvement in community initiatives.**
 - Consensus not reached—no sub-directions formulated yet.
 - SDC spent the longest time on this direction.
 - Main idea: How can SAF continue to support projects and have an impact on the surrounding the communities of Concordia given the current pandemic?

- Seb: Fee-levies come from student's money, so the typical priority of fee-levy groups is to use that money on student and university initiatives, striving for as much of an impact as we can have.
- Olivia: Conflicts arose with this direction—how do we encourage students to work within the community without it feeling like an academic experiment on these communities. We want to avoid negative situations arising from this—students being exploited by the community & the community being exploited by students. Does anyone get any red flags from this?
- Q (Ariel): In terms of accountability measures, is there a specific financial metric that would say 50% of fee-levies has to go to project funding, for example? Making a metric like that could help with accountability and make it so that it's not just directional.
A (Seb): Yes—internally we would develop these measures. These measures wouldn't be published to the public but set as goals for ourselves that can be publishable after we see results.
- Brett: This is a great direction. Loves aspects regarding support and accountability, although they can be complicated seeing out. In terms of engagement within community initiatives and internships, it would be good to make sure students are treated ethically and valued and that the relationship is reciprocal and fair). For accountability—there is a historical and ongoing negative relationships between communities and universities—colonist implications. Getting away from that is great and will take a lot of work.
- Brett: A sub-direction to think about could involve trying to partner with professors and classes that have community internships as part of their courses. The support side of these are typically managed by the professor.
- Seb: The first phase of accountability is put on SAF when we receive a project application—we can further support this by emphasizing the dynamic of communities carrying out & leading the work they are trying to do, while students help them out with their resources rather than leading or dictating those community initiatives.
- Stefan: Our SDC discussions grappled with these ideas—Rebecca asked in one SDC meeting 'what measures are we using to be accountable of the community and students?'. Brett is right, it will take a lot of work to do and SAF will need some sort of other

partnership or framework to support this kind of work. We need to mention this in the sub-directions and ensure that it gets done.

- Reb: Having a third party person to help us with these accountability measures would be ideal—Bâtiment 7 is a partnership with the Office of Community Engagement. SAF is hands off and the Office is, instead, accountable to that community.
 - Seb: Office is the anchored presence. We have a contact who works out of the Office directly on the field with the Leadership Council at Bâtiment 7—this is a solid model that has had some tough points in the past but ultimately met the needs of that community.
- Seb: This is not to say that SAF will take on another partnership like this, but we are opening up to the possibility of supporting student’s communities.
- Seb: SDC discussions considered what ‘community’ means given the current COVID-19 context. In order for SAF to stay within its scope, the SDC decided that community engagement needs to stay within the Montreal community.
 - Stefan: This is not including students directly outside of Montreal (suburbs, etc.).
- Seb: SDC considered including the wording of ‘local’ community initiatives to this direction—but ultimately decided not to.
 - Seb: We don’t expect to receive a large influx of projects too outside of this scope once we open our platform up to this. Feels like it’s clear what SAF’s scope is without directly putting ‘Montreal’ into the wording of the direction.
- Seb: Our focus is to ensure that there are clearly laid out accountability measures put in place when choosing the right projects and ensuring there is followup once those projects have been funded.
- SDC meeting minutes will be available to the Board for reading.

4. Committee Updates

a. **Marketing/Outreach**

i. AGM date

- AGM will be held on October 29 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm.

- Will start advertising it next week.
- We want to fill some seats on the Board—get in touch with your friends who would want to sit on the Board!
- AGM will be hosted on Zoom and will include fun giveaways!
 - Wants to make sure that we can make quorum.
- Working on figuring out a good voting platform.
- If you have fun ideas for the AGM, please let Rebecca know!
- Seb: We are developing our annual report to be presented at the AGM—due Oct 15. An email will be sent out to all committee chairs, asking them to write up a summary of the work they did this past year.
- *Rebecca leaves meeting at 1:59 pm.*

b. SPC

- Didn't receive that many projects this month (project peak is in October and February).
- Went through more administrative check-ups in the SPC meeting.

i. [Project Showcase video](#)

- Two online networking events were held this month.
 - They are uploaded onto YouTube and available for watching.
 - Showcases very passionate project leaders! Interesting to hear their perspectives and connections made.

ii. [KPI summary report \(last call for feedback -welcome to leave comments throughout!\)](#)

- KPI summary report is about to be finalized—will be on SAF's website in the next month or so.
- 2019-2020: Summarized impact and other metrics used to evaluate the projects we received this past year.
 - Board can see how their decisions have resulted in these metrics.
- Last call for feedback, Olivia would love to hear from everyone! If you have any suggestions, comment in the KPI report and it can be integrated into the next report.
- Seb: Olivia has put a lot of work into this, so please give feedback!

iii. [\\$57,724 remaining this fiscal year \(excluding 40k reserved for living labs\)](#)

- Project by expenses summary.
- Living Labs funding will be passed in the next couple of months.
- This may not seem like a lot of money, but we haven't allocated that much in project funding this year.

c. Fincomm

- See finance update above.
- Fincomm didn't have an official meeting in the last month with hiring underway.
- Heads up for a meeting coming within the next week.

d. HR

i. New hire!

- Past HR committee work has revolved around the new hire—callout, interviews, hiring committee, etc.
- Happy to have Courtney on board!
- Staff evaluations will be done in the next month.

6. Project Funding Allocation (3)

\$97,723 left to allocate (\$6,000 being requested this month).

Project 1: CEED

- Requesting \$1,000.
- SPC recommends full funding.
- Presented by Payton.
- SPC meeting didn't reach quorum—couldn't make a funding decision on this project.
- Payton: We received this project earlier in the Summer where the Board found that the project was asking SAF for a lot of funding when they had a large surplus leftover in their budget.

- Project consists of a documentary analyzing, challenging and critiquing the narrative surrounding Black lives and communities across Montreal and Canada in order to offer a candid view into the lives and communities of Black people.
- SAF would pay \$1,000 for videography—SDC expressed concern over what the exact contents this would entail.
- Q (Stefan): Seems like a good start. Is this is reapplication? A (Seb): Yes.
- Seb: If we decide to push back the decision again, it will be pushed back to the end of October.
- *Roy enters meeting at 2:03 pm.*
- Brett: Loves this project—very well done and the funding request is very reasonable. Only feedback would be to ask for a further breakdown of the videographer expense—this doesn't have to be a reason to not fund them, however.
- Stefan: Enjoys that the \$1,000 is for videography training—it makes sense to have a budget for that. The breakdown of that expense is not specific but [Stefan] would be cautious about post-posing the application back to next month.
 - Seb: We do have the option to ask for more information but if it's not a deal breaker, we can move forward with funding.
- Info from Olivia:
 - Request is to fund filmmaking workshops.
 - 2 x 4 hours of preparation & 3 x 4 hours of workshop time.
 - Different themes and topics of each workshop are listed.
 - Not the most detailed in terms of how the expenses per category are broken up but they do include the hours.
 - Seb: Could be a 1:1 ratio for preparation and actual workshop time.
- Q (Krista): Where are they presenting this film? Do they have a date established? A (Seb): They are presenting the film next year—shooting will take place in the Fall and editing will happen in the Winter.
 - Stefan: The project application states it is tentatively planed for next year and they will post the documentary to CEED's youtube page.

- Seb: CEED is very involved in the Concordia community and also extends past the Concordia community—they hustle a lot to get new projects going, improving their efforts in connecting with new students and people, etc.
- Brett: Concerning the videographer expense—in terms of [Brett’s] own familiarity with workshop facilitation fees, 4 hours of workshop is a lot especially given that they are working through an anti-oppressive lens and with videography. Feels like their request is justified.
- Stefan: Concerns previously expressed doesn’t stop [Stefan’s] support for this project.
- Katherine: Feels confident with that price point and offering the project full funding.

Motion to allocate full funding of \$1,000 to CEED.

- Moved by: Katherine
- Seconded by: Brett
- *Motion passed*; all in favour.

Project 2: Shoe Leather

- Requesting \$5,000.
- SPC recommends full funding
- Presented by Brett.
- Project is initiated by Concordia students, alumni and community members.
- Project consists of an ecologically responsible community art initiative supporting emerging artists, ecologically responsible community art practices and breaking down isolation through the distribution of printed artworks.
- Based on practice of social-solidarity through creative communication—responding to isolation caused by the pandemic.
- Subscriptions are offered on a free or by-donation basis.
- SPC was very impressed by this project—they are using different sources to make sure the art is all ecologically sustainability (soy-based inks, recycled products, etc.).
- Expenses:
 - \$5,670 in printing fees—receipt is attached to the application.
 - 4 x \$150 are being given to four project leaders.
- SPC didn’t find any additional problems with the application.

- Katherine: Supports this project—feels it is strong and thorough. As an emerging artist, [Katherine] sees the value that this project brings to the artists and the community.
- Q (Stefan): Sees that they have a plan for canvassing members to sign up members to their subscription service through different student associations. How are they deciding what artists they work with? Wants to avoid the possibility that they selected and are working with their own friends.
 - A (Seb): Thinks the artists have been predetermined, unsure about the selection process.
 - Katherine: Doesn't get the impression that this project would do that, especially given how low their honorarium requests are—knowing who the artists are is definitely something we could question them on.
- Q (Roy): Should knowing who the artists are impact our decision?
 - A (Stefan): Doesn't think so—that is not up to us to decide.
 - Stefan: It's a great thing to fund the distribution of these artist's work, but if we're using student's fee-levy money to fund this initiative, we should ensure that those same students got the opportunity to submit their art to be featured in this project.
- Q (Seb): Would we feel more comfortable funding this project if we know the artists are students?—this project application doesn't explicitly say that the artists are students.
 - Q (Stefan): Would feel more comfortable with that. In [Stefan's] past experience in music (playing in a band), engagement and connections can be typically done through your own personal network of friends—wants to avoid that with this project.
- Brett: Enjoys project overall—project engages an outward community as well as Concordia students (in terms of subscribers). Understands where Stefan is coming from and it would be nice to have that clarification—that would seal the deal.
- Payton: There's a group that reached out to ASFA—led by JMSB students that is partnering up with FASA, ASFA, CSU and EDM and consists of a subscription based service to sell original student art to other people.
 - Payton: This information may not be relevant, but there is overlap in people doing these kinds of projects right now.
 - Seb: This is important to keep in mind.
- Q (Seb): Do we see value in this if there was no student artists involved in this project?

- A (Katherine): Still sees value in this project, in terms of reaching an audience greater than Concordia.
- Project states they are only taking 6 artists given how small of a team they are—with a project this big, it's hard to take on more than that amount of artists.
- Seb: If there is a majority support for this project, we could also include a note encouraging Shoe Leather to support emerging student artists as much as possible.
 - Stefan: Grievance isn't about the artists being students, it's about the accessibility of this project to student artists.
 - Stefan: This could be overreaching for SAF—would involve project having an application process put in place to select artists.

Motion to allocate full funding to Shoe Leather.

- Moved by: Katherine
- Seconded by: Holly
- *Motion passed*; Roy, Katherine, Brett, Payton in favour; Stefan & Krista abstain.

Funded \$6,000 worth of projects this month—\$91,723 remaining in allocations budget.

7. Community Announcements & Ancillary Items

- Brett: Sustainable Concordia's AGM is happening this Wednesday at 5:30 pm—please attend so we can make quorum!
 - Includes great raffle prizes!

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the September 28th, 2020 meeting.

- Moved by: Brett
- Seconded by: Roy
- *Meeting adjourned at 2:29 pm*