Committee on Student Services
Wednesday, January 11, 2017: 2:00 – 4:00 PM
James, 302

Present:
Jim Fyles (Co-Chair), Dorothy Apedaile (Co-Chair), Vera Romano, Cynthia Tang, Ian Simmie, Erin Sobat, Axel Hundemer, Lina Di Genova, Martine Gauthier, Kyla Hosie (secretary)

Absent or regrets:
Andrew Dixon, Nathalie Cooke, Tamara Western, Muhammad Wali, Dusica Maysinger, Elaine Patterson, Jenny Ann Pura, Nihal Mandanna C.P., William Cleveland, Amanda Montaque

Meeting called to order at 2:12

1. Approval of Agenda
Agenda approved as circulated

2. Approval of Minutes
Minutes from December 12, 2016 meeting approved as circulated

3. New Business
   a. Innovation Fund Reports (sustainability)

   Discussion regarding the sustainability of innovation fund projects. If the students are going into a referendum on student fees, S2 needs to show the students what we are doing for them and how it is sustainable. How can we sustain ongoing projects that have less tangible, qualitative deliverables? Progress/final reports for Innovation Fund projects are an opportunity to review the projects. How can funding be built into in Student Services budget for these initiatives?

   J. Fyles noted the lack of a clear exit strategy for the Innovation Fund; if we develop a new initiative through the Innovation Fund and it looks good, how do we determine where it fits alongside ongoing programs and how it can be adopted?

   I. Simmie noted there needs be discussions with HR and Finance about how to work it into existing budgets. Processes haven't been put in place.

   I. Simmie explained the three innovation fund projects that CL&E has undertaken (Campus Incubator, Off-campus and Commuter Student Support, Student Information Services Network). Discussion ensued regarding what the outcomes of the projects are and what process will allow
the networks to carry on. There is a need to reduce the burden of people doing the core training (ie. webinars vs workshops)

E. Sobat noted the opportunities to expand certain projects (ie. support for students from a foster home). There is a strong community of students involved in sustainability but the Office of Sustainability struggles to connect with themes. The range of what is being provided by students is huge, needs continued investment by university to ensure these programs are maintained. Baseline fund from S2: what kind of investment is needed?

V. Romano asked how to create more formal connections of people doing the heavy lifting and how can those relationships be clearer and included in the overall design moving forward? Agreed that we need to simplify the process.

I. Simmie noted the development of UG skillsets will help with coherence and coordination of different topics. Also will help with the students receiving training. Students and student groups need to know who they can rely on for training and professional development.

L. Di Genova asked how will the networks will be followed? Sometimes peer groups are active for a month then disappear. Or admin units may say they can support an initiative but for only 1 month. We need to look at intensity and memberships of the communities that we are serving. We need to ensure sustainability.

V. Romano noted that autonomy is important, and groups need input in design. This is not a streamlined process. UG skillsets as model: it’s a liaison hub, doesn’t develop their own programming.

Project leads need to think concretely about required resources.

For the Ask McGill Project, I. Simmie noted that some of the ongoing needs are already in budget but need to figure out how it can be maintained. Looking at providing pop-ups during certain times of the year. Hope was that we could increase the presence (not just Brown Building but finding staff to sit at other kiosks).

E. Sobat noted this is important but that it is more of as an institutional/SLL project. Wayfinding and access to accurate information is important. Room for expansion to faculties, and student association offices. This should be a long term goal.

Student Housing shifted commuter support to CL&E and it needs to be approached differently. After doing the check-ins with commuter students and stakeholders, we have a better idea of what commuters want. Conversations have been held with housing and residence staff as to whether some initiatives they are doing can be better. People saw this as a communications
project. Messaging wasn't tailored to that audience (commuters), should tailor the communications and content.

D. Apedaile noted the difficulty to find the right experts to work on these short term contracts.

E. Sobat asked about spaces for commuter students (ie. crash pads for students to stay overnight). Is there an opportunity for this/has there been conversations with residences?

I Simmie: this is something we can explore.

M. Gauthier voiced concerns regarding how do we decide if a project is sustainable and how? Student Services is running an operational deficient, we do have a surplus but every year we are running a deficient. Important to get clarity on what is happening internally before we can commit. What is the criteria for a project to be operationalized? Who makes that decision? CSS? Are we using this funding to bolster what we (StuServ) should be doing? Deadline is coming and it is scary that we don’t have criteria, assessment in place.

L. Di Genova noted C. Piperni (interim Sr. Director) did approve money to go towards assessment.

E. Sobat noted that some innovation fund projects could find funding from other sources (ie. Cousins and possible government funding).

V. Romano noted that many of these projects represent needs of vulnerable populations. We have a high demand in Student Services around answering the needs of vulnerable populations.

This discussion needs to be continued and sustainability is something to keep in mind when reviewing the SSIF applications.

b. CL&E Student Feedback and Engagement

A document was circulated which outlines the level of student feedback in various initiatives. Discussion ensued regarding the lack of a CL&E advisory board and with questions ask about how everything comes together for all the programming/projects that CL&E undertakes. Some people noted that Advisory Boards provide an opportunity for vision dialogues but that a lot of the content is overlapping.

c. Vote on student co-chair (information from Secretariat)
Jim Fyles noted that the nomination committee appoints the academic staff as a co-chair and the student co-chair should be voted on by all members (not just the student members).

4. Senior Director’s Report
Discussion regarding the role of CSS.

The new Senior Director of Student Services, Martine Gauthier, wants more clarity on the purpose of CSS. Wants to review the Terms of Reference. Martine asked about the role of faculty members. A. Hundemer noted that he feels detached from committee as he doesn't deal with many issues being discussed, doesn't have opinion because he is not involved. Many people noted that it is important to have the experience of faculty members and their perspective.

E. Sobat said that he made a point to the Secretariat that the background of faculty members should be important (some faculty members are more involved in StuServ so it's better to involve them)

M. Gauthier sees the potential of this committee with various stakeholders, really wants to define roles and expectations.

It was noted that the on-boarding for new members should include an orientation.

There was no other business

Meeting adjourned at 3:50.

NEXT MEETINGS:

Tuesday, February 21 | 1:30-3:30 PM | Brown, 3001
Wednesday, March 15 | 2:00-4:00 PM | James, 301
Monday, April 10 | 1:30-3:30 PM | Location: TBA