



MAX BELL SCHOOL

Public Policy Association of Graduate Students

MID-TERM UPDATE

2020



THANK YOU

**CATHERINE
STACE**

**CHRISTOPHER
RAGAN**

**NICHOLAS
SALTER**

**PEARL
ELIADIS**

**ACKNOWLEDGING YOU FOR YOUR TIME,
SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT
THIS INAUGURAL YEAR.**

PPAGS EXECUTIVE TEAM 2020-2021



MAX BELL SCHOOL

Public Policy Association of Graduate Students



FOREWORD

As students of public policy, student government provides a unique opportunity to practice what we learn in class and exhibit the behaviour we hope to see from political representatives. In setting this high standard for our association, one of our principal goals is to bring more accountability from PPAGS to the student body.

We are taking an integrated approach to achieving this; we are launching our new website to provide a space for you to connect with PPAGS, we will be sending regularly scheduled news blasts containing information relevant to you and we have set up monthly leadership meetings with the Max Bell School in order to build a coordinated effort towards improving the cohort experience and responding to challenges in this dynamic new normal.

Nearing the halfway point of the academic year, we would like to introduce one more way that we are expanding our communications and accountability. This midterm report features first-hand contributions from each of your representatives detailing what they have accomplished in the first half of the academic year and what their plans are going forward.

In late June we will present a final report, including final budgets and progress updates on our accomplishments for the year. We hope this tool helps the 2020-21 cohort better understand the work undertaken by PPAGS, and we are optimistic that future executive councils will also consider producing similar documents during their mandate.

It's a special year. Thank you for your continued support and good luck next semester!



GOVERNING DURING A PANDEMIC

Creating a platform to enhance advocacy, experience and engagement for students at the Max Bell School came with a new set of challenges in this new normal. Despite not having access to a physical office, screentime burnouts and our academic commitments the team rallied together to champion the victories we highlight in this report.

As we continue to represent your rights and advocate for you we are placing a focus on integrating mental health and the international student experience at the center of our agenda. It's a special year for a special group and we will continue to make it worthwhile.

MILESTONES

Constitution

Successfully ratified our Constitution to establish PPAGS on October 7 2020 becoming the first student association to be represented at the McGill University Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group in the history of the school.

Leadership Meetings

Confirmed school interest in providing direct funding to PPAGS and successfully increased student participation in school governance through appointment of a student member in the Search Committee for the Diamond-Brown Chair in Democratic Studies at McGill University.

LOOKING FORWARD

Final Report and Successful Transition

Working with the Executive Team to ensure continued accountability and a successful hand-off to next year's executive team.

Flagship Events

Championing our guest speaker series and the inaugural PPAGS Case Competition spearheaded by the executive body in the Winter and Spring terms.

Presidents, Anil Wasif & Jonathan Lesarge



BRIDGING BORDERS

Becoming a resource for international students, providing you with useful information and managing initiatives to promote your integration with respect to your cultural identity are the central goals driving my work for the year.

This year I plan to represent and facilitate your access to available resources of interest, in special consideration to the implications of COVID-19 on your academic and social experience at the Max Bell School of Public Policy.

MILESTONES

International Student Database

A comprehensive database containing information on international students to enable us to serve you better in the spirit of inclusion and integration.

International Student Survey

Survey to identify gaps in the international student experience at Max Bell School.

LOOKING FORWARD

International Student Resource Book

Your guide to resources while you're attending the Max Bell School. Whether you are near and far the guide can help you unlock your potential during your time as a student.

International Student Engagement Strategy

Working with executives to integrate the international student experience in our flagship events and social affairs.

Director of International Student Affairs,
Gina Maldonado



TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

This year I aim to develop "well being advocates" via diverse workshops and events in my role as a student resource for navigating mental health and wellness needs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing will be put at the core of every activity conducted by the Association in order to support you mentally and physically throughout the academic year.

MILESTONES

Mindfulness & Yoga

Successfully organized the first remote Yoga class. Participants expressed their desire for more mindfulness sessions that integrate fitness,

McGill Wellness Hub

Established connection with the university's Wellness Hub to gather resources to support the needs of the present cohort.

LOOKING FORWARD

Mindfulness

Integrating wellbeing content in the PPAGS newsletter to encourage mindfulness practice.

Integration

Integrating Mental Health & Wellbeing as a small part of all PPAGS activities.

Director of Mental Health & Wellbeing,
Dorothy Yi Yung Kwok



ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EVERY DOLLAR

My foremost responsibility is to ensure fiscal accountability for the organization by ensuring efficient and equitable allocation of the PPAGS funds. This includes accounting for the Association's finances such as budget drafting, tracking receipts of expenditures from events, and liaising with budget officers for PGSS and the Max Bell School. This year, I collaborated with other executives to create the PPAGS Reading Group and develop our website. I plan to continue supporting flagship initiatives beyond my role.

FINANCIAL POSITION

PPAGS is in good financial shape. Our total operating budget at the beginning of the year was approximately \$728.00. In addition to our operating budget, we have approximately \$635.00 in our bank account from surpluses from previous years.

LEAVING A LEGACY FUND

By convention, we do not attempt to spend a part of the money made available to us. The surplus is valuable in facilitating cash flow for major events where a pre-payment is needed, as administration only reimburses the PPAGS after the fact. Additionally, cognisant of our role as the inaugurating administration as well as the virtual conditions we have had to endure, we intend to leave a sizeable amount to future members to help kickstart physical office solutions and updated services.

Vice President of Operations & Finance,
Ricardo Chejfec



RUNNING A TIGHT SHIP

As your Vice President of Operations & Finance my responsibility is to ensure operational processes and procedures are established and maintained throughout the year to foster a cohesive and impactful service delivery.

MILESTONES

Student Survey

Initiated a survey to the broader cohort to collect sentiments on the MPP and identify gaps that a student association can fill. Information is also being collected to inform programming.

Administrative Processes

Set up administrative processes and guidelines as a foundation to enable success from the current administration working under virtual conditions and the PPAGS to come. Ensure important items are covered at PPAGS meetings by setting the agenda, taking notes, and facilitating the meetings.

Events Management Committee

Established a process for event management that includes a cross-functional working group to ensure standardization and streamlining of PPAGS events.

LOOKING FORWARD

PPAGS Case Competition

Assist with the planning of the PPAGS flagship event by leveraging best practices and past experience competing in case competitions.

Vice President, Operations & Finance,
Mikayla Zolis



KEEPING EVERYONE IN THE LOOP

Responsible for all official correspondence, my goal from day one has been to develop a communications strategy that ensures cohort engagement and represents the exciting work being undertaken in our inaugural year. This includes developing our primary communication platform and collaborating with the School's communication team on a regular basis.

MILESTONES

Communications Strategy

Developed relations with the Max Bell School's Communication Team to collaborate and inform our communication strategy.

Communication Processes

Established standards and best practices to support initiatives and plans put forward by executive members in regards to information transmission.

Website

To ensure that all students are effectively receiving PPAGS information and updates, worked with the VP of Finance & Operations to bring our website to life,

LOOKING FORWARD

Newsblasts

Snippets outlining advocacy victories and information particularly valuable for the cohort.

Vice President of Communications,
Adele Brawley



LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

My primary goal this year is to represent students' academic interests and concerns to the Max Bell School. Through academic events and student engagement I will strive to improve the student learning environment, enhance collaboration and facilitate your professional ambitions by advocating for your academic interests at McGill University.

MILESTONES

Reading Group

Up until now, 111 readings were summarized by members of the cohort to enhance our collective academic experience.

Policy Case Study Survey

Informed the Max Bell School with suggested topics of interest for policy case studies going forward.

Study Sessions

Weekly sessions to cover topics, readings, practice presentations and for deeper discussion are held with members of the cohort.

LOOKING FORWARD

Guest Speaker Series

Talks from prominent figures on subject matters chosen based on topics of interest specified on the case study survey, with the aim of encouraging student aspirations beyond the classroom.

Vice President of Academics,
Leonardo Lozano

PROMOTING EQUITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Our goal is to cultivate an environment that allows students to feel a sense of belonging, inclusion, fairness and mutual respect. The primary method of championing for this will be by acting as a liaison between the students, the EDI Working Group, and the Max Bell School of Public Policy.

MILESTONES

Representing PPAGS in the EDI Working Group

Working closely with the Max Bell School's EDI Working Group to understand the priorities students, faculty, and staff have related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

EDI Office Hours

Informal office hours open to all students at Max Bell. Students are invited to share their vision, ideas, and concerns as they relate to EDI. In the new year, office hours will continue and will be expanded to accommodate international time zones.

EDI Resource Guide

A comprehensive guide which will serve as a central point of reference for any student at Max Bell facing EDI related issues.

LOOKING FORWARD

EDI Guest Speaker Podcast Series

The EDI PPAGS Team is working towards the creation of an EDI Guest Speaker Podcast Series that will explore the intersection of public policy and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Vice President of EDI, [Nayantara Sudhakar](#)

Directors of EDI, [Gulrukh Qidwai](#) & [Mariel Aramburu](#)



CELEBRATING ONE OTHER

In this special year, our aim was to foster a stronger sense of community at the school. We oversee any social event end to end from planning the events, creating brochures, communicating about the events and eventually executing the events.

MILESTONES

Halloween Photo Contest

Students sent their funny spooky photos from Halloween night celebrations with Alexandra W. stealing the show.

Sip N' Chill

Our november social for chit chat and online board games helped us sit back, relax and enjoy each other's company.

Birthday Cheer

E-Cards filled with love on behalf of PPAGS to our dearest students.

LOOKING FORWARD

Festivus Gift Exchange

Fighting social distancing with an old concept in a fresh new community.

Ugly Sweater Contest

With a refined sense of irony, our Ugly Sweater Contest, will test our sense of outdated and tacky fashion.

Vice Presidents for Social & Events,
Udita Upadhyay & Rebecca Charles



REPRESENTING YOU AT HOME AND ABROAD

This year, our goal was to assure our place in future decision making within the PGSS. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to attend the Association's Annual General Meetings as a voting member. In my role, I am going to support and provide assistance to fellow VP's with key flagship initiatives for this academic year.

MILESTONES

Canadian MPP Outreach

Six Canadian and American Master of Public Policy and Public Administration schools are on board to foster a strong master students network with PPAGS.

PGSS (McGill University) and Max Bell School Liason

Established and represented the Max Bell and PPAGS community at monthly PGSS council and AGM's.

CAPPA Case Competition

Liaison with school administration to secure first time participation of the Max Bell team at the annual CAPPA Case Competition.

LOOKING FORWARD

Successful MPP Schools Outreach

Bringing together student associations from Kennedy, Blaknovik, Munk, and Max Bell schools of public policy at our inaugural Public Policy Students Summit.

Vice President of External Affairs, Ellen Rowe

PPAGS EXECUTIVE TEAM 2020-2021

Gina



Leonardo



Dorothy



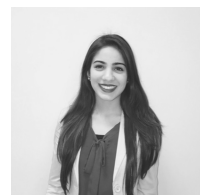
Jonathan



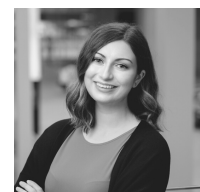
Ellen



Gulrukh



Mikayla



Adele



Anil



Nayantara



Mariel



Ricardo



Rebecca



Udita

