

Constitution of the AUS



Québec 

*The Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University is an
accredited student association under R.S.Q. Chapter A-3.01.*

Revision History

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March 2015

March 2016

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PART I: The AUS

ARTICLE 1 – ESTABLISHMENT

- 1.1 The Society shall be known as the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) of McGill University or L'Association Étudiante de la Faculté des Arts de l'Université McGill (AEFA), hereinafter the AUS.

ARTICLE 2 – MANDATE

- 2.1 The AUS exists to:
 - 2.1.1 Represent all McGill students in the Faculty of Arts and to promote their welfare and interests;
 - 2.1.2 Provide activities and services to enhance the educational, cultural, environmental and social conditions of its members.
- 2.2 The AUS shall be recognized by its members and the Students' Society, Senate and Board of Governors of McGill University as representative of all undergraduate Arts students registered at McGill University.
- 2.3 The AUS recognizes both English and French as languages of the organization
 - 2.3.1 The Constitution of the AUS will be available English and in French
 - 2.3.2 In the case of a discrepancy between the English and French versions of this Constitution, the English version shall be deemed authoritative.

ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The membership of the AUS shall be composed of all undergraduate students currently registered at McGill University in the Faculty of Arts, subject to payment of fees prescribed in Article 4.

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP FEES

- 4.1 The AUS Council shall establish a society fee, which shall be paid by every member of the AUS.

- 4.1.1 Members who are full-time Bachelor of Arts students (as defined by McGill University) shall pay one hundred percent (100%) of the society fee.
- 4.1.2 Members who are part-time Bachelor of Arts students (as defined by McGill University) shall pay fifty percent (50%) of the society fee.
- 4.1.3 Members who are full-time and part-time Bachelor of Arts & Science students (as defined by McGill University) shall pay fifty percent (50%) of the applicable society fee.
- 4.2 The society fee shall be collected from each member by the Cashier of McGill University and forwarded to the AUS.
- 4.3 Any change in the society fee shall be subject to ratification by the AUS' members voting in a referendum called for that purpose.

ARTICLE 5 – FINANCES OF THE SOCIETY

- 5.1 The financial year of the AUS shall be the first (1) of June to the thirty-first (31) of May of the following year.
- 5.2 The total expenditures of the AUS in any year shall not exceed its total revenues. A specific vote requiring two-thirds (2/3) majority must be taken and passed at Council if a deficit is to be incurred in any year.
- 5.3 There shall be a set of financial bylaws of the AUS, which will govern the finances of the organization.
- 5.4 The accounts of the AUS shall be maintained according to standard accounting practices and shall be available to the membership.
 - 5.4.1 Any member wishing to see the accounts of the AUS must submit a request in writing to the Vice-President Finance.
 - 5.4.2 The Vice-President Finance shall respond to any requests by members to see the accounts of the AUS within one (1) full week.

PART II: ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE 6 – POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE AUS COUNCIL

- 6.1 The governing body of the AUS shall be known as the Legislative Council (hereinafter, Council) and as such shall:
- a) Recognize the supremacy of the AUS Constitution and be bound by it;
 - b) Be empowered to make all decisions and take action on behalf of the AUS in accordance with and subject to the constraints imposed by the General Assembly;
 - c) Adopt the AUS annual budget;
 - d) Establish Committees of Council where and when it deems necessary;
 - e) Have the power to mandate any of its representatives to adopt and defend a specific stance.
- 6.2 The terms of office for members of the AUS Council, other than the Vice-President of Finance (*Article 12.10*), shall be from May first (1) to April thirtieth (30).
- 6.3 AUS Council shall have the power to mandate the votes of its representatives to both the SSMU (Students' Society of McGill University) Council and the McGill University Senate, with a majority vote of the AUS Council.
- 6.4 AUS Council shall have the power to mandate its representatives to both the SSMU Council and the McGill University Senate to bring forward questions to those bodies, respectively.

ARTICLE 7 – MEMBERS OF THE AUS COUNCIL

- 7.1 The Council shall consist of:
- a. The members of the Executive Committee;
 - b. All Arts Representatives to SSMU, the number of which is to be determined by the SSMU Constitution;
 - c. All Arts Representatives to the University Senate, the number of which is to be determined by the SSMU Constitution;
 - d. A representative of each of the Faculty of Arts Departmental Associations and Programs to be chosen in accordance with their respective Association's constitution in reference to Article 8.2;
 - e. The Vice-President External of the First-Year, Events, Academic and Representative Council;
 - f. A representative from the AUS Environmental Council (AUSec).
 - g. The Speaker of Council (non-voting);

- h. The Recording Secretary (non-voting);
- i. A representative from the AUS Equity Committee;
- j. A representative from the AUS Financial Management Committee (FMC);
- k. A representative from the Arts Community Engagement Committee;

7.2 The Arts Representatives to SSMU Council shall:

- a. Be voting members of SSMU Council and be bound by the SSMU Constitution and by-laws;
- b. Consult with AUS council and reasonably represent the prevailing views of Council at SSMU Council meetings;
- c. Report the relevant and/or important discussions and decisions of SSMU to Council and of Council to SSMU;
- d. To serve as a liaison between Arts students, AUS Legislative Council, AUS Executive Committee, and the SSMU Legislative Council; and for the purpose of pursuing student initiatives.
- e. Each Arts Representative must sit on at least one of the following committees: Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty of Arts, the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty of Arts, or the Faculty of Arts Infotech Committee
- f. Liaise and collaborate with the Executive Committee to improve representation and service provision for AUS members.

7.3 The Arts Representatives to the University Senate shall:

- a. Be voting members of McGill Senate and be bound by the SSMU Constitution and by-laws;
- b. Be voting members of the AUS Council;
- c. Consult with AUS Council and represent and be guided by the views of Council at Senate meetings;
- d. Report the relevant decisions and discussions to AUS Council;
- e. Serve as a liaison between Arts students and the Senate;
- f. All Arts Senators must sit on the Faculty of Arts Committee.
- g. Liaise and collaborate with the Executive Committee to improve representation and service provision for AUS members.

7.4 The Speaker of Council:

- a. Is the neutral mediator of Council;
- b. Is appointed by the Executive Committee, and ratified by Council;
- c. Shall be a non-voting member of Council;
- d. May be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council or a General Assembly.

7.5 The Recording Secretary:

- a. Is appointed by the Vice-President Communications, and ratified by Council;
- b. Shall take the minutes of Council;

- c. Shall be a non-voting member of Council;
- d. Shall transmit the minutes to the Vice-President Communications.

7.6 No member of the AUS may concurrently hold more than one position on Council.

7.7 No member of the AUS may hold an Executive position for more than two consecutive academic years.

ARTICLE 8 – DEPARTMENTAL ASSOCIATIONS

8.1 Each Department and Interdisciplinary Program in the Faculty of Arts shall be entitled to a Departmental Association.

8.2 Departmental Associations must hold annual elections in accordance with the AUS Departmental Electoral By-Laws and their Constitutions.

8.2.1 Any member of a Departmental Association shall be eligible to run for office and vote in that Departmental Association's election.

8.2.2 Council may grant a waiver of an annual electoral process for a specific departmental association, by a two-thirds vote.

8.3 Each Departmental Association shall have a single vote on Council, in accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution.

8.4 Each Departmental Association VP External must sit on a minimum of one (1) Standing Committee of the Legislative Council.

8.5 Departmental Associations must have their own Constitution. The Vice-President Internal of the AUS must keep updated copies of all Departmental Association constitutions.

8.6 Departmental Associations may not issue their own compulsory student fee, independent of the AUS base fee.

8.7 Departmental Associations shall recognize the supremacy of the AUS Constitution, the AUS General Assembly, By-Laws, and Council.

ARTICLE 9 – MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

9.1 Quorum for a meeting of Council shall be half (50%) of its voting member

- 9.1.1 Departmental Associations will have their seat and funding on AUS Council suspended indefinitely if they fail to attend two (2) or more scheduled meetings per semester.
 - 9.1.1.1 Departmental Associations with suspended seats and funding must notify the AUS Speaker of the Council, in writing five (5) days prior to the next Council meeting, to be put on the agenda, should they wish to reclaim their seat and funding.
 - 9.1.1.2 The seats and funding can be reclaimed by a majority vote at the above council meeting
- 9.1.2 Departmental Associations who fail to attend two (2) or more Council meetings per semester will lose their funding for the semester.
- 9.1.3 The Speaker of Council, may at their discretion, allow for excused absences, which shall not count as absences pursuant to 9.1.1 and 9.1.2.
- 9.1.4 The Speaker shall not recognize a suspended seat for the purposes of quorum.
- 9.1.5 Members of the Executive Committee, Arts Representatives to SSMU, and Arts Representatives to the University Senate who fail to attend four (4) or more Council meetings without a legitimate excuse at the discretion of the Speaker will have their seats suspended.
 - 9.1.5.1 The seats can be reclaimed by a majority vote of AUS Councillors.
- 9.2 The Council shall hold regular meetings at least every other week while classes are in session during the fall and winter semesters.
- 9.3 Except where otherwise specified in this Constitution and by-laws, voting and procedure shall be as specified in the newest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
- 9.4 Notice of all meetings shall be given to all members of Council at least three (3) days in advance. In pressing and substantial cases, the President or Executive Committee may call an emergency meeting twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
 - 9.4.1 Departmental Associations will have their seat on AUS Council suspended indefinitely if they fail to attend two (2) or more emergency meetings over the course of the academic year. Seats can be reclaimed in the same manner as in 9.1.1.1

9.4.2 The President must notify the members by email

9.5 All AUS Council meetings shall be open to its members with the exception stated in Article 9.6.

9.6 The Council may, when deemed necessary, conduct closed meetings, with a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council in favour of such a motion.

9.7 The President shall chair Council meetings in the Speaker's absence.

9.8 The Vice-President Communications shall take minutes at Council meetings in the Recording Secretary's absence.

ARTICLE 10 – COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

10.1 Standing Committees of Council shall be determined by the Committee By-Laws of the AUS

10.2 All activities of the standing Committees outlined in Article 10.1 of this Constitution shall be presented by the respective chair to Council at least once a semester.

10.3 Council may establish new Standing or Ad-hoc Committees as it sees fit to carry out the AUS' objectives.

10.4 All members of the AUS are eligible to become members of AUS Committees.

ARTICLE 11 – THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11.1 There shall be a Committee of Council called the Executive Committee, which shall govern the AUS between meetings of Council in a manner consistent with policies set out by Council and the General Assembly.

11.2 The Executive Committee shall be composed of:

- a) The President;
- b) The Vice-President Academic;
- c) The Vice-President Communications;
- d) The Vice-President External;
- e) The Vice-President Internal;
- f) The Vice-President Social;
- g) The Vice-President Finance;

- 11.3 Arts Representatives to SSMU and Arts Representatives to McGill Senate are recognized as part of the AUS executive team and shall be welcome to attend all Executive Committee meetings with non-voting, consultative status.
- 11.3.1 Arts Representatives to SSMU and Arts Representatives to McGill Senate shall be included during confidential sessions.
- 11.4 No member of the AUS Executive Committee may concurrently serve as a Departmental Executive.
- 11.5 Quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be four (4) voting Executive officers.
- 11.6 Positions on the AUS Executive Committee shall be considered service-oriented: to provide representation, events, and services for members of the Arts Undergraduate Society.
- 11.6.1 To improve accessibility to positions on the AUS Executive Committee outlined in Article 11.2, members of the AUS Executive Committee who demonstrate financial need in accordance with McGill Work Study eligibility criteria shall be eligible for remuneration for their tenure on the AUS Executive Committee through the AUS Work Study Program (AUS WSP).

ARTICLE 12 – POWERS AND DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- 12.1 The Executive Committee shall ensure communication between Council and the members of the AUS.
- 12.2 The Executive Committee shall have all the powers of Council between meetings of Council, except that it shall not entertain motions to amend this Constitution and by-laws. In the case of course fee approvals, the procedure outlined in FIO bylaw 2.3 must be followed.
- 12.2.1 Official votes of the Executive Committee may not take place on social media messaging platforms including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Official votes are binding and do not include straw polls.
- 12.2.1.1 If the Executive Committee wishes to hold official votes on an online messaging platform not explicitly prohibited in the proceeding clause, they must seek approval from Council by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.

- 12.3 All resolutions and actions of the Executive Committee taken between Council meetings must be submitted to the next Council meeting for ratifications.
- 12.3.1 The Executive Committee shall not vote on matters which Council has already voted on themselves.
- 12.4 The President shall:
- a. Coordinate and supervise the affairs of the AUS, with respect to the mission of the Society;
 - b. Be responsible for fulfilling the obligations of the AUS to McGill University as outlined in the AUS's memorandum of agreement with the University;
 - c. Be the official spokesperson for the AUS in a manner consistent with the policies set up by Council and the General Assembly;
 - d. Be *ex officio* on all AUS Committees;
 - e. Ensure the continuity of the operations of the AUS;
 - f. Liaise with legal counsel, when necessary;
 - g. Chair the Executive Committee and all other committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws
- 12.5 The Vice-President Academic shall:
- a. Be responsible for all educational, curricular, and academic affairs of the AUS;
 - b. Be responsible for coordinating and leading the representation of the AUS on Faculty and Academic Committees
 - c. Be a liaison between the AUS, the Faculty of Arts administration and other McGill units providing academic services to AUS members;
 - d. Advocate for student academic needs and concerns in a manner consistent with the policies set by Council and the General Assembly;
 - e. Represent the prevailing views of Council and the General Assembly at all Faculty and
 - f. Supervise the AUS's academic support networks;
 - g. Create and improve academic opportunities for students;
 - h. Administer the Essay Centre
 - i. Administer AUS Peer Tutoring
 - j. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws
- 12.6 The Vice-President Communications shall:
- a. Communicate to students the goals and activities of the AUS;
 - b. Publish a regular email listserv;
 - c. Maintain the AUS's online presence, including but not limited to the AUS website and AUS social media;
 - d. Manage the promotion and publicity of the AUS and its activities, including overseeing graphic design and photography;

- e. Work to fulfill the AUS' commitment to bilingualism and inclusive communication;
- f. Encourage creative and artistic opportunities in the AUS;
- g. Administer the Photography Services
- h. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws

12.7 The Vice-President External shall:

- a. Liaise with other faculty associations, the SSMU, and the Montreal community;
- b. Be a voting member of SSMU Council in a manner consistent with the policies set by Council and the General Assembly;
- c. Communicate and respond to any external issues that may affect the AUS or its members in a manner consistent with the needs of its members;
- d. Enhance the career and post-graduate prospects of all AUS members;
- e. Liaise with alumni organizations to strengthen relationships with Arts alumni and organize alumni-student events;
- f. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws

12.8 The Vice-President Internal shall:

- a. Oversee the functions of the Departmental Associations; Act as a liaison between Departmental Associations and the AUS;
- b. Promote the interests of Departmental Associations within the AUS;
- c. Be responsible for internal entities of the AUS that do not fall explicitly under any other portfolio;
- d. Act as a resource person for the Departmental Associations in matters regarding resources and affairs of the Arts Undergraduate Society;
- e. Be responsible for keeping record of volunteers for the AUS and recognizing their contributions;
- f. Serve as the ombudsperson of the AUS;
- g. Work to maintain and improve the Arts Lounge as a student space;
- h. Manage all table bookings and lounge bookings
- i. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws

12.9 The Vice-President Social shall:

- a. Organize social and cultural activities for the members of the AUS;
- b. Work with the Vice-President Internal in aiding Departmental Associations in running social events;
- c. Work with the Vice-President Communications to actively seek input on the programming interests of the members of the AUS;
- d. Work with the Vice-President External to seek potential expansion or improvement of programming by way of partnerships with other groups;
- e. Oversee the operations of Bar des Arts;

- f. Hire and chair the AUS Frosh Committee, as governed by the Frosh Bylaws
- g. Organize an event for graduating AUS members;
- h. Maintain a working relationship with McGill Security Services, when necessary;
- i. Ensure that all social and cultural activities are equitable and sustainable;
- j. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws.

12.10 The Vice-President Finance shall:

- a. Advise the AUS Council and departmental executives on all financial matters of the AUS;
- b. Prepare the AUS's Budget in accordance with the financial regulations of the AUS;
- c. Ensure that all AUS student fees are spent in a manner consistent with their intended purpose;
- d. Keep proper accounts and records in accordance with the AUS' By-laws;
- e. Prepare and present to members of Council a bi-annual revenue and expense report;
- f. Ensure the AUS' preparation for and receipt of audited financial statements;
- g. Act as a resource for all AUS groups seeking to finance their events and initiatives;
- h. Chair all responsible committees pursuant to the AUS Committee By-Laws

12.11 Each member of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the preparation of a transition manual for his/her successor.

12.11.1 These shall include procedures, records, and previous transition documents.

12.12 In the event of the resignation or the impeachment of the President, the Vice-President Internal shall assume the duties of the President until a by-election, if deemed necessary by Council is held. Should a by-election not be held, the Vice President Internal will remain President until April thirtieth (30th).

12.13 In the event that a position on the Executive Committee is or becomes vacant, the Council or General Assembly shall elect a replacement, in accordance with the Electoral by-laws, from amongst its members or choose a member of an official committee (as stipulated in article 10.1) until a by-election, if deemed necessary, is held.

12.14 In the event of a leave of absence by any member of the Executive Committee or Arts Representative to SSMU, or Arts Representative to McGill Senate, Council shall have the authority, if deemed necessary, to appoint a temporary replacement from amongst its members.

- 12.15 The AUS Executive Committee shall hire an Executive Assistant, a permanent full-time staff member, whose salary shall be paid for by student fees.

PART III - ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

ARTICLE 13 - GENERAL ELECTIONS

- 13.1 All members of the AUS shall be eligible to vote in AUS elections.
- 13.2 There shall be a set of Electoral By-Laws inscribed in the by-laws of the AUS. Elections shall be conducted in accordance with this Constitution and by-laws.
- 13.3 Elections and Referenda shall be passed by plurality, excluding referenda that amend the AUS Constitution, which shall be passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all votes cast.

ARTICLE 14 - ELECTORAL OFFICERS

- 14.1 There shall be a Chief Returning Officer (hereinafter referred to as the CRO), who shall be responsible for the general conduct and execution of elections and referenda and shall fulfill this duty with impartiality.
- 14.1.1 The CRO shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and ratified by Council.
- 14.2 A decision made by the CRO or Elections AUS concerning the interpretation of articles in this Constitution and by-laws regarding elections and referenda, shall be considered binding, subject to an appeal to the Judicial Board.
- 14.3 The Council shall ratify the appointment of the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs).

ARTICLE 15 - ELIGIBILITY

- 15.1 All members of the AUS in satisfactory standing, as determined by McGill University, shall be eligible to stand for election to any of the AUS Executive positions.
- 15.1.1 Only members of the AUS enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program in satisfactory standing, as determined by McGill University, shall be

eligible to stand for election to the Arts Representative to SSMU positions.

- 15.2 All elected individuals must remain members of the AUS throughout their mandate.

ARTICLE 16 – PROCEDURES OF ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

- 16.1 There shall be a set of Electoral Regulations inscribed in the by-laws of the AUS, governing the elections and referenda of the AUS.

PART IV – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ARTICLE 17 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 17.1 A General Assembly may establish, amend or rescind any policy of the AUS:
- 17.2 A General Assembly shall be convened by the Speaker of Council, either at the request of eight (8) councillors or by a request signed by at least 200 members of the AUS.
- 17.3 At least five (5) days public notice must be given for a General Assembly.
- 17.4 Quorum for a General Assembly shall be one hundred and fifty (150) members of the AUS.
- 17.4.1 Quorum to pass a resolution in regards to an AUS student strike or boycott shall be five hundred (500) members of the AUS.
- 17.5 General Assemblies shall be chaired by the Speaker.
- 17.6 Ratification by special online vote is required for all resolutions passed at the General Assembly and shall be overseen by the CRO.
- 17.6.1 Voting with regard to the aforementioned special online vote will be held no longer than 10 days after the stipulated vote at a General Assembly.
- 17.6.2 Quorum for online ratification of General Assembly resolutions shall be eight percent (8%) of the AUS membership.

17.6.3 General Assembly resolutions which amend the AUS Constitution shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to pass.

17.7 Resolutions adopted by a General Assembly supersede all decisions made by Council, and may not be overturned by Council

PART V - REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

ARTICLE 18 - PROCEDURES

18.1 Any member of the AUS Executive, representative to SSMU, or representative to McGill Senate may be removed from office for impropriety, violation of the provisions of this Constitution and by-laws, delinquency of duties or misappropriation of funds.

18.2 A motion to remove a member of the Executive, representative to SSMU, or representative to McGill Senate must be presented in writing to the Speaker of Council and signed by at least eight (8) members of the Council, or one hundred and fifty (150) members of the AUS and distributed to the AUS membership. The motion to remove will then be inscribed on the agenda of the next meeting of the AUS (Council or General Assembly). A person against whom a motion to remove is directed shall be afforded the opportunity to respond to the allegations made at the meeting.

18.3 Quorum for a motion to remove shall be two thirds (2/3) majority of Council or the General Assembly.

18.4 Passage of a motion to remove shall require two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Council or the General Assembly.

PART VI - MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 19 - LANGUAGE OF THE SOCIETY

19.1 English and French are the official languages of the AUS.

19.2 Members of the AUS may use either official language at all meetings and in all documentation of the AUS.

- 19.3 The Constitution and By-Laws of the AUS must be made available in both official languages upon request.

ARTICLE 20 – FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 20.1 All documentation of Council and its Committees shall be public, except those minutes and documents described in Article 21.3
- 20.2 Requests to see the minutes and documents of Council and its Committees shall be addressed to the Vice-President Communications.
- 20.3 The Vice-President Communications shall not be obliged to release information, documents or minutes concerning ideas or motions which were not acted upon, or of closed sessions of Council or its Committees.

PART VII: THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 21 – BY-LAWS OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 21.1 Appended to this Constitution are a set of by-laws, which may be adopted by Council as it sees fit, providing that such by-laws conform to the principles embodied in this Constitution.
- 21.2 Quorum for a motion to enact, amend or rescind a by-law of the AUS shall be two-thirds (2/3) of council.
- 21.3 Enacting, amending, or rescinding any and all by-laws of the Arts Undergraduate Society shall require two-thirds (2/3) majority of Legislative Council or the General Assembly.
- 21.4 No by-law of the Arts Undergraduate Society may be amendable solely through referendum.

ARTICLE 23 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 23.1 This Constitution may only be amended by a referendum conducted in accordance with Part III of the Constitution.
- 23.2 The existing wording as well as the proposed constitutional amendments shall be provided at every polling station during the referendum.

23.3 All amendments to this Constitution shall be adopted in both official languages.

ARTICLE 24 - SUPERSEDING CLAUSE

24.1 This Constitution repeals and supersedes all previous constitutions.

ARTICLE 25 - EQUITY

25.1 Appended to this Constitution shall be the Arts Undergraduate Society Equity Bylaws.

25.2 These Equity Bylaws shall affirm the Society's commitment to:

- a. the inclusivity and accessibility of its services and events,
- b. the promotion of respect and a culture of equity,
- c. a framework for handling complaints related to equity.