



Arts and Science Federation of Associations (ASFA)
Regular Council Meeting (October 15, 2020)

Meeting minutes

1. Call to order - Roll call and excusals

Chair calls the meeting to order at **6:04 pm**.

Chair: I'll start by reading the land acknowledgment. The Arts and Science Federation of Associations would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka (Ga-niyen-gé-haa-ga) Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke(jo-jya-gé)/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

2. Chair remarks and housekeeping

Chair: I've received two resignations for executive positions, the Student Life Coordinator and the Internal Coordinator. These resignations will be discussed further as part of this evening's agenda.

3. Executive Remarks

(Nothing further.)

4. Approval of the agenda

A Torres: I will present my report today.

Chair: Report point or information and presentations?

(The agenda is approved consensually as modified.)



5. Consent agenda

Chair: Let's move to approve the minutes. Are there any comments or questions about the minutes? Otherwise, if no one is opposed, we'll approve them.

(The minutes are approved consensually; no oppositions.)

Chair: Now, we have Hamza and Ashley who would like to present their executive reports.

i. Finance Coordinator Report

***The Arts & Science Federation of Associations
September 2020 Regular Council Meeting – Executive Report
Finance Coordinator – Ashley Torres - Thursday, October 15th 2020***

Greetings and welcome to the first Regular Council meeting of the 2020 Fall semester year of the Arts & Science Federation of Associations. The following report intends to provide an update of what fincom has been working on.

As the finance coordinator I finalized Orientation's budget, updated and processed the last transactions that were missing. This year our revenue was significantly lower than previous years. Because of COVID it was hard to obtain sponsorships, most of our sponsors gave us merchandise for our gift bags which ultimately saved us money. In terms of ticket sales, it created a total of \$4,874 of revenue. Our events were ultimately more affordable than previous years due to the fact that we are in the middle of a pandemic and our events were online. The money we were able to obtain in terms of sponsorship and partnerships was specifically for Rad Frosh. Overall our balance was under budget, we spent 35,380.76 \$ which means that we have \$4,619.24 remaining.

ASFA year to date september budget actuals: We have used up to 16 percent of our budget so far. You may reference the following link for more details on what our expenses look like so far. Some reimbursement for Frosh and MA expenses will appear in the next quarter.



Since our last Council, Fincom has had two meetings. We approved a Special Project Funding Request which consists of a project that will count cells using artificial intelligence. We also modified a few lines on the ASFA Budget. Since executives will not have access to their offices for the entire year and we are in the middle of a global pandemic it can be difficult to complete certain tasks, we decided that we would create an executive support fund of 6,000\$. This fund's purpose is to support the executive team in these difficult times, the fund could be used in different manners such as office supplies, troop support or covid related expenses that will allow executives to complete their mandate. In order to create this fund we modified the budget line for covid supplies from \$9,500 to \$6,000 and the office Supplies from 5,000 to \$2,500.

Update on the revenue on student fees: The student fee revenue is significantly bigger than what we had predicted which means that we will be able to take funds from this year's budget and place it in our contingency fund. The revenue collected in September is \$384,333.67, as for now it is higher than anticipated, we were anticipating a revenue of \$322,987.50.

(No further questions.)

ii. Executive Coordinator Report

H. Muhammad: *(Report.)*

(Nothing further.)

Chair: Does anyone have anything else to pull from Consent Agenda? Otherwise, we'll go ahead and approve it.

(Consent agenda is approved consensually.)

6. Information and presentations

a. The Art and Science of Good Policy - J. Hutton

(J. Hutton, ASFA General Manager, presents a set of slides on good policy development to Councillors, executives, and members in attendance.)



Chair: Any questions for John?

LSA: Not a question, but thanks for this presentation - lots of useful information.

WSSA: I was wondering about writing a code of procedures, because we don't have one. Do you have any suggestions for that? Also, what do we do when there's a discrepancy between ASFA Standing Regulations and MA bylaws?

J. Hutton: The ASFA ones hold. There can be exceptions to this, however - that will be specified in the Standing Regulation in question. Within ASFA, bylaws trump Standing Regulations. By default, assume that the ASFA rules are superior. And then, your other question was about creating a code of procedures. What do you mean by a code of procedures?

WSSA: Would it be going against ASFA's Standing Regulations if we decided to use a system other than Robert's Rules?

J. Hutton: I don't believe there's anything preventing MAs from using a different system.

b. Office Manager Report – J. Hutton

J. Hutton: (*Report.*)

(*Nothing further.*)

c. Executive Consul Report – C. Sakr

September-October 2020 Consul Report

Christiane Sakr, ASFA Consul

I was very much eager to have this position fulfilled. Two of the executives had reached out to me and had asked if I could fulfill this position again. Although I was hoping that someone else could fill the Consul position, as I wanted to step back a bit with my involvement in ASFA, I will still take on this position to the best of my ability. I understand the importance of someone with some form of institutional knowledge taking on this role and hope that it will come in handy.

General Updates:

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- *I had managed to gain access to the consul email (consul@asfa.ca) as the password I had set up was not reset.*
 - *Feel free to send any comments, questions, complaints, etc. to that email.*
 - *While I am reachable via social media, I would like any consul related things to be communicated via email to allow for some sort of paper trail that future consuls can refer to.*
- *I reached out to the executive coordinator to ask about executive meetings as it was already October and I still had not been looped into any executive meetings.*
 - *The executive coordinator pointed out that it would have been the internal coordinator's responsibility to add me in.*
 - *Executive meeting minutes have been shared with me however and I have been added to the executive Slack channel as well.*

Executive Updates:

- *I found out through an email correspondence with John that the internal coordinator had resigned and saw in the ASFA CEO's email that the student life coordinator had resigned too.*
 - *The internal coordinator did mention during an internal committee meeting that we should consider creating more positions under ASFA to help alleviate some of the workload.*
 - *I am happy with what Emma was able to accomplish as internal coordinator.*
 - *All of the Judicial Committee seats and the ASFA CEO position were filled thanks to interviews carried out by internal committee.*
 - *By-election dates have been set and WILL be happening this year.*
 - *The same goes for the student life coordinator*
 - *FROSH was a success for being an online event - arguably the first FROSH of its kind*
 - *ASFA was able to collaborate on successful events with other student associations as well.*
 - *It is very clear, however, that ASFA executives are overworked and underpaid.*
 - *Two executive meetings had taken place between the September RCM and October RCM.*
 - *It appears that the internal coordinator and student life coordinator had resigned at the end of September.*
 - *Everything looks okay in the meetings minutes.*



- They have a “How are you?” agenda point which is a good incentive for looking out for each other’s mental health and wellbeing.
- It appears that there is still a bit of role confusion but execs seem to get a clear idea with each meeting they have.

(Nothing further.)

d. Loyola Report for October (tabled-Sept BL324) – Loyola Committee

I. Huang: For those who don’t know, Loyola Committee exists to gather the different MAs on the Loyola campus and organize events and activities for Loyola students. Our Chair is Yasmina Chebib from BSA, and we have representatives from all Loyola MAs as well as a member at large and our mentor (and former co-Chair of Loyola Committee), Fiona Harrison-Roberts. This presentation is just intended to update everyone on what our committee has been up to so far this year. Of the \$14,190 allocated by ASFA to Loyola Committee for this year, we have budgeted for \$13,510, which includes administrative costs, Academic Weeks for the Fall and Winter terms, Fall and Winter virtual orientation events, and MA workshops and challenges. A lot of our usual costs were not relevant this year because we couldn’t organize any in-person events.

Y. Chebib: This year, we wanted to work on building a strong social media presence for Loyola Committee. This included regular i (...)

I. Huang: *(First event and challenges; daily schedule)*

Y. Chebib: *(Fall academic week)*

7. Business Recurring

a. Appointments (as needed)

Chair: Does anyone need to fill any committee seats?

i. Faculty Council

H. Muhammad: We need to fill some positions on Faculty Council. Faculty Council is a legislative body that ensures good governance within the academic

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affairs of the faculty. The Chair from each department sits on Faculty Council, and there are 8 seats for student members to uphold the interests of students. Currently, we have three people who have been appointed. We still have five vacant seats.

LSA: What's the time

H. Muhammad: 1.5 hours one Thursday every month, from 10-11:30. It's usually the third week of the month.

Chair: Does anyone want to sit on Faculty Council?

H. Muhammad: If not, Policy Committee came up with a potential solution (...) reach out to all the VP Academics from each Member Association and ask them if they're interested in sitting on Faculty Council. It would be first come first serve, and we'd keep a waiting list of students.

Chair: Did you check with the Faculty Council to ensure that this solution would work for them?

H. Muhammad: I did. The Standing Regulations permit us to choose any student we want, it can even be a member at large. As long as it's the same students consistently sitting on the committee (unless they resign), it will be okay.

Chair: This is an important position, so I think Representing ASFA within the Faculty is an important part of why ASFA exists. Does anyone on Council wish to volunteer? Otherwise, Hamza, can I ask you to

H. Muhammad: Motion to fill seats through appointments policy to appoint five Members at Large, with a priority on VP Academics from MAs, because we cannot fill the seats through Council.

SASU seconds.

LSA: Would the students at large appointed have to report back to Council regularly or come to the RCM everyone?



H. Muhammad: I would provide updates, as I'm acting for the Academic Coordinator at the moment.

(No objections; the motion passes consensually.)

b. Ad-Hoc Committee on Equitable Employment

Chair: This motion was initially presented by someone who did not have the right to motion, but it was then adopted and seconded by I believe Christiane. I have received requests to push this a little bit further. Is there anyone who would like to speak on this? Payton, you wanted to retable the proposed motion to strike the ad-hoc committee?

P. Mitchell: We decided to ask Council to reconsider this motion and to retable it for tonight's meeting.

Chair: Are you asking Council to push this reconsideration, or to get rid of it entirely?

P. Mitchell: We don't have access to the motion that Victoria presented; we wanted to ask Council to bring it back tonight and to vote on the motion tonight.

Chair: Oh, okay, absolutely. Excellent. We can discuss it now, my misunderstanding. I'll pull up the motion.

Motion on equitable employment

Originally presented by V. Vidiera; presented this evening by P. Mitchell.

Whereas ASFA employment standard policies are thin and pretty inexistent;

Whereas both employees and executives frequently get burnt out in their mandate;

Whereas both employees and executives typically work part-time hours but are not compensated ASFA's minimum wage for hours;

Whereas all paid positions at ASFA are underpaid;



Whereas salaries are not revised often at ASFA;

Be it resolved that an ad-hoc committee be created without the presence of the executives to discuss the labor standards at ASFA.

Be it further resolved that they consult the executives on matters that pertain to employee labor standards (employees, coordinators, clerks and managers).

Be it further resolved that they review the pay scale and the payment of all paid positions at ASFA (employees, coordinators, clerks, managers and executives), including the frequency at which they should be revised and payment methods.

Be it further resolved that the burnout problem of overworking paid members of the ASFA organization is addressed to find resources and solutions to prevent this.

H. Muhammad: We want to make sure that what Victoria brought up is discussed and voted on. We would like to know what Council thinks about it.

WSSA: I think this is a great motion, it's essential for ASFA I would even move this myself, or second it if it's already been moved.

Chair: Christiane had officially moved it in September - is that still the case?

C. Sakr: Yes.

H. Muhammad: I'd like to make a small friendly amendment if possible. I think Executives' input is indeed critical here. It would be important to specify that the executives would "be created with the presence of the executives?" We can discuss the ratio of how many executives should be present, but I think it's important for executives to be there.

C. Sakr: I wouldn't say it's 100% friendly, but I do think executive involvement is important. I just need a little more convincing - I do think it's important, but I just want to avoid any conflict of interest. Can I amend the amendment and say "with the limited presence of the executives, to discuss the labor standards," which I don't mind either, unless there's a conflict of interest.



A Torres: I understand the point about conflicts of interest. Can we make it so that execs have a representative at the table but have no decision-making power or voting rights?

C. Sakr: I think maybe we can change it so that there's an executive there as a non-voting member. Maybe executives could come in on a rotating basis so that it's not always the same executive and there aren't too many executives in the room. Can we amend it to "with the presence of an executive as a consulting member, and that executives sit on the committee on a rotating basis decided by the executives?"

Chair: Maybe it could be reworded as "BIR that an ad-hoc committee be created in consultation with the executives to discuss the labor standards at ASFA." If both of you agree, we'll consider this a friendly amendment and we can proceed to voting on the whole motion.

(The motion carries consensually; no oppositions.)

Chair: This motion has created an ad-hoc committee that should be filled this evening. Does anyone want to volunteer?

(C. Sakr and Olivia (LSA) volunteer.)

A Torres: This will be an ad-hoc committee that looks specifically at ASFA's labor standards in terms of payment and treatment, as well as our history of resigning and burnout, and what we can implement in terms of good practices to avoid this in the future. We'll look into our existing policies and propose amendments to improve them. Because we are a union, ensuring that we do have good practices is particularly important.

Chair: For those who are new, an ad-hoc committee is a committee created for a limited period of time and for a specific purpose. This is not a permanent thing, and anyone who wants to sit on it can join.

LSA: I did volunteer, but I also just want to make a comment that we are dealing with mass student burnout right now. If this particular Council is not jumping on

positions, it's not because we're a bad bunch, it's because we're dealing with a lot.

c. Update on ad-hoc sweater and merchandise

SoPhiA: We haven't received much information on this, so I'm wondering if anyone can speak to any updates.

A Torres: There haven't been any meetings since the beginning of the semester on this because people have resigned and others have been overwhelmed with work. That being said, there was work and brainstorming done over the summer.

H. Muhammad: As Ashley pointed out, due to the workload, we haven't had a chance to meet over the semester, but the ad-hoc committee did come to a unanimous conclusion that we'll be purchasing sweaters in bulk, and a few different colors. We ended up finding a vendor in Montreal, and that vendor would have the opportunity to print MA logos. All the forms have been filled out. We've also been looking into a domain name that we can purchase for the site and we will be presenting this to the Finance Committee. Some vendors in Montreal have reached out to us with interest. In the next meeting, we will choose a vendor, print the logos for the MAs, and within a month to a month and a half we should have this project up and running.

8. Business Arising

a. Executive team staffing and resignations - *Executive team*

H. Muhammad: Our Internal Coordinator submitted a formal resignation almost a month ago, primarily because of the workload - it was clear to her that it was not the ideal situation to manage four or five classes alongside this position. This is a reality for most of the executives currently on board. I believe we will have a chance to fill the vacant positions during the by-elections, but if Council is interested in discussing the overworking situation as part of the ad-hoc committee, that could be interesting. I would love to know what other Councillors or executives think.



Y. Chebib: Speaking as the Loyola Committee co-Chair, I think regarding the workload and tasks need to be clarified more. Coming into the ASFA team, there's a lot of ambiguity as to what we are expected to do. We can't always look back at what former execs or co-Chairs have done because it's not always well documented. The whole staying at home and being so overloaded with work plays into that as well.

Chair: Hamza, my understanding is that these positions just come up again for by-elections, is that correct?

H. Muhammad: That's correct.

b. Executive honorarium installments

Executive honorarium motion

Presented by A. Torres

Considering that, the 2020-2021 ASFA executive honorarium was significantly increased by the 2019-2020 Council;

Considering that this increase was passed in order to make ASFA executive positions more accessible to students who need a wage to live on;

Considering that under the current bylaws, ASFA executives receive their honorarium every quarter;

Considering that most bills, including; rent, phone, internet and hydro are charged on a monthly basis;

Considering that the reality of monthly bills, without a monthly income pose significant economic challenges for executives responsible for paying their monthly expenses;

Be it resolved that the Standing Regulations be amended to allow the ASFA Executive to receive monthly installments of their honorarium.

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A Torres: Since there was an increase in honorarium last year for this year, we were wondering if Council would allow us to change the bylaw stating that Executives only receive our honorarium installments every quarter. It is more practical to receive monthly installments, especially for students who live on their own and have monthly expenses. It also helps with motivation and would alleviate a lot of stress.

H. Muhammad: The honorarium amount itself wouldn't change, we would just be receiving it monthly instead of every four months.

A. Torres moves to approve the motion.

P. Mitchell seconds.

(The motion carries unanimously; no objections.)

c. **Pass/Fail 2020 - SASU**

C. Sakr: Some of you might know that SASU has been passing around a Pass/Fail petition for our department in particular, because for a lot of our students, this has been the most difficult semester so far, what with the current circumstances. I'll send you guys a copy of our petition in case you would like to do something similar in your own department. I also want us to take into account International Students, many of whom are still at home and paying full price for their courses, dealing with different time zones and whatnot. There's no motion, I just want to encourage different departments to do something similar. On our end, we're going to have our VP Academic present this at the next departmental meeting.

P. Mitchell: Thank you for this. I have been having meetings with the CSU and we've been discussing pretty much everything you've mentioned here. We're working toward a universal pass/fail option as well as a reduction of fees. Can you send me any of the responses? I'd love to send them along to Victoria to help them make their case to the Dean of Students.



H. Muhammad: Other universities are also looking into implementing a Pass/Fail option for the rest of the year, so I don't think it's impossible to convince Concordia to do so.

Y. Chebib: Why would the university offer a pass/fail option? Pass/fail was implemented as an option in the Winter because of the "element of surprise." I feel like the university is going to argue that we signed up for this.

LSA: I think that it's not a real argument - nobody is taking a pass/fail option because they want to. Everyone's circumstances during the pandemic are very different. Some have pressing financial concerns, some don't. Some have to work in-person and put themselves at risk for the virus. There have been a lot of surprises.

A Torres: In terms of equity, we need to be conscious that not every student has the same privilege and access. Students generally want a GPA, not pass/fail, but given the circumstances the option should be there. Historically, things like this come from MAs pushing for these changes; the school will never do it on their own. ASFA and CSU obviously have a role to play, but you guys have closer contact with students. A lot of people also don't have the option to pause their studies - they have to finish their degree and can't afford to take a gap year.

WSSA: I think it's an important thing to push for as MAs. We don't know what our students' lives are like, we don't know their socioeconomic backgrounds. In terms of loans, some people need to be full-time in order to get their loans. I was wondering if anyone has experience or suggestions for how to bring this up at a committee level?

SASU: We're having our VP Academic present it to the departmental committee.

Y. Chebib: If the school goes against this - perhaps we could suggest that the pass/fail option could be application-based? That could potentially work as a middle ground option.

ESS: ESS is actually trying to build something relatively similar to the pass/fail option. Today, something was shared on the CASA-JMSB Facebook page, and if you don't mind, I'll just read this out because I feel like this really does represent a lot of the students and how they're feeling right now. *(A screenshot of the*



relevant Reddit thread is presented.) The post continues for quite a while, I encourage you all to check it out. I'm personally going to be bringing this up to our department.

C. Sakr: Regarding applications - I think it could be a feasible option, but I also feel like students shouldn't have to share all the details of our personal circumstances in order to get an excuse. It should be self-explanatory that the pandemic is affecting many students. Who are the admin to decide who gets pass/fail?

SCPASA: Maybe this point should be brought up during the announcements point, so let me know, but I feel like another thing that personally I wish Concordia would do better is allow more access to the library. It's one of the few areas in which social distancing can easily be respected. In the same vein as saying that we're paying full tuition and not getting the full experience, I feel that more efforts should be made by Concordia to allow more access to university services.

P. Mitchell: I want to advise MAs to not present "middle ground" options to your departments unless you get a hard no. This is also something being discussed at the inter-faculty level.

d. Elections - Executives

Motion - ASFA by-election and election dates, 2020-21

Presented by H. Muhammad

BE IT RESOLVED THAT notwithstanding ASFA Standing Regulation 230, by-elections for ASFA and participating Member Associations (MA's) shall be held on the following dates:

Nomination Period: Monday, October 26 – Friday, October 30, 2020

Campaign period: Monday, November 2 – Monday, November 9, 2020

Voting Period: Tuesday, November 10 – Thursday, November 12, 2020

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following positions in ASFA shall be open in the Fall 2020 by-elections:

Academic Coordinator

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*Internal Coordinator
Student Life Coordinator
Four (4) Independent Councillors*

BE IT RESOLVED THAT notwithstanding standing regulations 136, 139, and 237, candidates seeking nomination in the Fall 2020 by-elections shall not be required to collect physical signatures in order to be nominated. The ASFA Elections Committee shall be responsible for determining a method by which candidates may collect verifiable nominations from students. The Elections Committee shall have discretion to waive the requirement for signature collection if they deem that a satisfactory method of e-signature verification cannot be applied.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following Member Associations shall hold by-elections to fill their vacant and/or interim executive positions concurrently with ASFA's Fall 2020 By-Elections. Member Associations may, as an alternative to holding by-elections, fill their vacant and/or interim executive positions at a General Assembly.

MA's choosing the General Assembly option must approve a motion from their executive committee to 1) opt-out from holding by-elections and 2) select dates for the General Assembly. The MA must inform the ASFA Chief Electoral Officer of the General Assembly's date and positions available for election at this meeting.

ASFA Electoral Officers or their designates must be permitted to attend the General Assembly to verify the integrity of the voting process.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT General Elections for ASFA and all Member Associations shall be held on the following dates:

Nomination Period: Monday February 8 – Friday, February 12, 2021

Campaign period: Monday, February 15 – Monday, February 22, 2021

Voting Period: Tuesday, February 23 – Thursday, February 26, 2021

H. Muhammad motions to approve the motion.

ESS seconds.

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C. Sakr: Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't you mention you wanted to push by-elections to the end of November?

H. Muhammad: Traditionally, the by-elections would take place before the end of October; these are the new dates.

WSSA: So we need to approve a motion at that GA before starting the election process?

H. Muhammad: This is referring to the ASFA elections. Moving further, typically the MA elections take place within the month of November. But let's say the MA feels that they would rather have a GA than have the by-elections,

WSSA: I understand that, I'm just wondering if we need to approve this motion before our GA tomorrow?

H. Muhammad: If it's tomorrow, it's too late to do anything in terms of elections.

WSSA: We did an announcement with the correct amount of time

H. Muhammad: Have you already announced that during the General Assembly you would be electing new executives?

WSSA: Yes.

H. Muhammad: That's perfectly fine.

SCPASA: Now I'm a bit confused, because after having spoken to ASFA's General Manager, we were under the impression that we were able to run elections at our General Assembly with five days' notice.

H. Muhammad: For elections via a GA it's five days' notice, for formal elections or by-elections, it would be two weeks' notice.

(The motion passes consensually; no objections.)

Chair: Any other points related to elections?



H. Muhammad: We have the updated contract for the Chief Electoral Officer, and I have a brief amendment to present to Council, but that will need to be done in closed session if I understand correctly.

Chair: Is it a matter of discussing or approving the contract itself?

H. Muhammad: It's just changing the amount of the honorarium from \$500 to \$600.

Chair: That can be done in open session unless someone needs to see the full contract.

H. Muhammad: So I'm moving to increase the honorarium amount for the CEO from \$500 to \$600, and to increase the bonus amount for the CEO from \$300 to \$350.

(Motion passes consensually; no objections.)

9. Announcements and Question Period

(Nothing further.)

10. Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at **9:11 pm**.