

Friday, April 8, 2011

Last week, Concordia students went to the polls in record numbers to vote for their CSU representatives for the 2011-2012 academic year. The election saw two teams work hard to spread their platform and ideas, and reach as many students as possible. While both teams had concerns about the election process we also both recognize that we have to work together going forward.

We also realize that it's in students' best interests if we all work toward common grounds, rather than focusing on our differences. This is why Team Action and Your Concordia are making this unprecedented joint statement today. We have agreed that neither team will file any contestations of the election against the other party. At this point, we believe that any contestations would cause further divisiveness without changing the outcome of the vote, and keep us from getting to the work of serving students and reforming the CSU. We further agree, in good faith, to the CEO performing a recount if requested.

We also want to mention that throughout this process, a number of serious allegations were made from both sides—many hurtful, exaggerated, and damaging things were said. In the spirit of forgiveness, we wish to move past this, knowing that a legacy of electoral reform means that this sort of behaviour shall not be rewarded or ignored.

There is much work to be done in the upcoming transitional period, and Team Action and Your Concordia pledge to work together on a number of priorities.

Historically at Concordia, electoral and constitutional reforms have been very popular campaign topics, but frequently forgotten once teams are in office. Team Action and Your Concordia are committed to breaking this cycle, and both are very concerned about the current electoral system, which is based on a 'winner-take-all' slate and affiliation system. In practice, it is often vicious and damaging to the democratic process, where individual candidates and their ideas are drowned out by the dominance of party politics.

We would like the Concordia Student Union to move beyond this divisive past. Regardless of our electoral camp, we are all on the side of serving students and it's time to show students that we mean it. Both teams commit to supporting the restructuring of the CSU's bylaws and standing regulations concerning the slate and affiliation system, arts and science representation, electoral expenses, and reporting and access to financial documents to bring Concordia in line with other Canadian universities.

Our recommended changes will be presented jointly at the May 2011 Council meeting, and if approved, will be in place for when the new CSU Executive takes office.

Financial transparency is important for the health of the CSU and the transitional period should encourage a time of openness and specifically working together for the good of students. A positive attitude and a strong work ethic can only help that become a reality.


Students will only benefit from a strong union that can reach out and motivate all members, especially in a year where tuition fees are seeing the biggest increase in Quebec history, and when the University is dealing with major issues of governance that require a united student body. Both teams had similar positions on these issues and are looking forward to working on them together with a united student body now.

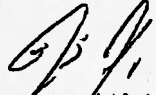
We are conscious that this initiative would not be possible without the help and cooperation of the current 2010-2011 CSU Executive team. We would like to thank them for their work during the current year. We would also like to send a word of thanks to the 2009-2010 Executive under the leadership of Amine Dabchy, former president of the CSU, whose hard work and dedication allowed the CSU to be controlled again by its members, and free from the influence of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). This is one of the biggest reasons why this election and a healthy debate among and by Concordia students could happen, without allegations of fraud or external involvement. In turn, this makes it much easier to put differences aside and work together from a place of mutual respect. We look forward to Heather and Amine's input as former and current CSU Presidents, and their help with this current process.

In conclusion, a student union is as strong as the involvement and commitment of its members. The word "Union" itself is a word implying cohesiveness, consensus, and a common bond. We hope that by showing that if less than a week after a divisive election both teams can rally and work together, it will inspire the student body to do the same; together we can make this union strong.

With great respect,

Khalil Haddad
Lex Gill


LEX GILL
APRIL 8, 2011


KHALIL HADDAD
APRIL 8, 2011