

QUEBEC PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP AT CONCORDIA

CONSTITUTION

(Approved October 13 2011, updated October 9 2014)

Article 1: Name

The organization shall be known as the “Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia” (hereinafter QPIRG Concordia), and in French “ le Groupe de recherche d’intérêt public du Québec à Concordia”(hereinafter GRIP à Concordia).

Article 2: Language of QPIRG Concordia

A. English and French are the official languages of QPIRG Concordia.

1. In all communications and meetings of QPIRG Concordia, members may use either official language.
2. In all personal communications, QPIRG Concordia will endeavour to use the language preferred by the correspondent.
3. Resolutions of QPIRG Concordia shall be posted in both official languages.
4. Official notices of QPIRG Concordia shall be posted in both official languages.
5. All documents of QPIRG Concordia shall be considered authoritative in the language of their original adoption.

B. Accommodation of additional languages will be provided, if possible, upon request given reasonable notice.

Article 3: Mandate

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at Concordia is a resource centre for student and community research and organizing. We strive to raise awareness and support grassroots activism around diverse social and environmental issues. Our work is rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice. We seek to make campus-community links and inspire social change through engaging, inclusive and non-hierarchical approaches.

QPIRG Concordia is committed to being inclusive and accessible to all. We are actively opposed to all forms of discrimination and oppression. QPIRG is a volunteer-driven, student-funded, non-profit organization that is independent from the Concordia administration, the Concordia Student Union, and the Concordia Graduate Students’ Association

Article 4: Membership

- A. There shall be the following classes of members:
1. Student members
 2. Community members

B. Eligibility

1. Student membership is available through, and begins upon payment of fees to QPIRG Concordia. .
2. Anyone who is not a student member is eligible for community membership. Community membership is available through either the completion of ten (10) or more volunteer hours for QPIRG Concordia within twelve (12) months or payment of an annual membership fee of ten (10) dollars. Membership fees must be paid or volunteer hours must be completed prior to the Annual General Meeting.
3. A member who receives a fee refund ceases to be a member of QPIRG Concordia.

C. Rights of Members

1. All members shall have voting privileges in elections and general meetings of QPIRG Concordia. All student members and only student members shall have voting privileges in referenda of QPIRG Concordia.
2. All members shall be eligible to sit as Board members.
3. All members shall be entitled to participate fully in meetings and other activities, and benefit from the services of QPIRG Concordia
4. Every document of QPIRG Concordia shall be open to inspection by any member upon reasonable request, except for minutes of Board meetings held in closed session.

D. Fees

1. Student members shall pay their fees with their school registration. The nature of this fee cannot be changed except by way of a referendum held in accordance with this constitution.
2. The community members' fee shall be payment of an annual membership fee of ten (10) dollars or the completion of ten (10) or more volunteer hours for QPIRG Concordia within twelve (12) months.
3. QPIRG Concordia shall administer its own fee refunds in accordance with this constitution.
4. Student member fees will only be refunded after the final drop date with full refund or financial credit of each semester. In order to receive their refund, students shall come in person to the QPIRG Concordia. office with student ID and student account record, within the refund period established by QPIRG Concordia. The refund period shall run for at least five (5) class days.
5. Notice of the refund period shall be given by QPIRG Concordia at least one week before the refund period begins, by:
 - a. a notice in a publication of QPIRG Concordia, where such publication exists, and in a student publication available to all members of Campus, and
 - b. a notice conspicuously posted in the QPIRG Concordia office and in conspicuous places in all major buildings of the university.

ARTICLE 5: ELECTION AND REFERENDUM PROCEDURES

A. Election Procedures: The Board of Directors

1. In order to manage the day-to-day operations of QPIRG Concordia a dedicated body will be selected by popular will.
2. The membership therefore invests its authority in a directorate. Ultimate authority remains with the whole group in its membership, to which the directorate is responsible and reports.
3. This Constitution, and thus these electoral procedures, is independent of all other student groups on campus. However, this autonomy does not preclude cooperative electoral action where beneficial and agreeable to all groups participating in such action.
4. QPIRG Concordia shall actively promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups within QPIRG Concordia.
5. The Board shall be elected at a General Meeting, in which:
 - a. Nominations shall come from the floor;
 - b. Nominees shall declare themselves to be running either for a Concordia Student Board Seat or a Community Member Board Seat;
 - c. All candidates shall have the opportunity to present themselves, and members present at the meeting shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates;
 - d. Any candidate who cannot be present due to extenuating circumstances may present a written platform that will be read on their behalf;
 - e. Separate but concurrent elections for the Concordia Student Seats and the Community Member Seats shall be conducted by secret ballot;
 - f. To be elected, candidates must receive a simple majority of ballots cast;
 - g. If more than six (6) Concordia Student Member candidates receive a simple majority vote, the six (6) candidates with the most votes are deemed elected
 - h. If more than six (6) Community Member candidates receive a simple majority vote, the six (6) candidates with the most votes are deemed elected.
 - i. No voting by proxy will be allowed
 - j. All publicity materials for the General Assembly shall give notice of the Board elections.
6. The operation of these election rules will be overseen by an impartial electoral officer, who will be selected by QPIRG Concordia for that purpose.

B. Election Procedures: The Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee

1. In order to review complaints entailing decisions made by the QPIRG Board or Staff, or any other internal disputes, which cannot otherwise be resolved, a dedicated body for decision-making about these complaints will be selected by popular will.
2. The Conflict Resolution and Complaint Committee shall be elected at a General Meeting, in which:

- a. Nominations shall come from the floor.
 - b. Nominees will demonstrate the existence of a minimum one (1) year involvement with the organization.
 - c. Nominees will be members in good standing of QPIRG Concordia;
 - d. Nominees will declare themselves to running for either a Member Representative position or for the Alternate Member Representative position;
 - e. All candidates will have the opportunity to present themselves and members present at the meeting shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates;
 - f. Any candidate who cannot be present due to extenuating circumstances may present a written platform that will be read on their behalf;
 - g. Elections for the Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee will be conducted by secret ballot;
 - h. To be elected, candidates must receive a simple majority of ballots cast;
 - i. If more than 4 candidates receive a simple majority vote, then the 4 candidates with the most votes are deemed elected;
 - j. No voting by proxy will be allowed
 - k. All publicity materials for the General Assembly shall give notice of the Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee elections.
3. The operation of these election rules will be overseen by an impartial electoral officer, who will be selected by QPIRG Concordia for that purpose

C. Referendum procedures

- 1. All referendum questions must be approved by the QPIRG Concordia Board of Directors.
- 2 a. QPIRG Concordia reserves the right to run its own referenda, in accordance with QPIRG Concordia policies and constitution.
- 2 b. All Student and Community Members shall have voting rights in referenda conducted by QPIRG Concordia in accordance with QPIRG Concordia policies and constitution.
- 3. QPIRG Concordia's autonomy does not preclude cooperative electoral action with the Concordia Student Union and/or the Concordia Graduate Students' Association where beneficial and agreeable to all groups participating in such an action.
- 4. Only referenda for Concordia undergraduate student fee levy increases will be run according to the policies and procedures of the Concordia Student Union by an external third party.
- 5. Only referenda for Concordia graduate student fee levy increases will be run according to the policies and procedures of the Concordia Graduate Students'

Association by an external third party.

6. Any other referendum questions involving QPIRG Concordia's relationship to its undergraduate student membership or graduate student membership are subject to the following compulsory conditions:
 - a. a petition clearly outlining the proposed referendum question must be submitted at least 3 (three) months in advance of the proposed referendum;
 - b. the petition must only contain the proposed question, as well as the first and last name, faculty, valid student ID number and signature of at least 1500 (one thousand five hundred) Concordia undergraduate students for the purposes of a referendum concerning the undergraduate student fee levy;
 - c. the petition must only contain the proposed question, as well as the first and last name, faculty, valid student ID number, and signature of at least 300 (three hundred) Concordia graduate students for the purposes of a referendum concerning the graduate student fee levy;
 - d. any petition for referendum must be independently verified and approved to ensure all signatories are registered Concordia students who have not opted out of the fee levy;
 - e. the question must be approved and advertised at least 3 (three) months before it is to be considered by the membership;
 - f. for the purposes of this section, advertisement of the approved referendum question must minimally include a notice on the main QPIRG Concordia e-mail list, a posting on the main page of the QPIRG Concordia website, as well as posters placed visibly in the QPIRG Concordia space and other campus locations;
 - g. the referendum question must be approved by at least 50% of the voting membership, with a minimum voter participation of at least 10% of the applicable student membership.
7. The membership has the right to form committees for the purpose of advocating a position on a referendum question.

ARTICLE 6: BOARD

A. Board Members

1. The Board shall consist of not less than three (3) and not more than twelve (12) elected members of QPIRG Concordia who have been elected as Board members to represent QPIRG Concordia. The board seats are divided as follows: 6 seats are reserved for Concordia Students Members and 6 seats are reserved for Community Members.
2. The term of office for Board members shall be one year.
3. Board members may run for re-election at an AGM.

4. Board members shall retire upon entry of the new Board into office.
5. The staff of QPIRG Concordia shall be considered non-voting ex-officio Board members.
6. The Board shall have the right to appoint other Board members from time to time to fill vacant positions between elections.
7. No remuneration shall be paid to a Board member for being or acting as a Board member. However, a Board member shall be reimbursed for all incurred expenses while engaged in the affairs of QPIRG Concordia, subject to authorization according to financial guidelines determined by the Board.
8. No regular Board member may be a paid employee of QPIRG Concordia.
9. Resignation of Board members
 - a. A Board member may resign by presenting a resignation in writing, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the Board.
10. Dismissal of Board members
 - a. A board member who is not on leave is deemed to have resigned upon the non-attendance of four (4) consecutive regularly scheduled board meetings
 - b. A Board member may be dismissed from the Board by a 2/3rds vote at a meeting of which the Board member has received ten (10) calendar days written notice including the reasons for the removal.

B. Board Duties and Powers

1. The management, administration, and control of the affairs of QPIRG Concordia are vested in the Board, subject to this Constitution. Without diminishing the foregoing, the Board:
 - a. may make such rules and regulations as it considers advisable for the conduct of the affairs of QPIRG Concordia, provided such rules and regulations are consistent with this Constitution and The Quebec Companies Act;
 - b. may appoint standing committees, ad hoc committees, and task forces, to carry out specific functions as determined by the Board;
 - c. shall ensure the keeping of proper financial records;
 - d. shall perform such other duties as directed by the members, or as necessary for the Board's legitimate function.

C. Meetings of the Board

1. The Board shall hold regularly scheduled meetings at least once a month.
2. Quorum shall be 50% of the Board members, except any members on leave.
3. A Board member may request to go on leave due to extenuating circumstances. Leave may be granted by the Board, in response to a request in person or in writing.
 - a. When on leave, a Board member does not have a vote and cannot participate in any decision-making process.
 - b. However, the Board member retains all responsibilities of being a Board member, except attending meetings.

4. A Board member in a conflict of interest shall disclose such interest and shall abstain from participating in decisions.
5. Meetings of the Board and its committees shall be open to all members of QPIRG Concordia, however, only board members have decision-making power; the facilitator shall make every effort to enable the participation of all members present.
6. Notwithstanding the previous article, a particular meeting or portion thereof may be held in closed session only for the purpose of discussing the following matters:
 - a. proposed, pending, or current litigation;
 - b. personnel matters, leading to the hiring, firing, promotion, demotion, suspension, salary level or evaluation of staff members;
 - c. personal matters concerning the conduct of any member.
7. Special meetings of the Board may be called, to consider matters of particular urgency:
 - a. upon receipt of a written request from any three (3) Board members, or;
 - b. upon receipt of a petition signed by thirty (30) members of QPIRG Concordia, stating the time, place, and agenda of the meeting.
8. Agenda Items
 - a. All members of QPIRG Concordia may propose items for the agenda, by bringing the item to the Board before the beginning of the meeting.
 - b. The agenda shall be adopted at the beginning of the meeting.
 - c. Non-members of QPIRG Concordia may attend Board meetings to present information relating to an agenda item; however, they may not be present for the decision-making process.

ARTICLE 7: MEETINGS

A. Annual General Meetings:

1. QPIRG Concordia shall hold an Annual General Meeting each year in the fall term months of September, October or November at a time and place determined by the Board in accordance with this Constitution.
2. Quorum is set at thirty (30) members of QPIRG Concordia, at least half of which shall be student members.
3. The AGM will be publicized for three weeks prior to its date (not including the day of) by:
 - a. Advertising in an independent student newspaper at Concordia University and
 - b. Postering on and around both Concordia Campuses and
 - c. Listing the AGM on the QPIRG Concordia website and on all active QPIRG listserves
4. The AGM agenda shall include:
 - a. staff reports;
 - b. board report;
 - c. working group reports;
 - d. financial report of the last fiscal year;

- e. any agenda item, other than a constitutional amendment, provided it is brought up by a member to the attention of the board of directors at least ten working days prior to the AGM;
 - f. the board election
5. Any motion to be voted on at the AGM shall be decided by simple majority vote of members present.

B. Special General Meetings

- 1. Any matter which needs urgent and special attention that falls outside of the timeframe or the basic structure of the AGM can be discussed and decided on at Special General Meeting (herein known as an SGM) of the QPIRG Concordia membership at any time throughout the year.
- 2. SGM can be called:
 - a. By decision of the board OR request of 3 members of the board as in special board meetings
 - b. By petition of 1000 members
- 3. If an SGM is called by petition the board of QPIRG shall organize the meeting within 28 days.
- 4. Quorum and voting procedures at an SGM shall be the same as for an AGM, simple majority.
- 5. The SGM will be publicized with minimum 2 weeks notice:
 - a. Postering on both Concordia campuses
 - b. Listing the AGM on the QPIRG Concordia website and on all active QPIRG listserves

ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

- 1. Constitutional amendments shall be made at a General Meeting provided that thirty (30) days prior notice to wording of the amendment is readily available to members. It requires a three-quarter vote to be adopted.
- 2. If a three-quarter vote is not reached, the General Meeting may elect to vote on changes clause-by-clause.

ARTICLE 9: ANCILLARY POWERS OF QPIRG Concordia

QPIRG Concordia shall engage in business activities, as it shall from time to time determine, including but not limited to, the following powers:

- a. To enter into, perform and carry out contracts of any kind necessary to, or in conjunction with, or incidental to the accomplishment of the purposes of QPIRG;
- b. To acquire any property, real or moveable, bought or rented, or any rights therein or appurtenant thereto, necessary or appropriate for the accomplishment of the purposes of QPIRG;

- c. To borrow money, and to issue evidences of indebtedness, and to secure the same by mortgage, deed or trust, pledge, or other lien, in furtherance of any or all of the purposes of QPIRG;
- d. To sell or otherwise dispose of all or any portion of the assets or properties of QPIRG;
- e. To pursue civil and criminal cases before the courts.

ARTICLE 10: SEPARABILITY OF ARTICLES

In case any of the provisions contained in this Constitution or any application thereof shall be invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions contained in this agreement shall not in any way be affected.