



MEMO

From the office of the...
**ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT
(FINANCE)**

TO: Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Alexandra Johnston
SUBJECT: Finance Committee OPRIG Review
DATE: November 21, 2018

Dear Members of the Student Representative Assembly,

The Finance Committee was satisfied with the state of OPRIG. We believe they are using their funds appropriately and we were satisfied with their responses to questions which can be found below. The Committee felt OPRIG has made appropriate changes given their budget cut from last year's referendum and does not recommend they go to referendum.

What did you do this year to promote to students that you have an opt-out option?

- It was advertised on the front page of our website, a sign outside of the office, displayed on the large television screen in MUSC for over a week, and advertised on our social media accounts. The MSU was also asked to assist with advertising the opt-out. For more information as well as some examples, there is a separate word document attached to the email for your reference.
 - 9/5/2018 Clubs Fest PIRGSPECTIVES. Hard copy of newsletter.
 - 9/13/18 Website Main Page <https://www.opirgmcmaster.org/>
 - 9/13/2018 Website Membership and Funding <https://www.opirgmcmaster.org/funding-and-membership/>
 - 9/17/2018 PIRGSPECTIVES online version on blog <https://www.opirgmcmaster.org/2018/09/17/pirgspectives-fall-2018/>
 - 9/20/2018 Sign Outside office
 - 9/20/2018 Twitter <https://twitter.com/OPIRGMCMaster/status/1042770604133367808>
 - McMaster U <https://student-accounts.mcmaster.ca/tuition-fees/opting-out/>
 - 9/26/2018 Instagram https://www.instagram.com/p/BoMMixTDgjj/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet
 - 9/28/2018 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/OPIRG.McMaster/posts/10157512646607814>
 - 10/2/2018 Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/OPIRG.McMaster/posts/10157520419797814?_xts__\[0\]=68.ARBBre_aFVcXbgBZcrsM5Z3tsa1Inz2hoz_MIpTgBWkwCVDXC7NNSL](https://www.facebook.com/OPIRG.McMaster/posts/10157520419797814?_xts__[0]=68.ARBBre_aFVcXbgBZcrsM5Z3tsa1Inz2hoz_MIpTgBWkwCVDXC7NNSL)

[b2_Q5vOV_TrclmzjUgSi-ftisvCOT7-SPOQm26sieNyEYaFPe6BPL38jUnHH6mNx1MmnB9Ybdq_DG0aNc1jg5uzruCtcdXja0x_0XVkeG-pHkz21di4f6aqjtWutkMmKA&_tn_=-R](#)

Why do you have a carry-over of \$20,000? Why without the surplus would you be losing \$7,000?

- Our apologies for not asking sooner, but we would like clarification with this question. Going off of the budget sent to you and posted on our website, is this referring to the Surplus from Previous Year (of \$27,062) located under Revenue, or the predicted surplus (of \$21,623) for the 2018-2019 year, listed at the bottom of the budget document?

*I clarified we were curious about both and did not receive a response.

How did you come to the split between salary and operation expenses?

- Originally, 89% of our budget went towards staffing. The Board contends that this spending was not unreasonable: most organizations have the bulk of their expenditure going towards staffing and administrative costs. Furthermore, permanent staff provide continuity and stability to an organization. Working with the Board of Directors, OPIRG staff carry out critical basic tasks that maintain the integrity of the organization, ensure financial obligations are met, strengthen infrastructure, and assist volunteers in their activism. As a unionized workplace under CUPE 1281, OPIRG McMaster abides by fair wages and working conditions. Responsible organizations operate with staff and the amount OPIRG spends on staff is not out of proportion in comparison to other organizations. However, due to the recent budget cut imposed by the MSU, OPIRG has no other option but to reduce staff hours. Under the new budget, 57% of fees go towards staffing costs, with 43% allotted to operations and programming.

How many students do you assist every year, how many volunteers do you have?

- It is difficult for us to say how many students we assist every year, as we assist students in a variety of ways. We help students through the resources (ex. Button maker and iMac computer with Adobe suite) in our Resource Centre (MUSC 229)), workshops/fairs/presentations we hold and/or fund, funding groups on campus, and also funding/supporting our student working groups and the work they do in the community. We do not keep track of attendance at our workshops/fairs/presentations as students and community members do not have to pay admission to attend them. In addition, many of these events (such as the Fair-Trade Fest) are drop-in events that generate a lot of foot traffic, which is difficult to measure. When we fund groups on campus, we do not record how many members are a part of these groups or how many people the work of these groups reach (many groups deal with raising awareness for social and environmental issues, so it would be difficult to quantify how many people they assist). This applies to our working groups, as well.
- Definitively, we can say that for the past 8 years we have had an average volunteer intake of 32 volunteers a year. Last year was 42 and this year (so far) has been 35, but that number is ongoing, and we continue with recruitment efforts throughout the year. Some volunteers do not continue with OPIRG or they may not get placed with a position. The past 3 years has shown an average of 19 volunteers who are placed and active. For

Working Groups last year, we had an average of 15 members per group with 150 members in total.

Sincerely,
Alex Johnston
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