Welcome to the School of Social Work

It is September already and classes will soon be underway. As members of the Social Work Association of Graduate Students (SWAGS) 2012-13 Executive we would like to welcome you to the program and give you some information about SWAGS. We know that student life is busy and many of you are juggling various life commitments however, there are many ways to participate. Depending on your interest and availability this may include becoming a member of the executive, helping out with committees, attending an activity, providing feedback and suggestions.

This is your association and SWAGS strives to be working on events and issues that matter to you. The association is funded by Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS) from student fees and we want to ensure that everyone interested benefits from our activities and actions.

A message from our 2012-2013 SWAGS Executive

We started the school year, trying to understand the expectations of our fellow students as those nominated to protect their interests. In the fall term, we initiated activities such as providing coffee and cookies between classes. This activity sought to provide a relaxed opportunity for student voices to be heard and to seek suggestions to focus the actions of SWAGS. By organizing study boosters and yoga classes during the term, we tried to address the expressed need for self-care as we moved through difficult and stressful periods in the program. With the Idle No More teach in, we sought to engage the program and larger community in the diverse experiences and issues affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada and the role of the evolving Idle No More movement. We listened to students concerns across the PhD, MSW and Q-year levels and strived to address these concerns with the administration. Apart from this, we also took time to enhance graduate students participation on hiring committees, celebrate our cultural diversity, organize workshops exploring issues pertinent to our lives as social workers as well as question what our future practice means to us with special focus on challenges faced during our field placements.

In organizing events for the school year, we tried to reach out to other student bodies within the School of Social Work and other departments in McGill. This is because we believe that real learning for social workers should be an interactive process with other disciplines.

As our term draws to a close, we would thank to all the students, faculty and staff that have worked with us see our activities and ideas through to action.

Thank you and best wishes from: Alex, Bonnie, Ifeyinwa, Ilyan, James, Marianne and Patrina (SWAGS Executives, 2013). Unfortunately, for personal reasons Ed resigned from the SWAGS executive during the summer.

Annual General Meeting

On September 12th, we hope many of you can make it to our Annual General Meeting (AGM), an opportunity for election of executive positions and to learn more about SWAGS. This report will include information to prepare you for the AGM, our activities of the past year and items that will need to be voted on by students.

The AGM will be held at 5:30 on September 12th in room 326. A light meal will be served. We hope to see you there!
SWAGS Executive Council Available Positions 2013-14:
At the AGM those interested in positions will be able to formally apply. If you have any questions about positions or process, please contact us at swags.pgss@mail.mcgill.ca.

Administration/Communication Committee Leader
The primary role of this position is to coordinate the communication of SWAGS (activities, events, meetings) with the SWAGS members and to direct questions from the members or the School to the appropriate executive or at SWAGS meetings. Communication also includes providing minutes to SWAGS members, preparing and distributing the newsletter and promoting SWAGS events.

Finance Committee Leader
The main role of this position is to be responsible for the funds of SWAGS. This includes monitoring and providing updates on the budget, communicating with PGSS, coordinating funds for activities and reimbursement.

Intra-University/Community Committee Leader
This committee leader represents SWAGS at the monthly PGSS council meetings. This role includes acting as a liaison between SWAGS, the PGSS councils and other faculties in relation to events, causes and the interests of SWAGS members. This committee leader works to promote social justice and/or social action initiatives in the School, university and the larger Montreal community.

Social Events Committee Leader
This position seeks to build and promote a sense of community amongst graduate students by organizing social activities. In the past this involved activities such as, yoga, meditation workshops, Thomson House social nights and coffee and cookies between classes.

Q/year, MSW and PhD Representatives
These positions represent their cohort within SWAGS and the School. This includes seeking the perspectives of their fellow students and presenting their concerns in advisory committees and in SWAGS meetings. Further responsibilities include coordinating activities of interest and communicating information about SWAGS meetings and events to fellow students.

Social Justice & Advocacy Committee Leader
This position seeks to promote activities that foster diversity and social inclusion amongst multiple social and cultural identities, life experiences, and beliefs within the university and community. This includes working on issues of equity and social justice, democratic participation and social change within the university and community. This role is an essential part of SWAGS executive advocating for marginalized students’ voices.

International/ Out of Province (IOOP) Student Committee Leader
This position represents the needs of international and out of province students at the School. Among the tasks of the IOOP is to identify needs, plan desired social events, and liaise with university associations. The IOOP is also responsible for collaborating with the SWAGS Exec to organize events relevant to the needs of students new to Montreal.

The Academic/Student Affairs Committee
This position represents student body interests in matters concerning hiring/reviewing positions for faculty, staff and directors in the School. The responsibilities include liaise with faculty and school administration with matters related to graduate student development, plan events that further graduate student professional development, and report SWAGS activity to faculty at least once per term.