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To: Senate

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From: Aaron Donny Clark

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Subject: Student Grievances

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Date Submitted: 2007-01-08

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Senate Meeting Date: 2007-01-17  
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Background:

The Senate Committee on Student Grievances was created to allow grievances arising in within the university to be reviewed and answered internally, and the Code of Student Grievances is tailored to address the particular difficulties students face in defending their rights within their own educational institution. Historically, it is normal to wait two or three months for a case to be heard, with additional weeks to receive a decision, and this system that has satisfied the student community for a number of years.

Despite cases being filed, the Senate Committee on Student Grievances has not meet in the last eight months. There are currently cases that have been delayed up to five months, with no end in sight. This kind of delay is unreasonable considering the pace of academic life. Instead of having a fair hearing, students are being penalised as if their grievances failed, preventing them from move on constructively from these situations. With a growing backlog of potential cases, and no meeting dates currently scheduled for any of the pending files, it is getting to the point where it is unreasonable to expect students to address their grievances internally instead of pursuing recourses external to the University.

The consideration of time in a fair and reasonable hearing is recognized in the Code of Student Grievance Procedure by the Appeals Committee, specifically in article 6.7.1 which states a maximum delay of 40 days from the decision for leave to appeal until the appeal hearing. While this is not always respected, the suggestion does indicate a relationship between time and a fair hearing, if only for a student's second hearing on the issue.

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Question:

Given that these delays are resulting in the violation of students' right to a fair grievance process, my questions are the following:

- 1) Where, within McGill, does the responsibility lie for ensuring hearing dates are set in reasonable time?

- 2) Given the implications of hearings never being held, why is there no maximal time limit for the first hearing of a student's grievance?
- 3) What university bodies or procedures exist to hear grievances against the Student Grievance Committee?

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