

Constitution of the **BIORESOURCE ENGINEERING STUDENT SOCIETY**

Adopted March 28th, 2013

Amendments ratified on March 2016

Amendments ratified on September 2016

Amendments ratified on November 2017

Amendments ratified on March 2018

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ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

Section A. Name

1. The organization shall be known as the Bioresource Engineering Student Society, hereafter referred to as the BESS.

Section B. Definition of Terms

1. The organization shall be known as the Bioresource Engineering Student Society, hereafter referred to as the BESS.
2. *BESS Council members* refers to the President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Internal, Vice-President Industry Affairs, Vice-President University Affairs, Vice-President Communication and Services, First Year Students Representative, Second Year Students Representative, Third- and Fourth-Year Students Representative.
3. *BESS Executive members* refers to the President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Internal, Vice-President Communication and Services, Vice-President Industry Affairs, Vice-President University Affairs.
4. *BESS members* refers to any and all undergraduate students registered full or part time in U1, U2, U3, and U4 of the B. Eng. Program at Macdonald Campus.

Section C. Purpose

1. To represent students enrolled in the Bachelor of Engineering (B. Eng) program of Bioresource.
2. To maintain a high degree of cooperation, participation and friendship among the members by organizing social activities and events, as well as interaction with the students of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.
3. To provide an opportunity for members to exchange information and ideas on current topics.
4. To provide assistance and information to members on the problems of an academic nature.
5. To maintain good communication with the Macdonald Campus Students' Society; to cooperate and collaborate in the organization of student activities.
6. To maintain good communication and cooperation with clubs of engineering, agricultural and environmental nature.
7. To act as a link between the members and downtown Engineering students, as well as the other universities from Quebec and Canada.
 - a. To promote the participation of the members in their related competitions
8. To provide a communication channel with the *Ordre des Ingénieurs du Québec* (OIQ).
9. To publicize the Bioresource Engineering major within McGill, and the community at large.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section A. Requirements

1. Members of the BESS must be registered full-time or part-time undergraduates in the B.Eng. program of Bioresource Engineering.
2. Members of BESS must pay Student Society fees to BESS. Payment of Society fees is levied by the Student Accounts Office of McGill University. The fees (per semester based on full-time enrolment) are as follows in the Appendix section
3. The BESS council is also included in the BESS membership.

Section B. Withdrawal of Membership

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1. Membership of the BESS is mandatory for all undergraduate students in the Bioresource Engineering program and cannot be withdrawn or opted out of.

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS

Section A.

Officer Titles

1. The legislative and administrative authority of the Student Society is vested in the Executive Board members.
 - a. President
 - b. Vice-President Finance
 - c. Vice-President Academic
 - d. Vice-President External
 - e. Vice-President Internal
 - f. Vice-President Communications and Services
 - g. Vice-President Industry Affairs
 - h. Vice-President University Affairs
 - i. First Year Students Representative
 - j. Second Year Students Representative
 - k. Third and Fourth Year Students Representative

Section B.

Duties

1. The legislative and administrative authority of the Student Society is vested in the Executive Board members.
2. The Executive Board members are the President, VP Finance, VP Academic, VP External, VP Internal, VP Communications and Services, and VP Industry Affairs, and VP University Affairs
3. President
 - a. The president is the Chairman of the BESS Executive Board, Committee and BESS as a body. The President shall call and preside over all meetings pertaining to BESS.
 - b. Shall act as an 'ex officio' member of all committees and organizations constituted under BESS.
 - c. Shall have the duty to uphold the constitution and ensure that it represents the rights of the members of the BESS.
 - d. Submit an annual report of the Executive Board to successor and to the permanent Council files, and present it at the general open meeting in the winter semester.
 - e. Shall break all ties in voting.
 - f. Shall keep the minutes of all BESS meetings and the meetings for the Executive Board/Committee.
 - g. Shall give two weeks' notice to members of the time and place of each General Open Meeting.
 - h. Shall be responsible for finding, and maintaining a suitable location for all permanent records.
 - i. Shall keep a permanent file containing all the correspondence and minutes of BESS and close it at the end of the term (by April 1) and make it available to the new Executive Board.
 - j. Shall provide assistance and guidance to the Executive of the BESS when requested and as needed.
4. Vice-President Finance
 - a. Shall manage the finances of BESS in accordance with the rules set down by MCSS.

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- b. Shall keep an account of all monies received and disbursed, to obtain receipts, to present at the request of the chairman the financial statements at the regular meetings of MCSS.
- c. In the absence of the President, shall assume the presidential duties.
- d. Hand over to the successor, in good order, all books, records and papers pertaining to the office of Treasurer.
- e. Present a complete financial report to the Vice-President Finance of the MCSS.
- f. Submit an annual report to successor and to the permanent Council files.

NOTE: ONLY THE ABOVE-MENTIONED POSITIONS HAVE SIGNING AUTHORITY AND ARE ALLOWED TO REMOVE MONEY FROM THE STUDENT SOCIETY ACCOUNT

5. Vice-President Academic

- a. Shall bring to the attention of the departmental chair any concerns brought up by the student body, and represent the student body to the staff of the Bioresource Engineering Department at the meetings.
- b. Shall be responsible for all academic matters that concern the members of the BESS.
- c. Shall be in charge of publicizing the Bioresource Engineering major within McGill, and the community at large.
- d. Shall coordinate all required logistics for the announcement and execution of a referendum.
- e. Shall represent the BESS and its members to the Engineering Career Center (ECC) and Career Planning Service (CaPS)
- f. Shall relay important event and administrative information from the ECC and CaPS to the BESS and its members at all times
- g. Shall actively participate in organizing events and activities with the ECC and CaPS that will be of interest to bioresource engineering undergraduate students
- h. Shall keep the ECC and CaPS informed on relevant events and activities organized by the BESS.

6. Vice-President External

- a. Shall represent the BESS, and the Department of Bioresource Engineering at meetings outside of normal Student Society activities, and report back to the Executive Board.
- b. Shall be the contact for BESS with the different engineering Student Societies and their affiliated competitions (including, but not limited to):
 - i. In McGill University, like the Engineering Undergraduate Society
 - i. And intra-university competitions such as: Engineering Week (E-Week).
 - ii. At the provincial and federal student levels, such as the Québec Confederation for Engineering Student Outreach (QCESO) and Canadian Federation of Engineering Students (CFES).
 - i. And inter-university competitions such as: Quebec Engineering Competition (QEC), the Engineering Games (EngGames), the Canadian Engineering Competition (CEC).
 - iii. At the provincial professional level, such as the Quebec Order of Engineers and the Réseau des Ingénieurs du Québec.
- c. Shall be a liaison for any media contacts that are requested and will also contact media outlets about important activities that will promote the BESS, and the Department of Bioresource Engineering.
- d. Shall submit a written report on all meetings attended, and media contacts made to the successor, and to the permanent club files.

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- e. Shall communicate at General Open Meetings, or at any other time, any information gathered from other organizations that would be of interest to the members of the BESS.
 - f. Shall be responsible for assembling a committee called “QEC Committee” to organize the attendance of Macdonald Campus delegates at the Quebec Engineering Competition (QEC).
 - g. If necessary, shall also be responsible for assembling a committee, appropriately named, to organize attendance in other competitions such as but not limited to the Canadian Engineering Competition (CEC).
7. Vice-President Internal
- a. Shall coordinate all internal communications, and activities of the BESS including sporting teams, trips and other special events.
 - i. The official internal communication method is the BESS newsletter, ideally sent out bi-weekly
 - b. Shall communicate all important information arising from General Open Meetings and Executive Board Meetings to the members of the BESS
 - c. Shall assure that a copy of the constitution is available for review at all times upon request.
 - d. Shall take care of the coordination of the Integration Event for the First Year Students at the beginning of the Fall semester, with the help of the Second Year Students Representative.
8. Vice-President Communications and Services
- a. Shall be in charge of managing and maintaining all BESS run areas
 - i. This includes the ‘BREE Lounge’ and any future areas run by the BESS
 - ii. Management tasks include, but are not limited to; keeping an organized environment for students; include a bulletin board for information and news; decoration of a portion of the space for a ‘stress free zone’, etc
 - iii. Maintenance will be given a specified budget, set by the Vice-President Finance, for new supplies, appliances, and refreshments for use by all students in Bioresource.
 - b. Shall manage the social media of the BESS and facilitate class groups made for respective years on these social media sites.
 - i. May request to be the administrators of Facebook groups created by students; Students are not obligated to make any Executive Board member an administrator of their group.
 - ii. Recommended to create class groups on facebook for incoming students
 - c. Shall communicate information from Executive Board to all members via email or social media.
 - d. Shall manage the accounts of any current and future communication outlets
 - i. Communication outlets include email accounts, MyInvolvement, and social media accounts
9. Vice-President Industry Affairs
- a. To establish contact with members of industries, companies, and other corporate entities.
 - i. The contacts may be reached for networking events, competition judging, among other causes.
 - b. Shall select suitable sponsors that may appear at BESS events, meetings, etc.
 - c. Sponsors may include but are not limited to company representatives, company executives and volunteers.

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- d. Shall draft appropriate sponsorship packages to send to sponsors and act on the Student Society's best interests at all times
 - e. Shall be responsible for securing funds or items sent to the BESS by sponsors.
10. Vice-President University Affairs
 - a. Shall represent the interests of the BESS Council and Members at all other club and society meetings at McGill University including but not limited to MCSS, AESUS, and EUS.
 - b. The meetings of other clubs and societies shall be attended at the discretion of Vice-President University Affairs, as they deem necessary.
 - c. Shall inform the BESS about the activities of other clubs and societies at McGill University.
 - d. Shall relay all important and relevant information between the BESS and other clubs and societies at McGill University.
 - e. Shall maintain regular communication between the BESS and other clubs and societies at McGill University.
 - f. Shall voice the concerns of BESS Council and Members to other clubs and societies at McGill University when necessary.
11. First Year Students Representative
 - a. Shall represent the First Year Students and their interests at all meetings of the BESS, and report back to the First Year Students.
 - b. Shall foster the integration of the First Year Students with the other members.
12. Second Year Students Representative
 - a. Shall represent the Second Year Students and their interests at all meetings of the BESS, and report back to the Second Year Students.
 - b. Shall organize the Integration Event for the First Year Students in the Fall semester.
 - c. Shall help the Second Year Students with the transition between Macdonald Campus and the Downtown Campus.
13. Third and Fourth Year Students Representative
 - a. Shall represent the Third and Fourth Year Students and their interests at all meetings of the BESS, and report back to the Third Year Students.
14. Member-at-Large
 - a. Shall provide assistance to the BESS when organizing activities, and to act in the place of any missing members of the Executive Board except the President.

Section C.

Requirements for Running For and Holding Office

1. The positions on the BESS Council to be elected: President, Vice-President Finance, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Internal, Vice-President Communications and Services, Vice-President Industry Affairs, Vice-President University Affairs, First Year Students Representative, Second Year Students Representative, Third and Fourth Year Students Representative.
 - a. The candidate for presidency must have been a member of the BESS Council for at least one year.
 - b. In order to be eligible to run for non-presidential positions in the BESS, candidates must be members of the BESS.
2. Any candidate for one of these positions must be a member of the BESS during their mandate. They must also be registered for a full year, therefore shall accept the position for a full year.

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Section D.

Nominations and Elections

3. Only members of BESS are eligible to vote.
4. In order to be nominated, each prospective candidate for an executive position must receive at least 20 signatures of BESS members, in support of their nomination.
5. The Executive members shall set a period in March during which nominations will be called for and accepted. This period shall be no longer than 2 weeks in duration and end no later than March 31st.
6. An election to fill all positions must be held before the last day of classes for the winter semester. The only exception to this shall be the First Year Representative and the Members at Large, who will be elected by the end of September.
7. Two election procedures will take place: the Presidential Elections and the Council Member Elections. The Presidential Elections are to take place two weeks prior to the Council Member Elections.
8. In the case where only one person runs for a position, the candidate running uncontested receives the position by acclamation.
9. Ballots will be counted by a committee appointed by the BESS Executive Board.
10. A debate session must be held 3 days before each election.
 - a. The specific format of the debate session shall be decided upon by the current BESS Executives and made available at least one week prior to the debates.
11. The elected member shall be the candidate receiving the majority of the votes.
12. At least twenty percent (20%) of the membership must have voted for the election to be considered valid.
 - a. A tie in voting shall be broken by the current President, the Departmental Chair, and the future President.
 - b. In the case of a tied vote for the presidential position, the two presidents shall hold a debate and the Departmental Chair shall decide the winning candidate based on their credibility and competencies.
13. At least two (2) members of the Executive Board of the BESS shall be the chief returning officers.
14. The term of office for the elected members of the BESS Council shall be from May 1 of the academic year during which council members are elected, to April 30 of the following year.
 - a. During the period between April 1 - April 30, the new BESS council shall be required to attend all meetings.
15. Year representatives (U1, U2, U3/U4) must be elected by an electorate entirely made up of their respective classmates. In other words, U2 students will not be allowed to vote for U1, or U3/U4 candidates and vice-versa. The same applies to U3/U4 candidates with respect to U2 and U1 students.
 - a. The year of a student shall be determined according to their status on Minerva.
 - b. At least 20% of the undergraduate year (U1, U2, or U3/U4) must participate in their respective elections for the vote to be considered valid.
16. Any elected candidate can be suspended or removed from office in case of behaviour deemed unfit by Executive Members of the BESS (disclosure of confidential information, continuous lackluster or unsatisfying job, etc.).
 - a. To suspend or remove a candidate, the Executives must vote in favour of the suspension or removal. Suspension requires a two-thirds majority; removal requires unanimity.
 - b. During the vote, the person in question should not be present. The decision of the vote will be in effect for the remainder of the academic year.

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17. A removed candidate shall be replaced no later than two weeks after the removal. Special elections must thus be held.
18. In the situation where a member of the Executive Council, Year representative, or any other candidate holding office steps down, special elections will be held within two weeks of the vacancy.
19. Special elections require an electorate of 10% of the BESS membership and a simple majority.
 - a. Special elections apply in the case that a BESS Council member has been removed or has stepped down from their position
 - b. The special elections shall require no nomination signatures, no debates, and shall be conducted with a simple ballot.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section A.

General Meetings

1. Open
 - a. A minimum of two General Open Meetings shall take place each year, one in each semester. This General Open Meeting is the ultimate decision-making body of the Student Society.
 - b. A minimum of 15 people or 10% of the BESS members shall consist the quorum of these Open Meetings.
 - c. Should a quorum not exist at an open meeting than that meeting shall be rescheduled within one week of that date.
2. Special
 - a. A Special Meeting of BESS may be called by the President, as the need arises, provided that 7 days' notice is given of such a meeting.
 - b. A Special Meeting must be called by the President of BESS on the receipt of a petition bearing the signatures of 10 percent of the membership.
3. Only members of BESS are eligible to vote
 - a. At no time may a member be asked to leave a meeting of the BESS, unless they are disrupting the meeting in some way.

Section B.

Meetings of the Executive Board and Committee:

1. Meetings of BESS shall be open to any BESS members and held at least twice a month and concluding in March. March is the transition month between leaving and entering Executive Board members.
2. The President may call a meeting of the Executive Board and Committee of BESS at any time.
3. A quorum at any meeting of the Executive Board and Committee of BESS shall be sixty percent of the membership.
4. If a member misses more than 3 consecutive meetings that member will automatically lose their position. Exceptions will be made based on special circumstances or ones out of the individual's control.
 - a. Exceptions may include but are not limited to conflicting courses at the time of the meeting or injury.
 - b. Individuals may attend in person, via oral online communication or phone.

Section C.

Meeting Procedure

1. All meeting shall be conducted according to the Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

Section A. Committee Members

1. Shall consist of a representative from each club on campus that is related to engineering, as well as the technical societies.
2. Individuals can be both committee members and part of the BESS Executive Board.

ARTICLE VI. FINANCES

SECTION A. Finances shall be controlled by the BESS Executive Board.

SECTION B. Funding

1. The BESS will be, as much as possible, completely self-sustaining. To this end the Student Society will hold any fundraising events and seek sponsorship that it deems necessary to fund activities and events that will meet the goals of the Student Society.
 - a. Only in cases of dire need shall the Student Society seek monies from outside sources.
2. All monies, investments, and assets belonging to the BESS shall remain the sole possession of the Student Society regardless of any future decision.
3. A copy of the financial reports will be available for review by members upon request.

SECTION C. Funding Request for Clubs

1. All requests for funds must be submitted at least one (1) month prior to the holding of the event.
2. All requests for funds must include a detailed account of the event to be organized, including a budget, and a description of how the members of the BESS will benefit by funding this event.
 - a. Events with a focus on fundraising, engineering and sustainability purposes will be prioritized
 - b. Carpooling or public transit should be promoted in the organization of the event
3. The BESS reserves the right to reject any request for funds, without prejudice, which does not meet with the goals of the Student Society.

ARTICLE VII. AFFILIATIONS

Section A. MacDonald Campus, McGill University

Section B. Robotics Club, Macdonald Campus

Section C. McGill University Tractor Pulling Team (Mutrac)

Section D. CSBE Committee, Macdonald Campus

ARTICLE VIII. BY-LAWS

Section A. Non-Discrimination

1. The BESS shall not discriminate against anyone on the basis of personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, gender

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identification and expression, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, or social class.

2. A distinction, exclusion, or preference based on relevant physical or other qualifications required in good faith is deemed non-discriminatory.
 - a. The reasoning for such distinctions, exclusions, or preferences shall be provided when decisions are made.
 - b. Members of the BESS can challenge the distinction, exclusion, or preference by preparing a petition that fulfills the requirements for a Special Meeting, and mentioning the distinction, exclusion, or preference.
3. The BESS shall support engineering groups, programs, and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group who encounters disadvantages based on, but not limited to, their race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, gender identification and expression, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, or social class.

Section B.

Language

1. All information and communications shall be done in English, but a French translation shall be made available upon request.
2. Where meanings of the English and French text conflict, the English text shall be authoritative.

Section C.

Conflict of Interest

1. No member shall vote on a motion in which they stand to gain financially, or receive some other benefit, which the Executive Board deems unreasonable.

ARTICLE IX.

REFERENDUMS

Section A.

Call for a Referendum

1. A referendum shall be called by the Executive Board of the BESS under the following situations:
 - a. The Executive Board is presented with a petition signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the BESS members and three professors of the Bioresource Engineering department.
 - b. The Executive Board decides that an issue requires the input of the entire student body.
2. The referendum question shall be decided upon by the Executive Board prior to the announcement of the referendum date.
3. The location of the voting shall be decided upon by the executive prior to the announcement of the referendum date, and must be included in the announcement of the referendum.
4. The referendum shall take place no less than two (2) weeks following the announcement of the date.
5. An information session and debates must be held at least a week prior to the voting date for the referendum.
6. The referendum shall be held by secret ballot.
7. The President shall act as the chief returning officer.
8. Eligible voters shall be determined by a list of all members of the department, and their positions or student status that will be provided by the department chair.
9. A list of eligible voters will be displayed the same day as the announcement of the referendum. Any person who wishes to have their name added or removed from the voters

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list must submit a request to the chief returning officer no later than 1 day before the date of the referendum.

10. Voting shall occur for a minimum of two (2) consecutive working days, not spanning a weekend.
11. Quorum will be achieved when twenty percent plus one (20% +1) of the eligible voters vote.
 - a. A question will be considered as passed if a simple majority of votes are in favour of the proposition (vote "Yes").

ARTICLE X. CONSTITUTION

Section A. Amendments to the Constitution

1. Proposed amendments shall be voted either by secret ballot or by voice during any general meeting by BESS Council members. A simple majority is needed to adopt an amendment.
 - a. Proposed amendments shall be recognized once at least two thirds of the BESS Council have agreed in voice or in writing.
2. The membership will be informed by public notice of the proposed amendments prior to the next General Open Meeting.

Section B. Adoption and Ratification

1. Proposed amendments shall be voted either by secret ballot during a referendum or during any general meeting, provided that all members have at least one week's notice of the proposed change. Amendments shall be voted on by the Executive Council of the BESS. A simple majority is needed to adopt an amendment.
2. Major revisions to the constitution shall be voted on by all BESS council. A two-thirds majority is needed to adopt an article considerably modifying the Constitution.
 - a. A considerable modification is defined as one which changes the scope or goal of the BESS, and is deemed so at the discretion of the BESS Executive Council. The decision will be made by simple majority.
 - b. Upon ratification by the BESS, changes to the constitution shall take effect when ratified by the MCSS.

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APPENDIX

1. Bioresource Engineering Student Society student fee
 - a. Full-time B.Eng Bioresource Undergraduate Students \$12 / semester
 - b. Part-time B.Eng Bioresource Undergraduate Students \$6 / semester

2. Engineering Career Center approved fee for students \$50 / semester
 - a. No opt-out option