

March 28, 2019

To the members of *The Link Publication Society*, the community of Concordia University, and anyone else this may concern.

My name is Julian McKenzie. I am a freelance journalist and a Concordia University graduate from 2016. I was both a print and online sports editor for *The Link* between 2014 and 2016.

I consider those years among the best of my life. I am also thankful that I was given a second opportunity to stay around *The Link* through my time as a media representative and president of *The Link's* Board of Directors.

In our second full year as a magazine, we've seen some positives. We've seen 112 contributors and 281 contributions in our magazine and we're grateful for each and every one. *The Link* also won a JHM Award for Best Cover, to go along with nominations for Indigenous Reporting and Student Journalist of the Year.

Our publication broke the story of privacy being breached during the Concordia Student Union's consent training. We continue to cover Concordia's handling of its own Creative Writing teachers being accused of sexual assault. *The Link* continues its coverage of Art Matters, while also delving into the world of Afro-Drag and families being torn apart by residential schools. We also had reporters cover the Stingers' basketball teams attempts at capturing provincial championships, with the men's team emerging as victors for the first time since 2012.

We had a number of launch parties, workshops, and talks throughout this year, featuring guests like Christopher Curtis, Laura Beeston, Aaron Lakoff and many more. On behalf of everyone, I'm grateful for each participant and host who gave their time this year.

While not necessarily in the name of the publication, we find *The Link* at the forefront of a strike against unpaid internships. It is being spearheaded by our outgoing editor-in-chief Miriam Lafontaine and incoming Current Affairs Editor Erika Morris.

We've also revised policies for the purpose of bringing diversity to our contributors' list, our masthead, and eventually our board of directors. I thank Brian Lapuz for carefully considering and revising our Code of Conduct as well. We also secured our temporary space as our home will be renovated in the coming months. Finally, we also increased honorariums for our editors.

Yes, there is a lot to be proud of from this past year. But there is still work to be done.

We should not be satisfied with our achievements and we should all strive for more. For the magazine, the website, our masthead, our staff, and our workplace culture. Especially with our milestone 40th anniversary on the horizon.

I challenge and urge the incoming masthead to keep the spirit of *The Link* alive.

This means being welcoming and inclusive to contributors of all races, sex, genders, and backgrounds. This means demanding as much as you can from your fellow Linkies for each issue and online story you put together. This means being critical of an article or story idea if you feel it needs critiquing. This means being receptive to criticism and seeing how you can improve. This means considering your fellow editors' perspectives and not silencing and belittling those who have the right to speak in that moment.

This also means treating one another with respect. *The Link* is not the place for intimidation. It is not the place for anyone to feel uncomfortable.

Above all things, this means continuing to be a home for advocacy journalism for news, sports, fringe, and opinions. There is a time-honoured standard that must be upheld and passed onto future generations.

The 40th volume will not be a cakewalk by any means. At some point you'll be operating in a completely different space. There will likely be festivities for the anniversary happening around the time you'll be working on the magazine. You will also have school and other commitments that will also cut into your time. It's on you to be organized and prepared as you all embark in your new roles.

But, I know you can do it.

Many people have walked through the doors of H-649 as members of *The Link*. A number of them have turned into reputable and talented journalists. If you all apply yourselves (with a little help, of course), you can one day be considered among the illustrious alumni this paper has produced.

More importantly, you'll be on your way to making a career for yourself as a journalist, designer, photographer, videographer, podcaster, or whatever you may choose. I hope *The Link* plays a positive role in your journey.

It's been an absolute honour to have served as President of *The Link* Publication Society's Board of Directors. It's been an absolute honour to have worked at *The Link* with such talented editors, writers, videographers, photographers, creatives, and business minds.

Hope to work alongside you in the field and I'll see you at Link 40, hopefully.

Sincerely,

Julian McKenzie, TLPS