



# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2017

Attendance:

Observers:

Absence:

## 1. Call to Order

Speaker calls the meeting to order at 6:52 pm.

## 2. Land Acknowledgement

Speaker gives land acknowledgement: "SSMU would like to recognize that it is located on the traditional unceded territorial land of the Kanien'keha:ka, which has long served as meeting grounds for indigenous peoples."

## 3. Attendance

Met quorum.

## 4. Approval of the Minutes

Councilor Century motions to approve, seconded by Councilor Prillo. Motion carries.

## 5. Adoption of the Agenda

President Ger motions to adopt the agenda, seconded by Councilor Century. Motion passes.

## 6. Guest Speakers

### a. Presentation by the Provost



Christopher Manfredi (Provost): I don't have long speech to make, I think it's more important that I hear what's on your mind and try to answer question you may have, as much as possible. I'll just let you know a couple things that we're working on in my office over the next couple of months that will be coming up the various governing bodies of the university including the senate. The first is, which I've mentioned at a number of faculty councils where some of you may have been attending, the university has had two strategic planning documents that have been directing its academic activities for about a decade – the first was called The Strengths and Aspirations, which was followed by a document called Achieving Strategic Academic Priorities, both of them are on the web if you want to look them up. Those two documents, especially the second one, are coming to the end of their operational life, and the principle asked me to start drafting another document that I'm working on a first draft. I'm trying to make it a document that is concise but ambitious, that is going to set some meaningful but achievable objectives that are directly under the control of the office of the provost, and that document is going to come to senate for an open discussion in February, so certainly have your student senators be there for that discussion, I'd like your feedback on the ideas that I'll be presenting in that document as well as the specific actions I plan on taking. The document itself is tied to things that the principles already articulated and have confirmed by both senate and the board of governors, mainly the theme of McGill as an open, connected and purposeful university, and around our mission statement and so on. So keep an eye out for that, it'll be coming to senate.

The other document that we're working on that will also be presented: as you know, over the summer, the big international relations portfolio was moved from the office of the vice-principle research and international relations, that's now the vice-principle research and innovation, the international relations part came to the office of the provost, and I appointed a new associate provost international, Phil Oxhorn, to be responsible for that strategy, that aspect of our office's operations, and he's been a working on a strategic document around our international relations and that will be coming for publication and consultation.

So just to let you know that those two things are coming forward and there will be opportunities for input and we're looking forward to that. Of course the other item that will be coming is the formal and final report will be in June, which is the report of the Provost taskforce on Indigenous Studies and Education, that will be coming up, and that will be pushing into the end of June. So, that's it. I'm happy to hear comments, questions, what's on your mind.

Councilor Okome: I don't know if you can speak on behalf of this, but I was just wondering what kind of role McGill has played in the fact that there was a deal made with the McGill bargaining team to floor fellows who work for McGill, starting this semester, and McGill backtracked out of that agreement to pay them. This is really important because floor fellows right now are doing work for free and the work that they do is so immense, like the race project itself is eight hours of training and then three sessions and then also facilitating, and I felt like they came to an agreement that floor fellows and McGill could reach to – like these are your students that are really helping first years transition, like it's a hard year, and they're working so hard and McGill backtracked out of paying them money that I think McGill can afford,



especially since that job is so important, and it was agreed upon – I was just wondering why that decision was made, what happened there?

Provost Manfredi: It is common practice that, since this is still an ongoing labor negotiation, and I don't comment on ongoing labor negotiations. It's unfair to the parties that are at the table, having those negotiations, so I don't comment.

VP Sobat: Thank you, I wanted to ask about the work of the taskforce on Indigenous Education. The final report is in June, there was going to be a preliminary report in January and I was wondering if it will be coming to senate to renew or requit in the course of this year or have there been other opportunities, does the committee expect to see progress by the taskforce by the end of the year, any recommendations, has anything been submitted as suggestion or for feedback?

Provost Manfredi: So if you look at the terms of reference, this is a preliminary report directly to me, largely so that I could get a head start in making recourse allocation decisions, with support with the recommendations of the taskforce. If the taskforce final report is in June, it would be that we wouldn't have resources available for another year because of the way that the budget cycle works. When I asked for a preliminary report in January, it was so I would start planning, so you will hear about that when I give my budget presentation in the senate.

VP Sobat: Because I think it would be useful to us to see some of the preliminary ideas, honestly we don't have the most representative taskforces at SSMU and we don't necessarily get the whole picture to understand how to look forward and how to ensure that particularly the external communities and well and aware of the deliberations that are happening and they see that there are priorities being made for them, and if there are concerns then they could voice that.

Provost Manfredi: So as I said, the taskforce has the responsibility for getting the appropriate input from the whole community. As I said, when I do my budget presentation, I'll see to some of the preliminary recommendations of the taskforce and what we're doing to jumpstart resource allocation to those recommendations. In addition, I will say that part of the strategic plan that will be discussed at senate, obviously these things will have elements of what we want to do with indigenous studies and education, so there will be an opportunity at that stage to see to those concerns.

President Ger: I was wondering after the yield performance taskforce took place, I noticed there wasn't any section specifically looking at governance and administration recommendations, and I was wondering if that was something that is still within the scope of the taskforce or something that still being considered?



Provost Manfredi: I think you're right, but I don't think it was specifically part of the mandate of the taskforce to look at that. Again, I attended the first open forum of the taskforce, but I'm letting the co-chairs of the taskforce proceed through their work, and so if there are recommendations along those lines, I'm sure they'll be taken seriously.

President Ger: In the case that there are some recommendations around this midterm period that maybe are not necessarily resource allocation initiatives, will those be reported on or brought to senate, during that budget presentation?

Provost Manfredi: I think a budget presentation is an opportunity to speak not just to the numbers, but to some of the broader themes that are driving some of the budget. One of the important aspects of my role as provost and vice principle academic is that, under that model, the idea is that resource allocation decisions and the management or the responsibility for the VP academic life of the university are in the same office because the one should drive the other, so those two things are combined. So I think, like I did last year, I used that budget presentation as opportunity to talk not just about the numbers, but also about some of the themes that were underlined in the decisions that were taken. So I will take that opportunity to speak to those issues as well.

VP Sobat: My interest is in seeing not just which places we end up putting resources towards, in all of the options that are presented, as there will be a lot of exciting ideas and I recognize that we won't be able to go forward on all of them at this time, but understanding that with the process of prioritization, we are knowing what is out there as far as opportunities, for example for students to get involved in some of those initiatives that we'd like to see move forward, and we have a mandate here at SSMU for example to allocate more resources toward course content so we can work on that, so allocating more resources and having those conversations with the department would be useful for courses, just helping out in those areas and how we can support that endeavor moving forward. For example, with consultation, we can look at what was done with the prioritization, which issues that couldn't go into the policy or were addressed there, maybe help for people to understand those decisions.

Provost Manfredi: Point taken. There will be a final report for the taskforce; this taskforce is working on a very compressed timeline, it started in September and it's supposed to give the final report in June. That's actually quite fast for something like of this importance and length, because I didn't want us to spend two years talking about it, I wanted us to do something. I also wanted to have some guidance from the taskforce even before they finish all of their work, so we could start thinking about these things. The idea is to act intelligently but to act quickly.

Councilor Mehrotra: My question is about the [Sexual Violence Policy] SVP. Since that's been brought up at senate, can you speak to some of the steps that the administration has been taking to take what's in there and manifest it in concrete ways?



Provost Manfredi: As you know, there is an office that has been created that consolidating some of our existing resources, and is also adding resources. I think the new person is starting imminently, I don't know the exact date. You know the policy mandate us to do a number of things, including in three or four months, do a survey on sexual violence, so we're in the process of developing that. There's an establishment of an oversight committee, so we're following and working with associate provost Campbell to put all those sets in place. We have a final report from our consultant worker, that's just come in so that will help guide us. These policy was just passed by the board of governors in December, and so we really haven't had the chance to sit down and map out what to do – the policy, in a sense, tells us what to do next, and we're taking the steps that we're required to take.

Councilor Templer: I have a bit of a two-part question, largely based off of research and a report that came out in the McGill Daily. In the report, the former director of McGill Mental Health Services Norman Hoffman was talking about some rather troubling things to do with the Step care program at the McGill Mental Health services. Some of the things that were brought up, and I'm paraphrasing but it's in the article, basically that staff weren't allowed to voice criticism for the program, that it wasn't working very effectively, he said that, "It is my opinion that the McGill Mental Health Service has fundamentally been abolished." My first part of the question is if there is anything you could say to respond to or to answer the concerns that have been brought up by this, not dealing with the employment aspect because I understand that would be something separate, but just dealing with the concerns. And the second question I would like to ask, as you're examining this in regards to the future, how things should lay out and what to focus on, what sort of role will mental health take on?

Provost Manfredi: My answer to the first question is that I have not read the report, so I would hate to speak to something without knowing, I've been out of town recently, so I haven't had the chance to read the report but I will. Certainly a lot of conversations with the deputy provost and myself will happen. Obviously you know mental health is a critical priority at this university. We're working on a new strategy, it's very complicated, and it's not an easy thing for us to do well. I think we have a responsibility to try our best and find the best way to do that, we managed to secure external profits to support some of our activities in this area, and that's something we're committed to doing well at.

Councilor Okome: I don't know what the full scope of your role is as VP Academic, but I'm going to ask this question and see if you can answer it. I know McGill came out with a report recently talking about the hiring process and how race and different things can go into that, and how there's going to be different processes set up ensuring that we have equitable hiring. But taking that in, I know McGill also has an issue with class, as in we are not known for being diverse in terms of class at this university and kind of the accessibility issues that McGill has, and making sure that they're taking on students that don't belong to a higher social class, and I was wondering what you're going to be doing as VP academic to making sure



that the school McGill is accommodating to people who come from higher and lower class, because I think it's beneficial for higher and lower classes to interact and to learn from each other.

Provost Manfredi: I think that's absolutely right. So I'll speak to both of those points, I believe you're referring to the report on systemic discrimination, which was presented at the senate. I think it's important for the university to look at itself in the mirror from time to time and see where we're not doing well, and I think that report was very useful in identifying areas where we can improve in terms of our academic hiring practices. And I should note that even before that, before it was presented to me last spring and came to senate in the fall, because it had to go through the senate subcommittee on equity and so on, we had taken measures working with the associate provost Campbell, we took measures in the academic hiring process, mandatory equity training for search committee, we put in place an extra step in the approval process for buyers to ensure that those search processes would be consistent with our existing equity policies, so we'd already taken measures. But I will say, I'll give you a brief discussion about my strategic plan, but my strategic plan will have what I think are meaningful and realistic targets with respect to diversifying the academic staff at McGill University. To your second point, yes, socioeconomic status is an area where we're not as diverse as we could be, and my strategic plan will have meaningful and achievable targets with respect to increasing student financial assistance that I think will help address that to some degree.

Councilor Okome: So you've talked about the socioeconomic changes, that your plan is to diversifying the McGill. Because the report only talked about diversifying the staff, but McGill as a student body is not diverse in terms of race at all, so what are the plans in place that you could also not just take on staff but implement it at a student level.

Provost Manfredi: Well, the first step is ensuring that we are providing appropriate levels of financial assistance, we have to look at our recruitment practices for students, so that when we go out and recruit students, we haven't built things into our recruitment practices that are somehow prohibiting us from capturing a broad view and diverse set of students. Certainly the other aspect of course will be putting a big focus in enhancing or increasing our indigenous student population, I think that will be a particularly targeted diversity measure that we'll put in place.

VP Patterson: I just have a quick questions about mental health at McGill, and the state of mental health here. As it currently stands, students are paying a lot of fees to student services specifically that are being used for different mental health services that are providing for students, but I was wondering if the university itself is planning on investing in mental health, since it's such a major thing that we deal with on campus.

Provost Manfredi: The answer is yes.



VP Patterson: Fantastic! Could you expand on that at all?

Provost Manfredi: Well, I don't have the numbers in front of me, but I think we already are investing in mental health services, and we will continue to make those investments once we have a comprehensive strategy in place to ensure that the strategy is successful.

Councilor Mahrotra: Is there a timeline for these investments into mental health?

Provost Manfredi: Well I think the deputy provost is working on the overall strategy, there's been some philanthropic funding to help this matter, so we'll move forward as quickly as we can to put an effective program in place.

Councilor Mehrotra: So wait, the funding is philanthropic; it's not coming from McGill. So McGill is really not funding this?

Provost Manfredi: Yes, we are. We invest from our operating budget.

Councilor Mehrotra: My other question was, in regards to what Councilor Okome was saying, you talked about broadening the scope of the financial assistance, so that we can diversify the McGill student body. I was wonder in that financial assistance would be contingent on grades? Because I find that a lot of financial assistance is contingent on grades and some student might have grades that are good enough to get into McGill, but they're not at the very top, so they miss out on financial assistance, even though if their grades were technically good enough.

Provost Manfredi: No, I'm speaking mostly to needs-based financials.

Councilor Sur: I wanted to ask if there are any upcoming services that are being done to get more indigenous student to come to McGill? First Nations have been discussed a lot, but we're not seeing many results.

Provost Manfredi: Yeah, we have our recruiters go out and we're working with those communities. Part of the purpose of the indigenous studies taskforce is to give us idea of what we could be doing better, so we think we should be doing better in that area, and different kinds of programs, pathway programs, support for those students when they get here. Partly, one of the reasons why we created this taskforce, was rather than have a scattershot ad-hoc approach, let's have a group of people sit down and think through what this strategy should look like. So we are doing outreach, and we'll do better outreach once the taskforce tells us what they think will work best.



Councilor Sur: The reason I was asking, is because I know some faculties have their own student-run programs, where students from those communities go into other communities where they talk about what the program is like, and all that.

Provost Manfredi: Yes, we can help support those things. You should go on the indigenous taskforce website and one of the things we did was do a scan of everything we're already doing, which was quite extensive, but what we didn't have was a coordinated effort around it. So now hopefully we'll have a coordinated effort around this, and it will have more impact.

Councilor Thomas: I guess this is more of a question than a suggestion; I understand that you are invested in mental health and these initiatives. Have you considered ways you can include student consultation, because there are a lot of people who have gone through all these mental health services and they're really advocating for their story, like Mental Health Awareness week is coming up in two weeks and some of them are entering panels. Would you be willing to go through student consultations to create a variety of different ways to invest, is that something that you've thought about?

Provost Manfredi: I'm sure that's what the Deputy provost is doing, but I'll make sure he's aware of that.

VP Magder: After talking with Jacob Lavigne from the PGSS, we both feel that McGill could be doing more to increase student innovation on campus, and specifically the fact that we have an innovation centers that target faculties like the Engineering Design Center, but no McGill cross-faculty innovation center like they have at NYU, where they have cross-faculty innovation. Given the fact that there's a lot of expansion going on in the Royal Victoria at the moment, does the university have any plans to create or expand innovation centers that target cross-faculty innovation and collaboration.

Provost Manfredi: Yes, innovation is part of the academic plan for the Royal Vic, the trick is to find space for it. Innovation is within the portfolio of the VP Research and Innovation, Angelique Mannella is in charge of that, and the mandate is specifically to look at cross-faculty initiatives. And some of the initiative that we often identify as single faculty, like the Dobson Cup, are actually very multi-faculty, and I'm very proud as the former Dean of Arts that many of the winners of the Dobson Cup are from Arts. The success of that program come from a variety of faculties, so even though it may be based in management, it has a university wide mandate and impact. The other thing that has happened of course is that we have developed a template for minors in entrepreneurship, which are delivered largely by the faculty of management but in partnership with individual faculties; so Music is now a participant in that program, the school of agriculture and environmental sciences is largely involved in it. So those are some of the things that we are doing that are multi-faculty and bringing innovation and entrepreneurship across the university.



VP Madger: Just to clarify, there are specific spaces that are planned to accommodate these programs? Because I know that there could be spaces that are set up to facilitate these experiences.

Provost Manfredi: We're certainly looking at that, yes.

VP Magder: Have any concrete plans been developed?

Provost Manfredi: We're certainly looking at it, having some of those spaces in the Royal Vic. If we develop, we always have to preface it with "if" because again, we're looking at the possibility. But yes, there would be possibility for space there.

President Ger: Later on slash in the middle of last semester, VP Sobat and myself, as well as Councilor Sadikov, started some talks with the Dean of students as well as the associate provost Campbell about potentially working into like an academic amnesty policy that would allow for the university to go back on grading one day, to allow for students to make it up in more student-led decision bodies, specifically the general assembly was something that we talked about. I have heard that there have been some preliminary discussions, but I was wondering if there was something that made it to your office that you maybe have had preliminary discussions on?

Provost Manfredi: Very preliminary discussions. I'm aware of the idea, but very early talks.

Speaker: Thank you for your presentation!

## 7. Question Period (5)

VP Sobat: By a show of hands, put your hand up if your faculty has set your nomination and election dates for this year? Okay, it would be great if you could send me the dates for those.

## 8. Report of the Steering Committee (2)

President Ger: Since some people weren't back yet, steering did not get to meet last week. So this week it is totally fine if council just approves the agenda and if we need to make any wording changes then we'll submit that as an amendment to the movers, and making sure the movers are okay with some small grammatical changes. We have already changed one small thing in the motion about the Quebec Bill 62; it originally started for the VP External to communicate with the government about the issue but we broadened the language to include action beyond just that communication, if need be.



## 9. Announcements (5)

VP Magder: Mini-courses registration is live, so if any of you guys want to check out because we just hit our base numbers for every one of our twelve new courses, so if you're interested in them I would recommend checking them out now.

President Ger: It's around that time again. In about less than a month, there's going to be an info session about executive elections. Kind of strange to think that there's only one term left. But if any of you are interested in coming to that session, please reach out, there will be a Facebook event probably up by Monday. As well, the GA is going to be happening in a couple months, just want to remind everyone super early on – well, in a month. Make sure to tell everyone.

Councilor Douglas: So Nightline is recruiting new volunteers, if everyone could share that on their faculty pages and pass the news around, our interviews are starting this weekend.

VP Sobat: There's also a student senator info session on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> in this room. So even though the elections are happening on different timelines, we will have a general overview of the job and its responsibilities. So definitely check that out and share with your constituents.

Speaker: I have one more announcement: we have a new Councilor joining us!

Councilor Jio introduces herself as the new Athletics Rep.

## 11. New Business

### a. Motion Regarding SSMU opposition to Quebec Bill 62

VP Aird: So Bill 62 is a watered-down version of what we've seen previously under the Quebec government, the Charter of Values, which called for basically the removal of religious symbols from government officials. Seen as a human rights issue, but the problem is that mostly the other parties in the National Assembly right now think that the Liberals in power are doing enough to curb this, what they perceive as a problem but it's not actually a problem. So it would ban religious symbols from all features. So the problem is that it's essentially solving a problem that doesn't exist; the situation is not problematic. Other parties are calling for a more massive removal of all religious symbols from police officers to prison personnel and judges. So it's very much in line with the problematic that was present under the previous Quebecois government. It's already passed in principle, so the first reading at the National Assembly, so it's being sent to committee for further review, so it's going to be looked at more



and then sent back for a formal vote this year. This would be basically to help denounce it and voice our opposition to it through the relevant channels.

Councilor Mehrotra, Councilor Century, Councilor Sur, VP Magder, Councilor Douglas, Councilor Okome, Councilor Prillo, Councilor Sgro, Councilor Gingrich-Hadley, Councilor Jaio, Councilor Templer, and Councilor Thomas are all added as movers to this motion.

Councilor Mansdoerfer: So Bill N.62 is a terrible bill, I just want to say that for a start. But a previous discussion that was brought up at EUS was that SSMU takes a stance on this while something like the conflict in Syria aren't discussed, although there are clear moral problems and issues in Quebec. So at what point do we pick and choose where the right stance is? Because there are no motions to oppose Syria or any political issues; so that was an issue brought up by EUS. I know there are other motions out there as precedent, like the opposition of BDS, but just wanted to bring that up.

Councilor Mehrotra: I would like to say to that, that there is a difference in taking a stance against this bill that is a specifically Canadian bill, as something in Canada and specifically in Quebec. I think there's a difference in the scale of this bill and the scale of the complex situation in Syria, and to suggest that SSMU could even potentially conceive of a bill that could take a stance on the complex situation that is Syria is kind of ridiculous, there's no way we'd be able to do that. With BDS, we didn't take a stance on that, it was voted at the GA, that wasn't SSMU council.

Councilor Sur: Bringing back to the point of the BDS: I think that those were also brought up by other students, so I don't think it stops other students from bringing up motions that relate to more global issues, but going back to what Councilor Mehrotra said, this is something that impacts our student body directly, because it is not even a federal level but a provincial one, so it makes sense for us to get involved because we are part of this province.

Councilor Okome: Looking at this bill, I want to also enforce the fact that this is important, because this speaks to facial coverings and the problems the white man has, and the Quebecois have a strange view on the religion of Islam. And that's what this bill is, it's perpetuating more and more Islamophobia in Canada. And telling a woman to put on or take off her clothes – there's nothing feminist of either of those things. And BDS, that was a movement on campus, so that was a little different. But I understand what you're saying, about how we choose issues, I guess it's just what we think is relevant to our campus situation, there are so many things going on but I think SSMU's stance on this is really important, especially within the political era that we are, where we want to stand during history; we should stand on the side of the oppressed, obviously.

President Ger: I think there's been a few separate occasions in which people have been curious about why SSMU takes stances that are potentially considered exterior to the university. I think it's a good thing to



have dialogue about that, talk about why we do it and why it's important. We have a pretty diverse population at this university, a lot of them are members of our society and a lot of them are affected by certain conflicts that are maybe not necessarily located directly on campus, but does affect their lives. If we want to stick to the discussion of the university being a strictly academic space, which I think is something in itself isn't necessarily true; we learn a lot more here from the experience here. Beyond that, I mean the experiences of stresses, all these sort of things claim space to how the academic is experienced. We have the privilege of being part of this society, and the society is essentially a multi-million dollar corporation that is here to serve, that is here to do what it can to help. Our members are students on this campus, and I do think it's important, on whatever scale it is, that we are there for our students who want to take those stances, to alleviate those stresses, work towards building an inclusive space that serves all of our members.

VP Patterson motions to call to question. This motion carries.

#### **b. Motion Regarding Interim Provision For Board Of Directors Reporting**

Councilor Sadikov: This motion arising out of the ad-hoc Democratic review committee, which has a mandate to ensure the transparency and accountability of SSMU's bodies. One way to ensure such accountability is to provide for more regular reporting mechanisms from the Board of Directors to the Legislative Council. This is something that we thought could be beneficial immediately, not having to wait for the committee to complete the rest of it's work, which is why we are moving this as an interim provision that will be applicable in the mean time while the committee comes up with a more thorough review of the applicable regulations. These interim provisions would provide for the Board to submit a report to council for each council meeting and also that all minutes and documents of the Board be publically accessible be publically available unless the Board calls a confidential session. This is good and I encourage you to support this motion.

Councilor Douglas: I think this is a great idea, does anyone know why this wasn't done before and why this hasn't been happening already?

Councilor Sadikov: Largely, this is because of the restructuring of the board that was done at the end of last year, so whereas previously the Board had a lot less independent responsibility and didn't really have anything to report on, but when these changes were made, the appropriate accountability and transparency regulations were not created and soon we will rectify this, but at the present this will provide some clarity.

President Ger: I think it is an ongoing project that was done with good intentions, which is one reason why the responsibilities were split. It was nearing the end of the semester and there wasn't as much thought



put into the split as could have been done and the Democratic Review Committee is readdressing that now.

Motion passes.

## 12. Reports by Committees

### a. Executive Committee (5)

President Ger gives the report.

Councillor Douglas: The last line the report about the real estate agent, what is that about?

President: So there's very preliminary discussion that was happening at the Board about potentially looking into new real estate that we could go in on a partnership deal, potentially a club space or bar space or conference space that students could use. Because students are spending so much money to rent out spaces externally for a lot of events that are for big student populations; those usually aren't done on campus, they're done at clubs or bars. So we're potentially looking at joining up other universities, maybe Concordia, and looking for places that we could potentially buy or rent, but that's super early just to see what sort of spaces there are out there and what the price range kind of is. If people would like updates, we can get back to you if there is anything.

VP Magder: A comment on that: so we've been working on some long term building plans, long term space plans for SSMU. A lot of work will be done for that by BOMCOM on that topic, but just looking into how SSMU as it stands should be featured. Personally I know that there are a lot of things that will be happening later in the year that we aren't ready to present yet, but there's a lot of work that we have been doing that we haven't been focusing on properly that will be presented at a later date, no action can be taken any time soon. So it's just preliminary conversations to look forward.

## 13. Councillor Reports

### a. Councillor Sur (2)

Councillor Sur gives their report.

VP Sobat: I was wondering if there are more details about the universal design and accessibility work? I did get a chance to read the initial report that the consultant you hired produced and I know the faculty



has hired him, so I was wondering if there have been any initial changes that have been worked on and also what is being envisioned for the future?

Councilor Sur: So after he got rehired, he's been working with the equity committee of our faculty to work more on the academic side of things, in terms of the actual building, the two upper rooms that he talked about, that are on the main floor, they're both being redone right now. So part of that process is also looking at the suggestions that he made either for himself; but in general some the physically accessibility issues in regards to washrooms and whatnot, that needs to be done and that's kind of a long term project that the faculty itself needs to work on. But other than that, with the equity committee things are going pretty well. Mental Health has been such a big issue and more relevant issue now in the faculty, so he's working with them to implement some of those questions into reality.

**b. Councilor Sgro (2)**

Councilor Sgro gives their report.

**c. Councilor Shi (2)**

Councilor Shi gives their report.

**d. Councilor Templer (2)**

Councilor Templer gives their report.

President Ger: Could you state which four committees now how a spot open for the rest of the councilors?

Councilor Templer: The Judicial Board Reform Committee, Steering Committee, Democratic Review Committee, and the Equitable Governance Reform Committee

President Ger: At the end, anyone who is interested can come let me know.

**e. Councilor Anderson (2)**

Councilor Anderson gives their report.

## 14. Executive Reports

**a. VP (Operations) (5)**



VP Magder gives their report.

Councilor Douglas: I was wondering about the lockers and their allocation, has that already taken place or when will that take place?

VP Magder: Those will get set up as soon as I can figure out how to dismantle that huge wooden mailbox thing. I was hoping to run locker applications now so that they could be allocated by the end of January. The other issue too is that by lack of foresight, I forgot that I should consider giving groups at least a couple weeks notice that they will not be receiving mail at the current location so that they could plan for that. So I think that is something that should be address, but hopefully we'll get it done as quickly as possible.

VP Patterson: Just as a reminder, the lockers will be located on the fourth floor, currently where club mailboxes are located. So we're moving club mailboxes to a filing cabinet at the SSMU front desk, and the lockers will be placed with that wooden mailbox is.

VP Magder: We found mail from like 2010, and only a very small percentage of groups actually take mail, so we figured it was a better use of space to dedicate that to footlockers, where we could be storing things in a secure location when we have the capacity.

Councilor Gingrich-Hadley: I was just wondering about the artist reimbursement project, so this is not just students buying the work, SSMU will also be paying the artists to put that work up?

VP Magder: Initially, we were talking about using visuals and basically it's really difficult for SSMU to purchase a really good quality visual. What I think the protocol is, and what I'm suggesting at the moment, is that we purchase the prints, so we have an initial investment, whereas the original will still be up for sale and can be sold. So the artist maintains the ability to sell the original as well as being able to gain initial profit from the initial rent. It gives students the ability to put like a little placard beneath to say who is the artist, where you can buy a copy and print so and artist could continue to gain revenue by the print being displayed in the building, from students buying the print online or something like that. That will allow artists to make profit from the original as well as prints, and potentially make more revenue by having students buy more prints. Because I think it is a very valid concern; I don't want to put stuff up and have it not benefit the artist.

**b. VP (University Affairs) (5)**

VP Sobat gives their report.



Councilor Okome: For the safety appointments that you were talking about, like them adding more safety appointments, do you ever talk to them about the fact that the safety appointments themselves are like 15 minutes and in those 15 minutes counselors are supposed to find out if someone is suicidal or not, and how problematic that is? Like I don't think you can sit a student down, because they're only allowed 15 minutes and through those 15 minutes, they somehow decide the mental state of someone who is about to harm themselves? Did you bring up the fact that in itself there is a limit on how many safety appointments, even if it's supposed to be an emergency service, for people who can't get an appointment, because I think the waiting period is three weeks, which is insane. So did you mention the fact that, in itself, the safety appointments are a ridiculous notion.

VP Sobat: My understanding is that when they do take assessments, there is an option to put students directly in touch with emergency care, like hospitalization if that is required. I do agree with the notion that 15 minute to make an assessment is super brief. I think the amount of time is also problematic in that if students are trying to get a safety appointment, they should be receiving a full treatment that day, and I think they enough counselors on staff so that they could take those appointments that day, and not just have an assessment. If you've been hearing different experiences from students, let me know and we can talk about it. To clarify, the appointments that they added are not just additional safety appointments, they've extended hours also so that they can take on appointments that are less severe criteria. So other students that might require significant attention, but aren't at that point.

Councilor Okome: But there's still a limit – just because I know of instances where the students have gone and they'll have to come in at a certain time because if you're out of safety appointments, then that's not emergency care then you have to get there on time, which doesn't make sense, I guess? I guess that's my issue, if it's supposed to be emergency but there could be a scenario where there was too many people who might harm themselves but you got there last.

VP Sobat: Yeah, absolutely. If you want to let us know the details, we can follow up, because obviously with the transition there have been a lot of elements that have not been sufficiently considered and they're still making assessments as they go. Student Services is also launching a new consultation program for students to get together with student reps and discuss how they view the services, before the appointments and also after.

Councilor Sur: I wanted to ask something regarding the sexual assault policy. I believe some students reached out with concerns about the policy as well as the process, I was wondering if you could speak to some of the concerns, and if students have been reached out to.

VP Sobat: I think we've tried to be clear that the policy we passed is not perfect. I think there were definitely some concerns from the students that not only were there gaps in the policy in terms policies and procedures and what they mean, and retroactive for students that had things happen in the past and



hadn't gone public with those experiences, but that also that it wasn't reflecting strongly enough our advocacy and conversations with the university in the media narrative. I can say so much about what went on in the initial interaction behind those doors, but I definitely recognize that they're also feeling that maybe the words used weren't strong enough in those interactions, particularly publically. But I think it is important to recognize that the policy is something that a lot of students have needed to see for a long time and that for many students, I think they were happy to see something passed that we can build on. So, mentioning media narratives, I think that going forward we need to take steps to try to include students who are wanting to be better represented in certain areas, so I think anything we can do to improve the consultation mechanisms going forward will be important. I mentioned there is an advisory committee that is being formed, as well as hiring someone to look at continuous research, as well as having a lot of groups on campus involved. We're going to reach out and see if some of these people actually want to be involved with rewriting the constitution, because they may or may not want to be.

**c. VP (External Affairs) (5)**

VP Aird gives their report.

Councilor Sur: I wanted to ask something with the Conservative Party Leadership Candidate thing, was the event held at McGill or in Montreal? Did SSMU oppose this?

VP Aird: This was off-campus and it was done by McGill Against Austerity. So there was an event that was organized in protest for it, so this was in part being organized by McGill students, and basically McGill Against Austerity provided support.

**d. VP (Student Life) (5)**

VP Patterson gives their report.

**e. President (5)**

President Ger gives their report.

Councilor Sur: Is there something in particular you'll be doing to promote this executive info session stuff?

President Ger: When it comes to executive shadowing, we'll be hopefully sending those out to the many resources that exist on campus, which will hopefully encourage people to come see if it's something that they would be interested in. If they haven't been involved in SSMU before, there are long terms plans like the Equitable Governance Reform Committee report, who will hopefully be opening up the floor to



referendum questions by the referendum period. One of the suggestions made in that report was to make more identity specific seats on council, to open up the accessibility of the spaces. To think about it in a different way, to make sure that those opinions are being considered around the table, as well as give people an opportunity to sit around the legislative council table in order to give opinions that may be specific to that interest group. Hopefully allowing people to have that access to this legislative council, specifically around identity, will open up space and experience in order to eventually move up. In short term as well, those shadowing days are pretty great.

Councilor Okome: Just going off of that important question, I was wondering if you guys have any processes standing as to really put forward the fact that generally these positions are seen by a certain group of people and there's a lot more space for those identities for them to run. Also in the voting process, it's more probable that people will see like an Anglo-Saxon name and will vote for that one more so than a non Anglo-Saxon. Because that's been something that the IRC and different councils have been working on, they've been talking about taking photos down because when people see photos, they assume certain things about intelligence level and things like that. And creating more diversity because more diversity means more voices and more experiences to share, and I think that's important.

President Ger: I'll say quite honestly that some of those things that you just mentioned haven't been brought up, like taking down photos, however all really great points. I recognize that yes, you're right that there is more that could be done on that and I'll commit right now to bringing that up at the Equitable Governance Reform committee and see if we can do anything on a short timeline; if not, we can definitely make plans by next year.

Councilor Sur: To run for the executive position, do you have to be on council or not? Is there something councilors can help you do to reach out to people to run? I think we need to encourage more people to run who may not be in close vicinity to the council.

President Ger: No, you don't have to be on council. Yeah, definitely. So when an event that does come up, like it, share it, send it to everyone who you think might be interested. Not just the info session but also the shadowing thing; reach out to people. You all have respective councils, reach out to people on those councils who might not have thought of SSMU. As far as outreach to clubs on campus, that's definitely somewhere we can reach out to. If anyone has any suggestions, totally open to it.

Councilor Sur: I think there's just this negative notion that even if you run, you won't get elected because I think certain people can seem too rad or too left or too right or what have you. So I was wondering how you plan to work around that problem? Because I think you can encourage people to run, but I think a lot of people feel discouraged because they don't think they'll get a chance at winning.



President Ger: Super good point. There are a number of things that were brought up, not just in the report from the Equitable Governance committee, but also just discussion of getting people who are properly prepared for these positions. Especially with the executive, it is a lot of responsibility, so how to address some of those things. I'm open to doing considerably more if there are suggestions; we've been talking about more long-term shifts in governance structures. It's hard to implement some of these things on the short term, especially when dealing with governance. We're looking into some identity specific seats on council, and if that does get passed, it will act as a door to potentially running for these positions. Even within the extra barriers within an election situation, and especially if people don't feel comfortable going through an election, there will be more opportunity to get involved on a lower level. One specific example would be that if there are identity-specific positions next year, there's a possibility that each of those would come with their own specific committees to talk about issues within those identity relations, so there was talk about, because there is labor involved in that, that we would be potentially paying members of those committees by potentially increasing the equity fees in order to arrive as some diversity. We definitely need to build up access and especially equitable access, so we're trying to open up pathways. But again, if there are other suggestions, I'd love to hear them.

Councilor Anderson: I forgot if you had said it or not, but is there a date for the executive shadowing or not?

President Ger: Advertising will go up with the executive info session next week, but it's on a rolling basis.

Councilor Sadikov: I just wanted to add to what President Ger said about any specific consultation, in terms of the political climate there was a concern inferred last year in the electoral reform committee to address the acrimonious nature of SSMU elections, so there was some progress that's been done with that and I don't think we've actually had an election under the new rules yet, because they were adopted at the very end of last year. So we should hopefully be seeing some changes. But otherwise, in terms of having radical political views, I would just say that it doesn't matter maybe as much as we think? If someone is able to form a cogent and appealing platform that addresses issues that are relevant to student needs, like their broad political views don't matter so much and I think we've seen people across the spectrum occupy political decisions within this room. So I guess I would inform people of that. My question is, did I hear you say something about a referendum on the accessibility of council positions?

President Ger: Yeah, so one of the considerations in the report that was made by the committee is potentially having a stipend for either those, again, any specific seats on the legislative council or potentially the committees associated with them. The form of actual governance review is still at committee level, hopefully we'll decide on that soonish, but there is possibility that compensation is part of the conversation when we talk about opening up access to positions.

