

## Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University

1) **Call to Order**

The meeting of the Legislative Council was called to order at 6:09pm by Speaker Michael Tong.

2) **Attendance**

The attendance sheet was circulated around the room.

3) **Approval of the Minutes of Council – 2012.11.29**

VP Dinel motions to adopt. The motion clearly passes and **the minutes of the 2012.11.29 Legislative Council meeting are adopted.**

4) **Adoption of the Agenda**

Councillor Larson motions to adopt. The motion clearly passes and **the agenda is adopted.**

5) **Report of the Steering Committee**

President Redel stands for questions.

There is a motion to adopt. The motion clearly passes and **the report of the Steering Committee is adopted.**

6) **Guest Speaker**

a. **Professor Anthony C. Masi, Provost of McGill University**

He thanks Council for inviting him to present the university's strategic plan. He opens the floor for general discussion to allow students to ask any questions they may have(not necessarily related to the presentation).

**Questions:**

VP Reid-Fraser: Regarding university financing, there have been many different stories from different sides. She is wondering what mechanisms are in place right now to oversee the financing of all universities in Québec, if there is a general overview, and what kind of accountability is in place right now.

Provost Masi: It is important to distinguish between two types of universities in Québec: UQ universities receive a mandate from the government while chartered universities (for example, McGill has existed before Québec was even a province) do not. All universities accept money from the Canadian government, a contribution of about 48-9% of the total operating budget (at McGill), so it makes sense for the government to want accountability. A big part of what goes into Québec operating grants is for the provision of educational services (not student services), which involves the paying of salaries.

Every year both kinds of universities have to produce a budget. Chartered universities can run deficits if they have the mechanism to recover them, but UQ universities are not supposed to. The budget is first brought to Senate, then the budget book and proposal goes to the Board of Governors (who are responsible for the running of the university and its risk management), and finally the budget is made publicly. In the last few years the McGill budget and budget book has won

awards from the government; it is a reliable document. The Board of Governors are volunteers and have to go over all affairs related to the running of the university and are in charge of approving the budget. He gives a walkthrough of the process. In February/March last year: The government of Québec told them students would pay an increase of \$325 per semester (for full-time students) so the budget accounted for this. The budget was made and approved, but then the government said that they would only get \$254 from the government per student. The university said they would not produce a new budget as it was within the normally allowed variance. Then the PQ was elected, and now they were told there will be no increases, so the budget was changed again in September. The budget had been in place for 6 months and they were promised government support. In December the government said they want the university to cut 5.2% of its annual budget in the next 4 months. This amounts to a 15% cut in the remainder of the year and they do not have leeway because most of the budget is tied up with people (in salaries). That cut, in addition to other cuts, represents \$19 million in deficits that would be accumulated. These cuts lead to a \$31 million deficit. It is not due to financial mismanagement, but is a result of the way the government expects universities to prepare their budgets. Now they have to go back to the Board of Governors and say that the underfunding is really because of the four different messages they received from the government.

The general question about university underfunding is interesting. Starting with the 1999 PQ government which produced a series of studies between university committees and CREPUQ and determined that university underfunding was at \$125 million. It is not the universities, but the estimation of the government. This is not to say that Quebec is not generous. It gives deferential grants based on programs and has given the most grants of any provincial government. However, by 2010 we have fallen to the middle of the pack (at least 4 provinces are better funded). Our tuition rates are low, and when you compare our funding to other provinces, if our universities per capita have lower amounts to spend for students, then what is the explanation? In Ontario students pay three times more than in Quebec. This was used to calculate the underfunding. Underfunding has not been the product of individual universities or CREPUQ, because numbers show that Quebec, when compared to other Canadian universities, is underfunding its universities.

Regarding management, we have a serious system of checks and balances. We have compacts or agreements between faculties and universities and have to demonstrate with metrics that they are performing at the appropriate level. The government has two conclusions about McGill. The CNO report states that McGill's budget is generally transparent and spends money for the purposes it is allocated to. We do have an accumulated deficit of \$90 million over time, but part of this is from Legault saying that McGill should get \$15 million more than it has. He said he would give \$1 million a year for 15 years because the government owed McGill money but could not pay it. The principal fought the previous administration, and finally the government gave us an additional \$7 million but did not give us the money we lost. Irresponsible financing by the government is at least partially responsible for the deficit. We show our books to the government, have internal and external auditors, and our budget is overlooked by an unpaid board, making McGill transparent.

VP Dinel: What is the plan right now for the 5.2%?

Provost Masi: Right now the principal and other CREPUQ universities are working together to figure out what they can do to bring something to the government. As it is currently three quarters of the way through the budget year it is nearly impossible to make these cuts without causing harm. This would mean \$19 million in cuts on top of the \$11 million we have already had to make. They are going to the government to convince them that the cuts are not a good thing to do. They are doing so at multiple levels and meeting with different parts of the government. They will have to look at where the numbers come from and what we can expect them to look like. For example, we could not afford 24/7 library access, student services would decrease, and some staff might be let go if the cuts were made. There is nothing on the books yet because they want to have this conversation with the government first, and are avoiding doomsday scenarios in the meantime.

Councillor Zidel: Thanks Masi and clarifies that his statement is not an accusation. In terms of ethical investments, the university might do unethical things unintentionally. Do you think our policies protect against unethical policies in terms of environmental issues and things like weapons research? Do you think the university has the right policies to deal with this?

Provost Masi: It is a tricky issues because it deals with the academic world. In 1980 McGill divested from apartheid Africa due to student movements; students do have an influence. With human participants in studies, there are good guidelines. We have ethics review boards that review every single project. They are required to review any projects receiving grants from Ottawa, but have gone above and beyond to include every project at the university. If a project fails this review, it cannot run. Every disciplinary group has an internal ethics review. There are political decisions to be made, but those decisions are not ethics. We receive money from the government to do certain kinds of research and if we turn it down we might not get this money for other things. He cannot tell us whether we should do every project, but he looks at whether they have passed the ethics review board.

Councillor Zidel: Politics and ethics are intertwined, so if people decide that the environment is ethical should that come into play in ethics?

Provost Masi: We have sustainability policies which many ethics boards think must be included in the review as well. McGill was one of the first universities to adopt an environment program; we take environmental issues seriously and do research on them. For example, McGill has just won an award in green chemistry. The Bellini Building and Goodman Cancer Center have been built in accordance with these policies.

Councillor Zidel: His questions are more related to the investments of the university.

Provost Masi: The university's investment portfolio is tied up with endowments so they only get to use 25% of the billion dollar endowment each year. The remaining 75% is spent directly on students. The fund is earmarked for certain purposes. People have to compete for research chairs and the university's obligation is to put professors in positions to compete, not to decide what the research is about. After this, they can apply for grants. We do not make decisions about what research to invest in. Does the Investment Committee decide whether we should invest in the tar sands? Yes, but they have the ability to be influenced, like they were influenced to divest from tobacco. The Pension Fund's charter has one responsibility: to return as much value from it as possible. There are different ways of looking at investments, and our Investment Committee has a subcommittee about socially responsible ethical investing.

VP Dinel: Regarding the financing of the university and funding for research, do you think we should move away from government funding towards corporate or endowment funding? What is your opinion?

Provost Masi: Most of our research grants come from Ottawa; we rely very heavily on the government. Some government funds require us to seek private grants to supplement them. For example, in some cases we need to get the funding matched by a private corporation, such as the Bombardier chair for aerospace engineering. Should we diversify our funding sources? My opinion is yes because too heavy a dependence on any one source (including the government) can endanger the research.

VP Dinel: As a follow-up questions, how to we then insure that the companies are not dictating the agenda?

Provost Masi: There are lots of guidelines, for example we cannot accept money from any industry that would prevent the professor from publishing research. The industry can have up to a one year delay, but cannot prevent the publication of knowledge. Also, the professor may be doing research with proprietary value. If they developed it with their researchers, then the university helps develop it. Sometimes patents gain revenue for the university, such as strawberries and dairy developed at MacDonald campus.

**Provost Masi now begins his presentation:**

McGill's mission statement includes five basic characteristics: research-intensive, involving the hiring of professors who are going to produce knowledge and expecting them to have a student-centered approach; re-enforcing the student-centeredness of the university; priding itself on its excellence, even with lower resources, especially when compared to the United States we produce higher than our resources should allow; McGill is judged against the highest international standards and compares relatively well, usually among the top 30 to 50 universities in the positive rankings (however McGill does not do well with student engagement, the Princeton Review has ranked our professors as the least accessible to students);

McGill also has an enduring sense of public purpose, we have a big impact on Montréal and Québec as even with a total budget of \$1 billion our imprint in Québec is about \$5 billion.

The student body is composed of 26 000 undergraduate students, 9000 graduate students, and 20% international students.

Regarding what the Provost does, he is the chief academic officer after the principal. He is responsible for academic administration including all deans (including the libraries), the Deputy Provost for Student Life and Learning, and 3 provosts who work on policies, academic staff and the budget all report to him. He is also responsible for the budget (he gets the first crack at allocating resources) and serves as the chief budget officer.

Regarding the Deputy Provost position, it has been developed after a full year of consultation with student groups to understand what was going right and wrong went into the process to try to choose a successor to Morton Mendelson. The job profile (which can be found online) was directly influenced by students. They are looking both internally and externally for someone who will have a broad oversight for student wellbeing, is an advocate for student concerns (does not have to agree, but brings them to the senior administration), is a spokesperson from students to the McGill community, oversees services that deliver key services to students (admission, food and dining, etc.). The candidate should be someone with experience and success, someone who will understand how to assess and address university-wide issues pertaining to students, can serve as an agent of positive change, has unquestioned integrity, and possesses good interpersonal skills.

The strategic plan of the university:

This plan is made up of strategic priorities to serve you when you are growing and when you are shrinking. We will have to make strategic decisions if the government decides that we have to balance our books. This also needs to drive budget allocations which should reflect the university's top academic priorities. This has been approved by Senate and anything that will affect the policies of the university will have to go back to Senate for approval. This plan has been through a year of broad consultations.

The three main priorities of the plan are:

- 1) Enhancing McGill's academic success.
- 2) Focussing on student-centeredness.
- 3) Managing resources on a multi-year basis.

Goals:

We want to enhance McGill's world leadership in research, scholarship, and creative activity. McGill has alumni in 150 countries, 50 of which have active alumni associations.

We want to think about ways to change our educational program and review the ways we offer all of our programs. We want more cross-cutting opportunities at the

university so students will be able to take courses in other areas.

We want to bring in engagement of student services.

We also want to improve our facilities; we have more old buildings than anyone else.

The cross-cutting themes of the plan are: sustainability, international character, innovation (in both technology and pedagogy), expectation for instantaneous information, and technological support (including lecture recordings, MILE: McGill Innovative Learning Environments, and MOOCS: Massively Open Online Courses, a way of understanding how this kind of education can improve the use of technology).

The major strategic objectives of the plan:

-Professors: they are here for a long time and shape the university. The academic renewal plan is in place to try to bring in fresh ideas.

-Undergrad composition and experience: we have a lot of grad students, so they want to enhance the experience of both graduates and undergraduates.

-Services: we need to make sure you are getting high quality services. Some things need to be streamlined.

-Development: everyone at McGill should have the opportunity to think about professional development and career development at McGill

-Diversity: we want diversity in origin and ideas; we do not want the university to be stagnant. We do not have enough people coming from less than privileged backgrounds or aboriginal communities.

-Professional Faculties: the university is not only about arts and science, we have professional faculties as well. We need to have a revitalization of these faculties as well.

-Library: we want to re-imagine the library. We have a great library collection but half of the books do not circulate once in 10 years and are taking up prime time downtown real estate. Coursepacks are also an issue as we already own the material so we end up paying double for copyrights.

-Technology: we need to update technology in classrooms and supports (we only update 1-2 classrooms per year).

-Partnerships: we need to enter interactive partnerships (MOOCs).

The provost wants to keep up the dialogue, asks students to give ideas about what they like.

**Questions:**

Councillor Larson: Sometimes students feel McGill only compares itself to other universities in magazine surveys and that there is not enough emphasis on McGill doing independent projects.

Provost Masi: McGill is one of two Canadian universities that are part of the American Institute, which is split between public and private universities. We have programs like Music which compare well to private universities; you have to pick the programs that cut across public and private sectors instead of picking out a of a magazine to look at other universities with similar missions.

Councillor Lam: Asks for more explanation about interdisciplinary programs.

Provost Masi: We have created two interdisciplinary programs in the last two years (one is neuroscience). There are also programs that cut across music, medicine and engineering to deal with neuroscience and the brain. The questions they are asking cannot be answered in one discipline. More examples include the International Development major in Arts and the Engineering and Management program at the Masters level. Undergraduates should have the opportunity to find out who they are and what they like, so the university is going to find ways for people to do that.

Councillor Bissky-Dziadyk: In terms of libraries, is there any potential for McGill to expand library services? Is it financially feasible?

Provost Masi: It is not feasible, but we need to think about it. Our libraries are in a crisis so we need to think creatively about them. It costs about \$40 to keep an uncirculated book on the shelf so we need more compact shelving or shelves will start encroaching on student space. The big thing for our libraries is to get a new facility. Schulich has had a 75% decline in books checked out but a 75% increase in people who use it, which shows the need for more library space.

The Speaker thanks the Provost.

**7) Question Period**

There are no questions.

**8) Announcements**

VP Reid-Fraser: There are a few interesting things coming up. First, there will be a TACEQ meeting here on Sunday at noon in the clubs lounge. If anyone would like to drop by that would be great as she knows TaCEQ would really like to meet more SSMU folks. She will probably be there for most of the afternoon and maybe into the evening. Secondly, she and VP Szejda are in the process of running and Introduction to Quebec week of events. The McGill Debating Union will be presenting a debate on Québec sovereignty, as well as many other fun events.

VP Szejda: There will also be a poutine crawl during Introduction to Quebec Week. There may also be some kind of snow combat re-enactment on Lower Field; he is still trying to figure out the logistics of it. Also, if anyone has any recommendations or knows of any francophone bands please let him know.

Councillor Rosentzveig: Club audits are due next Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. They are now required once a semester and clubs are encouraged to complete the audits as their chances of getting funding for the next semester will be reduced if their audit is not handed in.

VP Dinel: Two weeks from now on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Senate will be meeting and the session will also be live-streamed. She will send out the live-stream link today.

VP Cooper: Save the dates: Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup> in Lev Bukhman there will be a services roundtable summit event. Activities Night and SSMU Fest will be occurring on January 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-8:30pm in the whole SSMU building. There will be a food fair, activities and performances, and tabling. Registration ends tomorrow at noon.

Councillor Chaim: Management Carnival starts on Sunday and there is a big auction in support of cancer on Friday. He encourages everyone to come on out and support it.

President Redel: The Winter 2012 SSMU General Assembly will be held on Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm. More information will be coming tomorrow and Saturday. GA motions are due Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. Motions from the floor will be accepted up to 3 hours before the start of the GA and should be sent to the Speakers at [speakers@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:speakers@ssmu.mcgill.ca). Referendum reforms will happen at next Council and questions will be voted on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Lam: New students also arrive in the winter semester, and DEFROSH will be hosted by Christian organizations (who run Fish Frosh) for these students. More information can be found at [www.fishfrosh.com](http://www.fishfrosh.com).

President Redel: Motions to suspend the rules and amend the agenda to insert the election of the Chair and Secretary for SSMU Council meetings for the remainder of the year as the next item of business and renumber accordingly. This is another legal requirement, two people need to sign the minutes to make them legally binding. The motion clearly passes and **the agenda is amended.**

## 9) New Business

### a. Election of Chair and Secretary for SSMU Legislative Council Meetings

President Redel nominates himself as Chair and Mike Tong as Secretary. The motion clearly passes and the elections have been carried out. **President Redel is now the Chair and Mike Tong is now the Secretary for all remaining SSMU Legislative Council meetings.**

### b. Motion Regarding Amendment to SSMU By-Law 13.6.1

VP Cooper reads the Resolved clause:

*“Resolved, that SSMU change By-law III-13.6.1 to read:*

*The Club demonstrates evidence of an active member base among members of SSMU beyond the executive at the discretion of the Interest Group Committee.”*

She offers an explanation of the motion, saying it decides clubs' existence in a manner more secure than members lists and gets rid of their obligation to hold three events.

There is a motion to move to the previous question.

The motion passes and voting begins. **The motion clearly passes and the Motion Regarding Amendment to SSMU By-Law 13.6.1 is adopted.**

**c. Motion Regarding Amendment to SSMU By-Law 13.6.3**

VP Cooper reads the Resolved clause:

“*Resolved*, that SSMU make the amend By-law 13.6.3 to read:

13.6.3 The club has been actively working to fulfill their mandate as demonstrated by presenting a summary of a finished product, running a political or social campaign, running activity oriented weekly or biweekly meetings, or organizing three or more significant events through application forms found on the SSMU website, as posted by the Interest Group Coordinator.”

She explains that the motion allows evaluations to focus more on how clubs are doing and how they are fulfilling their mandates. This motion is part two of the first amendment.

Councillor Chaim: Motions to move to the previous question. This motion clearly passes and voting begins.

The motion clearly passes and **the Motion Regarding Amendment to SSMU By-Law 13.6.3 is adopted.**

**d. Motion Regarding Removal of By-Law III-14**

VP Cooper reads the Resolved clause:

“*Resolved*, that Article 14 be removed from By-law Book III.”

Councillor Zidel: Motions to move to the previous question. The motion clearly passes and voting begins.

The motion clearly passes and **the Motion Regarding Removal of By-Law III-14 is adopted.**

**e. Motion Regarding Removal of the Queer McGill Undergraduate Fund By-Law**

VP Cooper reads the Resolved clauses:

“*Resolved*, that Bylaw II-7 Article 4 be removed from the SSMU bylaw book and the Fund abolished;

*Resolved*, that the Vice President (Clubs and Services) work with the Queer McGill Executive to help them establish a more efficient discretionary funding system for such a mandate within their internal bylaws,

*Resolved*, that the money currently held in the QMUF be moved into Queer McGill's category of the Student Life Fund for them to allocate in the future internally."

She explains that the current bylaws are very problematic as it only allows Queer McGill to spend the interest of the surplus each year (which is a matter of cents). Also, it is an extra hassle for the accounting department to have another fund. Although this is a Queer McGill service initiative, it is still a SSMU thing. They will be having a GA soon to come up with something that works better.

VP Reid-Fraser: Motions to move to the previous question. The motion clearly passes and voting begins.

The motion clearly passes and **the Motion Regarding Removal of the Queer McGill Undergraduate Fund By-Law is adopted.**

**f. Motion Regarding Amendments to the Elections SSMU Electoral Timeline**

VP Dinel reads the Resolved clause:

*"Resolved*, that an updated electoral schedule be adopted to take into account the McGill University Reading Week from March 4-8, 2013."

There is a motion to move to the previous question which clearly passes and voting begins.

The motion clearly passes and **the Motion Regarding Amendments to the Elections SSMU Electoral Timeline is adopted.**

**g. Motion Regarding Alternative Education Summit**

VP Reid-Fraser: She wants to talk about the explanations behind the following two motions and then she has amendments to make based on new information.

Basically, after the most recent meeting for the education summit (there is a report on this in the document for today's meeting) she has spent a lot of time thinking about the summit and the state of higher education in Québec in general. Her conclusion is that there are a lot of groups who feel similarly that the process of the current education summit is not as big as it could be. Currently, the summit process is taking two months. There are themed meetings and all of the groups are already chosen. These meetings mostly involve groups talking to each other and not really coming up with an action plan, even on the things people agree on. There is not really a mention of the final meeting or what it will look like. Only four citizen meetings are taking place. Other forums include the Facebook page, etc. We are at a really important time and the conversations we are having are not enough. We are going into this without really having a conversation about what we want to be doing with our education system in general. The last time the education system in Québec was questioned was in the 1960s and it has not really been evaluated since then. What are the partnerships and what do we want them to be doing? Are they serving the needs of people? She is not sure where we are trying to go. What does accessibility even mean? Originally, the first motion was for SSMU to have a

mandate to call on TaCEQ to organize another education summit, maybe at the beginning of April, something with more time and with more people involved. Then, with Simon, she arrived at the idea of an État Généraux. Basically, it is something that would be put on by the National Assembly (the government). It would be a much longer process (one year to 18 months) and would be a really broad examination of the university system. She is putting two options on the table, because if the government would be putting on the État Généraux they are more likely to take it seriously and move with it. Her idea was to switch this around and strike the two last Resolved clauses replace them with two new clauses. The motion would then ask to have a figure similar to the Auditor General of Canada who would look at where money is going in Canadian universities.

VP Reid-Fraser: Reads the Resolved clauses as submitted:

*“Resolved, that the SSMU bring to TaCEQ for consideration the suggestion that TaCEQ organize another education summit, separate from that of the Quebec government and to be held at a later date, revolving around the topic of “the role of higher education in Quebec society,” with the possibility of collaborating with other groups including but not limited to other national student associations, unions, community organizations and educational institutions,*

*Resolved, that the goal of this summit be that it be as open to participation of all parties as possible, and that TaCEQ work to specifically invite groups that are currently not present at the education summit meetings, but may have input regarding higher education in Quebec.”*

Councillor Zidel: Motions to suspend the rules and open 10 minute moderated caucus to avoid people commenting on what they like and don't like, and then talk about how to organize this in terms of motions. The speaking time will be 45 seconds.

Voting on the motion to enter the moderated caucus to give feedback begins. The motion clearly passes and **Council enters a 10 minute moderated caucus.**

Councillor Zidel: He is concerned with the enormous size of what is being asked. He thinks it is going to take innovation at a local level to research independently and then partner with universities to look at this research. SSMU could work on this and getting money.

Councillor Larson: From the External Affairs Committee, the idea of an État Généraux is a way to get the government to do the work as they have the time and the resources. It is a good way to have a legitimate way to do this through government.

VP Reid-Fraser: Regarding the local level comment, the État Généraux would be a big process and small groups would be submitting things so the process would still have research happening. People would put their own perspectives together.

Councillor Zidel: It could be a good idea, but his concern is that it is SSMU's responsibility to provide a formal document to Council about how they plan on calling on TaCEQ. He thinks the motion is premature when we do not have a document to call for an État Généraux.

Councillor Larson: VP Reid-Fraser has made it clear that if these motions are not fully formed they can be tabled or committed.

VP Reid-Fraser: In doing this, SSMU and TaCEQ would not be the only ones. Many groups including the CSN and PQ have asked for the same thing. It would not just be TaCEQ alone asking for this.

VP Cooper: Makes a point of personal privilege and asks councillors to speak into the mikes so the gallery can hear.

VP Dinel: She is in support of this motion. The summit probably will not have a lot of students participating so we need to organize something for ourselves to talk about it outside of TaCEQ.

Councillor Giannakakis: Thinks this is a great way to spread ideas that are happening.

Councillor Bissky-Dziadyk: This motion gets support from people of all opinions. There is obviously a desire for the collection of information. We could take a leadership role in this initiative.

Councillor Morawetz: This sends a good message to the government: it is important that we present an alternative if we do not like what is happening.

Councillor Baker: He agrees that the summit has been limited but is just skeptical about a few things. Before calling for this from the government, we need to find more systematized approaches whether through SSMU or TaCEQ. He wants to try to do this through TaCEQ and then make more serious demands later on. He would like to see the results of the thematic meetings first.

Councillor Zidel: It would take more as to the procedural aspect of how this will go about. It could happen, it will just have to wait.

The moderated caucus comes to an end and Council will move forward with the motion.

VP Reid-Fraser: Motions to amend the motion to strike both Resolved clauses and replace them with:

“*Resolved* that SSMU call for an État Généraux to the state of education in Quebec with the theme of the role of education in Québec society,

*Resolved* that SSMU bring this mandate to TaCEQ at the upcoming TaCEQ meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>.”

She asks if everyone is clear on what an *État Généraux* means?  
Council is clear on the meaning.

Speaking on the motion begins:

Councillor Bissky-Dziadyk: What if we were to hold off for three weeks until the third of February? If we hold off, we maintain the idea that we are willing to work with the process in place. If/when it fails, then we take the next step forward. Otherwise we are not really negotiating in good faith with what the government is trying to do.

VP Reid-Fraser: Making this call does not change our participation in the current summit structure. The thing is that we have not established a collective vision for education, which is necessary to do at this point. In terms of holding off for this, many other member associations of TaCEQ will be bringing this forward at the next meeting. We can abstain if this is SSMU’s mandate, but the question is coming anyways. Do we come as the lead-pack or wait and then join in? This is a good way for TaCEQ to get more visibility, but these are personal views.

Councillor Zidel: We haven’t even strategized what our main question would be. We need to decide strategically what we need to get out of the government. We need to decide what our collective vision is and then extract something similar from the government. He thinks SSMU’s job is to be prudent. If we are not, then we will not get what we want out of the *État Généraux*. Maybe being a leader means telling other organizations this.

Councillor Larson: This is important because in order for that discussion to happen, the project obviously leads to other things to implement it. It would be smart of us to get in early, because it is not scary.

VP Cooper: She is still torn. She is all for more information but she does not think it should be a priority and does not like the idea of the government doing it. She would like to see this as a better plan, including educating our own constituency more. She does not know how to vote. It is a great initiative but she is not sure if it is a worthwhile use of resources.

Councillor Larson: She does not think not believing in objective reports is reasonable. She thinks this is the largest and most reasonable way to involve students. If Council is trying to represent students, this motion should be passing.

Councillor Baker: He does not think it matters if the motion passes or not. It does not have a lot of substance so they require further work.

VP Cooper: She would be interested in a motion to commit this to a committee as she thinks the External Affairs Committee has a lot of good insight and decision making power. She motions to commit this motion back to the External Affairs Committee.

Councillor Zidel: He is curious how VP Cooper would feel about Senate Caucus also discussing this motion.

VP Cooper: In what context would Senate be discussing it? In the context of the university?

Councillor Zidel: Yes.

President Redel: Then we might as well commit the motion to every student.

RF: Main issue is people don't understand exactly what this would look like if it were undertaken?

Councillor Baker: Seconds VP Cooper's motion.

Voting on the motion to commit the motion back to the External Affairs Committee begins. The motion does not pass.

Debate on main motion resumes:

VP Dinel: Motions to move to the previous question. The motion is seconded and clearly passes.

Voting on the motion begins. With a voting count of 14-3-4, the motion passes and **the Motion Regarding Alternative Education Summit is adopted.**

#### **h. Motion Regarding État Généraux on Higher Education**

VP Reid-Fraser reads the Resolved clauses:

*“Resolved, that the SSMU call for an État Généraux of Quebec higher education, in which the real spending and real financial needs of universities will be examined,*

*Resolved, that the SSMU demand that an independent, impartial party carry out a full audit of university spending,*

*Resolved, that the SSMU bring these mandates to TaCEQ, with the intention that TaCEQ make this demand at the upcoming meetings it attends during the Education Summit.”*

VP RF motions to amend to strike first Resolved clause and edit the remaining two clauses as follows:

“*Resolved*, that the SSMU demand that an independent, impartial party carry out a full audit of university financing and spending, in which the real spending and real financial needs of universities will be examined,

*Resolved*, that the SSMU bring this mandate to TaCEQ, with the intention that TaCEQ make this demand at the upcoming meetings it attends during the Education Summit.”

Councillor Nasr: Regarding first Resolved clause, when asking for an impartial organization, don't third parties usually perform audits on universities anyways? Also, why don't you add “request the government to have an impartial third party audit on its university funding management”. The bigger issue is not where spending is going but on financial mismanagement by the government.

VP Reid-Fraser: There are audits of each individual institution as it stands. The idea behind the motion is that there is not an overall idea behind university financing. When we have people accusing universities of spending their money badly with stark examples, the thing we do not know is what is happening with all of that money. There is a lot of information that you do not get and need ATI requests to access. For example, we do not individual salaries and the amount spent on travel. There would be a process to really see where universities need money by comparing universities across Québec and looking at other universities that are doing just as well with less money. We can talk about where the money should come from in general, but there is no information about where that government money goes – there is not even a flow chart on the government website about where tuition goes. She is open to amendments if people have better ways to say that.

Councillor Nasr: Can you add somewhere something that would sound like “and to request and bring to TaCEQ a call to the ministry to include the ministry” as well. Based on what Masi said, why don't we just bring up something to try to get provincial wide support into also launching an inquiry?

VP Reid-Fraser: She has a suggestion for that: in the first Resolved clause she would change it to say “university finance and spending” instead of just “university spending”.

Councillor Zidel: Agrees with everything VP Reid-Fraser has said, but just to prevent inefficiencies, perhaps the government has all the information but just lacks transparency. He would like to change the wording to work this in. He would like a 10-12 point action plan to forward to other organizations. This could be the first step.

Redel: The difference between transparency and an audit is that you can have many different kinds of audits as they look at how you really do carry out a task. This audit would be trying to get at the core of why we spend on certain things. VP Reid-Fraser wants a more in depth investigation. Transparency is seeing it whereas an audit is more about investigating it.

Councillor Baker: He agrees with having 10-12 points to break it down. He thinks it is impossible to have a large objective view. He has a hard time voting on this as he still thinks it does not have substance.

VP Cooper: Agrees with Councillor Baker: yes, we should have more information from studies, but she does not know how this fits into the broader plan for SSMU.

Councillor Nasr: Speaking to what President Redel said, the word audit in the first Resolved clause sounds to him like a financial audit. How would the movers feel about changing “audit” to “inquiry”?

VP Reid-Fraser: It is becoming pretty clear that she does not really know what she is talking about. She motions to table indefinitely so she can do more research and work with the External Affairs Committee to see what processes are already in place.

The motion is seconded and clearly passes, and **the Motion Regarding État Généraux on Higher Education is tabled indefinitely.**

#### 10) Reports by Committees

VP Briggs motions to suspend the rules and add the Funding Committee Report. The motion passes and **the Funding Committee Report is added.**

##### a. Funding Committee Report

VP Briggs: Councillors can peruse the report at their leisure. He stands for questions.

There is a motion to adopt. The motion clearly passes and **the report of the Funding Committee is adopted.**

##### b. Executive Committee

President Redel: There is nothing very significant. ElectroBac needs to approve the signature with 3 mandates and will be going forward in January/February. They have approved \$750 for Plank to update the SSMU website. The second floor tenants asked if we would cover their winter break costs. We did not agree to that but did agree to cover their cleaning costs. We also approved the McGill Sports Club to apply for funding. He stands for questions.

VP Cooper: Motions to adopt. The motion clearly passes and **the report of the Executive Committee is adopted.**

#### 11) Reports by Executives

##### a. Vice-President (University Affairs) – VP Dinel

She wishes everyone a happy New Year and welcomes them back. As some people may know, she went to Abu Dhabi over the break and talked to students from a bunch of different places. She will give a report of what they are doing and there will be a further report after the actual student conference in March. She has one thing

to add in connection to Provost Masi's presentation. There is going to be a big discussion in Senate about MOOCs and the innovative part of the presentation, so she encourages everyone to watch or to come out to Senate.

**b. Vice-President (External Affairs) – VP Reid-Fraser**

She has put together a report about the education summit theme meeting. Please email her if you have comments or questions. Community relations is going well, they are currently in the hiring process but it is moving forward well. French conversations will be happening: 25-30 students will be paired up with long-term Milton-Parc residents to practice speaking in French. This is a good way for students and community members to get to know each other. There is a TaCEQ meeting on Sunday and she invites everyone to come by. The Introduction to Québec week of events is exciting and coming up soon. She stands for questions.

**c. Vice-President (Clubs and Services) – VP Cooper**

Winter activities night is the next big thing coming up. It is a great opportunity to get to know the clubs. There will also be "Clubs 101" sessions for clubs to learn how to get full status, as well as a mixer at Gert's. There will be some reallocation of the offices this semester as there are a few bugs in the allocations (for example, Walksafe is having issues with noise from the clubs lounge). We have been talking a lot about the advanced room booking system. Now all of the clubs who have been approved are making cancellations and changing, so she is thinking about next time and may just open regular booking for a few weeks (instead of two weeks) and not do any advanced booking. She will be meeting with Pauline about how to categorize services and will talk about making a new category for student-run operations, which could be overlooked by the VP Finance and Operations. A lot of services have lots of transactions and accounting needs and may need to get up to tax standards, so this would make sure that they are being run well. She stands for questions.

**d. Vice-President (Internal) – VP Szpejda**

He has been having tentative meetings with the student work groups. Old McGill has been having meetings, and he will have solid information about them for next Council. He needs to talk to the faculties about getting rights to their photos. He is also meeting with Francophone Affairs to touch base on Intro to Québec week. He will be touching base with athletics and SPSM soon. He stands for questions.

**e. Vice-President (Finance & Operations) – VP Briggs**

The winter budget review is upcoming; the deadline is next Friday. For services, the budget process is still ongoing and he hopes to have it ready by the February revision. Other things he is working include focussing on marketing and promotions for Gert's and Gertrude's Corner. They now serve breakfast so you can stop by and grab a breakfast burrito, scotch eggs, etc. FERC and the Funding Committee are going well, there is a huge amount of research and development which is very exciting. He is entertaining some opportunities to manage cash and investments better and to use SSMU's money better. It looks promising and he will keep people updated. He stands for questions.

**f. President – Josh Redel**

He wishes a happy New Year to everyone. J Board is staring up their website and he is hoping to put up resources on how to use the site as well as past cases. They have a lot of content ready, hopefully we will know soon. He is also working on planning a conference with Student Life Commissioner Mitch Miller. The first half is somewhat speaker driven and the latter half of the day is participant driven, allowing faculty associations to come together and discuss what they want to work on. The Iron Rink is up and running, as long as it gets cold. There will be skate-able ice all year, as long as weather permits. The EUS Sports Committee has organized an interfaculty broomball league. The ice structure has been approved for construction, they just need cold weather for one week first. Winter Carnival will probably be happening in three weeks due to weather. The Board of Governors had an interesting meeting regarding the budget cuts. He is making progress on a supper event they will be hosting on February 11<sup>th</sup>. They will be inviting student groups to come and give presentations to allow interaction between students and the Board. In terms of Senate, there are two really cool new working groups including the university teaching labs group, which funds projects. They have been able to double the budgets of these groups from \$1 million to \$2 million for projects funded. They are starting a cool lecture recording focus group. They are also looking into getting property for the Living and Learning Lab for phase one of their project. Regarding mental health, he attended a conference in Waterloo which had one session on the topic of mental health. There are very scary statistics: at the University of Waterloo they have one attempted suicide per day for the full year, which amount to 1% of students each year. There is a spike near exam time, including people who can't go home over Christmas. Schools are coming up with mental health campaigns: some schools have exam time cats instead of dogs, scream rooms, bubble wrap popping, etc. It is an interesting conversation and there are a lot of initiatives involving how to help students who are already stressed, but they also need to look at why they are stressed to the point where they need to go scream in a room. Why is stress drastically higher in a university environment than in a work environment? What is pushing students into that mindset?

Logistically, this semester is going to be on Vibe and GroupWise only, and emails will no longer be sent to personal emails. This is a friendly reminder that councillors are required to check their GroupWise email. In terms of the Council retreat he is looking at the budget situation and a decent amount of responses that weekends in general do not work for people, he is compacting the retreat into one day. It will be this Saturday, in the SSMU building, rooms B29 and B30 at 10am. The retreat is based around building a work plan for the rest of the term as councillors and senators. They will be working through sessions and workshops together to build their work plans. This is a goal-based document that breaks goals into tasks. It is an awesome way to help people track their progress. There will be a light breakfast, full lunch and dinner. There will be a group activity after supper and everyone will be free to go around 9pm.

Speaker Tong: All councillors have been appointed to committees as is in their mandate. There are three vacancies left on various committees, is there anyone that would like to fill any of these vacancies?

No councillors volunteer for these vacancies.

**12) Confidential Session**

Council enters a recess at 8:44pm for a Confidential Session.

The Confidential Session closes and Council resumes at 8:54pm.

**13) Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made and clearly passes.

The meeting of the Legislative Council was adjourned at 8:54pm.

For Approval