

Dear Principal Suzanne Fortier,

We are writing to express our support for the Floor Fellows who are currently in their collective agreement bargaining process with the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE).

The SSMU has previously undertaken measures to support student mental health and wellbeing, whether that be through organizing proactive education events or working with student services to better communicate mental health services offered. Many of our services, including SACOMSS and Nightline, provide non-judgmental listening and support for students in need. We also recognize the strides that the university has taken to ameliorate support services and create a culture which supports the wellbeing of students. In line with this progress, Floor Fellows must also receive the support they require to continue the valuable work they do.

The Floor Fellows of McGill residences play an incredible role in providing frontline support to over 3000 students. This support takes the form of emergency response, non-judgemental counselling, community building, mentoring, and more. Floor Fellows use an anti-oppressive, and harm-reductive practice, which has been integral to building inclusive spaces for students and has established relationships of trust amongst first year students. This philosophy has allowed students to feel safe approaching the Floor Fellows on sensitive topics such as substance use without the fear of disciplinary action. By basing their support in anti-oppression and harm-reduction, Floor Fellows at McGill provide an essential service which is crucial to the university's goals of supporting student wellbeing.

The SSMU also believes in paying people for their work, as outlined by our recent motion against unpaid internships. This is why we are disappointed to learn that despite working upwards of 20 hours a week, Floor Fellows are not paid a wage for their work. This is especially shocking given that Quebec labour law specifies that if an employee must live where they work in order to complete their jobs, then the costs of living should not be included in the employee's payment. As the cost of education continues to rise, we find it deplorable that McGill refuses to pay the full-time students who provide such essential support services at this university.

In light of these issues, the SSMU would like to express our full support for the Floor Fellows, who are unionized under AMUSE, during their collective agreement bargaining process. We believe that their demands, the formalization of harm reduction and anti-oppression in the floor fellow role and the requests for creating a just workplace through fair pay and housing security, should be honored by the university. If McGill is serious about supporting students and creating a culture of wellbeing, then it is essential that Floor Fellows are respected and empowered within their roles.

Sincerely,

The SSMU Legislative Council