



Students' Society of McGill University  
Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

**Office of the Speakers**  
Bureau de Présidents du Conseil

### **Motion Regarding Reforming the General Assembly**

*Whereas*, the General Assembly is not currently as effective as it should be;

*Whereas*, the Bylaw Review Committee has conducted a review of the General Assembly;

*Whereas*, the student body has been invited to provide its input through an online survey and two town halls;

*Whereas*, the SSMU Constitution can be changed only by going to referendum;

*Resolved*, that the text below be adopted to replace the current By-Law I-5.

Moved by:

Ian Clarke, Law Representative  
Maggie Knight, President  
Alexander Kunev, Engineering Representative  
Kady Paterson, Education Representative

## **BY-LAW I-5 – GENERAL ASSEMBLIES**

### **Article 1 – Order of Business**

1.1 The order of business for any regular General Assembly of the Society shall be as follows:

- 1.1.1 Call to Order
- 1.1.2 Approval of the Agenda
- 1.1.3 Question Period
- 1.1.4 Report of the Executive Committee
- 1.1.5 Old Business
- 1.1.6 New Business
- 1.1.7 Adjournment

1.2 The order of business for special and strike General Assemblies shall be prepared by the Speaker in consultation with the Steering Committee.

1.3 The Speaker shall receive items for the agenda up until 2 weeks in advance of the GA in question and receive motions from the floor up until the day of the GA.

### **Article 2 – Report of the Executive Committee**

2.1 The Report of the Executive Committee to Regular General Assemblies shall include, but not be limited to, any actions undertaken by the Executive Committee as a result of motions passed at the previous General Assembly;

2.2 The Report shall be made available to the students no less than one week in advance of the General Assembly on the SSMU Website.

### **Article 3 – Attendance**

3.1 The Executive and Council shall be present at the General Assembly and shall be present for the entire Question Period excepting extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to, illness.

### **Article 4 – Motions**

4.1 Items for the agenda shall require either the signatures of one hundred (100) students or four (4) councillors, with no more than 50% from any one faculty and students from 4 faculties.



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- 4.1.1 Petitions to place items on the agenda shall require the name, signature, faculty and student number of all students in support of placing the motion on the agenda.
- 4.1.2 These motions will subsequently be translated and publicized in both English and French to the student body.
- 4.2 Motions in advance must be submitted to the Speakers of Council at least two weeks in advance of the General Assembly.
- 4.3 Motions from the floor may be submitted to the Speakers up until 3 hours before the General Assembly begins.
  - 4.3.1 The Speakers will be responsible for reviewing motions from the floor to ensure compliance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies; the Speakers may request the assistance of Elections SSMU.
  - 4.3.2 Each motion from the floor will be considered only if a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority of the General Assembly votes to do so.
  - 4.3.3 All reasonable efforts will be made to translate motions from the floor in order to provide them in both French and English.
- 4.4 It shall be the prerogative of the SSMU Speaker to rule as to whether or not motions presented for the General Assembly shall be in order.
  - 4.4.1 This ruling shall occur within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the motion by the Speaker for motions in advance and before the start of the General Assembly for motions from the floor.
  - 4.4.2 If the decision of the Speaker is appealed at the Judicial Board but no ruling is made in advance of the General Assembly in question, the motion shall come to the floor of the GA.
  - 4.4.3 Should motions or statements come to the floor of a GA which, in the Speaker's opinion, directly contravenes Article 6 of the preamble, or Article 29, of the SSMU Constitution, the Speaker shall have the authority to rule these motions or statements out of order and have them stricken. Such decisions shall not be subject to appeal by the Assembly, and can only be challenged at the Judicial Board of the Society.
- 4.5 The Speaker shall, in consultation with the mover, and, if requested, the Steering Committee, review and edit all motions submitted for concision and cogency.

## **Article 5 – Procedures of General Assemblies**

- 5.1 The Speakers of the Council shall be responsible for coordinating and chairing General Assemblies;
- 5.2 Standing rules for the General Assembly which make Roberts' Rules easier for students to understand procedure must be adopted by Council at least one week in advance of the General Assembly.
  - 5.2.1 These standing rules will be prepared by the Speakers of Council in collaboration with the President and any other interested Officers or Councillors.
  - 5.2.2 Standing rules must not substantively change the rights of an individual under Robert's Rules, but rather seek to facilitate an effective and accessible process.
  - 5.2.3 These standing rules must be publicized to the membership at least five calendar days in advance of the General Assembly.
- 5.3 The General Assembly may amend resolutions and motions in accordance with the standing rules.
- 5.4 Members present at the General Assembly must be given the opportunity to debate and amend each resolution.
- 5.5 All reasonable efforts shall be made to livestream and film the General Assembly.
  - 5.5.1 Resulting footage of the General Assembly will be made available on the SSMU website; in the case that any motion is sent to an online vote, it shall remain available before voting opens.
  - 5.5.2 In the case that any motion is sent to an online vote, all reasonable efforts shall be made to place a link to the relevant section of footage on the online ballot, so that interested students may view the debate before voting.
- 5.6 Should more than one General Assembly be called for the same time period, it shall be the purview of the Speaker to combine these two Assemblies into one, providing the appropriate quorum requirements are applied to the relevant motions.
- 5.7 All General Assemblies shall be in a physically accessible room and building according to the 1996 McGill standards for accessibility on campus and must have a room capacity of at least quorum.
- 5.8 A motion to hold an online vote on a main motion shall be in order at any time when a main motion is pending. Any member of the General Assembly, other than the Speaker or Parliamentarian, can move or second this motion.
  - 5.8.1 The online vote shall be open to all members of the SSMU



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5.8.2 The motion for an online vote shall require a 2/3 majority of the General Assembly

5.8.3 This vote shall be held no more than forty-eight (48) hours following the close of the General Assembly. It shall be open for a period of forty-eight (48) hours, and no campaigning shall be allowed on the motions in question. There shall be no quorum for this online vote. Minutes from the GA shall be made available during the voting period.

5.8.4 The Speaker of Council shall have discretion to rule a motion for an online vote out of order if used in a disruptive manner.

### **Article 6 – Special General Assemblies**

6.1 A special General Assembly shall be a General Assembly other than the required regular General Assembly held by the Society once per each fall and winter semester.

6.2 The Speaker shall call any Special General Assembly three (3) weeks after receipt of a petition for a Special GA.

6.2.1 Should the three (3) week requirement place the Assembly in a mid-semester holiday, the Speaker shall schedule the Assembly for the next available regular academic day.

6.2.2 Should the three (3) week requirement place the Assembly in either a (end of semester) holiday or exam period, the GA shall be called for a date in the first two weeks of the next semester.

### **Article 7 – Consultative Forums**

7.1 A consultative forum shall be established when any GA fails to reach quorum or loses quorum at any point. Such a consultative forum may revert to a General Assembly if and when quorum is reached

7.2 The minutes shall be circulated to Council before the next Council meeting.

7.3 Motions tabled from a GA which loses quorum shall be inscribed upon the agenda of the next General Assembly or, at the discretion of the Speaker in consultation with the movers and the Steering Committee, upon the agenda of the next Council meeting..

### **Article 8 – Procedures of a Strike General Assembly**

8.1 A “strike GA” shall be any General Assembly considering a motion to strike..

8.2 The quorum for a strike General Assembly applies only to the motion to strike and not to any other agenda items.

### **Article 9 – Responsibilities & Publicity**

9.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Speaker and all voting members of Council to accurately and extensively publicize General Assemblies.

9.2 The members petitioning for a Special General Assembly must provide at least ten (10) members as volunteers to promote the GA.

9.3 It shall be the responsibility of the Vice-President (Internal), to organize the logistics of the General Assembly.

9.4 Following any General Assembly, a copy of the minutes and a written summary of the decisions made shall be made available on the SSMU website.

### **Article 10 – Language**

10.1 A designated translator shall repeat any statement in French or in English at the request of any SSMU member.

10.2 Whisper translation in French and in English shall be available at all General Assemblies.