



# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

## FEBRUARY 9, 2017

### 1. Call to Order

Speaker calls the meeting to order.

### 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

### 4. Approval of the Minutes

Councilor Chin motions to approve the minutes, minutes are approved.

### 5. Guest Speakers

**Marc Gélinas (Director, Athletics & Recreation) and Philip Quintal (Associate Director, Athletics & Recreation)**

Marc Gélinas: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you and speak to the coming question being submitted for referendum. I realize that you've received some information, I just want to give you a bit of background and open it up for my colleague, Phil here, to answer your questions if you have any. Just so you know we have been working on our budget for many weeks now, probably even before Christmas, but we didn't have all the information we needed to finalize our budgets. We had submitted an earlier version, which was going to ask for a 7% increase. We were able to secure some extra support from McGill, almost to the order of \$500,000 extra for funding, which changed our budget situation, as you can imagine, quite a bit. So we were able to significantly reduce the request for an increase in fees in the referendum. So I'm really glad that we were able to convince McGill to provide us with extra funding, and which has led to the referendum question that you see now on the screen.



Councilor Sobat: I was hoping you could put the budget document on the screen?

Councilor Segal: In terms of your increase of fees, are you going to be making the gym more accessible, because right now the fitness room itself, where people work out in, is not accessible to those who are handicapped or have a prosthetic leg or anything. Social Work is concerned about that.

Marc Gélinas: I think accessibility is a big challenge throughout the campus, the fact that we have such a history is great, but it make accessibility difficult. We're certainly willing to look at accessibility and how to improve that, there are elevators that are accessible but even if you look at the reception area, it is cramped in there, it is difficult and we're aware of that. So there are some projects we're looking at to improve that situation.

Philip Quintal: The university is also going across campus and evaluating many difference situations in many different buildings with regards to accessibility. The university has gone through our building, from top to bottom, and is producing a report for our building. So we're waiting for that; when we renovated the fitness center the last time, adding in the [blank], we were careful to include, because we had a card checking area in the fitness center, we were careful to include a card checking post that could allow for handicapped access. As Marc says, the ground floor is accessible by two different elevators and so that we are always looking forward when the need arises, and if we are approached by someone with very specific needs in terms of using our fitness center, to help them out in terms of using our programs that can accommodate that.

Councilor Taylor: I was wondering why under your sales goods and services, looking across, where you see an increase of about \$100 to maybe \$200 dollars a year, I was wondering why you project almost a \$4,000 increase in sales of goods and services in your revenues for this year in particular?

Philip Quintal: In moving forward with this year's budget, it was important to us, in our revenue generating areas to challenge the individuals working in those areas. So we looked at our membership programs, we looked at our rental programs, we've looked at our sponsorship programs, and really thrown out the challenge to individuals in those areas to see if we can make some significant increases in those areas. One of the things that we have to be careful of though, in terms of the goods and services and those revenues, is that we don't want to compromise students programs at the expense of generating revenues, because it would be easy for us to say, we won't run any intermural programs in the rink on Monday and Tuesday nights, so we won't have intermural hockey on those nights and we'll rent it out and increase our revenues. But that moves away from what we're trying to do in athletics and recreation, and provide great services for our students. So we've thrown the challenge out; we think that these are achievable numbers and we're moving forward. One other point in terms of the



goods and service, in our budgets for this year, is a proposed new program for Mac Campus. We're opening up a pop-up boat project, we're opening up accessibility to the waterfront at Mac campus and we'll be running a paddleboard, kayak, canoeing program at Mac campus, which is really new to the scope of programs that we've offering in the past, and that represents a new source of revenue that we're putting forward and that too has contributed to the increase.

Councilor Taylor: For the increase of goods and service, does that include an increase in revenue due to increased fees for students to access those goods and services?

Philip Quintal: Those revenues, yes, include revenues generated the intermural program or revenues generated by the membership programs or some of the other programs that students use. But efforts are always made if it's in accordance to increase fees, to always keep those fees extremely reasonable for those students. I think if anybody can, I think if you ever compared it to the market place, I think that it's quite evident that the fees are very reasonable.

Councilor Chin: I would like to say a few things about this, first of all I notice that the graph provided shows a significant increase in salaries; is it possible to comment on salaries? And secondly, I want to preface this by saying that the athletics fee that McGill students pay is one of the highest in Canada. And one last comment is that I would like to see the term non-opt-outable included into the question, I'm not going to propose an amendment for the time being but I would like to see that term placed in there, as a non-opt-outable fee for McGill students.

Councilor Thomas: I want you to go back to the budget. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm noticing a substantial decrease in the salaries of the support staff, would that mean there's a cut to staff?

Philip Quintal: What happens in that line, the line is increased from our budget of 16/17 to our budget of 17/18, the salaries for support staff have increased by four hundred and nineteen thousand dollars. It refers back to the question that the gentleman asked, where does that increase come from? There's two factors that added to that increase this year, because there hasn't been a significant change in operations where we've gone out and hired a few more staff to do this and that, actually what is happen with that increase is two fold: one is just university salary policy for it's support staff and the other component is the combination of pay equity and the signing of a new collective agreement with the AMUSE group, has increased significantly the starting salaries of student labor. We are a large employer of student labor, probably the largest on campus, and so many of our programs have been impacted by these increased salaries.

Councilor Mehrotra: On the motion, it says do you agree to a 3% increase? But it's asking for \$7.90. That's not 3%, correct me if I'm wrong. A 3% increase would be around \$3.90. Previously



you were asking for 7% increase, and that was \$9.00, so I don't understand how a 3% increase amounts to \$7.90.

Philip Quintal: The \$7.90 is a 3% increase annually. If you break down the \$7.90, it's \$3.95 per term.

Councilor Mehrotra: So it would be going up every year, on top of the \$7.90?

Philip Quintal: So what we are asking for in the upcoming year is for the students to agree to pay a 3% increase on the athletics ancillary fee, for the upcoming year.

Councilor Mehrotra: Regarding student labor, would you say that you primarily hire varsity athletes, from McGill teams, or are they from the wider McGill student community?

Philip Quintal: Our student labor really comes from all walks of life across campus. Do some of our varsity athletes work in our programs? Absolutely. But you also have to realize that particularly, in the following winter months, most of our varsity athletes are competing and so many of them, they don't have a lot of extra time in order to work. So then we draw from all faculties and all different areas from the university to make up our student labor.

Councilor Segal: So right now you're charging student \$131 per semester, so for the students who don't use the gym who are being charged this fee, you're asking them for an increase. So in what way will this benefit them, why would they want to support an increase of 3% if they're not using the gym, they're going there maybe to write an exam, so I don't see how this benefits those students.

Philip Quintal: What happens is, is that you're right, some students will come up to the gym and use the services more than others, but it's important for all students to realize that the athletics and recreation facilities and programs, the varsity programs, the events that we stage, they add to the overall life of the McGill community, and so if you're part of the McGill community, it just works to your benefit that there are good programs throughout the community, even though some of those programs might not be programs that you in person use one day after the next.

President Ger: My question is two parts; it is my understanding after having a conversation with the deputy provost, am I correct that there's been a decision by central admin that there's been a decision in reinvestment in athletics?

Marc Gélinas: We were finalizing our numbers, looking at the information that we had at the time, we submitted a first version of a question with a suggested increase, and then were able to get some good news from the central university to increase our funding, which is reflected at the bottom there. So we were able to get almost \$500,000 extra, in fact it's allowed us, along with the other measures that I was referring to, pressing our staff to find and make new



programs to increase revenues in different ways, to increase our efforts in sponsorships, although yes you are correct that we were able to secure extra funding.

President Ger: As you may know, there is a little bit of an ideological problem that has persisted both within the Society and the student community with the idea that the university would have the students directly funding its facilities or services that are for students, considering the fact that tuition is already paid. Considering that there has been a decision by central for reinvestment, why do you see it now necessary that students face an increase in addition to that, to be able to provide adequate services?

Marc Gélinas: I think if you go back, as Phil explained an almost a \$500,000 increase in salaries for the reasons that he mentioned. And then in terms of building an occupancy clause, plus \$237,000, material supplies increase and in contracts. So things like cleaning the environment, some of you may be aware that we have a new supervisor that negotiated and was selected. That brought a significant increase in our costs. These are some of the things that we try to minimize as much as possible, so looking at cross-savings, looking at increase in revenue and sponsorships for example, the \$500,000 input was very good but we still face a short fall of \$220,000 at this point in time.

VP Sobat: Thank you for providing this detailed information. I was wondering if you could explain, under the line for the non-salary expenses, what overhead charges are and what the justification for that expense is, and why has increased or changed over time.

Philip Quintal: Those are charges that are on the revenues generated by certain programs in athletics and recreation, and those are charges that we give back to the university for many of the services that we must use from the university central in order to conduct our programs and operate our business. We use the university accounting services, their cable service, some of their IT services. So that's a contribution that is made back to the university central to help cover a part of the expenses that we use in those areas.

Marc Gélinas: This is applied across the board, in all departments and faculties. The other thing that I would say is that you could look at it another way, the influx of the \$500,000 that we were able to secure from the central university actually almost effectively wipes out this payment.

VP Sobat: Because my concern, and this is not a criticism of athletics directly, I recognize that you have increasing costs that you have to cover, but the university levies these overhead charges with no set formula, members here will remember that in 2012/2013, they started out at a half % and they're now over 5%, although I recognize that there is reinvestment in terms of the transfer, but we do see the university using these charges as a means to claw back revenue from different units. And these are not actually charged to faculties, but only units like athletics, student services, that we might pay fees for. So considering whether or not it's appropriate to



put forward a question to our members, my concern is that effectively the amount of an increase that you're asking for, could be reduced by the university reducing the fees of some of these overhead charges, because they've made it clear to over the past couple of years that there is no set formula for determining these; they do not directly correlate to the services being provided and if the only measure influencing the increases are the budget cuts to the university as a whole. So I don't know if you can address those concerns.

Marc Gélinas: Again, I would say the extra funding that we got from the university would effectively wipe out all these taxes. So, in essence, they've taken them away.

VP Sobat: Is there a reason for including that in a transfer instead of lowering the overhead charges by a set percentage?

Marc Gélinas: Good question, an accounting question maybe. This is the preferred way of handling by adding to our funding and offsetting the overhead fee.

Councilor Junejo: My concern was the gym fee that students pay to go to the gym, if the students are paying this amount already, why is it that they have to pay the fees to use the gym every semester?

Marc Gélinas: There's a lot of costs to consider, we have to sustain and maintain the building, so the repairs, the maintenance, the upkeep, the renovations. There are also other costs, the salaries involved for the people to manage, the salaries involved in energy and heating and cleaning, but also the instructors to provide the services, buy the equipment, those kinds of things. There are other costs that are being covered with the fees that we are asking for. We're really trying hard to keep the user fees as small as possible.

Councilor Junejo: Going back to a previous question, if you really want to encourage the creation of activities at McGill sports facilities that let the students use the gym, it should be at a smaller cost than what it is right now. Because this is quite big amount of money that the students give, regardless of the fact that they use your facilities or not.

Philip Quintal: I understand where you're coming from with those ideas, however if you just add up those two expense numbers at the bottom of the salaries column and the on-salary expense column, you'll see that the operating budget for athletics and recreation for the upcoming year is a little over 13 million dollars. So what we try to do is to run the best athletics and recreation programs in Canada, but in a manner that's lean and efficient and effective, we're concerned for energy costs, we're concerned for maintenance costs, we have concerns for all those different areas. But at the end of the day, doing the best that we can, we still have over \$13 million of expenses, and those expenses have to be covered in a way. We don't want to find ourselves in a position where we are cutting programs or we're saying to the McGill student, well sorry but the gym is closed on Saturdays and Sundays because we don't have the





money to operate the facilities. So we try to bring forth to our student population a budget that is as lean as it can be and as well thought out that it can be, so we can come forward in a year like this and ask for as little as we can ask for to try and balance our budget.

Marc Gélinas: Maybe one thing I can add about the cost being relatively high compare to other universities: I would caution people comparing fees and context is a hard thing to do, often times it's comparing apples and oranges because it depends what the other university is responsible for, if a department at another university is not responsible to upkeep, maintenance, repairs, then those costs wouldn't show and then the fee structure would be different. What we have, when compared with other universities in similar settings with similar responsibilities, then we're confident that these prices and these fees are accessible.

Councilor Shi: Is it possible to apply the charge as an optional charge? So students can choose to opt-out of the fee, if they will not use the services as much as other students.

Philip Quintal: The university is trying to proceed in the most equitable way possible, and if the option was opened up where people could opt-in or opt-out whenever they wished, all that would do is add costs to people who are in fact using it. So the attempt is made, again, to create a budget that is as lean as possible, and share those costs across the whole student population to keep the fees as low as they can possibly be.

Councilor Mehrotra: So originally you were asking for \$9.50, but then you secured funding from the university that you said, that amounts to a half a million dollars, but then you only lowered it from \$9.50 to \$7.90, which is not equivalent to the amount of funding that you got from the university.

Marc Gélinas: We need to be careful – the first question was phrased by term, and this question is now phrased for the whole year. It was \$18 and something for the whole year in the question asking for a 7% increase, and now it is a 3% increase and the numbers are presented for the whole year. So it's \$3.95 per term.

VP Patterson: So a lot of student groups on campus, specifically SSMU-affiliated groups, we have quite a few athletics and recreation groups that range from various different kinds of dancing to yoga, etc. It's typically for them to find space on campus. I know that currently, they do book in the athletics facilities, but they do incur charges when they are booking in those facilities, and that can really take a financial hit on the clubs' budget. So I was just wondering if there have been any conversations made to offer free room bookings to SSMU-affiliated student groups.

Marc Gélinas: I want to point out that the charged that are being levied for the usage and the usage of these rooms are less than 20% of what the going rate is for the market. When we would rent the same facilities or same rooms to an outside customer, it would be far more



expensive. We reduced the cost to a minimum to make sure that we have the means to prepare the room, book the room, coordinate that, and make sure that everything is ready for any event that it is reserved for. So I think it's 18% of what we would normally charge.

Philip Quintal: If you wanted to put it into the real dollar terms, when a group comes to athletics and recreation to book a facility, it guarantees that the facilities are there for them to use, it guarantees that the doors are open, that the lights are turned on, and everything is ready for when they come. When we initially set up these fees, which really haven't changed for a while, they were established at \$10 an hour for a facility. And when we looked at, the average group is about 10 people, some groups are more than that, so we figured at a dollar an hour, to have a facility booked for you and ready for you to use, clean and lit, specifically for your group, we thought that it would be manageable for the different groups.

VP Carolan: I just have two quick points, can you shed some light on exactly what other non-salary expenses, what that line item means? It's \$664,000, so I was wondering if you could be more specific? Other non-salary expenses.

Philip Quintal: Those are just all and the other expenses that do not fall in the categories that are presented.

VP Carolan: Can you provide an example?

Philip Quintal: I would rather get back to this group with the actual list of the different items that are included in that.

VP Carolan: Secondly, as your overall totals, if you post a surplus or a deficit over your annual year, that surplus or deficit, is it reflected in the next year's budget? SO if you made \$141,000, generally that would show up as a source of revenue for the next year, as a surplus carried over. Is that money absorbed into the larger McGill budget as a profit?

Philip Quintal: No, if the programs run a surplus, then that money is put into a reserve fund, our athletics and recreation reserve fund. If it runs a deficit, then funds are taken from the reserve fund to bring the account back down to zero.

VP Carolan: Is that reserve fund information available to students?

Councilor Chin: I noticed for graduate students, those represented by the PGSS, they are paying a lesser or lower athletics fee, and I also realize that three years ago there was a big discussion with them about the fee itself. My question is, are there similar efforts to solicit a fee increase from them as well this year?

Philip Quintal: We will be approaching the PGSS with a very similar request, the same request.





## Open Educational Resources Researcher

Casarina: I'm a researcher for the libraries working on open education and resources and I'm going to present on how things are going at McGill and in relation to the cost of textbooks that we have. I'm going to go through an introduction and what the definition of OERs are, the financial burden of textbooks, a textbook survey that I did here at McGill, and some recommendations and resources.

OERs are any educational material used for teaching. This can be courseware, it can be the whole actual course itself, like slides, video, pictures. For the purpose of this presentation, textbooks. They are freely accessible, most of them are in digital format and they hold open license, which is different than having no copyright. Additionally they come at a low cost print version, obviously if it's a video you can't. But if you were to get an open textbook, you could get a print format that would come at a low cost.

Open licenses have three aims: retaining all the work of the author, sharing ideas and restricting commercial activity adaptation, if needed. The idea is that the owner still has ownership over their work, so no one can plagiarize it, but still has the possibility for others to adopt it and share as they need to. Open licenses really do vary though, so using them have tons of different applications, but the most common one that people would be familiar with would be Creative Commons licenses.

The creation of OERs has been motivated by two reasons: accessibility for students and as a pedagogical tool for educators. For students, this is created for many reasons. One, in our generation, a lot of us are digitally inclined, so we like to have stuff on our mobile phones or an e-textbook. But it's nice because you can switch between a print format or a digital format, so this addresses different learning styles. The last accessibility reason is a financial one. Because OERs are freely accessible when they're in their digital format, that's a huge financial burden being lifted. And then, if you do want it in a print version, it comes at a low cost.

Now, for educators, it's a great tool because they can address different learning styles and needs. Moreover, it allows them to share with their colleagues. A lot of professors find that it's easier to have an open access textbook, because then it's easier for other professors to look at in and reduce the redundancies in teaching styles. Instead of a student going from class to class, learning the same or overlapping material because different textbooks aren't being shared between professors, having an online reader with open accessibility, allows them to navigate that and reduce redundancy.

The cost of textbooks have been a huge issue across North America. From 2006 to 2016, the inflation of textbook cost has risen 88%, four times the inflation rate, and that's a US stat but the Canadian stats are very similar, basically the same. I have a graph here to show you what students are expected to spend on books each year; McGill is actually at the lower end, where we only recommend \$1000 for the year, while a school like McMaster expects \$800 per semester, so \$1600 for the whole year. But as you can see, across the board, it's at least between \$1000 and \$1500. As a result though, a lot of students are very frustrated with how expensive this is, and have created different strategies to cope with the high costs of textbooks.



So these strategies are in five different groupings, first is “seek alternative retailers and editions”, so that’s through Amazon and getting second hand editions. The second option is “textbook rentals”, this is probably one of the least popular coping strategies but it still exists. Three “party cost sharing”, and this is widely popular at McGill, I’ll soon elaborate on that. Four, “opting out of buying, finding free access or editions”, so that actually be Open Educational Resources that have proper licensing or they can just be pirated copies, or found in the library. Sometimes simply going without some of the course material, I have done that before and I do not recommend it. And five, “Advocacy”, is the last strategy.

So in some in my survey, I had 134 students, of which 129 were undergrads and from 12 different faculties. When I surveyed them, I asked about where they got their textbooks, how much did they cost, what do you feel like about free resources, and so forth. These are some of my favorite quotes when I asked about the methods they used to gain your textbooks. I really enjoyed “The Pirate Bay”, “free stuff”, or “screenshotted trial versions of an entire online textbook”.

So a lot of students here at McGill are using the same strategies that I mentioned in the previous slide. So I also asked them: have you ever dropped a course or not signed up because of the cost of its course material? Luckily online a quarter of us had said yes, another  $\frac{3}{4}$  said no. However, when I asked about whether they had ever opted out of buying course material because of it’s cost, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them said yes. So that’s pretty problematic, if you’re not buying the course material, but I wonder if that means you have access to it or not.

Next question: did the lack of course material impact your final grade or learning experience? Now this is where there’s big room for questioning. 43% were unsure that lack of course material impacted their grade or not, but at least 43% said yes, that had a negative impact. So that gives us a hint that this is an issue that can be taken seriously, if students are not obtaining the course textbooks because they can’t afford them and that is having an impact on their course and their learning as students, there’s probably an issue there to resolve.

Students were definitely not afraid to voice their frustrations and complaints. It’s also noted that the cost of the textbooks is comparable to very basic necessities like Quebec tuition rate or maybe rent or perhaps bursary money. When I averaged out how much students actually spend on textbooks for this year, most students said about \$580 per semester, and that was rounded up from \$577. I mean, \$580 per semester is quite a bit for students, and as one student noted, I think it’s unfair to expect students from low-income families to pay that much, and if they don’t, they’re going to suffer from it. So when I asked what was the most expensive course material, most students indicated that it was the print material that costs the most, but very few students indicated that it was a course pack or electronic textbook. That’s indication that when most students are buying a textbook, they’re probably buying conventional textbooks that were bought at conventional places like the McGill Bookstore or the Word or Paragraphe. So normally that’s required course material for your class. If we’re thinking about those students who don’t buy those expensive textbooks, and it’s required, it’s not really unusual to think, or surprising to think, that it’s actually impacting their grade.

One of the most commonly cited textbooks that were really expensive for students was the CHEM 110 textbook. This past semester we had 982 students who took the course, and



when you buy that textbook at McGill, from the McGill bookstore, it's \$179 new, this is without taxes, so if every student in the class was to buy the textbook new, it would be \$179,118 for one semester that students are spending on this textbook. Of course many students are buying from older students or getting older editions, but the idea remains that students are spending a lot for one textbook. Funnily enough, there's an alternative to that – Rice University has published their own open textbook, which is available online freely and you can download and you can also order it as a low cost print version. So people might wonder that maybe it's not the same textbook that covers the same material or in the same quality, I actually went through the syllabus of CHEM 110 and the open textbook table of contents, chapter by chapter, and it covers all the same material.

When I asked students if they preferred using other resources, where they're OERs or other material obtained at the library online, in comparison to textbook, most students agreed that they'd prefer it. In terms of whether they actually found it better, or comparable in quality to the traditional ones. So there's no reason not to do something along these lines.

So, perhaps a bit of a simple question, but would you be interested in seeing more free material such as OERs implemented in the classroom? 91% of students said yes, surprisingly a couple of students said no. But I think that's a pretty strong implication that McGill as a student population would be interested in doing this as an option.

I have a couple recommendations going forward, in terms of bringing OERs to McGill. My first recommendation would be to collect data, so a better survey than my own to actually really get to the nuts and bolts of where students are spending their money on course material, and what courses are the most expensive. When I surveyed the different student groups, a lot of students in Arts didn't complain that they spend a lot on textbooks, and it was actually the students in science that spend the most. So using that information to go forward and try to target the right areas to frame OER textbooks. My second point would be advocacy. A lot of schools across Canada have been using the Textbook broke campaign to highlight how much that they're spending at their local bookstore. In some cases, the bookstore is a third party-run operation, so it's sort of a target at them, but at McGill we actually run our own bookstore so it might be something to do collaboratively or with the library. But also advocacy can happen at department levels, faculty levels and individually with professors. Which leads me to my last point, which support at an institutional level. SSMU as it's own entity could work with their Library Improvement Fund, for example, to have people work on creative workshops and resource guides, sending those out to professors who are interested. However, departments and faculties can also take this upon themselves to find which professors are willing to make that step from conventional textbooks to OERs and providing those resources. I did follow up interviews with professors who use OER resources currently, and or other free material, and when I sat down with them, none of them knew what OERs were, even if they had been using them. As a result, none of them knew where to find them or get more, or share that information with their colleagues. So providing the basics about what OERs are and where they can find these resources is really important. In the future, once there is already a cultural of Open Educational Resources at McGill, McGill could then start thinking about creating their



own or having professors who want to create their own textbooks and that would be a whole other step.

Lastly, a couple resources for those interested in getting this forward. On the left there, we have OpenStacks, OpenEd and Open Textbook Library. All three of those resources are basically open textbook libraries. So you can go on there, search by discipline, what type of textbook that you're looking for and then the quality of it, who wrote it (normally professors from other universities), and often these textbooks are updated in real time. For example, OpenStacks, whenever there's an update, it lists right underneath the link to the live textbook so that students and professors can see any time the textbook is updated. In all these option, you can also download them and then retain your own copy.

Then on the right here, we have BRER which is actually an AVEC initiative and it has francophone OERs, which is really great because there is very few compilations of francophone resources out there. This is a good one, it has some textbooks in French but also French language resources for those students who are taking language courses. Then we have MIT open courseware; this has been around for a long time, and definitely offers like full courses in the sciences, however probably a professor wouldn't want to transplant an entire course as their own, but they could take exams, assignments, different slide materials, and use them. There are also a couple textbooks. And modifying an open textbook guide is a really basic guide, step-by-step, explain how to use and modify an open textbook. Because open licenses also differ, sometimes when you use an open textbook, you can't actually modify things in it or you might have limited modification possibilities. All of these are pretty accessible if you're a first time user or if you want to switch your courses to OERs. And that's it!

VP Sobat: Thank you for this informative presentation. I was just wondering, what is the main barrier you see from professors adopting these OERs; is it lack of knowledge or is it lack of availability? And how can students and student reps in particular encourage professors to adopt more OERs?

Casarina: Probably the biggest barrier for a professor using OERs is that they don't know that they exist; they don't know where they are, they don't know how to access them. Even the professors here at McGill that are using them, they didn't know what the concept was until I sat down and had a conversation with them. Once they do know, more professors are pretty open to the idea of implementing them. Of course some still prefer their textbooks, but one they are ready it's a question of where to obtain these resources. And because more professors find that they don't have enough additionally time to spend searching for them, that's a big hindrance. So as a result, most professors that I talked to in terms of researching what's happening at other institutions, there's normally supporting staff to help them with that, whether it's through the library or through a department, in some cases the university itself might implement incentives like financial incentives. So a lot of it has to do with 1) knowledge, 2) time and 3) resources.



Councilor Zhou: I was wondering what your thoughts might be on the planned obsolescence of some textbooks? Kind of like how Apple is getting rid of the headphone jack, how some textbooks are word for word the same as the earlier edition except for the homework set parts. I can personally attest to the fact that I have three older editions textbooks right now and they're page for page the same as the material covered in class, but when we get an assignment that is worth marks, the homework questions come out of the newer edition and then you have to struggle or scramble to find that particular homework set.

Casarina: This is where OER come in handy to solve, so instead of having new print versions to change all the time, what would happen is you would have a real ongoing, changing, open education resource available online. So as semesters change, what would happen is that the new homework set of questions could also change or professors could change them for each class. So they might love that one textbook and keep using it, but because they have a possibility to modify it as they wish, they wouldn't necessarily have to go buy a new textbook to have new questions, they would just edit those questions themselves, that way the students don't have to keep buying new ones. It would just be available online and the professor would have the ability to change it. When I was doing this survey, and had a lot of different responses from students on some of the issues with conventional textbooks, a lot of them said that they're just not usable or I constantly have to buy new ones for no reason. The idea of open educational resources is that you can update it without necessarily making students go buy a new one or having to produce a whole new book; you can keep changing it as it goes. Which is also really fantastic in a rapidly changing disciplines like science, where you might have developments happening in real time, professors can go on their textbook, change and edit to fix the facts as new developments come out, instead of having to wait a whole new semester until a new textbook comes out.

Councilor Sur: Just a couple questions, is this, your presentation, available to faculty reps? That would be great, because for our faculty, we don't always use a lot of textbooks, but we have course packs that are made for us that are online, but in terms of accessibility, they're often horrible and, especially for students who have visual impairments, they have to transfer those into word documents and it's really messy. So, I think our faculty and most faculties would be really interested in tools like this.

Casarina: Of course! I left this particular presentation more general, so that it would apply to most students here, however when discussing this with my supervisor, I brainstormed the idea of doing faculty presentation, in which I would cater information to the faculty, according to information around that faculty. So if that interests you, let me know!

Councilor Sur: We have a student in our faculty council who is working on accessibility issues regarding readings and course packs, so I think it would be great to connect you guys.





Councilor Chin: Thank you, I can only speak for courses in Medicine and in Science, but what I've noticed is that for some textbooks that are labeled as "required", quite a few of them do not actually contribute pedagogically or towards exams at all. And my question is, are there measures or policies or controls in place by the university to control for this, whether we label a textbook required or not? I think in particular first year students are very vulnerable to this, because at least for myself, I remember spending a lot more in my first year because I didn't know any better about alternative resources and such.

Casarina: That would actually be out of the scope of what my research was, however I would note that, for example, in my survey, that was a reoccurring thing. Required textbooks that weren't actually being used, professors indicated that they need to buy this since it would be used, and then you don't use most of it. So it does seem like a reoccurring problem across the university, and that would be something that I would suggest adding to data collection if you were to do more research into this as how students experience the cost of textbooks or using course material at McGill, I would suggest including question that directly relate to that, to see where professors are denoting textbooks as required. Because I have some students indicate that they had professors who wouldn't even let them use an older edition of textbooks, and then not even use that textbook, which seems pretty problematic, whereas there are other professors who don't really care which edition gets used. So I think it's a broader conversation that needs to happen across the university about what materials we're using, what are we expecting students to use, and as professors, being more conscious of that.

### **Chris Buddle, Dean of Students**

Chris Buddle: Thank you. I'm not asking you for money. [Applause] What I want to do today is to offer an invitation for a conversation around thinking about how Student Societies organize events. This relates to the perennial question about "what is a McGill context"? Overseeing the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures, this always comes forward when we think about Frosh, Carnival, Faculty Olympics, etc. The code of conduct applies to a McGill context and for a long time many of us have struggled to describe exactly what that means. The definition of a McGill context has broadened over the years, and that's a positive step because the shared goal that we all have is to ensure that any events that students attend are safe and the well being of everyone involved is taken care of, that's a priority.

So the real example here is if there is something that goes wrong at an event that's not in the McGill context, there's not possible follow-up or the follow-up is not as straightforward, through the code of conduct. That's to set the stage. So what we did with Carnival this year was sit down with the Management Undergraduate Society and work together, work collaboratively, to develop a memorandum of understanding where McGill and the student society agreed upon calling Carnival event the McGill context. In the very simplest form, that was the outcome of this memorandum of understanding. That maybe sounds boring but it's actually really important, and it actually is to me a real game changer because it shows two things: one, it shows an incredible positive collaboration between McGill and student societies





and, secondly, it provides a process that we can scale up and scale to other events and situations. I do want to say that this is sometimes when we approach this question, it looks like McGill is trying to take control of these events, and organize a mandate x, y, and z. That's not the purpose. The purpose is to sit down and talk about security, talk about first responders, talk about venue choice, whether it's on campus or off campus, talk about education and communication – have this collaboration and then the student society agrees to sit down with us and talk about the logistics and we agree to say yes, the McGill context can apply and, if necessary, we can apply the code of conduct and as the Dean of Students I can bring appropriate disciplinary officers into the discussion.

So we did this with Carnival, we did it as a pilot project; I did it with full approval of the upper administration, the Dean of the Management Faculty agreed. And it worked beautifully, and in fact many people say that Carnival this year was exceptional in terms of how it was organized and in terms of the safety and well being of those involved. So I'm basically here to say that my door's open, I'm like very much to work with all student societies, if you're willing to sit down and talk about this process. And now is the time, because we're going to be talking about Frosh very soon next fall. SSMU has already come, Daniel has already come and talked to me about Faculty Olympics to set something up like this, so we can do this. I'm very willing, and there might be other ways to approach it instead of one-off MOUs for every student society, that's a lot of work and I'm happy to do it, but there might be other approaches as well that we can consider. So this is to me a watershed moment for McGill and for student societies in terms of showing a partnership, and showing a shared goal and showing an approach that is quite novel and I think that proactive in terms of recognizing that we can still have a relationship where student societies have autonomy around organization, autonomy as entities, but a collaboration with McGill. Any questions?

Councilor Gingrich-Handley: I would wondering if you comment on how this ties in the sexual assault policy that has recently been passed?

Dean: Sure, I mean the question around the policy against sexual violence is witnessing a memorandum of understanding that actually provides a clear opportunity to ensure that the code of conduct applies, and so the sexual assault policy is a part of the code of conduct, whether it's Frosh or Carnival, if there is an incident that gets reported, then we have a pathway where the code of conduct can apply. That wasn't always the case before.

I also briefly wanted to mention that we're working on some publications around that collaboration with Management, so I really wanted to come today to share with you in advance of these publications so that you're all aware and when you do see any press about this, don't hesitate to contact me.

**AVEQ**



Kristen: Hi, my name's Kristen, I'm the coordinator of Mobilization and Social Development at AVEQ, and I've got my colleagues here that are going to join me for questions at the end, but I'm just going to explain a bit about what AVEQ is. AVEQ is the Association for the Voice of Education in Quebec; it's a provincial student association that is working to bring together a lot of the different associations at the local and campus level, so that we can have a stronger voice together. We're a pretty new student association, we actually only became a student association in the last year and we can't be out of the need for an association that would be representing the plurality of all students, so in particular we noticed that Anglophone student societies and student associations were not well represented and able to be included in the discussions that were happening. We also try to really make sure that we're bringing the voices of regional schools and schools that are in the bigger cities like Montréal together, so those are the main issues that came forward to create this association.

Currently, we actually have eleven student associations, representing 100,000 students that are sitting around the table. Everybody has a vote because in our first year we're being really inclusive of everyone, so it's a great collegial atmosphere around the table, which is exciting to see. In terms of formal affiliation, our members have voted on a base fee, and there's going to be more referenda in the next little while. I just wanted to share a little bit about our core values: one of the main things for us is a progressive democracy, so like I said, it's a very simple voting process: one association, one vote. So there's a very clear way for consensus to be made. We actually come to consensus and we try to make our decisions by consensus, we have a lot of different opinions and we want to bring those to the forefront, if anyone wants, they can ask for a vote on any issue, but we prioritize consensus in every decision that we make. And of course we have transparency, all of our documents are available online. Our goal is to really advocate for things that are common between student associations and political autonomy of the student associations. Solidarity; one of the things we really try to do is promote collaboration between different groups, support social initiative, so we do have a lot of very social progressive positions that we aim to promote and work in solidarity with people who are affected by a variety of different issues. We'll talk about our different positions. Equity, inclusion, feminism, accessibility and social and environmental justice are at the core of AVEQ.

Just to talk about the governing structure, it's pretty familiar I think, you have your members assembly, which is all the associations together holding the final decision making power. We have the executive council, and we also have Board of Directors who look over the administrative side of things. But a lot of the work is done with the commissions that we have. So we have the rally student's body, which is more independent, and then we have education and research commission, socio-political commission, and mobilization and development commission. Those all work on different things, you can probably tell what those are by the names, but if you have further questions about exactly what we do, please ask.

Right now all participating student associations have a voice and vote at the table, especially since this is our first year, we're interested in making sure that everyone is included in the decision making process. Of course, as we continue growing, the people will need to be affiliating in the future.



So we have a lot of different positions, our full list is on the website and is ten pages long. But these are some of the things that I thought would be more relevant to McGill in particular: we have a very strong position in favor of accessible education, and our ultimate goal is for free education for all. We have various positions in favor of environmental and planetary justice, against pipelines and fossil fuel dependency, and then social justice: feminism, freedom from discrimination, many different things. A newer thing that we've been working on is unpaid internships, and I see that you actually have a motion on the agenda about that tonight, so it seems really relevant to you guys.

So I'm going to talk a bit about the type of work that we do now and the sort of things that we're really providing. We do advocacy and representation, mostly at the provincial and federal levels. Our goal is to make sure that we're clearly communicating student views and priorities to the decision makers at the political level. We consult with all of our member associations and the people who are sitting around the table at our congresses to develop stances on timely issues and we also try to implement positive changes that are in line with the views of AVEQ.

We also do a lot of research, this is another very concrete thing that we have that is tailored to be very useful to student associations. So the associations themselves bring forward things that are issues for them that they need information on but maybe don't have the resources to provide the research, and then we will do the research. It also helps inform the advocacy that we do; we actually get contract specific researchers who are very knowledgeable about these issues, to do this research. One of the ones coming up is health insurance for international students, very relevant for a McGill context.

For mobilization, we really try to connect students that are organizing around different issues that they care about, so we had a mobilization camp in the fall, where we brought together students from all across the province to a mobilization training camp, where they got to learn about some of the issues that they are excited about and share knowledge about that, and also learn skills for how to organize effectively. We also provide a lot of resources, like funding and support from student organizers across the province.

Collaboration is pretty straightforward. We're willing to work with any other student unions or organizations or communities whenever it is pertinent. Sometimes we have to come together on certain issues, but it's always things that we definitely agree on and we think it's really important to identify those and work strategically for our members. We also try to connect different groups and individuals that have similar interests, so that we can amplify our voices and be effective about it.

Association and development, this is one of the concrete things that we have in terms of supporting associations and our members. We just launched a community action fund, it's \$40,000 this year and that can grow or change. It's really for any initiatives that support student mobilization or other priorities for students, so it could be things that are on campuses or encouraging students to collaborate with community groups. Right now, that's open to anyone from AVEQ but this year we're also opening it to anyone who is sitting around the table, so McGill students would be eligible to apply this year.



We also host events and collaborate with other associations and we can kind of facilitate those with the associations. That's most of it, I'll invite my co-workers up and we can answer any questions that you might have!

Councilor Sur: A lot of student were concerned with AVEQ and SSMU joining forces because you guys don't work a lot with the other French universities, and a lot of students were worried about that, as well as in general, process with AVEQ, so I wanted to you to talk a little bit about that, because it was a huge portion of the student body who did not want to join forces with AVEQ last year. So how have things changed in regards to connecting to other universities?

AVEQ: Like I said, we have eleven associations right now that are sitting around the table, the majority of those are francophone, only four of which are Anglophone, so it's a balance. But I think one of the big things about last year was that we didn't even have an executive at that point, AVEQ was very much in its infancy, and we're still growing. I've showed you a lot of more concrete things that we've developed this year, and our executive team is really working to improve our reputation with other groups, start new projects, and shown that we're competent with advocacy and research, with more goals to accomplish.

AVEQ: Just to add to that, I was on the team last year so I might be a bit more knowledgeable about some of the things you're referring to. In terms of the concerns brought up, probably specifically referring to a few French universities that chose to leave the table around this time last year, an update on that is that both of those associations are sitting at the table again, as an addition to the francophone associations that have now joined us. We probably shouldn't get into what might or might not have been the case last year, but definitely from what we understood from those previous executives, it was more so a desire to wait and see how things played out with the association.

Councilor Templer: I had a question regarding the community action fund, and campus sovereignty, and know that was a big concern last year during the election and so my question is would students potentially be applying for that fund to then use in an ongoing project, to contribute to campaign for a no-vote or only to contribute on issues which have already been taken as an official stance of the university?

AVEQ: So our goal is to support grass-roots initiatives that are happening on campus, so when we're talking about campus sovereignty, we're talking about things that are already happening on campuses, or supporting things that have already been identified and need more support on.

Councilor Templer: Just to be clear, my question is if there was an ongoing vote to make a stance on an issue at SSMU, then the resources from the community action fund wouldn't be qualified to contribute to that? That money wouldn't be used to contribute to a campaign to take a stance on an issue where that vote is still ongoing.



AVEQ: So there is a lot of discretion by the actual fund committee, so it would have to be decided whether it was generally aligned with the direction that AVEQ has.

Councilor Chin: I realize that the landscape for the student associations is rather fragmented at this moment, there are various associations and certain university societies that don't affiliate, and others that kind of do, but don't pay. My question is given that it's all fragmented, can you tell us concretely, what issues are you working on with those other teams, in terms advocating for students towards the government.

AVEQ: If I understand your question correctly, how AVEQ is working with other student associations, I'll give you a few examples. This weekend for example, we're going to CDS as observers, and our members are going too. The CDS was something that was created by UEQ to work on the question of unpaid internships, so we're willing to work with UEQ on this issue, making sure that student benefits are positive and are willing to collaborate with other associations so that our portfolio are being heard across the board on a provincial level. With ASSE, we released a joint statement regarding sexual violence a few weeks ago. AVEQ's goal is to work with everyone and to make that this fragmented situation we're in right now is made into a student movement that is diverse and shows the different perspectives that exist, because we were created because there was a need for a voice that is representing Anglophone student realities too – the other student associations were not fit to represent them in the way that they wanted to be represented. We're doing actual work right now, and it's been ongoing, and we've created solid partnerships with other unions. I talked to one of the biggest teacher's unions regarding certain issues too, workers unions, political parties, we're building these partnerships, we've been working all year on building these partnerships because AVEQ is a unique project with Anglophone universities and some of these regional universities have never had that space to have a voice.

And just to answer a previous question, in terms of sovereignty, another project right now is to give the right to propose to various faculties among us to make sure that there is political diversity that is vibrant and organic within our structure. Even if AVEQ takes a certain position, that doesn't necessarily mean that all of our student unions will have to think the same way. Everyone is allowed to work according to their principles, the idea is just to work together and make sure that issues are being brought up across the board on a bigger scale.

Councilor Chin: My second question is can you tell us the added benefit to being a paying organization toward AVEQ compared to our current status right now, of technically an observer, although we do have some decision making power. I'm asking this, given the context that there was a no-vote during the referendum last year, however AVEQ still experiences a lot of visibility around campus in terms of tabling rights and handing out swag and even coming here to speak with students who have decision making power.





AVEQ: The reason why it's this way right now is because the position was taken of SSMU observing and attending at AVEQ instances. The way that students on different campuses see fit for advertising or sharing political positions is their own choice. The way that SSMU might benefit from joining AVEQ is our community action fund, how many student associations contribute depends on how many we are, our resources we have in common; we'll be able to work on issues with more resources. I'll give you a concrete example, right now the question of internships; a lot of students are fighting for paid internships in the education sector, the same issue was being raised regarding psychology students and working together, we were able to bring this to the minister directly, negotiate and have an actual agreement that would directly impact student realities afterwards. For that, we need members, we need student unions. Right now you are observing, but the idea is that we will make this process as organic as possible with diverse voices. More voices involved so that afterwards, bringing these issues forward will have more strength. That agreement for psychology student would not have been possible if national student associations hadn't worked together. The idea of why joining a national student association is important is because it adds your perspective to how things will work out afterwards; SSMU is not a member of any national student association, the minister of education is not going to call SSMU by itself negotiate on any issues. On a national level, your ideas needs to be heard across the province and country, well that's something we can do for you.

AVEQ: Especially since this year is a bit of anomaly, since it's our first year building our association, SSMU's been very active in shaping the direction of AVEQ and I think the vision and values that we hold are going to be continuing in the long term, but it's likely that some of the structures, like who has a vote and the community action fund, which are currently open to anyone who is participating, we don't know exactly what will happen, but it's likely that in the future that it would be really beneficial to be a member to access those resources. It's also much stronger if we can go to the minister and say that we are actually representing 100,000 students instead of saying, well, some of them are involved in our decision making and some are just observing.

President Ger: I have a question in regards to reasons for affiliation; compared to a lot of other societies or associations in the province, SSMU is a fairly large one, and with that comes a fairly sizable budget, I'm just curious, in your opinion, why it might be more important to sit around the table and act collectively with a bunch of other association, potentially giving up our control in those situations, instead of spending the money on our own advocate?

AVEQ: Well if you check the examples of what happened in the history of AVEQ, we've had major changes that have happened on a provincial level. McGill joining this student association would be sending a very strong message, because of the size of your student association, and the nature of your student association. McGill is one of the biggest Anglophone association, and we want to make sure that all associations are being heard regardless of their language or history. The fact that a few years ago, there was a tuition hike proposed by the government





that was blocked by collective action. The size of McGill, the nature of McGill, is a strong message and whatever the perspective that the future takes with AVEQ members, and the changes that are going to happen, they're going to happen directly because of which associations join and what issues are brought forward. I think that McGill's voice is a strong voice to be heard and that could directly impact how things will happen as we move forward. It has been proved in the past and will be proven again and again, that we have the power, we have a say, and if we value education, then our goal is to make sure that student needs are being met and your perspective is of great value.

AVEQ: To answer your question of why not hire an advocate for SSMU, I think one of the important things to note is that due to this structure that we have, where the provincial government expects us to come forward and represent the student on issues. So those groups wouldn't go directly to SSMU, they would approach us and expect to get the information from associations like AVEQ.

## 6. Adoption of the Agenda

VP Patterson: I would like to table the report of the Mental Health Committee until our February 23<sup>rd</sup> council meeting.

Councilor Segal: I was wondering if we could move the motion regarding the internal regulations of governance to the first motion that comes forward?

Motion passes. Agenda is adopted.

## 7. Question Period (5)

David, Arts: As many of you are aware, a member of this board, Igor Sadikov, tweeted, "punch a Zionist today". I am a Zionist and this member is initiating violence against me. Under pressure, Igor proceeded to make a non-apology, in which he completely dodged his incitement of violence and instead proceeded to make an irrelevant political statement. I'm not here to speak about Zionism; this has nothing to do with Zionism, this is about making students feel safe on their own campus. So my question is, considering that a member of this board is inciting violence against me and thousands of McGill students and making us feel unsafe on campus, I'm actually afraid to ask this question, to stand up, because I feel as if I could be attacked, I do not see how this member of the board has a right to be here, considering the SSMU constitution which prides itself on inclusivity and diversity. Would anyone be able to justify that to me?

President Ger: First of all, I'd like to say thank you for your question. In terms of constitution and things like that, over the past day, which I'm assuming everyone is fairly aware of, in terms of procedurally, how governance here on campus works, there are a number of channels for



removal of office or impeachment. One of those is through legislative council, though primarily there's some through individual faculty associations, so the Arts Undergraduate Association.

Laura, Engineering: I'm just wondering, since SSMU has a social justice mandate, why does it allow Zionist councilors on council when Zionist ideology is inherently based on ethnically cleansing Palestinians and I, as a Palestinian, do not feel safe with councilors like that representing me on a daily basis?

Councilor Zhou: Just for a clarification, were you meaning to say, anti-Zionism? Is this in connection to the previous question? As far as I know, I'm not aware of any pro-Zionist actions or policies that have come up from individuals within council at this moment.

Councilor Segal: Just to make sure I understand this, you're upset if there is a pro-Zionist as a council member? So unfortunately, I am. So I think your opinions don't mean what I represent as the student body, so my first impulse is, if my student body is against what I believe, I will represent my student body. Your question, I think, is really inappropriate, because the student representatives are allowed to believe what they want, and don't need to justify that.

Councilor Sur: I think it's great that everyone's asking question, but just to be mindful that we want to make sure that we're creating an environment that is not going to be too unsafe. I think it's valid that people raise their concerns, but I just want to make sure that people are not feeling unsafe, and we create a space of inclusivity, as SSMU expects us to do.

Sonya, Arts: I was actually wondering, Jasmine, per your comments of your personal ideologies being divorced from your activities as a SSMU councilor and all of that, if that is true, then why is it that a current SSMU councilor is being lambasted in the court of public opinion for expressing a political view on his personal twitter account that that is not connected to SSMU council or McGill University, or his capacity as an Arts Rep.

Speaker: I just want to make it clear that everyone is allowed to be here, but please don't interrupt others. Please don't snap.

Councilor Segal: I think there's a difference between what I just did and what you're saying. If I was speaking on a platform and representing all the student body, and saying something that I didn't believe, that'd be different. He's speaking on a public platform, where he said something that was a hate crime. So that's different that me representing a student body and not stating my opinion.

Speaker: If everyone could please address their comments to me, the Speaker.

Question period is extended.



VP Magder: I just want to make one quick clarification here, that I personally feel as an individual that there is a difference between expressing your political views and inciting violence and I think one of them is not the same as the other. So I would like to say that violence in no circumstance is tolerated, but that is very different than an individual expressing their personal political beliefs.

Liam, Bull & Bear: My question is addressed to Mr. Igor Sadikov, the motion you've sponsored today includes an amendment that grants the general assembly the authority to weigh in on decisions by the judicial board, I think it's worth pointing out here that the judicial board found last year's BDS motion to be unconstitutional on the basis on singling out a particular nationality; considering your "punch a Zionist" tweet, which you have still not apologized for, is it safe to assume that this reform is meant to allow anti-Zionist motions to be passed without considering the constitutional validity?

Councilor Sadikov: No, that is incorrect. I'm happy to speak to the reasons for that particular motion when that motion will be presented; I think it would be redundant to do so now.

Jordan, Bull & Bear: I just had a question for the members of this body, a member just asked why individuals who have Zionist viewpoints are allowed to sit on this council and this body was silent. You let some individual define what Zionism is and you did not say anything. So I have a question for everyone sitting here, why you were silent, why you thought it was okay to be silent? Why you thought it was okay to allow that person to question why someone is sitting at this table with an opinion, and let them define Zionism incorrectly?

President Ger: Thank you for your question. Regarding question around who is and who is not allowing to sit around the table, at least personally I can say that my audible silence on that matter was mainly because there's nothing outlined in terms of... that's an electoral process. Again, I want to point out that there are mechanisms put in place if people would like to see, or who feel that their representatives do not represent them anymore, removed. But anyone who is elected is allowed to sit around this table.

Sonya, Arts: I'm just wondering why council has allowed a council-person to say that Councilor Sadikov committed a hate crime or committed hate speech when those concepts are very clearly defined in the law as something you need to be convicted of, and as we all know until proven guilty, there has not been a court case, there has not been a ruling, so to perpetuate the rhetoric that this tweet was a convicted hate crime, I'm wondering how you guys can allow that to happen when you very well know that's not the case.

Councilor Okome: So just to answer that question and not speaking to whatever was said in this council, but speaking to conviction, we do know that crimes are committed and not convicted. I think that question is grossly unfair; I'm just thinking of sexual assault survivors, like that wasn't a fair question and that should not be brought up in this case. I'm not talking about whatever



questions have been brought up, I'm not commenting on any of that, but to bring up a question like that really devalues experiences and that's not fair.

Councilor Segal: So your point before was that there shouldn't be a person here as a Zionist that represents the student body. I'm here representing my student body, so before I came here today, I had a talk with my social work association and asked them how they felt on certain issues and what words I was allowed to say, and what they wanted me to address today. So I'm here to represent my student body, I'm using their diction and the words that they informed me to use, if that helps with your question.

Simon, Law: My question for Councilor Sadikov; in your statement regarding the tweet you published, you state that, and I quote, "I do not condone or advocate violence on the basis on membership in any identity group", how do you reconcile that with your tweet, which perpetuate and condones violence based on membership in a certain group?

Councilor Sadikov: So to put in some context, I can say what I mean by the category of Zionism, which I referred to in my tweet. So, when I talk about Zionism, I am not referring to a group identity, I am referring to a political ideology, mainly a colonialist ideology and practice that encourages the occupation of Palestinian land, an ideology which continues to treat Palestinian people as second-class and inflict violence on their population. This is the ideology that I oppose, in the same way that I oppose colonization and occupation everywhere, including Canada and the United States. I understand that many members of the McGill community identify as Zionist, and that for some of them this label is connected to their Jewish identity. As someone with Jewish heritage myself, I find it important to draw a clear distinction between Jewish identity, culture and religion on one hand, and Zionist politics and ideology on the other hand. These are not to be conflated and I want to be clear that I condemn anti-Semitic rhetoric and behavior, whether it's towards those who identify as Zionist or not. I regret that the way that I phrased by position towards Zionism was harmful to some of my constituents and fellow students. I wanted to say that my tweet was not intended as a incitement of violence. Some of the messages that I've received have noted the fact that the format of my tweet alluded to the "punch a Nazi" meme, which has become popular recently. So this meme has been used to signify opposition to white supremacy and I used a similar format to signify opposition to colonialism. I want to be very clear however; in no way did I intend to equate Zionism with Fascism. I see now that doing so through this format was not the most appropriate format to use, and I regret that. So I hope this makes this clear that my tweet was not intended as an attack against any group and in particular it was not an attack against Jewish students.

Molly, Arts: So as we're all aware at this point, Councilor Sadikov tweeted "punch a Zionist" three days ago. To this instance, SSMU has not condoned this statement or this behavior, even considering that this is one of their councilors under the law. So does this mean that SSMU condones political violence and, if so, is it safe to be someone who identifies as a Zionist at McGill?



President Ger: First of all, I would like to say that SSMU does not condone violence of any kind, especially on campus. When it comes to statements by the SSMU, I recognize that there has not been one that has been made at this current time, I will point that the tweet was reported on last night, it was made notice of last night, as Councilor Sadikov is a councilor of Arts to SSMU, as well as a representative of the SSMU as a board level, and the Board will be meeting on Monday, we felt it would be best to have both this question period, if possible, as well as a chance for the Arts Undergraduate Society to respond and then in the place in which Councilor Sadikov is a representative of the SSMU, of the Board, a separate discussion to be had there. Again, I'd like to repeat that violence on campus is in no way something that we promote and it is something that we condemn.

Speaking time is extended.

Iris, Arts: I'm asking this question on behalf of someone who can't be here; what is the SSMU or AUS going to do guarantee Councilor Sadikov safety after this hateful campaign against him?

Becky Goldberg, AUS President: On behalf of the AUS, we have previously released a statement with regards to the comment that Igor made on our Facebook page, our statement was specifically designed to express that we do not promote the use of violence, although it was intended to have remained specifically political to the issue at large; we do regret that any members felt alienated, but we do recognize that as an ongoing political controversy on campus, there is a lot more conversation to be had around this. We do recognize that the way in which this was brought to light was a little bit – and these are my words, not on the behalf of my society – but it seems to be a little bit of a witch-hunt, and I have tried to ensure Igor's safety, just providing support in my capacity as a friend, but we have been contemplating formulating a statement that does not condone the use of defamation or some sort of promotion of harm in response to something that some people perceived as harm; we do recognize that the use of violence and any phrasing that promoted violence was wrong to begin with, but there has been a lot of reactionary promotional violence and we do not condone that and I want to distance ourselves from that sort of response.

Councilor Sadikov: I'm grateful for President Goldberg's support provided on a personal level; that said I'm in agreement with the question, about the need for institutional support. In the past 24 hours, I have received hundreds of insulting threats on social media, my personal information has been posted online. It has been forwarded to various institutions and authorities. I cannot say that I feel safe, I am experiencing harassment and threats. I would prefer to see further institutional support.

Councilor Segal: I agree that you also need some form of safety, because seeing some of the emails I've received on my SSMU account, and they've been quite aggressive, I agree with that. However I do think at the same time, it's important to note that you did make other people feel



unsafe. Whether or not that was your intentions, your words weren't nice. In all honestly, as a person who is a Zionist, I too didn't feel safe. You used the word punch, that wasn't nice, so I think the problem here lies with these two groups of people who don't feel safe. You yourself don't and the people that you did target in your twitter status, which is a free media that is publicized so anyone has access to it, it's not a private account, so it's not anyone's fault that it went all over the media, I'm sorry about that but that is the case. Twitter is public. So in that sense, I don't know what the institution really could do, because you've used a public social media tool. However, I do think that it's important for you to realize that you're not the only person who doesn't feel safe because you opened a platform for other students who don't feel safe. I know a lot of students, Jewish and not, who have come forward to me who don't feel safe at all, both in the Social Work school and other schools at McGill.

Speaker: Please keep it refrained to questions during this question period.

Molly, Arts: This is a follow up question to Councilor Sadikov's response. What is SSMU and the Arts Undergraduate Society going to do to protect me from being punched? As a Zionist, I'd love to know.

Councilor Sadikov: Both the SSMU and the AUS have equity policies, which I assume are some measure of protection against violence, I don't want to speak to that further since I have bias as a representative of those bodies as such, that's said, in the current context, I reiterate my apology for the harm my tweet has caused; it was meant in a light tone that did not work in this context. That said, from what I'm observing and experiencing, it seems that the violence that's been enacted upon me is much more than the violence that I insinuated.

Jennifer, Bull & Bear: I would like to ask Councilor Sadikov this question, in good faith: why do you feel like your definition of Zionism is more important or should be understood as the definitive definition of Zionism over and above other people who have had experiences with what Zionism actually means to them, and felt threatened by your tweet?

Speaker: Reminder to refer questions to me, the Speaker.

Councilor Sadikov: My definition of Zionism is based on academic, historical and political understandings of the various texts and institutions that are associated with this movement.

Question period is extended.

Councilor Taylor: I was wondering, in light of the AUS asking for Councilor Sadikov's resignation, why has he decided to ignore this request by the Society?

Councilor Sadikov: I have not yet reached a decision on this issue, and I will follow the institutional procedures that exist in the governance documents of the AUS and the SSMU.





Laura, Arts: I'm just wondering if this council started by a land acknowledgment against colonialism and Zionism is clearly defined as an ideology that continues to this day to incite violence on the ground in Palestine as a part of colonialism, why is there hypocrisy by all these councilors that started with a land acknowledgment, when you do not respect the lands of me and other people in this crowd that have people living there and experiencing colonialism every single day?

Councilor Segal: So SSMU is in Canada where we took the land from the first nation peoples, so that is why we do the land acknowledgement, I'm not saying that your view shouldn't be heard, but we're here speaking on the land that was stolen, we're not speaking in Israel where that happened. We're speaking here. We acknowledge your feelings and we acknowledge your rights, no one is telling you not to say what you're feeling, but we're not speaking in Israel, we're speaking here in Canada.

Greg, Arts: My question is directed to anyone who could answer. I was wondering if people are aware that Councilor Sadikov's twitter has no reference to his last name or any reference at all to his position at McGill, and if anything it's actually quite impossible to make a connection between this twitter account and Mr. Sadikov's tweet. And, at the same time, people should be aware that this twitter account has very few followers and, in reality, was not made in a public space at all.

President Ger: It was brought up, yes. It has been noted.

Councilor Madwar: I would like to clarify, so you mentioned that Igor's name has no reference to McGill, but hasn't he worked in the McGill Daily before and as he's finished articles or anything like that, he would actually have his twitter account username on it. So actually, it was public and it has reference to McGill in that sense. So it wasn't his private twitter account, he uses it within McGill.

Councilor Sadikov: To address that, the McGill publications society and the McGill Daily is an institution separate from McGill and SSMU. So as such, I have not used it in my professional role as a position at AUS or SSMU.

Jordan, Bull & Bear: This question is for Councilor Sadikov, I'm looking here at the Oxford Dictionary definition of Zionism and it says, "a movement for the reestablishment of a Jewish nation in the historic land of Israel". By that definition, as early Zionist thinkers and as today, it's rooted in the idea that Jews are an ethno-religious group who are also indigenous to the Levant and deserve protection from persecution in the land that their ancestors hailed from. So, the councilors who are sitting around this table, who believe in a two state solution, who believe that Israel is acting unjust with the settlement policy and want to see a two-state solution, they



are all Zionist. So my question to Councilor Sadikov is, if he's getting his definition there, does he want to punch his fellow councilors, who believe in such an idea?

Councilor Sadikov: I don't believe that the dictionary definition is sufficient to understand a social and political phenomenon. As I've stated before, in my understanding of Zionism, takes into account it's history, the practices to which it was enacted, the institutions, the ongoing violence to which it is connected. As to your claim that Jewish people are an ethno-religious group indigenous to the Levant, again, as someone with Jewish heritage and Jewish ancestry, I want to note that is a deeply contested claim.

Sonya, Arts: I was wondering if the SSMU council could publically address the assertion that Jordan made about what constitutes Zionism as it completely erasing the voices of anti-Zionist Jews who do not see the state of Israel representing them or see some sort of indigenous claim to the region. We're here; we don't believe that Israel represents us, we are not Zionist and we will not be silenced.

Councilor Taylor: Point of order, could the speakers please address the Speaker instead of Council?

Sonya: Madame Speaker, I was wondering if you could publically reject or not accept the assertion that Jordan made about what Zionism constitutes and that anti-Zionist Jews exist. As anti-Zionist Jews, Israel does not represent us, we do not feel a tie to Israel as our ancestral homeland, in fact we reject that completely, in the name of continued colonization of indigenous Palestinians who include Christian, Jew, and Muslim Palestinians who have lived there for centuries.

President Ger: I'm going to speak a little bit broadly to a few points that were brought up and do my best to hopefully address a number of things. In my role of the President, making sure that our governance here runs as successfully as it can be, I do want to act as a resource for members of the gallery. Hence, if they would like to either implore the governance channels and the different processes that we do have available institutionally, whether that be impeachments or motions, in terms of the SSMU taking stances in any political way, I will say that the GA is coming up, I am happy to show people through that process, and additionally if people have questions about that on the other end, with impeachment, I am happy to walk them through the SSMU end of removal of office, just in the sense that I understand the bureaucracy and difficulties associated with our governance and I'd like to make that as easy as possible.

Question period is extended.

David, Arts: So how can Igor, on the Council, possibly say that Jews do not have an indigenous connection to the land, with all evidence? You can find the evidence, it's constantly dug up



from thousands of years ago, the Western Wall, how can all of this evidence be dismissed? All evidence, historical, religious and cultural, points to that Jews have been indigenous to that land for thousands of years.

Councilor Sur: Just a couple things. First, you know, it's a valid question, but not all of us have an answer to that, because unfortunately we don't know a lot of that history. Just wondering what, now, the point is of this question period, what exactly are we talking about right now and what are we trying to address?

Councilor Templer: In regards to the AUS representative's tweet and regards to his involvement in the Daily previously; there have been articles published where the Daily has been quoted as saying that it maintains an editorial line of not publishing pieces which promote a Zionist worldview. I want to ask if Councilor Sadikov would perhaps be able to qualify their involvement in drafting that policy, or how they were involved with that at all?

Councilor Sadikov: I'm not longer affiliated with the Daily and in fact I'm not directly aware of such a policy, so I had not involvement in drafting or enforcing it.

Laura, Arts: So I do define Zionism as ethnically cleansing Palestinians, so I take it, Madame Speaker, I just want to ask if Councilor Segal believes that I should not exist because I am Palestinian because she just said that she was Zionist at the beginning of this forum and she does not represent the student body since there are Palestinians in the student body.

Councilor Segal: Well, I never once said that I don't think you should exist, I want to make that very clear. What you believe is something against what I believe and we can have our different beliefs, but that doesn't stop us from being humans, we all go to the same school, we all are under one roof right now, so no one should be questioning if one person should exist or one shouldn't, so I don't think that's very fair or nice or reasonable. I think here we've heard a million different definitions, I mean right now I'm currently shaking so I think there are a lot of different things happening here that shouldn't be. So I'm going to ask if we can end this question period because I think it's getting way out of proportion.

Jordon, Bull & Bear: Madame Speaker and the Councilors, I want to thank you for taking the time, there are a lot of members of this gallery who are shaking for different reasons. I do respect the Councilor's position and opinion that they are not familiar with the historical context of things we are talking about. I do want to reiterate that what was just said by Councilor Sadikov, that it is contested that Jews have ties to the Levant, is an Anti-Semitic conspiracy theory and I am wondering how that could be accepted in this council, and I'm wondering what we will do to reconcile after something is said like that.

Councilor Sadikov: I guess I will just first note my surprise of an accusation of Anti-Semitism leveled at someone who is Jewish. These kinds of accusations are often used, for the political



purpose of conflating a Jewish identity with Zionism, which I reject. To get to the substantive part of your question, again, as far as I understand, Jewish people do not form one coherent ethnic group, and to that extent they are indigenous to different areas and the history of the different groups that make up the Jewry are specific to other areas, like Egypt for example.

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

Councilor Renondin: It is the belief of my constituents that neither the SSMU council, not any association at McGill should promote any type of violence and that being said, I move a motion to censure Councilor Sadikov for his quotation “punch”. Again, I would like to reaffirm that the EUS does not have a stance on this controversial political issue, and EUS has determined to make sure that it worded carefully, so yeah, I move to censure Councilor Sadikov.

President Ger: So there are a few different interpretations of what the constitution says here, but at least my reading of it, people who are put forward for impeachment would require a reasonable notice, so this would come forward as a notice today to be voted on next council.

Councilor Renondin: I’m not motioning to impeach Councilor Sadikov, I’m censuring him. Is censorship done the same way as impeachment, because I believe in light of recent issues, that motion should be brought forward to be voted on today; according to Robert’s Rules, censuring a councilor expresses a body’s belief that against sanctioning that councilor’s expression or behavior and so I do believe it would be in order to be voted on today, again, if that’s not in order because of the by-laws or the internal regulations, I would withdraw.

President Ger: Super fair, I made a mistake in terms of conflating the two.

VP Sobat: Point of order, so this is a motion made under Robert’s Rules, could the Speaker please confirm what the Robert’s Rules say?

Speaker: A motion to censure is something that needs to be seconded, is debatable and it amendable. A motion to censure will essentially mean that the person that is being censured has to leave for the rest of council, it does not mean that they’re being impeached from this body, it does not mean that they’re removed from the body at all, it does mean that they have to leave for the rest of council, to my best knowledge. It is a majority vote and the person that is being asked to be censured cannot vote, obviously. That’s the best of my knowledge to it.

Councilor Sadikov: Point of Parliamentary enquiry, would you be able to source these claims about the motion? I ask for a source because my understanding about a censure is that it’s essentially like a reprimand. It’s the condemnation of behavior, without necessarily taking a step of suspension or removal from office. In that sense, it’s basically a warning not to repeat the behavior again. At least, it does seem to translate to removal.



Speaker: Yeah, like reasoning for censuring a member, I can list it out, persistent violation of rules, assault on the floor, slander or insulting remarks, disorderly conduct, misconduct in office, neglect of duty, disobedience of instructions by delegates or committees, bribery, conspiracy, larceny, yeah. That's why we would motion to censure someone.

VP Carolan: Point of information, does the censure, is that lasting just for this one council or does it apply to future councils as well?

Speaker: Just this council.

Councilor Sadikov: Could you clarify again the effect of the censure, because that is the aspect that I'm trying to clear up.

Speaker: In my understanding of Robert's Rules, it's very wordy here, is that the person that is being censured, if the vote does go by, is removed from the council until the end of council today. That does not mean that they're suspended or expelled in any way. A member of any body cannot be censured twice for the same offense. And that's my understanding of censures. If someone else has a better understanding of censures, I give them the space to explain now, because I've never censured someone.

Councilor Sadikov: Again, obviously I'm the interested party here, so you might not want to take what I'm saying at face value; that said. I do believe that I am some understanding of Robert's Rules and the way I understand it, it's an expression of condemnation and disapproval that does not have direct consequences on the member, basically a warning. There exists a counterpart that is really opposite to that. But it's distinct from both suspension from the rest of the meeting.

Speaker: Councilor Renondin has done some researcher.

Councilor Renondin: Not quite, I comply to your opinion here, but I do want to state that the councilor I am bring this motion towards is moving a motion that may or may not be directly linked to the issues that have arisen today and I believe that he should not be allowed to speak to this motion particularly. If the chair finds that he should stay in this council, and if my motion passes, I would like the chair to consider preventing him from talking about the motion itself, it is a motion about the changes to the internal regulation.

Speaker: Just to clarify, when a censure is in order, it's a warning and the next step would be suspension, removal or expulsion. So yes, Councilor Sadikov is right on that remark.

Councilor Douglas: Yeah, that was basically what I was going to say, that it's just a warning.



Councilor Renondin: Would the chair be open to attaching to my motion of censure, a clause preventing this particular councilor from talking about this motion because again, there could be a belief or a motive that this motion is moved by this particular councilor, I don't want to say because, but the fact that he's moving this motion could be linked to the allegations that he has said today and the allegations that have been made. So I strongly believe that this body should not allow a councilor that has expressed a will to direct violence, when he is so closely linked to such a motion

Councilor Zhou: I would just like to say that I think it might be a little bit preemptive to completely censure Councilor Sadikov from moving this motion based on the premise or preconception that is already linked to a previous affair, and that should that particular concern become apparent in his moving, then it can be dealt with appropriately then. So I would suggest that we allow Councilor Sadikov that we move on the motion, and if there is a conflict then I think it would be appropriate for us to discuss it then.

Councilor Douglas: Can we find out that whether or not we can vote on if we want to ask Councilor Sadikov to not be a part of a motion.

Speaker: You can't prevent someone from doing one specific thing. I think that's against Robert's Rules and would rule that out of favor, using my chair's discretion, but there is a motion that a member must leave the hall during a portion of the meeting, motion to suspend the member's rights for a designated time or period, which are motions that can be brought up to this floor, which are under "censure" but won't be qualified as a censure.

Councilor Sadikov: Two points of parliamentary enquiry: first, is there anything on the floor right now?

Speaker: There is technically a motion to censure on the floor right now, that we're discussing.

Councilor Sadikov: Does that not require an amendment to the agenda? The motion to censure is a main motion.

Speaker: Yes, it does. It was proposed, and we didn't vote on it, so according to Robert's Rules we're in this weird spot where there's nothing really happening, so I'm stopping it.

Councilor Taylor: Motion to suspend the rules and amend the agenda to suspend Councilor Sadikov for the amount of time over this current meeting resides.

Councilor Sadikov: Does such a motion not need to be related to an offence during the meeting?





Speaker: Yes, so if you want a member to leave, for the remainder of the meeting or a specific amount of time, you must present it, say why, we will debate it, Councilor Sadikov, if he is the person you ask to remove, he must also defend himself, and it requires a majority to adopt.

Councilor Zhou: Do we not need a vote to suspend the rules?

Councilor Taylor: Motion to suspend the current rules to be able to amend the agenda.

Motion fails.

Councilor Renondin: I would like to bring back my motion to censure Councilor Sadikov.

Speaker: That is out of order. To motion to do anything at this time would require suspending the rules to amend the agenda, and that requires a 2/3 majority, which we did not have at the time. Now, the report from the Steering committee!

VP Sobat: This is a very long agenda, we apologize for this, there were a number of items that came this week because of other delays, either from previous meetings or because there were some deadlines imposed on us, but we did suggest purchasing pizza for councilors.

## **9. Announcements (5)**

Councilor Anderson: So this is something that was brought to the committee on Student Affairs in the Arts Faculty. I can share it within our facebook group to share with your constituents, there's going to be an event called "Conversations with Muslims"; this is something that was organized by Muslim members of the McGill Community, with the support of all of their friends and family. They just want people to come and engage in dialogue and get to know them as neighbors and friends. I hope you all can come attend! I think it'll be an educational and strong event.

VP Lawrie: Faculty Olympics are coming up, I would highly encourage everyone to find a team. I have another event coming up, which is an e-sports tournament, contact me if you want more details.

Councilor Poorian: I would like to welcome our third science councilor, who is new to council tonight.

Councilor Gingrich-Hadley: I would like to remind everyone that the Self-Care challenge is ongoing!



## 10. New Business

### Motion Regarding the Amendment of Internal Regulations of Governance

VP Sobat: I'm pleased to motivate this motion, I know there's been quite a lot of interest, so I'm happy to see that so many are engaged in the SSMU governance changes that are being proposed. There are a few changes to this motion from what was presented to this council as a notice of motion two councils ago, I will flag those, but as far as I'm aware, those were friendly to all of the movers on this motion. I also want to clarify that the intent of this motion. Last year, at the end of the year, there was a fairly significant restructuring of our governance, much more significant than actually this motion, to give more power to the Board of Directors, with the intent of them taking on more oversight of the whole operational resources of the society. However, this was not accompanied by the same level of regulation that we have, for example, at the legislative council, giving the power of the Board to act unilaterally on some matters. So the goal of these provisions is to place some restrictions to ensure that decisions of this society are made in consultation with the legislative council, which is an elected and accountable body. I will clarify a few points about our current governance structures, that there may have been some questions about. In particular, I want to note that the Legislative Council is already, and always has been, responsible for passing formal policies and plans of our society. These are capital "P", Policies and Plans, documents that have a set period of time, longer than a year, in our regulations between five and ten years, all of our existing policies except for one, have been adopted by the Legislative Council, one was sent to referendum, there has been some information distributed that policies and plans may conclude the decision to join a student federation or endorse an external vocal campaign, I want to note that in the formal case, that is found by our internal regulations to go to referendum, so the Legislative Council cannot move to affiliate SSMU to an external organization. And in the latter case, any external political campaign deemed not within the jurisdiction of the council by the steering committee would have to go to the general assembly. So there is not change to those existing procedures as they stand. Furthermore, all existing decisions by the legislative council must be ratified by the Board of Directors, as per the Companies Act, and that there is an amendment that would go over clarifying how that would happened, done in consultation with our legal counsel. Finally, similarly, opinions or decision of the judicial board must also be ratified by the Board of Directors, as per the Companies Act, and there will be some provisions in that regard.

So, just starting with the first be-it-resolved clause, I won't go over every resolve clause as this was presented as a notice two weeks ago, but the second be-it-solved clause has been substantially revised. This is in regards to ratification of the judicial board decisions by the Board of Directors. The previous notice added a point c, that would have allowed resolutions to refer to legislative council for ratification, that's been revised; instead, the Board may consult the Legislative Council, if necessary, on a political or representative matter. Furthermore, if a decision by the judicial board requires a corresponding change to our governance documents, that must be referred to the legislative council following ratification; this is because it is a body responsible for amending our internal regulations.



So, 1.2 has been revised: resolutions passed at a legislative council will go into immediate effect upon subsequent ratification of the Board. This was following concerns that the previous phrasing, that resolutions by council would immediately go into effect unless they were overturned by the board, in consultation with the Board of Directors as well as with McGill legal counsel, it was identified that this was in violation of the Companies Act, so that was revised. Moving on to 6.1, power to adopt, a referendum has been added as a means for the Society to adopt policies. Again, it's unlikely that this would ever occur, however in one instance that referendum was used to vote in the educational accessibility policy, which had come to legislative council from the general assembly and the council did decide that they would like that to be voted on by all students at the referendum. Just to note that some of the deletions here are because some these procedurally already exist, or are detailed in the standing rules. So, for example, to adopt a policy at council, that does require two readings, hence some policies and policy revisions are presented with a notice of motion.

Finally, if we can scroll through the appendix, which I would argue is actually the most substantial part of this motion. This is the part that places some restrictions on the power of the Board to act unilaterally, all resolutions passed at the meeting of the legislative council should be considered for ratification by the Board, however the Board is not in place to unilaterally amend those motions, however if they do feel that the motion should be overturned because, for example, it jeopardizes the legal, financial, or operational wellbeing of the Society, they must refer it back to the legislative council with more information for consideration. You'll note that in 1.3.1, the Board should only exercise this power in those cases, however that does leave them with the discretion if they feel that something is really not in the best wellbeing for the society, which negates our core obligations. I'll leave it there, I'm happy to answer any questions, again most of this is quite similar to what was present two weeks ago except for those three changes I've pointed to.

EUS Rep, reading statement from Councilor Mansdoerfer: Dear SSMU Legislative Councilor, I wish to extend my sincerest regrets for my absence this evening, I am currently away due to extenuating circumstances back home. Recent events at McGill confirm the thoughts I had, as well as others, that this motion to change the internal governance at McGill has not been made in good faith. A councilor has recently spoken against those who are in support of the Jewish faith, and it is possible, in light of past events at SSMU, this could have triggered the changes being made to SSMU constitution regarding the changes being made to the SSMU Judicial Board. The judicial board ruled on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 that any legislature compelling students to campaign against any country is unconstitutional, as it discriminates against other countries and violates the SSMU human rights policy. This judicial board decision prevents SSMU from further investigating BDS. Modifications to internal regulations presented before SSMU council this evening allow future judicial board decisions to be overturned. This sets a dangerous precedent, allowing the enactment of topics democratically voted against by students at McGill. This judicial board modification could also apply to stances regarding SSMU election infringement. An oversight arising at the SSMU Board of Directors only needs a simple majority to overturn—



Speaker cut her off, cutting speaking time to one minute mark.

Councilor Sur: I'd like to bring forward a few concerns that students from the faculty brought forward to me. First, in regards to the Board of Directors as being the unregulated, unchecked power: this is by definition through the Corporations Act as well as the corporate by-laws, so if you want to limit the Board of Directors power, it has to go through the by-law changes procedures. And also, I reiterate the things that Councilor Mansdoerfer has been saying around the judicial board. It delegitimizes the decisions that the judicial board makes, and it's really important, with everything that is going on down south, that we understand the separation of the judicial board as well as the legislative council.

Councilor Chin: I'd like to echo that I also support the independence of the judiciary branch, but I would also like to note that since Saturday I've started receiving emails, first of many speaking in regards to this matter. I started a discussion with one of those individuals, who actually published an article at the Bull and Bear. Rather than have his words told through me, I figured it would be best to cede my time to this member at large with the Faculty of Law.

Simon, Law: I'm going to make this very short and address just one factor. While we welcome amendments to this motion, do to its sweeping nature and its brazen attempts to push these changes through with an ulterior motive, it would not be just, equitable or responsible to adopt this motion as is. I urge everyone to vote against this motion and I look forward to expanding on my comments at a later time.

Councilor Okome: This is just a question, because I'm just a little confused about the changes that you're trying to make. So, essentially, would they no longer be a referendum? Whatever passes in the legislative council is that like the word that we go to GA?

VP Sobat: So I think there's a few different pieces here, and just to note that these are amendments to existing internal regulations that contain provisions for all of these things. So there's business that can go through the legislative council, which includes passing resolutions, amending or adopting internal regulations, adopting policies or plans. All of those resolutions need to be ratified by the Board of Directors. Things that go through referendum would be, for example, changes to student fees, primarily, or affiliations to external federations, things that can go through the General Assembly would be resolutions and policies as well, there's some rules in the constitution actually that prevent the GA from modifying the constitution, which is something else that has to go to referendum, as well as the internal regulations, so this doesn't change any of those existing procedures. All that it does is limit the ability of the Board to unilaterally change policies that aren't being implemented from the legislative council, sorry, policy and resolutions. So decisions of the legislative council still need to be ratified by the Board, the General Assembly doesn't change under this, the referendum, now with this amendment retracted, doesn't change.



Councilor Renondin: I was wondering if, since we're changing the internal regulations, would that require a 2/3 majority vote?

Speaker: It would require a 2/3 majority vote if the motion passes, not to amend the internal regulations. So when we debate it, the vote that we're going to have eventually to amend these IRs, require 2/3 majority. Not a simple majority.

Councilor Madwar: I know the presenter of this motion and other sponsors of this motion sit on the Board of Directors, so this motion deals directly with the power of the Board of Directors, so is it safe to assume the movers have a direct personal interest in this motion? Isn't this a conflict of interest as defined in SSMU's conflict of interest policy?

VP Sobat: So as an officer, I have a role in bringing forward changes and recommendations to changes in governance documents, which again must be approved by the legislative council. This motion restricts the powers of the Board, so a Director I am bringing forward a motion that restricts the ability of the Directors, to adopt, for example, changes to governing documents like this. So if you think that's a conflict of interest, I am confused.

Debate period is extended.

Councilor Templer: I'm wondering what consultation was done beyond this committee, in order to solicit feedback before these were brought to council, particularly by the movers and the Democratic Governance Review Committee, because in the time since this has been made available, I can only speak for myself when I say that I've received probably dozens of emails about this with diverse concerns, so I'm curious as to what consultation was done in the drafting of these amendments?

Councilor Sadikov: These amendments deal with fairly typical aspects of governance. In terms of consultation, we went to the Board of Directors, the body that is most effected by these changes, but we also have had a legal review, so that should maybe alleviate some concerns in terms of the legality of this motion. We had a legal review and amended it accordingly according to the recommendations of that counsel. In terms of consultation beyond that, this notice was posted two weeks ago and the councilors has had the opportunity to consult with their constituencies. Because this is was created out of a committee that was specifically struck by council to come up with restrictions and rules around the dealings of the Board of Directors, it's a fairly technical task, that we did not deal with any consultation at the committee level.

Councilor Mansdoerfer (continues): An oversight arises when the SSMU Board of Directors only need a simple majority to overturn a j-board decision. Hypothetically, any candidate for a SSMU executive position can fair campaign, have a j-board report filed against them, receive the j-board decision in the candidate's favor, and then have the decision overturned because of



hidden agendas. The Board of Directors currently harbors a member that has publically expressed violence against another community of people, specifically related to previous referendum failures. The electoral reform committee review was dismantled in Fall 2016, after members of the Board struck their ideas and refused to publish recommendations from the standing committee. This displays the bad faith conducted by not only the member in question, who acted in dissipating the electoral reform ideas, there aided by other members of the board. If the above stated is incorrect, I would like to see changes made to the judicial board removed from this motion and possibly examined later by a standing committee of legislative council. If those who wrote and moved this motion really want to fix issues regarding the relationship between the judicial board and SSMU Board of Directors, the Board of Directors should be making this motion themselves. I implore this legislative council to act with restraint and sense when reviewing this amendment; SSMU represents the entirety of the undergraduate body attending McGill University. I believe it is in the best interest of all to study the implications of this implementation before asking the opinion of the general student body through referendum.

Councilor Sur cedes time to Simon, Law: I want to raise responses to two points, first made by the mover of the motion, Councilor Sobat. There was an inconsistency in his claim that the referendums cannot set policies and plans; they can currently set policies and plans as stated in internal regulations of governance, 7.6.1 with power to adopt policies and plans. Second, on the points made about consultation; I find it disingenuous that the claim made about consultation to legal advice was done, since this was done in the last few days and not before notice of the motion was given two weeks ago. I would also like to hear corroboration that consultation was made with the Board of Directors, prior to the notice of motion being given on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Taylor: I can answer that. The Board of Directors was made aware of this on Saturday or Sunday, and meeting was called this Monday to discuss it, just for a time frame.

Councilor Kouyoumjian cedes her time to Sonya, Arts: I was just wondering if the EUS rep could elaborate on what he said a bit about the hidden agendas and j-board, I don't know if you could give more information about that?

Councilor Mansdoerfer (EUS Rep): From what I understand, these amendments would allow the Board of Directors to overturn a decision made by the judicial board, is that correct?

VP Sobat: So the Board is already tasked with ratifying decision of the judicial board, there is a description of how that occurs. The Board has already had the capability in the past to overturn one of those decisions, in extreme circumstances basically. There is an adjustment here, due to a procedural issue where you'll note that it requires a simple majority to ratify a resolution of the judicial board yet a 4/5 majority to overturn, which means that if there is a voting imbalance in between a simple majority, which is 50% plus 1, and the 4/5<sup>th</sup> majority, then the





motion is stuck in limbo, not ratified and yet not overturned. So this change was to address that concern, however I would be very open to any amendments to adjust that

VP Magder: I would just like to reaffirm some of the comments that were made, especially some of the concerns that the objectivity of the j-board needs to be addressed. Because as you allow the j-board opinions to be overturned, you remove it's separation from the political levels of governance, and I think there, as suggested by some of the law students, there is a very important interest in keeping that j-board separate from the political governance, because if you trust them to make that decision, then you should hope that they are the ones making an impartial decision in this, and I think there is a committee going on right now to evaluate the j-board. I would like to see what they have presented before we start limiting powers of the judicial board.

Councilor Thomas: I just have a question, was legal counsel done?

VP Sobat: Yes, these were sent to our legal counsel earlier this week, the reason that they were not sent before there was a notice of motion is because we typically wait until there is a more finalized version for consultation because lawyers are expensive. So, to be clear, the notice of motion plus two weeks was exactly what was intended for consultation and changes have been made, based on those consultations.

Debate is extended.

Councilor Chin: I was wondering if the j-board has been consulted on this, given that there are amendments to the rules over them, or if there is anyone in the gallery who could speak for the j-board?

President Ger: On this particular point, no, the j-board was not specifically consulted. At least with, the intent of that was that the specific changes were largely to make thing procedurally easier, although I will say that the number of concerns that were brought up on certain points probably need a bit more explaining because there might be some misunderstandings about why some of this might not be the best thing to go through. Honestly I think most of the changes are smaller. On this particular issue, I'm open to motions to amend that, or make changes, if people would like to keep the j-board with a super majority in order to turn over. I will just say as well, I'm sorry that this is going out of the scope of the question that was just asked, one of the additional reasons for the reduction there is largely due to the fact that the judicial board, which acts as our supreme court, for accessibility reasons, it is helpful for students to have a point person within the institutional branch who is separate that they can go to ask questions or appeal; ours, as opposed to other high levels of government, is made up of people who do not have law degrees, people who are not lawyers and who are making decisions that, in the past, have run contradictory to what our official legal counsel has said. I can promise that this was not a politically motivated change, as something who was consulted or



has been in the room where these sorts of problems have arisen, but once again I understand the idea associated with gutting the judiciary branch of the institution, once again I am amendable to having that taken out.

Councilor Anderson: So just to follow-up what Councilor Thomas said, it wasn't clear, when she asked about legal review and you said legal review was done, just to clarify, was this motion found to be legal?

VP Sobat: I apologize that I didn't make that clear. So the Board did meet on Monday and had an opportunity to raise some concerns, one of which was about ensuring compliance with the Companies Act, which requires the Board of Directors to be the highest body in terms of decision making, and that means they need to be tasked with ratifying the decisions of council. We specifically went to consult legal based on that, and the lawyer recommended that yes, we adjust the proposed amendment that would have simply allowed legislative council resolutions to be immediately in effect unless they're overturned. That has been revised, so they're only in effect upon ratification of the board. In terms of the restrictions of the ability of the Board to make changes to those, that is also within our ability as a corporation to place restrictions, to require them to go back and consult with the legislative council if they overturn a decision. So yes, it's legal.

Councilor Sadikov: As has been explained, and I will be as candid as possible, so at the Board of Directors, we have a situation where the ruling of the judicial board was presented, the Board of Directors were able neither to ratify this opinion nor to overturn, so this opinion is basically not in effect because it has not been ratified, but it also hasn't been overturned so it remains in this procedural grey area, where this decision was issued in May and as of now, it remains in this limbo area. To me, this highlights a procedural concern, this is the suggestion that we have to address that concern, I understand that some of you have the worry that this idea is politically motivated, so as a show of good faith, I will propose an amendment. I would like to amend that "such a resolution should require a 2/3 majority", I say 2/3 as a compromise between the fact that we need to basically minimize the probability of such a legal ambiguity or procedural ambiguity occurring, and the concerns I guess implied by councilors, that an exceptional situation overturning a judicial board decision requires a super majority, this is my suggestion, I'm putting it out there for debate. I would personally abstain from this amendment, and I will not speak to it further. I hope that this is sufficient as a show of good faith. It's not friendly, I want debate about it.

President Ger: I'll speak favorably to this, in terms of how this amendment will effect current business avenues for the Board of Directors, I will note that changing it to a 2/3 majority will not change the ability of the board to overturn what is currently there. So again, speaking favorably towards this, and again, it has no effect on what is currently being talked about at the Board.



VP Magder: I think the issue here is not so much the existent Board of Directors being able to overturn a position, but rather the j-board itself and I think that we should be address j-board structural reform before we start addressing the powers of the j-board, and personally I would like to see those amendments to the structure of the judicial board before we start effecting the powers, I just don't feel comfortable effecting any of it's powers until I see what is present from that committee.

VP Sobat: I will speak in favor because it is the ability of council to make changes to our governing documents, including those that govern the judicial board, and it would be problematic to ask the judicial board to make changes to its own regulations, so it is actually fully within the ethical ability of council and everyone here to decide whether or not to make appropriate consultation, I want councilors to vote on this based on that process.

VP Magder: Point of parliamentary inquiry, what would be the procedure if I wanted to table the decision on the powers of the judicial board until after the committee on judicial board reform has presented to council?

Speaker: Do you mean table this motion?

VP Magder: Specifically the edit to the portion of final decision of governance documents and internal regulations of governance.

Speaker: So a specific clause of this amendment.

VP Sobat: Just to clarify, the specific process that we're talking about was in the fall term, there was a specific committee struck as a judicial board review committee. As of now this committee has not yet met, the goal of the committee was to review the internal procedures of the judicial board itself and not the internal regulations explicitly, so certainly we could expand on that.

Speaker: You can divide the question and we can vote clause by clause to all the amendments.

VP Sobat: If people don't want this to be changed, they can introduce a sub-amendment to a different number to the same as it was before, as opposed to not making any changes at all to this motion.

VP Magder: We have to vote on the change now, or could I propose at this moment to amendment? I would like to amend the amendment to return to the original 4/5 majority, given my personal opinion that I want to hear more about the judicial review.

Councilor Zhou: If the amendment to make it 2/3 was to strike the possibility of a procedural limbo, where it could be not ratified and not overturned, so if you are voting to keep it a 4/5,



that is the same before this motion and to keep it at 2/3 was the compromise that Councilor Sadikov proposed, and then the original motion simply asked for a majority.

VP Mehrotra: Why do we want it brought back to 4/5?

VP Magder: Why I want to bring it back to 4/5 instead of 2/3 is because I don't feel comfortable changing regulations on how judicial board can be overturned until we get more verification about a review of how the judicial board functions. I personally believe that there needs to be a lot of faith put into the judicial board and I feel like there needs to be a very high standard to overturn their opinions and until we review their practices and prove that the Board of Directors really are the people that know best and prove that their concerns are valid, then until I see that point in the review that is done, then I don't feel comfortable allowing their judgments to be overturned so easily.

VP Mehrotra: Doesn't that not change anything? They said that either percentage would not change the case as is.

VP Magder: Yes and I think that's an even stronger argument to say that it doesn't change the case on the floor, and any cases that are being discussed at the moment, and it continues to preserve the opinion of the judicial board. So exactly, since it's not changing any ongoing cases, it doesn't really matter whether it's 4/5 or 2/3 for any issues currently going on.

VP Mehrotra: Wasn't there a decision made in May that is currently in limbo? Wasn't that the point of this?

VP Magder: And on that note, I think it's even more important to consider the fact that we're amending the powers of the judicial board based on political decisions, which I think is vastly inappropriate right now, since the whole point of the judicial board is to be an unbiased body to interpret the documents.

President Ger: Just speaking to the resolution, I really just want to make sure that we're recognizing that there's some opinions that this may be politically motivated. As somebody who sits on the Board of Directors, and seen how the Board functions and recognizing the fact that there was a different amendment that was just proposed that actually does not change how the board would function right now, any change of the Board politically-wise, will not be effected by the reduction to 2/3, this is merely to make things run smoother, regardless. There's effectively no different right now between 4/5 and 2/3, the lower one potentially opens up for a smoother functioning Board of Directors and Judicial Board.

Councilor Zhou: Would it be not out of the realm of possibility to achieve the same effect by raising the threshold to ratify to meet that of the threshold to overturn currently, therefore we eliminate the limbo while not compromising the judicial board's authority?



Councilor Okome: Just for transparency reasons, we're talking about this decision that happened in May, and everyone keeps saying that it was political, can anyone say what this decision was? I think that we're talking about hypotheticals and I feel like some people are talking to each other but not the whole council. There's a lack of understanding because this motion is not about the whole council and that's really frustrating, it feels like there are five people talking to each other but not the whole council and it feels like some kind of weird game, and I need you to be clear and say exactly what you mean.

Councilor Chin: Is this confidential?

Speaker: No, this is public.

President Ger: This is super fair, and I apologize if people feel out of the loop. In public session at the end of last semester, there was a discussion that happened at the Board of Directors, specifically regarding the potential ratification of the reference question given to the Board by the judicial board. There was extensive debate on whether or not ratification would go through, what happened ultimately is that there was not a majority in favor of ratifying the reference question, but there wasn't a super majority against ratifying the reference question, so the board was left in this very weird space where it was just sort of floating. There wasn't a definitive action that it could do. There was not 2/3 of the Board that was in favor of dismissing the reference question being spoken, so just again this provides a more clear way, regardless of this being a 2/3 or a 4/5 super majority, which would not change that particular situation at the floor level. It would maybe make it a little less likely that this same limbo would happen again.

Councilor Douglas: Motion to call this amendment to question.

Amendment to 4/5 majority fails. Amendment to 2/3 majority passes.

VP Sobat: I want to apologize if there people feel like I did not do enough of a good job explaining how our governance procedures work. That being said, I want to emphasize that this process is not at all atypical, in fact last year there was an entire overhaul of all of our governance documents that completely changed the role of all of them. That is the role of legislative council to make such changes and to conduct consultation. The Board was consulted on this as a courtesy, because again, the Board is not the elected body. It is within the legislative council's power to make revisions to our governing documents and regulate the board. Furthermore, based on feedback that was received, we did make amendments to this motion. I know that some people received a piece of paper at council with some of the concerns laid out, at least the amendments that have been made to date respond to a number of them, there are several anachronisms as well that I would be happy to speak to. Just know that the Board of Directors is bound by the constitution of the internal regulations, this does not open up power for the Board, and Council is also bound by the documents. Furthermore, I



had spoken much earlier about a referenda, the amendment here maintains the ability for policies to be adopted by student referendum.

Councilor Madwar: May I ask VP Sobat to explain which ones were incorrect?

VP Sobat: The ones that have been addressed by the amendments were the concerns that allowed judicial board opinion to be ratified by the legislative council. That has been removed. Furthermore the concern for the ability of the legislative council resolutions to take immediate effect would violate Quebec law in terms of the company act has been addressed within the amendments. Finally, a piece of referenda that I just mentioned was also addressed. In terms of giving legislative council authority over policy and plans, again, that was a misinterpretation over how we define policies and plans, this does not refer to all resolutions of the society, it refers to particular long term documents in our policy book that all which except one have been adopted by the legislative council. Things like affiliating with an external organization or voting on a BDS motion would still not be within the authority of council. In the formal case, it would need to go to student referenda, in the latter it would go to the General Assembly. In addition, the judicial board is responsible for interpreting our governing documents. If a complaint or an appeal is made, they're not the sole body for that; because the council, the board of directors and all of these bodies are still bound to those governance documents. If there's a concern over an interpretation or violation, then that can be brought to the judicial board. And that has happened in the past over judicial board decisions, by the Board of Directors, because again we are a corporation and while we have set up this body as something akin to a court, it does not have all encompassing power over the society. That being said, I definitely understand the feeling that members would like to maintain that it holds an arms length from the political decisions being made.

Councilor Mehrotra: I want some clarification, so if the Board of Directors choses to pass a j-board decision onto council for advisement, sorry consultation, council can recommend overturning or not overturning?

VP Sobat: This is the second be-it-resolved clause, 5.3 [recites section], this is particularly in response to the decisions of the judicial board that are political in nature and not a straightforward decision for the Board to decide whether or not to ratify. I do want to stress that this is extremely rare, this is not the norm. In terms of making decisions on whether or not to ratify, a) is to ratify the decision, b) is to send it back for an appeal if there are concerns, c) would be to pass a resolution overturning it. Article 7, in the interest of assuring that the Board cannot unilaterally change our governing documents, ratifying an opinion or a decision of the j-board requires a change to governance or procedures would go to legislative council, as it is the body responsible for making those amendments.

Councilor Mehrotra: My question was more like what would the advice of the council look like, what form would that take?





President Ger: In situations where the Board is potentially in some sort of lock, seeing as how a non-binding vote in either direction by council would help inform them which way our representatives would like to go?

Councilor Mehrotra: So Legislative council would vote on what the Board would do? It would be a suggestion. Would council need the same 2/3 majority?

President Ger: It's just a non-binding suggestion, there's not regulation around needing a super majority.

Councilor Madwar: I just wanted to ask the question, because I didn't really ask the question before the amendment thing. Policies and plans as defined by the society, contrary to what the members earlier said, still can only be recommended by legislative council. Also contrary to the movers claims, controversial policies can be passed under policies and plans. Where it doesn't explicit say policies like BDS, for example, and fees cannot go to legislative council, does the membership really want this 30 person body being able to dictate policies for the whole student body?

VP Sobat: So the language used in the internal regulation has the Legislative Council recommending policies for the society, but really what that means in practice is that the decisions of council is going to be ratified by the Board, so it's not binding before that happens, however legislative council has always been responsible for enacting policies. A vote on whether or not to support the BDS movement is not a policy of the society, it is not something that could come to council because as per our regulations anything deemed external and divisive by the steering committee would not be brought to council, would be required to go to the General Assembly, because that is a democratic body as opposed to council which is representative body of only 30 people. Nothing of that nature has come to legislative council, I do invite anyone who is confused about what we mean by policy to look at our policy book, things like the proposed policy against unpaid internships today, our accessible education policy, our family care policy, etc. Those are the kind of documents that we're talking about.

Councilor Taylor: I have two points; one, in 5.7 that was in the email that Erin had sent out, it says that "after reviewing the Judicial Board's opinion and considering any appeals, the Board of Directors may refer the opinion to the Legislative Council." This seems to me that if the judicial board had done something that wasn't ratified by the Board, that it would just be passed back to the legislative council to approve, if it has to do with the governing documents; what's worrying to me that if those governing documents have to do with something that the legislative council is doing, or running, or how it is operating, it turns that decision to ratify that judicial board decision right back to the board that is effected by that. If council made a decision on a governing document that allowed it to have more power or something, and it got passed by the board and then it goes to j-board and they find it not to be within the



constitution or spirit of the society, and then it bypasses the Board for analyzing that, and then it comes right back to the body that voted to make that change. I'm curious if that was considered.

President Ger: In that particular instead, once against that I would like to point out that Council would literally only be an advisory, there would be no binding power of the council to actually approve a j-board decision, when a j-board decision would get referred to council it would be in the instance of getting advice.

Councilor Taylor: Well, it says that, "it shall refer the reference to the legislative council."

VP Sobat: So council would be bound by the recommended or ratified decision of the judicial board to those documents, I think it might be helpful to point out that judicial board decisions may or may not go through with recommendations to amend the governance documents and there may at times be procedural questions that arise due to those decisions, rather than decisions of the judicial board that require change to our procedures. Right now there's not really a mechanism to address those, other than the opinion of the board, and if it's felt that ratifying the decision of the judicial board would have other effects on the society, that could also produce a stalemate, if that makes sense. I think we're imaging this kind of feedback loop of council trying to increase its power, cycling back between council, judicial board and the Board; in practice, that's never been the case but council would be bound by the decision of the judicial board. There could be debate over the specifics of the governing documents

VP Magdar: Interpreting these documents should be relatively straightforward, or there should be a clear interpretation to these documents. Given some of the concerns that were brought up in relation to the j-board, I don't understand why, given the fact that we have such an incredible law faculty, that are members of our society, that we aren't making a better effort, rather than change the power of the j-board, but instead to make sure that they have every tool necessary to interpret these documents adequately and to make an unbiased ruling. So I feel like, especially given the context where there is a clear division between the legal division of the government and the judicial branch, I think this is clear evidence of why we need to keep a limit on how much political branches and judicial branches can interact, frankly, with all resources that we have at this school, I don't understand why we aren't exploring those avenues, rather than changing the governance documents.

Councilor Sur, ceded time to Simon: There was a claim earlier made that the terms "recommend" in the internal means something that it does not; nowhere in the internal regulations is the term "recommend" defined in the way that Councilor Sobat claims it is defined. I've heard this claim several times before when discussing this motion with members of this council and the conclusion I got was that this council is operating under the assumption that they can adopt policies, which they can't do, and this council is operating under a failed understanding of the internal regulations. Whether that's the fault of some of the members of this



council, I leave to the members of this council to determine, but the fact remains that the word “recommend” as defined by Councilor Sobat is just plain wrong.

President Ger: I appreciate the interpretation to some extent, I would invite the member of the gallery to look through not just our council but council for the last period that it has existed, council for every single year has always been able to adopt policy, and also I would like to support Council Sobat as well as our legal teams' understanding of our governing documents that do allow council to adopt policy, I also invite you to look at the constitution. I invite anyone who is a member of the gallery or general public to look at the constitution in which council is listed as the political body of the society.

Councilor Renondin: We've heard Erin talk about this motion; I would like to get the thoughts of the two first year members, specifically I'd like to know what they think about the judicial board, considering the recent SSMU history on certain decisions that have been made by the judicial board and if their opinion justifies them moving this motion.

Councilor Mehrotra: The movers on this motion were part of the Democratic Review Committee, that's why their names are on this motion. It's unfair to call them out like that.

Councilor Renondin: If they are a part of that committee, they should still be able to justify this motion. I apologize if that was rude.

Councilor Zhou: I can't obviously speak to past judicial board decisions, since I am a first year. So maybe a few things that you are probably in light of that I am not, however my understanding of the motion including the clauses under inspection right now is that the purpose of the proposed amendments 5.7 of the governing documents is that when an opinion has been ratifying by the Board from council, so it starts at council and then is sent to the Board and is ratified by the Board, and then the judicial board, which is then ratified by the Board. The purpose of this amendment was just to sent that opinion back to council, as a courtesy, so that we might then also know what their opinion was and obviously, by the term recommendation, we wouldn't be able to make amendments to that opinion or overturn. As Ben said, any decision would just be a suggestion, if anything. And to speak to the motion overall, I believe there might still be some confusion about some of the clauses, some of the finer points. I will refer to what Erin has already said, that the council is actually the political body of the society and that our decisions are ratified by the board. So in practice, through that medium, we adopt policies. So to also address the comment of the member of the gallery, I believe just as a clarification that Councilor Sobat and Councilor Ger did not mean recommendation, where the power of recommendation has the power to adopt policy directly but more through a collective medium with the Board of Directors. And additionally, the motion, in terms of the conflict of interest comments I've been hearing, in that regard, the motion is not intended to give any more of such power to the Board or take away any power from the judicial board, but more so



to define the relationship between the three entities, so we are in fact not augmenting the Board.

Councilor Madwar: As the member moving the motion said, there was a judicial board case that went to the Board of Directors regarding BDS at McGill. This decision was sent back to the judicial board for further review, where it currently rests. Given the comments of Councilor Sadikov about Zionism and the fact that he was the chair of the Democratic Review Committee, is it safe to say that this is a politically motivated motion?

Councilor Zhou: I think that to propose that question again to Councilor Sadikov might be a little unfair considering that we have gone through the clauses of this motion and given what I think is ample reason as to the motive for each clause and I think that there might be some lingering doubt or thought that there is an ulterior motive to any of these clause, however I personally fail to see that there is a specific political motivation attached to these specific clauses presented and I would suggest that we move forward in council.

Debate is extended for two minutes.

Councilor Taylor: I have a question about leaving the adoption policy in regards to the standing rules in regards to readings and whatnot that are in 6.2 of the internal regulations of governance, I was just wondering why not officiate that instead of moving it up to standing rules that might change on a year to year basis.

Councilor Sadikov: Well, simply put it is because these are standing rules. Standing rules govern the committee procedure and the operation of the meetings. These are in fact specified in the standing rules, further to that, the distinction between standing rules and IRs is that standing rules can be suspended through a motion to suspend the rules, however those rules specific that any by-law surrounding rules that are in the nature of rules can also be suspended through a motion to suspend the rules, so in order for that to be clear, it made more sense to put them together with the other standing rules rather than have this particular set of standing rules in that language.

Councilor Mehrotra: I personally don't feel comfortable voting on this today, based on all the information we've received. I think this is a short timeline because we're trying to get this to go to referendum, but is it at all possible to table this until the next meeting so that there can be further consultation with our faculty bases, just in light of the fact that a lot of stuff has been clarified and reviewed today, I know that I don't feel 100% comfortable making this decision.

Councilor Sadikov: To clarify, this does not have to go to referendum, this was brought to council for a first reading two weeks ago, the reason why we have a first reading is so that councilors have the opportunity to consult their constituents, and at the outcomes of those



consultations we have made amendments. That's said, it's certainly possible to postpone if you make a motion to do so.

Councilor Mehrotra: I understand that's why we have two readings but this is a particularly contentious motion and while there was faculty consultation I feel like the opinion may have changed in terms of further clarifications that were made just today that were not proposed earlier. Also, amendments were made after some of us had our executive meetings.

Councilor Templer motions to postpone this motion until the next Legislative Council meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Councilor Sadikov: I would argue against this motion, we've literally been talking about this for hours and we're going to have the same conversation next meeting, I don't believe that the changes that were made today are substantial enough to actually warrant further consultation. Because I expect that no further thoughts on this motion will be concocted between the period of now and two weeks from now and further, because I do not want to further burden the already heavy agendas in the coming weeks, I speak against this.

Councilor Thomas: I would have to argue that we should postpone this motion just because there were things that even my constituents didn't feel comfortable about at our AUS meeting yesterday, so just the legal review not even coming in until today, which Councilor Sadikov did mention at our meeting yesterday, and as a voter for my constituents, I don't feel comfortable not having addressed this with my executive and not even have an exec meeting that had these amendments, I'm very grateful that Councilor Sobat made these amendments available to us councilors, that being said, because they were made available a bit later I could only send them along to those who had reached out and received one reply and it was obvious that they person hadn't had a lot of time to go over everything, so I personally disagree with Councilor Sadikov in the sense that we would be able to gather a better view on our constituents beliefs in the coming weeks.

Councilor Renondin: I'd like to in support of this motion as well. I do agree that the fact hat some of the amendments have change will impact the way that myself and the other Engineering Representative will vote, and we definitely want to go back to council and consult.

Councilor Zhou: Just a really quick thought is that, I am in support of postponing on the basis that there are still some people who are confused and it would allow them time to go over the motion and the amendments, however I'm sure that much of the debate that has already taken place today is not repeated as well.

Councilor Segal: Given that this meeting has been very controversial, we've been discussing this for over an hour now, so I just think that given the diverse views and opinions on it, I don't even understand why this is even a motion at all, we're all here representing our students, this is



taking away our students' right to vote and act democratically, which doesn't make sense to me. We're all talking about it and trying to understand it, so it doesn't even make sense that this should be a motion, so I think that we should just vote on it because we've been arguing for an hour or so, I don't see why we would want to argue for longer next week.

Councilor Templer: I would encourage council to vote to postpone this, I think further consultation about changes that have been made in the past 24 hours will put a lot of minds at ease and maybe the democratic governance review committee could hold a public session with members who have been heavily involved in this process and directly answer questions as opposed to representative explain all the intricacies of this, when they may have question they are not fully able to explain as well as the members of the committee involved in drafting this legislation. I also think it might be favorable if the review from legal could be share with their recommendations on what was reflected in these amendments.

Councilor Okome: I'm just going to bring up the point that we actually do need to postpone this just because I think this motion was poorly explained and by moving it, we can go back and they can explain it. I think this is something that SSMU and this council has always had an issue with, where information isn't passed out to everyone, just certain people, and those people just talk with each other and that's something that we need to work on and that's something that postponing this motion would hope to do. We need to work on passing information between all 30 members that are here.

Vote by roll call is requested. Motion to postpone succeeds. 22 in favor, 8 opposed.

### **Notice of Motion Regarding Athletics Ancillary Fee Referendum Question**

Councilor Jiao: If anyone has any questions about this motion, I can provide the student perspective.

Councilor Chin: Given that this is a notice of motion, I will not put up any amendments, but I'd like to share some recommendations. First of all, I would like the mention that the fee, including the increase to the fee, is non-opt outable. And secondly, I realize that a financial statement has been appended to the document, but I want to make sure that this is available to students while they are voting.

Councilor Jiao: Recommendations noted, thank you.

VP Sobat: I was wondering if you discussions with Athletics had covered some of the points that were raised with the director, but specifically issues that were raised around increased access to recreational facilities?





Councilor Jiao: Those have yet to be addressed with the Director.

Councilor Thomas: Can you comment on how the fees will effect student employment, if there is any increase in salaries or more money towards hiring more students?

Councilor Jiao: The fee is asking for maintaining services that are offered, so that includes maintaining the student jobs. I'm not sure if there's anything more I can say on that.

Councilor Poorian: Does the fee not need to be renewed at all?

VP Sobat: It doesn't expire, it's in a category of ancillary fees known as IOs, which are enacted through referendum, and can only be modified through referendum, but exist independently.

Councilor Mehrotra: It kind of makes it sounds like they're only asking for a 3% increase of \$3.95, it's misleading. Is there anyway we could change is to like, "a 3% increase per term, amounting to \$7.90 for the year"? Just for full disclosure

Councilor Jiao: I believe it is already stated in one of the whereas clauses.

Councilor Mehrotra: It just has very unclear wording.

Councilor Shi: I'm still wondering why we can't change this to an opt-out fee.

Councilor Mehrotra: It can't be opted out because it's a set budget.

VP Sobat: Legally, this type of fee is not opt-out-able, per government regulations, it is a mandatory fee for all students, again I have issues with these types of fees and if someone wants to ask me about that, I would happily explain.

Councilor Chin: What happens then, when council is then presented with such an ancillary fee?

VP Sobat: This question is being presented to the legislative council to decide whether or not this should be put to students to vote on the increase. According to the internal regulations of finance, we do have the authority to prevent this motion from going forward if we feel that it is not appropriate to ask for an increase from students, if we don't feel that these costs reflect the budget. Like I pointed to in the presentation, a portion of their budget goes back into the overhead budget of McGill, ostensibly to cover essentially services like legal, etc, but which have increase substantially in the last several years. They have it projected to be decrease for next year, however on the one hand it shows that they do not need to take this much money from the athletics budget, and we would like to see them reduce these overhead charges and put a cap on a set percentage. They do the same thing with student services.



Councilor Segal: I feel like the students who don't go to the gym aren't being fairly represented at all, I mean they're already paying \$131, and their argument is that you want to keep the facilities for the people who do use the gym, but then you're not doing anything to promote people into buying a membership. How much of the student body is actually using the body and how are they reaching those who aren't?

Councilor Jiao: Is there any kind of demographic that council would like me to seek out to help you understand the motion?

Councilor Segal: So right now at the gym, it's probably people who are involved in activities that are continuously buying memberships, so it's the same people who are accessing. In the whole Social Work school, there are five people who use your gym. So I think that something has to be done there, because you're asking for more money, but it only goes towards the ones who use the gym.

Councilor Jiao: Your concerns are noted and will be brought to Athletics admin.

Councilor Shi: I was going to say the same thing, like it makes more sense to charge more for the membership fee for those who are actually using the gym than to make those who are not pay more money.

Councilor Poorian: I think the motion should be more explicit in it's wording of how much they will be paying over the course of the year, how much they are currently paying and how much they will be paying. That should be explicitly stated on the question, so people know what they're saying yes to.

Councilor Taylor: With this being an ancillary fee, are we allowed to edit the wording of the question being posed?

VP Sobat: Yes we can. They just need to approve the final wording.

Councilor EUS: The second last whereas clause, that fee increase there, is that the same one as the be-it-resolved clause?

Councilor Jiao: It's the same, but as an annual number.

Councilor Mehrotra: So this is exactly what I was concerned about, can we please change the wording of the question.

Wording of the question is changed.



Councilor Prillo: If this does not pass, and there is no fee increase, what kind of cuts would you be making? And my second question is, is there a sort of strategic plan in place, at least financially over the next few years. Because it seems to me that these fees are just periodically increased every three or four years, and even when they were discussing the budget this year, when someone mentioned how in the goods and services, they projected an huge increase revenue, it wasn't really concrete.

Councilor Jiao: For what if there is a no majority vote, I'm not sure and athletics admin have not told me or they don't want to tell. In terms of the strategic plan, so not to constantly have the students pay more for these services, there has been interest in developing more donors.

VP Sobat: I think you raise a very valid point, which is that the university has very purposely set up these budgets to be unsustainable such that every few years, based on inflation and salaries, they can turn to students and say, oh we need more money otherwise we're going to have to cut services. At the same time, they're increasing the overhead charges that cause these budgets to be unable to operate. My response would be to play more hardball, and deny fees like this unless certain conditions are made by the university.

### **Motion for SSMU to Advocate for an Immediate Suspension of the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement**

Councilor Sur: So this motion is brought by a few students by the law faculty and it was unanimously passed by the students at the law council. For people who don't know what the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement, the agreement was implement in 2004 by the Canada and the United State so that asylum seekers would only be able to apply for refugee status in whichever country they come to first. So basically it forces them to choose either country for their protection. Recently this has become very problematic in regards to the ban that is happening in the State, even if there have been new decisions that have come forward, people are still trying to illegally enter Canada and it's quite dangerous for those people. At the law faculty, we have many initiatives that are working to combat this by going down to offer legal services, so this is still a big issue. There is also a letter-writing campaign, and we've sent 500 letters to MPs. I know some of this motion has already been, but it's really asking SSMU to help us move this forward and support the law faculty in this.

VP Patterson: Do the movers of this motion have specific executives in the be-it-resolved clauses?

Councilor Sur: When we wrote this, we put it through the External position, we are happy to help work with him on that.



Councilor Anderson: We has it come up with Arts, and we were wondering if you could add it in that waiving fees for refugees that are not necessarily part of those seven questions in the ban?

The order of Robert's Rules was done wrong, Councilor Taylor wanted it mentioned in the minutes.

Amendment was adopted. Motion passes.

### **Notice of Motion Regarding Referendum Question on Constitutional Amendments**

President Ger: This motion is largely symbolic, it is the changing of the name from the Vice President Operation to Vice President Building and Operations, there are a number of reasons for that, one of them being that it is more reflective of what the job actually looks like; hopefully will bring in candidates with similar background. Moving HR from where it was previously in Finance and now back to the President, it has been definitely an experiment, and it has been helpful to share, but it does make more sense under the President portfolio, but sharing has been good, two people is better.

Councilor Taylor: I was wondering why it was proposed to remove the provisions on quorum regarding the number of students at the General Assembly, as well as removing the deadline for submission of motions to the GA, which prevents any edit of motion by the speaker to check for efficacy and spelling as those have been in other General Assemblies previously.

President Ger: In regard to the GA and motion dates, in my experience there ends up being a number of students who want to submit past the deadline, and it just ends up coming up on the floor regardless. It's trying to make the GA more accessible to those who don't necessarily have a lot of experience with that process.

VP Sobat: Specifically those regulations are within the internal regulations and they weren't consistent with the constitution, so in the regulations lay out how bring up a motion from the floor. In terms of the quorum, we can't actually verify which faculty students are in. The other thinking was that GAs have a consistent problem with quorum and this would help with that.

Councilor Taylor: Would you be friendly to amending that to include the diversity of faculties required at least for a student strike general assembly? Because I feel like that would possibly make more sense to have more consensus and agreement around campus.

VP Sobat: I don't think we've ever had a strike GA at SSMU, that's why it clarifies it as a special GA. This might be resolved if we get a card reader for the GA, but if we're looking to increase



our chances of quorum at the GA, this might help, because as it stands, they are under-attended.

Councilor Chin: I would like to echo this concern, because I belong to one of the smaller faculties, and getting rid of this faculty diversity in quorum would steer power to the larger faculties that are actually already, in a sense, over represented in many aspects of SSMU. So I would be in favor of amending those clauses. Also, why has the terminology of the land acknowledgement changed?

VP Sobat: This is still going through consultation, but we want to recognize that the practice of indigenous solidarity is an ongoing learning experience and we know that this terminology is not as inclusive to the other groups that have claims to this land, it's not so black and white, historically, you could say, and so it's become more of a practice to recognize both groups, speaking to the people that have been here and continue to be here.

#### **Notice of Motion Regarding Referendum Question on Increase to the Equity Fee - From the floor**

President Ger: I'm going to talk about this in reference to something larger, equitable governance reform. The equitable governance reform committee is currently fairly close to making a series of recommendations, part of those series of recommendation is included in this motion, which is increasing the equity fee for programming and making budgeting easier on our end for commissioners. There's discussion about the type of positions being considered by the committee, so identity specific ones, broader equity seats. We were thinking of some sort of fund for that to pay people for their labor. As of right now, there is an agreement on the free, and since we have two meetings before the next legislative council, we thought it would be a good idea to at least let people know about this part. By next council, if there is a decision made by the committee then this will wrapped into a larger motion of equitable governance, if not then the need for an increase in the equity fee is potentially good for now.

Councilor Templer: Is that to say that certain people would be hired to do the jobs that the rest of the councilors do for free?

President Ger: No one's getting hired; theoretically they'd be in our system so that we could pay them. It's still an election process.

Councilor Mehrotra: There's been a lot of debate around this, and has pushed towards the question of whether all councilors should be paid, which was the recommendation in the report originally given, so there was a lot of debate about it and if we had to choose between paying everyone and just those people, we would chose to pay just those new seats that we would be creating, because they would be putting in emotional labor not required from the rest of us.



President Ger: We kind of discussed more of the scope of the committee, as to whether is it actually our place to make these broader recommendations. I would like to say it is difficult to separate yourself from your role as councilor, so while you represent your constituents, you still retain your own identity, but those identity representatives would be there to give specific emotional representation from their identity groups.

Councilor Taylor: I express concern about putting together an increase in programming fees for the equity portfolio and the payment of equity-based students on council, just because I am fully for the increase in programming, but however the small group of science student that I consulted, the executives express serious concern about paying representatives, in light of the fact that SSMU is the only body that is paying their executives and then also to extend that to councilors, was worrying. I think it might be more honest to split the fee for students.

VP Sobat: I don't know if I can address all of those points. I have similar concerns on the councilor side, because I know that a lot of faculty associations work on this, but as far as the fee itself, I just want to note that there were budget cuts this year that did cut our programming budget in our equity portfolio. There were cuts to student staff as well. So I would restructure this fee more along the lines of the student mental health fee, which is set up in a portioned manner.

Councilor Taylor: My only concern is that this is the notice of motion, so we're looking to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, would there be enough time to make the edits to the internal regulations? Otherwise the

President Ger: it is our intention to go forward sooner rather than later, but we'd like to first see a consensus, so if in two weeks time there is no consensus on what the full package looks like, I don't think we would move forward with these ideas.

### **Notice of Motion Regarding Adoption of a Policy Against Unpaid Internships**

VP Sobat: This is a notice of motion for the adoption of a motion that came forward from the General Assembly of Winter 2015, for SSMU to develop a policy around unpaid internships and particularly developing criteria for identifying unpaid internships offered to students. It has a number of mandates; it includes background info, research and statistics, other campaigns. Reference to the current legislation. Also it provide criteria for identifying where internship might qualify as unpaid because it provides legitimate learning experience, but it does not replace a job at a legitimate business, so you're not taking away from an employee position and the employer is not benefiting from your work. It mandates us to take some steps around the awareness of this issue, the awareness of students around their rights on this issue. This is the screening criterion that they suggested; this comes from a professional organization in Canada.





Awareness and promotion through education. Advocacy within the university, advocacy outside the university and reporting.

01:06:00

### **Motion Regarding the Amendment of the SSMU Electoral Timeline**

President Ger: Just changed so that it's fair for everyone and so that everyone can get his or her nomination kits in, and access to the information for their nomination.

Motions passes.

### **Motion Regarding Endorsement of the McGill Communities Council Letter to the Board of Governors**

Motion is postponed.

### **Notice of Motion Regarding Revisions of the Equity Policy**

VP Sobat: for the most part, this is not a substantive revision, it is a revision to make it more clear and accessible in terms of the claims and process and to address issues with the scope of the policy. Conflict of interest, and a couple of other points based on feedback and issues based on operationalizing the policy. That's all I'm going to say for today.

### **Notice of Motion Regarding Revisions to the Indigenous Solidarity Policy**

President Ger: There a few different things, the first is that the motion on the indigenous solidarity policy has some changes that were made to it that maybe should not have been made, in terms of the scope as well as a number of details that people can read through in the actual policy. The committee that was struck this year, the indigenous affairs committee, have a number of opinion – as Erin mention, solidarity is an ongoing evolving process that involves a lot of learning, so there were a number of things that needed to change.

VP Sobat: I will apologize for a technical error where we lost a lot of the tracked changes.

Councilor Mehrotra: Can you indicate what consultation was done, beyond the committee?



VP Sobat: Yeah, around the first question, some the changes happened last fall term, there was a discussion with a group of indigenous students, particularly within the context of the women title-holders that was brought up in the General Assembly. As a result of that, the policy being brought forward to council needed stronger provisions around where this applies, beyond just the SSMU executives and into the SSMU affiliated groups. In addition, expanded some of the mandates around territory acknowledgement, which we discussed.

## **11. Reports by Committees**

### **Funding Committee (10)**

VP Carolan gives the report.

### **Club Committee (5)**

VP Patterson gives the report.

### **Executive Committee (5)**

Report tabled.

## **13. Councillor Reports**

### **a. Councillor Poorian (2)**

Councillor Poorian gave his report.

## **12. Executive Reports**

### **12. VP (Operations) (5)**

VP Magder gives the report.

### **13. VP (University Affairs) (5)**

VP Sobat gives the report.

### **14. VP (Internal) (5)**



VP Lawrie gives the report

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

VP Patterson gives the report.

**16. VP (Finance) (5)**

VP Carolan gives the report.

**17. President (5)**

President Ger gives the report.

**15. Adjournment**

APPROVED