



Legislative Council - January 11th, 2018

# SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

## 1. Call to Order 18:10

The speaker calls the session to order at 6:10 PM

## 2. Land Acknowledgement

The speaker presents the land acknowledgement.

## 3. Attendance

The speaker conducts attendance.

## 4. Update on/Approval of last Council's minutes - APPROVED

President Tojiboeva motions to approve the minutes. Councillor Zhou seconds the motion.

With all in favour, none opposed, and one abstention, the minutes are approved.

## 5. Adoption of the Agenda - APPROVED

President Tojiboeva motions to approve the agenda. Councillor DeMoulin seconds the motion. With all in favour, the agenda is approved.

## 6. Guest Speakers

### a. SSMU Indigenous Affairs (Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, Carlee Kawinehta Loft)

The speaker introduces the guest speaker, Carlee Kawinehta Loft.

Carlee Kawinehta Loft is here with some of the Indigenous Affairs Commission. Their role is to organize events surrounding indigenous affairs at McGill University. They are in charge of facilitating collaboration with students at McGill University. There will be a new website with a link directly to the Indigenous Solidarity Policy. A lot of the policy surrounds what SSMU specifically will do. For instance, all SSMU affiliated events are supposed to have a land acknowledgement, and SSMU is supposed to be enforcing this.



The group also serves as a consultative body for if anyone is doing an event that might be related to Indigenous affairs, if they have any questions.

The other members of the commission introduce themselves.

The first member expresses that the commission is very open to answering any questions.

Tomas states how important it is to understand that Indigenous affairs are really interwoven with many other facets of society and student life.

Kelly is a psychology student who believes that it's important to address ongoing oppression that occurs in Montreal.

Another student explains that a policy lays out the guidelines for how we can begin to create change.

Carlee discusses an Indigeneity and Allyship Report conducted in 2016, which helped to influence and inform the policy. A former commissioner updated this policy, and they are available online on the SSMU website.

This year's projects include a Consultation and Solidarity 101 document which should be available in both an online and print edition. It will discuss things like consultations, collaborating with Indigenous groups, implementing ideas of solidarity, and some information about land acknowledgements.

They are also working on an Indigeneity and Solidarity Event Series. There is a Facebook page with all of the dates and times, and there are also individual event pages. They have an event coming up on Monday already, with a speaker who will discuss the Oka crisis and histories of solidarity.

The group invites folks to their meetings, or to send an email to the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner. They are really open to collaborating on events if folks have any ideas. They also have their own networks that they are willing to share, given that proper consultation happens.

Move to question period.

Councillor Lametti is happy to hear about the first step of implementing land acknowledgements. They ask what the Council thinks the second step would be. What should Councillor Lametti bring back to their council? The commissioner suggests working to understand the meaning behind the words as opposed to



just reading out the words. The commissioner also recommends consultation with Indigenous groups that operate out of the Faculty of Medicine. What's really important is having collaboration and consultation, without pushing all the labour on another group. Tomas adds that it's important to recognize that Indigenous folks are not here to enlighten others, and instead people should be putting that effort in themselves. So a person in medicine could look into Indigenous approaches to epistemology. A person in arts could look into Indigenous arts. It's about more than land acknowledgements.

A member of the commission asks how folks can implement change in councils. The commissioner responds that it's important to not come to an Indigenous group and say "fix this for me". It's important to do one's own research, and then see how you could maybe reach out and connect and potentially contribute. Some people go to other groups and want answers or resources or information but it isn't reciprocal. Folks should have an idea of what they are bringing to the group as well. If you want to host an event, it is helpful to have some specifics prepared. They can then email the commissioner and ask for specifics about speakers, etc.

End of question period.

## **7. Announcements (5)**

VP Oke alerts everyone to the fact that the Know Your Rights campaign is happening next week, and there is a link on the group for signing up to table. They encourage anyone to sign up.

Senator Anderson announces that there will be a New Student Wellness Center meeting happening. The Senator cannot personally be there, and they are allowed to send 5 or so people in their place. Any Councillors who are interested in talking about updates to the wellness centre, etc can email the Senator.

VP Earle states that both Activities Night and Mental Health Awareness Week are happening next week. They are still looking for volunteers for Activities Night.

President Tojiboeva states that at next council, the director of the Bi-Centennial Celebrations will be coming, so Councillors can prepare questions if they wish. Faculties often develop their own steering committees to celebrate their faculties, so they can begin thinking about that and prepare questions for the director.

## **8. Question Period (5)**



Gallery member Joshua Chin from Medicine has a question for the representative of dentistry. This Councillor is not present, so they will present their question generally. They would like to bring to the attention of Council a CBC article regarding McGill Dentistry and mishandling of sexual assault. The member wanted to bring this to the attention of Council. There is a second story related to complaints of academic harassment and bullying. The member wants to bring forward the report by the University Harassment Assessor which concluded that there are serious management issues in the Faculty, and that students do not feel safe coming forward. The article also later mentions Greg Foro who is a colleague from the Metis community. This section reiterates that there are serious issues in the faculty. The member wants to ask whether there are any student groups in Dentistry who are working on this issue, and whether there is anything that we can do as SSMU to help out with this issue.

The speaker explains that there is a formal submission of questions process that can be used in order to ensure that the appropriate Councillor answers when the question is submitted to the Council.

Councillor Bulger does not have an answer to the gallery member, but wants to thank the member for bringing that article up. We need to make it a priority for this council and our student body to protect our students. The Councillor also mentions the work that the VP External has been doing on this issue.

The email to submit questions is [speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca). The speaker will also be available after council if the gallery member wishes to receive more information about the process for submitting questions in advance.

Councillor Bulger motions to extend question period by 2 minutes. Seconded by Councillor Koch. Motion passes.

Councillor Lametti says that at the MSS, they are aware of the situation and general thoughts have been given to the DSS but nothing has been heard yet. Councillor Lametti has a question from a constituent. They asked for a liquor license, but SSMU said they could not give this because SSMU's insurance was expiring on January 16, 2018. VP Earle responds that the liquor license refers only to the SSMU building, so they are unclear on why a member would ask for a liquor license from SSMU. Councillor Lametti follows up that the event was not going to be held in the SSMU building, and asks for information on who the student should contact. Councillor Koparkar responds that this is entirely unrelated to SSMU, and it would likely be a purely administrative McGill task.

President Tojiboeva motions to extend by 2 minutes. Seconded by Councillor Savage. Motion passes.



Councillor Lametti asks what members of the executive will do so that this error on the part of the administration is resolved. VP Oke responds that they can contact Erika to try to clear it up. It's a very unusual situation because Erika works in residences and so the Student Housing and Hospitality Services owns the liquor license. They will try to clear this up.

Councillor Lametti asks a question regarding the J-Board decision to apply the approval of Board of Directors members at the GA. The decision said that the motion to divide was unconstitutional, and thus a remedy must occur. The Councillor asks what measures have been taken to ensure that this remedy is undertaken quickly. President Tojiboeva responds that the motion will be brought up on Sunday for discussion. They also spoke to the CEO who will look into a special referendum and how they will approach this question.

VP Spencer motions to extend by 1 minute. Seconded by Councillor Chan. Motion passes.

VP Spencer has a response to the gallery member question. Vaguely in response to the gallery member's question, the Our Turn Task Force has been struck, and emails have been sent out to all faculties to get faculty representation. It's a student-led initiative, not necessarily directly out of Dentistry, but they will be present. It would be best if faculties can send folks who have already been doing this kind of work, so not necessarily just the President or VP External, but someone who should be at this table.

## **9. New Business**

No new business.

## **10. Reports by Committees**

### **a. Executive Committee (5)**

President Tojiboeva presents the report.

VP Oke motions to extend committee report time by 5 minutes. Seconded by Councillor Campbell. Motion passes.

Councillor Bulger asks why the President is hiring an administrative assistant when there is already a secretary general. The President responds that the secretary general was not really present and working last semester. Secondly, the General Manager administrative assistant graduated and resigned, and she was the one doing a lot of minute writing, handling small documents, etc. The President admin assistant will thus be helping in ensuring that all the board documents are in order. The secretary general will be focussing more on



research. The work will be divided more between the GM admin assistant and the President assistant. The GM has more work that he needs help with because of the building closure, so they are delegating some of that work.

Councillor Lametti asks why the executive believes that having a strategic plan is a solution to the problems that SSMU faces. VP Oke responds that a strategic plan will not fix all of the problems, but it's one of the outcomes we would see suggested through a review committee. A strategic plan would help with the year to year turnover and would help with some of the projects that the society engages with. The strategic plan supports those specific points, but doesn't necessarily fix all problems.

Councillor Campbell asks if there is a proposed structure of committees for council to approve today, as is listed on the executive report. VP Oke responds that the proposal wouldn't be possible without the support and engagement of legislative council, so the idea is just to see whether legislative council wants to go in this direction and whether they see it as a project separate from or cohesive to the governance documents reform discussions that went on last semester. They are also willing to continue building on this next council.

VP Spencer motions to extend by 5 minutes. Seconded by Councillor Zhou. Motion passes.

Councillor Bulger asks if there will be a Presidential assistant in years to come, or if it is just for this year, and therefore no longer a part of the secretary general position. President Tojiboeva responds that the secretary general will be working more on projects that are not necessarily bureaucratic. Because the GM admin has not been working since last November, there is a backlog of minutes and documents that need to be processed, so this position is specifically to address this backlog, but it won't be a long-term position. It is just to get rid of the missing documents and minutes. The distinction between the positions is that one is more research and project implementation oriented, while the other is more administrative in terms of compiling documents and posting things on the website.

Councillor Anderson asks why a second GM admin assistant wasn't just hired instead of creating a new position. The President says that it's basically the same position, but the job description has just changed to make the supervision under the President rather than the GM, so that the GM can focus on the building closure and the President can focus on documents.

Councillor Campbell asks what connections the executive committee thinks there are between what legislative council was talking about last year with governance





and technical reform, and this document here now. VP Oke speaks from a personal perspective, saying that there is overlap first and foremost in format. Both would probably use open forums, etc, so combining them to simplify the overall message would make sure there wasn't too much confusion over what is happening with SSMU. Having different consultations over how commuter students or racialized students or other portions of the society will likely refer back on occasion to documents and governance structures, so this is where the two proposals might come together.

Councillor Campbell motions to suspend the rules to have a less formal discussion on reform. Seconded by Councillor Chan. This passes unanimously.

Councillor Lametti asks if it really possible to hold these two processes separately considering that they are convergent. Doesn't it seem like a colossal undertaking that might be better undertaken in a yearly process beginning with election campaigns as opposed to over one semester. VP Oke responds that the strategic plan isn't necessarily the focus of this proposal. The proposal aims to explore all possible options. Without legislative council, this can't happen. It's proposed today to look at how legislative council could take this on. If this seems like too much, then the executive doesn't have to do it this way, but this is a space to explore these options. Doing a systematic approach with more resources and people behind it is better than during an election campaign which is short.

VP Oke adds that so often the folks who are elected only figure out what is going on around this time of year, because they've been working with these issues for 6 months now. It's a huge project, but they need to start somewhere and it might as well happen now when we have people here who are willing to do the work, because we don't know who will be here next year. The point of the strategic plan is to make sure that the work that doesn't get finished can carry over.

Councillor Campbell asks what is happening with document reform. VP Koparkar responds that this is what they wanted to discuss with legislative council, to see what the structure will be, who will sit on committees etc, which will be integrated with the process.

VP Spencer adds that a possible idea that has been floated around is that there could be Councillors dedicated to looking over the governance reform who would sit on the review committee. The smaller group of Councillors would be there to act as a separate working group that looks specifically at governance reform.

Councillor Lametti agrees in spirit with the will to create change. They also say that the lack of institutional memory also applies to reform. Reform took place a



few years ago and now we are scrapping it. How do we make sure that these reforms don't fall into the same trap and won't just be scrapped in future years. VP Oke responds that what was proposed was to have someone whose sole job in this process is to be a note-keeper and to create a report at the end. Hopefully the scale will make it useful in years to come. One solution to making sure this doesn't get scrapped by future administrations is perhaps better utilizing the GA in the winter semester to try to set goals for the incoming executive. If elections could take place earlier than the GA, then the incoming executive would be present at the GA and could have a formal set direction approved by the membership, which would help them determine what to put resources towards in the summer.

VP Koparkar says that from a moral standpoint it is incredibly pertinent that those incoming to SSMU are interested in reform. If you aren't interested in coming into the position with the goal of seeing change happen, then you shouldn't be an elected official.

VP Oke wants to communicate their apprehension in saying that they are unsure as to how to utilize the structure of legislative council to best come to a concrete decision moving forward. Councillor Campbell suggests a committee of legislative council members who are especially interested and might have experience in government documents to be a part of whatever process happens and to report to Council meetings. Because all Councillors have their own issues, it's probably unrealistic that it ends up on their priority lists, so maybe a smaller committee could work.

Councillor Lametti agrees that the people who are interested in the work should be doing it. All the executive and Councillors here came here to create change, but a culture of perpetual change is also one that will throw away what we decide here, so it needs more consultation and discussion than what is happening here.

Return to regular standing rules.

## **11. Councillor Reports**

No Councillor Reports.

## **12. Executive Reports**

- a. VP (Student Life) (3)

VP Earle presents the report.





Councillor Savage motions to suspend the rules to share something on behalf of the faculty. Seconded by Councillor Campbell. This unanimously passes.

Councillor Savage says that before the holidays, their faculty society took controversial measures to get face time with the McGill administration to discuss bathroom accessibility. The Councillor says that we shouldn't be *asking* for rights. There are things at this school that are incredibly problematic, as we heard from the gallery. Sometimes someone just has to take the first step. Vincent in the gallery decided to just change the signs on the bathrooms themselves. The Councillor wants to say that if anyone else wants to do something like this, the Social Work Students Association has your back. They will be on the front lines with you. Sometimes you have to be the change you want to see. Going forward, the Councillor wants to see movement from everybody. There is no need for marginalization to occur. It only occurs if we allow it to occur.

VP Spencer adds that it is Councillor Savage's birthday today. VP Spencer motions to sing happy birthday and pass out cupcakes. Motion is seconded and passed unanimously.

Councillor Campbell asks the SSMU executive if the SSMU has any kind of policy on gender equity with regards to trans people. VP Spencer responds that a lot of the barrier that SSMU keeps hearing is that it's Quebec regulation, but they now have proof that this is not the case, so they need to re-discuss this with the GM. The Equity policy technically covers it, but something brought up in the consultation was that we talk a lot about sexual violence but not about gender violence, and how we need to be more aware and actually include these rights if we are mentioning the words. Credit goes to UGE for bringing this up.

Vincent from Social Work in the gallery thinks there is a really important question that needs to be brought forward around SSMU's position. There are some other groups that have already made change happen, like PGSS. As much as SSMU has been wonderfully supportive, other groups have already degendered their bathrooms. If SSMU were actually taking this seriously, they would have stumbled across other buildings on campus that have already succeeded, and this seems indicative that SSMU hasn't been taking the issue as seriously as they should. Why hasn't SSMU done this, and what will be done to make sure that this building is safer for gender non-conforming folks? VP Oke responds that the description of the situation at SSMU is accurate. In terms of creating a policy, this is something that has been brought to the Equity Committee. It hasn't gotten much traction but it is on their radar.

- b. VP (Internal) (3)



VP Koparkar presents the report.

c. VP (University Affairs) (3)

VP Oke presents the report.

Councillor Anderson asks if there will be a Facebook page for the Know Your Rights campaign. VP Oke responds that it is scheduled to go live on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 12pm.

d. VP (External) (3)

VP Spencer presents the report.

Councillor Savage motions to extend the speaking time for 2 minutes. Seconded by Councillor Bulger. Motion passes.

Councillor Campbell asks if we are able to get both AVEQ and UEQ on the ballot, what kind of format the options would be. VP Spencer responds that it would ask Yes or No for affiliation, and then once one clicks Yes it would be a dropdown asking which association they want to affiliate with.

e. President (3)

President Tojiboeva presents the report.

Councillor Yue motions to extend by 1 minute. Seconded by Councillor Abu Youssef.

Councillor Anderson asks that the Speaker confirm that the Board of Directors meeting is not today as stated on the website, but actually on Sunday. The Councillor also asks for it to be confirmed that the building will be open. The Councillor also asks what the meeting described in the report was about.

The President responds that it is indeed on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> from 7-8. The President also answers that the meeting was to accompany a student who had concerns.

Councillor Campbell asks if someone not on the Board wanted to attend, would the doors be unlocked? The President responds that either the President or GM will stand there to physically open the doors.

### 13. Confidential Session



#### 14. Adjournment 20:06

Councillor Zhou motions to adjourn. Seconded by Councillor DeMoulin. Motion passes.

Council adjourns at 8:06PM.

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Muna Tojboeva, SSMU President



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Catharina O'Donnell, Recording Secretary

FOR APPROVAL