

## General Assembly of the Students' Society of McGill University

### **1) Call to Order**

At 4:41pm, the meeting began as a consultative forum.

### **2) Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved by the consultative forum.

### **3) Report of the Executive Committee**

Maggie Knight asked the members of the body how many had attended a GA before. Many had not. She explained that all executives would be very brief with their reports. President Knight began her report by stating that her first priority is having a strong SSMU team. She created a 40-page orientation guide for staff, which had never been done before. She also supported the Council retreat, revamped SSMU's outreach materials, coordinated the Presidents' Roundtable and was around several events during Orientation. The first strategic summit was last Friday and the next will be this Friday from 12-5pm in the Clubs Lounge and tuition hikes will be discussed. President Knight also sits on the Board of Governors and is a representative of the SSMU on the Senate. She also gets to meet with many administrators. She has been working on the Bylaw reform. Sometimes bylaws are old, outdated, and contradict each other and she hopes to make them make sense. Finally, she has been working on the Board of Directors' Reform, which will be discussed later.

Vice-President External Joel Pedneault has been working over the summer on meeting with Student Unions of Québec, to oppose tuition increases and organizing demonstrations. It is as yet unclear on what the conditions of international students will be, and this campaign is ongoing. SSMU hired a researcher on International Students this summer, and during the school year the Political Attaché and researcher was hired. Vice-President Pedneault has been organizing information about tuition hikes to distribute in frosh bags and update the [tuitiontruth.ca](http://tuitiontruth.ca) website. In community relations, he has been working with the Milton Parc Community (East of campus) and has been organizing things like the frosh street team which held out water bottles to people during Frosh. There was a block party on September 17<sup>th</sup> which went very well. The Community Engagement Committee and the Charity Committee have been getting up and running. He is touch with campus unions including the inter-union Council and sits on that Council on behalf of the SSMU. He has been creating informational material on what the strike is about.

Vice-President University Affairs Emily Clare's three focus areas are this year are to increase student representative accountability, to make a bylaw review so that there will be regular reporting, and to maintain contact with the senate caucus. Communications and expectations of representatives would inform them of issues and situate them in the SSMU and McGill context. The new Senator's Corner will be up and running on the website soon to further students' communication with their student senators. The University Affairs Secretary General has been hired, and is working to make sure that people will be able to have more historical knowledge about the University Affairs position. The Consultation Fair is a new

initiative came out of the consultation and communications working group. Vice-President Clare does not want the Consultation fair to become a one-stop shop for administrators, but establish connections on a micro and macro level between McGill's administration and students. Vice-President Clare will be involving equity in her position through a Strategic Summit which is coming up, a review of the Policy including the appeals process, and she will design an equity award for McGill staff.

Vice-President Patel said that his work is administrative and technocratic in nature. One of the main things he has been working on is the student-run café working group. They have started doing research in advance of opening such a student-run initiative, which is clearly needed. Next, he would like to make Committees under the portfolio more active. He is using Committees to get Councillors and students involved in SSMU's finances. Councillors and students can sit on the Committees related to finance. He has been working to make the financial issues with SSMU more understandable to students. His background is working with student groups, so he would like to keep funding in his portfolio. The Financial Ethics Research Committee will review the purchasing policy and the ethical investment plan this year. The Operations Committee is also under his jurisdiction. He finds it difficult to explain the budget, but is working on financial transparency. He is working on a club audit for SSMU clubs, and is assisting services with their finances. He said that he is at the office a lot, and office hours are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 12-2pm.

Vice-President Fraser asked for audience participation regarding what her job actually entails. An audience member answered that she helps allocate finances for clubs. Vice-President Fraser explained that she works with both clubs and services, and is one of the building managers for the Shatner building. This year so far, she has been working on clubs workshops (with Vice-President Patel and Councillors) and has held four so far. Also, she has met with almost all twenty SSMU services over the summer and in the past month. A major overhaul has been done on the clubs and services section of the website, she has been working on locker allocations. She has been negotiating the McGill Name with the University in order to help clubs keep the McGill name. Also, she helped to coordinate the Fall activities night. Vice-President Fraser oversaw the creation of the SSMU student Handbook. She said thanks again to the editors of the handbook. As a building manager, she has been working on more floor signage. There will be SSMU-logo birds on the floor from the front doors of SSMU, leading to the SSMU office. Also, there will be new things going on in the vending machine area "Green Corner." She has been working with other Executives to support the Strike and negotiate clubs' ability to use the building. She is happy that the recent flood on Mactavish did not wash away the William Shatner University Centre.

Vice-President Plummer said that he oversees a lot of SSMU media presence. He then used his phone to take a picture of this forum for Twitter. He has put on events such as SSMU Frosh, which including a great evening concern with Dragonette. Also, he has been working on the Integrated Orientation debrief with some administrators which will be developed into a report. He has also been a faculty liaison, helping with their events. The film Gladiator will be screened on lower field tonight for Movies in the Park. A barn party will be happening

during the Thanksgiving weekend at Mac campus. 4Floors will happen around Halloween. Flashlight Tours will be happening in the Redpath museum this semester. At exam time, he will be bringing in puppies to the SSMU Ballroom, and is trying to hop over the hurdles in the bylaws about doing that. Also, he oversees communications via the SSMU listserv and has finally found a format that will be likable.

Chair Nizam requested that those at the front table introduce themselves to the forum. Recording Secretary Claire Michela, Speaker of Council Michael Tong, and Speaker of Council Nida Nizam introduced themselves. Chair Nizam spoke to the body to explain the procedural matters and explained the Question Period. She said that one of her jobs as Chair is to relieve tension.

#### 4) Question Period

John Ericsson in Poli Sci is wondering about more details about what happened with the McGill name. Walksafe was told that it should take out all of the details in its paraphernalia, etc.

President Knight said that the McGill Name has been a longstanding issue. McGill wants to make it very clear that SSMU groups remain student groups. According to Mr. Mendelson, the word "collective" is not permissible in a SSMU group name. The MOA is a legal agreement between SSMU and the University. In MOA negotiations, a list of student groups has been discussed. Now, McGill has agreed to allow the SSMU to use the McGill name in certain circumstances. Sometimes the reasoning does not make sense to the President or the Vice-President University Affairs despite asking. Obviously now that it is school time and not the summer, negotiations and communication are easier. She would also like clear rationales from the University, which happen to change frequently. There also may be smaller changes to smaller groups and others will be contacted.

Councillor Winer, Clubs and Representative to Council, U2 Arts, said that the format of the General Assembly has been a point of contention and is wondering who people can go to discuss their grievances.

President Knight said that Generally Assembly reform has been a point of discussion. The ad-hoc bylaw review committee took place at 9:30 in the morning last week. E-mail [president@ssmu.mcgill.ca](mailto:president@ssmu.mcgill.ca) if you would like to give feedback or input. She said that this may be a historic format of the GA.

Rida Svan, U2 Arts, is wondering what the current relationship is between SSMU and MUNACA.

Vice-President Pedneault said that there is a very specific resolution by the SSMU Council to support MUNACA and to allocate resources to researching the strike. There is also a very general statement of principles and that mandates SSMU to support workers on campus. Chair Nizam said that the Policy and the Resolution can be viewed on the SSMU website.

Alex Nedarussin, U3 said that the government is going to start cutting costs 5% provincially and federally. He asked whether SSMU is going to cut costs, given that it has not.

Vice-President Patel said that the SSMU will not be affected by the cuts because it gets a constant base fee from students. The SSMU is doing well financially right now. The last few years have been great from SSMU in terms of finances. He is concerned about the fact that Execs are not submitting their budgets, but other than that everything is fine.

Sami Fink, U3 Arts, asked how the recent injunction will affect students wishing to show support for the union by wearing statements or pins.

Vice-President Pedneault said that the injunction only pertains to MUNACA members and does not indicate that students cannot partake in action. He has heard reports of students being harassed by Security. President Knight discussed this with the Associate Dean of students who assured her that students have the right to wear MUNACA pins. President KNight will also be following up with the head of Security on campus and make sure that students are not classified as MUNACA members and to ensure that they are allowed to present their support.

Councillor Crawford, U3, asked if President Knight will be addressing conflict of interest policy in the bylaw review.

President Knight said that won't be part of the bylaw review process but it will be part of the policy review. This will be done so that it is made clear for everybody what is and is not ok.

Ian Clarke, a second year law students, is wondering about the student fee opt-in campaign and its success.

President Knight said that the student association opt-in campaign have occurred over the past few years to inform students of what student services can provide. All of these fees go towards supporting many things on campus that provide lots of experiences for students. The SSMU realizes that not all students can afford extra fees, but it has been a concern that opt-out rates have been rising. Students should make informed decisions about whether they would like to opt-in or opt-out and how that will affect your own opportunities and opportunities of fellow students.

Councillor Khan is the Engineering representative to SSMu and asked what type of response was received when the student-run café was discussed, if it was discussed, with the university. Also, what is the status of the arch café.

Vice-President Patel said that student-run café working group is not in response to the Arch café. He does not think that this comparison is appropriate. He thinks that it is good to look forward. The response received from the University is quite positive. Professor Mendelson wished him luck over e-mail but mentioned that they should be financially careful. Other than that there have been no setbacks from the University.

## **5) New Business**

### **5a. Resolution Regarding the Democratic Refom of the SSMU Board of Directors**

President Knight was asked to explain the Board of Directors reform and the original motion that was brought to Council. She said that the situation is that the Executive reports to

Council, but that the Board of the Directors is only accountable to the Executive. She explained that the Board will comprise of fifteen voting members and the General Manager. The members of the Board have to be eighteen years of age and the other major change is that all members of the Legislative Council must be made aware of any meeting and must be allowed to be present. This is to ensure that the Council remains the highest governing body. She is open to any question that students may have.

Chair Nizam said that a bylaw change can only happen at a General Assembly and would like to make sure that everyone is aware of what's happening.

### Questions

A member of the gallery asked "How will the nine Councillors be chosen?"

President Knight said that they will be elected from Councillors who meet the criteria. The bar will not be set too high because many Councillors are not Canadian. Also, quorum will be 8 so that business will still proceed.

Councillor Winer said that any Councillor will be able to attend the Board of Director meetings. Will all other SSMU members be entitled to attend all meetings?

President Knight said not officially, because decisions may necessarily be made in in-camera sessions for legal readings. Mostly, the Board of Directors meeting will occur within the first part of Legislative Council meetings.

Chair Nizam made the body aware that anyone is allowed to come to the Legislative Council at any time and sit in the gallery.

The Speaker for the PGSS asked whether there is going to be any training for the Directors. If they would be responsible for a lawsuit and the death of the organization, will there be indemnity positions in place?

President Knight said yes. Ideally there will be nothing that the Directors would be in trouble with. However, there is insurance to protect all members.

A member of the body asked what instances would require confidentiality.

President Knight said that confidentiality requires a case-by-case analysis. She said that the goal is to do as much as possible in open session. In negotiations with McGill, there are legal impacts to the tenants in the building. Also, everything that is accessible to all students is accessible to all administrators. She said that this is a big issue and is hoping to develop a policy on confidentiality about what is confidential and what is not. She said that currently there is no consistent policy that deals with that.

Debate Began and Councillor Nizam explained the procedure of the debate. She said she would give five minutes to each side to be able to debate on this motion.

Vice-President Fraser spoke in favor of this motion. This motion surrounds accountability and transparency issues. It is scary that the Board of Directors is also the Executives right now.

One member of the body said that it would be more wise that the Legal Council should give a resume of this issue to the body and would like that no closed session could happen until the legal council is consulted.

President Knight said that at the moment the choices are to continue with the Executives or to expand the Board to include a lot more Councillors. She would like students to have the right to know that the Executive will not be exploiting the Board. There will be a referendum in March but this is the first step to the reform.

President Knight moved to add a resolved clause to the resolution:

*Resolved*, that the following members of the SSMU Legislative Council who meet the criteria outlined above, be elected to the Board of Directors 2011-2012:

Isabelle Bi

James Burnett

Matthew Crawford-Appignanesi

Haley Dinell

Angela Herman

Radney Jean-Claude

Jim Niu

Kady Paterson

Adam Winer

Billi Wun

A member of the body asked whether, assuming that this is passed, these students will be on the Board. Was there already an election process?

President Knight said that because the change to the bylaws and election has to happen at a GA, nominations were made by Council in open session. Essentially, the Board will be designed to approve all the decisions that Council makes. These names were chosen at the Legislative Council by the Council.

Chair Nizam said that debate would begin on this amendment. She clarified that within speaking times, members of the body can ask any questions that they want to. All those for the amendment, please stand on the speakers' right.

Debate began on this amendment:

President Knight said that the first Council meeting happened before the GA submission deadline. Technically, no, the Board will be elected and another General Assembly and will have to be added to this. President Knight said that these names were selected by elected representatives on Council, and those elected representatives also have the highest power as the Board of Directors.

Another member of the body asked whether the selection process was outlined in the bylaws, and whether there a process written for the way that those individuals who decide not to be members of the Board once they are chosen.

President Knight said that this is not in the bylaws, but the method for replacing member of the Board is to elect a suitable person from the members of the Council. In the name of transparency, she further explained the way that this lists was acclaimed in Council. Councillors were asked whether they were Canadian, and then the list of the Board members was drawn from those Canadians who wanted to be Members of the Board.

It was moved to commence voting procedure on this amendment.

Chair Nizam said that if you are in favor of adding this amendment you will vote for, or you can vote against. Because this is substantive, you can also abstain.

With a vote of 106 for, 1 against, and 13 abstentions, this amendment passed.

One member of the body asked, with regards to statues and bylaws, how quickly this will come into effect.

President Knight said that this will be a very quick process and could be in action by the end of the week or early next week.

There were several motions to move into voting procedure.

With a vote of 99 for, 2 against, and 19 abstaining, this Resolution passed.

#### **5b. Resolution Regarding the Institutionalization and Documentation of SSMUs Leadership for Sustainability**

Aryeh Canter, the mover of this motion read the following Whereas and Resolved clauses:

*Whereas*, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has made it clear that it is committed to sustainability;

*Whereas*, the SSMU's adoption of the Five Year Plan for Sustainability in 2009 was a major step towards institutionalizing sustainability within the SSMU's operations;

*Whereas*, clear and accurate benchmarks are necessary to properly direct student effort in making the SSMU more sustainable;

*Whereas*, a comprehensive sustainability assessment of the SSMU was done in 2008, which included the recommendation for the assessment to be updated annually;

*Whereas*, with the creation of the new permanent Sustainability Coordinator position, the SSMU now has the human capacity to carry out that recommendation;

*Whereas*, student awareness of sustainability efforts and successes on campus is essential for continued student-led action;

*Whereas*, a central report assessing all sustainability-related work done by student groups and university staff would give a clear overview of the state of sustainability within both SSMU and McGill;

*Resolved*, that the SSMU will update the Sustainability Assessment annually in an effort to have an overarching understanding of the McGill environmental community and serve as a communication tool for interested students and related green groups,

*Resolved*, that this new assessment will be compiled by the Sustainability Coordinator reflecting his/her work and will, at a minimum, include:

An overview of projects that different green student groups have done,  
A summary of the exit reports from the Environment Commissioners, Green Events Coordinator and Green Building Coordinator,  
An evaluation of the year's progress and how they fulfill the long-term goals of SSMU,  
A reflection on the SSMU's relationship with both the Office of Sustainability and McGill University and a list of recommendations for the following academic year,  
*Resolved*, that this report should be made publicly available to all students on campus and in the Montreal community.  
Moved by:  
Aryeh Canter

Aryeh said that this would create institutional memory for the sustainability community.  
Councillor Chaini made a motion to previous question. There are several seconds.  
Nizam said that there are no abstentions on this motion. We will move into voting procedure.  
With a vote of 115 for, 0 against, and 5 abstentions, this motion passes.

### 5 c) Resolution Regarding Accessible education

*Resolved*, that the SSMU continue to uphold the following mandates on accessibility to post-secondary education:  
Support for high-quality, universally accessible post-secondary education as a human right,  
Opposition to any mechanism or legislation that would permit a non-consensual increase in student fees for any student, whether Quebecker, Canadian, or international,  
Call for a public re-investment in post-secondary education from all levels of government,  
Call for the elimination of all financial barriers to a high-quality post-secondary education, and advocate for a progressive reduction of tuition fees for all students, including the eventual replacement of any and all ancillary and tuition fees with alternative methods of funding post-secondary education,  
Work with all elements of the Quebec and Canadian student movements towards these goals,  
*Resolved*, that the SSMU specifically oppose the most recently announced \$1625 tuition increase affecting Quebec students,  
*Resolved*, that the SSMU encourage its members to participate in the upcoming demonstration on November 10, 2011 against tuition increases.  
Moved by:  
Joël Pedneault, VP External  
Undersigned by:  
James Burnett, Arts Representative  
Kady Paterson, Education Representative  
Micha Stettin, Arts Representative

Debate began on this motion.

Vice-President Pedneault spoke in favor of this motion. He said that the November 10<sup>th</sup> demonstration is being organized as we speak by all different organizations in Québec; students as well; over do not want the tuition increase. Québec student increases have already been announced, and their increase represents a 7.5% increase over a few years. Government figures show that this would prevent thousands of students from attending university. Tuition increase has to be announced by the government.

Alex Niderisin, U3 political science, said that many students do not live in Quebec. The tax rates here are crazy at 52% and universities have a load of \$750 million dollars of debt to pay. Ultimately, somebody is going have to do something about this. It is a right to have a decent tuition rate. But paying \$6,000 for out-of-province students is not huge, and students want our education to be worth something. Otherwise, professors will not stay in Quebec.

David said that he thinks that this is important because this can be viewed many ways by different people. This is a right that people have not a privilege that people get. He said that he would like to hand out tuition truth cards, and did so.

Jean-Claude, U2, said that he is not going to say his opinion. He said that no one has the right to opt-out from SSMU and does not think it is right to protest against tuition fees. He said that his money is being taken without his consent and he would not like his money to be used in this type of politicization without his consent. He spoke French and said that people here are forcing him to do this. He is not ok with this and said that others' money are funding some people's educations. He will put his money towards his education.

Lilly said that the word non-consensual should be clarified. Debt is a financial barrier. Chair Nizam suggested that movers propose an amendment to clarify "non-consensual."

One member of the body said that Quebec students paid \$500 for tuition in the 60s, and adjusting for inflation should make education about \$3,000.

Vice-President Clare asked what can be done if a statement of supposed fact is wrong.

Councillor Burnett asked if he could make an amendment. Chair Nizam said that could happen at any time.

Vice-President Patel, a U3 marketing student, spoke in favor of this and said that the University is in a situation that it is poorly underfunded. Looking at a budget, one thing that you have to keep in mind is priorities. Funding will be given to certain things and not other things. Vice-President Patel said that countless amounts of dollars are being spent on the administration. He hopes that people will vote in favor of this resolution.

Marc from Arts, U2 said that the idea that increasing fees has to do with accessibility is problematic. Nova Scotia has the highest rate of tuition and highest accessibility rate. Québec has the lowest fees and lowest accessibility. Education is not a right, it's a privilege.

A member of the body in history highly doubts the credibility of the last statement that was made. There are reams of information that argue against that. There are still reasons why students might want that privilege for every member of your society. There is also the cost to consider of supporting oneself when one is a full-time student and cannot work.

A member of the body said that the last Resolved clause says "encouraged" but the member would like to know whether this would implicate that SSMU's financial resources would be involved.

Chair Niam said that if the movers would like to extend the debate, she would allow that. There has motion to extend the debate by 10 minutes. When voting on whether or not to extend debate, one cannot abstain. This passed.

A motion was put forward to amend to make the SSMU fee opt-outable.

Chair Nizam said that this is not allowed. General Assemblies are not allowed to make decisions which affect the financial matters of the SSMU.

Chair Nizam said that that, further, that is not necessarily germane to this motion. Members are welcome to voice their concerns with Council and should address their Councillors with their concerns.

Vice-President Pedneault said that there are questions about the substance of the motion. He said that "encourage" might mean making posters and encourage people to participate in actions. This would take money out of the campaigns budget line to encourage people to participate. He said that this would mandate him to oppose any increase with which students have not agreed.

A member of the body said that we should specifically oppose Québec increases. He is wondering why we are only targeting Quebec student fees and not national fees. Some of the deregulated faculties are going up 10% from this year on.

President Knight requested that a resolved clause be read out loud. The bulleted clause in question states that there would be "Opposition to any mechanism or legislation that would permit a non-consensual increase in student fees for any student, whether Quebecker, Canadian, or international..."

A member of the body that it is illogical to say that post-secondary education should be a right in our society. The problem in Quebec is the inefficiency in government and goes into every level of government. Pressure should be put on the government to increase efficiency.

Councillor Burnett made a motion to amend to add “Resolved, that the external affairs committee, in conjunction with SSMU’s Political Attaché Researcher, work to develop informational materials and policy proposals regarding out-of-province and international students, in line with SSMU’s commitment to accessible education for all students,” He explained that McGill in a unique situation because it has international and out-of-province students. He said that it is important to develop demands and proposals in conjunction with this.

Thinks that the amendment adequately addresses his concern to international and out-of-province tuition. It was moved and seconded to move to previous question on this amendment.

With a vote of 91 for, 6 against, and 7 abstentions, this passed.

Debate continued on the Resolution as a whole:

Councillor Bi said that this body should be concerned with accessibility to McGill students. She thinks that time and resources should be put towards McGill students specifically rather than putting resources towards what is going to be a province-wide change

Councillor Khan said that he has to pay huge amounts as an international student. He thinks that education is a right, not a privilege. We not only have to oppose this but we have to fight for it.

Brendan, U3 Political science, said that talking about principles is great but we have to look at the effect of SSMU’s negotiation will have. SSMU would be off the table when it comes to negotiating about accessibility and where new fees go. The student corporation is no longer at the table if it takes this hard-line, no-negotiating stance. It is a systemic problem and he does not think that is right to go about this.

A motion to previous question passed and was seconded. The motion to previous question passed with 100 in favor and 4 against.

With a vote of 73 in favor, 17 against, and 14 abstaining, this motion passed.

#### **5d. Resolution Regarding Student Consultation in Re-Appointment of the Deputy Provost of Student Life and Learning**

Councillor Winer read the resolved clause of this motion:

*Resolved*, that the SSMU Representative to the McGill Board of Governors make all reasonable effort to amend the University Statues article 3.4.1 to add “reappointment, or extension” to read:

“Before recommending an appointment, reappointment or extension for the office of Provost, Deputy Provost, Deputy Provost, or Vice-Principal, the Principal shall have consulted an advisory committee consisting of four representatives of the Board of Governors and SSMU representatives to the Senate, four representatives of the Senate and two students.”

Councillor Wince also gave background to this motion; whereas clauses. The contract for the Deputy Provost of Student Life and Learning, Morton Mendelson was extended for two years. This motion would say that if the University would like to re-appoint a Provost or some other administrative positions, a forum should be doing so. This is not a job at the current Provost. The University was able to extend his contract because the University statutes read that in the case of appointment, a consultant body has to be formed. This does not say anything about re-appointment. Reappointment and extension of contracts should also include consultant bodies.

The General Assembly and became a consultative forum at this point.

Chair Nizam said that if individuals are not happy with the outcome of Resolution votes, they should not leave in the future. If the student body cares about this they need to ensure that their opinions are heard. The body is currently comprised of around 55 people plus some extra students. The consultative forum can continue debating and discussing this motion, but all matters will go to the Legislative Council.

Councillor Chaini asked whether this can be passed. Chair Nizam said that these motions can be passed in Council, but this forum cannot officially pass a motion.

Councillor Dinell is wondering how this makes sure that the McGill administration will change its policy.

President Knight said that this mandates her to attempt to make this happen.

A Senator said that he does not think that anyone is opposed to this. The Deputy Provost Student Life and Learning is at the Principal's table to say what students want—the idea that we students don't have anything to do with his hiring is ridiculous. The fact that this was done behind closed doors is egregious.

Ethan said that this debate is false and slows down progress. People should not speak to the other side to talk about whatever.

Chair Nizam said that this is the procedure that has been utilized for the past GA. She is in favor of the reform of the GA so that things like this don't happen again. She said that it is up to SSMU members to change this and make sure that it doesn't happen again.

Vice-President Clare put forward an amendment to add “and the SSMU representatives ter SSMU representative to the McGill Board of Governors

VP Clare spoke to this amendment, and said that this is best done in a multi-pronged way. It would be great to engage the senate caucus this year. This would also mandate the SSMU representatives of Senate towards these same goals.

A vote on the amendment was 44 for, 2 against, and 9 abstentions.

It was moved to vote on this resolution as a whole. A vote of 49 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions should have passed. Chair Nizam said that the people who are staying should be

staying and everyone in this body should come to Council where these Resolutions will be seen on Thursday.

### 5e) Resolution Regarding Support of Workers' Struggles

Councillor Stettin read the Resolved clauses:

*Resolved*, that the SSMU actively engage, support, and work in coordination with all campus unions and the Inter-Union Council.

*Resolved*, that in periods when a campus union has gone on strike, the SSMU will actively do the following:

Collect information and solicit various perspectives on the issues,

Disseminate information to the student body,

Support the workers in their strike by whatever means at its disposal, including but not limited to:

- Participating in the picket line,
- Issuing a statement in support of the strikers,
- Petitioning the University,
- Organizing rallies in solidarity.

Councillor Stettin spoke for this Resolution. He thinks that it is disgusting that people came here for a specific question and left after that question. He said that this is a necessary motion at this point in the University. Students should not allow themselves to be fragmented opposing administrative decisions. Students should show our support and actively engage in what we believe in.

Vice-President Clare said that this is based on a motion that was passed in October 2006. The motion is very important in what is currently happening and represents what students were thinking in the past.

Lilly said that she is generally in favor of unions, it is problematic to say that the SSMU should be voting in favor of all workers' strikes. She thinks that it is appropriate to say that the SSMU is in support of MUNACA's strikes, but to disagree with the blanket statement of supporting all worker's strikes.

Another speaker said that a strike requires a majority vote of those employees. Just to keep in mind, supporting a strike on campus means supporting the majority of employees in that group. It is difficult for employees to mobilize as a group to strike, and it has to be a very important issue for the group to strike.

One speaker proposed that a new clause would add "(once the issue has been debated and action has been approved by the SSMU GA and Legislative Council)". This was not a formal motion.

The next speaker said that he understood where Lilly is coming from, but would like to make clear that things on this campus would have to change radically before campus unions started acting like brats. He thinks that things would have to change so radically that we would have ample time to change this motion as necessary.

Councillor Stettin said that the point of this motion is to be able to act immediately, to garner support, and raise information about this issue. It took two weeks for Council to meet, and until then people would not have known about the issue of the MUNACA strike if the SSMU had not taken action right away because of the 2006 Policy. The point is to make a decision here that students do support these struggles and that they will be able to take action immediately when these issues come up.

One member of the body said that Council maybe should be mandated to approve that support. Still, he thinks that it is important to support.

President Knight said that she is concerned about putting this amendment in this format in case there is no have a Council or GA to consult before support is given. She thinks that a motion should put forward to be put to the first Council. She would be in favor of a proposed amendment to this amendment.

Another member said that he hopes that people understand that people are for this strike. He said that he does not want WWI to happen again with accusations being made all over. He agreed with the President's comments that support would have to be approved following initial and immediate action. He said that democracy can never be side-stepped. Democracy is about public process.

Councillor Bi said that each year's Council and student body has to be respected to make autonomous decisions. She said that when a motion is passed like this, all future Councils will be affected when they make decisions.

Ethan made a motion to replace "and" with "or." He heard another speaker say that we can't side-step democracy. We cede decisions in certain respects. We elect people to represent us and to do a job; to elect them is not going to make this process better.

Molly said that she disagrees with this amendment. She says that it's important to understand that students are affected by the MUNACA strike. Decisions that are made by the MUNACA union affect the rest of the unions as well, including student workers' unions. The SSMU needs to advocate for the student body and student workers. SSMU needs to actively support student workers.

Another speaker had a few points. First, the logic that we should not mandate Councils in other years to do certain things potentially applies to everything that is done here at the General Assembly. Workers on campus are a hell of a lot closer to students than the

administration. He said that this strike demonstrates that students have workers' rights and interests in mind to a much greater extent than the administration. He thinks that we should oppose this amendment..

The text of a new amendment will replace that it says "Resolved, that support for any specific strike must be further ratified by the earliest possible Legislative Council or General Assembly in order for actions in support of the strike to continue." (the other amendment had been removed).

Molly is wondering whether something can be added that would stipulate a case in which the Council is for but the GA is against their support.

Vice-President Fraser asked whether this amendment means that there would be support from the Executive Committee to do whatever they want.

President Knight said that her understanding is that members of the SSMU body at large could use the SSMU resources to support a strike, and at the earliest opportunity there would be a vote put to Council or to the GA about more specific support. Her understanding is that if one body wished to overrule the other, it would have to be resolved that the General Assembly overrule the Council. They are supposed to be equal governing bodies of the SSMU, so a Resolution would have to speak to one or the other.

Ethan said that the motion should stipulate whether a Resolution in support would be for the Council or the GA because one of those bodies would be enough. He thinks that it is silly because one may not support the workers. He does not see it as particularly relevant thing to add.

Evelyn said that she would normally be all for long-term amendments and would support this amendment. She said that the SSMU is in a state of emergency, and McGill is cracking down on student protestors and strikers.

Tim agreed with Evelyn and this amendment also brings up concerns that people have said earlier. If this act is automatic approval of any strike, he disagrees with that. This amendment is not conducive to the substance of the motion. What Evelyn said is correct and at the moment this amendment is not necessary.

Councillor Burnett said that it is not right to send the message that there might be ill-intent and if there is some strike that is done with the intent of harming the community, then there would be much bigger problems that the SSMU would have to deal with.

One member of the body would like to address this alarmist rhetoric. He said that democracy is always necessary. He does not think that the SSMU will ever be wrong about this without the amendment but is not saying that the amendment is a bad idea. The immediate action will be reviewed at a Council or after.

Councillor Chaini made a motion to previous question on the amendment. With a vote of 40 for to thirty-nine against to six, this amendment failed.

Dave Deighan in industrial relations said that he would like to respect that negotiations are there to resolve their issues. For the SSMU to drop support behind them does not give justice to automatically supporting the strike. Students need to be fair in our approach. He thinks that the SSMU has not looked at every part of the collective agreement with MUNACA. The negotiation process there is no wrong or right, but this body should vote on the agreement.

Ethan said that two people are incapable of entering a rational agreement with each-other. Each person has an attitude and position into the discussion—people who can do nothing are forced into the reason to strike. For this body to imply that opinion comes equally is incorrect. When a strike happens it's because there was discussion and discussion failed.

One speaker said that the biggest problem he said he has against this motion is that this body is generalizing the strike into every issue, there are individual demands that have to be look at as a Legislative Council. This does not represent the idea of the unions either.

One speaker thinks that it is important to recognize the power imbalance between the administration and the workers on campus. The SSMU is one of the most important stakeholders on campus. At any strike there are parties who will take sides and neutrality is not an option.

A motion to previous question passes.

Chair Nizam said that after a moved to previous question there can be a motion to appeal. The motion to previous question passed.

The speaker lodged his appeal on moving to previous question. He believes that this body is moving in an alarmist way too fast. Even if they are sure that democracy is going to happen, you should decide that what your debates are. Democracy is continuously thinking of this action.

Councillor Paterson said that she would normally agree with this and says that at a consultative forum, this will have to be discussed again at Council.

Chair said that we will have another vote to reverse to the motion to previous question. The appeal failed.

The Resolution passed with 57 for, 9 against, and 11 abstentions. Every motion that has been voted on without quorum will be brought to the Legislative Council.

Chair Nizam said that Executives or Speakers should be e-mailed if there are any questions about these motions and if people in attendance would like their input to be shared at Council.

President Knight asked the Chair when Council meetings take place.

Chair Nizam said that Legislative Council takes place on the Lev Bukhman room at 6 pm every other Thursday.

Monday September 26, 2011

Opinions were discussed about what is happening with the GA. She says that everyone here are the vanguards of the Society and thinks that it is really wonderful that many have decided to come. This is a year of reform with Executives and President Knight is looking forward to the rest of the year.

6) Adjournment 7:17pm