

Notice of Motion Re: Reforming the General Assembly

Whereas, the General Assembly is not currently as effective as it should be,
Whereas, the Bylaw Review Committee has conducted a review of the General Assembly,
Whereas, the student body has been invited to provide its input through an online survey and two town halls,
Whereas, the SSMU Constitution can be changed only by going to referendum,

Resolved, that the text below be adopted to replace the current By-Law I-5,
Resolved, that the Bylaw Review Committee be mandated to bring forward a referendum question to remove the faculty proportion of 50% from the quorum requirements listed in Articles 29.4 and 29.5 of the Constitution.

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

BY-LAW I-5 – GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

Part I: Special Rules of Order

Article 1 – Order of Business for a Regular General Assembly

- 1.1 The order of business for any regular General Assembly of the Society shall be as follows:
- 1.1.1 Call to Order
 - 1.1.2 Approval of the Agenda
 - 1.1.3 Question Period
 - 1.1.4 Report of the Executive Committee
 - 1.1.5 Old Business
 - 1.1.6 New Business
 - 1.1.7 Adjournment

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

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

Article 2 – Question Period

~~2.1 There shall be a maximum of twenty (20) minutes allotted to Question period;~~

~~2.2 Any member of the Society may ask a question. A maximum of five (5) minutes per question and answer will be allowed. Questions may be addressed to any Councillor, including the Executive Officers;~~

~~2.3 Should an individual being asked a question not have the appropriate information to answer it, s/he shall respond to the question in the SSMU Listserv and website within the next two weeks;~~

~~2.4 Supplemental questions that are on topic will be allowed. All questions and answers shall be addressed to the Speaker;]~~

Article 23 – Report of the Executive Committee

~~23.1 The Report of the Executive Committee to Regular General Assemblies shall focus on include, but not be limited to, any actions undertaken by the Executive Committee as a result of motions passed at the previous General Assembly;~~

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Comment [u1]: Formerly only the SSMU President

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Comment [SSMU Pres2]: This is unnecessary and should be at the discretion of the Speaker(s) and/or the GA

~~3.2 The Report shall also address any other issues deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.~~
~~3.3 The Report shall be delivered by the President and other Executive Officers in no more than fifteen (15) minutes.~~
~~3.4 A question period of no more than twenty (20) minutes relating exclusively to matters discussed in the Report shall follow the delivery of the Report. Any member of the General Assembly may ask a question. Questions must be addressed to an Executive Officer of the Society.~~
~~23.25 The Report shall be made available to the students no less than one week in advance of the General Assembly and shall be published on the SSMU Website.~~

Comment [u3]: Redundant/overly prescriptive

Article 34 – Attendance

~~34.1 The Executive and Council shall be present at the General Assembly and shall be present for the entire Question Period excepting extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to, illness.~~

Article 4 – Motions

~~4.1 Motions in advance must be submitted to the Speakers of Council at least two weeks in advance of the General Assembly.~~

~~4.1.1 Items for the agenda shall require either the signatures of one hundred (100) students or four (4) councillors, with no more than 50% from any one faculty and students from 4 faculties.~~

~~4.1.2 Petitions to place items on the agenda shall require the name, signature, faculty and student number of all students in support of placing the motion on the agenda.~~

~~4.1.3 These motions will subsequently be translated and publicized in both English and French to the student body.~~

~~4.2 Motions from the floor may be submitted to the Speakers up until 3 hours before the General Assembly begins.~~

~~4.2.1 The Speakers will be responsible for reviewing motions from the floor to ensure compliance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies; the Speakers may request the assistance of Elections SSMU.~~

~~4.2.2 Each motion from the floor will be considered only if a 2/3rd majority of the General Assembly votes to do so.~~

~~4.2.3 All reasonable efforts will be made to translate motions from the floor in order to provide them in both French and English.~~

~~4.3 It shall be the prerogative of the SSMU Speaker to rule as to whether or not motions presented for the General Assembly shall be in order.~~

~~4.3.1 This ruling shall occur within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the motion by the Speaker for motions in advance and before the start of the General Assembly for motions from the floor.~~

~~4.3.2 If the decision of the Speaker is appealed at the Judicial Board but no ruling is made in advance of the General Assembly in question, the motion shall come to the floor of the GA.~~

~~4.3.3 Should motions or statements come to the floor of a GA which, in the Speaker's opinion, directly contravenes Article 6 of the preamble, or Article 29, of the SSMU Constitution, the Speaker shall have the authority to rule these motions or statements out of order and have them stricken. Such decisions shall not be subject to appeal by the Assembly, and can only be challenged at the Judicial Board of the Society.~~

~~5.4 The Speaker shall, in consultation with the mover, and, if requested, the Steering Committee, review and edit all motions submitted for concision and cogency.~~

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Article 5 – Procedures of General Assemblies

~~5.1 The Speakers of the Council SSMU shall be responsible for coordinating the coordination and chairing of the Society's General Assemblies; for the administration of agenda items and setting of the agenda, for the preparation and distribution of the agenda, and for the conduction of the meetings themselves.~~

~~5.1.1 As the administrator of the agenda, any amendments to the agenda shall be reviewed and approved by the Speaker.~~

~~5.2 Items tabled from any General Assembly shall appear on the agenda of the next GA unless otherwise specified when tabled.~~

~~5.3 It shall be the prerogative of the SSMU Speaker to rule as to whether or not motions presented for the General Assembly shall be in order. These rulings may be subject to appeal to the Judicial Board of the SSMU.~~

~~5.3.1 This ruling shall occur within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the motion by the Speaker.~~

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~~5.3.2 Should the Judicial Board fail to make a ruling on an appeal of the Speaker's decision in advance of the General Assembly in question, the motion shall come to the floor of the GA.~~

~~5.3.3 Should motions or statements come to the floor of a GA which, in the Speaker's opinion, directly contravene Article 6 of the preamble, or Article 29, of the SSMU Constitution, the Speaker shall have the authority to rule these motions or statements out of order and have them stricken. Such decisions shall not be subject to appeal by the Assembly, and can only be challenged at the Judicial Board of the Society.~~

~~5.4 The Speaker shall, in consultation with the mover, review and edit all motions submitted for concision and eogency.~~

~~5.5 There shall be an SSMU parliamentarian, selected by the President and Speaker, who shall field all questions of Assembly procedure for members of the Assembly.~~

~~5.2 Standing rules for the General Assembly which make Roberts' Rules easier for students to understand procedure must be adopted by Council at least one week in advance of the General Assembly.~~

~~5.2.1 These standing rules will be prepared by the Speakers of Council in collaboration with the President and any other interested Officers or Councillors.~~

~~5.2.2 Standing rules must not substantively change the rights of an individual under Robert's Rules, but rather seek to facilitate an effective and accessible process.~~

~~5.2.3 These standing rules must be publicized to the membership at least five calendar days in advance of the General Assembly.~~

~~5.3 The General Assembly may amend resolutions and motions in accordance with the standing rules.~~

~~5.4 Members present at the General Assembly must be given the opportunity to debate and amend each resolution.~~

~~5.4.1 Each faculty and school association consisting solely of SSMU members will be given the opportunity to identify its position on each motion as "for," "against," or "undecided".~~

~~5.4.1.1 Representatives from the above associations must state their name and position with said association before speaking.~~

~~5.4.1.2 Representatives from the above associations will not be granted special priority in otherwise debating the motions.~~

~~5.5 All resolutions passed by the General Assembly must be submitted to an online vote for ratification.~~

~~5.5.1 The Assembly may vote to have its vote tally recorded on the online ballot.~~

~~5.5.2 Elections SSMU shall be responsible for the online voting process.~~

~~5.5.3 Motions passed by a regular General Assembly in the Fall semester will be submitted for ratification as part of the Fall referendum period, which will open no more than 2 calendar days after the General Assembly.~~

~~5.5.4 Unless the General Assembly is held 3 days or fewer before the start of the Winter Referendum Period, motions passed by a regular General Assembly in the Winter semester will be subject to a separate online vote, commencing no more than 1 day after the General Assembly and lasting for a period of 5 calendar days.~~

~~5.5.4.1 In the event that quorum (15% of the student body) is not reached, the question shall be included on the Winter referendum period ballot.~~

~~5.6 No campaigning for or against ratification of motions passed by a General Assembly will be permitted.~~

~~5.6.1 Elections SSMU shall be responsible for addressing any unauthorized campaigning.~~

~~5.7 All reasonable efforts shall be made to livestream and film the General Assembly.~~

~~5.7.1 Resulting footage of the General Assembly will be made available on the SSMU website before voting opens.~~

~~5.7.2 All reasonable efforts shall be made to place a link to the relevant section of footage on the online ballot, so that interested students may view the debate before voting.~~

~~5.86 Should more than one General Assembly be called for the same time period (such as a special GA & a strike GA), it shall be the purview of the Speaker to combine these two Assemblies into one, providing the appropriate quorum requirements are applied to the relevant motions.~~

Comment [u4]: Majority of this section moved above

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Comment [u5]: This responsibility can be shared by the Speaker and the Parliamentarian (in recent practice, the second Speaker of Council who is not presiding)

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5.97 All General Assemblies shall be in a physically accessible room and building according to the 1996 McGill standards for accessibility on campus ~~and must have a room capacity of at least quorum.~~~~5.7.1 — The room or space selected for any General Assembly must have a room capacity of at least~~
~~5.7.2 — [All efforts must be made to select the largest room or space available.]~~
~~5.8 All speaking from the floor shall be conducted in congruence with the principle of gender parity (male/nonmale) where possible.]~~
~~5.9 A motion to hold an online vote on a main motion shall be in order at any time when a main motion is pending. Any member of the General Assembly, other than the Speaker or Parliamentarian, can move or second this motion.~~
~~5.9.1 — The online vote shall be open to all members of the SSMU.~~
~~5.9.2 — The motion for an online vote shall require a 2/3 majority of the General Assembly to defeat.~~
~~5.9.3 — This vote shall be held no more than forty-eight (48) hours following the close of the General Assembly. It shall be open for a period of forty-eight (48) hours, and no campaigning shall be allowed on the motions in question. There shall be no quorum for this online vote. Minutes from the GA shall be made available during the voting period.~~
~~5.9.4 — The Speaker of Council shall have discretion to rule a motion for an online vote out of order if used in a disruptive manner.~~

Comment [u6]: Impractical/ provides no equation for what "all efforts" entails

Comment [u7]: Eliminated at Fall 2010 GA

Article 6 – Special General Assemblies

~~6.1 Special General Assemblies shall be called where there exists a policy concern.~~
~~6.2 Special GAs may also be called in order to provide a forum for input and discussion in regards to the development of SSMU policy.~~
~~6.2.1 — The process for placing such motions on the agenda shall be as laid out in Article 29.2 of the SSMU Constitution.]~~
~~6.3 A special General Assembly shall be a General Assembly other than the required regular General Assembly held by the Society once per each fall and winter semester. [It shall be called according to Article 29.1 of the Constitution.]~~
~~6.4 The Speaker shall call any Special General Assembly four (4) [three (3)] weeks after receipt of a petition for a Special GA.~~
~~6.4.1 — [The Speaker shall ensure, along with the President and petitioners for Special GAs, that the arising deadlines for motions are well-publicized.]~~
~~6.4.12 — Should the four (4) [three (3)] week requirement place the Assembly in a mid-semester holiday, the Speaker shall schedule the Assembly for the next available regular academic day.~~
~~6.4.23 — Should the four (4) [three (3)] week requirement place the Assembly in either a (end of semester) holiday or exam period, the GA shall be called for a date in the first two weeks of the next semester.~~

Comment [u8]: Redundant/unnecessary

Comment [u9]: Redundant

Comment [u10]: This expedites the process

Comment [u11]: Redundant with responsibility & publicity section

~~6.6 The process for placing items on the agenda for a special GA shall be the same as for a regular GA, as specified in article 29.2 of the Constitution.]~~
~~6.7 Any motion to be placed on the agenda for a special GA shall require the Constitutionally mandated number of signatures to be placed on the agenda, and signatures gathered for the purpose of calling a special GA may not be used to place a motion on the agenda.]~~
~~6.8 The agenda of a special GA need not follow the formula laid out in article 1.1 of these by-laws, and shall be prepared by the Speaker in consultation with the SSMU President.]~~

Comment [u12]: Redundant

Comment [u13]: Redundant

Comment [u14]: Moved to article 1

Article 7 – Consultative Forums

7.1 A consultative forum shall be established when any GA ~~which~~ fails to reach quorum or loses quorum at any point. Such a consultative forum may revert to a General Assembly if and when quorum is reached. ~~Should a Regular General Assembly fail to reach quorum half an hour after its scheduled time, the Speaker of Council shall turn it into a non-decisional Consultative forum addressing the items on the agenda.~~
~~7.2 A consultative forum shall not have the powers of a GA. However, the Speaker shall chair the meeting as though it were ongoing. Procedural motions under Robert's Rules, or the special rules of order for General Assemblies, shall be in order.]~~
~~7.3 The Speaker of Council shall report the minutes shall be circulated to Council before the next Council meeting, so that a discussion can be held on the issues debated at this Forum.~~
~~7.4 Motions tabled from a GA which loses quorum shall be inscribed upon the agenda of the next General Assembly or, at the discretion of the Speaker in consultation with the movers and the Steering Committee, upon the agenda of the next Council meeting. GA, regular or special, of the Society.~~

Comment [u15]: Redundant

~~7.5 In order to be included in the agenda, motions not voted upon by a GA due to a loss of quorum or failure to achieve quorum, must be resubmitted.]~~

~~7.6 The quorum for maintaining a consultative forum shall be fifty (50) students.]~~

Comment [u16]: This seems unnecessary

Comment [u17]: This seems arbitrary and unnecessary, since a consultative forum has no voting powers

Article 8 – Procedures of a Strike General Assembly

8.1 A “strike GA” shall be any General Assembly ~~to which~~ considering a motion ~~for a to strike, is brought, Regular or Special.~~

8.2 ~~The quorum for a strike General Assembly applies only to the motion to strike and not to any other agenda items. Should a motion to strike be brought to a General Assembly, the consideration of the strike motion will require the quorum specified in the Constitution (500 students from at least 4 faculties, with no more than 250 from any given faculty or school) for the purposes of a “strike” GA. The Assembly may consider other motions without the need for a strike quorum, provided it reaches the required regular quorum as per Article 29.4 of the Constitution.]~~

Comment [u18]: Redundant

Article 9 – Responsibilities & Publicity

9.1 It shall be the responsibility of the ~~Executive Committee~~ ~~Speaker~~ and all voting members of Council ~~to make all necessary efforts to accurately and extensively publicize General Assemblies, Regular or Special.~~

9.2 ~~The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the content and accuracy of all advertising for these Assemblies.~~

9.3 ~~In the case of Special GAs, the Executive Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of promoting and publicizing the GA to ensure that quorum is met. This committee shall be composed of The members parties bringing forward petitioning for a Special General Assembly the call for the Assembly [must provide at least ten (10) members as volunteers to promote the GA] and any motions to be placed on the as well as the SSMU President and Speaker.~~

Comment [u19]: Given the relatively short timeline, this is important to ensure that Council/the Speakers are not overwhelmed

9.3.1 ~~— This shall include, but not be limited to: poster, flyer, and making classroom announcements (when appropriate).~~

9.3.2 ~~— All costs for publicity and operation of the GA shall be provided by the SSMU.~~

9.4 ~~The SSMU’s efforts to publicize its GAs shall not contravene the Society’s Constitution or By-Laws, nor shall they have an egregious environmental impact.]~~

9.5 It shall be the responsibility of the ~~Vice-President~~ (Internal), ~~in conjunction with the President and Speaker, and the Executive Committee~~ to organize the logistics of the ~~actual General~~ Assembly, ~~including the physical location and instruments of the Assembly.~~

Comment [u20]: Redundant with other bylaws/policies

9.6 Following any General Assembly, a copy of the minutes and a written summary of the decisions made shall be made available on the SSMU website. ~~Article 10 – Items for the Agenda~~

10.1 ~~As per Article 29.2, [the Speaker shall receive items for the agenda up until 2 weeks in advance of the GA in question.]~~

10.2 ~~This deadline shall be at five pm (5pm), two weeks in advance of the GA.~~

10.3 ~~The Speaker shall make him or herself available at the SSMU office until this deadline.~~

10.4 ~~Motions may also be delivered up until this deadline at the SSMU front desk.]~~

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

10.5.1 ~~— Petitions to place items on the agenda shall require the name, signature, faculty and student number of all students in support of placing the motion on the agenda.]~~

10.6 ~~The Speaker or the SSMU Front Desk shall issue a receipt for all petitions for Special GAs and agenda items, along with a signed photocopy of said petitions.~~

10.7 ~~All petitions and motions should list a mover of the motion, with up to date contact information such as e-mail and if possible, a phone number.]~~

Comment [u21]: Moved elsewhere

Comment [SSMU Pres22]: Unnecessary level of detail

Comment [u23]: Moved elsewhere

Comment [u24]: Common sense / does not need to be included in the bylaws