



MOTION REGARDING CONDEMNATION OF TRANSPHOBIC EVENT AT THE NEWMAN CENTRE

Whereas, the SSMU Constitution mandates the SSMU to undertake all its endeavours “without discrimination on the basis of [...] gender identification” and commits it to “demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights [and] social justice”;¹

Whereas, on February 2, the Newman Catholic Students’ Society (NCSS) organized a panel at the Newman Centre on the topic of Catholic faith and transgender issues, featuring as panelists Douglas Farrow, a professor at the McGill School of Religious Studies and the current Kennedy Smith Chair in Catholic Studies, and Moira McQueen, a professor of moral theology at the University of Toronto;²

Whereas, both Farrow and McQueen have authored transphobic articles, respectively arguing against legal protection from discrimination on the basis of gender identity³ and against the use of hormone blockers and gender affirmation surgery;⁴

Whereas, following the raising of concerns by students and community members, the NCSS dissociated itself from the event, and later apologized for its failure to “take into consideration the lived experiences of trans people when initial plans were made”;⁵

¹ SSMU Constitution, Preamble

² <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2017/02/protestors-disrupt-transphobic-talk/>

³ <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/03/blurring-sexual-boundaries>

⁴ <http://www.eeparchy.com/blog/2016/03/22/bioethics-matters-catholic-teaching-on-transgender-gender-dysphoria/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/events/1875344382694695/permalink/1909806432581823/>



Whereas, despite community concerns regarding the event's adverse impact on trans people and the NCSS's dissociation from the event, the Newman Centre proceeded to hold the panel as planned as per Farrow's decision;⁶

Whereas, both Farrow and McQueen repeatedly engaged in transphobic speech during the panel;⁷

Whereas, the SSMU was involved in the promotion of the panel, having approved a promotional poster for display in the William Shatner University Centre;⁸

Be it resolved, that the SSMU condemn Douglas Farrow and Moira McQueen for their transphobic remarks;

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU condemn Douglas Farrow and the Newman Centre for the failure to cancel the panel on request from the NCSS, despite the event being organized by the NCSS;

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU advocate to the Dean of Arts for the reprimand of Douglas Farrow through the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs);

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU issue an apology for its role in the promotion of the February 2 panel, and, through the Office of the Vice-President (Internal), review its procedures to implement specific guidelines to prohibit discriminatory promotional material;

Be it further resolved, that, through the Office of the Vice-President (Internal), the SSMU extend an offer of logistical and promotional support to the NCSS, Queer McGill, and other groups in the event that such groups collaborate on an event centering trans perspectives on Catholicism;

⁶ <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2017/02/protestors-disrupt-transphobic-talk/>

⁷ <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2017/02/protestors-disrupt-transphobic-talk/>

⁸ <http://i.imgur.com/AfjHNA7.jpg>



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Be it further resolved, that the SSMU reaffirm its commitment to cultivating a trans-positive atmosphere at McGill, and, through the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs), collaborate with relevant groups in the achievement of this goal.

Moved by:

Kahli-Ann Douglas, Services Representative

Caitlin Mehrotra, Science Representative

Erin Sobat, Vice-President (University Affairs)

APPROVED