



# MOTION REGARDING STATEMENT ON MCGILL FOOD SERVICES CONTRACT 2019-02-21

Submitted for: February 21, 2019

**WHEREAS**, McGill food services' major contract is up for renewal at this moment;

**WHEREAS**, this contract will be in effect for the next five years;

**WHEREAS**, this contract influences the majority of food options that are on campus;

**WHEREAS**, we as students should have our collective voices given to the selection committee on the new contract;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Legislative Council endorse the statement in Appendix A and send the statement directly to the committee.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** all SSMU Councilors share the statement within their respective bodies.

Moved By:

Jacob Shapiro, *Vice-President University Affairs*

Tre Mansdoerfer, *President*

Victoria Flaherty, *Clubs Representative*

Brooke Callaghan, *Management Representative*

Brandon Hersh, *Dentistry Representative*



## (Appendix A)

# Letter to Regarding Upcoming Food Contract

Dear Members of the Call for Tenders Review Committee for the Upcoming Food Contract,

Five years ago, McGill [switched food service providers](#) from Aramark Canada to the Compass Group's Bon Appetit Management Company. While those names don't mean much to most students, Tim Hortons and Première Moisson do. For most of us, the switch meant replacing an affordable option with a pricey one. And, we communicated this: we told the [Deputy Provost](#); we told the [Principal](#). We explained that students are "[hungry for food accessibility](#)," and a year later, in late 2015, we had the data to prove it: [almost 80% of over 1300 students surveyed](#) by SSMU felt or strongly felt that food options on campus were not affordable. Yet, the cry largely fell on deaf ears because the University was already locked into the five year contract.

Five years later, we have a chance to avoid repeating this mistake. Indeed, as students, we have made clear that we want [a more affordable option](#). This time around, though, in the context of McGill's decision to [cutback its Eating Disorder Program](#) last year and thanks to increased awareness and education, including programs [like National Eating Awareness Week held on campus for the first time just this year](#), we understand and value the importance of "[raising awareness around eating disorders in relation to stigma and McGill life](#)" and ensuring that a wider range of student needs are considered when making these decisions. As [argued earlier this month](#), given the "well-documented correlation between nutrition and stress levels, fatigue, mood, and alertness," McGill has a responsibility to ensure that food options on campus generally, but in the library particularly, are affordable.

To be sure, affordable options are possible: [George Brown offers its students](#) a number of Tim Hortons, Pizza Pizza, and Bento Sushi locations across its campuses; the [Dalhousie Student Union Building](#) houses a range of options, including a Tim Hortons; [Thompson River University](#) in British Columbia, [Queens](#), and [Western](#) each have a Tim Hortons, among a wide selection of other affordable options. Though, affordability and health need not be in competition: [Henderson Cafe](#), a family owned business, has managed to last over twenty years on campus at the University of Regina due to its consistently affordable prices, and [Simon Fraser's Makenzie Cafe](#) manages to offer a large chili for under \$5 and a breakfast sandwich for \$4 while also offering free trade options.

We had hoped that wide student participation would have been solicited so as to ensure the best outcome for students and the community in general. Because of the importance of this decision, we feel it best to not wait any longer: we present you with this letter so to ensure that we have the time



and the opportunity to work together on this. In pursuing a new food contract, it is essential that the following two principles be applied:

- 1) **Affordability:** The selection committee should recognize that University students have limited budgets.
- 2) **Variety:** The selection committee should prioritize ensuring that students have a range of options that can accommodate varying preferences, diets, and dietary restrictions. Particular attention and care should be devoted to working with experts on the subjects of disordered eating and eating disorders so as to ensure that our campus is better equipped to offer choices that meet the needs of the high proportion of students experiencing disordered eating while also creating a climate that breeds greater awareness of the range of eating disorders.

While Midnight Kitchen does important work to provide accessible food to as many people as possible, there is a lot more work left to do on campus to ensure affordable access to food. Involving and listening to students in the process of negotiating a new contract is an important first step. Whereas students were left feeling disappointed and not heard in 2014, we hope that a more collaborative approach could lay a foundation from which we could then pursue other objectives, such as, for example: building out a resource of affordable food options on campus and around Montreal, like [Concordia](#); developing a tool that lets students search for individual menu items at a given price, [like Monash](#); or, reducing the required minimum meal plan cost, [like NYU](#).

In conclusion, just as students had voiced in 2014, we want to see more affordable options on campus. We want to ensure that students are involved in this process, and we hope that this can serve as foundation for further trust and collaboration so that we can more capably address problems within our community, like financial accessibility and general student health.

Signed,

The Students' Society of McGill University