



# MOTION REGARDING FREE TRIP OFFERS TO STUDENT LEADERS 2019-11-28

Submitted for: November 28, 2019

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of the Students' Society of McGill University ("SSMU") is the highest body of the SSMU as it supervises the management and administers the business and affairs of a student society of more than 20,000 members<sup>1</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, being a Director on the Board of Directors requires good judgement and integrity as it deals with the SSMU's most contentious issues;

**WHEREAS**, there are 12 directors on the Board of Directors, including four Legislative Council Representative positions nominated by the SSMU's Legislative Council every year;

**WHEREAS**, Directors that are nominated from among the members of the Legislative Council are, in some measure, accountable to the Legislative Council, in addition to the Society at large;

**WHEREAS**, one member of the Legislative Council who is among its representatives to the Board of Directors has accepted to participate in a trip to Israel, organized by Hillel Montreal, an organization independent of the SSMU;

**WHEREAS**, these trips, which are 10 nights in duration, include free airfare, room and board, and meals, and are thus not of a modest value;

**WHEREAS**, while it is unclear whether or not these trips were all offered on the basis of its recipients holding positions of student leadership, there is proof that this is the case in some instances<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, it is reasonable to believe that the acceptance of these trips by student leaders could create a perception of deriving a monetary benefit from holding such positions;

---

<sup>1</sup> [SSMU: "Board of Directors"](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Hillel Montreal: "Israel Trip Invitation"](#)



**WHEREAS**, the Councillor that has accepted such trips describe her participation to this trip as something personal and separate from their role as student leaders, in this case as Director on the Board of Directors<sup>3</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the Arts Undergraduate Society<sup>4</sup> and Science Undergraduate Society<sup>5</sup> have declared their opposition to the student leaders attending the trip;

**WHEREAS**, the Councillor's refusal to acknowledge that these trips could be related to their role as student leaders, even after being presented proof that it could be the case, shows a significant lack of judgment in understanding the offer that was made to them;

**WHEREAS**, the Legislative Council recognizes that the Board of Directors has not found the involved directors to be in a real or apparent conflict of interest as defined by the current Society policy;

**WHEREAS**, the Legislative Council recognizes that the Board of Directors has additionally found there to be a risk of conflict of interest in the future involving those directors, and suggested measures to mitigate such a risk;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU Legislative Council express its opinion that a perception of deriving a monetary benefit from holding positions of leadership would be prejudicial to the ability of organs of the Society to maintain confidence in their decision-making process;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU Legislative Council express its opinion that it is wise to decline gifts that may create an appearance of a conflict of interest, for example gifts that partially originate from the intervention of clubs of the SSMU, especially if the recipient of the gift may have decision-making responsibilities over those bodies of the Society;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU Legislative Council urge the Directors on the Board of Directors, as well as any members of student leadership, to decline the offer they might have received for the aforementioned trip to Israel on the basis of the reasons detailed above;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** upon the ratification of this motion by the Board of Directors, the Society takes the position that Councillor/Director Wright is in an apparent Conflict of Interest per the definitions in Section 2, Article 2a) and Section 4, Article 4f) of the Conflict of Interest Policy and on the basis of the reasons detailed above;

---

<sup>3</sup> [YouTube: SSMU Livestream - "SSMU Legislative Council - Nov. 14th"](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Arts Undergraduate Society - "Statement Regarding the Hillel Trip"](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Science Undergraduate Society - "Science Undergraduate Society SPECIAL EXECUTIVE MEETING"](#)



**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** upon the ratification of this motion by the Board of Directors, the Society takes the position that and imposes the remedy of requiring the Director to decline the offer for the aforementioned trip to Israel for this apparent Conflict of Interest per Section 8, Article 3 of the Conflict of Interest Policy;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT**, the SSMU Legislative Council demand the resignation of Councillor Wright from their Council Representative position on the Board of Directors, if she still chooses to participate in the aforementioned trip by Hillel, through an official statement, released to all members of the society, no later than December 1st;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** in the event that the Council Representative resigns from their Director position on the Board of Directors, the President be mandated to prepare a motion to hold a new nomination during the January 16, 2020 Legislative Council session to replace the Director(s) that would have resigned;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** upon the ratification of this motion by the Board of Directors, in the event that the Director does not decline the offer for the aforementioned trip to Israel, that the Board of Directors resolves to vote on the removal of the Director by reason of impropriety and delinquency of duties per Article 6.8 of the SSMU Constitution at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the 2020 year;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** the Legislative Council urge the Board of Directors to vote in favour of the resolution to remove the Director should it come to the Board of Directors for approval;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** the Legislative Council reaffirm its caution towards the acceptance of gifts of more than a modest value by officers of the Society, and especially in instances that may result in the perception of deriving a monetary benefit from holding leadership positions;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** the Legislative Council urge all of its members who have received valuable gifts that may be linked to their position to declare them appropriately, and strongly encourage members to avoid accepting gifts of more than a modest value that may create a perception of deriving a monetary benefit from their position or the perception of a conflict of interest.

Moved by:

Jeremy Garneau, *Senate Caucus Representative*

Seconded by:

Noah Merali, *Services Representative*