

# SSMU Policy and Plan Book

Policies and Plans of the SSMU

Updated as of 2020-02-13





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# Policies

Policies last for up to five (5) Years.

## Introduction to SSMU Policies

SSMU Policies and Plans provide long-term guidance for the affairs of the Society. Policies lay out the SSMU's values and positions, both internal and external, and may remain in effect for up to 5 years. Plans, which can remain in effect for up to 10 years, are intended to set out a concrete set of goals for projects, policies, and governance areas that require long-term planning. The Internal Regulations of Governance outline the procedures for creating and amending both forms of legislation.

The SSMU Policy Book (formerly the Policy Manual) was originally compiled in 2006-2007 and is updated annually based on the resolutions of the Legislative Council, General Assembly, and Board of Directors. It is therefore an evolving document that reflects the changing priorities of SSMU members as well as an organizational tool for the long-term planning of Society governance. In recent years, SSMU Policies and Plans have also shifted from primarily aspirational documents to more detailed guidelines containing extensive context, resources, and direction for the Executive Committee.

All Executives are expected to fulfill the mandates contained in this Policy Book to the best of their ability. Furthermore, proposals for additional Policies or Plans should consider the resource capacity of the Society to undertake new initiatives at any given time. General questions regarding SSMU governance and legislative practices can be directed to [president@ssmu.ca](mailto:president@ssmu.ca).



## Table of Policy Dates

The following table lists all of the SSMU's policies, as well as when they were adopted and when they are set to expire.

Policy	Adoption Date	Expiry Date
A. Accessibility Policy	April 7, 2016 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2021
B. Against Unpaid Internships Policy	March 9, 2017 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2022
C. Climate Justice Policy	November 14, 2019 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2020
D. Clubs and Services as SSMU's Highest Priority Policy	September 27, 2018 (Legislative Council) Adopted: April 04, 2019	January 1, 2024
E. Conflict of Interest Policy	February 21, 2019 (Legislative Council) Amended: December 2, 2019	May 1, 2023
F. Council Transparency Policy	October 18, 2018 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2023
G. Effective Committees Policy	February 07, 2019 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2023
H. Equity Policy	April 05, 2018 (Legislative Council) Amended: April 11, 2013 Amended: April 9, 2015 Amended: April 7, 2016 Amended: March 23, 2017	January 1, 2023
I. Free Menstrual Hygiene Products Policy	October 26, 2016 (Legislative Council)	October 20, 2021





J. Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy	October 11, 2018 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2023
K. Global Access to Medicines Policy	December 1, 2016 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2021
L. Human Resources Policy	April 7, 2016 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2021
M. Implementation of a Fall Reading Break Policy	March 21, 2018 (Referendum)	January 1, 2023
N. Indigenous Solidarity Policy	March 31, 2016 (Legislative Council) Amended: March 9, 2017	January 1, 2021
O. Smoking on Campus Policy	April 7, 2016 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2021
P. Support for Family Care Policy	October 15, 2016 (Legislative Council) Amended: March 31, 2016 Amended: February 7, 2019	January 1, 2021
Q. Sustainability Policy	April 5, 2018 (Legislative Council) Adopted: April 11, 2013	January 1, 2023
R. VP Internal Intoxication and V.I.P Culture at SSMU Events Policy	September 27, 2018 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2023
S. SSMU Mental Health Policy and Plan	January 30, 2020 (Legislative Council)	May 1, 2023
T. SSMU Francisation Plan	January 30, 2020 (Legislative Council)	January 1, 2023



## A. ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/04/07

Expires: 2021/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

### Background

As outlined in its constitution, the Students' Society of McGill University has a strong commitment to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights and social justice and “commits itself to groups, programs, and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or social class.”<sup>1</sup>

The Society has shown leadership in its efforts to promote equity and anti-oppression through the development of an Equity Policy and the institutionalization of equity programming and advocacy, but to date has not placed a focus on the support of students with disabilities or on the accessibility of the Society and campus at large in collaboration with this community. In order to stand in solidarity with students with disabilities, the adoption of this Accessibility Policy serves as the operationalization of a commitment to ensuring that the Society prioritize accessibility and the unique needs of students with disabilities.

In order to fulfill this commitment, the Society must acknowledge and address the current barriers and issues of access that exist on the McGill campus and on University campuses at large. The barriers experienced by students with disabilities extend far beyond the physical built environment on campus and affect access to essential support services, participation in the classroom and learning environment, and involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Important first steps towards increasing access for students with disabilities have been taken at McGill University, including the implementation of a Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities,<sup>2</sup> the establishment of the University's Joint Board Senate Committee on People with Disabilities, and the application of barrier-free design standards to renovation and construction

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<sup>1</sup> SSMU Constitution, amended March 18, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities, last amended by McGill Senate in 2005.



projects<sup>3</sup> on a campus that still lacks barrier free access to many physical spaces<sup>4</sup>. However, substantial barriers to access remain in the built environment, learning environment, and student life as a whole. Recognizing that the number of students with disabilities on campus continues to increase alongside rising mental health concerns in the McGill community, while noting that not all individuals who have a mental illness identify as having a disability, the need to develop a culture of accessibility on campus is pressing.

In light of the lack of accessibility associated with many aspects of student life and learning, the Society must show leadership in meeting the needs of Members and building a strong and more equitable community through demonstrating its commitment to accessibility and the support of students with disabilities. This involves engaging with issues of disability and ableism in meaningful ways through solidarity and advocacy, while recognizing that disability does not exist in isolation and often intersects with other identities, such as race, gender and class, to disproportionately marginalize certain individuals and/or groups.

This marginalization continues to exist where accommodations are made available, as accommodations made to students with disabilities often place undue burden on the individual requesting accommodation. The Society recognizes that it is the fundamental responsibility of the institution to ensure that individuals are not expected to shoulder the burden of their own accommodation and aims to be cognizant to avoid the double-burdening of students with disabilities and instead act in meaningful solidarity.

Through the implementation of this Accessibility Policy, the Society aims to demonstrate its active commitment to the promotion of universal access and the support of students with disabilities within the operations of the Society, as well as to advocate for the prioritization of accessibility at the university-wide level.

## Scope

This Accessibility Policy shall apply to all individuals and bodies involved in decision making processes for the Society, including but not limited to Directors, Officers, Councillors, Senators, Committees and Committee Members, and Staff.

This policy shall serve as a reference and mandate to all Society decision makers and shall act as a guide for the Society to demonstrate its commitment to universal access and respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities.

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<sup>3</sup> McGill University Barrier-Free Design Standards, McGill Facilities

<sup>4</sup> Guide to Accessibility on the Downtown Campus, Office for Students with Disabilities



This policy shall apply to all activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the Society, all materials published by the Society, and all promotion taking place within the William Shatner University Centre.

## Definitions

The definitions outlined below are only for the purposes of this policy. The Society acknowledges that there is no neutral language to discuss or describe disability, and that individuals may identify or choose to define these terms differently.

**Ableism:** Ableism, which can be conscious or unconscious, refers to practices and dominant attitudes in society that privilege able-bodied individuals. Ableism is the belief system that underlies negative attitudes, stigma, and discrimination against people with disabilities.

**Accessibility:** Accessibility refers to the ability for everyone, regardless of disability or a difference in needs, to access, use, and benefit from everything within their environment. As a practice, it aims to facilitate the full participation of individuals with disabilities in society.

**Barrier:** Barriers refer to circumstances or obstacles that prevent the full participation of an individual in a given activity or in society at large. Barriers may include, but are not limited to, economic, systemic, environmental, attitudinal, psychological, physical, academic, informational or communication-based, or technological factors.

**Disability:** Disability refers to an exclusion or limitation that may restrict the full participation of an individual in society as a result of systemic barriers, including, but not limited to, physical, attitudinal, and social factors.

**Disadvantage:** A circumstance or a situation that puts an individual or a group of people in an inferior or less favourable position compared to others, resulting in compromised access to resources or opportunities.

**Universal Design:** Universal Design (UD) is a concept that promotes the production and creation of physical spaces, products, services, and built environments that allows for use by everyone to the greatest extent possible. This process involves continuous improvement toward the ultimate goal of full inclusion.

**Universal Design for Learning :** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) refers to a teaching approach that encourages diverse methods of instruction, assessment, accommodation, and resource provision with the goal of meeting the needs of the greatest number and most diverse group of learners possible. The goal of UDL is to create a learning culture in which diversity is respected and embraced, and where all students are encouraged to learn and demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.



## Framework

The Society will formally adopt a framework for accessibility based on its values of equity and anti-oppression, and the Society shall refer to these fundamental principles in advocacy for and implementation of accessibility within the Society, on campus, and in society at large.

The Society's framework of accessibility shall be based upon the following fundamental values and concepts:

**Social Model of Disability.** The Society shall operate under the understanding of a social model of disability, which focuses on the structures and barriers that impose limitations on certain groups or individuals. The social model of disability maintains that systemic barriers to participation and exclusion, including physical, attitudinal, social, and other factors, are the primary contributing factors to an individual's experience of disability, and it is therefore society that disables a person, not their impairment. The model describes an impairment as the difference in ability of an individual, while disability refers to the exclusion resulting from societal and systemic barriers.

**Universal Access.** The Society shall, in its advocacy and programming, work towards the promotion of universal access, with the goal of all individuals having the opportunity for full participation in society. To accomplish this objective, the Society will draw on the principles of Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning as defined in the Policy.

**Anti-Oppression.** The Society will advocate and organize around the principles of an anti-oppressive mandate. Anti-oppression recognizes that various axes of oppression, including disability, contribute to power imbalances that differentially marginalize certain communities. The Society shall confront these historical and current inequities, and promote and practice anti-oppression in all facets of the implementation of accessibility within the Society.

**Solidarity.** The Society will act in meaningful solidarity with individuals with disabilities through maintaining relationships with affected communities, facilitating opportunities for self-advocacy wherever possible, including a diversity of voices in Society decision making, and striving for the participation of affected individuals in all advocacy and policy. Society shall follow the leadership of and defer to individuals with disabilities advocating on their own behalf where desired.

## Implementation

This Accessibility Policy shall mandate the Society to take action in six areas associated with barriers to accessibility within the context of the Society: communication and promotions; programming and events; physical access; student groups; advocacy; and Society governance.



The Society shall strive for the fulfillment of all of the mandates outlined below:

## 1. Communications and Promotions

All Society communication projects must be undertaken with full respect for accessibility and with the goal of ensuring that all Society information is accessible. This goal will be operationalized through the following means:

1.1. Accessible design standards for online communication and web content shall be incorporated into the Society's Communication Plan and reviewed on an annual basis by the Vice-President (Internal Affairs).

1.2 All online publications, including the Society's Website, shall be adapted to ensure accessibility of web content through the implementation of accessible design standards into the Society's Website. All updates to the Society's online presence shall take into consideration the accessibility of the information presented through consideration of the use of fonts, graphics, colours, headings, content organization, and other factors affecting the accessibility of information online.

1.3. All communications and promotions regarding Society events that are published in print or online must explicitly include basic accessibility information about the event in question, including the physical accessibility of the venue and the availability of additional accessibility factors, including but not limited to whisper or sign language translation and childcare.

1.4. All external promotional materials advertised by the Society must include explicit accessibility information to be considered for promotion.

1.4.1. Submissions to the Society Listserv or social media channels that do not include accessibility information where applicable, including the physical accessibility of venues and the availability of additional accessibility accommodations, including but not limited to whisper or sign language translation and childcare, shall not be accepted nor promoted through the Society Listserv.

1.4.2. Submissions of event posters for approval for posting in the Shatner Building that do not include accessibility information where applicable, including the physical accessibility of venues and the availability of additional accommodations, including but not limited to whisper or sign language translation and childcare, shall not be accepted nor posted in the Shatner Building.

## 2. Programming and Events

All Society events must be physically accessible and must make every effort to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that all Members have equal access.



2.1. All Society events must make every effort to be accessible to all Members, and must be held in venues that are physically accessible to individuals with limited mobility.

2.2. All Society events must publicize in their promotions a list of accessibility services available upon request, including but not limited to whisper or sign language translation, childcare, and adapted physical access.

2.3. The Society shall promote and encourage the use of accessible venues for events across campus, and shall advocate for the inclusion of accessibility training in the planning for all cross-faculty events in which the Society participates, including but not limited to Orientation Week, through the Office of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs).

2.4. The Society, through the Equity Committee and the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs), shall raise awareness of accessibility issues on campus and in the community at large through hosting at least one annual event with a focus on accessibility and disability.

2.5. The Society shall take accessibility into consideration when making determinations about the allocation of Fees distributed by the Funding Committee to programming and events, through the Office of the Vice-President (Finance).

2.5.1. The Funding Committee shall incorporate at least one question soliciting accessibility information about the event or project seeking funding into the Funding Application.

2.5.2. The Funding Committee shall consider the physical accessibility of event venues prior to making funding decisions.

### 3. Physical Access

The Society, through the office of the Vice-President (Operations) shall ensure that the integrity of the William Shatner University Centre as an accessible space is maintained and actively improved upon in order to ensure the continuance of access for individuals with disabilities.

3.1 The Society will address cosmetic access needs in the William Shatner University Centre, including but not limited to the transition of lighting to non-fluorescent, improving building signage, increasing the number of push buttons in the building and ensuring their functionality, implementing even grating on floors, changing knobs to handles, ensuring accessible seating lounges and cafeterias, and widely publicizing accessibility information for the building on the Society's website.

3.1.1. Prior to the development of renovation plans within the William Shatner University Centre, the Society shall consider the implications of the renovation for accessibility and shall ensure the application of barrier free design standards.



3.1.2. The Society shall make every effort to consult and involve the Office for Students with Disabilities in the planning process for potential renovation or construction projects to ensure that spaces within the building remain accessible.

3.2. Accessibility of projects and initiatives within the building shall be taken into consideration prior to the funding of such projects from the Space Fee Fund as allocated to internal Society projects. The Committee responsible for these allocations shall be responsible for reporting to Legislative Council on the accessibility implications of the projects selected for funding.

3.3. In order to facilitate continuous improvement in the accessibility of the William Shatner University Centre, the Society shall execute an Accessibility Audit of the building on a bi-annual basis and shall develop a series of recommendations to Legislative Council for making spaces within the building more accessible.

## 4. Student Groups

The Society, through the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure the consideration of accessibility and inclusion among student groups through the provision of resources and awareness regarding accessibility issues.

4.1. The Vice-President (Student Life) shall be responsible for educating student groups on issues of access through the inclusion of accessibility information in training materials made available to student groups, including but not limited to the inclusion of accessibility content in Club Workshops, at the Services Summit, and in the Society's online resources.

4.2. The Vice-President (Student Life) shall be responsible for the production and annual maintenance of a master list of accessible venues to be identified as priority venues for event bookings for student groups. The accessible venue list shall be paralleled by a "blacklist" of event venues that are physically inaccessible, for which booking events shall be discouraged.

4.3. The Vice-President (Student Life) shall be responsible for the production and maintenance of an Equitable Event Planning Guide to be circulated to student groups as a resource for hosting accessible events with the support of the Vice-President (University Affairs).

## 5. Advocacy

The Society, through the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and its student membership on relevant University committees, shall make every effort to promote a culture of accessibility within the McGill community at large, including advocating for the prioritization of accessibility on campus.





5.1. The Society shall advocate for McGill to prioritize improving the accessibility of the physical, social, and learning environment of the University. This should include but is not limited to the accessibilization of entrances to all buildings on campus; the implementation of Universal Design for Learning on campus in both curriculum and assessment design; ensuring an accessible work environment for all University staff; and the prioritization of funding for accessibility initiatives and services for students with disabilities.

5.2. The Society shall advocate for the inclusion of the Office for Students with Disabilities or an accessibility officer in the consultation, decision making, and planning processes for all renovation projects on campus.

5.3. The Society shall advocate for the University to develop a University-wide accessibility policy that includes a timeline for consultation, implementation, and regular reporting to Senate.

5.4. The Society will advocate for the elimination of any and all physical, social, and financial barriers preventing a student from receiving the necessary accommodations to fully access academic or social services provided by the Society or the University.

5.5. The Society shall stand in solidarity with any member of the McGill community who is discriminated against or prohibited from full participation within the University due to their disability.

## 6. Society Governance

The Society, through the Office of the President, shall make every effort to increase the accessibility of participation of its membership within the Society's governance structures and will work towards eliminating any and all barriers to participation in decision making.

6.1. The Society recognizes that there currently exist barriers to participation in Society governance, including but not limited to the time commitment associated with serving as an elected representative and the length and intensity of meetings of the Society's governance bodies.

6.2. The Society will provide reasonable accommodations when required in a manner that does not compromise the functioning of the Society in order to make participation in Society governance accessible to all students.

6.3. The President shall be responsible for maintaining an accessible work environment for all staff of the Society and for ensuring the implementation of reasonable accommodations where required.



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6.4. The President shall be responsible for conducting an audit of all the governance processes and positions of leadership within the Society with attention to the social, attitudinal, and physical barriers limiting participation.

## 7. Reporting

All Officers responsible for the implementation of the Accessibility Policy through targeted action points shall report to the Equity Committee on a bi-annual basis and to the Legislative Council on an annual basis regarding the fulfillment of their responsibilities as outlined in the Accessibility Policy.



## B. AGAINST UNPAID INTERNSHIPS POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2017/03/09

Expires: 2022/01/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

### 1. Introduction

Unpaid internships exist in a legal grey area where, while ostensibly regulated, they are not clearly defined, restricted, or monitored. As a result, they facilitate an environment for companies to profit from unpaid student labour. In accordance with the Constitution and Equity Policy, the SSMU has a longstanding history of leadership on issues of human rights and social justice. Furthermore, the SSMU Policy on Accessible Education calls for the elimination of all financial barriers to education and training. As a result, the SSMU has a responsibility to advocate against unpaid and exploitative labour practices and to demand accessible, quality experiential learning opportunities for all McGill students.

To this end, at the Winter 2015 General Assembly on March 15, 2015, the SSMU adopted a “Motion Regarding Unpaid Internships.”<sup>5</sup> This resolved that, among other mandates, “the SSMU develop a policy, in consultation with interested student groups and McGill University, clarifying when unpaid internships should be considered illegal for the purposes of this motion.” In the interest of furthering this mandate, the SSMU hired a researcher in Summer 2016 to investigate the specific issues posed by unpaid internships for McGill students and to put forward recommendations for improvement. A policy was developed on the basis of this research in order to institutionalize existing and future measures for advocacy and awareness-building around unpaid internships.

According to Article 9 of the McGill University Charter of Student Rights, every student has a right to a quality education. The University’s corresponding obligation is fulfilled where: (a) the University offers an education capable of providing students with an adequate level of competence in the relevant field of study, (b) the University makes every reasonable effort to maintain the quality of education it dispenses, and (c) the University makes every reasonable effort to provide an appropriate environment for learning and assessment activities. As internships, particularly those taken for course credit or circulated by the university, are designed to further a student’s education, the administration must also be held accountable for their quality and accessibility.

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<sup>5</sup> “Motion Regarding Unpaid Internships,” Students’ Society of McGill University (2015).

<http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Motion-Regarding-Unpaid-Internships1.pdf>



## 2. Context

Students required or opting to complete an internship as part of their educational program are frequently exposed to performing work as an employee, yet not being compensated as one. Furthermore, many students experience intersectional barriers to accessing career and experiential learning opportunities that are exacerbated by the prevalence of unpaid positions.

Frequently, unpaid labour is justified as an opportunity to develop skills, experience, and connections—to get one's "foot in the door." However, evidence demonstrates that unpaid internships are no more likely than paid internships or entry-level jobs to provide young workers with valuable experience. Furthermore, in some contexts unpaid internships ultimately replace paid, entry-level jobs and contribute to further youth unemployment. Reference letters and CV-building are not substitutes for remuneration for any form of labour, particularly as this consistently exacerbates existing inequalities. There is little screening, tracking, or enforcement of internship regulations by governments or public institutions such as universities.

Relevant statistics on unpaid internships include the following:

1. Almost one-fourth of youth are unemployed, underemployed, or have given up looking for work.<sup>6</sup>
2. Unpaid internships exacerbate social inequalities by excluding from many prestigious and meaningful fields those students who cannot afford to work for free.<sup>7</sup>
3. Unpaid internships are already illegal in most situations in numerous jurisdictions across Canada, but continue to exist because of lax enforcement.<sup>8</sup>
4. Unpaid internships risk eliminating entry-level jobs and lowering starting wages for all, but particularly young workers.<sup>9</sup>

There is no advantage in terms of hiring rates or starting salary for graduates with unpaid internship experience, but significant advantages in hiring and starting salary for those with paid internship experience.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Youth Unemployment and Underemployment in Canada," Canadian Teachers' Federation (2014).

<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/Brief-Youth-Unemployment.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> "Why Unpaid Internships Mean Inequality of Opportunity," Macleans (2013).

<http://www.macleans.ca/economy/business/why-unpaid-internships-means-inequality-of-opportunity/>

<sup>8</sup> "What is the law?" Canadian Interns Association (2015). <http://www.internassociation.ca/what-is-the-law/>

<sup>9</sup> Marco Chown Oved, "Unpaid internships: the most precarious work of all," The Toronto Star (2013).

[http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/03/05/unpaid\\_internships\\_the\\_most\\_precarious\\_work\\_of\\_all.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/03/05/unpaid_internships_the_most_precarious_work_of_all.html)

<sup>10</sup> "Class of 2013: Paid Interns Outpace Unpaid Peers in Job Offers, Salaries," National Association of Colleges and Employers" (2013).

<http://www.nacweb.org/s05292013/paid-unpaid-interns-job-offer.aspx>



5. In one Ontario inspection, 42% of companies with interns were found to be breaking the Employment Standards Act's conditions on internship remuneration.<sup>11</sup>

Campaigns for the fair remuneration of unpaid work are not new in Quebec or Canada. In addition to bargaining and mobilization by labour unions and community groups, numerous organizations have addressed issues with unpaid stages, or mandatory internship placements for professional programs. In December 2016, the Quebec Fédération interuniversitaires des doctorant.e.s en psychologie (FIDEP) succeeded in obtaining remunerated internships for doctoral students in psychology, following an almost four-month long boycott.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the Campagne de revendications et d'actions interuniversitaires des étudiantes et étudiants en éducation en stage (CRAIES) roundtable has been advocating since 2014 for the remuneration of stages for education students, while the comités unitaires sur le travail étudiant (CUTE) seek to obtain remuneration for all students in an educational training situation in Quebec. In Ontario, Students Against Unpaid Internship Scams previously called on the provincial government to better enforce, communicate, and strengthen legal protections for student interns.

McGill students similarly face issues with unpaid stages; a lack of centralized coordination or screening of internship postings; limited student literacy on labour rights and protections; and a shortage of paid experiential learning and employment opportunities. Specific concerns include the quality, supervision, and protections associated with education stages;<sup>13</sup> unpaid positions with private corporations (such as start-up ventures or media companies) and major non-profit organizations (such as public museums or inter-governmental agencies); a lack of academic credit offered for applied opportunities;<sup>14</sup> and unpaid or for-cost internship and volunteerism programs offered by various student and external groups.

### 3. Scope

This Policy shall apply to:

1. Individuals involved in decision making processes for the Society, including Directors, Officers, Councillors, Senators, Committee Members, and Staff;
2. Clubs, Services, and Independent Student Groups (ISGs);
3. Activities and events hosted, funded, or promoted by the Society, including all those occurring within the University Centre;

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<sup>11</sup> "Blitz finds nearly half of companies with interns break law," Toronto Star (2014).

[https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/09/30/blitz\\_finds\\_nearly\\_half\\_of\\_companies\\_with\\_interns\\_break\\_law.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/09/30/blitz_finds_nearly_half_of_companies_with_interns_break_law.html)

<sup>12</sup> "Rémunération de l'internat en psychologie : Une victoire pour les doctorant.e.s et la santé mentale au Québec," Newswire (2016).

<http://www.newswire.ca/fr/news-releases/remuneration-de-linternat-en-psychologie--une-victoire-pour-les-doctorantes-et-la-sante-mentale-au-quebec-607758076.html>

<sup>13</sup> "Speak louder than racism," The McGill Daily (2016). <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2016/02/speak-louder-than-racism/>

<sup>14</sup> "Question Regarding Faculty Internship Programs," McGill University Senate (2016).

[https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question\\_and\\_response\\_regarding\\_faculty\\_internship\\_programs.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question_and_response_regarding_faculty_internship_programs.pdf)



4. Materials and communications published or distributed by the Society.

## 4. Definitions

**Disadvantage:** A circumstance or situation that places an individual or a group of people in an inferior or less favourable position compared to others, resulting in compromised access to resources or opportunities.

**Employee:** A person who works for an employer and who is entitled to a wage. According to the Quebec Act Respecting Labour Standards, this also includes a worker who is a party to a contract, under which they:

- I. undertakes to perform specified work for a person within the scope and in accordance with the methods and means determined by that person;
- II. undertakes to furnish, for the carrying out of the contract, the material, equipment, raw materials or merchandise chosen by that person and to use them in the manner indicated by him or her; and
- III. keeps, as remuneration, the amount remaining to him or her from the sum he has received in conformity with the contract, after deducting the expenses entailed in the performance of that contract;

**Employer:** Any person who has work done by an employee.

**Internship:** An experiential learning opportunity that integrates knowledge gained in the classroom into a supervised role in an employment setting, including a defined start and end date, job description, and clearly identified learning outcomes and evaluation related to a student's field of study. Not simply an operational work experience that just happens to be conducted by a student.

**Wage:** Remuneration in currency and benefits having a pecuniary value due for the work or services performed by an employee.

## 5. Legislation

Currently, Quebec and Ontario have the most developed legislation in Canada on the question of unpaid internships, which attempts to clarify under what conditions these are permitted. While such standards remain insufficient, ambiguous, and poorly enforced, they can provide a helpful legal reference when assessing existing opportunities.

### **Quebec Act Respecting Labour Standards:**

Unpaid internships are illegal except:



1. Internships that are part of a program provided by an approved educational institution;
2. internships where the intern is a student working for a not for profit organization with social or community purposes;
3. internships that are part of a programme of vocational training.

## Ontario Employment Standards Act

Unpaid internships are illegal except:

1. internships that are part of a program approved by a secondary school board, college, or university;
2. internships that provide training for certain professions (e.g. architecture, law, public accounting, veterinary science, dentistry, optometry);
3. internships that meet the six conditions required for the intern to be considered a “trainee”:
  - I. The training is similar to that which is given in a vocational school;
  - II. The training is for the benefit of the individual;
  - III. The person providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the individual while he or she is being trained;
  - IV. The individual does not displace employees of the person providing the training;
  - V. The individual is not accorded a right to become an employee of the person providing the training;
  - VI. The individual is advised that he or she will receive no remuneration for the time that he or she spends in training.

## Canada Labour Code

Federal legislation contains no exclusions for students, trainees or interns, which has resulted in a huge lack of clarity on the legality of internships for government and federally-regulated organizations (e.g. banks, broadcasters, and airlines). However, so long as an intern is performing “work” (which includes training), they are entitled to the minimum wage of the relevant province ([Policy on Hours of Work](#)).

## 6. Screening Criteria

Some unpaid internship opportunities may in fact qualify as legitimate training experiences. However, clear screening criteria are required in order to ensure that such opportunities are not merely exploitative. When assessing the validity of unpaid internships for the purposes of this policy, it is recommended that the following criteria from the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) be considered:<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “CACEE Statement on Unpaid Internships” Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (2012).  
[http://www.cacee.com/CACEE\\_Statement\\_on\\_Unpaid\\_Internships.html](http://www.cacee.com/CACEE_Statement_on_Unpaid_Internships.html)



6.1 The training is similar to field-specific or applied training that can be found at a post-secondary institution.

6.2 The training is for the benefit of the intern.

6.3 The organization providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the intern while he or she is being trained.

6.4 The intern does not displace employees of the organization providing the training.

6.5 The intern is not accorded a right to become an employee of the organization providing the training.

6.6 The intern is advised that he or she will receive no remuneration for the time that he or she spends in training.

6.7 The skills and/or experience gained must be transferable to other employment settings.

6.8 There are clearly defined and articulated learning outcomes for the intern to realize by the conclusion of the internship.

6.9 Regular supervision is given by a professional pertinent to the internship.

6.10 Internships must be for a defined period of time.

For the purposes of this policy, the above exceptions do not apply to professional stages or internships with private companies, public institutions, or intergovernmental agencies.

In a response to a question at the Senate meeting of November 23, 2016, the Provost indicated that all McGill internship and career offices follow the CACEE framework as a guideline for vetting placements that are not degree program requirements.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Concordia University has developed salary guidelines<sup>17</sup> and sample responsibilities<sup>18</sup> for internships based on corresponding academic program, which provides a clear guide for both students and supervisors to assess fair remuneration and learning outcomes in these instances.

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<sup>16</sup> "Question Regarding University Regulation of Unpaid Internships," McGill University Senate (2016).  
[https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question\\_and\\_response\\_regarding\\_unpaid\\_internships.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question_and_response_regarding_unpaid_internships.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> "Student salary guidelines," Concordia University Institute of Co-operative Education (2017).  
<http://www.concordia.ca/academics/co-op/employers/student-salary-guidelines.html>

<sup>18</sup> "Sample Co-Op student responsibilities," Concordia University Institute of Co-operative Education (2017).  
<http://www.concordia.ca/academics/co-op/employers/sample-co-op-student-responsibilities.html>





## 7. Implementation

This Policy shall mandate the Society to take action in four key areas related to unpaid internships: education and awareness; programming and student groups; university advocacy; and external advocacy. These efforts should be undertaken in collaboration and consultation with other student associations on campus. The Society shall strive for the fulfillment of all of the mandates outlined below.

### 7.1. Education and Awareness

The SSMU shall make efforts to educate all Members on the negative impacts, legality, and protections related to unpaid internships. This shall include the following actions:

7.1.1. The Offices of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) shall make information regarding the legality, criteria, and protections surrounding unpaid internships available on the Society's website as well as through other communication channels as appropriate.

7.1.2. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and Vice-President (External Affairs) shall distribute informational resources regarding the legality of unpaid internships and available protections through annual educational campaigns and third-party events (including but not limited to relevant job fairs, volunteer fairs, and career information sessions).

7.1.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall make information on this Policy available to all existing and prospective student groups.

### 7.2. Programming and Student Groups

The SSMU shall ensure that all constituent and affiliated student groups, programming, and events of the Society do not offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities. This shall include the following actions:

7.2.1. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure that Club, Service, and/or Independent Student Group status is not granted to groups that offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities as one of their primary activities.

7.2.2. The Office of the Vice-President (Finance) shall ensure that SSMU funding is not allocated to groups or activities that offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities.



7.2.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Finance) shall ensure that sponsorship and contractual agreements are not made with businesses that offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities.

7.2.4. The Office of the Vice-President (Operations) shall ensure that no events are approved or hosted within the University Centre that offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities. In the case of events where full oversight may not be possible, educational materials shall be distributed regarding the legality, criteria, and protections surrounding unpaid internships.

## 7.3 University Advocacy

The SSMU shall advocate for the improved fairness, quality, and legality of internships for Members, and shall communicate with relevant McGill University offices including, but not limited to, the Internship Offices Network (ION), Career Planning Services (CaPS), and Faculty internship or student affairs offices. This shall include the following actions:

7.3.1. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for the screening and regulation of all internship opportunities by the university before they are advertised to students through any official channel(s), in order to ensure compliance with legal regulations and the criteria outlined in this Policy.

7.3.2. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for adequate statistic-tracking by the university in order to gauge the accessibility of internship and funding opportunities on campus.

7.3.3. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for the establishment of salary guidelines and suggested learning plans for all internships based on academic program.

7.3.4. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for the elimination of tuition fees charged by McGill University for credits obtained in exchange for completing an internship, notwithstanding reasonable administrative charges to offset the limited supervisory costs associated with granting credits for off-campus internships.

7.3.5. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for all McGill programs and offices related to career development to actively find, promote, circulate, and encourage internships that pay student workers a fair wage for their work and obey all applicable employment laws.



7.3.6. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for the improved quality, equity, and accessibility of internship opportunities offered through McGill University and affiliated organizations, including the associated recourse and reporting mechanisms within the university.

## 7.4 External Advocacy

The SSMU shall advocate for the required remuneration of internship opportunities in collaboration with any relevant external groups. This shall include the following actions:

7.4.1 The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall liaise with campus labour unions and staff associations on any concerns, priorities, or initiatives related to unpaid internships, including through the Inter-Union Council (IUC) and the McGill Communities Council (MCC).

7.4.2 The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall facilitate collaboration between Members, external advocacy groups, student federations, labour unions, and campaigns related to unpaid internships, locally, provincially, and federally.

7.4.3 The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall advocate for the stronger enforcement of existing provincial legislation and the development of stricter requirements for unpaid internships, including the remuneration of all professional stages.

7.4.4 The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall advocate for the increased provincial and federal funding of quality paid internship and work opportunities for students.

## 8. Reporting

All Officers responsible for the implementation of this Policy shall report to the Legislative Council on an annual basis regarding the fulfillment of their responsibilities as outlined above.



## C. CLIMATE JUSTICE POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2019/11/14

Expires: 2022/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

### 1. Scope

This policy shall apply to Directors, Councilors, Officers, Senators, Commissioners, Permanent Staff, and all others involved in Society decision-making processes for the duration of their formal involvement with the Society. It shall be used as a guide for decision-making and a plan for taking action on the climate crisis. This policy does not necessarily represent the approach to addressing the climate crisis espoused by any faculty association, departmental association, or SSMU affiliated Club, Service, or Independent Student Group.

### 2. Definitions

#### 2.1. Global North

The Global North refers to the 59 countries with very high human development and the 53 countries with high human development as reported in the United Nations Development Programme<sup>19</sup>. Most, but not all, of these countries are located in the Northern Hemisphere.

#### 2.2. Global South

The Global South refers to the countries of the rest of the world, most of which are located in the Southern Hemisphere. It includes both countries with medium human development (39 countries) and low human development (38 countries).

#### 2.3. Oil Sands

Oil sand is a naturally occurring mixture of sand, clay or other minerals, water and bitumen, which is a heavy and extremely viscous oil that must be treated before it can be used by refineries to produce usable fuels such as gasoline and diesel

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<sup>19</sup> [United Nations Development Programme: "2018 Update"](#)



## 2.4. Plan Nord

The Plan Nord was an initiative by the Quebec government in May 2011 aimed at encouraging natural resource extraction and economic development in Northern Quebec past the 49th parallel. This policy had, under the Liberal Party of Quebec, received support from the mining industry and the Coalition Avenir du Quebec, and opposition from Indigenous and environmental groups<sup>2021</sup>.

## 2.5. Divestment

Fossil fuel divestment involves institutions, governments, and investment funds selling away shares in fossil fuel and related stocks. Divestment campaigns place high value in ethical principles and also emphasize applying political and economic pressure to curb the harmful effects of the fossil fuel industry. The ultimate aims of divestment is reverting the anthropogenic contributions to the climate crisis in a just manner, placing a fair share of onus on the producers of fossil fuels<sup>22</sup>.

## 2.6 Climate Justice

Within the fight against the man-made climate crisis, this term comes from the understanding that the climate crisis has unequal effects on global populations, with communities in the Global South being more susceptible to many of the negative effects of the climate crisis such as droughts, mass migration, and flooding. It recognizes that certain populations have greater constraints in combating the climate crisis, and calls on communities in the Global North to compensate with rapid decarbonization, progressive immigration policies, and other socially just solutions, while taking equity, circumstance, and development into account. Moreover, a Climate Justice analysis acknowledges that the populations that have, through heavy industrialization, contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions are the least likely to experience the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

# 3. Context

## 3.1. Climate Crisis

Over 97% of actively publishing climate scientists agree that the primary cause of the climate crisis is anthropogenic in nature<sup>23</sup>. In particular, the burning of fossil fuels and the subsequent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations is responsible for the majority of observed warming for the last fifty years. According to the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) “Global

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<sup>20</sup> [CBC News: “Alliance Romaine protest of Plan Nord”](#)

<sup>21</sup> [McGill Daily: “Plan Nord”](#)

<sup>22</sup> [ScienceDirect: “Summary of the Divestment argument”](#)

<sup>23</sup> [iopScience: “Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming”](#)



Warming of 1.5 °C” report, anthropogenic activity has caused “approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels.” Given present rates, there is high confidence that there will be 1.5 °C of warming by 2030 to 2052. This degree of warming will have severe and irreversible consequences for both the near future and for years to come — even if emissions are then slowed. The World Health Organization suspects that over 250,000 additional deaths will occur per year due to the climate crisis between 2030 and 2050<sup>24</sup>.

### 3.1.1 Sustainability and the Climate Crisis

The SSMU sustainability policy states that SSMU will strive to “actively promote practices that will lead to resilient ecosystems.” It further elaborates the SSMU’s commitment to reducing our contribution to fossil fuel extraction and greenhouse gas emissions<sup>25</sup>. The climate crisis touches on the three major dimensions of sustainability outlined in the Sustainability Policy: social, economic and environmental. The SSMU has a responsibility to encourage students and McGill University entities in combating a climate catastrophe, as it will affect students and global communities.

### 3.1.2 Equity and the Climate Crisis

The SSMU Equity Policy commits to creating a functional anti-oppressive environment through the use of “proactive steps to challenge and acknowledge the current and historical processes” that further marginalize certain groups of people<sup>26</sup>. The climate crisis disproportionately affects low-income groups, people of colour, and Indigenous communities. As warming reaches 1.5 °C or greater, risks associated with food security, access to clean water, livelihood, health, and economic growth will only grow. The relationship between the climate crisis and equity is crucial, and is referred to as Climate Justice.

## 3.2 Climate Justice

The fight against the climate crisis is inextricable from a movement to combat systemic inequalities and the dominance of capitalist and colonialist paradigms in the Global North. The SSMU’s efforts to combat the climate crisis must include the protection of human rights; respecting the right to development; ensuring transparency, accountability, and fair participation; addressing gender inequities, and emphasizing education and partnership<sup>27</sup>. Groups affected the most are often lacking in representation within structures that make crucial decisions impacting the Earth’s climate, and ought to be granted more leniency in their progression to a low-carbon economy.

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<sup>24</sup> [World Health Organisation: “Climate change and health”](#)

<sup>25</sup> [SSMU: Sustainability Policy](#)

<sup>26</sup> [SSMU: Equity Policy](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice: “Principles of Climate Justice”](#)



## 3.3. Causes

The climate crisis is undoubtedly caused by human activity, namely by greenhouse gas emissions, atmospheric aerosols, and land-use change (e.g., desertification and land degradation)<sup>28</sup>. Carbon emissions in particular should be attributed to both consumers and producers. In this Policy, the Society details not only its commitment to reducing our consumptive impact, but also mandates those identified in Section 1 to challenge producers and the systems that allow them to function through the exploitation of natural resources.

### 3.3.1. Fossil Fuel Companies

By continuing large-scale exploration and extraction, lobbying governments, and influencing the media, fossil fuel companies worldwide currently act as a barrier to action on the climate crisis. For example, the Canadian fossil fuel lobby, one of the most active in the country, exerted massive pressure to amend legislation regulating their activities between 2011 and 2018<sup>29</sup>.

## 4. Framework

### 4.1 Principles for Advocacy

The Society will formally adopt a framework of climate justice, in accordance with our values and based fundamentally on anti-oppression. The Society will refer to the following framework when organizing around climate justice:

- a) **Anti-oppression.** The Society will organize initiatives around the recognition that climate change, extraction, and environmental destruction disproportionately impact the most vulnerable groups in society. The Society will strive to ensure these voices are centred in environmental initiatives, and provide educational resources on the links between oppression and the climate crisis.
  
- b) **Solidarity.** The Society will act in meaningful solidarity by maintaining relationships with directly affected communities, with a particular emphasis on Indigenous groups in accordance with the Indigenous Solidarity Policy. Acting in solidarity includes, among other things, consulting groups before publicly discussing content related to their lived experience and providing every opportunity possible for groups to self-represent rather than being spoken for.

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<sup>28</sup> [IPCC: “Climate Change and Land”](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: “Big Oil's Political Reach”](#)



## 4.2. Just Transition

In light of the context and advocacy principles presented above, the Society will advocate for a timely transition away from fossil fuels with the goal of moving away from a catastrophic climate crisis fed by unchecked capitalism and colonialism, and toward a more equitable society. The SSMU shall root its climate initiatives in the recognition that the historical and ongoing burden of emissions is overwhelmingly carried by Global North countries like Canada, and it is these communities that must take responsibility, while the communities of the Global South are entitled to resources and technology to heighten their standard of living as they plan a transition to a low-carbon economy. The transition of the Global South towards a low-carbon economy should not be held to the same standards as the global north and should receive more support, due to aforementioned colonial constraints, socioeconomic circumstances, and reduced responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.

## 5. Operations

### 5.1 Business Partnerships.

The SSMU will, through purchasing and investment, support businesses that share our values and comply with provincial and federal environmental and labour laws.

#### 5.1.1 Ethical Purchasing.

The SSMU will prioritise the purchasing of products from companies that display a strong commitment to sustainability.

#### 5.1.2 Investment.

The SSMU will continue to avoid all investments in the fossil fuel industry and follow other sustainability screens outlined in previous Five-Year Ethical Investment Plans.

### 5.2 Carbon Footprint

While recognizing and prioritizing the need for systemic action, the SSMU will strive to reduce our carbon footprint as reasonably possible and encourage the membership to do the same.

#### 5.2.1 Transportation

The SSMU will have greater accountability for its transportation impacts. It will promote opportunities for collective transportation to meetings and assemblies and encourage the





usage of public — bus or train — transport whenever possible. Additionally, when applicable, teleconferencing will be a strong consideration in attendance at events to minimize carbon outputs.

### 5.2.2 Events

Larger-scale events will make use of a carbon calculator, such as the McGill Office of Sustainability's Mc3Gill. The Society will work toward limiting those activities found to have an elevated carbon footprint, and will, when necessary, work toward offsetting remaining activities with carbon credits.

### 5.2.3 Waste and Energy Reduction

The SSMU will strive to minimize overall material consumption of the organization by investing in reusable supplies and to encourage waste diversion through compost and recycling. The SSMU will also periodically conduct research into potential energy reductions in the University Centre and present the findings of this research to the Legislative Council.

## 6. Education

### 6.1 Research

The SSMU will lobby the University for increased research funding and internship opportunities in fields such as renewable energy that contribute to a just transition to a zero carbon future. The SSMU will also support student run research opportunities that assist lobbying efforts as outlined in section 7.

### 6.2 Showcasing Solutions

The Society will host or partner with events which aim to showcase the viability of alternative energy and job opportunities within the renewable energy sector at least once per academic year.

### 6.3 Support for Applied Student Research

The SSMU will seek to partner with on campus actors that support applied student research in climate change initiatives such as the McGill Office of Sustainability and Teaching Staff.



## 6.4 Capacity Building

In line with the framework laid out in section 2, the Society shall strive to foster a better awareness and capacity to act within the McGill community on the realities of the climate crisis, the need for urgent action, and its intersections with struggles against racism, austerity, inequality, capitalism, sexism and other social justice movements. This involves earmarking resources for equity work and climate justice organising, awareness campaigns around these subjects, and educational event series that teach anti-oppression and community organising skills.

## 7. Advocacy and Mobilization

### 7.1 Advocacy

The Society, to keep warming at or below 1.5 °C, will advocate for all institutions' and communities' need to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The Society will actively oppose fossil fuel extraction or distribution projects that are being conducted without the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous communities whose lands they affect.

#### 7.1.1 Lobbying

The SSMU will advocate for solutions to address the climate crisis in communities and at all governmental levels, such as community renewable energy projects; fair, ambitious, and binding carbon pricing systems; and initiatives contributing to more sustainable food systems. This may be done independently or in conjunction with a provincial student Federation.

### 7.2 Tactics

The Campaigns Department, in its mandate to mobilize the student body, shall support a diversity of tactics needed to address the climate crisis effectively and equitably, in line with the framework in section 2 and in recognition of the context presented in section 1. In particular, it shall support the following groups insofar as they pressure various institutions to take action on the climate crisis:

#### 7.2.1 Fossil Fuel Divestment

Fossil fuel divestment has been the most visible tactic towards the goals of climate justice supported by the Society. SSMU divested its funds from fossil fuels in 2013, and has actively supported the autonomous Divest McGill campaign through funding, outreach assistance, space booking, and task completion as needed through the Campaigns Coordinators and Vice-President (External Affairs). The Society shall continue to assist in these ways, and to coordinate initiatives between campus divestment campaigns.



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## 7.2.2 Emission Reduction

Climate Justice Action McGill (C-JAM) participates in a province-wide effort to pressure institutions and governments to reduce their emissions as required by the IPCC. Within the University context, emission reduction takes the form of divestment from fossil fuels. The Society shall support C-JAM through funding, outreach assistance, space booking, and task completion as needed through the Campaigns Coordinators and Vice-President (External Affairs). Participation in province-wide actions shall be overseen by C-JAM rather than the Society, unless otherwise requested.



## D. CLUBS AND SERVICES AS SSMU'S HIGHEST PRIORITY

Adopted by the Legislative Council: 2019/04/04

Expires: 2024/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

**WHEREAS**, there are over 230 clubs and 16 services operating under the Students' Society of McGill University ("the Society") at the time of this motion;

**WHEREAS**, clubs and services impact a large number of students at our university;

**WHEREAS**, Activities Night, an event that showcases the Society's clubs and services, regularly has over 3,000 students attend;

**WHEREAS**, the Policy on Clubs and Services as SSMU's Highest Priority is set to expire in May 2019;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the Legislative Council of the Society adopt this Policy on Clubs and Services as SSMU's Highest Priority with the following positions which shall supplant the existing policy of the same name:

1. Clubs and services are the Society's highest priority.
2. The Society will actively work towards improving the structure to support clubs and services.
3. The Society will actively update this policy and corresponding Plan to reflect the current and future needs of the Society's clubs and services.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT** this policy shall expire January 1, 2024.

Moved by:

Tre Mansdoerfer, *President*

Bryan Buraga, *Senate Caucus Representative*

Maxence Frenette, *Engineering Representative*



## E. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2019/02/21

Expires: 2023/05/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

### 1. Preamble and Scope

The Students' Society of McGill University ("the Society") is committed to making decisions with integrity, transparency, and objectivity.

The Conflict of Interest Policy ("the Policy" or "this Policy") applies to Directors, Councillors, Officers, Senators, committee members (including members-at-large), part-time and full-time employees, volunteers, and all other persons involved in Society decision-making processes for the duration of their involvement with the Society ("Concerned Individual(s)"). This Policy is intended to guide Concerned Individuals in independent decision-making, assist the Society and its Directors in managing Conflicts of Interest – whether real, apparent or potential, and provide a framework within which decisions in respect of Conflicts of Interest are made and, where appropriate, disciplinary measures imposed.

All Concerned Individuals are presumed to have reviewed and understood this Policy and are personally responsible for upholding it and for adhering to it in both letter and spirit.

### 2. Definitions

1. Capitalized terms set forth herein and not otherwise defined shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the Society's Constitution.
2. Within the meaning of the Policy,
  - a) "Apparent Conflict of Interest" shall mean a situation in which a reasonable, well-informed person believes that a Financial Interest, Interpersonal Interest, Professional Interest, or Personal Interest could improperly influence the performance of a Concerned Individual's duties and responsibilities, whether or not it is the case;



- b) “Breach of the Conflict of Interest Policy” shall refer to a situation in which a Concerned Individual has not properly addressed a Conflict of Interest by failing to address it in an appropriate manner when they ought reasonably to have known to disclose it, as determined in accordance with the Policy;
- c) “Conflict of Interest” shall mean any situation that is sufficient to affect, or provide incentive to affect, the Concerned Individual’s impartiality in their conduct of Society activities, including the events and circumstances detailed herein. Provided the Conflict of Interest is appropriately recognized, disclosed, assessed, and addressed, the existence of a Conflict of Interest does not connote misconduct;
- d) “Financial Interest” shall mean any financial or pecuniary interest of any kind which, in view of all of the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect a Concerned Individual’s judgment and ability to independently make decisions or conduct business in the best interests of the Society with respect to their involvement with the Society;
- e) “Interpersonal Interest” shall mean any relationship a Concerned Individual has with other individuals, including, but not limited to, a current or former romantic or sexual partner, friend, peer, family member, colleague (from occupations including but not limited to remunerated work, student group activities, projects, student group leadership, involvements with clubs, services, independent student groups whether registered under the Society or not, and campus publications), or roommate which would, or reasonably could, affect a Concerned Individual’s judgment with respect to their involvement with the Society;
- f) “Professional Interest” shall mean any advantage or benefit that an individual may pursue regarding non-Society, professional affiliations, or career opportunities that would, or reasonably could, affect a Concerned Individual’s judgment with respect to such Concerned Individual’s involvement with the Society; and
- g) “Personal Interest” shall mean any personal advantage or benefit that may be pursued by a Concerned Individual , whether a Financial Interest, Interpersonal Interest, Professional Interest or otherwise.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Policy shall be administered by the Board of Directors. The Human Resources Committee, working with the General Manager, shall assist the Board in administering this Policy, including



helping Concerned Individuals identify and manage Conflicts of Interest and Apparent and Potential Conflicts of Interest in accordance with this Policy.

2. The Human Resources Committee may, where required or directed to do so by the Board of Directors, take the following actions:
  - a) seek guidance in respect of this Policy from an Ad-Hoc Conflict of Interest Committee comprised of all members of the Society's standing Accountability Committee under the Board of Directors and the Society's General Manager;
  - b) upon the prior approval of the committee, delegate their responsibilities contained herein to the committee; and
  - c) refer the matter to the Board of Directors as a whole with a report and associated recommendations.
3. Where a member of the Human Resources Committee is in a Conflict of Interest or Apparent Conflict of Interest, the Concerned Individual shall recuse themselves for the duration of the deliberations related to their Conflict of Interest.

## 4. Conflicts of Interest

1. In this Policy, a "Conflict of Interest" is defined as any situation in which a Concerned Individual has interests that could improperly influence the performance of their duties and responsibilities with respect to the Society or in which said Concerned Individual uses their position for personal gain or for the benefit of any person or entity other than the Society. A Conflict of Interest does not relate exclusively to matters concerning financial transactions and the transfer of economic benefit, such as a Financial Interest. It can arise in any area of activity that could impact the perceived objectivity of the Concerned Individual in question. A Conflict of Interest includes: (a) a real conflict of interest, which exists at the present time; (b) an apparent conflict of interest, which could be perceived by a reasonable, well-informed person to exist, whether or not it is the case; and (c) a potential conflict of interest, which could reasonably be foreseen to exist in the future.
2. Without limiting the extent of the foregoing, the following events shall, for the purposes of this Policy, be considered Conflicts of Interest and therefore must be avoided by all Concerned Individuals:
  - a) preferential treatment: a Concerned Individual using their position to influence a decision so as to further their own Personal Interests or those of a party with whom they have an Interpersonal Interest:



- i. Interpersonal Interests between Concerned Individuals where one individual has influence or control over the other's conditions of employment are inappropriate. These relationships, even if consensual, may ultimately result in conflict or difficulties in carrying out the work of the Society. If such a relationship currently exists or develops, it must be disclosed.
  - ii. Interpersonal Interests between Concerned Individuals where both are serving on the same elected decision-making body of the Society, including the Executive Committee, Legislative Council, Senate Caucus, or Board of Directors are in a Conflict of Interest that must be disclosed and proactively managed by the Speaker or Chair(s) of that decision-making body to avoid preferential treatment and/or retaliation;
- b) use of privileged information: a Concerned Individual disclosing to any person, including a Personal Interest or Professional Interest, information obtained in the course of their duties as a Concerned Individual, which information is not generally available to the public and which, once disclosed, may place or could reasonably be expected to place, the Concerned Individual in a situation where the interests of the Society are in conflict with those of the person having received the information;
- c) contracts and financial transactions: a Concerned Individual who knowingly has a Personal Interest or a Professional Interest in a Society contract or business transaction that includes but is not limited to any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods or services, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, the establishment of any other type of financial relationship, or the exercise of control over another organization. Such Concerned Individual shall not represent, advise, negotiate (including discussing the matter under negotiation with others within or outside the Society where they would, or reasonably could, influence the negotiations), or make decisions for the Society on this matter;
- d) hiring: a Concerned Individual involved in a hiring process involving an Interpersonal Interest, including a family member, current or former roommate and/or a current or former romantic partner, or any other significant interpersonal relations. A Concerned Individual who is part of a hiring committee is responsible for disclosing where any person with whom they have an interpersonal relationship is a candidate for hire;
- e) outside activities: Concerned Individuals should always prioritize the interests of the Society while conducting or participating in Society business. If an external activity or affiliation creates a Conflict of Interest or Apparent Conflict of Interest, the Concerned Individual must disclose it immediately;





- f) gifts, hospitality, and other benefits: Concerned Individuals shall be prudent in choosing whether to accept a gift, hospitality, donation, or other benefit from a person, group, or organization which may influence a decision or result from securing a financial transaction between the aforementioned and the Society. Accepting gifts, hospitality, or other benefits from individuals or entities can also result in a Conflict of Interest when the party providing the gift, hospitality, or other benefit does so under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence, compensate, or otherwise individually remunerate a Concerned Individual for a decision taken or business arrangement with the Society, or possibly would influence, the Concerned Individual in the performance of their duties.
- i. A Concerned Individual may accept minor gifts as token courtesies (e.g., notepads, pens, coffee mugs, et cetera), but may not accept gifts that may put them in a position of obligation and under no circumstances any gifts from any person in excess of \$50.00 in value (be it individually or in the aggregate).
  - ii. If a Concerned Individual has any doubt about the appropriateness of accepting a gift, hospitality, donation, or other benefit, the Concerned Individual must refuse, unless such a refusal would cause significant offence on cultural or religious grounds. In such circumstances where a gift is accepted because refusal would cause offence, the acceptance must be immediately disclosed in accordance with this Policy.
  - iii. The Concerned Individual is welcome to consult with the Human Resources Committee before or after such an occurrence to be better prepared for any similar situations which may subsequently occur.
- g) use of Society resources: Concerned Individuals shall not use Society resources, including but not limited to office supplies, building space, staff time, or funding, in pursuit of personal or professional interests. The Society permits Concerned Individuals to use Society communication devices, including but not limited to electronic mail addresses, telephones, computers, and internet connections, for personal purposes. However, a Concerned Individual's use of Society resources should not be used to the detriment of the Society. A Concerned Individual should exercise good judgment when using Society communication devices to offer personal opinions. To avoid confusion, a Concerned Individual shall add the following notice where confusion may arise in written media: "The views expressed in this medium are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society."



## 5. Disclosure

1. Where a Concerned Individual is in a Conflict of Interest or concerned that an Apparent or Potential Conflict of Interest may exist, they must disclose this Conflict of Interest in writing, using the *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form* (Annex A1), to the Human Resources Manager and the General Manager as soon as the Concerned Individual becomes aware of the Conflict of Interest or Perceived Conflict of Interest..

## 6. Intervening Period

1. In the intervening period between the disclosure of a Conflict of Interest and the formal determination by the Human Resources Committee or their designate, the Concerned Individual must exercise their own sound and reasonable judgement as to whether they should take any one of the following actions:
  - a) disclosing to the relevant decision-making body their potential Conflict of Interest as may be required by law in the case of Directors and Officers;
  - b) the details thereof;
  - c) that a disclosure has been made to the Human Resources Committee or their designate in accordance with this Policy;
  - d) voluntarily withdrawing from a meeting when business related to the Conflict of Interest is discussed;
  - e) voluntarily waiving their right to participate in debate or discussions related to the Conflict of Interest; and
  - f) voluntarily waiving their right to vote on matters related to the Conflict of Interest.
2. Instances where a Concerned Individual does not take reasonable steps to mitigate the circumstances surrounding their Conflict of Interest may be grounds for further sanction or disciplinary processes as allowed by this and other Policies of the Society at the direction of the Board of Directors, with or without the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, or their designate.



3. The above notwithstanding, the designated individual or body described in Section 3 of this Policy may share the facts and nature of a disclosure with the relevant decision-making body before a formal determination of a Conflict of Interest has been made.

## 7. Determination of a Conflict of Interest

1. After reviewing the Concerned Individual's *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form*, the Human Resources Committee or their designate, with the General Manager may determine:
  - a) there is or was no Conflict of Interest;
  - b) there exists or existed a Conflict of Interest that is permissible if appropriately addressed by the relevant decision-making body, including as outlined by the remedies in this Policy; or
  - c) there exists or existed a Conflict of Interest that is not permissible and subject to the remedies herein.
2. Should the Human Resources Committee or their designate feel unable to independently make a determination as stipulated above, they may form an Ad-Hoc Conflict of Interest Committee with the membership set out in this Policy that will then be empowered to make the determinations set out in the foregoing section.
3. The Human Resources Committee or their designate shall report, in writing, their determination to the Board of Directors with the associated recommendations as appropriate, as well as to the Concerned Individual.
  - a) Nothing in this Policy or otherwise shall limit the Board of Directors' power to overturn the decision of the Human Resources Committee or other party as appropriate.
4. Where a Conflict of Interest exists, and the Concerned Individual expresses no desire to appeal that decision as per appeal procedure provided in this Policy, the Human Resources Committee or their designate shall forward the determination (placing appropriate consideration to the Concerned Individual's right to confidentiality) to the Chair(s) of the relevant decision-making bodies to which the Concerned Individual's Conflict of Interest applies and to the Officer responsible for the portfolio within which the Concerned Individual in question falls, where:
  - a) For the purposes of this Policy:



- i. Councillors fall under the President's portfolio;
  - ii. Senators fall under the Vice-President (University Affairs') portfolio;
  - iii. All Officers, including the President, fall under the collective purview of the Board of Directors as a whole;
  - iv. Individual Directors fall under the collective purview of the Board of Directors as a whole;
  - v. Full-time staff fall under the purview of the General Manager, who falls under the collective purview of the Board of Directors as a whole; and
  - vi. Part-time staff and volunteers fall under the purview of the Officer or full-time staff to whom they report regularly or that is specified on their employment contract.
5. The Human Resources Committee or their designate may recommend any appropriate remedies to the Concerned Individual, the Chair(s) of the relevant decision-making bodies, the Officer responsible for the portfolio within which the Concerned Individual falls, and to the Board of Directors.

## 8. Remedies to a Conflict of Interest

1. In all cases, the remedies to a Conflict of Interest do not independently resolve the Conflict but rather serve to mitigate the adverse effects of a Conflict of Interest.
2. Once a determination has been made by the Human Resources Committee or their designate, they may recommend for adoption by the decision-making body any of the following remedies along with their written determination.
  - a) proactive management of the situation by the Speaker or Chair(s) of that decision-making body to assure that the rights of all parties are protected, the work of the Society can continue in good order, and that no Concerned Individual participates in discussions, debates, or decisions on matters with which they have a Conflict of Interest;
  - b) barring the Concerned Individual from any discussions on the matter being addressed.



3. The above notwithstanding, the Board of Directors may also impose any remedy they deem necessary, even if not adopted by the relevant decision-making body.

## 9. Appeal Procedure Following a Determination

1. A Concerned Individual may appeal a decision of the Human Resources Committee or their designate to the Board of Directors by sending written notice to the Chair of the Board of Directors.
2. The Chair(s) of the relevant decision-making body and the General Manager must be informed that the Concerned Individual has appealed the matter to the Board of Directors, and that decision-making should be postponed if possible during that period. The Chair(s) must respect the Concerned Individual's right to confidentiality, according to this Policy and the recommendations of the Human Resources Committee or their designate.

## 10. Alleged Breach of this Policy

1. If a person other than the Concerned Individual believes another person within the scope of this Policy has breached the Conflict of Interest Policy, that individual may disclose this in writing to the Human Resources Committee or their designate using the *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form* (Annex A1).
2. In instances of an alleged breach of this Policy, the procedures outlined in sections 7 and 8 of this Policy shall apply in determining whether a Conflict of Interest exists and the appropriate remedies to mitigate the Conflict of Interest.

## 11. Breach of this Policy

1. All Conflicts of Interest shall be addressed in such a manner as to preserve the interests of the Society. Where the Human Resources Committee or their designate determines that a breach of this Policy has occurred, the matter shall be referred to the Board of Directors to determine the consequence(s) of such breach with the recommendations of the Human Resources Committee or their designate, the whole in accordance with the following procedure, in circumstances of any Conflict of Interest which are material or which cannot be effectively addressed by a remedy prescribed above and therefore require a substantial change in circumstance, which could include but are not limited to:



- a) the removal of the Concerned Individual from the decision-making body or from office;
  - b) any breach relating to hiring may result in re-hiring when permitted by law, and may result in the Concerned Individual's removal from office;
  - c) any breach relating to the use of privileged information or financial transactions may result in the suspension or removal of the Concerned Individual from office;
  - d) any breach relating to gifts, hospitality, and other benefits may result in the Concerned Individual being asked to return the gift or benefit, donate the gift or benefit to a charitable organization under the *Income Tax Act* deemed suitable by the relevant decision-making body, and/or removal of the Concerned Individual from office; and
  - e) any breach relating to the use of Society resources may result in temporary suspension from use of the relevant property and/or communication device(s) and the required issuance of a formal apology for inappropriate conduct and/or removal of the Concerned Individual from office.
3. The consequences of a breach of the Conflict of Interest Policy outlined above notwithstanding, the Human Resources Committee or their designate may also recommend the issuance of an apology, the undertaking of any professional development for the Concerned Individual to help avoid future Conflicts of Interest, or other fair and reasonable steps appropriate to address a breach of this Policy.

## 12. Confidentiality

1. Except as required by law, the Society's governing documents, and this Policy, any information disclosed by any person to the Human Resources Committee or their designate and the General Manager is confidential unless the relevant individual consents to its public release.
  - a) In matters relating to the Society's finances, matters of ongoing litigation, disposition or acquisition of property by the Society, or negotiations with employees or matters regarding human resources, the General Manager of the Society must be consulted as to the appropriateness of any releases.



## 13. Special Provisions

### Part I. Employment of Councillors

1. A Councillor who is also employed by the Society in a separate capacity shall be deemed to be in a Conflict of Interest but may continue to serve as a member of the Legislative Council, provided certain conditions are met.
2. Where this Conflict of Interest exists or arises, the Councillor shall notify the Human Resources Committee or their designate of the Conflict of Interest in addition to disclosing the Conflict in accordance with section 5:
  - a) in the case of a Councillor who is employed by the Society at the time of their Election or who becomes employed by the Society shortly thereafter, prior to the first meeting of the Legislative Council at which they will serve as a Councillor; or
  - b) in the case of a Councillor who becomes an employee of the Society during their term, prior to the next meeting of the Legislative Council.
3. The Speaker shall notify the Legislative Council of the existence of a Conflict of Interest.
4. Councillors with a Conflict of Interest shall abstain from voting on matters materially connected with their employment at the Society or related to decisions that they have worked on, researched, and on recommendations that they bring to Legislative Council by means of their employed position with the Society.
5. Councillors with a Conflict of Interest shall remove themselves from confidential sessions where the matters discussed are materially connected with their employment at the Society, but may be present for any In-Camera Sessions, provided they continue to comply with the requirement to abstain from voting on matters materially connected with their employment at the Society.
6. Councillors with a Conflict of Interest shall at all times comply with this Policy.
7. Failure to notify the Speaker of a Conflict of Interest or to comply with any other provisions herein constitutes a breach of this Policy to be addressed in accordance with Section 11 of this Policy.

### Part II. Post-Script



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1. This Policy is part of the Society's broader commitment to ethical and responsible action. The Society encourages Concerned Individuals to educate themselves about ethics and to ask questions whenever they encounter a situation that raises ethical questions they cannot readily answer. A culture of transparency, accountability, and integrity is essential to maintaining public faith in the Society while pursuing its best interests.





# A1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

## Directions

- Complete this form electronically or in print with blue or black ink
- Print and sign where indicated (note that electronic signatures are not accepted)
- Submit this form...
  - scanned via email to [hr@ssmu.ca](mailto:hr@ssmu.ca); or
  - in-person to the SSMU Offices to the attention of the Human Resources Committee **and** the Human Resources Manager (two copies)

### A. Your Information (provide your contact information and the nature of the potential conflict of interest)

First name	Last name
Telephone number	Email address
Group <input type="checkbox"/> Director/Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Councillor/Senator <input type="checkbox"/> Employee (including casual) <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member (Member-at-Large) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Conflict type <input type="checkbox"/> Real: Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Real: Interpersonal <input type="checkbox"/> Real: Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Real: Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Apparent or Potential
Position title	Date you became aware of the potential conflict (yyyy/mm/dd)

### B. Conflict of Interest Party (provide the contact information for the other party)

First name (if applicable)	Last name/Company/Club/Group
Telephone number	Email address
Group <input type="checkbox"/> Director/Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Councillor/Senator <input type="checkbox"/> Employee (including casual) <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member (Member-at-Large) <input type="checkbox"/> External/Outside the Society <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Possible conflicts you have/may be engaged in with this Party <input type="checkbox"/> Preferential treatment/hiring <input type="checkbox"/> Use of privileged information/outside activities <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts and financial transactions <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts, hospitality, other benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Society resources <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

### C. Details of Conflict of Interest (answer all questions that are applicable, leaving others blank. If you require more space, attach a separate sheet)

Describe the nature of the relationship between you, the Society, and the Party (ongoing business relationships, sought/future business relationships, existing contracts, services you or the Society receive/provide, employment arrangements, interpersonal relationships). If an Apparent or Potential Conflict of Interest, describe the circumstances in as much detail as possible.



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Describe the nature of any privileged information (not the content) that has been disclosed and the way in which it was used

Describe conflicts with negotiations of contracts or financial transactions that you are a part of for the Society

Describe any individuals that you have or may be interviewing for positions within the Society

Describe any outside activities that you engage in that may or have conflicted with your responsibilities at/to the Society

Describe any personal or financial benefits you personally may or have received from the Party and their estimated value

Describe any gifts, hospitality, or other benefits you may or have received and their estimated value

Describe the circumstances under which a gift, hospitality, or other benefit may be or was offered

Describe any Society resources you have or may potentially use due to your Conflict of Interest

**D. Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature



## F. COUNCIL TRANSPARENCY POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2018/10/18

Expires: 2023/05/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

**WHEREAS, not all Legislative Council meetings are currently live-streamed or live-tweeted;**

**WHEREAS, students have expressed concerns about this lack of transparency and would like to follow the proceedings of council;**

**WHEREAS, the time, length, and location of Legislative Council meetings are not always accessible to all students, especially during busy times of the school year;**

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** this policy be adopted, expiring on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

1. Steering Committee shall endeavour to work with on-campus partners, including but not limited to; TVM: Student Television at McGill, the McGill Daily, Le Delit, the McGill Tribune, and the Bull and Bear to ensure that meetings of Legislative Council are live-streamed whenever possible.
2. The SSMU shall take steps to disseminate access to the livestream via social media and listserv.
3. The SSMU will post on social media and in the listserv the location and time of the next Legislative Council.

Moved by:

Andrew Figueiredo, *Arts Representative*

Ana Paula Sanchez, *Arts Representative*

Garima Karia, *Arts Representative*

Bryan Buraga, *Senate Caucus Representative*

Victoria Flaherty, *Clubs Representative*

Brandon Hersh, *Dentistry Representative*



## G. EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2019/02/07

Expires: 2023/01/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

### APPENDIX A

#### Policy on Effective Committees

In creating effective and efficient committees under SSMU, the following preface outlines the base composition of all committees under SSMU and the structure therein. All SSMU committees will have the following components for their composition:

- 1) A SSMU Executive on the committee (except in situations where an executive present goes against the premise of the committee)
- 2) A SSMU student staff in a leadership role on the committee
- 3) At least 1 SSMU councilor (if a committee under Legislative council) or at least 1 SSMU director (if a committee under the Board of Directors)

SSMU committees have the following expectations during the academic year:

- 1) A SSMU committee will report at least once during the year to its respective body
- 2) A SSMU committee will make recommendations (if any) to its Terms of Reference at the end of the each Academic Year
- 3) A SSMU committee will submit an exit report highlighting the years work for documentation purposes

In keeping with these principles, we hope to build strong committees for the Society that build year after year.



# H. EQUITY POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2018/04/05

Expires: 2023/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

## 1. Background

The Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has a longstanding history of advocating for issues of equity and social justice. The development of formal mechanisms for addressing equity concerns has been in a constant process of critical reflection and growth over the past three decades.

The SSMU has a responsibility as a leader, representative, and service provider to a diverse membership to conduct itself by the highest standards of respect, fairness, integrity, safety, and equitable treatment for all persons. Furthermore, the SSMU strives to create a community that addresses the imbalance in social standards to create and uphold a safer space for all of our members, where discourse and diverse ideas can flourish within a respectful atmosphere. This Policy recognizes that the practice of equity requires the dedication of material support to reduce intersectional barriers for marginalized groups who may benefit from targeted resources. The Leadership pillar of the Preamble of the SSMU Constitution describes the following:

“All of the Society’s endeavours shall be undertaken with full respect for human dignity and bodily sovereignty and without discrimination on the basis of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, language, sexual orientation or social class. The Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The Society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects that Society businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic, and environmental surroundings. The Society commits itself to groups, programs, and activities that are devoted to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics as outlined above.”

## Article 1 – Interpretation

1.1. The SSMU will promote a functional, anti-oppressive environment through:



1.1.1. Recognizing that historical and ongoing processes of oppression disadvantage and harm certain groups of people;

1.1.2. Taking proactive steps to challenge the current and historical processes that affect the safety and well-being of these groups, and the actions, attitudes, and assumptions that result from these processes of oppression.

1.1.3. Acknowledging that certain groups of people knowingly or unconsciously benefit from these processes;

1.1.4. Using gender-neutral language in all documents, electronic and written correspondence from SSMU addresses, and in the workplace. This shift shall be implemented systematically under the supervision of the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs).

1.1.5. The SSMU will actively support projects and policies that aim to end oppression or to promote accessibility and inclusivity in the McGill community.

1.1.6. The SSMU and its affiliated Clubs and Services will not condone organizations that continue to promote or engage in discrimination, harassment or harm to members of the Society within the definition of oppression as per the policy.

1.1.7. SSMU-facilitated equity training(s) must be provided to all elected officers and representatives, members of the Board of Directors, Judicial Board members and student staff on a yearly basis.

1.1.8. Decision-making bodies within the SSMU invoking the Equity Policy must consult the Equity Commissioners as a part of their consultation process.

1.2 The SSMU recognizes that groups that have been historically and culturally disadvantaged are subject to systematic marginalization and oppression, and condemns harassment or discrimination based on but not limited to: gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or social class.

1.2.1. The SSMU regards harassment and/or discrimination on these bases as serious offences that undermine its constitutional commitment to respect, as outlined in the preamble of the SSMU Constitution.

1.2.2. Programs or activities whose purpose it is to improve the conditions of, or provide safer spaces for groups that have been historically and culturally disadvantaged are not deemed discriminatory or oppressive by advocating for specific resources, conditions and spaces to address the social and systemic barriers they face.



1.3. This Policy should be applied in such a way as to ensure that the rights of marginalized students are not further compromised as a result of a Complaints process. This includes ensuring that students are respected and not subjected to undue stress or disparagement.

1.4. This Policy is to be applied in such a way that uplift the perspectives and voices of members of the society that have been historically disadvantaged by various systems of oppression, and ensures respect for these members during discussion on campus that implicate their identities.

## Article 2 – Scope

2.1. This Policy shall apply to:

2.1.1. Staff, elected representatives, operations, Clubs, and Services, of the Students' Society of McGill University.

2.1.2. All activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the Society and SSMU-affiliated Clubs and Services.

2.1.3. Written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, endorsed, or funded by the Society.

2.1.4. Activities, events, campaigns, and promotions held in the William Shatner University Centre.

2.2. An Equity Complaint may be deemed outside the jurisdiction of the SSMU if the subject matter of an Equity Complaint involves:

2.2.1. Physical or sexual assault;

2.2.2. Persons or bodies outside the jurisdiction of the SSMU, including, but not limited to, McGill Administrative units, faculty members, Libraries, and Student Services.

2.3. In the event that a Complaint falls outside the jurisdiction of this Policy, the Equity Commissioners may serve as a resource in referring the Claimant to the appropriate channels.

## Article 3 - Definitions

For the purposes of the Equity Policy, the following definitions apply:

3.1 **Bad faith:** An intentional dishonest act demonstrated as failing to fulfill the obligations outlined in this Policy.



**3.2 Equity:** the recognition and respect of equality of opportunity. Equitable treatment involves acknowledging and respecting diversity and actively addressing the barriers that prevent equal inclusion, opportunity and recognition due to ongoing and historical oppressions and power dynamics.

**3.3. Diversity:** the existence of differences in needs and relations, among individuals and groups based on, but not limited to gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or social class.

**3.4. Oppression:** relations of domination and exploitation resulting from historically and culturally constructed ideologies of superiority and inferiority. These relations of power result in individuals or groups being systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social injustices.

**3.5. Privilege:** an unearned advantage or immunity knowingly or unknowingly held by a group of persons in a position of power. This is typically used to the disadvantage of others and maintained by systems of oppression.

**3.6. Marginalization:** the exclusion and relegation of certain individuals and groups to positions of lesser value, power, and access to opportunity within society.

**3.7. Disadvantage:** a circumstance or situation that puts an individual or group in an inferior or less favourable position compared to others, resulting in compromised access to resources or opportunities.

**3.8. Discrimination:** the differential treatment of an individual or group, typically to their disadvantage, on the basis of their perceived status or characteristics.

**3.9. Good faith:** An intentionally honest or sincere fulfillment of an obligation outlined in this Policy.

**3.10. Harassment:** any behaviour, act, comment, or display that demeans, and/or causes personal, psychological, or social harm to an individual or group, including acts of intimidation or threat.

**3.11. Intersectionality:** the recognition that individuals may experience interconnected systems of oppression differently, in varying configurations and degrees of intensity. This recognizes the larger structures of oppression that form and work in conjunction with each other to produce “certain identities.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> “Kimberle Crenshaw Intersectionality NOT identity”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPtz8TiATJY>, August 17th 2017. Patricia Hill Collins essay, “Intersectionality’s Definitional Dilemmas” the term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender,





- 3.12. **Equity Officer:** a member of the Equity Complaints Committee responsible for responding to Complaints, including Informal and Formal Resolutions Processes.
- 3.13. **Complaint:** a formal written allegation of a violation of the Equity Policy to the Equity Officers.
- 3.14. **Incident:** an instance of alleged violation of the Equity Policy.
- 3.15. **Claimant:** the person or group who has experienced (an) alleged incident(s) and has filed a Complaint against the Respondent.
- 3.16. **Respondent:** the person against whom a Complaint is brought.
- 3.17. **Support person:** an individual who a Claimant and/or Respondent may request to accompany them throughout the Complaints process.
- 3.18. **Private space:** a mutually agreed upon location where Mediation can take place that allows for the respect of confidentiality.
- 3.19. **Conflict of interest:** a situation in which a person's interests may affect or be perceived to affect their ability to make a fair decision, such as the presence of pre-existing social relationships or the possibility of personal, financial, or professional advancement. See Article 7 for instances of conflict(s) of interest.

## Article 4 – Equity Complaints Committee

- 4.1. The Equity Complaints Committee shall be responsible for responding to Complaints, including Informal and Formal Resolution.
- 4.2. The Equity Complaints Committee will be comprised of the following Equity Officers:
- 4.2.1. The two (2) Equity Commissioners;
  - 4.2.2. The Vice-President (University Affairs);
  - 4.2.3. One (1) member of the Executive Committee as selected by the Equity Commissioners following the election of the incoming SSMU Executive Committee.
- 4.3. The Equity Officers must have received adequate equity training.

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sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena.



4.4. If a Complaint is against one or more Equity Officer(s), the Equity Officer(s) shall recuse themselves from the Complaints process.

4.4.1. If a Complaint is against the Vice-President (University Affairs), it shall be referred to the President.

4.4.2. In the case only one or no Equity Officers are available to conduct the Complaints Process due to recusals or Complaints being brought against them, the SSMU Judicial Board shall conduct the investigation as per Article 5.7.

4.5. Upon receiving a Complaint, one or both Equity Commissioners will respond, in consultation with the VP University Affairs.

4.5.1. A different Equity Officer shall facilitate the Formal process than was designated to respond in the Informal Resolutions Process.

4.6. If a Complaint involves a Club or Service of the Society, the Vice-President (Student Life) will be notified.

4.7. The Equity Complaints Committee may consult other members of the Executive Committee as required in seeking the Resolution of a Complaint.

4.7.1. Complaints will be investigated by the Equity Officer(s). Members of the Executive Committee may be consulted on procedural matters as required.

## Article 5 – Equity Complaint Process

### 5.1. Submission of an Equity Complaint

5.1.1. All Complaints shall be submitted in writing, or addressed in writing, in either French or English, to the Equity Complaints Committee through an online form.

5.1.2. All Complaints submitted will be investigated, provided the Claimant is willing to assist the Equity Officers in a capacity that will not put their personal safety or the safety of any other individual or group at risk.

5.1.3. Equity Officers shall be empowered to seek any information that is not explicitly confidential.

5.1.3.1. Parties involved in the Complaints Process who have been asked for information may reject the Officer's request if they are not at liberty to disclose such facts that would involve the party breaching a legally binding code of compliance.



5.1.4. After the submission of an Equity Complaint, the Equity Officers must outline, either in writing or in person, the limits of the Policy to any implicated parties.

5.1.5. Any individual who does not wish to participate in the resolution process is not obligated to do so; however, this does not prevent remedies from being recommended to the Legislative Council.

## 5.2. Review and Limitations of the Policy

5.2.1. Upon reception of an Equity Complaint, Equity Officers will assess whether the Complaint falls within the scope of the Equity Policy as per Article 2.

5.2.2. Should the Complaint fall outside of the scope of this Policy, the Claimant will be notified of the finding by writing.

5.2.2.1. In such situations, the Equity Officers may act as a resource in referring the Claimant to the appropriate channels, including other governance or representative channels of the Society, as appropriate.

5.2.2.2. Equity Commissioners shall be empowered to be proactive in reaching out to student groups to provide recommendations when appropriate.

5.2.3. If there is not enough evidence to support a Complaint and the Equity Officers are unable to issue a recommendation, they must provide the Claimant with an explanation to this regard.

5.2.4. Claimants should be aware that there is a six-month time limit for filing a Complaint at the SSMU, unless it is determined that the delay was incurred in good faith and no substantial prejudice will result to any person as a result of the delay.

5.2.5. In the event that the Complaint or ensuing process was made in bad faith, the Claimant will be subject to the same possible remedies as the Respondent. The person unjustly accused of an Equity Policy violation will be given the benefit of any necessary remedies.

## 5.3 Unsubstantiated Complaints

5.3.1. If there is not enough evidence to support the complaint, or if the complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the Equity Policy, the Investigators will be unable to issue a recommendation. At which time they must provide the Claimant with an explanation of why the Complaint cannot be pursued as per the terms of reference of this policy.

5.3.2. In the event that the Complaint or ensuing process was made in bad faith, the Claimant will be subject to the same possible remedies as the Respondent.



## 5.4 Informal Resolution Process (Mediation)

5.4.1. An Equity Officer will be identified as a mediator, to initiate and facilitate an ameliorative dialogue between all parties concerned in a Complaint.

5.4.1.1. The Claimant, Respondent, or supervising Equity Officer(s) may request for an external qualified person to act as a third party mediator in order to facilitate the mediation upon consensus approval by the Equity Complaints Committee.

5.4.2. The mediator will begin to help the parties settle the Complaint within 10 working days of the Complaint's submission and complete the Mediation with 20 working days, unless an extension is needed.

5.4.2.1. The timeline to respond to an Complaint is outlined in articles 5.6.1 to 5.6.3 which mandates the following:

“5.6.1. The Equity Complaints Committee must forward the complaint filed by the Claimant to the Respondent within three (3) business days after the complaint is filed;

5.6.2. The Respondent must file a response to the Complaint within five (5) business days of the filing of the Complaint by the Claimant;

5.6.3. If the Respondent fails to file a response within five (5) business days of the filing of the Complaint they may file a response within an additional three (3) business days, but must provide reasons for the delay which will be reviewed and evaluated by the Investigators. The Investigators may reject the response on the basis of the provided reasons.”

5.4.3. The mediator should not be involved in investigating the Complaint, and should not be asked to represent the SSMU at any stage of any proceedings related to the Complaint.

5.4.4. The mediation will take place in a private space.

5.4.4.1. Either party has the right to request separate private spaces for mediation without reprisal.

5.4.5. Either party has the right to refuse mediation, without reprisal.



5.4.6. If implicated parties are unable to reach a resolution upon the conclusion of the mediation process, the Complainant and/or Respondent may engage the Formal Resolution Process.

## 5.5 Formal Resolution Process (Investigation)

5.5.1. The Claimant shall make a written record of the incident, including dates, times, locations and a detailed account of the incident. The Claimant will forward the written record of the incident as follows:

5.5.1.1. To the Equity Officers, unless it is a Complaint against one or more of the Equity Officers.

5.5.1.2. To the Speaker of Council, if it is a Complaint against one or more of the Equity Officers. The Respondent will be made aware of the allegations against them and has the right to respond as to whether they will be participating in the Formal Investigation.

5.5.2. The investigators will investigate the Complaint thoroughly. An investigation will involve:

5.5.2.1. An interview of the Claimant, the Respondent, and any witnesses.

5.5.2.2. A detailed record shall be kept of interview minutes and sent to both the interview subject and the investigators for confirmation of accuracy. The Claimant, Respondent and witnesses interviewed have a responsibility to cooperate in the investigation, and act in good faith.

5.5.2.3. Obtaining all pertinent information from the Claimant, informing the Respondent of the details of the Complaint and obtaining their response, interviewing any witnesses, providing the Claimant and the Respondent with all of the allegations and responses of the other party or of witnesses to allow them to respond, determining whether the Equity Policy violation has occurred, recommending appropriate remedies.

5.5.3. To preserve the integrity of the Complaint process, everyone involved is required to cooperate with the investigation and maintain the confidential nature of the Complaint as per Article 6. Failure to cooperate will constitute bad faith.

5.5.4. Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, the remedies for Policy violation include, but are not limited to:

- a. Letter(s) of apology
- b. Suspension of the Respondent from their position within the SSMU and its affiliated Clubs, Services, or Independent Student Group
- c. Suspension of financial support by the SSMU for Clubs, Services, or Independent Student Groups that violate this Policy
- d. Dismissal of the Respondent from their position within the SSMU.



- e. Any other remedy deemed to be an appropriate and equitable by the Equity Complaints Committee.

5.5.5. Recommendations for Resolution made by the Equity Officers shall be ratified by a majority vote of the Legislative Council.

5.5.5.1. If the Legislative Council does not approve the Recommendations for Resolutions made by the Equity Officers, the Recommendations shall be referred back to the Equity Officers for revision and presentation at the next session of the Legislative Council.

5.5.5.2. If the Legislative Council rejects the Recommendations following revision, it shall submit a reference to the SSMU Judicial Board explaining its reasons for withholding ratification.

5.5.6. Within a week of being ratified, the Equity Officers will submit the final report to the General Manager. The Claimant and Respondent will also be provided with a copy of the final report. The report shall consist of but is not limited to facts, full explanations detailing the ways in which the violations outlined in the Complaint contribute to system of oppression and and recommendations with the reasoning behind them.

5.5.7. In the case of more serious or complex violations, the Claimant may be recommended to seek resolution via the administrative processes of the University, or an external legal source. The Claimant may do so regardless of the Claimant's recourse to the SSMU Equity Complaints Investigation Committee.

## 5.6 Formal Complaints Timeline

5.6.1. The Equity Complaints Committee must forward the complaint filed by the Claimant to the Respondent within three (3) business days after the complaint is filed.

5.6.2. The Respondent must file a response to the Complaint within five (5) days of the filing of the Complaint by the Claimant

5.6.3. If the Respondent fails to file a response within five (5) days of the filing of the Complaint they may file a response within an additional three (3) business days, but must provide reasons for the delay which will be reviewed and evaluated by the Investigators. The Investigators may reject the response on the basis of the provided reasons.

5.6.4. Five (5) days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant the Investigators may interview the Claimant and the Claimant's witnesses. The Investigators have ten (10) days from this point to do so.



5.6.5. Ten (10) days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant the Investigators may interview the Respondent and the Respondent's witnesses, if a response has been provided. The Investigators have ten (10) days from this point to do so.

5.6.6. Fifteen (15) days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant, the Investigators must provide all material gathered during the interview process to both the Claimant and the Respondent. Additionally, the Investigators must provide the Claimant with the response filed by the Respondent.

5.6.6.1. The Respondent and the Claimant shall have three (3) days to respond to this material and file their responses with the Investigators.

5.6.7. Twenty (20) days following the filing of the Complaint by the Claimant, the Investigators shall begin the review of all the material (complaint, interview and responses etc.) and draft a report containing but not limited to facts, reasons and recommendations regarding the complaint. The Investigators shall do so within 10 days of the start of this process.

## 5.7. Judicial Board Review

5.7.1. Appeals to the Equity Complaints process are submitted and handled by the Judicial Board.

5.7.2. The Claimant and/or the Response can submit appeals:

5.7.2.1. Up to ten (10) days from the day the Formal Resolution Recommendations have been communicated to all parties if the Claimant and or Respondent feel that a fair outcome was not reached.

5.7.2. In the case that Claimant or Respondent wishes to appeal the decision ratified at Legislative Council, the Claimant and/or respondent may appeal to the Judicial Board following the submission procedure outlined on the Judicial board website or by contacting the Chief Justice of the Judicial Board.

## Article 6 – Confidentiality Rules

6.1. Confidentiality of the Equity Complaint must be respected at all times during the resolution processes, in consideration of the following restrictions:

6.1.1. The Equity Officer facilitating a complaint will provide those implicated in a Complaint (witness, complainant, respondent) have enough information to fully participate and respond to the stage(s) of the equity complaint they are involved in.

6.1.2. A Claimant who seeks informal or formal resolution must be prepared to be identified to the Respondent in name.



6.2. Everyone involved in a Complaint will be made aware upon initial communication of their responsibility to ensure confidentiality in all their verbal, written and taped communication, formal and informal, to respect the right to fair process for the Claimant and Respondent.

6.3. Any electronic documents shared between the Equity Officers, Claimant and Respondent will be confidential.

6.4. Personal information regarding a Complaint will only be shared in connection with those responsible for administering this Policy, investigating and processing the Complaint, determining appropriate remedies or sanctions, or for a consistent and related purpose.

6.5. When the resolution is discussed by the Legislative Council, a confidential session will be declared, and all names and identifying features of the Claimant and Respondent will be omitted

## Article 7 - Conflicts of Interest

7.1. Upon receiving an Equity Complaint, Equity Officers must declare any conflicts of interest as individuals and/or as a whole.

7.2. Any Equity Officer who declares a conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint must abstain from all stages of conflict resolution, including informal and formal resolution.

7.3. Failure of an Equity Officer to declare a known conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint will result in review or suspension from the Equity Complaints Investigation Committee, at the discretion of the other members of the committee based on the seriousness of the violation.

## Article 8 - Right to a Support Person

8.1 Throughout all Equity Complaint resolution processes, the Claimant and the Respondent have the right to be accompanied at any and all times by a Support Person.

8.1.2. The Claimant or Respondent may request that the SSMU provide a Support Person. Such individuals can be chosen amongst the membership of the SSMU Equity Committee and should be trained in anti-oppression principles and active listening.





8.2. Any interviewing or questioning may be paused to allow the Support person and their party to discuss an issue or question privately. The Support Person may take notes and give advice to the party they are supporting.

8.3. The Support Person may not be a supervisor of either the Claimant or the Respondent.

8.4. If the Support Person is not able to fulfill their role (ie. Using their position to intimidate another party in the complaints process instead of providing emotional support to the person who requested them), Equity Officers make seek appropriate remedies such as imposing boundaries in writing or request that the Claimant/Respondent be accompanied by a different Support Person.

8.5. The Support Person's role is not to present or respond on behalf of either a Respondent or Claimant.

## Article 9 - Consultation with Student Groups

9.1. Throughout the resolution process Equity Officers are encouraged to consult relevant student groups for advice during the process of resolving a complaint while not disclosing any personally identifiable details of either party implicated in the Complaint.

9.2. While confidentiality must be respected, student groups should be consulted in instances where Equity Officers:

9.2.1. Feel a particular perspective is not being adequately represented throughout the process.

9.2.2. Believe the Resolution would significantly affect a particular student group.

## Article 10 - Accountability and Reporting

10.1. Recommendations arising from the informal or formal resolution processes shall be provided to both the Claimant and the Respondent in writing.

10.2. All documents pertaining to Equity Complaints will be archived for a minimum period of three (3) years. They must be kept confidential.

10.3. The Legislative Council and the Executive Committee are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy as well as integrating principles of anti-oppression, inclusivity and diversity into all activities of the SSMU.



10.3.1 Failure to fully and adequately address or manage Equity concerns within these bodies' respective procedures is sufficient grounds for members-at-large, staff, and representatives to file an Equity Complaint and/or bring the issue to the SSMU Accountability Committee.

10.4. The Report of the Equity Committee to the Legislative Council will include a general summary of the number of Complaints received and the status of resolutions.

## APPENDIX A

The SSMU's history has seen extensive student organization against sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination on the local, university, provincial, federal, and international levels. Numerous SSMU services and student groups have a strong commitment to equity, safety, and the creation of safe(r) spaces for its membership, including but not limited to Queer McGill, the Union for Gender Empowerment, the Black Students Network, the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society, Walksafe, and Drivesafe. Dozens of SSMU Clubs and affiliated student groups also share a commitment to equity and anti-discrimination in their mandates.

Civil rights movements over the last 450 years have shown the impact of universities and students on progress in equity issues. From the struggles for women's rights to francophone rights to queer rights; the SSMU and its members have played an active part in the struggle for fair treatment and personal sovereignty. Much of the SSMU's commitment to equity comes from the responsibility of university organizations to create safe havens from the rest of society, where marginalized persons can come together and create communities where they are supported in combating systemic oppression.

In 1989, the SSMU defined itself as an "anti-oppressive" organization. This was an important step in defining ourselves as leaders in the field of equity. By incorporating anti-oppression practice into the SSMU, the understanding of equity was extended beyond the simple relationship of person-to-person isolated events of harassment and discrimination into an in depth evaluation of the situation of certain groups that leads to a lack of access and respect in society for those groups. This method for evaluating and addressing injustice, discrimination, and inclusion is utilized by many non-profits across North America and is a staple in academic discourse surrounding social movements.

"The SSMU—an organization working with individuals, in groups, within organizations, and across a wide social and political context—shall promote a functional anti-oppressive environment that fosters a culture of respect and facilitates our mission of Service representation and leadership." [Approved by the Legislative Council on March 14, 1989]

Since this 1989 decision, the 1990s saw a great deal of development in the SSMU's work on equity. The creation of a VP Equity (by splitting the VP University Affairs position) was proposed and rejected by



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*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories*

the Legislative Council in 1992-1993, and again in 1996-1997, for reasons most likely related to a lack of confidence that this was the best allocation of resources. The Legislative Council soon after created the position of Equity Commissioner, who was given the responsibility of managing the Equity Committee and taking a proactive position in addressing equity issues at McGill.

McGill University created the Joint Senate Board Committee on Equity in 1994. Today, this Committee has grown into an umbrella group with six subcommittees on Women, Racialized and Ethnic Persons, Indigenous Peoples, Queer People, Persons with Disabilities, and Family Care. The effectiveness of this structure is still in question, and undergraduate students have taken an active role in pushing for equitable practices at McGill. In 2004, McGill created its first interim Policy on Harassment. In 2005, it established the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office as an outreach unit for the McGill community. In years to come, the recommendations of the Principal's 2009 Taskforce on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement will likely see some changes to the way McGill addresses diversity and inclusion on its campuses.

Since 2005, the SSMU Equity Policy has gone through its most intensive processes of review and implementation as Equity has grown in importance to our membership. The most important developments in the Policy over this time period have focused on the protocol for addressing violations of the Policy, the delegation of responsibility, and settling of disputes over equity matters. The current Equity Policy is the culmination of these ongoing conversations and the work of the SSMU Equity Commissioners during the 2017-2018 year.



# I. FREE MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/10/26

Expires: 2021/10/20

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

## 1. Scope

This Policy shall apply to Directors, Councillors, Executive Officers, Senators, committee members, staff (employees), and all others involved in Society decision-making processes for the duration of their formal involvement with the Society. It shall be used as a guide for decision-making and a plan for taking action on providing menstrual hygiene products to those who need it.

## 2. Definitions

All terms used in the Free Menstrual Hygiene Products Policy shall adopt the same definitions as those given to similar terms previously defined in the Constitution. In addition, the following terms shall be defined herein:

- 2.1. **Sex:** refers to the social, legal, and medical classification assigned to one's body at birth. Sex, unlike Gender, is not self-defined, though it can be changed.
- 2.2. **Gender:** a set of cultural identities, expressions and roles, codified as feminine or masculine, that are assigned to people based upon the interpretation of their bodies, and more specifically, their sexual and reproductive anatomy. Since gender is a social construct, it is possible to reject or modify the assignment made, and develop something that feels truer and just to oneself.<sup>31</sup>
- 2.3. **Gender Non Conforming (GNC):** a descriptive term and/or identity of a person who has a gender identity and/or expression that does not conform to the traditional expectations of the gender they were assigned at birth. People who identify as “gender nonconforming” or “gender variant” may or may not also identify as “transgender.”

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.glsen.org/GSA/making-your-club-inclusive-transgender-and-gnc-students>



- 2.4. **Gender Binary:** the Gender Binary, also referred to as “gender binarism” or “binarism”, is the incorrect classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine.
- 2.5. **Cisgender:** Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity coincides with their sex at birth.
- 2.6. **Transitioning:** the process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another, GNC or non-binary. Transition is a process that is different for everyone, and it may or may not involve social, legal, physical or medical changes. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.
- 2.7. **Transgender:** encompassing term of many gender identities, some binary and some nonbinary, of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.
- 2.8. **Menstrual Hygiene Products:** any products used during a person's menstrual cycle in order to assist them with the experiences and/or difficulties of menstruation. Persons may choose in some cases to not use these products at all, a decision that is entirely theirs to make and one that should be respected as such. For the sake of this policy, such products may include, and shall be defined as, but are not limited to:
  - 2.8.1. Tampons: an unscented and hypoallergenic plug of soft material inserted into the vagina, using a plastic applicator, to absorb menstrual blood, which must come in a variety of sizes.
  - 2.8.2. Sanitary Pads: an absorbent item worn by a person who is menstruating.
- 2.9. **Pink Tax:** the Pink Tax refers to the discrimination against non-male defining people that manifests itself in an increased expense on products typically labelled, explicitly or implicitly, “for women.”
- 2.10. **Economies of Scale:** a proportionate saving in costs gained by an increased level of production and purchasing.
- 2.11. **Luxury Goods:** products which are not necessary but which tend to make life more pleasant for the consumer.



- 2.12. **Necessary Goods:** goods or service whose consumption is essential to human survival, or which is considered indispensable for maintaining a certain minimum standard-of-living

### 3. Background

- 3.1. **History** the SSMU recognizes that, prior and throughout the drafting of this legislation, there exist programs that seek to combat some of the financial burden on any person or peoples that experience menstruation. Both the Union for Gender Empowerment (UGE)<sup>32</sup> and the Shag Shop provide tampons to students on a pay-what-you-can basis. This policy seeks to only support and build upon the work done by front-line community members who have fought and continue to fight for gender and sex equity and equality
- 3.2. **Price Discrimination** as shown in the study From Cradle to Cane: The Cost of Being a Female Consumer<sup>33</sup>, a comprehensive study that looked into “gender pricing of goods in New York City across multiple industries,” on average women pay 7% more for all goods they consume. The study showed that in some areas, in particular personal care products, women can also pay, on average, 13% more, and products labeled “for women” in general costing more than others 42% of the time. This fact, in combination with the recognition that people that experience menstruation are generally economically vulnerable due to patriarchal hiring practices, amongst other sexist work-based issues associated with the systemic oppression in moneymaking industries, compounds in terms of relative cost.
  - 3.2.1. **Luxury Goods and Gender** reproductive health is widely promoted on the McGill campus in various existing capacities: free condoms can be found at large-scale events, in residence halls, and elsewhere on campus. As well, the McGill Health Clinic offers STI testing as one of its many services to students. Menstrual hygiene products, however, are sparsely found on campus. This dichotomy presents an unnecessary and unacceptable fissure between reproductive health and menstrual health given that both of which are related to one’s reproductive organs. As well, while commonplace necessary goods, such as toilet paper, are supplied in public washrooms for free, menstrual hygiene products maintain a cost and can be labeled as “Luxury”; a clear marker of the discrimination faced against products deemed “feminine” in nature. One study compared the cost of “Pads for [Elderly] Women” with equivalent “Guards for [Elderly] Men” and found that in some cases packages of product costed the same amount for 25% less in pad count.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <https://unionforgenderempowerment.wordpress.com/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/partners/Study-of-Gender-Pricing-in-NYC.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/partners/Study-of-Gender-Pricing-in-NYC.pdf#page=14>



- 3.3. **Product Gendering** the act of gendering a product, in which a Gender identity is attached to the packaging and marketing of a good, an act that usually subscribes to pricing discrimination in favor of men and perpetuates/creates some of the gender based segmentation and assumptions we have present today. The SSMU has taken similar prior stances against gendering of products through its section 2.7 of the Equity Policy, in which the SSMU established its commitment to “gender-neutral language in its documents, in all electronic and written correspondence from SSMU addresses, and in the workplace.
- 3.4. **Menstrual Stigmatization and Shaming** studies show that 62% of women who were asked the question, ‘Do you feel comfortable talking about menstruation with males?’ in a survey answered in negative<sup>35</sup>. As well, there are documented occurrences of people in prominent positions being shamed for getting their period in public and not having any menstrual hygiene products.<sup>36</sup> Students who get their period unexpectedly on campus may be paying for their own education and lifestyle. In an emergency situation, some may be faced with the decision to purchase either menstrual hygiene products and not eat lunch that day or purchase food and experience mental health related negative impacts. One study<sup>37</sup> showed that 35% of women caught in public without the supplies they needed when they unexpectedly started their period would feel panicked, and 43% would feel anxious/stressed.

## 4. Product Subsidizing

- 4.1. **Fee** The Vice-President Finance shall, in consultation with the President, draft a Referendum Question to be considered by the Legislative Council with the intent that the SSMU establish a Free Menstrual Hygiene Products Fee mandating the Society to purchase and freely distribute Tampons and Sanitary Pads, of various width and thicknesses, in order to leverage Economies of Scale to reduce the overall cost through buying in bulk.
- 4.1.1. **Renewal** The SSMU will continue to bring this fee back to the membership for renewal, at the initially passed price per student or higher, until McGill, or the Municipal, Provincial or Federal Government recognize that these products must be classified as Necessary Goods and pass a subsidy program to eliminate their cost and/or supply them publicly.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ijssh.org/papers/296-B00016.pdf#page=4>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/menstruation-themed-photo-series-artist-censored-by-instagram-says-images-are-to-demystify-taboos-10144331.html>

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.freethetampons.org/uploads/4/6/0/3/46036337/ftt\\_infographic.pdf](http://www.freethetampons.org/uploads/4/6/0/3/46036337/ftt_infographic.pdf)



- 4.1.2. **Surplus Fund** If, at any point, the SSMU finds itself running a surplus with the funds collected, those surplus moneys collected will be pooled into a fund (to be referred as the Health and Hygiene Products Fund) to be reserved for the purchasing of alternative health and hygiene products, including, but not limited to, Diva Cups.

## 5. Distribution

- 5.1. **Provision of Products to Students** The SSMU shall seek to provide menstrual hygiene products through as many prominent access points on campus as are outlined, but not limited to, herein.
  - 5.1.1. **SSMU Building** The Vice-President Operations shall establish dispensaries at key access points in the building, namely in, but not limited to, the two gender neutral washrooms in the SSMU Building. The Vice-President Operations will also create and maintain clear signs on the first and fourth floor indicating where these products are, and shall coordinate with the VP External's annual awareness campaign (outlined below) to promote the existence of these free products in the building.
  - 5.1.2. **McGill Campus** The Vice-President Internal will be responsible for coordinating with Healthy McGill to distribute these products as widely as possible through their kiosks on campus. As well, the VP Internal shall contact all other groups they feel would interested in working with the SSMU on providing free menstrual hygiene products, in order to promote the creation of more access points across campus into this Policy.

## 6. Advocacy

- 6.1. **Expansion of Policy** The SSMU will advocate for similar policies to be adopted at all higher levels of governance, including, but not limited to, at McGill, Municipal and Provincial Government
  - 6.1.1. **Campus-Wide Advocacy** The Vice-President University Affairs shall advocate for the McGill administration to adopt a similar Policy, as well as establish similar dispensaries to those outlined in section 4.1.2, through any official capacity they have, such as, but not limited to, Senate and its Committees. The President shall advocate the McGill administration, as well as faculty associations, to adopt similar policies and establish dispensaries, through any official capacity they have, such as, but not limited to, Senate and its Committees, the Board of Governors and its Committees, and the Presidents Round Table.





- 6.1.2. **External Advocacy** The VP External and the President shall both be tasked with the joint responsibility of advocating for the expansion of those adopting this, or similar, policies at the Municipal, Provincial or Federal level, through media relations, provincial associations, as well as personal outreach to the city of Montreal by the VP External in specific.

## 7. Education

- 7.1. **Awareness** The SSMU recognizes that many McGill and Quebec students are uninformed on issues of economic discrimination against individuals who experience menstruation, and will actively participate in local communities to increase awareness.
  - 7.1.1. **Gendering of Products** The SSMU recognizes and denounces any gendering of products, which further contributes to societal pressures associated with Gender, that constantly negatively impacts and pressures people to fit a Gender mold that is deemed “normal.”
  - 7.1.2. **Annual Awareness Campaign** The VP External shall put on, in coordination with the Office of the VP Operations, an annual awareness campaign that aims to both explain the Pink Tax and educate people about how it negatively effects and discriminates against GNC, Transitioning, Transgender, and Cisgender people that experience menstruation. The predominant role of the VP Operations in this is outlined in 4.1.2, but they will also act as a general support to the VP External throughout the campaign.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/18/period-cost-lifetime\\_n\\_7258780.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/18/period-cost-lifetime_n_7258780.html)



# J. GENDERED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2018/10/11

Expires: 2023/05/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

## 1. Preamble

This Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy, herein referred to as the GSVP, is a response to harm perpetrated by members of the 2016-2017 SSMU Executive who committed acts of sexual violence against a dozen students from the McGill community. Not only were the perpetrators executives at SSMU, but SSMU failed to take active steps to investigate and respond to rumours, informal and formal complaints regarding the individuals in question. The lack of clear procedure, survivor-centric processes and disclosure training perpetuated the re-traumatization of survivors who sought to hold the SSMU executive members accountable for their actions and ensure that they could no longer hold positions at SSMU.

Due largely in part to the unpaid emotional and physical labour of the adhoc collective the “Community Disclosure Network” (CDN), this harm was brought to light. They launched an anonymous disclosure campaign following disappointment with the lack of mechanisms within SSMU to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable. Because of CDN’s work, both individuals in question resigned from their positions in SSMU, with less than a few months left in their terms. These incident(s) revealed the serious shortcomings in SSMU’s ability to respond to sexual violence internally.

The GSVP has been created to ensure that the harm and re-traumatization that survivors experienced will not happen again. This holistic GSVP serves to create confidential and survivor-centric processes for disclosures and resolutions within various political representative bodies, clubs, and services of SSMU. Beyond creating a disciplinary procedure to respond to sexual violence, this policy will address acts of gendered violence - a broader spectrum of harm that includes sexual violence.

SSMU recognizes that acts of gendered and sexual violence are not isolated incidents. They occur within the context of the prevalence of [rape culture](#) in the broader communities of McGill and beyond. Thus, this policy seeks to address gendered and sexual violence by focusing on specific commitments SSMU will make to be able to support the existing prevention and support programs, as well as create new student-led responses which may fill in gaps existing between other policies and procedures.



There are many steps the SSMU must take to begin to address the violence that it has been complicit in perpetuating, this policy being just a beginning. We must create a union that supports, protects, educates, and advocates for the safety and well-being of its members. We must be active leaders in the fight against campus gendered and sexual violence.

## 2. Purpose

The SSMU GSVP has been created to provide an intersectional and survivor-centric approach to sexual harassment, gendered violence and sexual violence within the SSMU community and applied to the SSMU context.

SSMU is a unique entity whereby their jurisdiction within the SSMU context is different from the institution of McGill University. SSMU has jurisdiction over its employees, volunteers, participants in SSMU clubs and those who are present within SSMU spaces. Furthermore, SSMU is comprised of elected officials - the Board of Directors, the Judicial Board, Legislative Council and the SSMU officers (also known as Executives) - who, by provincial legislation, are subject to different processes with regards to sanctions. It is important to note that this jurisdiction is different than that of McGill University, whose [Policy Against Sexual Violence](#) has limited authority within the SSMU context of employment, clubs or services. Thus, the purpose of this policy is to fill this gap and complement the existing campus and community structures in place to respond to gendered and sexual violence.

The purpose of this policy is to create a response to gendered and sexual violence within the SSMU community that is holistic and encapsulates the four components of (1) prevention, (2) support, (3) advocacy and (4) response. All of these components will rely on an intersectional framework to account for the different ways in which various groups experience and are impacted by gendered and/or sexual violence.

### 2.1. Prevention

In September 2017, the SSMU Legislative Council passed [a motion](#) to acknowledge that gendered and sexual violence does not occur in isolation from the larger context of rape culture that exists on campus and Canadian society. In this motion they defined rape culture as “a culture in which dominant ideas, social practices, media images and societal institutions implicitly or explicitly condone sexual assault by normalizing or trivializing male sexual violence and by blaming survivors for their own abuse”. To address, the larger context of sexual violence the SSMU policy will actively engage with prevention efforts. SSMU will work with existing campus stakeholders to create and mandate prevention training and campaigns that address the existence of rape culture on campus, promote a culture of consent and actively facilitate the creation of a safe and inclusive environment that is free from gendered and sexual violence.



## 2.2. Support

SSMU will seek to support the existing support resources on campus and in the larger community to ensure that students are aware of the resources and accommodations available to them. SSMU acknowledges that its role is to uphold and complement the existing support structures, and advocate for increased resources and intersectional support options. We all share the same goal in ensuring individuals who experience gendered and/or sexual violence have access to timely and specialized resources to support their healing processes.

## 2.3. Advocate

SSMU will take on an active role in advocating for intersectional and survivor-centric processes at McGill University and at the provincial level by using the [OurTurn National Action Plan](#) as a guide and through the creation of an OurTurn McGill Taskforce.

## 2.4. Response

The GSVP creates accessible, confidential and survivor-centric processes to ensure that all members of the SSMU community have the ability to have options available to them to feel safe and comfortable while participating in SSMU spaces and using SSMU services. These informal and formal resolution processes are in accordance with and do not limit a survivor's ability to seek recourse through other existing structures such as of the [McGill Policy Against Sexual Violence](#) and the [Criminal Code](#).

## 3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all forms of gendered violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence as defined in section 6 of this policy.

3.2. Upon the passing of this policy all other relevant SSMU policies and documents will be updated to ensure that they are adapted to the GSVP, this includes the SSMU Employment Manuals, SSMU Club and ISG documents, SSMU Internal Regulations and the SSMU Constitution.

3.3. This policy applies to all members of the SSMU community, individuals using or participating in SSMU services and clubs or individuals on SSMU property.

3.4. This policy applies to all forms of gendered violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence, as defined in section 6 of this policy, whether they are in the University's learning, living or work environment, on or off campus, or interacting through social or other electronic media and when the potential consequences of the incident(s) may adversely affect the complainant's ability to feel safe and be able to access SSMU spaces or services.



3.5. For clarity there is no limit on the temporal jurisdiction of this policy, as to when the act of gendered and/or sexual violence occurred. Specifically, so long as the respondent and/or complainant are members of the SSMU community at the time of the incident or at the time of the complaint.

## 4. Jurisdiction

4.1. Due to the context and limitations of the jurisdiction of SSMU this policy applies to all members of the SSMU community to varying degrees depending on their status within the SSMU community, as outlined in section 11.8 of this policy.

4.2. To clarify within this policy, the SSMU community encapsulates all:

- a) SSMU members which includes all undergraduate students;
- b) SSMU employees, both full time, part-time and casual;
- c) SSMU volunteers, who have signed volunteer contracts, in the instance that they are not undergraduate students at McGill (for example, PGSS members who volunteer for SSMU services);
- d) SSMU Officers, also referred to as Executives;
- e) SSMU General Manager;
- f) SSMU Legislative Council;
- g) SSMU Judicial Board;
- h) SSMU Board of Directors;
- i) Executives and or members of all SSMU affiliated club, Independent Student Groups and Services;
- j) Any visitor on SSMU owned or leased premises, using SSMU services or participating in a SSMU club regardless of student or SSMU membership status.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

**5.1. Anti-Violence Coordinator.** Two Anti-Violence Coordinators (AVCs) will be hired by SSMU to oversee the implementation and application of the GSVP. The coordinators will be responsible for organizing GSVP training in conjunction with HR and SSMU executives. The coordinators are responsible for facilitating the response section of the policy. Prior to the beginning of their mandate they must receive extensive training as required in their contract.

**5.2. Human Resources Manage.** The HR manager is responsible for applying the GSVP as it relates to GSVP training for employees and recourse mechanisms in the Employee Manual for full-time and casual staff pursuant to the GSVP. They are the direct supervisor of the AVCs.



**5.3. SSMU Executive Officers.** The Executive Officers are responsible for assisting in the implementation of the GSVP. The following is a breakdown of their roles as it pertains to the GSVP:

**5.3.1 President:** The President is responsible for ensuring that all members of the SSMU complete GSVP training in accordance with the timeline outlined in the GSVP.

**5.3.2 Vice-President Student Life:** VP Student Life is responsible for working in conjunction with the AVCs to ensure that all clubs, services and ISG's receive training.

**5.3.3 Vice-President University Affairs:** VP University Affairs is responsible updating the rights of students on the Know Your Rights campaign specifically as it relates to the rights of individuals who experience gendered and/or sexual violence.

**5.3.4: Vice-President External:** VP External is responsible the coordination of the OurTurn McGill taskforce, specifically the selection and honorarium of the Chair.

**5.3.5 Vice-President Finance:** VP Finance is responsible for ensuring that the designated amount of funding to operate the GSVP is provided for in the SSMU budget.

**5.3.6: Vice-President Internal:** VP Internal is responsible for communicating any relevant information regarding the GSVP including prevention initiatives and training to the SSMU body at large. Additionally, they are responsible for taking all appropriate steps to ensure that SSMU events are safe spaces free of gendered and sexual violence.

## 6. Definitions

**6.1. Affirmative Consent:** Affirmative consent requires that a person is able to freely choose between two options: yes and no. This means that there must be an exchange of mutually understood affirmative words or body language which indicates a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. It is the responsibility of the person initiating or engaging in a sexual activity to obtain clear and affirmative responses at all stages of sexual engagement. Silence or non-communication must never be interpreted as consent. The fact that consent was given in the past to a sexual or dating relationship does not mean that consent is deemed to exist for all future sexual activity. Recognizing the intersectionality of consent and ability, consent may not be present properly if an individual has a disability that limits their verbal or physical means of interaction – in these instances and all instances, it is necessary to determine how consent will be established.

Consent is not obtained or implied if:

- The agreement is expressed by the words or conduct of a person other than the specific individuals who are involved in the sexual activity;
- An individual induces another individual to engage in the activity by abusing a position of trust, power or authority;



- An individual expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to engage in the sexual activity;
- An individual, having consented to engage in sexual activity, expressed, by words or conduct, expresses a lack of agreement to continue to engaging in the activity.
- An individual is asleep, unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate;
- An individual has been threatened or coerced, as outlined in the definition of sexual violence, ) into engaging in the sexual activity;
- An individual has been drugged;
- An individual is incapacitated due to consumption of alcohol or drugs.

Additionally:

- Any sexual activity involving alcohol or drug-use requires the standard of affirmative consent. The use of alcohol and/or drugs by an individual never implies consent and should not be assumed to have played a role in causing a survivor's experience of sexual violence. Furthermore, the use of drugs or alcohol by the perpetrator never justifies their actions;
- An individual's profession should not impact their ability to provide or withdraw consent. Specifically, individuals choosing to engage in sex work maintain autonomy over their bodies and the ability to consent or not consent to any form of sexual activity. However, it is important to distinguish the term 'sex work' from 'sex trafficking'. Sex trafficking is the trade of humans for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Sex trafficking is a criminal act, under which consent cannot be obtained in any circumstances;

**6.2. Board of Director:** The body of the SSMU made up of all the Directors in accordance with Article 6 of the SSMU Constitution;

**6.3. Club:** A formal and accredited organization which has been recognized by the Society as a Full-Status Club or as an Interim-Status Club in accordance with the Internal Regulations of the Student Life Portfolio. The composition could include both executives, members who can be McGill students and non-McGill students;

**6.4. Discloser:** An individual who discloses information about an incident(s) of gendered or sexual violence that they have experienced;

**6.5. Employee:** A person who is hired for a wage, salary, fee, or payment to perform work for the SSMU;

**6.6. Independent Student Group:** A student-based organization that is not a Service or Club but that provides some benefit to Members and that is accredited by the SSMU as an Independent Student Group, in accordance with the Internal Regulations of the Student Life Portfolio;



**6.7. Gendered Violence:** any act of physical, verbal, or emotional aggression which implicates, targets, or de-legitimizes an individual's gender presentation or identity; or an act reinforcing gender inequalities resulting in physical, sexual, emotional, or economic harm. This includes misogynistic, queerphobic, and transphobic violence. Gendered violence is often implicit, and the gendered dynamics which enable it may not always be hypervisible.

Gendered violence can manifest as singular acts or as continued micro-instances of violence. These include, but are not limited to:

- Intentional misgendering;
- Intentional “outing”;
- Verbal abuse;
- Use of gendered slurs;
- Physical violence or intimidation.

**6.8. Judicial Board:** Shall refer to the body of the Society, established in accordance with section 15 of the [SSMU Constitution](#);

**6.9. Legislative Council:** shall refer to the body of the Society, established in accordance with section 8 of the [SSMU Constitution](#);

**6.10. Officer:** Any person elected to any position created under section 10.1 of the Constitution;

**6.11. Petitioner:** A SSMU member, officer, employee, or visitor who has sought formal recourse through the GSVP.

**6.12. Rape Culture:** A culture in which dominant ideas, social practices, media images, and societal institutions implicitly or explicitly condone sexual violence by normalizing or trivializing sexual violence and by blaming survivors for their own abuse. Rape culture enables disproportionate rates of sexual and gendered violence in marginalized communities, and prevents perpetrators from being held accountable for their actions;

**6.13. Respondent:** A member of the SSMU community named as an offender in a informal or formal report of sexual violence;

**6.14. Service:** a formal and accredited organization that has been recognized by the SSMU as a Service in accordance with the Internal Regulations of the Student Life Portfolio;

**6.15. Sexual Violence:** any non-consensual, unwanted actual, attempted, or threatened act or behaviour, that is carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression. This act or behaviour may or may not involve physical contact. Sexualized violence includes all forms of sexual misconduct including but not limited to:





- a) **Sexual Assault:** Any form of sexual touching or the threat of sexual touching without the individual's consent;
- b) **Sexual Coercion:** is the act of using subtle pressure, drugs, alcohol, influence, power, or force to have sexual contact with someone against their will. Sexual coercion includes ongoing attempts to have sexual contact of some kind with another person who has already expressed that they do not want to have sexual contact;
- c) **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the working, learning, or living environment, or leads to adverse consequences for the one directly subjected to the harassment;
- d) **Stalking:** Engaging in conduct that causes an individual to fear for their physical or psychological safety, such as repeatedly following or communicating through any means with someone, engaging in threatening conduct, or keeping watch over the place where the individual happens to be;
- e) **Indecent Exposure:** Exposing one's body to another individual for a sexual purpose or coercing another individual to remove their clothing in order to expose their body, without their consent;
- f) **Voyeurism:** Non-consensual viewing, photographing, or otherwise recording another individual in a location where there is an expectation of privacy and where the viewing, photographing or recording is done for a sexual purpose;
- g) **Distribution of Sexually Explicit Photograph or Recording:** The distribution of a sexually explicit photograph or recording of an individual to one or more individuals other than the individual in the photograph or recording without the consent of the individual in the photograph or recording;
- h) **Stealthing:** nonconsensual condom removal during sexual intercourse.

6.16. **SSMU:** The Students' Society of McGill University/l'Association Étudiante de l'Université McGill, the corporation duly incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Province of Québec pursuant to the Act, and accredited as a student association pursuant to the Act Respecting the Accreditation and Financing of Students' Associations, CQLR c A-3.01;

6.17. **Personal Advocate:** An individual who may advocate or provide information and support to a complainant through the complaint process.



**6.18. Support Person:** An individual present during a complaint who gives emotional support through the complaint process.

**6.19. Survivor:** For the purposes of this policy, a SSMU Community Member who has experienced an act or acts of sexual violence as it has been defined above. Survivors themselves may self-identify using whatever language they prefer.

**6.20. Survivor-centrism:** A survivor-centred approach requires all those who engage in sexual violence prevention and support programming to prioritize the rights, needs, and wishes of the survivor. This requires the inclusion of procedural commitments that seek to mitigate the potential for re-traumatization when survivors seek recourse or accommodations.

**6.21. Trauma-Informed:** A process that is informed by the understanding of how trauma affects Survivors' response to services, resolution processes, and procedures. It is important to recognize that adopting a trauma-informed approach requires significant training and is a field that is continuously developing. Thus, trauma-Informed processes should be carried out by individuals with appropriate training with the goal of avoiding Survivor re-traumatization, increasing the safety of all, and increasing the effectiveness of interactions with Survivors.;

**6.22. Visitor:** An individual who is present on SSMU owner or leased property or is using SSMU services regardless of their geographic location.

## 7. Prevention & Training

**7.1. Gendered and Sexualized Violence Prevention and Support Training,** herein referred to as GSVP Training, will be coordinated by the AVCs in collaboration with various actors, including but not limited to the President of SSMU, the Human Resources Manager of SSMU, the VP Student Life and executive members of campus clubs.

**7.2.** This training will be coordinated and scheduled by the AVCs, and will be facilitated by volunteers from SSMU and SACOMSS. The AVCs will be responsible for training these facilitators and scheduling the training sessions. The volunteer trainers will be conducting the training sessions. The trainings will include information pertaining to:

- Defining sexual violence and gendered violence;
- Consent including discussions of consent and alcohol or drug use;
- Rape culture and consent culture;
- Intersectional impacts of gendered and sexual violence;
- Bystander intervention;
- Survivor-centric responses to disclosures;
- On-campus and off-campus support options;



- Reporting options including the SSMU GSVP policy.

7.3. Individuals have the ability to have alternative trainings to those offered by SSMU recognized as equivalent to the GSVP training, based on the discretion of the AVCs. The alternative trainings must be conducted by individuals who have received adequate training from professionals in the field of sexual violence, such as OS-VRSE, and the training must cover all of the topics mentioned in section

7.4. Upon completing their training individuals will be asked to complete a feedback form to measure the impact of the training and record ways the training can be continuously improved.

7.5. The AVCs will keep records of the names and numbers of individuals who completed the training and include it in a report, presented to SSMU by May 31st of each year.

7.6. Students who complete the training will have the ability to add it to their McGill co-curricular record. This will be monitored by the AVCs.

## 7.7. Employee Training

7.7.1. All SSMU full, part-time and casual employees, including the General Manager, will be required to complete GSVP Training, within 2 weeks of their contract start date as mandated by the SSMU Employee Manual.

7.7.2. Employees may be exempted from training at the discretion of the AVCs, particularly under exceptional circumstances such as the signing of a contract which covers a period of less than two weeks, or absence from Montreal during the term of the contract.

7.7.3. All employees must participate in the training annually, based on the academic year.

7.7.4. This training will be coordinated by the AVCs, in conjunction with the SSMU Human Resources Manager, herein referred to as the HR Manager.

7.7.5. An employee who does not complete the training within the initial 2 week deadline will be contacted directly again by the AVCs to arrange a training in their first month of employment at SSMU. The AVCs will also inform the SSMU HR Manager in writing that the individual has not completed the GSVP training within the required time frame.

7.7.6. If an employee does not complete the training within their first month of employment they will be placed on an administrative suspension until the training is completed.



## 7.8. SSMU Officer Training

7.8.1. All members elected into SSMU officer positions, as defined in the SSMU Constitution, will be required to complete GSVP Training within 2 weeks of their contract start date.

7.8.2. If the member is re-elected into an officer position in SSMU or hired in another position at SSMU after their initial term, they must repeat the training annually based on the academic year.

7.8.3. This training will be coordinated by the SSMU Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy Coordinators, in conjunction with the SSMU President.

7.8.4. It is the responsibility of the SSMU President to ensure that all officers complete the training within the first two weeks of their contract start date.

7.8.5. In the event that an individual takes an officer position through a by-election they must complete the training within two weeks of the start date of their term. It is the responsibility of the SSMU President to ensure that this training occurs.

7.8.6. If a SSMU officer does not complete the training within the initial 2 week deadline, the AVCs will contact the officer directly to arrange a training in their first month of taking their position at SSMU. The AVCs will also inform the President in writing that the officer has not completed the GSVP training within the required time frame.

7.8.7. In the event that the SSMU President has not completed their training, the AVCs will provide a written notice to the HR Manager.

7.8.8. If an officer does not complete the training within their first month of employment, the AVCs will notify the President and the HR Manager who will place the officer under administrative suspension until the training is completed.

## 7.9. Legislative Council Training

7.9.1. All voting and non-voting members of the SSMU Legislative Council will be required to complete GSVP Training prior to or within one month of the first Legislative Council meeting.

7.9.2. This training will be coordinated by the AVCs in conjunction with the Speaker of the Legislative Council, to be included in the general Legislative Council training prior to the beginning of their mandate.



7.9.3. If a member of Legislative Council is unable to complete the training during the general Legislative Council training, then the individual member must coordinate with the AVCs to attend an alternative training session.

7.9.4. It is the responsibility of the SSMU President, working alongside the Legislative Council Parliamentarian and Speaker, to ensure that all Legislative Council members receive training within the required time period.

7.9.5. If members of the Legislative Council have completed equivalent training in another capacity, they may be exempted at the discretion of the Gendered and Sexualized Violence Policy Coordinators. This does not detract from the requirement that members of the Council must complete training annually based on the academic year.

7.9.6. If a member of the Legislative Council does not complete the training within the month following the first Legislative Council meeting they will be suspended from Legislative Council meetings until the training is completed.

## 7.10. Board of Directors and Judicial Board Training

7.10.1. All members-at-large of the SSMU Board of Directors and Judicial Board, will be required to complete GSVP Training within one month of their ratification at the Fall General Assembly.

7.10.2. This training will be coordinated by the SSMU Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy Coordinators, in conjunction with the SSMU President.

7.10.3. It is the responsibility of the SSMU President to ensure that all members of the Board of Directors and Judicial Board complete the training within the first two weeks of their start date.

7.10.4. If members of the Board of Directors or Judicial Board have completed the GSVP Training in another capacity, they may be exempted at the discretion of the Gendered and Sexualized Violence Policy Coordinators. This does not detract from the requirement that members of both boards must complete training annually based on the academic year.

7.10.5. If a member of the Board of Directors or Judicial Board does not complete the training within the month following their ratification at the Fall General Assembly they will be suspended from meetings until the training is completed.



## 7.11. Services Training

7.11.1. All employees hired by services are required to complete GSVP Training within 2 weeks of beginning their contract.

7.11.2. All service employees must participate in, or receive exemption from, the training annually.

7.11.3. In the event that a service does not employ individuals, they are required to ensure that at least 5 executives or 50% of their executive team, whichever is lesser, has received GSVP Training during the Fall academic semester at McGill.

7.11.4. If an individual has completed equivalent training in another capacity, they may be exempted at the discretion of the Gendered and Sexualized Violence Policy Coordinators. This does not detract from the requirement that everyone must complete training annually based on the academic year.

7.11.5. This training will be coordinated by the AVCs in conjunction with the HR Manager, and the VP Student Life.

7.11.6. In the case of employees it is the responsibility of the SSMU HR Manager to ensure that the GSVP Training is completed. In the case of service executive members, it is the responsibility of the VP Student Life to ensure that the GSVP Training is completed.

7.11.7. A service employee who does not complete the training within the initial 2 week deadline, will be contacted directly by the AVCs to arrange a training in their first month of employment at SSMU. The AVCs will also inform the the SSMU HR Manager in writing that the individual has not completed the GSVP training within the required time frame.

7.11.8. A service that has not had 5 executive members or 50% of their executive team, whichever is lesser, complete the training by December, will be contacted directly by the AVCs to arrange a training in the prior to the winter semester at McGill. The AVCs will also inform the the VP Student Life in writing that the individual has not completed the GSVP training within the required time frame.

7.11.9. If an employee does not complete the training within their first month of employment they will be placed under administrative suspension until the training is completed. A service whose executive members do not complete the training in the Fall academic semester will be required to meet with the VP Student Life to determine appropriate next steps.



## 7.12. Clubs and Independent Student Groups Training

7.12.1. All accredited SSMU clubs and Independent Student Groups will be required to ensure that at least 5 members or 50% of their club membership, whichever is lesser, has received GSVP Training.

7.12.2. All SSMU clubs and independent student groups will be notified of this requirement in an email sent by the VP Student Life. This requirement will also be included in any club orientation documents or online information pages provided by SSMU.

7.12.3. If an individual has completed equivalent training in another capacity, they may be exempted at the discretion of the Gendered and Sexualized Violence Policy Coordinators. This does not detract from the requirement that everyone must complete training annually based on the academic year.

7.12.4. If the composition of clubs change in the winter semester, members can request additional training to the AVCs if they feel that it is necessary.

7.12.5. It is the responsibility of the VP Student Life, in conjunction with the GSVP Coordinators, to ensure that all clubs and independent student groups have the required number of members complete the training.

7.12.6. If a club or independent student group does not complete their training by the last week of November the VP Student Life, in conjunction with the AVCs will email the club or group to notify them again of the required training and consequences of not completing the training. They will be offered the ability to arrange a training session in December.

7.12.7. If a club or independent student group does not complete their training prior to the beginning of the winter semester, their club status will be suspended and they will lose their ability to receive SSMU funding or book spaces through SSMU. Their suspension will not be lifted until the required number of members complete the training. The suspension will be removed after the end of the academic year.

## 8. Support

8.1. SSMU acknowledges the existing sexual violence support services on campus and in the community, which include but are not limited to, the Sexual Assault Centre of McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS), the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (O-SVRSE), Nightline McGill and the Montréal Sexual Assault Support Centre.



8.2. O-SVRSE may also be a valuable point of contact for individuals who have experienced gendered violence. Additionally, some services at SSMU currently provide support to those who experience gendered violence. These include SACOMSS, QM (Queer McGill) and UGE (Union for Gender Empowerment).

8.3. SSMU recognizes that its role is to further support, rather than replicate, these services and direct individuals to them if they are seeking resources.

8.4. It is the responsibility of the Vice-President External Affairs to continuously update the SSMU website with information on the various on and off campus support resources and the accommodation options available.

8.5. It is the responsibility of the Vice-President University Affairs to create and update any Academic Rights Campaigns and Resources to include a section for individuals who experience gendered and/or sexual violence.

8.6. SSMU acknowledges the emotional labour that one performs while providing support to others who have experienced harm and encourages those providing support to seek support for themselves if they feel it is necessary. If needed these individuals can reach out to the AVCs who will connect them with other appropriate resources at McGill and in the broad community. If the AVCs feel as though they need support, they can contact the HR Manager who will connect them with appropriate resources.

## 9. Advocacy

9.1. SSMU is committed to advocating for a holistic approach to addressing campus sexual violence that includes prevention, support and survivor-centric disciplinary processes.

9.2. In the Fall of 2017, the SSMU Legislative Council passed [a motion](#) acknowledging the existence of rape culture on campus and committing to use the [OurTurn National Action Plan](#) as a guiding document in all anti-sexual violence advocacy efforts. They also committed to creating a student-led OurTurn McGill taskforce to serve as a consultative body in all SSMU anti-sexual violence work.

9.3. In all anti-gendered and anti-sexual violence advocacy work SSMU commits to:

9.3.1. Advocating for more resource allocation to support services on campus, particularly O-SVRSE and to better support individuals with intersecting marginalized identities;

9.3.2. Advocating for an intersectional approach to gendered and sexual violence by way of recommending the inclusion of representatives from marginalized groups, who are interested and have the capacity to participate in various SSMU and administrative committees;





9.3.3. Advocating for survivor-centric reforms to both campus policies and provincial legislation;

9.3.4. Contextualizing experiences of gendered violence and sexual violence within the broader systemic structures of rape culture;

9.3.5. Consulting survivors of campus gendered violence and sexual violence and campus stakeholders actively engaged in anti-gendered violence work anti-sexual violence work;

9.3.6. Holding the institution of McGill accountable for violations of survivors rights or sexual violence response processes that violate the provincial [Bill 151 An Act to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions](#).

9.4. It is the responsibility of all members of the SSMU Legislative Council, including SSMU officers, to uphold and advocate for the rights of survivors as enumerated in the SSMU [Survivor's Bill of Rights](#).

9.5. SSMU holds no jurisdiction over University disciplinary procedures and processes; however the VP (University Affairs) is empowered under this article, in conjunction with the GSVP coordinators, to receive anonymous information regarding members of faculty, staff and administration who commit acts of gendered and sexual violence.

It is the responsibility of the Vice-President University Affairs, with the consent of the individuals involved and respecting requests of anonymity, to share this information with relevant members of Faculty, Disciplinary Officers and/or McGill administrators who enforce [the McGill Policy Against Sexual Violence](#). Reports forwarded by the VP University Affairs will not result in a complaint process. However, the purpose of section 9.5 is to provide its members with alternative options to make instances of harm known to the university.

9.6. It is the responsibility of the Vice-President External to create an OurTurn McGill taskforce, which includes an external chair, who is not an Officer of SSMU. They must receive financial compensation and are primarily responsible for the coordination of the task force.

9.7. The OurTurn McGill Taskforce is independent of the GSVP or the procedures within the complaint processes. Their mandate, outlined in section 9.10, is primarily to harmonize advocacy efforts on campus and inform SSMU anti-sexual violence efforts.

9.8. This policy recommends that the task force be composed of students from the following groups:

9.8.1. Equity Commissioners from every faculty association, as well as SSMU;



9.8.2. Members at large;

9.8.3. Representative(s) from SACOMSS;

9.8.4. Representative(s) from O-SVRSE;

9.8.5. Representative from PGSS (Post-Graduates Students' Society of McGill University).

9.9. To ensure that the task force is able to gain a diverse range of perspectives and experiences the task force should include representation from underrepresented communities who are often adversely impacted by gendered and sexual violence. This includes but is not limited to reaching out specifically to members from BSN, ISA, QM, UGE and other groups who express interest.

9.10. The mandate of this task force is:

9.10.1. Harmonize all student-led initiatives on campus around gendered and sexual violence prevention;

9.10.2. Create a culture of consent on the McGill campus through education and events coordinated by the taskforce;

9.10.3. Continuously communicate with OurTurn National;

9.10.4. Act as SSMU's consultative body on anti-gendered and anti-sexual violence advocacy and policy reform with a specific focus on the McGill Policy Against Sexual Violence and Bill 151.

## 10. Response

### 10.1. Distinguishing between Disclosure and Complaint

10.1.1. Under this policy, a disclosure and a complaint are separate processes.

10.1.2. A disclosure is defined as a communication of an instance of gendered and/or sexual violence. In the event of a disclosure which implicates members of the SSMU community, the discloser is encouraged to reach out to the AVCs. The AVCs are mandated to provide survivors with non-judgemental, non-directional support and relevant resources. Furthermore, they must ensure that discloser is aware of all existing avenues for recourse which are available.

10.1.3. A complaint is defined as a formal written report of an act or several acts of gendered and/or sexual violence against an individual within the SSMU community. In the event of a



complaint, the AVCs will follow the procedures defined in section 11 of this policy, in addition to providing resources for support.

10.1.4. A disclosure does not need to be followed by a complaint under this policy. The AVCs must allow for survivors to maintain autonomy in handling disclosures and complaints.

10.1.5. After all disclosures the AVCs will record non-identifying information for the purpose of statistics. These statistics will be anonymously published in a year-end report presented to the Legislative Council prior to their final meeting.

## 10.2. Distinguishing between Informal Resolutions and Formal Resolution

10.2.1. In some circumstances, a discloser may wish to resolve the matter informally in lieu of pursuing a formal complaint, or before the case is referred to a decision maker. The AVCs will facilitate this process of alternative resolution in a survivor-centric manner.

10.2.2. Formal resolution processes require a formal written request, to investigate and address an incident that may have involved gendered and/or sexual violence.

10.2.3. More information regarding the details of each process can be found in section 11.

## 10.3. Accommodations and Interim Measures

10.3.1. Both disclosures and complaints may function as grounds for accommodations. Complaints may function as grounds for interim measures.

10.3.2. If a discloser is employed by SSMU, they may request a minimum of five working days off without penalty or loss of pay. They may also work with the AVCs to request additional time off. The time off will be arranged by the AVCs in conjunction with the HR Manager. They may also request situational accommodations, such as changes in working space. Additionally, the AVCs will assist the discloser in accessing relevant campus resources that can provide other of accommodation

10.3.3. If a complaint is filed, a complainant may request interim measures to ensure their safety and well-being. These may include temporary partial space bans on the respondent, employment scheduling changes, and temporary administrative suspension of a respondent from employment.



## 10.4. Anonymous and Third Party Disclosure

10.4.1. For clarity, a third-party disclosure is understood as a disclosure of an act(s) of gendered and or sexual violence experienced by another individual who the third party witnessed or was told about. For the AVCs to investigate a third party disclosure they require the consent of the third party and the individual who experienced the harm in question.

10.4.2. The AVCs will provide the ability for individuals to submit anonymous and/or third party disclosures in person or through the general online disclosure form. If the disclosure is in person, after the meeting the AVCs will record non-identifying information for the purpose of statistics

10.4.3. This anonymous and/or third party disclosure form, will provide the option for individuals to provide their contact information if they would like to be informed if another individual contacts SSMU with a disclosure regarding the same alleged perpetrator. With the consent of both individuals who disclosed, SSMU may facilitate connecting all those who disclosed regarding the same alleged perpetrator.

10.4.4. The general online disclosure form will allow the individual disclosing to specify how they would like SSMU to respond to the information. SSMU may not launch an investigation without the consent of the individual who discloses.

10.4.5. SSMU does not have jurisdiction over McGill University Faculty and Staff. Pursuant to article 9.5, If SSMU receives any type of disclosure regarding a member of the McGill faculty or staff, with the consent of the individual who disclosed, SSMU through the Vice-President University Affairs working in conjunction with the AVCs who will follow the procedures outlined in section 9.5 of this policy.

10.4.6. SSMU may be unable to proceed with an investigation involving anonymous or third party disclosures due to a lack of evidence, a potential violation of the autonomy and privacy of involved parties, or where proceedings would violate procedural fairness and impede due process. In such cases, the AVCs will consider whether any other steps can and should be taken. In appropriate cases, the AVCs may contact the third party who submitted the allegations to inquire if the individual who experienced the incident(s) of gendered or sexual violence would consider submitting a formal complaint. However, where other sufficient evidence exists and where it would not violate procedural fairness, at the sole discretion of the AVCs, SSMU may decide to proceed with an Investigation. In such cases, the individual who experienced the incident of gendered or sexual violence has the right to not participate in the Investigation or to call for its cessation.



## 10.5. Retaliation

10.5.1. Any reprisal, or expressed or implied threat of reprisal, for reporting an incident(s) or making a complaint about gendered and/or sexual violence under this policy may itself be the subject of a formal complaint and may be subject to interim measures (such as a conduct contract, restrictions from certain SSMU spaces, or other appropriate measures).

## 10.6. Conflict of Interest

10.6.1. If an individual involved in the investigation, complaint process, or sanction enforcement has a real or apparent conflict of interest in a particular matter, or there is a reasonable apprehension of bias, then that individual will not continue their involvement in the matter. They are obligated to inform the AVCs who will make other arrangements.

10.6.2. Any individual, including the discloser, complainant, respondent or a third party may inform the AVCs of a conflict of interest, who will then investigate and decide if appropriate next steps are required.

10.6.3. In the event of a conflict of interest with the AVCs, the discloser may seek recourse, following the policy, directly to the HR manager who will also be able to administer the policy.

10.6.4. In the event of a conflict of interest with the HR Manager, the discloser may work with the AVCs to seek recourse, following the policy, directly to the General Manager who will also be able to administer the policy.

## 10.7. Respecting the Dignity of Disclosers and Complainants

10.7.1. In accordance with the survivor-centric approach that this policy adopts, at no point in the disclosure, or in the informal or formal resolution processes, shall the discloser be asked questions or subjected to discussions regarding their character and choices including but not limited to prior sexual activity, sexual orientation and gender identity.

10.7.2. SSMU acknowledges the central importance for all parties – the discloser, complainant and/or respondent - to be informed throughout the informal and formal resolution process(es). This policy has outlined various points of the informal and formal resolution processes where the AVCs will communicate information to the parties. However, at any point the parties may contact the AVCs to receive information, barring confidentiality requirements, about the case.



10.7.3. At any point, a complaint may withdraw their complaint and end the informal or formal complaint process(es). If a respondent decides to not participate in the complaint process, the formal complaint process may still be initiated and decided upon. They will receive at various points the opportunity to provide evidence for the investigation and/or write a statement to the GSVP committee. It is up to their discretion whether they submit documents.

## 10.8. Specific Immunity

10.8.1. SSMU recognizes that some individuals may be hesitant to disclose or report sexual violence in cases where they have committed minor breaches of the SSMU Employee handbook. An individual or community member acting in good faith who discloses or reports an incident(s) of gendered and/or sexual violence will not be subject to sanctions for violations of other SSMU policies related to the minor breach(es) at the time that the incident(s) took place.

## 10.9. Coercion and Power Relations in the SSMU Context

10.9.1. In the context of SSMU any individual who uses their position as a political representative of SSMU, employee of SSMU or status within a club, ISG or service to coerce or manipulate an individual into sexual activity is committing an act of sexual violence by abusing their position of authority, and thus falls under the jurisdiction of this policy.

10.9.2. It is important to note that this does not explicitly ban all relationships between executives and students, or between employees. However, it does ban relationships that develop due to an abuse of power.

10.9.3. If an employee is put in a position where they are involved in the hiring, selection, or evaluation of an individual with whom they have had an intimate relationship, they are obligated to inform the AVCs and HR of this conflict of interest and recuse themselves from the process.

10.9.4. Furthermore, should a relationship develop between an individual in power and one of their subordinates, it is the duty of the former to notify the AVCs.

## 10.10. Confidentiality

10.10.1. The AVCs will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality when it becomes aware of an incident(s) of gendered and sexual violence and will limit disclosure of information about individuals to those who are responsible for administering and enforcing the policy in that specific.



10.10.2. Under the following circumstances, however, SSMU may face additional legal obligations and may not be able to guarantee complete confidentiality if:

- a) An individual is at risk of self-harm;
- b) An individual is at risk of harming others;
- c) Members of the University community or the broader community may be at risk of harm; and/or
- d) Investigation or reporting to authorities where required by law (the following list of examples is not meant to be exhaustive: an incident involving a minor, obligations related to occupational health and safety, human rights legislation and/or community safety).

10.10.3. While all documents produced in the informal and formal resolution processes will be required to be kept confidential, this does not limit the discloser's right to speak openly about their experiences for the purpose of seeking support or maintaining their safety and the safety of others.

## 10.11. Advocates and Support Persons

10.11.1. Both parties to an informal or formal process have the ability to have a support person, any individual chosen by them, present throughout the process. The support person may not speak for either party during formal process.

10.11.2. Both parties to an informal or formal process have the ability to have a personal advocate, present throughout the process.

10.11.3. Prior to any proceeding the complainant or respondent must identify their advocate and/or support person to the AVCs.

## 10.12. Concurrent Complaints

10.12.1. This policy and the formal complaint process do not prevent and is not intended to discourage an individual from also reporting gendered and/or sexual violence through external mechanisms such as the criminal justice system, the McGill Policy Against Sexual Violence, the McGill Student Code of Conduct and the Human Rights Tribunal of Quebec pursuant to the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Rather, it seeks to fill existing gaps in recourse for survivors.

10.12.2. It is important to note that under 1.3.1 of the McGill Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination Prohibited by Law, concurrent complaints of Harassment cannot be filed. Consequently, if a complaint is filed under the SSMU GSVP, the individual will



not be permitted to pursue complaints under the McGill Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination Prohibited by Law.

10.12.3. While we acknowledge that acts of gendered and sexual violence can implicate other forms of violence, including the grounds for discrimination outlined under the SSMU Equity Policy, complaints about the same incident cannot be filed concurrently under the SSMU GSVP and the SSMU Equity Policy.

10.12.4. Individuals may file separate complaints about different incidents of violence committed by the same individual or several individuals under both policies concurrently.

10.12.5. In the event that an individual wishes to file a complaint against a SSMU club or service as opposed to against another individual, they must pursue a complaint under the SSMU Equity Policy.

10.12.6. Should an individual feel that their experiences are covered by both the SSMU GSVP and the SSMU Equity Policy, they may contact either the AVCs or the SSMU Equity Commissioners in order to arrange for a joint meeting to discuss the options available.

## 10.13. Club Responses to Gendered and Sexual Violence

10.13.1. All clubs, ISGs and services fall under the jurisdiction of the SSMU Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy.

10.13.2. This does not limit the ability for a club, ISG or service to create an internal policy to respond to gendered and sexual violence. However, these policies must mention the existence of the SSMU GSVP, and cannot contradict or obstruct the procedures outlined under the SSMU GSVP.

10.13.3. Any internal policies created by clubs, ISGs, or services must be reviewed and approved by the AVCs to ensure that they are in accordance with the SSMU GSVP.

## 10.14. Summer Implementation

10.14.1. While timelines and procedures are set out within this policy, it is important to note that the absence of many students over the summer poses a series of limitations on its enactment.

10.14.2. Given the potential absence of Board and community members over the summer, GSVP Committee meetings may be conducted remotely via Skype or other online platforms. Additionally, in these circumstances, communications may be carried out online.





10.14.3. Exceptionally, timelines for formal complaints may also be extended as a result of these absences. However, the complainant must be notified of this ahead of time.

## 11. Procedures

### 11.1. Disclosure

11.1.1. If an individual believes they may have experienced gendered and/or sexual violence, they may disclose to the AVCs who must provide them with appropriate resources in a non-directional manner.

11.1.2. The AVCs may not take any action through accommodations, informal or formal resolution processes without the consent of the individual disclosing unless legally obligated to do so as stipulated in section 10.10 of the GSVP.

11.1.3. The AVCs must inform the discloser that non-identifying information will be recorded for the purpose of statistics.

### 11.2. Informal Resolution Process

11.2.1. Should the discloser feel that an alternative resolution prior to pursuing a formal complaint process would be appropriate, the AVCs would facilitate this process.

11.2.2. Prior to proceeding with an informal resolution, the AVCs must assess the situational needs of each party, with particular focus placed on the safety of the survivor. For this process to be meaningful, participants must engage voluntarily and remain free from reprisal. At any stage during the process, the discloser may indicate they would like to end the informal process and file a complaint to initiate a formal resolution process.

11.2.3. Where the alternative resolution process involves the respondent, the AVCs will take steps to ensure that the circumstances of any meeting will appropriately protect the dignity of the discloser through accommodations that continue to allow their participation. Accommodations that may be considered include: providing separate rooms before the meeting; alternate means of participation such as telephone, video, pre-recorded answers and statements; prepared written responses; the opportunity to have a support person present; and other appropriate accommodations.

11.2.4. The outcome of an alternative resolution process must be agreed upon by both parties in writing. Outcomes can include, but are not limited to: apologies and impact statements;



mandating anti-oppression and/or educational training for the respondent; restorative and transformative justice processes; negotiations of accommodations; and any other forms of recourse or accountability which both parties agree to, provided that the AVCs is capable of enforcing their enactment. It is important to acknowledge that SSMU may not have the capacity to facilitate restorative justice processes, but can work with the individuals involved to seek out these processes within the larger Montreal communities.

11.2.5. Both parties will agree to the enactment of the informal resolution in writing. Should the terms of this resolution be violated by the respondent, the discloser may request another alternative resolution or file a formal complaint. The AVCs will be the discloser's point of contact in this event.

### 11.3. Initiating a Formal Resolution Process

11.3.1. Formal complaints must be submitted in writing. However, the AVCs can write the complaint on behalf of the complainant if they are present and requesting this form of accommodation.

11.3.2. If an anonymous formal complaint is submitted, the AVCs are tasked, in the appropriate circumstances as outlined in section 10.4, with initiating the formal resolution process.

11.3.3. Formal complaints must include identifying information regarding the incident(s), the identity of the respondent and their relationship to SSMU, as well as any documentation relevant to the incident, which may include but is not limited to: screenshots; written or online exchanges; photographs; written testimonies; witness contact information and recordings.

11.3.4. Upon receiving a formal complaint the AVCs will, if possible, contact the complainant to confirm that the complaint process has begun and notify them of any action that is being taken within 48 hours and ask the complainant if they require interim measures.

### 11.4. Interim Measures

11.4.1. Upon filing a formal complaint the complainant may arrange interim measures with the AVCs, pursuant to Section 10.3 of this policy.

### 11.5. Investigation

11.5.1. If the AVCs feels that there is adequate evidence to launch an investigation (including previous complaints submitted regarding the respondent), they will come to a decision and contact the petitioner within one week of receiving the complaint.



11.5.2. The AVCs will contact the complainant to inform them of the decision made. At this point, the complainant will be told that they can submit additional evidence if they feel that it is necessary, particularly if the original evidence submitted was deemed inadequate.

11.5.3. If an investigation is launched, both the complainant and respondent will be notified by the AVCs.

11.5.4. The AVCs, will determine the appropriate next steps for the investigation, whether it be an external investigation or conducted by the AVCs. In most cases, formal complaints against employees and SSMU political representatives will be investigated by an external third party, unless it is deemed unnecessary by the AVCs. Third party investigators will be identified and contacted at the beginning of each academic year, and will be contacted again in the instance of an investigation. SSMU will cover the cost of these investigations.

11.5.5. For cases that are not investigated by a third party, including those filed against visitors and club, ISG and service members they will be investigated by the AVCs. If it is deemed necessary, the AVCs will collaborate with SSMU Security to conduct the investigation.

11.5.6. If the AVCs are involved in conducting the investigation, there will be a separation of the roles of each of the AVCs. Specifically, one AVC will be tasked with facilitating the complaint process and communicating with both parties. The other AVC will be independently tasked with conducting the investigation, and collaborating with SSMU Security if necessary.

11.5.7. An investigation conducted by the AVCs should take no longer than 2 weeks, unless the complainant consents to a longer timeframe. An investigation conducted by a third party should take no longer than one month. In exceptional circumstances, this deadline may be extended by the AVCs.

11.5.8. The purpose of an investigation is to: gather evidence and witness statements; weigh the evidence; make findings of fact based on the evidence; and produce an investigative report. In an investigation under this procedure, the investigator must outline the evidence, their findings, and conclude, weighing the evidence on a balance of probabilities, either: (1) that gendered and/or sexual violence did occur; or (2) that gendered and/or sexual violence did not occur.

11.5.9. A report produced by a third party investigator will be provided to the AVCs who will take the appropriate next steps in the following circumstances:

- a) In the instance that the report does not substantiate the complaint, the AVCs will communicate this to the complainant and respondent who will each receive a confidential copy of the investigative report. Either party may seek review of the



investigative report by a panel of three members of the GSVP Committee who may unanimously decide to overrule the investigative report.

- b) In the instance that the report does substantiate the complaint, the AVCs will communicate this to the complainant and respondent who will each receive a confidential copy of the investigative report. The AVCs will contact the members of the GSVP Committee to arrange the panel to review the report and determine sanctions.

## 11.6. Composition of GSVP Committee

11.6.1. The GSVP Committee, comprised of six McGill students, will be selected in the two weeks following the fall General Assembly, and will include:

- a) 2 members from the Board of Directors, who are not SSMU Executives, who will be selected by the Board of Directors;
- b) 2 representatives who are employees at SACOMSS, who will be selected by the SACOMSS membership;
- c) 2 student members-at-large from the SSMU community, who will be selected by the AVCs as a result of the open application process begun prior to the Fall GA.

11.6.2. All six members of the GSVP Committee will participate in a day-long training on anti-oppression, sexual violence and responses to trauma, and the GSVP, arranged by the AVCs in partnership with community groups, including O-SVRSE. Members of the GSVP Committee may opt out of sections of training if they have already completed it in other contexts within the last year, at the discretion of the AVCs.

11.6.3. The AVCs must take into account SSMU's commitment to support and inclusion for marginalized groups during this selection process. Recruitment must involve outreach to student groups which represent marginalized students.

11.6.4. The GSVP Committee will be scheduled to meet every two weeks to review complaints referred to them, if there are no complaints the meeting will be cancelled.

11.6.5. Given the potential absence of Committee members over the summer, meetings may exceptionally occur online.

11.6.6. The GSVP Committee will be held to a high standard of confidentiality. Details regarding specific complaints and implicated parties cannot be publicly shared by Committee members.



Failure to meet this expectation will result in removal from the Committee, and if applicable, will be reported to the Board of Directors or SACOMSS by the AVCs.

## 11.7. Review and Sanctions by the GSVP Committee

11.7.1. For each complaint that is investigated which requires review, the AVCs will take steps to arrange a committee meeting on the same day that they contact the complainant and respondent regarding the status of the investigation.

11.7.2. Each complaint referred to the Committee will be considered and deliberated on by the GSVP review panel. A review panel will consist of three of the six members of the Committee. There must be one representative from each group listed in 11.6.1.

11.7.3. The three members of the GSVP Committee who are not on the review panel for that specific complaint will form the appeals panel for the same complaint.

11.7.4. This committee will be arranged by the AVCs, who will present them with the formal complaint and confidential investigative report in writing, not via email. This may be disregarded if a committee meeting is happening remotely over the summer. The committee will read the report during that meeting. During the meeting the review panel will be informed of their obligations to maintain confidentiality.

11.7.5. To ensure procedural fairness, the respondent and complainant will both have the opportunity to submit in writing to the Committee a response to the report, as well as comments on a desired sanction(s).

11.7.6. With information solely from the investigative report and the responses from the two parties, the committee will decide whether there is enough information to determine if act of gendered and/or sexual violence occurred and the sanctions (as listed in 11.7) to be imposed. This decision must be endorsed by the majority review panel who will write a final GSVP Committee Complaint report during that meeting.

11.7.7. SSMU holds that the health and safety of complainants in this process, including their mental health and psychological well-being, are paramount. Consequently, the AVCs will ensure that they are communicated both the investigative and committee report in its entirety.

11.7.8. A summarized version of the committee report, including the name of the respondent, the violation of the GSVP and sanctions imposed will be communicated to all individuals required to enforce the decision. The name of the respondent will be anonymized, unless it is required to be included to ensure proper enforcement of the decision.



## 11.8. GSVP Sanctions

11.8.1. Due to the nature of the SSMU jurisdiction, the sanctions that can be imposed by the SSMU GSVP Committee vary.

11.8.2. For a visitor who is a non-SSMU member, to be enforced by the SSMU security manager in conjunction with the AVCs:

- a) Letter of apology;
- b) Letter of behavioural expectations signed by the respondent, AVCs and other appropriate enforcement actors
- c) Restrictions related to accessing the SSMU building, other leased spaces or SSMU events.

11.8.3. For a SSMU member, to be enforced by the SSMU security manager in conjunction with the AVCs:

- a) Letter of apology;
- b) Letter of behavioural expectations signed by the respondent, AVCs and other appropriate enforcement actors;
- c) Restrictions related to accessing the SSMU building, other leased spaces or SSMU events;
- d) Mandated anti-oppression or anti-sexual violence training coordinated by the AVCs.

11.8.4. For a SSMU member who is also a member of a club, ISG, or service, to be enforced by the SSMU security manager and/or the VP Student Life in conjunction with the AVCs:

- a) Letter of apology;
- b) Letter of behavioural expectations signed by the respondent, AVCs and other appropriate enforcement actors;
- c) Restrictions related to accessing the SSMU building, other leased spaces or SSMU events.
- d) Mandated anti-oppression or anti-sexual violence training coordinated by the AVCs;
- e) Restrictions related to accessing club, service, and ISG spaces, including events.
- f) Restriction from participation in a club, service, or ISG, including removal from executive positions.

11.8.5. For a SSMU employee, including the General Manager, to be enforced by the Human Resources Manager in conjunction with the AVCs:



- a) Letter of apology;
- b) Letter of behavioural expectations signed by the respondent, AVCs and other appropriate enforcement actors;
- c) Restrictions related to accessing the SSMU building, other leased spaces or SSMU events.
- d) Mandated anti-oppression or anti-sexual violence training coordinated by the AVCs;
- e) Administrative leave or suspension without pay;
- f) Dismissal from their position at SSMU.

11.8.6. For members of Legislative Council, Judicial Board, the Board of Directors, or the SSMU Executive team, to be enforced by the relevant body in conjunction with the AVCs:

- a) Letter of apology;
- b) Letter of behavioural expectations signed by the respondent, AVCs and other appropriate enforcement actors;
- c) Restrictions related to accessing the SSMU building, other leased spaces or SSMU events.
- d) Mandated anti-oppression or anti-sexual violence training coordinated by the AVCs;
- e) Administrative leave or suspension without pay;
- f) Dismissal from their position at SSMU.

11.8.7. It is important to note that any limitation to space must be a response to the needs of the complainant and the incident. Specific spaces bans are encouraged. Banning an individual from the SSMU building in its entirety must be approached with caution as SSMU offers many services that respondents may need for their own health and safety, such as the Legal Information Clinic or the Peer Support Centre.

## 11.9. Enforcement

11.9.1. The AVCs has the obligation to communicate the Committee's decision to the appropriate actors and bodies, who will also maintain confidentiality in the steps that they take.

11.9.2. If the complainant has concerns regarding the quality of enforcement, they can contact the AVCs in order to reinforce or escalate sanctions.

11.9.3. The SSMU Constitution currently requires that the Board of Directors approve any dismissal of the General Manager. In the instance that the GSVP Committee recommends the dismissal of the General Manager the AVCs will inform the Board of the GSVP Committee's decision and request that they vote to enforce the decision. This meeting will not entail any



discussion of a specific incident details, a complainant's identity, or the legitimacy of an instance of gendered and/or sexual violence. The role of the Board is to enforce the decision which was made by trained representatives.

11.9.4. The Quebec Corporations Act requires that any member of the SSMU Board of Directors or Executive Team be dismissed through a two-thirds majority vote at a Board meeting. In this instance, the AVCs will inform the Board of the GSVP Committee's decision and request that they vote to enforce the decision. This meeting will not entail any discussion of a specific incident details, a complainant's identity, or the legitimacy of an instance of gendered and/or sexual violence. The role of the Board is to enforce the decision which was made by trained representatives.

11.9.5. The Quebec Corporations Act further requires that any dismissal of an officer is ratified by the SSMU General Assembly. In this instance, the officer who the Board has voted to be dismissed will be suspended and an emergency GA will be called. In this instance, the AVCs will inform the GA of the GSVP Committee's decision and Board of Directors decision and request that the GA vote to enforce the decision. This meeting will not entail any discussion of a specific incident details, a complainant's identity, or the legitimacy of an instance of gendered and/or sexual violence. The role of the GA is to enforce the decision which was made by trained representatives.

## 11.10. Appeals

11.10.1. An appeal is not an opportunity for the complainant or the respondent to repeat the information provided to the GSVP Committee. The right to an appeal is not automatic and an appeal will only be considered if it meets the following requirements:

- a) The appeal is submitted by either the petitioner or the Respondent;
- b) The appeal must be made within five business days after the date of the final decision that is the subject of the appeal;
- c) The appeal includes the reasons for the appeal, the reasons why the appeal should be granted, the arguments in support of the appeal and the outcome sought;
- d) The appeal must demonstrate that:
  - i) There has been a fundamental procedural error in the making of the final decision and that such error has caused or will cause actual prejudice to the person seeking the appeal, or
  - ii) There are new facts relevant to the final decision that were not available and could not have been provided to the investigator of GSVP review panel.





11.10.2. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some examples of situations where an appeal would not meet the requirements of this paragraph:

- a) The appeal repeats arguments made at the meeting of the review committee or in written submissions and does not provide any new information relevant to the final decision;
- b) The appeal is based only on a disagreement with a finding of fact, including findings made about the credibility of witnesses;
- c) The appeal raises new arguments that were not made, but could have been made at the GSVP panel meeting
- d) The appeal amounts to a mere speculation or a bald statement of a procedural error causing prejudice and does not provide detailed and convincing information to establish the error and to establish a link between the error and actual prejudice or a reasonable expectation of prejudice to the person seeking the appeal.

11.10.3. The request for an appeal will be made within five business days of the initial decision, following section 11.9.1.

11.10.4. If an appeal is made, any interim measures implemented during the complaint may be extended for the duration of the appeal.

11.10.5. The appeal will be heard by the appeals panel of the GSVP Committee within 2 weeks of the request. They will review the findings of the initial panel and consider the grounds for appeal, ultimately deciding the outcome.

11.10.6. The appeals panel will provide their decision in writing to the AVCs, who will inform the complainant and respondent within 24 hours.

11.10.7. Upon the appeals decision, the AVCs will take appropriate steps to enforce any relevant sanctions.

## 12. Recording and reporting

12.1. An annual report will be drafted by the AVCs to be presented to Legislative Council at the end of the academic year. It will also be made available to members of SSMU online.

12.2. This report will include:

- a) Information and statistics relating to the frequency of disclosures made to the AVCs, including distinctions between anonymous and third-party disclosures;
- b) Documentation of initiatives, programs and other efforts made by SSMU to prevent and respond to sexual violence;



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- c) Information and statistics relating to the frequency of formal complaints made and non-identifying information the sanctions enforced;
- d) The implementation and effectiveness of this Policy, including challenges experienced by the AVCs and recommendations for ways the policy can be better implemented.

## 13. Review

13.1. The SSMU will review this Policy one year after it comes into effect in consultation with the membership and stakeholders, and at least every two years following.



## K. GLOBAL ACCESS TO MEDICINES POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/12/01

Expires: 2021/05/01

[Adopted Motion](#)

**WHEREAS, the SSMU is committed to “demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights [and] social justice,”<sup>38</sup> as well as to social sustainability;<sup>39</sup>**

**WHEREAS, pharmaceutical patenting in developing countries restricts generic competition and raises prices of drugs that hinders access to life-saving medicines;<sup>40</sup>**

**WHEREAS, drug applications developed by research universities in developed countries contribute to the majority of research and development of medicines, and licensing decisions at the university level of these drug applications substantially impact the accessibility of these medicines in developing countries;<sup>41</sup>**

**WHEREAS, humanitarian or global access licenses implemented by research universities in developed countries can substantially increase the accessibility of medicines in developing countries by, for example, allowing generic production of final products for exclusive distribution in low- and middle-income countries to realize economies of scale and market competition by locating the most efficient manufacturer and distributor;<sup>42</sup>**

**WHEREAS, the case outlined above was empirically proven in 2001 when Yale University and Bristol-Myers Squibb agreed to allow the HIV drug stavudine to be available generically in South Africa, which resulted in a 96% price reduction and a substantial increase in accessibility to South Africans at no cost to the university in terms of licensing revenues;<sup>43</sup>**

**WHEREAS, the University of British Columbia, Emory University, University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Washington, Boston University, Harvard University, Yale University, the University**

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<sup>38</sup> Preamble, “Leadership,” SSMU Constitution.

<sup>39</sup> Introduction, Vision and Understanding Sustainability, Social, [SSMU Sustainability](#) Policy.

<sup>40</sup> Sampat, B. N. (2009, January). [Academic Patents and Access to Medicines in Developing Countries](#). American Journal of Public Health, 99(1), 9-17.

<sup>41</sup> uaem.org.

<sup>42</sup> Chen CE, Gilliland CT, Purcell J, Kishore SP (2010) The Silent Epidemic of Exclusive University Licensing Policies on Compounds for Neglected Diseases and Beyond. PLoS Negl Trop Dis 4(3): e570. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0000570.

<sup>43</sup> Chen (2010).



College of London, and 65 other universities and research institutions have adopted similar licensing approaches with benefits of similar magnitude<sup>44</sup> at no loss of licensing revenues<sup>45</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM), Boston University, Brown University, Harvard University, Oregon Health & Science University, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University have adopted a humanitarian or global access licensing framework in their licenses to the private sector per the Statement of Principles and Strategies for the Equitable Dissemination of Medical Technologies (SPS)<sup>46</sup> specific to licenses as follows:

1. In negotiations with potential licensees, we will make vigorous efforts to develop creative and effective licensing strategies that help to promote global access to health-related technologies by apprising potential commercial partners of the institution's commitment to contribute to the health and well-being of populations throughout the developing world, and by cultivating productive relationships with companies that share our values and are able and willing to advance the University's global health mission.
2. Our intellectual property should not become a barrier to essential health-related technologies needed by patients in developing countries. In cases where the University can fully preclude intellectual property barriers to generic provision by not patenting in developing countries, or by filing and abandoning patents, we will pursue these strategies. Early publication and wide dissemination of results will be encouraged to reduce opportunities for interfering patents.
3. In those cases where we pursue patent rights, we will negotiate license agreements that draw upon a variety of strategies that seek to align incentives among all stakeholders to promote broad access to health-related technologies in developing countries including, but not limited to, financial incentives to licensees, reserved or 'march-in' rights, mandatory sublicenses or non-assert provisions, affirmative obligations of diligence, with license reduction, conversion, or termination as the penalty for default, or tiered- or other appropriate pricing on a humanitarian basis (e.g., subsidized, at-cost, or no-cost).
4. We will strive to preserve its future rights to negotiate effective global access terms through implementation of such measures as notice requirements coupled with 'agreements to agree.'
5. We will work to develop and apply meaningful metrics to evaluate the success of its efforts to facilitate global access and support continued innovation with particular relevance to global health.

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<sup>44</sup> Sampat (2009).

<sup>45</sup> Chen (2010).

<sup>46</sup> [Statement of Principles and Strategies for the Equitable Dissemination of Medical Technologies](#).



We will revisit these principles on a biennial basis to ensure that they reflect currently understood best practices.

**WHEREAS**, universities who have adopted these strategies have reported a financial gain from donations and additional funding by organizations in support of global social responsibility<sup>47</sup> ;

**WHEREAS**, many pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have acknowledged sublicensing to generic producers as a socially responsible and financially viable method to increase accessibility of medicines in developing world markets, including Gilead Science, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKlein, and Alnylam Pharmaceuticals<sup>48</sup> ;

**WHEREAS**, McGill University, as a publicly funded research institution, is the leading Canadian university in producing biotechnology patents, some of which may apply in developing country contexts<sup>49</sup> ;

**WHEREAS**, the mission statement of McGill University as an academic institution includes the “advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge [...] by providing service to society,” hence mandating a contribution to public welfare<sup>50</sup> ;

**WHEREAS**, McGill University has not implemented a humanitarian or global access licensing framework for technology transfers to the private sector specific to global health in its Policy on Intellectual Property to date.<sup>51</sup>

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU adopted the following policy regarding global access to medicines, to expire on May 1, 2021:

1. The SSMU supports increased access to medicines throughout the world as a public good and a human right.
2. The SSMU calls for the implementation of a humanitarian or global access licensing framework for health-related technology transfers to the private sector at McGill University.

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU advocated for the implementation of a humanitarian or global access licensing framework for health-related technology transfer to the private sector through the University Senate and the appropriate University Committees, as per the goals outlined in the Statement of Principles and Strategies for the Equitable Dissemination of Medical Technologies.

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<sup>47</sup> Chen (2010)

<sup>48</sup> Chen (2010).

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/channels/news/mcgill-tops-canadian-universities-biotech-patents-21915>.

<sup>50</sup> [McGill University Mission Statement](#).

<sup>51</sup> [Policy on Intellectual Property](#).



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Moved by:

McGill Students' Chapter of Universities Allied for Essential Medicines

William Cleveland, *Senate Caucus Representative*

Joshua Chin, *Senate Caucus Representative*

Noah Century, *Music Representative*

Caitlin Mehrotra, *Science Representative*

Jake Prillo, *Medicine Representative*



# L. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/04/07

Expires: 2021/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

## 1. Background

This policy aims to ensure that the human resources practices of the Society are well documented, accessible, and conducive to a productive and healthy work environment.

## 2. Scope

This policy shall apply to all remunerated staff of the Society. It is a policy administered by the Board of Directors through its Human Resources Committee and through the Human Resources Department, as defined below.

## 3. Definitions

The following terms used in this policy shall have the same definitions as in the Constitution.

- (a) “**Board of Directors**”
- (b) “**Executive Committee**”
- (c) “**General Manager**”
- (d) “**Legislative Council**”
- (e) “**Member**”
- (f) “**Officer**”

The following definitions shall apply to this policy:

- (g) “**Commissioner**” shall refer to a Student Staff member who coordinates a committee of the Legislative Council or of the Board of Directors;
- (h) “**Director-level**” shall refer to Supervisors who report directly to the General Manager and/or the Board of Directors. Officers and the General Manager are to be considered Director-level.
- (i) “**Guides**” shall refer to comprehensive documents detailing pertinent information related to projects, events and routine administrative functions within each portfolio;



- (j) **“Human Resources Committee”** shall refer to the committee duly established in the Internal Regulations of the Committee Terms of Reference Book;
- (k) **“Human Resources Department”** shall refer to the department of the Society consisting of the Human Resources Manager, the Anti-Violence Coordinators, and any other Permanent Staff and Student Staff whose primary areas of responsibility include human resources;
- (l) **“Permanent Staff”** shall refer to full-time or part-time staff of the Society who are employed for an indefinite term with contracts that do not have an end date;
- (m) **“Staff”** shall include both Permanent Staff and Student Staff;
- (n) **“Student Staff”** shall refer to casual staff of the Society, who have employment contracts that specify specific end dates;
- (o) and **“Supervisor”** shall refer to Officers and Permanent Staff of the Society who are directly or indirectly responsible for the performance of other staff members. Supervisors are not necessarily Director-level Staff.

## 4. Hiring Process

**4.1. General.** Each Supervisor shall be responsible for the hiring of the Staff that they supervise. In February of each year, the Human Resources department of the Society shall advertise the available Student Staff positions to the Members. All hirings must be approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors.

**4.2. Affiliation disclosure.** When presented to the Executive Committee and reported to the Board of Directors, all hirings for approval shall be accompanied by disclosures of any affiliation that the hiring Supervisor has with the Staff being considered for hire, submitted verbally or in writing.

**4.3. Employment Equity.** The Human Resources Committee shall be responsible for the creation, implementation and end-of-year review of procedures surrounding employment equity. These procedures shall, at minimum, satisfy legal standards for employment equity.

**4.4. Notification of status.** All applicants to remunerated positions of the Society shall be notified of the status of their candidacy as soon as said information is available to the Human Resources Department, within reasonable constraints. All efforts shall be made to inform candidates of their status in a timely fashion.

**4.5. Interview feedback.** Interviewed candidates shall be informed of the opportunity to receive feedback regarding their interviews. This feedback shall be issued through the Human Resources Department.





## 5. Job descriptions

All substantive changes to job descriptions of Student Staff must be approved by the Executive Committee. All Student Staff job descriptions shall be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members.

All substantive changes to the job descriptions of Permanent Staff must be made in consultation with the position's Supervisor, the General Manager, and the Human Resources Committee, and then subsequently approved by the Board of Directors. All Permanent Staff job descriptions shall be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members.

## 6. Institutional memory

**6.1. Employment contracts.** Copies of all employment contracts and employee-related documentation, including job descriptions, must be filed with the Office of the Human Resources Manager for archiving.

**6.2. Archives of Supervisors.** It is the responsibility of all Supervisors to provide organized electronic and paper files to their successors, along with a detailed exit report outlining the major events of their tenure and advice in navigating key areas of responsibility in their role. Exit reports shall also be created for projects and events under the responsibility of the Supervisor. All exit reports shall be considered confidential.

It is the responsibility of all Supervisors to ensure that exit reports from outgoing Student Staff are transmitted to the incoming Student Staff within their portfolio.

**6.2.1 Guides.** All Supervisors shall develop and maintain Guides on routine projects and processes within their portfolio, where applicable. These shall be separate from the Supervisors' exit reports and shall include, but not be limited to, reports on events, reports on large-scale projects, and details regarding routine administrative processes.

It shall be the responsibility of the Office of the General Manager to distribute templates which Supervisors can use for this purpose.

## 7. Training

**7.1. Documents.** It shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to distribute the following documents to new Student Staff:

- (a) the Student Staff Integration Guide;



- (b) the Student Staff Orientation Guide;
- (c) the Student Staff Training Checklist; and
- (d) the Employee Manual.

New Permanent Staff and Officers will receive:

- (a) the Employee Manual;
- (b) the position's Training checklist; and
- (c) the two (2) most recent exit reports for their position, where applicable.

Newly-elected Officers will receive:

- (a) the two (2) most recent exit reports for their position; and
- (b) the Employee Manual.

7.1.1. International students serving as Officers will also receive a guide on the suggested steps to take in order to avoid violating their study visa as part-time students.

7.2. **Orientation.** It shall be the responsibility of each Supervisor, with the support of the Human Resources Department, to ensure that all Student Staff receive sufficient orientation in their position in order to fulfill their roles to the best of their abilities. This orientation shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) going over documents distributed by the Human Resources department with incoming Staff in advance of the academic year;
- (b) providing Student Staff with an orientation to the SSMU office and introducing them to the Permanent Staff.

7.3. **Additional training.** Each Supervisor shall ensure that the Staff under their supervision are informed that requests for additional training may be made at any point during the year, within reasonable time constraints and financial constraints.

7.4. **Integration.** Supervisors shall consult the Human Resources Department and the Student Staff Integration Guide when a Student Staff is hired outside of the regular recruitment period.

7.5. **Mandatory trainings.** During orientation, all Supervisors shall attend a training on Mental Health, Gendered and Sexual Violence, and Equity prior to commencing supervision of any Staff. This training will be arranged through the Office of the President, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department, and will serve to ensure that the SSMU is a mental health-positive and equitable workplace free from oppression and violence.



## 8. Reporting

New and renewed job descriptions will include the requirement to regularly report to the relevant Supervisor regarding the status of work-related projects and activities with a frequency as negotiated with the Supervisor.

8.1. Commissioners must report at least once per semester to either the Legislative Council or the Board of Directors, depending on the nature of their work. These reports may be submitted either verbally or in writing.

8.2. In addition to reporting to the General Manager of the Society, Director-level Staff must report at least once per quarter to the Board of Directors. Director-level Staff have the option of reporting as a bloc.

## 9. Vacancy

9.1. **Notification of Vacancy.** The Board of Directors or Legislative Council, depending on the nature of the position, shall be notified in the event that a Commissioner or Supervisor position is vacant.

9.2. **Filing vacancies.** In general, a new Commissioner or Supervisor will be hired or elected as the case may be. Notwithstanding this, the body to which that position reports reserves the right to halt the hiring process, for reasons including, but not limited to, the obsolescence of the position or the lateness of the academic year.

## 10. Compensation

10.1. **Pay scale.** The Human Resources Committee shall set and adjust the annual pay scale for Student Staff, maintained by the Human Resources Department of the Society. The scale, including the range of rates and the method for determining each pay rate, shall be made available to any inquiring Members however the individual pay rates for each position shall be considered confidential to the Board of Directors.

## 11. Conflicts

11.1. **General.** All Staff may consult the Human Resources Department in the event that they have a conflict or issue with their Supervisor or another coworker.



**11.2. Complaints.** All Staff may file an official complaint with the Human Resources Department in the event that a conflict or issue cannot be resolved informally. Such complaints will be handled by the Human Resources Manager, and, depending on the nature of the complaint, the Equity Commissioners or Anti-Violence Coordinators, who may also involve the President and any other staff on a case-by-case basis. Both parties to the conflict will be notified as to the outcome of the mediation, along with any sanctions imposed, as soon as this information becomes available.

**11.3.** When the complaint involves Supervisors, the Human Resources Manager shall report cases and outcomes to the Human Resources Committee.

## 12. Employee manual

**12.1. General.** To support the Student Staff and Permanent Staff, there shall exist an Employee Manual which shall contain internal information and procedures regarding recruitment, office rules, probationary periods, training, attendance, holidays and personal days, compensation, benefits, and other policies as are relevant to the Society's staff;

**12.2. Scope.** The Employee Manual shall apply to all Student Staff and Permanent Staff. The Employee Manual shall be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members, and an up-to-date digital copy shall be made available on the Society's website.

**12.3. Maintenance.** It shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Committee to keep the Employee Manual updated and to propose amendments to it as necessary, and at least once annually as a part of this Policy's review cycle.

**12.4. Amendment.** Any amendments to the Employee Manual shall require the Board of Directors. The Human Resources Committee shall, during the Winter Semester, propose amendments to this Policy when appropriate.



# M. IMPLEMENTATION OF A FALL READING BREAK POLICY

Adopted by Referendum: 2018/03/21

Expires: 2023/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

**WHEREAS, the SSMU is committed to “demonstrating Whereas, 61% of Canadian universities have already implemented four or more study days in the Fall semester;**<sup>52</sup>

**WHEREAS, evidence suggests that a Fall Reading Break reduces stress levels in students, particularly first-year students;**<sup>53</sup>

**WHEREAS, a 2015 survey of 5112 students conducted by Enrollment Services found that 71.5% of respondents were in favour of a Fall Reading Break;**<sup>54</sup>

**WHEREAS, a Proposal for a Fall Reading Break at McGill University has already been developed;**<sup>55</sup>

**WHEREAS, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has supported proposals for a Fall Reading Break in the past;**<sup>56</sup>

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** that the SSMU renew its stance of support for a Fall Reading Break at McGill University;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU support campaigns for the implementation of a Fall Reading Break at McGill University through the offices of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and Vice-President (University Affairs);

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<sup>52</sup>“Fall Reading Week up for approval at Western Senate“

[https://www.westerngazette.ca/news/administration/fall-reading-week-up-for-approval-at-western-senate/article\\_9c29a4b4-efa4-11e6-bbc-d-2f38abac1e3f.html](https://www.westerngazette.ca/news/administration/fall-reading-week-up-for-approval-at-western-senate/article_9c29a4b4-efa4-11e6-bbc-d-2f38abac1e3f.html)

<sup>53</sup>“Exploring the Impact of a Fall Break on Student Mental Health Outcomes – Year 1 Report.” [http://www.brocku.ca/webfm\\_send/33279](http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/33279)

<sup>54</sup>“SSMU Council passes motion of support for Fall reading week“

<http://www.mcgilltribune.com/news/ssmu-council-passes-motion-support-fall-reading-week-11238/>

<sup>55</sup> “Fall Reading Break Proposal”

<http://ausmcgill.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Appendix-%E2%80%93-Fall-Reading-Break-Proposal.pdf>

<sup>56</sup>“Motion Regarding the Endorsement of the Proposal for a Fall Reading Break”

<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Motion-Regarding-Endorsement-of-the-Proposal-for-a-Fall-Reading-Break.pdf?x26516>



**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU through the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs), lobby the University to implement a Fall Reading Break at McGill University as soon as possible;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU, through the Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs), lobby the provincial government for legislation implementing a Fall Reading Break;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU encourages the Senate Caucus to pursue implementation of a Fall Reading Break until said break is implemented or this policy expires;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** this policy be valid for five years until January 1st, 2023, when it will be brought back to the membership for renewal;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** this Motion be brought to the SSMU membership for approval during the 2018 Winter Referendum period under the question:

“Do you agree that the Policy on Implementation of a Fall Reading Break be adopted as a policy of the SSMU?”

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the SSMU Legislative Council endorse the adoption of the Policy on Implementation of a Fall Reading Break.

Moved by:

Muna Tojiboeva, *President*

Danny Dinh, *PTOT Representative*

Anthony Koch, *First Year Council Representative*



# N. INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/03/31

Expires: 2020/01/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

## 1. Background

The SSMU has a history of leadership on issues of equity and social justice, demonstrated through such documents as the Constitution and the Equity Policy. The Indigenous Solidarity policy aims to further this commitment by undertaking public awareness campaigns that recognize under-addressed components of Indigenous history; improve supports for Indigenous students; and lobby the University to prioritize Indigenous solidarity in service provision and academia. The SSMU recognizes a plurality of Indigenous voices and identities both in the Canadian context and internationally, however this policy focuses primarily on Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Furthermore, the SSMU recognizes the historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples both in the McGill community and society-at-large. In particular, the SSMU acknowledges that McGill University has historically failed to recognize and address its role in colonialism and the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples. This policy aims to address those oppressions and commits the SSMU to prioritizing Indigenous voices and histories in its activities.

This commitment is further demonstrated as the SSMU has implemented a traditional territory acknowledgement statement for meetings, as follows: “The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst various Indigenous peoples. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today.”

## 2. Scope

This policy shall apply to all:

1. Staff and elected representatives;
2. Activities and events hosted or promoted by the SSMU, including all those in the University Centre;
3. Written or graphic material published, distributed, or endorsed by the SSMU.
4. Clubs, Services, and Independent Student Groups



## 3. Definitions

**Indigenous.** A people or persons who are descended from and identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied, or otherwise colonized the area. In the context of this policy, Indigenous peoples may self-identify as First Nations (status or non-status), Inuit, Metis, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native, or as a member of another global Indigenous Community.

**Indigenous Community.** A group of Indigenous people with shared background and/or interests including, but not limited to, reserves, non-status communities, urban Indigenous communities, or community groups.

**Stakeholders.** Any person or group with an interest in the outcome of a decision or activity related to Indigenous issues or with relevant expertise and experience at McGill University or in local Indigenous communities. This includes, but is not limited to, the First Peoples' House, Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office, Indigenous Student Alliance (ISA), McGill Chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Indigenous Law Association/Association de Droit Autochtone, Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition, Native Montreal, Kitigan Zibi, Native Friendship of Montreal, and organizations in Kahnawake.

**First Refusal Rights.** The right of a group to receive priority in decision-making via an obligation to receive an offer first. This includes the opportunity to decline a request for consultation or participation, without fault or expectation.

**Traditional Territory Acknowledgement.** A verbal or written statement made publicly to recognize the Indigenous inhabitants and ongoing colonization of occupied land.

## 4. Implementations

The Policy shall mandate the Society to take action in five key areas related to Indigenous Solidarity: consultation and decision-making; support for Indigenous students; support for Indigenous communities; advocacy and solidarity within the university; and physical campus environment. Such efforts will be coordinated by the Officer of the Vice-President (External Affairs) in collaboration with the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner. The Society shall work towards the fulfillment of all of the mandates outlined below.

### 1.0 Consultation and Decision-Making

The SSMU recognizes the importance of developing relationships with McGill-based and local Indigenous groups that are grounded in open communication and respect. Furthermore, the SSMU





acknowledges that meaningful advocacy and decision-making can only occur in dialogue and ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities. All consultation efforts should take into account the diversity of Indigenous peoples and perspectives as well as the awareness that some perspectives may at times be harmful to Indigenous students and community members. The SSMU shall institutionalize consultation protocols through the following actions:

1.1. Each academic year, the Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall compile an internal document with the contact information of all relevant Indigenous Stakeholders, including University units, student groups, external organizations, individuals and local community groups. The SSMU will act in good faith with these Stakeholders based on First Refusal Rights and only refer students to them with their explicit permission. This document shall serve to facilitate consultation and shall be updated on an annual basis.

1.2. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and Vice-President (Student Life) shall produce and distribute a consultation guide for reference by Clubs, Services and Independent Student Groups in their activities. The Indigenous Affairs Committee shall be responsible for approving this guide and overseeing consultation requests in collaboration with the relevant Executive Officer(s).

1.3. The Offices of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and the President shall work to expand formal and informal opportunities for Indigenous student participation within the SSMU, including by actively reaching out to Indigenous student groups for their input on the SSMU's role in Indigenous Student life.

1.4. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall consult relevant Stakeholders in Indigenous student life at the University, as well as local Indigenous communities, regarding the renewal and revision of this policy before it expires.

1.4.1 All consultation processes shall involve an official meeting with notice at least 30 days prior, in addition to a minimum of 14 days to review the policy before it is submitted to the SSMU Legislative Council. The Stakeholders' feedback must be presented with the renewal of this policy.

1.5. For any matters involving Indigenous student life at McGill which are not covered within this policy, the Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall consult the aforementioned Stakeholders for direction.

1.6. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall seek out any additional means through which to appropriately recognize and compensate Indigenous students and Stakeholders for their consultation and contributions.



## 2.0 Support for Indigenous Students

The SSMU shall take steps to improve support for Indigenous students and student groups at the University. This shall occur through the following actions:

2.1. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall provide Stakeholder-identified educational and consultation resources to student groups in an effort to ensure that adequate support and consideration is provided to Indigenous students, accounting for their unique perspectives, experiences, and needs.

2.2. The Executive Committee shall ensure that Traditional Territory Acknowledgements are included as part of all public SSMU-organized events in whatever form is most appropriate.

2.2.1. The Executive Committee shall also endeavor to increase the visibility and breadth of Traditional Territory Acknowledgements at other events in the McGill community.

2.2.2. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall be responsible for ensuring that Traditional Acknowledgements are made at events organized by SSMU Clubs and Services and Independent Student Groups.

2.2.3. The Funding Committee shall request that student groups make Traditional Territory Acknowledgements at all events funded by the Society.

2.3. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the Vice-President (Student Life) shall advocate for University-run services to provide adequate support for Indigenous students, accounting for their unique perspectives and needs. This includes, but is not limited to, targeted support for financial aid, housing, academic advising, peer mentorship, mental health support, and career services.

2.4. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall provide Indigenous student groups on campus with access to room booking privileges in the University Centre equivalent equal to those of a Full-Status Club.

2.5. The Club Committee shall consider the underrepresentation of Indigenous students at McGill University when assessing Club applications from Indigenous student groups, and will waive membership requirements where appropriate. The Legislative Council will ensure that this underrepresentation is accounted for prior to approving relevant reports of the Club Committee.



## 3.0 Support for Indigenous Communities

3.1. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall maintain outreach efforts to Stakeholders in local Indigenous communities. This shall include, but is not limited to, an open invitation for dialogue at the beginning of each academic year, as well as issue-specific dialogue throughout the year. If requests that contact cease or be avoided at any point throughout this process, such a request shall be immediately respected. Various methods of contact shall be used- depending on the needs and resources of the group, including, but not limited to, phone calls, email messages, and in-person meetings.

3.2. Indigenous communities shall receive First Refusal Rights for services including, but not limited to, speaking engagements, education or instruction, and artistic or cultural production that relevant to Indigenous events organized by the SSMU. The SSMU shall strive to prioritize Indigenous-run businesses for such events whenever possible.

## 4.0 Advocacy & Solidarity within the University

The SSMU shall act in meaningful solidarity with Indigenous peoples through building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities; facilitating opportunities for self-representation wherever possible; incorporating a of perspectives in decision-making; and otherwise working towards the participation of Indigenous peoples in advocacy and policy development, such as is desired by Indigenous community members. The SSMU shall follow the leadership of and defer to Indigenous people advocating on their own behalf.

4.1. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall lobby the University to actively respect, consult with, and take direction from Stakeholders and to increase Indigenous presence on the University campus as a whole.

4.2. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) And President shall work with the University to better recruit, retain, and support Indigenous students, including by ensuring that pertinent data regarding current and incoming Indigenous students is collected, maintained, and assessed on a regular basis in order to determine where additional supports are needed.

4.3. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the President shall advocate for increasing the number of Indigenous faculty and support staff members at the University through equitable and cluster hiring and the development of a full Indigenous Studies department.

4.4. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall lobby the University to ensure that Indigenous peoples have formal role in the decision-making processes of the University, such as through representation of the Board of Governors and in senior administrative positions.



## 5. Physical Campus Environment

The SSMU shall advocate for the development of physical and symbolic representations on campus that reflect Indigenous history and continued presence on the land, specifically that of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples. Such efforts shall be undertaken with the goal of educating the community-at-large as well as developing spaces that facilitate the comfort, well-being, and cultural activities of Indigenous students. Furthermore, all activities should account for diversity in artistic and cultural representations; the societal prevalence of pan-Indigenous stereotypes; and the role of self-identification in Indigeneity and cultural expression.

5.1. The Office of the Vice-President (Operations) shall ensure that there is a visible Indigenous presence in the University Centre building. This includes, but is not limited to, art displays produced by Indigenous artists; room and building naming, and creating or modifying spaces to accommodate cultural activities, - such as smudging.

5.2. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall lobby the University to ensure that there is visible Indigenous representation in the campus environment of the University including, but not limited to, room and building naming; and creating or modifying spaces to accommodate cultural activities such as smudging.

## 5.0 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released its final report, including 94 Calls to Action, in 2015. The SSMU recognizes that the TRC framework is not universally accepted and does not meet the needs of all Indigenous peoples. However, it shall actively support the implementation and maintenance of these Calls to Action based on community consultation and direction, taking into account other local resurgence, nationhood, self-determination and self-governance frameworks. There shall be a particular focus on Calls to Action 6-17, 62-66 and 87-92, as these recommendations focus on issues within the scope of a university institution, including Education, Language and Culture, Education for Reconciliation, Sports and Reconciliation, and Business and Reconciliation.

## 6. Accountability

All staff and elected representatives of the SSMU are accountable for the implementation of this policy. To this end, the vision, planning, and decision-making of the Society should uphold the principles, support measures, and consultation protocols outlined in this document. Furthermore, the Legislative Council is responsible for ensuring that all Executive Officers and Committees integrate and



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communicate this commitment in their activities as well as in the development, implementation, and evaluation of new initiatives.

## Reporting

The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall report to the Legislative Council once per semester on the status of the mandates contained in this policy. The SSMU shall ensure that this report made available to Stakeholders in an accessible format.



## O. SMOKING ON CAMPUS POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/04/07

Expires: 2021/01/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

### Introduction

Recent years have seen changes in McGill's approach to smoking on campus, and to the way the community feels about this issue. The Government of Quebec passed a law in 2015<sup>57</sup> requiring smoking to occur at least nine meters from public buildings, and in

2014 McGill declared the Redpath Terrace a smoke-free zone, albeit with decidedly mixed results. Though firm statistics do not exist, a survey run by the Society<sup>58</sup> shows that 65.8% of students surveyed agree or strongly agree that exposure to second-hand smoke is a problem on campus. Comments in that survey as well as direct consultation with students demonstrated that those suffering from asthma, migraines, and other medical conditions, as well as those who need to use the Office for Students with Disabilities on a regular basis, are being adversely affected by second-hand smoke especially near the McLennan-Redpath passageway. The health risks of second-hand smoke are well known, as are the risks of smoking.

It is with this knowledge, and with the desire to ensure that students are provided with "safe and suitable conditions of learning," as stipulated in the Charter of Student Rights of McGill University,<sup>59</sup> that the Society is putting forward this Policy. Student consultation has included a survey, focus groups, discussions at Legislative Council and the General Assembly, a town hall, and a plebiscite question on the idea of a smoke-free campus. This policy is the result of those consultations and of research on the question of smoking on college campuses. Our hope is that the Society will be able to use the solutions put forward by this Policy to work with the greater McGill Community in order to decide how we can best reduce the harm of second-hand smoke, provide students with education regarding smoking (which McGill does less than other institutions<sup>60</sup>), offer smokers appropriate and voluntarily-accessed resources, and decide as a community what we see as the future of smoking on campus.

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<sup>57</sup> <http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2015C28F.PDF>

<sup>58</sup> [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DOOnA3uk6ZVyK7d7TC2sibUQgJqc6SbsMpG9QfS1D1l/viewanalytics?usp=form\\_confirm](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DOOnA3uk6ZVyK7d7TC2sibUQgJqc6SbsMpG9QfS1D1l/viewanalytics?usp=form_confirm)

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/charter-of-students-rights.pdf>

[https://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/files/healthymcgill/mcgill\\_ncha\\_report\\_dec\\_2014\\_final.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/healthymcgill/files/healthymcgill/mcgill_ncha_report_dec_2014_final.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/features/vitalsigns/smokingandmentalillness/>



We also wish to recognize the significant intersection between mental health and smoking addiction, in that smoking can be used as a coping mechanism and is often tied to experiences of anxiety, depression, stress, body image, social interaction, particularly in the university context. Because of these complex issues, the Society is committed to ensuring that all actions and messages stipulated in this Policy have as a guiding principle the support of the mental health and overall wellness of smokers and non-smokers and respect the intersection between smoking and mental health, culture, social and economic inequalities such as class<sup>61</sup>, gender, sexuality<sup>62</sup>, as well as other points of intersection.

## Principles

The Society recognizes the following as guiding principles to be considered when implementing this policy

- i. Smokers have the same rights as all students, and all students have the right to a healthy, accessible, and supportive environment as well as the right to their own bodily autonomy.
- ii. Second-hand smoke exposure results in harm to students, especially those with pre-existing medical conditions.
- iii. As a community, we can decide where, when, and how smoking should occur on campus, as we would regulate other activities.
- iv. As a community, we are responsible for ensuring that students have access to educational materials about smoking which are adapted to the university context (e.g. addressing topics like smoking for weight loss, social smoking, student stress and mental health dimensions of smoking).
- v. As a community, we are responsible for ensuring a spectrum of appropriate, voluntarily-accessed, non-directional and accessible services for smoking harm reduction and smoking cessation ranging from peer-support to medical interventions. The Society recognizes that not all smokers want to quit smoking, however adequate and diverse supports should be available for those who do.
- vi. Electronic cigarettes, nicotine vaporizers, and similar smoking cessation tools should remain affected only by the government nine-meter rule.
- vii. The Society acknowledges that drug users and those with a history of drug use often go without a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to prevent the harmful effects of drug use, and thus the Society will ensure that the voices of smokers are prioritized in conversations, programs, and policies regarding smoking on campus.

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<sup>61</sup> [http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org/channels/special\\_populations/low\\_income\\_and\\_education.php](http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org/channels/special_populations/low_income_and_education.php)

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.thedcenter.org/facts\\_smoking.html](http://www.thedcenter.org/facts_smoking.html)



# Implementation

The SSMU commits itself to advocating for the following measures, in accordance with the principles stated above:

## 1. Education

Education around smoking on campus must be adapted to the needs of students. It also must be non-directional and should seek to inform students and provide alternatives.

The Society will work with McGill Student Services to provide a spectrum of educational materials and opportunities that seek to achieve the following objectives:

1.1 Provide students with clear information about University smoking policies.

1.2 Employ harm reduction approaches and encourage smokers to voluntarily reduce the exposure of others to second-hand smoke. Information on the effects of second-hand smoke on individuals with pre-existing medical conditions should be included.

1.3 Provide all students with information about smoking and its lesser-known risks, adapted to the unique context of university students

1.4 Providing information about risks of social smoking and other smoking practices that are seen on university campuses

1.5 Informing students about different smoking reduction and cessation resources and strategies, including both on- and off- campus options

1.6 Actively fighting the stigmatization of smoking and recognizing addiction as a form of mental illness.

## 2. Cessation Resources

The Society will advocate for the provision and promotion of extensive, varied resources for smoking cessation and reduction to meet the needs of students. These resources should represent a range of approaches from non-directional peer support through to nicotine replacement therapy and medications. Partners will include McGill's Health Services, Mental Health Services, Counseling Services, the Office for Students with Disabilities, Healthy McGill, the Society student health plan provider, and the international student health plan provider. The Society shall work to ensure a variety of resources are available to students, including but not limited to:





- 2.1 Providing students with the contact information of smoking chatlines;
- 2.2 Providing peer support for those wishing to quit or reduce their smoking;
- 2.3 Providing smoking cessation counseling and treatment at Student Health, Mental Health, and Counseling Services;
- 2.4 Providing links and coverage information for off-campus resources and counseling.

### 3. Designated Smoking Areas

In line with best practices from other institutions, such as the University of Melbourne and the McGill University Health Centre, the Society will work with the University to put in place improved designated smoking areas where smokers can smoke while not exposing others to second-hand smoke. Principles that should be followed when developing these smoking areas are:

- 3.1 **Consultation:** Engagement with smokers and the community-at-large on the placement, design, and number of the areas;
- 3.2 **Safety:** Ensuring appropriate design standards, ventilation, comfort, and ease of use, while complying with current law  
[<http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2015C28F.PDF>] that does not allow the construction of roofed shelters for smokers;
- 3.3 **Location:** Placement where smokers will use them, but off of high-traffic routes;
- 3.4 **Promotion:** Identifying the areas as the locations for smoking and adjusting enforcement mechanisms as necessary.

### 4. Moving as a community towards a smoke-free environment

Research shows that smoke free campuses lead to lower second-hand smoke exposure than designated smoking areas<sup>63</sup>. In addition, through our survey<sup>64</sup> and plebiscite question<sup>65</sup>, students have indicated that they are in favor of the temporary use of smoking shelters in order to transition to a smoke-free campus environment. The Society therefore positions itself, in principle, in favor of the transition to a smoke-free campus.

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<sup>63</sup> Amanda Fallin, Maria Ruditis, and Stanton A. Glantz. Association of Campus Tobacco Policies With Secondhand Smoke Exposure, Intention to Smoke on Campus, and Attitudes About Outdoor Smoking Restrictions. *American Journal of Public Health*: June 2015, Vol. 105, No. 6, pp. 1098-1100

<sup>64</sup> <http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2015C28F.PDF>

<sup>65</sup> <https://ssmu.simplyvoting.com/index.php?mode=results&election=42041> (see Appendix A for plebiscite text)



However, in line with principles stated above, any movement towards a smoke free campus must follow and be contingent upon the implementation of the aforementioned items and the fulfillment of the following requirements:

4.1 Sufficient time, likely between 3 and 5 years, must be given for smoking shelters, education campaigns and cessation resources to be implemented before transitioning to a smoke-free campus. This is necessary for improved resources to contribute to culture change and to enable smokers' adaptation to a modified environment.

4.2 Smoking shelters should be built by the University and used to aid in the transition to a smoke-free campus. The community, and smokers in particular, must be consulted with respect to the placement, design, and number of smoking shelters. Following their construction, the effectiveness of the shelters should be evaluated.

4.3 A needs assessment should be conducted to evaluate the knowledge, perception and attitudes of smokers towards campus smoking resources, which should in turn inform the education campaign outlined above. A survey should be repeated after the first campaign in order to assess impact.

4.4 The education campaign and coordination of smoking resources should be implemented before moving towards a smoke-free campus, and must be maintained following the institution of a smoke-free campus.

4.5 Culture change and community enforcement shall aid in the transition to a smoke-free campus alongside limited security presence. Best practices should be identified from other smoke-free campuses in North America.

4.6 These steps must be carried out with respect for, and while supporting, smokers, particularly recognizing the intersections between addiction, mental health, and social inequalities.

## Consultation & Review

If any of the above requirements cannot be fulfilled, the Society will re-evaluate its commitment to a smoke-free campus and bring a discussion of this issue to the SSMU Legislative Council. The society also commits to working with stakeholders like the University Health and Safety Committee, the student health services, the Libraries, and our constituents to continually review and re-evaluate this policy.

The Society shall fulfill these mandates through the Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life). The Vice- President (University Affairs) and the Vice-President (Student Life) shall be responsible for reporting on this matter to Legislative Council



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once a semester. With respect to timeline, the Society commits to actively pursuing and working towards the implementation of all aspects of this policy within five years, at which point this policy should be revisited for renewal.

## APPENDIX A

[Smoke-Free Plebiscite Text](#)



## P. SUPPORT FOR FAMILY CARE POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2016/10/15

Expires: 2021/01/01

[Adopted Motion](#) (Link)

### Background

The SSMU has a history of and constitutional mandate<sup>66</sup> to take leadership on issues of equity and social justice. This dedication has been demonstrated in the creation of an Equity Policy<sup>67</sup> for the SSMU. This Equity Policy addresses the anti-oppressive stance the SSMU has towards issues of discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or social class. The SSMU recognizes that this Equity Policy, in its current form, does not explicitly recognize the discrimination and exclusion faced by Students with Dependents, Pregnant, or Breastfeeding student and aims to actively address this issue through this policy. Additionally, the SSMU recognizes that the visibility of Students with Dependents is very low, potentially driving the assumption that these issues are irrelevant to McGill's undergraduate student population.

### Scope

This policy shall apply to all:

1. Staff, volunteers and elected representatives of the SSMU.
2. Activities and events hosted and promoted by the SSMU.
3. Written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, or endorsed by the SSMU.

### Definitions

**Childcare:** Refers to services that ensure the supervision of children.

**Dependent:** Refers to a person who is financially, emotionally, legally and/or physically dependent on another individual.

**Family Care:** Refers to all matters pertaining to Childcare, Elder Care and Dependents.

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<sup>66</sup> SSMU Constitution 2016-02-04

<sup>67</sup> SSMU Policy and Plan Book 2016-10-15



**Student with Dependent:** Refers to any student with a Dependent, as well as Student Parents collectively. This includes, but is not limited to, caring for an elderly family member, a sick family member, and financially supporting others remotely.

**Student Parent.** Refers to a student who is pregnant or who has one or more children.

**Stakeholder:** Refers to any person or group that has an interest in the outcome of a decision or event related to Family Care within the University or that has expertise in said area.

## 1. Consultation

The SSMU recognizes the importance of developing relationships with Stakeholders that are grounded in open communication and respect. Furthermore, the SSMU acknowledges that meaningful advocacy can only be done in consultation with these communities. The SSMU, through the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life), shall achieve this by:

1.1. Ensuring that prior to each academic year, in August, the contact information of all relevant stakeholders is compiled into a central document, namely University units and other student groups, related to Family Care within the McGill University community. This document shall serve to facilitate consultation and institutionalize support and shall be updated on an annual basis and shared with relevant Stakeholders, which must also be made publically on the SSMU's website.

1.2. Consulting all relevant Stakeholders in Family Care at the University, including, but not limited to the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity Subcommittees on Women, Family Care and Disabilities, the Post-Graduate Students' Society, and any interested students with Dependents.

For matters involving Family Care at the University which are not covered within this policy, the Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall consult the aforementioned Stakeholders.

## 2. Support for Student Parents

The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure that support for Student Parents shall remain a priority for the SSMU. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that:

2.1. The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall advocate for increased support for current and future efforts to research regarding the barriers faced by and needs of Students with Dependents, in addition to the expansion of childcare services in Quebec.

2.2. The VP Student Life in conjunction with the Building Manager shall endeavour to increase the accessibility of the William Shatner University Centre (following renovations) and the 3501 Peel street



for undergraduate Student Parents and their children through the implementation of one or more child-friendly spaces for Student Parents and their children,

2.2.1. Including a private space for Breastfeeding or liaising with campus groups and/or administration for other spaces on campus with the VP University Affairs

2.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall endeavour to establish consistent childcare service to Student Parents in need, pending available financial resources.

2.3.1. Creation of available caregiver list (one of the largest recurring challenges with this project is communications. Because there is no list of caregivers and parents any place, communications must be done in a very piecemeal way (emailing both daycares, emailing my listserv, emailing through the student associations, emailing through ISS). This should be addressed in the coming year thanks to the inclusive registration project, which allows people who identify as caregivers to receive our communications once they register for classes).<sup>68</sup>

2.3.2. Inclusion of childcare possibilities for events in club workshop and club handbook and every clubs & services listserv.

2.3.3. Addition of required childcare provision upon request as a requirement for clubs.

2.4. The SSMU Executive Committee shall ensure that all SSMU-run or SSMU-endorsed events held in the William Shatner University Centre or other SSMU spaces have childcare available, if requested at least 24 hours in advance.

2.5. Service provision and advocacy efforts undertaken by the SSMU must take into account the unique needs of Student Parents who are single, Indigenous, queer, trans, disabled, racialized, of a lower socioeconomic status, and international student parents, due to additional barriers faced by these groups both institutionally and societally. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall collaborate with these self-identified student parents to ensure consultation shall be provided in addressing these needs.

2.6. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall work with the University to ensure that pertinent demographic information regarding Students with Dependents is maintained and assessed on a regular basis to determine where additional support is needed and how the University can ensure the retention of Students with Dependents.

2.6.1. This can be done by launching a survey which polls the Undergraduate student body on its needs regarding Family Care beginning in 2019.

2.7. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President lobby the University to create a physical Family Resource Office for Undergraduate students.

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<sup>68</sup> [https://mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/sp0140\\_frc\\_finalreport\\_may2017.pdf](https://mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/sp0140_frc_finalreport_may2017.pdf)



2.8. The Funding Committee will consider whether funding-seeking student groups will be making childcare services available at their events, upon request.

2.8.1. The Funding Committee may make recommendations to create funds to do so if it is not possible including but not limited to; budget changes, surplus fee reallocation.

## 3. Support for Students with Dependents

The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall ensure that support for Students with Dependents shall also remain a priority for the SSMU. This includes, but is not limited to:

3.1. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall lobby the University to institutionalize better support for Students with Dependents

3.1.1. A University-wide leave of absence policy for all Students with Dependents

3.1.2. It must also advocate for a more accessible medical note policy for staff and Students with Dependents.<sup>69</sup>

3.1.3. An Accommodation Policy for Students who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding who require lab work to fulfill degree requirements.

3.2. The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and Vice-President (Student Life) will continue to work towards removing the barriers for undergraduate Students with Dependents from participating fully in and accessing SSMU activities and services, including, but not limited to, SSMU Legislative Council and its committees, Clubs, Services and jobs at the SSMU.

3.2.1. Inclusion of available rights for Student Parents and Students with dependents in the Know Your Rights Campaign.

3.3. The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) shall collaborate with local organizations, such as Head and Hands and The Yellow Door, to support student caregiving projects, as well as McGill-specific organizations such as Midnight Kitchen or QPIRG-McGill, who could provide support in projects directed towards children and elderly persons<sup>70</sup>.

## 4. Reporting

The Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the SSMU representative to pertinent Joint Board Senate Committee on Equity Subcommittees on Women, Family Care and Disabilities shall

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<sup>69</sup> [https://www.mcgill.ca/daycare/files/daycare/cpe\\_mcgill\\_health\\_protocol\\_2012\\_09.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/daycare/files/daycare/cpe_mcgill_health_protocol_2012_09.pdf) See pages 4-11 for examples of when a parent has to keep their child home from daycare, but may not go to a doctor for a medical note (if a fever is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit). This applies to elderly care as well, given the vulnerabilities to health that both young children and elderly persons face.

<sup>70</sup> <http://headandhands.ca/programs-services/young-parents-program/>, <http://www.yellowdoor.org/generations.html>, <https://midnightkitchencollective.wordpress.com/24-2/>, <http://qipirgmcgill.org/>



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report to Legislative Council each semester on the status of the mandates in this policy. This report shall be made available to all interested relevant Stakeholders and publicly on the SSMU website.

4.1. Should the Vice President (University Affairs) fail to report, the Speaker should remind counselors of this when they complete the accountability survey.

4.2 Failure to report will also result in a complaint made to the accountability committee.





## Q. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2018/04/05

Expires: 2023/01/01

[Adopted Motion](#)

### Introduction: Mission and Vision

This policy lays out the guiding principles upon which multi-year goals and efforts to continually improve shall be based. Crucially, this policy seeks to provide more tangible recommendations and strategies to improve sustainability in the SSMU context, as well as measures of accountability to ensure that initiatives and goals are implemented and executed.

Students at McGill and across Canada have led efforts to make our campuses more sustainable.<sup>71</sup> At McGill, for example, student leadership has established a Sustainability Projects Fund, conducted a major environmental sustainability assessment of the SSMU, established and revised the SSMU's Equity Policy, and led McGill to hire staff specifically to make its food system more sustainable.

Students operate a large number of important services for students and are leading movements to improve sustainability at McGill, including the work and advocacy done by groups such as Divest McGill, ECOLE, McGill Permaculture Club, Midnight Kitchen, the Flat Bike Collective, the Union for Gender Empowerment, the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society, Queer McGill, WalkSafe, Drivesafe, Nightline, the Black Students Network, and many more.

The pursuit of a sustainable campus has largely hitherto been led by students, and SSMU must continue to be the joint effort of Executives, Councillors, and staff, and will be strengthened by the active participation of student groups and the student body at large.

### Mission

To achieve sustainable practices by balancing and integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations in the way it acts, and by having people collaborate to achieve this balance. The SSMU's commitment to sustainability is first and foremost outlined in the Preamble of the SSMU Constitution<sup>72</sup> :

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/spf>; <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/SSMU-EquityPolicy-Revisions.pdf?x26516>

<sup>72</sup> <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/SSMU-Constitution-2015-02-21-EN.pdf>



- “VI All Students’ Society endeavours shall be undertaken with full respect for human dignity and bodily sovereignty and without discrimination on the basis of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, language, sexual orientation or social class.
- VII The Students’ Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The Society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic, and environmental surroundings.
- VIII The Students’ Society commits itself to groups, programs and activities that are devoted to the wellbeing of a group disadvantaged because of irrelevant personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or social class.”

Further, the SSMU shall demonstrate leadership for sustainability by:

- fostering sustainability across campus and beyond through our advocacy, leadership, and all public actions;
- engaging students and student groups, connecting people who share the same ideas for change and coordinating projects with multiple stakeholders;
- promoting awareness of sustainability through its communications, informational resources and mandatory annual, in-depth trainings for SSMU executives and staff, and by leading by example in the delivery of events, services, and political action;
- Applying sustainability within its internal operations, through creating a just, empowering community within SSMU staff that encourages, incentivizes, and supports sustainability initiatives by minimizing barriers, providing tools and knowledge, and sets high standards for the SSMU’s sustainability practices;
- setting ambitious and feasible multi-year goals, drawing on best practices from other organizations to achieve them, reporting both qualitatively and quantitatively, and annually reviewing the goals to ensure that change is iterative and adaptive.

## Vision

As efforts for a sustainable SSMU and a sustainable campus intensify, the SSMU should not only successfully and meaningfully support grassroots student initiatives, but also serve as a leader for social, environmental, and economic sustainability.



# 1. Definitions

**Sustainability:** As defined in section 2, Sustainability is an approach and practice that allows present generations to meet their needs without compromising the needs of future generations, and includes environmental, social and economic considerations.

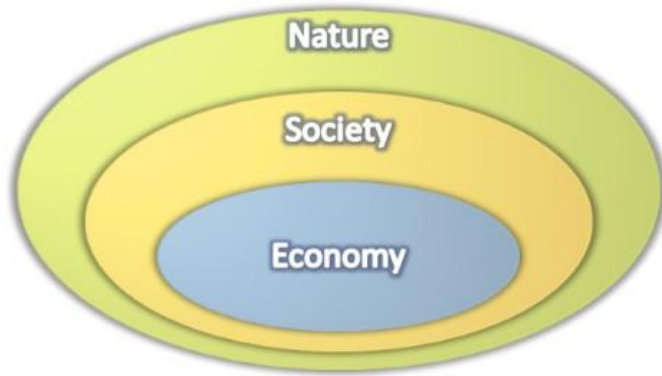


Fig. 1. This image, which consists of nested spheres, illustrates how we should consider and understand the 3 spheres or pillars of sustainability. “Nature” encompasses all of the physical world we are in, commonly referred to as the “Environment”. A sub-section of that is all of human “Society”, and “Economy” is a sub-section of human society. The two images together provide basic visuals that can help contextualize thinking about sustainability.

From <http://www.projectcss.eu/description/objectives.jpg> accessed March 20, 2012.

**Student organizations:** all clubs and services operating under SSMU.

**Student Associations:** University-level or faculty-level groups that are governed by elected student representatives.

**Officers vs Executives:** Both refer to the elected SSMU Executives.

# 2. Scope

This Policy shall apply to:

- Staff, elected representatives, operations, Clubs, and Services, of the Students' Society of McGill University.
- All activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the Society and SSMU-affiliated Clubs and Services.
- Written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, endorsed, or funded by the Society.
- Activities, events, campaigns, and promotions held in the William Shatner University Centre.

# 3. Understanding Sustainability

Sustainability in this context is about balancing and integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations in the way we act, and having people collaborate to achieve this balance. Different definitions are used in this document, within in the McGill community, and in many Canadian and



international scholarly articles. These definitions provide a common framework, not to be exhaustive or definitive, and can be refined in the future.

## 3.1 Environmental

Practices that lead to resilient ecosystems which can support healthy life and lifestyles. To that end, the SSMU will strive to:

- Eliminate its contribution to the progressive buildup of substances extracted from the Earth's crust (for example, heavy metals, fossil fuels, greenhouse gas emissions) by reducing unnecessary purchasing of materials, opting for more sustainable materials when possible, encouraging, advertising, and incentivizing the usage of reusable materials and containers at events, and reconsider traditional methods of distribution of information through promotional materials;
- Eliminate its contribution to the progressive buildup of chemicals and compounds produced by society (for example, dioxins, PCBs, and DDT ) by transitioning to materials that do not contain such chemicals<sup>73</sup> and by more strongly advertising and supporting the current electronic recycling program;
- Eliminate its contribution to the progressive physical degradation and destruction of nature and natural processes (for example, over harvesting forests and paving over critical wildlife habitat) by prioritizing the minimal use of these materials in general, and choosing products and/or vendors/corporations that adhere to socially and environmentally responsible guidelines.

## 3.2 Social

The SSMU will strive to promote a strong, safe, and empowering community by endeavouring to minimize systemic power imbalances within society and to foster a culture of anti-oppression. Socioeconomic inequality has been shown to be well correlated to ecological degradation.<sup>74</sup> This potential positive feedback loop of inequity exacerbating biodiversity loss which exacerbates inequity is one example of how equity struggles are, or should be, an inseparable part of the sustainability movement. The SSMU will aim to be of service to the communities of which it is a part, in keeping with the values laid out in the Constitution and Equity Policy. Please refer to the Equity Policy updated in April 2018 for more information on SSMU and equity. Beyond the Equity Policy, SSMU will approach social sustainability by ensuring that:

- it supports student initiatives that contribute to the aims stated in this section, and it will liaise with different groups to do so.
- it encourages and provides additional support for projects and initiatives that address multiple aspects of sustainability, such as environmental and social.

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<sup>73</sup> For example: sustainably-sourced and manufactured LED lighting

<sup>74</sup> Mikkelsen GM, Gonzalez A, Peterson GD (2007) Economic Inequality Predicts Biodiversity Loss. PLoS ONE 2(5): e444. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0000444 (Accessed on April 8, 2013 at <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0000444>)



## 3.3 Economic

The SSMU is tasked with managing fees collected from many thousands of students. The SSMU undertakes to manage these funds in a manner which respects students and the communities of which SSMU is a part. The SSMU will strive to:

- be stewards of students' money in an ethical manner, as per the Ethical Investment Policy, the Purchasing Policy, and this Sustainability Strategy;
- be transparent, accountable, and open to student participation in budgeting students' money;
- be responsible in its long-term planning of finances to ensure year-to-year financial stability and flexibility as major expenses arise;
- work to prioritize funding to initiatives that will (a) lead to cost-savings for the SSMU in a reasonable time-frame or (b) lead to considerable social and / or environmental benefit.
- Emphasize, communicate, and advocate to partners, donors, sponsors, administration, and other relevant parties that short-term investments in sustainability projects virtually always lead to long-term financial gains as long as the necessary maintenance is carried out.

## 4. SSMU's role fostering a community of sustainability

### 4.1 Overview of the SSMU's role

The SSMU will, through the actions of its elected representatives, staff, committee members, clubs, and services:

- Seek to be a catalyst for change in the McGill community;
- Represent student interests pertaining to sustainability issues on campus to the relevant community members;
- Work to build awareness of sustainability issues, and work to ensure that its internal practices adhere to a high standard of sustainable behaviour;
- Show leadership beyond the SSMU bureaucracy and the William Shatner University Centre for the good of the student body as a whole and the broader community and society.
- Take on the responsibility of reaching out to other groups to learn more about their activities, advocacy and research, what is going on and informing others of what is happening with the SSMU.

### 4.2 Coordination

The SSMU will use its relationships and its understanding of the community to connect members who are working on similar topics, problems, campaigns, efforts, research, etc. while ensuring it does not create extra or unnecessary burden for its collaborators



## 4.3 Facilitation

The SSMU will facilitate sustainability advocacy, resources and education for its members by:

- Hosting an annual SPOKES (Students Pursuing Opportunities and Knowledge in Environment and Sustainability) conference
- providing mandatory and non-mandatory workshops on sustainable event planning (See Section 7)
- Communicating sustainability opportunities through the Sustainability Corner (see Appendix A)

Other programming carried out through the academic year.

## 4.4 Outreach

The SSMU, in an effort to create a more sustainable community, will reach out to relevant groups in the community to (a) look for beneficial collaborations (b) Inform the community at large as to what the SSMU is doing for their reference (c) prevent the duplication of efforts on campus and (d) seek out best practices.

## 4.5 Awareness-Raising

The SSMU will work to make its members and the community more aware of how to live an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable lifestyle. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing structured educational opportunities, for example, Mini-Courses and workshops, that help students practice sustainable lifestyles that may be otherwise financially inaccessible, such as living zero-waste;
- Providing educational signage about sustainable practices such as using reusable dishes in dining areas in the building.
- Promoting other ongoing educational opportunities and events in the community, promoting collaboration to increase the scope and impact of beneficial initiatives<sup>75</sup>;
- Providing and compiling resources on SSMU's outreach and communication platforms to help all members of the Society fulfill the goals and act according to the values outlined in this policy

Responsibility for determining what issues and campaigns to focus resources falls on relevant Executive Officers, SSMU Committee(s), the society's General Assembly and its Legislative Council. More information on responsibilities can be found in the Appendices.

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<sup>75</sup> Relevant people include the VP Student Life, General Manager, Building Committee for Shatner Building projects, Environment Committee, Sustainability Commissioners



## 5. Internal practices and procedures

The SSMU will strive to be a model for sustainable internal practices insofar as is possible given organizational constraints. This includes learning from peer organizations, drawing on student research capacity and innovation, and proactively engaging students in projects and decision-making processes

### 5.1 Executive-Commissioner relationship

- Sustainability Commissioners will provide sustainability trainings for Executives during their training periods.
- Executives will meet with the Sustainability Commissioners at the beginning of their term and throughout the year to develop a tailored plan to incorporate sustainability into their portfolios.

#### 5.1.1 Reporting

Staff and committee report successful innovations to executives, and briefly to Council according to the relevant reporting schedules;

#### 5.1.2 Role Modelling

The SSMU Executive and staff shall role model sustainability during daily practices by only using reusable or compostable containers in the distribution of food or beverage in meetings and in the SSMU Office.

In addition, SSMU staff and committees carry out the day-to-day decisions and actions of the SSMU. As such:

- Staff and committees are responsible for upholding and integrating this policy into their decisions and actions, possibly by creating decision-making frameworks;
- Staff and committees should be reporting successful innovations to executives, and briefly to Council according to the relevant reporting schedules;
- The Sustainability Coordinator is mandated to provide support, track progress, and meet with employees and committees regarding strategy throughout the year. This includes collaborating with interested students and student staff to coordinate projects and responsibilities.

As outlined in this policy, sustainability is complex, both in theory and in practice. In order for this policy to be truly effective, its goals must be integrated across all portfolios of the SSMU. While each year's elected representatives and student staff will have their particular skills sets and interests, it is expected that all staff and decision-makers within the SSMU will act in good faith towards achieving



the goals of this policy will seek to make the William Shatner University Centre Building operate as sustainably as possible. This is the responsibility

## 5.2. Building

The SSMU will seek to make the William Shatner University Centre Building and all other associated SSMU spaces operate as sustainably as possible through its operations and the responsibilities of the Building Manager, Sustainability Commissioners and the SSMU Executives whose mandate includes operations if such a role exists.

### 5.2.1 Infrastructure

The SSMU will seek to maintain the infrastructure of the building in a fashion that:

- keeps energy usage as low as possible while providing reasonable payback period if renovations are necessary to do so. The focus here may tend towards energy efficiency and undertaking efforts to inform students/staff/tenants of best practices of behaviour.
- is accessible to students of all abilities by individuals involved with building design and construction undergo
  - training on equity, ableism, universal design;
  - provides infrastructure to assist sustainable lifestyle choices;
  - ensures safety, above and beyond fire code and alcohol regulations.

### 5.2.2 Use of space

The SSMU will seek to ensure that the spaces under its purview are used in a way that:

- Facilitates a safer space for all students in accordance with SSMU's Equity Policy<sup>76</sup>
- Aims to reduce the amount of waste (e.g. disposable cups and other materials) the space or events held in the space generate;
- Materials enter the right waste streams;
- Prioritizes student interests and services for students.

### 5.2.3 Purchasing

- The SSMU will adhere to the Ethical Investment Policy and Purchasing Policy.
- Material purchases should be carefully evaluated to avoid financial and material waste. Exit reports from events shall include recommendations regarding how to cut down on excess materials. The Events Administrator(s) will undergo tailored sustainability training, whereby the Sustainability Commissioners will work with them to identify key areas of consumption and how to mitigate the waste produced.

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<sup>76</sup> Article 3.2





- In the event that surplus materials are purchased, every effort should be made to either repurpose them or donate them to a worthy, sustainable student or community organization. Suggestions of such organizations can be requested from the Sustainability Commissioners, Equity Commissioners, and/or Sustainable Events Team.
- The SSMU will work with applied student research and McGill Food & Dining Services (MFDS) to continually improve the sustainability standards of all food providers on McGill campus and will prioritize waste reduction, then waste management. Relevant people for these practices include the President, General Manager, tenants in the building, and Executive Chef of SHHS, or otherwise the individual in charge of operations and sustainability within McGill Food and Dining Services.
- The SSMU will encourage all vendors that sell food and beverages to stop the sale of bottled water in the University Center. Failure for a vendor to comply with this policy will be asked to attend a review meeting carried out by the Sustainability Commissioners, supervising SSMU Executive and General Manager.
  - Further, the SSMU will include sustainability as a factor when negotiating new vendor agreements and corporate sponsorships.

### 5.3. Human Resource Practices

In its efforts to act as a socially sustainable and responsible organization, the SSMU shall strive to uphold best practices regarding Human Resources. As outlined in the Human Resources Policy, this includes providing meaningful work for both students and full-time staff, nurturing a sense of empowerment for all staff members, and striving to provide a productive and pleasant work environment. The SSMU will support staff to exhibit leadership in fulfilling the goals of this policy, the SSMU shall provide training tailored as much as possible to specific jobs regarding issues of social, environmental, and economic<sup>77</sup>.

## 6. Events

All SSMU-operated events must be planned in light of the values laid out in this policy. This includes financial accountability and responsibility, ensuring that events are inclusive and equitable (refer to the Equity Policy), and minimizing the environmental impact.

The SSMU will actively encourage events held within the University Centre to use only reusable materials, mandating that events within the University Center use only compostable materials if disposable materials are used at all.

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<sup>77</sup> Definition adapted from Advocates for Youth <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/safespace.pdf> accessed on March 21, 2012sustainability.



The SSMU will eliminate the distribution of bottled water and non-compostable disposable materials during all internal events affiliated with the SSMU, such as but not limited to, Orientation (Frosh) and 4Floors.

## 7. Clubs and Services

Clubs and Services must attend a minimum of 1 Sustainable Event Planning workshop per year, facilitated by the Vice-President (Student Life) and Sustainability Commissioners to further support the implementation of sustainability in the club or service's operations. The Sustainable Event Planning workshop includes training on all aspects of sustainability, with particular emphasis on environmental and social sustainability. Failure to attend will factor into club status. Clubs and Services who are found to be in repeated violation (1 or more) of this policy will attend an obligatory meeting with the Sustainable Events Planning Team or Sustainability Commissioners. If violations continue, Clubs and Services in question will be subject to a review by the Clubs Committee and Services Review Committee, respectively.

## 8. Implementation

### 8.1 Leadership

While all of the SSMU decision-makers are responsible for implementing this policy, the SSMU Executives, the Sustainability Commissioners, student staff within the Sustainability and Equity portfolios, and the Equity and Environment Committees must champion leadership and support, in line with the guidelines found in Appendix A.

### 8.2 Communication and Collaboration within the SSMU

As outlined in this policy, sustainability is complex, both in theory and in practice. In order for this policy to be truly effective, its goals must be integrated across all portfolios of the SSMU. While each year's elected representatives and student staff will have their particular skills sets and interests, it is expected that all staff and decision-makers within the SSMU will act in good faith towards achieving the goals of this policy.



## 9. Reporting and Accountability

### 9.1 Accountability within the SSMU Executive

The SSMU Executive shall report on all progress achieved within the purview of this policy to Council once in the Fall Semester and twice in the Winter semester with support from the Sustainability Commissioners and leadership from the president.

#### 9.1.1 Final Report of the Academic Year

The final report of the academic year shall constitute an annual report compiled by the President, Sustainability Commissioners and Environment committee, and shall include:

- Recommendations approved by the previous years' Council
- Work achieved that academic year and up-to-date campus initiatives
- SSMU's current organizational capacity in relation to this policy
- Updated implementation plan and benchmarking rubrics<sup>78</sup>
- Recommended goals of the following academic year

The President, with support from the Sustainability Coordinator and student staff, shall oversee an annual review of sustainability goals and benchmarks in order to adapt the SSMU's efforts in light of changes in organizational capacity and campus and societal shifts. The Sustainability Coordinator will lead a process of developing detailed implementation plans and benchmarking rubrics to ensure measurable, effective change; this shall not be allowed to detract from the pursuit of qualitative or difficult-to-measure efforts.

#### 9.1.2 Collaboration with the Sustainability Commissioners

The Sustainability Commissioners will hold monthly meetings with the SSMU Executives in order to develop plans to incorporate sustainability into their portfolios.

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<sup>78</sup> This shall not be allowed to detract from pursuit of qualitative or difficult-to-measure efforts



## APPENDIX A

### Responsibilities of Specific Positions and Committees within the SSMU

#### Role of the SSMU Executives

Description: Executives work (more than) full-time to make SSMU work, and they carry much of the knowledge about the activities of SSMU. To be successful, the implementation of this policy must be acted on in good faith by every Executive Officer. Weekly Executive meetings are a place of many political decisions that set the behaviour of the SSMU. It is important for those responsible for this policy to be aware of what decisions are being made at executive meetings and how they affect this policy. Decision-making frameworks should be developed shortly after the Sustainability training in May to ensure make sure sustainability is not a forgotten consideration at exec meetings.

Roles: Many roles of execs are identified in the text of this policy and are detailed further below just as much for the executives as for students who are working on sustainability efforts. (Exec positions listed in alphabetical order, not order of importance!)

#### President

- The President is responsible for ensuring environmental leadership.
- The President, along with the VP University Affairs, share responsibilities for advocating for stronger adherence to sustainability policies and pursuit of relevant actions to the McGill Administration. In the event of the creation of new committees pertaining specifically to sustainability, such as those involving administration, the President should advocate for the most qualified student to serve as the representative. Oftentimes, this will be the Sustainability Commissioner.
- The President is the official link to faculty-specific undergrad associations and to the First Year Council and Inter-Residence Council.
- The President oversees the work of the two (2) Sustainability Commissioners.

#### VP Student Life

- The Vice-President (Student Life) should foster the integration of student groups' initiatives & input
- They collaborate with staff to implement sustainable operations and infrastructure within the Shatner Building (University Centre)
- They should distribute information to all Clubs, Services, and students on issues pertaining to bottled water and promote the sustainable alternative of tap water, other sustainable methods of water distribution, and readily available services related to waste reduction such as The Plate Club.



## VP External

- The Vice-President (External) is critical to connecting in two-way communication with community organizations such as the Milton-Parc Citizens Committee and Eco-Quartiers, and municipal, provincial, and federal governments in the pursuit of this policy's goal.

## VP Finance

- The Vice-President (Finance) has the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the Ethical Investment Plan and Purchasing Policy;
- Overseeing the long-term financial viability of SSMU;
- and providing leadership in the integration of the values laid out in this policy within the SSMU's Operations (Gerts and MiniCourses)
- The VP Finance & Operations oversees the work of the FERC Commissioner, Funding Coordinator, Gerts Manager, and Mini Courses Manager.

## VP Internal

- The Vice-President (Internal) has a lead role to play in minimizing the impact of the Society's events and in promoting awareness within the student body. Repeating a mantra of "use less, use things that will be useful, and send the right messages with events and communications" will be an important contribution the VP Internal can make.
- The VP Internal will create and maintain a "Sustainability Corner", similar to the "Dean's Corner" on the SSMU Listserv, wherein one upcoming event or project in which students can become involved related to sustainability is featured.
- The VP Internal oversees several Frosh Coordinators over the summer, and a Sponsorships Coordinator when needed throughout the year.
- The VP shall ensure that the Sustainability Policy is followed in Frosh and refrain from the distribution or sale of any bottled water and non-compostable plastic. Further, the VP Internal should aim to work with sustainable manufacturers in the purchase of Frosh merchandise, a list of which can be obtained through the Sustainability Commissioners and/or the exit report from Frosh 2017.

## VP University Affairs

- The VP University Affairs is responsible for SSMU's commitment to Equity and representing SSMU on issues of equity to McGill units / administration.
- Shares responsibilities with the President for advocating for stronger adherence to sustainability policies and pursuit of relevant actions to the McGill Administration.
- The VP University Affairs oversees the work of the Equity Commissioners and often works with the Sustainability Commissioners.



## Role of Council and Councillors

Description: SSMU Council, the highest decision-making body of SSMU (in practice but not in law), meets every two weeks and consists of approximately 25 McGill undergrad representatives. Council is, ideally, a place where substantive decisions are made and where information travels back and forth between SSMU and the rest of campus through faculty undergrad associations. Sometimes this information transfer is not perfect. Councillors have to review large volumes of information before each meeting in addition to doing their full-time school work and any other responsibilities they take on.

Role: Early in the academic year, councillors should be engaged by those responsible for pursuing the Sustainability Policy (SSMU Executives and Sustainability Commissioners) in order to inform them of past progress, future direction, and to involve them in the process. A council meeting early in the academic year is an optimal time to engage councillors and discuss the contents of the SSMU Sustainability Policy and how it may be of mutual benefit to councillors' constituents. Many student associations have sustainability groups and committees and are often searching for guidance early in the year, which could be provided by this policy and its connection to Vision 2020. Councillors should be encouraged to sit on committees, such as Environment Committee and the Financial Ethics Review Committee, and shown how their roles tie directly into the direction this policy sets. This policy should be presented regularly to council, ideally once in early fall to build involvement, then again in January for the same reason and finally in March/April to present the progress through the year(s).

## Role of Senators and Senate Caucus

Description: SSMU Senators represent SSMU at McGill's Senate which is the highest academic decision-making group at McGill. Senate consists of over 100 people. There are about a dozen SSMU senators from all over campus. Any one of them may ask a question or make a proposition at Senate. The SSMU senators meet with regularity at what is called "Senate Caucus" and they discuss what is on the Senate agenda and what they will do/propose/say.

Role: SSMU's Senate caucus may benefit from having some understanding of SSMU's Sustainability Policy and SSMU's progress in adhering to it. Since it may be difficult to get enthusiastic support from all senators for one initiative, those responsible for the Sustainability Policy may want to meet one-on-one with senators to discuss what they are excited about and how they can work together to advance the Sustainability Policy and the direction set by Vision 2020 (McGill's sustainability strategy).

## Role of Environment Committee and the Sustainability Commissioners

The Environment Committee (EC) is chaired by the Sustainability Commissioners. The Sustainability Commissioners are responsible for ensuring that campaigns of the EC are facilitated properly to raise awareness and affect the change desired by the EC. The Commissioners ensure that EC acts as:

- A gathering area and a clearing house of ideas



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*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories*

- An incubator for student groups whose leaders have since left the McGill community
- A facilitator of capacity building activities and resources that help move students along the learning curve of how to achieve environmentally beneficial changes in the community

The EC's outreach and communications strategy shall focus on building connections with 6 main groups in order to share information about each others' campaigns, services offered, events, and activities:

- Faculty associations
- Green Groups
- SSMU Equity Committee
- Downtown student body
- Involved students and student groups at the Macdonald Campus
- McGill administrative units including the Office of Sustainability (the Office of Sustainability is becoming a highly valuable resource for connecting students with the appropriate staff on campus to pursue projects, as well as for helping students develop applied student research projects)

Efforts to communicate with students shall include:

- More centralized and accessible information
- Online resources as well as physical spaces like the green corner
- Creating strong sense of community (building inter-personal relationships)

## Role of Equity Committee and Equity Commissioners

Note: The roles of the Equity Committee and Equity Commissioners have been laid out in the Equity Policy, passed on March 1, 2012, and subsequently updated in April 2018. What follows here is a short addition connecting the Equity Committee and Equity Commissioners to the work of the Environment Committee and Sustainability Commissioners. This is not an exhaustive detailing of the Role of Equity Committee and Equity Commissioners.

The Equity Committee and Equity Commissioners provide a valuable resource to SSMU and the entire student body in grappling with equity issues broadly in the community and dealing specifically with equity complaints as they come forward.

- It will be the role of the Environment Committee to periodically connect with the Equity Committee, report back to Environment Committee and arrange collaborations.
- It will be the responsibility of the Sustainability Coordinator to ensure that communication between the typical environmental and social spheres within SSMU's internal operations is open (e.g. goings on in Building Committee, events being planned by Students' Society Programming Network, etc.). This will be an essential connection as Equity Committee is mainly concerned with social sustainability as described in this document and Environment Committee is mostly concerned with environmental sustainability.



# R. VP INTERNAL INTOXICATION AND V.I.P CULTURE AT SSMU EVENTS POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2018/09/27

Expires: 2023/05/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

**WHEREAS**, there has been an historical abuse of power in the portfolio of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) that has normalized spending copious amounts of money on alcohol and other perquisites for those individuals planning SSMU's drinking events.

**WHEREAS**, all members of the Students' Society Programming Network (SSPN) must act as role models to event attendees.

**WHEREAS**, the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) is the highest authority at all events facilitated by the SSPN and, thus, must be in their optimal mental and physical state at all said events.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, THAT SSMU funds must not be spent on alcoholic beverages exclusively for SSPN members or for any other individuals planning SSMU events;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, THAT the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) not become intoxicated at SSMU events of which they are in charge.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, THAT this policy shall expire on May 1, 2023.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, THAT any accusations from a SSMU member that the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) became intoxicated to the point that they were incapable of performing their duties at a SSMU event of which they were in charge be brought to the Accountability Committee for an initial investigation. This investigation shall be composed of interviews with the accuser, with witnesses, and with the Vice-President (Internal Affairs). Any of these people shall reserve the right to submit their testimony in writing. The Accountability Committee shall endeavour to provide support for all parties involved.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, THAT the Accountability Committee shall submit its decision and reasons by means of report to the Board of Directors for review in confidential session.





**Students' Society of McGill University**

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*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories*

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** should the case be referred to Legislative Council, a discussion and vote on possible disciplinary measures shall take place. These measures may include:

1. Formal reprimand
2. Suspension
3. An alternate penalty, at the proposal of a member of the Legislative Council

Moved by:

Matthew McLaughlin, *Vice-President (Internal Affairs)*

Andrew Figueiredo, *Arts Representative*

Julia Briand, *Environment Representative*

Jacob Shapiro, *Vice-President (University Affairs)*



## S. MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Date of Adoption: 2020/01/30

Expires: 2023/05/01

[Adopted Motion \(Link\)](#)

### I. Executive Summary

This document explicates the Students' Society of McGill University's approach to student mental health and wellness. It contextualizes the approach with a comprehensive description of the current mental health climate on McGill's campus and across comparable Canadian post-secondary institutions. This compiled research informs the three overarching, multifaceted commitments that the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) shall work towards in the next three academic years. This policy is meant to be understood in conjunction with the SSMU Mental Health 2020-2023 Three Year Plan.

### II. The SSMU Vision for Student Wellness on Campus

*Toward continued resilience, accountability, and solidarity.*

The last five years have brought significant changes to the landscape of mental health (MH) on McGill's campus. Student wellness is a subject that has been propelled to the fore-front of instructional dialogue thanks to strong student advocacy and a national recognition that mental health is a fundamental component of student success. This policy is meant to lay out a long-term vision for SSMU's continued dedication to the improvement of mental health resource access, promotion, and institutional accountability. The SSMU recognizes not only the importance of working with the Postgraduate Students' Society (PGSS) and the Macdonald Campus Students' Society (MCSS), but also the crucial input of student groups in order to better represent the unique mental health needs of all McGill students.

This policy is a living document and will serve as the foundation for future mental health projects. This policy's mandate will last for the next three years; goals and timelines should be updated every



semester by the mental health commissioner and their team to ensure accountability between years, and the achievement of the long-term goals highlighted in the Three Year Plan.

This policy seeks to continue the work that has been started by countless mental health advocates on campus in the last five years. Through organizations such as the Peer Support Centre, McGill's chapter of Jack.Org, McGill Nightline, the Sexual Assault Center of the McGill Students' Society, and more, mental health has become a priority and a topic of critical importance. As such, this policy seeks to build upon these foundations and advocate for tangible changes to the accessibility and diversity of resources; the implementation of new promotional and educational campaigns; and the integration of the 2020 Mental Health Commission of Canada's Post-Secondary Standards.

It is important to highlight that this document is intended not only to advocate for the students who suffer from poor mental health and/or mental illness, but to further empower student leaders to tackle the upstream, cultural realities at McGill that contribute to the harmful environment underlying the mental health crises students may face. The academic pressure, competitive environment, and cultural attitude of "work hard, play hard" manifest in symptoms of anxiety, chronic stress, and the overall increased potential of a mental health crisis.

Though every student experiences and responds to their mental health in a unique way, we strongly believe there are fundamental realities of the McGill student experience that can be inherently detrimental to student health. In the past, these community triggers have been minimized and neglected as causes of student distress. As such, this policy intends to highlight the ways in which small, student-driven changes can help diminish, or balance, the negative effects of the high intensity environment.

The introduction of the Rossy Wellness Hub in July of 2019 is an example of a fundamental shift- McGill services will hopefully no longer silo mental health, physical health and academic policies. Rather, the Hub represents a more holistic, integrative model. By working with this new system, rather than against it, we can hope to achieve long-term institutional developments that create a healthier learning environment that is accessible to all.

The SSMU founding principles mandate that every student has the right to live and study in a safe environment. The SSMU recognizes the impact its student leaders have by representing student rights at the community and institutional levels. Further, this document represents a promise that the individual and unique needs of students shall be respected and recognized, regardless of a student's ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, country of origin, level of ability, economic status, etc. In addition, the SSMU shall ensure that the voices of marginalized student groups be elevated in every sphere of mental health service provision and promotion.

In recognition of the 2020-2023 Mental Health Policy's overarching goals to increase accountability, representation, and solidarity in mental health services, our vision is to gather together student



groups, community members, stakeholders, faculty, and McGill administration, to create a stronger network of professional and student-driven services that will respect and represent the diversity of needs of McGill's student population.

## III. Background

In 2019, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), in collaboration with Bell Canada, the Royal Bank of Canada, and the Rossy Foundation, published the National Standard for the Psychological Health and Safety of Post Secondary Students (the Standard). The Standard presented the most recent data on the health and behaviours of post-secondary students and presented stakeholders with a series of concrete individual, community, and legislative recommendations to decrease the psychological burden on students, and increase overall wellness on Canadian campuses. This SSMU policy intends to incorporate the findings and recommendations of the Standard in order to advocate for changes that are founded in evidence and validated by the research highlighted in the Standard. Further, the Standard shall be used to increase institutional accountability as McGill administration shall hopefully recognize their responsibility in meeting the MHCC's recommendations.

The American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment II Survey (NCHA II), last conducted during the 2016-2017 academic year, is the largest source of data on the mental health and behaviours of Canada's post-secondary students. The survey collected the responses of over 43,000 students across 41 Canadian institutions; this data was synthesized and used to inform the Standard. Its major findings are highlighted below.

### I. The Canadian Context

#### Stress

- 42.2% self-reported stress is negatively affecting their academic performance.
- Self-reports of overall stress level in the last 12 months:
  - 46.2% felt above average stress overall.
  - 15% felt tremendous levels of stress overall.
- Main stressors (and percent of students reporting it difficult to handle)
  - Academics (58.1%)
    - Amount of coursework
    - Lack of time to complete assignments
    - Difficulty of content
    - Fear of failure
    - Inability to concentrate



- Finances (40%)
  - Having to work to pay for expenses is taking time away from academics and personal relationships.
- Sleep difficulties (37%), intimate relationships (33.8%), career (33.7%), personal appearance (33.4%)

## Distress

- Self-reported in the last 12 months:
  - Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do (89.5%)
  - Felt exhausted, not from physical activity (88.2%)
  - Felt very sad (73.7%)
  - Felt very lonely (69.6%)
  - Felt overwhelming anxiety (64.5%)

## Diagnosed mental illness

- Students who self-reported having received clinical diagnoses for:
  - Anxiety (18.4%)
  - Depression (14.7%)
  - A panic disorder (9.3%)
  - Insomnia (5.3%)
- Importantly, prevalence of professionally diagnosed conditions is significantly lower than prevalence of self-reported symptoms that underline the same disorders.
  - For example, 44.1% of students self-reported feeling “so depressed it was difficult to function,” a fundamental symptom of Major Depressive Disorder.

## Substance Use

- Percentage of students who self-reported using the following substances at any point in the last 30 days:
  - Alcohol (62.8%)
  - Marijuana (24.7%)
  - Cigarettes (10.8%)
  - E-Cigarettes (10.7%)

## Suicidality

- Self-reported in the last 12 months:
  - Intentionally self-harmed (10.5%)
  - Seriously considered suicide (16.4%)
  - Attempted suicide (2.8%)



## Campus Environments in Canada

### Culture

- Sense of belonging and community are important predictors of student coping and overall wellbeing.
- Prejudicial attitudes (racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism) actively harm the mental health of students subpopulations.
- Recurrent pressure to engage in substance abuse or other social activities is a source of stress for some students.

### Safety

- 24% of students experienced sexual harassment during their first semester of post-secondary education.
- 55% of women reported at least one experience of sexual harassment; 22.4% of women reported multiple occasions.
- 40% of students have received a rape disclosure from another student.
- 25% of students cited experiences of stalking as having a negative effect on their mental health.
- Only 36.7% of students felt “very safe” on their campus at night and only 21.8% of students felt “very safe” in the community surrounding their campus at night.
- Demographic Considerations:
  - Students who identified as male cited academic competition, financial pressure and workload as main contributors to feelings of suicidality. Also self-reported higher perceived stigma with seeking help for emotional health.
  - Students who identified as female cited family pressure, experiences of sexual assault, prior mental illness, and heartbreak as main contributors to feelings of suicidality.
  - Students who self-identify as being a member of the queer community reported increased feelings of suicidality, increased victimization of sexual assault, and decreased satisfaction with the tailoring of mental health resources to their needs.
  - Students who self-identified as being a member of the queer community and students who self-identified as being a visible minority had increased feelings of suicidality.

### Student Resilience

- Varies as a function of:
  - Individual characteristics like optimism, locus of control, and self-efficacy
  - The use of positive or negative coping mechanisms



- The quality of an individual's support system

#### Help-Seeking Behaviours

- Individuals cited the following as barriers to seeking help:
  - Time restraints
  - Concerns with confidentiality
  - Not feeling their problem warrants professional intervention
  - Uncertainty that interventions will help
  - Preference of other personal resources (family, friends, partner, community groups etc.)

## II. McGill University

The MHCC report offers a synopsis on the status of mental health at major Canadian institutions, including McGill. The following data are the responses of the 2016 survey:

- When compared to the average Canadian data, the following are McGill results whose differences are statistically significant ( $p=0.05$ ) and should be considered when applying the recommendation of the Standard.
  - International students: 29% (Canada: 9%)
  - Students who self-identified as being of an ethnocultural background that was not White or Indigenous: 40% (Canada: 36%)
  - Students living off-campus (but not with parent/guardian): 62% (Canada: 44%)
- McGill Student Mental Health:
  - In the last 12 months, 1 in 4 students were diagnosed or treated for a mental health condition.
  - 91% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do on a weekly basis.
  - 80% of students consumed alcohol in the last 30 days (compared to the Canadian average of 69%)
  - Between 2013 and 2016, the percentage of students who reported they “felt very sad”, “felt overwhelming anxiety”, “felt overwhelming anger,” and “seriously considered suicide,” all saw statistically significant increases.
- Help Seeking Behaviours
  - 42% of students sought psychological counselling (Canada: 37%)
  - 19% of students sought psychiatric counselling (Canada: 12%)
  - 27% of students sought university counselling and/or health services (Canada: 19%)



### III. Key Themes

The MHCC's report highlighted key findings in student mental health services and policies, pulled from the academic literature and the NCHA II survey results. These themes should be used to inform positive changes at the institutional and national levels.

- Student health is seen as an institutional and provincial responsibility; as such, there is a lack of national collaboration. Future policies should advocate for pan-Canadian knowledge transfer and federal funding for large scale, national intervention.
- There must be increased communication and collaboration between post-secondary institutions and community stakeholders, such as health professionals, policy-makers, all levels of government, and community organizations.
- When providing services, the definition of mental health must be expanded to include substance misuse and harm reduction strategies.
- Post-secondary institutions must recognize the importance of a whole-campus approach. This includes reviewing and updating all health and mental health policies and institutional structures; financial assistance policies; and mental health related academic accommodations.
- As part of the institutional response, faculty and staff members should be trained to support early identification and appropriate referral of students with emerging or ongoing mental health problems.
- There must be ongoing monitoring of quality assurance assessments and systematic evaluations to ensure the interventions and policies are effective and evidence-based.

### IV. The Rossy Wellness Hub

The Rossy Wellness Hub (“the Hub”), began operations in July 2019. Using a campus-wide “hub and spoke” model, the Hub incorporates facets of holistic medicine. For example, the use of the Wellness Wheel that stipulates one’s wellness is the culmination of 8 different facets of health (financial, spiritual, social, academic, physical, mental, career, and cultural) that must be balanced during a student’s time at McGill.

Among other major developments, the Hub introduced 14 Hub staff, known as the Local Wellness Advisors (LWAs), that work within the faculties as a means of bridging academic advising and student health. Academic pressure is the number one stressor for students, therefore having LWAs integrated into academic settings increases the presence of mental health support and hopefully, will increase the likelihood that students reach out (see Subsection F of the Three Year Plan for more details). Further, these staff are highly trained in the specific environments of their respective faculty, and are





more able to adapt to the unique needs of their student population. The policy's Resources section includes links for more information about the Hub's operations.

The Hub is a long-term commitment to bettering student services and this policy aims to push student-driven feedback and advocacy to the forefront of institutional dialogue, while the Hub is in its infancy. Though the Hub's first months have been a source of student frustration, positive changes are occurring over time, especially as the Hub integrates student feedback. Strong collaboration and bi-directional communication between students, mental health advocates, student leaders, and the Hub will be necessary in order to work together as successfully as possible.

## V. SSMU Mental Health Commitments

The American College Health Association's Healthy Campus 2020 is an evidence-based, multi-systemic framework that incorporates various tools and resources to drive positive change in health service provision (see Resources). Their five recommendations were used to inform both the three overarching commitments that the SSMU has chosen for this policy and the goals of the Three Year Plan.

1. Creates a comprehensive, strategic framework that unites health issues under a single umbrella and aligns them with the mission and values of institutions of higher education.
2. Requires tracking of data-driven outcomes to monitor progress and to motivate, guide, and focus action.
3. Engages a network of multidisciplinary, multisectoral stakeholders at all levels.
4. Guides local research, program planning, and policy efforts to promote health and prevent disease, and
5. Utilizes population-level interventions, while addressing the social determinants of health.

### **Commitment 1: Resource Promotion and Increased Accessibility**

The SSMU will work with passionate student groups, both on and off campus, to provide a diverse array of services that meet the unique needs of every student.

The SSMU MH Committees will provide an environment for student groups and campus allies to create functional, streamlined service promotion and educational campaigns in order to minimize overlap and maximize the number of students reached. Most importantly, the SSMU shall prioritize service accessibility by increasing collaboration with students who are underrepresented and whose needs may not currently be met by McGill services.



## Commitment 2: Accountability and Follow-Through

Due to the constant turn-over of student leadership, strong collaboration between each year's Mental Health Commissioner (MH Commissioner), SSMU Vice-President Student Life, and the Rossy Wellness Hub, is critical to ensuring the follow-through of long-term goals. This policy shall represent a new commitment to accountability by including concrete steps and detailed timelines that will facilitate the achievement of goals that may require multiple years to complete. Further, when students enter their new positions in May, they will be given detailed exit reports, updates on year's goals, and all necessary information to jump head-first into the role. As a result, there will be a MH Commissioner who ensures the Hub's accountability throughout the entire year, including over the summer and in September (during which institutional accountability and communication is known to decrease).

## Commitment 3: Advocacy and Solidarity

Ultimately, by striving to better understand the unique experiences of student sub-populations, the SSMU can help to ameliorate the experiences of students who feel isolated and/or marginalized. Building on Commitment 1, the SSMU must recognize that mental health services at McGill do not equally cater to the lived experiences of marginalized student groups. Further, the burden of mental distress disproportionately affects the same individuals that services frequently underrepresented. As such, the SSMU MH Commissioner and their team must be allies for student groups and advocate for personalized mental and physical health care that reaches the students who may need it most.

## VI. Resources

1. Mental Health Commission of Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety of Post-Secondary Students
  - Executive Summary:  
[https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/Scoping\\_Review\\_Post\\_Secondary\\_Student\\_Mental\\_Health\\_eng.pdf](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/Scoping_Review_Post_Secondary_Student_Mental_Health_eng.pdf)
  - The full report can be requested on the MHCC'S website.
2. National College Health Assessment Canadian Data Executive Summary (2016)
  - <https://www.cacuss.ca/files/Research/NCHA-II%20SPRING%202019%20CANADIAN%20REFERENCE%20GROUP%20EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf>
3. National College Health Assessment Healthy Campus 2020
  - <https://www.acha.org/healthycampus>
4. McGill University's Rossy Wellness Hub
  - <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>



# Three Year Plan

The following is the SSMU Mental Health Plan for 2020-2023.

## A. The Mental Health Commissioner

*Timeline: The sitting VP Student Life is to release the job application to the McGill population no later than March 1. The official hiring process is to begin as soon as the VP Student Life for the next academic year is hired. Commissioner must be hired before April 30. The month of May shall serve as a transition period between old and new commissioners.*

This policy represents a change in the organization of SSMU's Mental Health staffing. The VP Student Life and a human resources representative from SSMU shall hire one Mental Health Commissioner based on the application and interview process. This student should be extremely well educated about student mental health and the Rossy Wellness Hub. They should have strong communication and organizational skills; be able to confidently lead two staff members; and feel comfortable advocating in a professional and effective manner in meetings with McGill administration, faculty, and policy-makers. Commissioners should see their primary role as one of advocacy at the institutional level, as they will be one of very few students invited to participate alongside McGill's health policy-makers, faculty, and administration. They should be able to commit a small number of hours (to be decided by the commissioner and the VP Student Life) from May-August in order to be prepared to officially begin work September 1.

This individual will be responsible for:

- The hiring of two committee coordinators (Advocacy and Outreach)
- The directions and long-term goal setting of the MH Outreach and Advocacy Committees.
- The maintenance of institutional memory via the creation of exit reports and the updating of this Policy.
- Ensuring the provisions of this policy are pursued and implemented in a timely manner.
- The attendance of any and all mental health meetings to which they are invited at the Hub.
- Maintaining strong relationships and bi-directional communications with Rossy Hub leadership.
- Active involvement in the budgeting and distribution of the SSMU Mental Health Budget and the SSMU Mental Health Fund.
- Weekly meetings with the VP Student Life.
- Any other mental health initiatives, as directed by the VP Student Life.



## B. The SSMU Mental Health Committees

*Benchmarks and Timeline: The sitting VP Student Life shall post the two job applications no later than April 1. When the new MH Commissioner is hired, they shall work with the VP Student Life to hire one Outreach Coordinator and one Advocacy Coordinator at the end of the academic year (May). Committee members shall be chosen no later than the last week of September, and will meet for the first time no later than the first week of October. Both committees shall be recognized as official committees of the Legislative Council. Committees must provide formal exit reports and the end of each semester. Each year's reports are to be synthesized and added as an appendix to this policy.*

### About the Committees:

- The committees will exist under the portfolio of the SSMU VP Student Life.
- The Committee Coordinators (CCs) shall chair their respective committees. They will manage the day-to-day responsibilities such as communications, bi-weekly meetings, short-term goal setting, and overseeing the committee's projects/events/initiatives etc.
- The MH Commissioner shall work with the CCs to facilitate the achievement of long-term goals, as outlined in this policy, and ensure committees are working effectively. The Commissioner shall meet weekly with their CCs to discuss the direction of the committees and to provide any necessary support for the committee's initiatives.
- Each committee shall meet at least twice a month, alternating meetings between Outreach and Advocacy every week.
- The CCs shall write formal exit reports at the end of each semester (to be presented to the MH Commissioner before the end of the respective exam periods.)

### Formation of Each Committee:

- *Chair (1):* The Outreach or Advocacy Coordinator
- *Assistant to the Chair (1):* The CC of the opposite committee. Should take notes, support the chair, fill in when necessary, etc.
- *Core Membership (5-7):* Undergraduate students, chosen by the MH Commissioner and the relevant CC, through a formal, written application (to be released to the McGill public between the last week of August or the first week of September).
  - Individuals must be educated and passionate about mental health and should not be chosen as tokens for key student demographics. Rather, they should be dedicated to the improvement of mental health services at McGill.
  - Regular attendance at relevant meetings/events during the semester is required.
- *Community Consultants (Undetermined):* The CCs shall email McGill students groups and offer the opportunity to submit a consulting member to the committee. Attendance at meetings



is not required, nor necessary. Community members and consultants must be called upon to liaise and collaborate on events, decisions, and/or advocacy work when particularly meaningful to the experiences of student sub-populations.

- Such student groups may include, but are by no means limited to: the Health and Dental Review Committee, the Black Student Network, the Indigenous Student Alliance, Queer McGill, the Eating Disorder Advocacy and Support Group, Jack.Org, the Peer Support Centre, International Student Services, the McGill Office for Spiritual and Religious Life, the SSMU Equity Committee, the Hub's Peer Health Ambassadors, Nightline, cultural and religious groups, and the student mental health commissioners of each student faculty organization.
- These same community members may also be invited to participate in the Round Table (see Subsection C for more details).
- *VP Student Life and MH Commissioner*: May attend meetings as much as necessary; should aim to attend one meeting per month each.

## Committee Objectives:

### Outreach

- Collaboration and Cohesion:
  - Serve as primary facilitator of mental health collaboration between student groups. Increase inter-group awareness of activities and projects
  - Prevent resource splitting by encouraging all mental health groups to share knowledge, financial burdens, and human resources.
  - Increase student education of various institutional and student-run services; increase referral of students between groups.
  - Plan the agenda for the Mental Health Round Tables (held 1-2 times per semester, see Subsection C)
  - Facilitate the collaboration of various student groups for the Mental Health and Mental Illness Awareness Weeks.
- Communication:
  - Update and maintain social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.
  - Create and monitor the Mental Health Slack channel. Ensure yearly membership by student groups is maintained through the transition of student executives (see Subsection D).
  - Work with the Hub communication team to ensure cohesive and effective communication strategies that reflect student feedback.
- Education
  - Fund and oversee the Student Mental Health Website alongside relevant student groups.



- Ensure the accuracy and maintenance of up-to-date information by working with the Hub and other student groups.
- Create educational campaigns surrounding student health insurance plans and coverage available.

#### Advocacy

- **Rosy Wellness Hub Accountability**
  - Maintain and actively monitor student feedback of the Hub.
  - Prepare summaries of data collected on student mental health to be used by the MH Commissioner to drive policy changes, and to be shared with the Round Table.
  - Evaluate successes and setbacks on Hub projects and policy goals.
- **Evaluate and Monitor Progress**
  - Monitor the Mental Health Policy and Plan to ensure long-term goal achievement. Keep records of relevant campus updates and changes to inform exit reports.
  - Allocate funds (from the SSMU Mental Health fee levy) and further resources, and determine their use.
  - Documenting long-term trends in service provision and student satisfaction by creating any necessary means of student feedback collection (ex: campus surveys, feedback forms, user satisfaction etc.) Publish the results to the McGill when deemed necessary.
- **Allyship**
  - When appropriate, collaborate on mental and physical health related advocacy initiatives of other student groups. Such projects shall include, but are not limited to: improvements in the inclusivity and accessibility of health insurance for all McGill students; increased specialization of care for marginalized student populations; and the strengthening of health accommodations for students through the Office for Students with Disabilities and the Office of the Dean of Students.
  - Advocate in particular for the needs of students who may be under-represented and marginalized by services.
  - Encourage and support other universities and organizations when lobbying for improvements to larger healthcare institution policies.

### Advocacy and Outreach

- **Integration of Academic and Health Dialogues (see Subsection F)**
  - Both committees will be fundamental in pushing for the continued integration of academic and health policies.
- **Institutional Memory**



- Create a detailed exit report of the successes and barriers of mental health provision, education, and promotion every year by soliciting feedback from the Hub, student groups, and the Outreach Committee. This Final Report is to be added as an Appendix to this policy document every year.
- The MH Commissioner, Coordinators, and committee members that take over the following year must read the reports of their predecessors in order to better understand how to pick up where previous students left off, and learn from the experiences of other student groups.

## C. Fostering Mutual Support

*Benchmarks and Timeline: Bi-semesterly Mental Health Round Tables; the collection and synthesis of yearly exit reports from all Round Table membership groups. Continued financial, promotional, and resource support of mental health events and initiatives hosted by student-groups.*

The Commissioner and their Committees should prioritize supporting, promoting, and collaborating with pre-existing student and university-led services and clubs to create a larger, more well-rounded safety net for students in need of support. In order for this to be successful, there needs to be regular and consistent communication between all these resources.

### I. Mental Health Round Table (MHRT)

Due to its unique position on campus, the SSMU and its staff are in the perfect position to invite community members together to discuss themes in mental health service provision, barriers to success, and collaborations each semester. As such, in December 2019, the MH Commissioners hosted the first Mental Health Round Table. After this first meeting (that hosted more than 10 campus mental health collaborators) the following guidelines were decided upon and shall continue to grow with the new initiative:

- The MHRT shall be held at least twice a semester and will be hosted by the SSMU MH Commissioner and the two Coordinators.
- Groups who participate should commit to the entire year if possible, and designate an executive from their team to attend each MHRT.
- The groups shall provide exit reports in December and May of what each organization accomplished, and what they contributed to the MHRT. Every year, the Outreach Coordinator will synthesize the information into one MHRT report to maintain institutional knowledge year to year.
- Groups shall collaborate on the planning, funding, and hosting of a Mental Illness Awareness Week (or something similar) in early November, and a Mental Health Awareness Week (or something similar) in mid-February.
- The SSMU Mental Health Fund should be used to fund the MHRT's initiatives.



## D. Campus Communications

Improving institutional and student-drive communication will be critical goals over the next three years. Historically, McGill's bi-directional communication with students has not been effective therefore strategies shall be put in place to facilitate smooth communication from the Hub and student groups to the student populations. This policy hopes to decrease the overlapping of social media and communication campaigns; increase the awareness of the correct information; increase collaboration between mental health groups; and decrease the volume of redundant and repeat information that students are bombarded with.

### I. Mental Health Slack Channel

*Benchmarks and Timeline: To be created in early winter 2020. Membership is to be reconfirmed every September through a mass email to all relevant parties from the MH Commissioner and CCs; this email should explain the Slack's purpose and encourage the new student leaders of each group to continue to participate. Slack channel shall also be brought up at the first MHRT of every year.*

Campus communication between like-minded students who are passionate about mental health has been disjointed for several years. The Slack channel is a project that seeks to overcome the communication barriers that currently limit group collaboration and effective advocacy and outreach. The current MH commissioners shall launch the first Slack channel and invite relevant groups such as Jack.Org, Healthy McGill, the Peer Support Centre, campus research and interprofessional groups, and the faculty Mental Health Commissioners to join. It is to be maintained by the Outreach Committee.

The Slack channel should seek to:

- Decrease overlap in the events being planned and therefore limit redundant spending of valuable resources.
- Increase cross-promotion of events and initiatives between groups
- Reach student groups that are underrepresented
- Brainstorm new projects and campus initiatives
- Work toward the completion of large projects such as the Mental Health Website.

### II. Student Mental Health Website:

*Benchmarks and Timeline: To be designed and researched Winter/Summer 2020; to be piloted early Fall 2020; to be officially launched late Fall 2020.*

This website is to address the siloing of resources, interventions, and educational materials that are spread between different social media sites and web pages. By creating one website where students can access all mental health education and support information, the SSMU can reach more students





and limit the information bombarding students and ensure the information spread it accurate and up to date. The website shall be the continued effort of the MHRT meetings in Winter 2020 and should reflect the collaboration of many student groups.

The website should seek to:

- Describe the specific services provided by the Hub and various student-led organizations.
  - The term “services” is to be interpreted holistically and ranges from therapeutic intervention by professionals, peer support, group support, cultural and social support, financial and insurance support, and self-help information.
- Provide easy access to the anonymous student feedback form.
- Provide an interactive Google Calendar where students can stay informed of upcoming events held by the Hub and student groups.
- Provide the current information (the Outreach committee is responsible for actively requesting new information through the Slack communication channel and the MH Commissioner).

## E. Mental Health Fee Levy

*Benchmarks and Timeline: Mandatory Fee to be proposed in the 2020 Winter Referendum, fee increase to be proposed in the 2020 Fall Referendum. Goal to have an increased, mandatory student fee by Fall 2021.*

This fee, which currently exists as an opt-outable fee paid by semester by all members of the SSMU, is used to fund the position of the MH Commissioner and Committee Coordinators. Remaining funds are allocated by the SSMU Funding Committee, in order to support student-led mental health initiatives (all fund allocations must be approved by the MH Commissioner).

The fee renewal shall be proposed as a mandatory student fee on the semester’s Winter 2020 SSMU Referendum. Should the proposal not pass, the SSMU VP Student Life and MH Commissioner shall decide to either A) propose a mandatory fee again or B) propose a fee increase in the next referendum (Fall 2020). Should the Winter 2020 proposal pass, the fee increase may be proposed at either the 2020 Fall referendum or 2021 Winter referendum (the amount of the increase is to be decided by the aforementioned SSMU staff, along with the SSMU VP Finance).

## F. Integration of Student Academic and Health Dialogues

*Benchmarks and Timelines: Introductory meetings with the Dean of Students and Deans of Academics will be held in Winter 2020. LWAs and faculty allies will be contacted as well to help pilot the classroom interventions in Winter 2020. The implementation of a fall reading week would ideally occur for Fall 2021.*

As the Standard highlighted numerous times, mental health policies can no longer exist in a vacuum. Academic responsibilities is the fundamental sources of student distress on McGill’s campus and the



SSMU can no longer ignore that the larger institutional policies and campus environment are detrimental to student health. As such, mental health advocates on campus must begin to shift advocacy efforts and campus dialogue towards the upstream determinants of student health- such as the competition in McGill's culture, unrealistic academic workload, and harmful academic policies. The incredible success of the Local Wellness Advisors in their first few months on campus illustrates the magnitude of student need, and should be considered a positive step towards increased academic and health integration.

In December 2019, the MHRT participants unanimously agreed that this must be one of the primary goals for the next three years. Below is a non-exhaustive list of projects/initiatives that were brainstormed and will be priorities for student mental health groups on campus in the next three years:

1. A mandatory mental health information passage in all syllabi.
2. A mandatory mental health information slide in all classrooms at the beginning of semesters, and during times of heightened student distress.
3. A health information package for incoming students, sent before they arrive in September.
4. Returning the salary to student note takers at the Office for Students with Disabilities.
5. The implementation of a fall reading week.
6. A formal evaluation of McGill's exam policies (for example, abolishing exams that comprise more than 50% of a student's grade).

## G. The McGill Suicide Prevention and Education Framework\*

*Benchmarks and Timelines: The Steering Committee first met in November 2019. Advisory Committees and Working Groups will be meeting bi-weekly from January-April 2020. The current MH Commissioner will ensure the incoming MH Commissioner is included in the consultation period of new executives in May 2020. The proposed launch date of the Framework is September 10, 2020.*

The Office of the Dean of Students, in collaboration with the MHCC and Suicide Action Montreal, is in the first stages of establishing the McGill Suicide Prevention and Education Framework\*. This is a critical project in which the 2019-2020 MH Commissioner and other student leaders and executives are extremely involved. Future work will include monitoring the success of the framework's launch and the continued participation in the Steering/Advisory Committees. When the program components are piloted, the monitoring of student feedback and campus reception will be crucial to improve the Framework over time.

\*Note: This is a working title and should not be cited as the final title of the framework.



## H. Institutional Advocacy

*Benchmarks and Timelines: Semesterly summaries of feedback gathered and distributed among SSMU VP Student Life, University Affairs, MH Commissioner/Committee Heads, and the Hub leadership; semesterly feedback requests from the Hub; Commissioner should have monthly meetings with Hub Leadership, and bi-semester attendance at the Mental Health Round Table in order to communicate and update relevant groups; Commissioner attendance at relevant working groups and steering committees as required.*

The current anonymous feedback form was borne of the Hub's strenuous first few operational months. A proper series of feedback channels facilitates the collection of testimonies relating to poor-quality services, barriers to care, and malpractice. Feedback is also critical to follow-through on bench-marks, track progress, and hopefully in time, provide evidence for praise where praise is due. Student voices must be recognized and validated, therefore the SSMU MH Commissioner and Coordinators should seek to stand in solidarity with students and tackle the problems that have the most significant impact on daily lives. For example, advocating for an increase in the diversity of Hub staff expertise and experience through the hiring of, and/or collaboration with, more people of colour and gender diverse individuals.

A significant responsibility of the MH Commissioner is to foster long-term positive and respectful relationships with Hub leadership in order to advocate effectively. Ultimately, working alongside the Rosy Wellness Hub is one of the most sustainable ways to increase student satisfaction with mental health service provision over the next few years. By being present and active in the various mental health-related Hub working groups and steering committees, the Commissioner should aim to be heard in as many administrative and institutional settings as possible as they will often be one of very few student advocates invited. For reference, the committees on which the current MH Commissioners sit are listed below:

- The Rosy Hub Leadership Board
- Co-chair of the Student Wellness Hub Advisory Board
- The Suicide Prevention and Postvention Campaign Steering Committee and Advisory Board
- The Student Health Insurance Advisory Board
- The Healthy Living Annex Advisory Board
- Health and Dental Review Committee



# APPENDIX A

## Adoption and amendments of the SSMU Policy and Plan Book

Adopted by the General Assembly, 2010-02-10  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2011-04-07  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-01-12  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-03-01  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-03-15  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-03-29  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-03-29  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2012-04-12  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2013-04-11  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2013-04-25  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2013-10-10  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2013-12-05  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2014-02-20  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2014-04-10  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2015-03-12  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2015-03-26  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2015-04-09  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2015-10-15  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2016-03-31  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2016-04-07  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2017-03-23  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2018-04-05  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2018-09-27  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2018-10-11  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2018-10-18  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2018-02-07  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2019-02-07  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2019-09-10  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2019-11-14  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2020-01-30  
Amended by the Legislative Council, 2020-02-13