



MOTION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNAL REGULATIONS OF GOVERNANCE 2020-04-02

Submitted for: 2020-03-26

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2020-03-26-006 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Adam Gwiazda-Amsel <i>Vice-President (External Affairs)</i>	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Shreya Dandamudi <i>Arts Representative</i>		

Issue

In an effort to accessibilize our governing documents, a project has been undertaken this year to separate the 177-page long Policy & Plan Book into coherent documents with separate purposes. As the Policy & Plan Book is formalized in the Internal Regulations of Governance, these Internal Regulations need to be amended to approve the new format.

Background and Rationale

The Policy & Plan Book is too many things at once. It attempts to set out positions of the Society, internal operating procedures, and aspirational capacity-building plans. As such, the book has been scanned for all positions that are not actionable, but which do align the Society toward certain advocacy perspectives. These now comprise the proposed “Positions Book” for your consideration. The position book is divided by category, much like those of peer institutions (University of Sherbrooke, Concordia Student Union). This allows one to see the link between our policies and the political commitments that guide them.

Otherwise, the policies were divided insofar as they have differing oversight mechanisms. Policies related to Human Resources in particular (GSVP, Equity, HR Policy, Conflict of Interest) were placed in a separate book now called “Policies of the Board of Directors”. This is in line with best practices



of separating out Human Resources, Legal, and Financial matters from the more political forum of the Society - the Legislative Council.

Notwithstanding this division of responsibilities, it should be noted that Legislative Council maintains its authority as the “highest decision-making body of the Society” and can, as has been seen this very year, express its disapproval of certain HR processes.

Naturally, the other policies of the Society are placed in a book now called the “Policies of the Legislative Council”. All parts of the policies that are purely expressions of a political commitment have been taken out of the Policy Books and instead placed into the positions book. While this is a difficult change, the movers believe this truly does work toward making these documents more accessible and actionable.

The Society’s Plans were also placed in a separate book, called a “Plan Manual”. The word choice is indicative of the very real difference between policies and plans. While policies help to codify existing operating procedures, plans are more of a ‘guide’ toward some goal; they are a capacity-building manual. All of these distinctions are explicated in preambles to each book, which the Council may choose to change at its leisure. Uncharacteristically, the Sustainability Policy is found both in the “Policies of the Legislative Council” and the “Plans Manual”. The rationale for this decision can be found in the preamble to the Plans Manual.

Alignment with Mission

As an advocacy body, the Society is beholden to its political positions. These changes allow us to simplify our process in identifying and interpreting our political positions. In year-round consultations with Members and Staff, it is clear that many have (understandably) not read through the entire 177-page long document.

As a service body, we have worked hard to elaborate procedures that allow us to best service our Membership. However, these too remain inaccessible in our 177-page long document. In the interest of navigability and of accountability to those Members-at-large who wish to verify that we are following our own operating procedures, these changes are brought forward.

Consultations Completed

The motion before us comes from a year-long series of consultations with stakeholders from across the Society. At the start of the year, the project was presented to the Legislative Council for a strawpoll. Conversations were held with the former Speaker of Council to explore ways to approach the problems outlined above. Ultimately, the changes brought to Council



are largely of form and not of content, and so this minimally-disruptive solution allows stakeholders to continue their normal operations while rendering our documents accessible.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

There is a risk that Members and staff will be less likely to parcel through four separate documents for a comprehensive overview of the Society, but then many do not read this document unless they need to anyway. After the changes, those whose role in the Society relates to certain themes of the Policy & Plan Book will be able to access the sections relevant to them without having to parcel through the document as a whole. So, for example, a new Director will have knowledge of all the policies relevant to the Board of Directors and its committees without reading a large amount of excess content in between.

There is a small staffing implication to this change: The Communications department and Governance Manager will need to publish the newly-formatted books in their relevant locations on the website, but the content has already been drafted, as seen in the appendices.

Sustainability Considerations

There is an aspect of social sustainability to consider when we talk about accessibility. Of the many reasons people find it hard to involve themselves with student government, the burdensome bureaucratic nature is one of them. This is one step toward hopefully bringing down these barriers.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

The Communications Department will work with the Governance Manager to ensure the books are placed in their appropriate sections on the SSMU website, namely:

- All 4 books should be listed in on the “Constitution, Internal Regulations, and Policies” page;
- The “Policies of the Legislative Council” book should appear on the “Legislative Council” page;
- The “Policies of the Board of Directors” book should appear on the “Board of Directors” page.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be It Resolved, That the amendments to the Internal Regulations of Governance (Appendix A) be adopted.

Be It Further Resolved, That the text of Appendices B, C, D, and E, serve as the content of the SSMU Positions Book, Policies of the Legislative Council, Policies of the Board of Directors, and SSMU Plans Manual respectively.



Results of the Vote	In favour	()
	Opposed	()
	Abstain	()

APPENDIX A: AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNAL REGULATIONS

INTERNAL REGULATIONS OF GOVERNANCE-08: RESOLUTIONS, POSITIONS, POLICIES AND PLANS

Part I: Resolutions

1. Definition

1.1. **General** Resolutions are not equivalent to Policies or Plans of the Society and they must not conflict with any Governance Documents of the Society. However, a resolution may amend an existing Policy **or adopt a new position**.

1.2. **Contents** A resolution may contain:

- a. a call to action for the Society to undertake;
- b. lobbying points which have a restricted and immediate timeframe;
- c. a stance on a specific incident **issue** or event; **and or**
- d. a change in the unwritten operating procedures of the Society.

1.3. **Resolution Amending Governance Documents** A resolution amending or adopting any Governance Document shall continue to have effect after the expiry of the initial resolution.

2. Adoption

2.1. **General** Resolutions may be enacted, amended, or repealed by Referendum, a General Assembly, the Legislative Council, or another body of the Society as defined herein. The procedure for the adoption of resolutions shall be pursuant to the applicable procedures of each body set out in the Constitution, Internal Regulations and Policies.

2.2. **Labelling** Resolutions shall be labelled as such before being presented to the body voting on the resolution in question.

2.3. **Format** Resolutions shall contain both “**WHEREAS**” a **motivation** and “**BE IT RESOLVED**” clauses.

2.4. **Duration of Validity** Resolutions of Legislative Council shall be valid for no longer than one (1) calendar year from the date of enactment, but can be re-enacted by Referendum, General Assembly, or Legislative Council once expired.



3. Resolution Book

3.1. **General** There shall be a compilation of resolutions passed by Legislative Council called the Resolution Book, which includes all resolutions passed by the Legislative Council since the beginning of the academic year and shall be made available on the Society's website in English and French

3.2. **Management** The General ~~General~~ **Governance** Manager shall maintain and make available an archive of all past and adopted resolutions of the Society.

4. Positions Book

4.1 **General** There shall be a compilation of all stances taken by the Society called the **Positions Book**, which includes all positions adopted by the **Society by way of resolution**. **These positions do not expire, but can be removed or superceded by way of resolution.**

Part II: Policies and Plans

4. Policies of the Society

4.1. **Definition** Policies contain principles that direct the ~~actions~~ **operating procedures** of the Society. Further they shall:

- a. be expressed in broad and guiding terms;
- b. be relevant to the Society and relate to its mission;
- c. be visionary and proactive in essence;
- d. be subject to the Constitution, Internal Regulations and extant Policies of the Society;
- e. be managed by the Legislative Council or the Board of Directors;** and
- f. contain an expiry date not longer than five years from the date of adoption.

5. Plans of the Society

5.1. **Definition** Plans are multi-year projects and frameworks that aim to fulfill the goals of the Society. Further, they shall:

- a. contain actionable items which bind the Society to an undertaking;
- b. be relevant to the Society and relate to its mission;
- c. be visionary and proactive in essence;
- d. be subject to the Constitution, Internal Regulations, and extant Policies of the Society; and
- e. be valid for a period of up to ten (10) years.

5.2. **Format** Plans must clearly identify:

- a. a specific Officer to oversee the progress and implementation of the Plan;
- b. specific responsibilities for Officers, staff and committees of Council;
- c. a timeline for the completion of multi-year projects; and
- d. the over-arching goals of the plan.

6. Adoption of Policies and Plans



6.1. **Power to Adopt** Policies and Plans may be adopted, amended, or rescinded by the Legislative Council, the General Assembly, or a Referendum.

6.2. **Two Readings Required** The adoption of a Policy or a Plan by the Legislative Council shall require two (2) readings, as shall be detailed in the Standing Rules adopted by the Legislative Council.

6.3. **Expiry Dates** Policies and plans shall be structured with an expiry date of the policy or plan ending on either January 1st or May 1st within the maximum duration of the policy or plan.

6.4. **Mandate to Discuss Expiring Policies and Plans** Any policy or plan that is set to expire in the current semester will be brought to the Legislative Council by the Officer under whose portfolio it falls to discuss its renewal or non-renewal.

7. Policy and Plan Books

7.1. **General Policy Books** There shall be a **two separate** compilations of Policies and Plans called the Policy and Plan Books, which shall include all ~~resolutions passed since the beginning of the academic year~~ **policies currently in effect** and shall be made available on the Society's website in English and French. **Policies will be divided according to the body of the Society overseeing them.**

7.2 **Plan Manual** There shall be a compilation of Plans called the Plan Manual, which shall include all plans currently in effect and shall be made available on the Society's website in English and French.

7.3. **Management** The General **Governance** Manager shall maintain and make available an archive of all past and adopted Policies and Plans of the Society.

7.4. **Presentation to Council** The President shall be responsible for presenting the Policy and Plan Book to the Legislative Council ~~at least once during~~ **the start of** the academic year. The President shall introduce any relevant amendments or new Policies and Plans adopted by the Board of Directors.

APPENDIX B: LINK TO THE SSMU POSITIONS BOOK

Full text [here](#).

APPENDIX C: LINK TO THE "POLICIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL" BOOK

Full text [here](#).



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APPENDIX D: LINK TO THE “POLICIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS” BOOK

Full text [here](#).

APPENDIX E: LINK TO THE SSMU PLANS MANUAL

Full text [here](#).

APPROVED