



# SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

November 19, 2020

The regular bi-weekly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference, on November 19, 2020 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:08**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:08.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Attendance

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Legislative Council Public Minutes 2020-11-05 – **APPROVED**

Councillor Smith motions to approve the minutes by unanimous consent, seconded by Councillor Williamson – APPROVED.

The minutes are approved.

5. Adoption of the Agenda – **APPROVED**

VP Finance motions to add the Report of the Funding Committee.

VP External motions to move the Report of the Affordable Student Housing Committee following the UTILE presentation, seconded.

VP External motions to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Councillor Smith – APPROVED.

6. Report of the Steering Committee



The Speaker presents the Report of the Steering Committee.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

## 7. Guest Speakers

### a. UTILE

Laurent Levesque from UTILE presents.

Laurent states that UTILE is a non-profit organization, whose mandate is to promote and develop affordable student housing in Quebec. They note that their members are student unions, noting that SSMU is one of the earliest members. Laurent indicates that UTILE was founded in 2015. UTILE's work is largely encompassing, including research, advocacy, documentation, outreach, and education. Currently, UTILE has one building, developed in part with the Concordia Student Union, noting that it is a 144-bedroom complex. They are working on other projects across Quebec, including in Montreal.

For UTILE's partnership with SSMU, Laurent notes that they've reached a new level of partnership, in that they are working on development plans for a new, affordable student housing complex. The goal is to house at least 200 McGill students a year, but hopes for up to 300 students to be housed. There will also be common spaces, for tenants, as well as the student population at large to use. They seek to provide a rent reduction of at least 15% based on current housing price averages, which was the result of referendums, resulting in SSMU investing \$1.5 million dollars over the next five years. The money will be transferred to the project. UTILE will leverage the funds, and raise the remaining \$30 million dollars through public and private donors. They are currently working on finding land for the building site, and notes that once they have funding, they will proceed with collecting donations. Laurent states that they are hoping to be as downtown as possible, but that they are also looking at Milton-Parc and Sud-Ouest. SSMU has ultimate approval over the location. Regarding the maximum distance, the site will be no further than a 25-minute transit ride.

Question Period:

Councillor Karasick inquires about the current status of the Woodnote. Laurent states that the Woodnote is fully occupied, and that they believe people are happy there. Laurent notes that they would love for people to visit.



Councillor Reed asks about how the rent reduction of 15-30% is calculated, and if it changes based on the neighbourhood. Laurent explains that it is calculated according to a fair market price analysis by chartered estimators, and it is proportional to the neighbourhood it is situated in. This is why they are looking at areas near downtown, as opposed to the downtown area itself.

i. Affordable Student Housing Committee

Nathan O'Donnell, Community Affairs Commissioner, presents the Affordable Student Housing Report, in partnership with Andrew, a member of the Affordable Student Housing Committee.

Andrew notes that there are four principle items of the committee. The first one is the production of an apartment complex, which they are facilitating with UTILE. Secondly, they focus on ensuring that tenants/students know their tenant rights, hosting workshops and organizing posters. Thirdly, they advocate for public ownership of former hospital sites, such as the Royal Vic and Hotel Dieu. They should remain in public hands, to facilitate projects for the public good, such as housing. Fourthly, they are working on further developing community relations with the Milton Parc Citizens' Committee, so that they may advance their other goals.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

b. Lester Asset Management

Stephen Takacsy presents on behalf of Lester Asset Management.

Takacsy introduces Lester Asset Management.

Takacsy introduces himself, noting multiple degrees from McGill. He has been with Lester Asset Management for fourteen years. Their assets have grown from \$100 million to over \$300 million today. Lester's biggest strategy is Canadian equity, as well as Canadian fixed-income. He notes that their Canadian equity output vastly outperforms the TSX, and that they remain one of the highest-ranking investment partners in Canada because of it. On Canadian fixed-income, he notes that it is mainly a high yield strategy. He notes that they also have a high track record in this area as well, noting various awards. On Canadian equity, he states that they seek to obtain higher returns than the market, but less risk. On risk, he notes less cyclicity, less volatility, and more diversity. They do this by acting as a shareholder, investing for the long-term. They are not afraid to go activist on companies. They focus on market resolves, as opposed to decisions based on emotions. Takacsy explains that they do this through three criteria: searching for value, bargain-hunting, and relative value. They are looking for



value at a good price. He states that Lester Asset Management is also opportunistic, looking for events, mergers, consolidations, and outright sales, noting that they have acquired 40 companies in their portfolios. On the fixed income side, he notes that their focus is on corporate bonds. As mentioned, he notes that they are opportunistic in bonds as well.

As well, Lester Asset Management is very diligent in terms of environmental and social governance. He notes they avoid oil and gas, mining, and exploration companies, as well as tobacco, gambling, weapons, and coal. For SSMU, they try to focus on renewable resource companies. Lester Asset Management are buyers of green bonds.

On performance, Lester Asset Management has generated for SSMU, a 6.4% annualized net return. They have added almost 2% per year. On annualized returns, they have consistently stayed above the benchmark, and continue to be above the market. On weightings, much of SSMU's portfolio has been in telecommunications and natural resources, as well as a wine company.

Councillor Smith motions to extend by ten minutes, seconded by Senator Daryanani – APPROVED.

In regards to bonds, Takacsy notes that the portfolio has much lower duration than the index. He states that they like to keep it short, to pick up yield on corporate bonds. He states that the portfolio has 62% investment-grade, and 38% high yield bonds. Most of the bonds are telecommunications, banks, and real estate companies.

Lester Asset Management has over 50 years of experience, with Takacsy having fourteen years with the organization himself. He states that Lester Asset's approach is value-based, not relying on computer softwares. As portfolio advisors, they have a fiduciary duty to put the needs of the groups/individuals they supervise. Takacsy states that he has a unique set of experiences, as well as his colleagues.

Question Period:

Councillor Reed thanks Stephen Takacsy for the presentation. Councillor Reed asks how COVID-19 has impacted the assets. Takacsy notes that they did a very deep dive of the portfolios at the beginning of the pandemic, and were very rigorous at monitoring the well-being of companies they had invested in. Takacsy notes that many asset conditions have actually improved, and that their portfolios have been very robust during the pandemic. Takacsy explains that they went through their portfolio, and made changes as necessary. He notes that they owned shares in one retailer (Aritzia), but that they had since sold it. They also sold their stocks for their restaurant stock. They made some opportunistic buys during March and April. Takacsy notes they rebounded above market performance, as well as being



improving above the market, when the market was going down in September and October. Takacsy states that they are being very careful.

Councillor Kunze--Roelens asks how they value the sustainability of their investments. Takacsy notes that they look at the financial characteristics, including that they aren't massive polluters, as well as the use of slave or child labour. They also investigate the corporate governance structures of organizations. Takacsy notes that they do not have holdings in areas such as weapons, cannabis, and tobacco, explaining their lack of investment in Couche-Tard. That they have been unwilling to invest in SNC-Lavalin.

Councillor Kunze--Roelens further asks if they use any specific metrics. Takacsy notes that they haven't yet, but that they are heading in that direction.

#### 8. Announcements

The President notes that the Fall General Assembly will be next Tuesday, November 24, 2021.

#### 9. Question Period

Member of the Gallery, Johangir, asks a question. Johangir notes that the post shared by SSMU regarding the conflict between Armenia and Turkey is extremely biased in their opinion. Johangir notes that it made Turkish and Azerbaijani students feel unheard and unwelcome, and discriminated against. Johangir asks what the Executive team believes is a productive way to solve the issue, and if they would be willing to meet with the respective representatives to resolve the issue.

The Speaker notes that leading questions will not be accepted, and will be struck out of order going forward.

VP University Affairs states that they are willing to meet with any member that brings a concern forward.

Member of the Gallery, Tan Akpek, speaks. Tan Akpek notes that a similar situation occurred in 2016, between Israeli and Palestinian students, regarding BDS. Tan notes that the Judicial Board came to the decision that all motions which compel the SSMU to actively campaign against specific countries are unconstitutional. Furthermore, doing so would place one group at a structural disadvantage, vis-à-vis the majority, and are discriminatory. Tan states that individuals facing this discrimination are obviously in grievance, and notes that is why they are not addressing the Executives. Tan asks the Legislative Council what their plans are to rectify this violation against the Constitution, and their plans to rectify the violation of student unity.



VP University Affairs acknowledges that the question was not directed towards SSMU executives. However, they note that the 2016 Judicial Board ruling did not preclude SSMU from taking positions or making statements against a conflict, simply that it could not campaign against specific nations. They note that the statement was not a formal position or statement, but notes that it was partisan. They note that the statement was not against a nation or a nation's people, but rather, a statement of solidarity against a nation's event. They yield their time to any other member of the Legislative Council.

Senator Daryanani asks if the question can be rephrased. Tan Akpek rephrases. Senator Daryanani echoes the sentiments of the VP University Affairs. He notes that he does not believe there is a violation of the Constitution, and thus, does not deserve a further answer than was already given.

Tan Akpek notes that while he understands the statement was not an actual position, they note that some of the quotes were deemed hurtful, such as the claims of ethnic cleansing. Tan states that his country being called genocidal is hurtful, and notes that one could draw many similarities to the issue in 2016, to the issue now. He is baffled that the Legislative Council does not believe it is a partisan statement. Tan asks if they believe that they are underplaying the partisan component of the statement. The Speaker states that unless the question is rephrased as to not be a leading question, she will strike it out of order.

Tan Akpek asks if Executives believed that unwarranted accusations of genocide are hurtful and discriminatory, or not. Councillor Karasick notes that this is also a leading question.

The Speaker explains what a leading question is.

Tan Akpek asks if accusations of genocide towards one's country a display of partisan behaviour on the side of SSMU. VP University Affairs notes that they do not believe that anyone is denying that the post was partisan. They note that SSMU is a political organization, and have various positions on various issues. They note that the statement was not written by SSMU, but shared by the SSMU, and that SSMU was aligning themselves with the statement. VP University Affairs notes that the SSMU has a duty to speak out on matters of human rights and social justice. They do not believe that the number of students from each nation should dictate what position SSMU should take. While they respect that they understand that not all individuals will align themselves with the statement, they note that it was not to denounce Azerbaijani or Turkish students, but rather, to speak out against the actions of a government. They note that it is regrettable that some people felt alienated by the statement, but notes that they have a mandate to promote social justice.

Senator Parsons motions to extend Question Period by ten minutes, this was seconded – APPROVED.





Member of the Gallery, Rachel Tang, brings up concern regarding SSMU's previous statement on Hong Kong. Rachel notes that the comments generated on the post were very alienated, and that the purpose of the post was not clear. Rachel states that Chinese members have been subject to racism, psychological distress, alienation and discrimination. Rachel asks if the Legislative Council believes that Executives should consult the Legislative Council before making political statements regarding international affairs. VP University Affairs responds that SSMU releases many statements on many different platforms. In terms of procedure, they note that on a governance perspective, the release of statements is fairly ambiguous. There is no clear indication of who should be authorized to draft or review statements. VP University Affairs notes that they are in favour of consultation. In regard to statements, they state that there is an issue of the time crunch, and makes it difficult for the SSMU to actively respond to current events if they have to thoroughly consult every time. They note that when they are under time constraints, they refer to their governing documents, such as the Policies and Plans Book, to help determine what the position of the Society should be. VP University Affairs states that over the past few months, it has ultimately come down to the Executives' interpretation of SSMU's governing documents and SSMU's mandate to speak out on issues of social justice and human rights. They note that all statements made recently have been made following consultation with various student groups. They note that largely, they should try and consult as much as they can, whenever possible. VP University Affairs states that they are currently working on a framework for drafting and publishing statements, to create more clarity and certainty. They note that this motion will be coming next Legislative Council.

Councillor Reed states that it is important to look to see if the statements are adhering to SSMU's mandate that SSMU members have a safe and functional academic experience, regardless if students agree with statements made by the Society. Councillor Reed notes that they should not invalidate students' opinions based on sentiment of discrimination. They are looking forward to seeing VP University Affairs' new motion at making statements more sustainable, and to ensure that pervasive environments do not continue to dominate.

Councillor Collins asks what the process is for Executives deciding on sharing statements on behalf of associations and student groups. Councillor Collins asks that if two student groups contacted SSMU, representing 'opposing' sides of a given situation, how would the Executives choose which statement to share. VP University Affairs states that there is no clear procedural framework, but elaborates on the status quo. They state that if they are approached by a club or a group of people that wish to make a joint statement, or want SSMU to show their statement, the Executive Committee chooses to write a statement on a given matter. They note that it is usually written by members of the Executive Committee or by members of the group with members of the Executive Committee joining jointly. If they are asking to share one of those statements, they note that it goes through the SSMU Communications department, who conducts proofreading and copy editing. They note that following this, it is presented to the Executive Committee for approval. If it is approved, it is sent for translation



and for distribution. They state that if they wish to submit a statement of their own accord, such as their statement on BLM, they would consult with the relative bodies, such as BSN. They note that statements are either written by Executives in consultation with a relevant student group or it is written by a student group and then vetted by executives. They note that when they receive a statement to share or promote, the Executive Committee reviews it, deliberate it, and decide if it aligns with SSMU policies, and previous policies the Society has taken. Furthermore, they note that they don't believe they have released a statement without unanimous approval from the Executive Committee. They note that it ultimately comes down to the opinion of the elected Executives, both in reference to the Society's stated opinions, past political activity, and their own best judgements and the platforms that they were elected on.

VP External notes that the intention behind statements released is never to marginalize their students. He notes that they recognize the variety of opinions within the student body, and those who have felt feelings of marginalization in response to public communications of the SSMU, and they understand that there are unintentional effects of certain political communications from the SSMU. He notes that a goal of SSMU is to support students, providing service, representation, and leadership to the student body at McGill. He states that what this will look like, will continue to develop as the SSMU exists and evolves, and as executives make decisions on how best to serve, represent, and lead the student body.

Member of the Gallery, Kai, asks what are the measures that SSMU plans to undertake in order to resolve the hatred caused among the student body. VP University Affairs thanks Kai for the question. They note that as the VP External said, their goal is never to marginalize their members, nor is it to spread any hate or discrimination. They recognize that there have been some terrible comments that have been made on the posts. They state that they try to delete those comments as they see them to maintain as much of a safe space as possible, and notes that it was extremely disheartening to see those kinds of discriminatory and racist comments. They clarify that SSMU does not support anti-Asian and anti-Chinese rhetoric. They note that they are not intending to maintain the status quo, but to strive to empower and to advocate for their members, including their Chinese members. They state that they don't believe the solution is to renege their statement, because they would still agree that the statement they made was made in good faith, and does align with the state of beliefs and opinions of the Society. They believe that they can hold a government accountable, and that they can condemn the actions of a government while still representing its people, while still representing Chinese students and supporting Chinese students.

Senator Parsons motions for a fifteen minute extension on Question Period, seconded by Councillor Smith – APPROVED.

Kai notes that he understands the statement was released in good faith, and can understand where it came from. However, they note that there are already consequences that have arisen that they did not





expect, and notes that not everything that has been made in good faith can be used to justify it. Kai further asks if the SSMU has undertaken or plans to make an order to support Asian members of the Society, especially Chinese backgrounds, because they have already suffered severe racism on campus, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They understand that while the statement may have come from a good place, they have to remain accountable to their words. They note that SSMU has a mandate to speak for every student member, especially those of marginalized groups, and notes that they happen to be one of the marginalized groups, but they continue to feel unrepresented. Thus, Kai asks what SSMU will do to heal the wound inflicted on Asian, and Chinese students specifically, at McGill. VP University Affairs agrees that it is their responsibility to support SSMU's members. They disagree with the allegation that SSMU in and of itself has caused a rift in the community. They note that that was not their intention, as they were making a statement of good faith in solidarity with members of SSMU's community. They do not believe they are the cause of anti-Asian racism, or that their statement in any way marginalized any member of the community. They state that they regret that some members of the SSMU felt it appropriate to express racism, which they note is unfortunate, but note that they should not be receiving the blame for that. They note that they will continue to advocate for all students. On Chinese students specifically, VP University Affairs notes that they have been advocating to the Principal against the racist comments that have been made by McGill administration with reference to the pandemic. As well, they have further been advocating for the expansion of exchange programs to China. As well, they are working to increase accessibility of education for Chinese students that live in China. They believe that the allegation that SSMU isn't doing anything to support its Chinese members does not accurately reflect what is happening behind closed doors. They note that they do not have plans to backpedal on a statement of solidarity, made with good faith with their members, and that they will not backpedal on their political beliefs. They note that it is important that SSMU continues to demonstrate leadership in matters of social justice and human rights. They state that in the long-term, they could expand anti-racism education through their equity portfolio, and notes that is something that they are willing to pursue. However, they note that at the end of the day, they do not believe blame can be cast on them for racist and for anti-Asian beliefs made by our membership. They note that they appreciate the responsibility of SSMU to take care of their members, but at the end of the day, they do not believe releasing a statement was in any way wrongdoing.

Member of the Gallery, Han Xi, asks how the Executive Committee can state that SSMU can say they are representing its members, when statements are not approved by Legislative Council but rather, from the approval of the five (5) Executives. Second, they note that they disagree with VP University Affairs, because while SSMU may have freedom of speech for any political views, they cannot say that they represent the whole McGill community. They note that the political post has resulted in discrimination towards Asian members of the Society, due to the fact that the post is misleading, and makes an assumption with hearing Chinese representatives. They recommend that the Executives delete the post.



The Speaker notes that leading questions will be struck out of order.

VP University Affairs thanks Han for their statement. They state that they are making political decisions on behalf of the Society due to the fact that that was what they were elected to do. They note that it is their obligation to act as the Society's spokespeople, to make representations that align with its stated positions and stated opinion.

Han asks how the Executive Committee will solve the issue.

VP External states that the point of SSMU, or rather, the SSMU Executive has been to raise awareness about the rise of anti-Asian racism within the pandemic. VP External also notes that the previous excomm also released a statement in one of its COVID-19 statements, condemning the anti-Asian racism. They note that the SSMU is one of the two student unions in Montreal to join with several Asian community organizations in demanding that the city of Montreal adopt a motion condemning anti-Asian racism, and devoting material resources to combat it and states that this has been an ongoing collaboration with organizations such as the Centre for Research Action on Race Relegations, and the mutual aid group of East Asian organizations in Quebec. As well, they note that they have been attending consultations with the city of Montreal after the motion was passed unanimously at the city council. VP External states that there is not a clear procedure for the releasing of statements within the SSMU. VP External notes that the Executive Committee believes it is a best practice to adopt some kind of framework that offers more clarification to everyone, and more transparency, as well as a clearer procedure for consultation and involvement in the releasing of statements. They note that they are planning on bringing forward a motion that will come to the next Legislative Council.

Senator Daryanani motions to amend the ten minute recess to fifteen, seconded – APPROVED.

[Recess at 20:22.]

[Legislative Council resumes at 20:32.]

Senator Parsons motions to extend Question Period by twenty minutes, seconded by Councillor Wan – APPROVED.

Member of the Gallery, Johangir, states that they have been hearing the same generic response from SSMU, mentioning service, representation, and social justice. They ask who they consult in these decisions, and how they can know if they represent the whole Society. VP University Affairs notes that the post was not only about the Artsakh, but about self-determination in general, which is in line with SSMU's stated values. They state that as their roles as Executives, they were elected to make political decisions. They state that it is their responsibility to interpret the Society's governing documents, and



to ensure the enforcement and interpretation of the Constitution. They state that they make representation based on the governing documents of the Society and the platforms that they were elected to represent. They state that they are doing the job that the students of the Society elected them to do, to the best of their ability, which includes speaking out on matters of social justice and human rights. Furthermore, they note that it is not only SSMU with these opinions, and noting that they are doing their best to represent the beliefs that the Society and the governing documents indicate, and to represent SSMU's members, especially those who feel marginalized.

Johangir further asks how they can know that they represent the whole Society. VP University Affairs states that SSMU is a political organization, they note that service, representation, and leadership are all equally important in SSMU's Constitution. They note that this means that a third of SSMU's responsibility is demonstrating leadership. They state that they cannot know if they are representing all members of the Society. They state that the goal of the statement was to advocate for each individual member when they needed SSMU to do so. They note that they were elected by a majority vote to represent the beliefs of the Society. They indicate that it is impossible to find any single belief that all SSMU members would agree with.

Member of the Gallery, Greyson, notes the political stance that SSMU has taken on within past posts. Furthermore, they note that the VP University Affairs indicates that they were elected by the majority, but actually last year, there was less than a 20% electoral turnout for the Executive team. They ask what the steps SSMU will take to better represent the community as a whole. VP University Affairs indicates that they're a democratic political body, and that while they realize that voter turnouts are not ideal, they understand that if students wish to participate in SSMU governance, they can make their voices heard, and that there are mechanisms to do so. They note that it is unfortunate that many SSMU members aren't aware of these mechanisms, or choose not to vote. They note that the executives are elected by as many people as are interested in voting. They state that while their turnout may not be the highest, it is not a reason to question the legitimacy of their positions, because the same could be said for absolutely every single elected position with the Society. They state that they do not believe it's productive to question the validity of the people that are here today, or the validity of their actions. They note that students have mechanisms by which they can make their voices heard, and represent their opinions. They state that if students wish to be more represented, they have the means to do so. They state that the fact that a statement was released that they didn't agree with doesn't mean that the system is broken, but rather, that their particular beliefs weren't represented.

Senator Daryanani notes that while the voter turnout is low, they do require a quorum for voting, and that they have all been elected on these bases. They note that they cannot further stress on what the VP External and VP University Affairs have said in how such mechanisms have worked in favour, and currently work in favour; noting that it is commendable that members of the gallery are able to point



out the disagreements with such statements. He stresses that Senators and Councillors are here to help navigate individuals through SSMU, and that they are doing it to the best of their abilities. He believes that the debate that is going on is a matter of how they can best represent students and their ideas.

Councillor Karasick states that these issues are ideal situations for SSMU members to contact their representatives, noting that representatives are here to represent students, and advocate on behalf of students. He notes however, that turnout at McGill is actually fairly high amongst universities.

Greyson asks a follow-up question. Greyson notes that while they understand that only a certain amount of people involve themselves in a democratic system, they understand that once they are elected, that they should be seeking to represent the views of everyone, not just people who voted in the election. They ask how they would ensure better representation, moving forward.

VP University Affairs states that in principle, they are elected to represent the undergraduate students attending McGill. They note that they make their best effort to represent all of them. However, they note that they cannot make political statements that represent everyone. They note that they can't express beliefs or opinions that everyone would agree with. That being said, they note that they wouldn't concede that their commitment to social justice is purely for representation. They note that there are three pillars of the Society, all held to equal importance. They note that sometimes, leading in human rights does not mean being able to represent all Society members. At the same time, representing everyone means that you can't always be a leader. They state that they do their best to navigate a very complicated situation in a way where they try to represent as many people as possible, without conceding the beliefs of the Society, or their commitments to leadership. They state that as far as expanding representation, they believe expanding engagement is one method they support, and to encourage people to get involved in SSMU. They note that there is always more that they could be doing, but at the end of the day, they have to weigh the balances between SSMU's commitments. They state that speaking on themselves, they plan on conducting further consultation whenever possible.

VP External thanks Greyson for the question, noting that it gets to the heart of what it is important about this discussion. He notes that there are really no grand gestures that can be made. However, he notes that within the Executive Committee, it has been mentioned that they have the intention to bring forward a form of framework that can help SSMU navigate with this kind of dynamic that they face. They note that it is important to make the distinction of what the role of the Executive Committee is, and how the Executive Committee and the Legislative Council interact in the making of political decisions. Through this, he states that they will have a better understanding of what it means to take a political position. He notes that they are wishing to foster an inclusive environment in which people feel heard, and that when they feel marginalized, it is taken into account. VP External also



notes that regarding participation, there are things that can also be done to foster a more engaged student body, so that people feel more heard.

Senator Parsons motions for a ten-minute extension, seconded by Councillor Williamson --APPROVED.

Senator Daryanani states that like Spiderman, they are trying to embody the statement of “with great power, comes great responsibility.” He notes that their power comes from the SSMU membership, as well as the Legislative Council itself, to specifically provide some direct measures how SSMU constituents can reach out to their representatives that they formally elected. For example, he notes that representatives can be mandated to take a certain stance depending on the will of their constituents. Senator Daryanani also notes that while Senators and Councillors are privy to the knowledge of Robert’s Rules, and institutional knowledge and such, it is their obligation to keep themselves available for all constituents, and to help constituents navigate the process. He asks any of his constituents to contact him if they wish to speak with him.

Councillor Reed notes that in regard to voter turnout and representation, it is absolutely right that Legislative Council and Councillors are resources by which students can reach out to make their voices heard. However, he notes that it is important to also note that it isn’t a perfect system. They note that consultative efforts can be improved. He thanks the Executives for fielding all of the questions, as well as those involved in SSMU communications and operations, that despite the political nature of these statements, worked to produce as safe of space as possible.

Greyson notes that when it comes to controversial political issues, there are always two parties that are as diverse as McGill is, noting that you can always find people from two opposing groups involved. He notes that before they take a formal stance, it is always good to be heard, and he believes that that’s all they are wanting. They note that they are not attempting to dictate what kind of decision that SSMU should take, but rather to include everyone in discussions.

#### 10. Old Business

There are no items.

#### 11. New Business

- a. Notice of Motion Regarding Amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference  
2020-11-19

VP Finance motivates. VP Finance notes that the current process of approving and distributing funds through the Funding Committee takes three (3) to five (5) weeks from their reception of the



application to the distribution of funds. He notes that the timeline has received criticism from student groups who have applied for funding and further complicates things for all individuals involved, especially said student groups trying to plan for their club activities. He notes that through consultation with the Funding Commissioner, the SSMU Accounting team among others, they have come up with the amendments, which can be found on the motion document. He notes that the purpose of the amendments is to clarify when funding approvals should be ratified. He states that the Legislative Council shall ratify the disbursements of funds for applications exceeding 20% of the total fund for the fiscal year. VP Finance indicates that this in turn will substantially expedite the funding process to take only one to two weeks. He notes that the purpose of the proposed amendments will be to bring the Funding Committee Terms of Reference up to date, and to further increase internal accountability in order to accommodate the expedited process.

b. Notice of Motion to Adopt a SSMU 5 Year Plan 2020-11-19

The President motivates. The President states that this is a Notice of Motion to the presentation to the Legislative Council he gave at the previous Legislative Council session. He notes that the Plan is designed to expand SSMU in the following departments, including staff, operations, clubs, services, finance, and advocacy. He notes that he has separated the plan based on priority, and timeline. The President clarifies that the Plan would involve the creation of a sub-committee of the Legislative Council, that would have members of Legislative Council, Executives, full-time staff, and Members-at-Large. He indicates that he hopes that it brings SSMU into the right direction of thinking.

12. Reports by Committees

a. Executive Committee

The President presents. The President notes that there have been two Executive Committee meetings. He notes that they signed onto various petitions and open letters, including one with the Faculty of Law against Bill 21.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

b. Equity Committee

VP University Affairs presents. VP University Affairs states that the Equity Committee was a bit delayed in starting out. They note that the Equity Committee has been assembled. They note that the Equity





Committee has not yet had a chance to meet. VP University Affairs states that the Equity Commissioners have goals for the year, including increasing engagement.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

c. Indigenous Affairs Committee

VP University Affairs presents. VP University Affairs notes that Jocelyne Couture is the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner. They state that the committee has taken on a new form this year, discussing through online newsletters, as opposed to online meetings. This also allows work to be done digitally through Google Docs, over a period of weeks. They state that they are currently forming care packages for Indigenous students. They note that the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner sits on the BaCoN committee, as well as participating in the functional planning group for the Fiat Lux project. VP University Affairs notes that they are also working with Resilience Montreal to organize donations for homeless and at-risk Indigenous peoples. As well, they have joined the Board of Directors of the First Peoples' Justice Centre of Montreal.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

d. Francophone Affairs Committee

Councillor Wan presents. Councillor Wan states that they have been currently working on support for the Communications team, which is ongoing. He also notes that they have hired two new student translators, who are handling the weekly promotional materials and newsletters. He notes that there have been two meetings thus far. He states that there has been an increased awareness from translators to attempt to write more inclusively. Councillor Wan also explains that they are currently developing a bilingual policy, and a guide for inclusive writing.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

e. Funding Committee --**APPROVED**



VP Finance presents. VP Finance notes that they have approved seven applications, including the McGill Engineering Competition, McGill Energy Association, McGill Students for Oxfam, Sex and Self, McGill African Student Society, and Formula Electric.

Councillor Smith motions to approve the funding applications, seconded by Councillor Williamson – APPROVED.

### 13. Reports by Councillors

#### a. Councillor Merali (Services)

Councillor Merali presents. Councillor Merali notes that they sit on the Affordable Student Housing Committee, as well as the Services Review Committee.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

#### b. Councillor Drew (Social Work)

Councillor Drew presents. Councillor Drew states that for SWSA, they had their first official meeting in November. They note that they are looking to organize different events, including CPR training. Councillor Drew notes that they are looking at revising their Constitution, for the next GA. As well, they are looking into supporting a Social Work peer mentorship program.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

#### c. Councillor Gundermann (Management)

Councillor Gundermann presents.

Councillor Gundermann notes that there is now a Couche-Tard in the Bronfman lobby, as part of the experience of the School of Retail Management. They note that while they are positive about the school style, they note that it is a threat to their student-run store. Councillor Gundermann notes that they are in the process of introducing a VP Sustainability position.

Question Period:



There are no questions.

d. Senator Parsons (Senate Caucus)

Senator Parsons presents. Senator Parsons notes that the Fall Reading Week for Fall 2021 was approved. As well, she thanks everyone for signing onto their statement in support of implementing an EDI committee. For MUSA, Senator Parsons notes that they have been discussing changing some of the program requirements, as well as implementing a form of buddy system for first years. They have signed onto the IRP. As well, they are doing a major overhaul of the Constitution.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

14. Executive Reports

a. President

The President presents. The President notes that the Fall 2020 GA is taking place on Tuesday. They are looking for a seconder to move a motion to ratify the Directors who will be sitting on the Board for the 2020-2021 year, and encourages anyone interested to send an email or message. The President notes that the second round for EDI Officers is going to begin next week with the two finalized candidates, and notes that it will be scenario-based. The President and VP External will be participating in Lobby Week with UCRU next week. They hired a new Sustainability Commissioner for the Winter semester. They are continuing consultations for the services and financial sections of the plan. They had a meeting with the VP External and Divest McGill. Additionally, a Tim Hortons will be coming back to campus. There has been an extended winter break petition circulating.

The President motions to suspend the rules to enter confidential period immediately, seconded by Councillor Smith --APPROVED.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

Legislative Council returns to public session at 22:44.

b. VP University Affairs



VP University Affairs presents. VP University Affairs indicates that the University Affairs portfolio has been restructured.

For university affairs and research, they note that there are special researchers that are still working on research. Recently, they state that there was a joint Board of Governors-Senate meeting, where the University's response to COVID was discussed. They also make reference to a recent Senate meeting, where three (3) questions were entertained, involving the naming of the men's varsity team. They also note that the academic calendar was approved. Recently, they note that they have worked with the Governing Documents Researcher to formalize and empower the Senate Caucus within SSMU's governing documents. For BaCoN, submission forms are still open, and consultations will continue, but they are hoping to have a finalized name by November 27. They note that the buildings will be named after concepts, ideas, and values in Indigenous dialects, and the names of prominent individuals will be given to ballrooms, conference rooms, and other rooms within the building. They also note that they have finalized interviews for the Black Affairs Commissioner, and are hoping to finalize a candidate tomorrow. As well, they once again remind Council that course packs will no longer be offered by Le James, as they will be free from the library.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

c. VP Finance

VP Finance presents. VP Finance notes that the Finance Committee is currently conducting their investigation on SSMU student fee policies. They note that the audit is still ongoing. VP Finance also notes that budget revisions are occurring now. For Clubs and Services, the new accounts and new bank resources have been provided to Clubs by RBC, and that they are halfway through transitioning the new accounts. As well, credit card reconciliation is ongoing. Regarding SSPN, they note that SSPN has its first event planned, and is taking place this weekend, and that they have higher turnout than expected.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

d. VP Student Life– **POSTPONED**



Councillor Karasick motions to postpone until the next Legislative Council, seconded by Councillor Bonan – APPROVED.

The report of the VP Student Life is postponed.

e. VP External

VP External presents. VP External notes that they met with a number of student unions, both university and CEGEP levels. As well, they state that they helped draft a proposal for international students' solidarity and advocacy. Recently, he indicates that he has met with his two campaign coordinators. VP External states that next week, him and The President will participate in Lobby Week with UCRU. He notes that they have had numerous meetings with UCRU. VP External states he has resumed his work with CKUT. As well, VP External recently had a meeting with the President and Divest McGill to discuss a potential campaign.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

15. Confidential Session: **21:54**

Legislative Council enters into confidential session at 21:54.

16. Adjournment: **23:02**

Councillor Smith motions to adjourn, seconded by Councillor Bonan – APPROVED.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Earle', is written over a horizontal line.

Jemark Earle, President