



SSMU GENERAL ASSEMBLY FALL 2020 MINUTES

November 24, 2020

1. Call to Order: **16:18**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order via teleconference at 16:18.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Adoption of Standing Rules – **APPROVED**

The President motions to approve the Standing Rules, seconded by VP University Affairs.

The Standing Rules are approved.

The Speaker notes that as they have not hit quorum, the General Assembly will be considered a Consultative Forum. She further notes that all decisions made at the Forum will further come to the Legislative Council for approval.

4. Approval of the Agenda – **APPROVED**

VP External motions to approve the agenda, seconded by VP Student Life.

The agenda stands approved.

5. Question Period

The Speaker notes that all questions raised have to remain to the confines of the General Assembly. She notes that no matters related to legal matters will be discussed.

Senator Daryanani asks the Speaker why they chose to adopt a Zoom Webinar format, and how many attendees they currently have.



The Speaker notes that a normal Zoom meeting can only handle up to 100 participants. Given that the quorum for a General Assembly is 350 participants, in the case that the GA did reach the threshold, they would've required a Zoom webinar as opposed to a simple Zoom meeting.

The Speaker notes that over 80 people had registered to attend, but that they currently have 57.

6. New Business

a. Motion Regarding Nominations to the Society's Board of Directors 2020-11-24

APPROVED AT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

The President motivates.

The President states that Director terms run from November 15th to November 14th of the following year. He states that in line with the Memorandum of Agreement with McGill, as well as the Constitution, that the new Directors must be nominated by the General Assembly. He notes that the membership consists of four (4) Executives, four (4) Councillors, and four (4) members-at-large.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

Debate:

There is no debate.

Voting Period – APPROVED

In favour: 46

Oppose: 2

Abstain: 3

7. Report of the Board of Directors

The President presents.

On composition, SSMU President notes that the Board of Directors consists of four (4) Executives, the President, Vice-President (Finance), Vice-President (Student Life), and an additional Executive, as well as four (4) Councillors who are nominated at a Legislative Council session prior, four (4)



members-at-large who through an applications process, and one non-voting International Student Representative, who goes through the same applications process as the members-at-large.

He states that the requirements to be on a Board in Canada means that you have to be at least 18 years of age, a citizen or permanent resident of Canada, not be bankrupt, not have been declared incapable by a court, and not have a criminal record.

On the powers of the Board of Directors, he states that it is the highest governing body of the Society, and it is primarily responsible for SSMU finances, operations, and legal matters. He notes that they also ratify resolutions passed by the Legislative Council. He states that the Board can send back questions to Council for clarification. The President states that the Board of Directors meets bi-weekly on Thursdays at 6:30 PM.

Concerning key issues, he states that there haven't been any major decisions. He states that the main one was approving an interim provision for elections and referendum, allowing First Year Council, Clubs, and Services Representatives elections to occur at the beginning of September, as opposed to waiting until the Legislative Council had approved.

Question Period:

Question:

Senator Daryanani asks the President if he is excited for Thursdays.

Answer:

The President notes that he is always excited, whether it is the Legislative Council or Board.

Question:

SSMU Member Asa Kohn asks the President to identify the provision of law that he mentioned that requires all Directors to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Answer:

The President states that he will pull it up. He states that it is section 126.1 of the Not-for-Profits Act, which specifies the requirements to be on the Canadian Board of Directors.

Question:

SSMU Member Asa Kohn further asks if the federal Not-for-Profit act applies to provincial non-profits.

Answer:

The President notes that he will follow up through email.



There are no further questions.

8. Report of Executives:

a. President

The President presents.

He states that in the Constitution, the role of the President means that he is the chief officer and spokesperson of the Society. He notes that his goal is to ensure long-term integrity of the SSMU, as well as to enforce the Constitution, Internal Regulations, and maintain governing documents. The President notes that he chairs and coordinates Executive Committee meetings, which meet weekly.

The President also indicates that he sits on the Human Resources Committee, meeting bi-weekly. As well, he serves as one of the Executives on the SSMU Board of Directors.

The President notes he oversees SSMU-McGill administration relations, meeting once a semester with Principal Fortier, and that the VP University Affairs has standing meetings with the Deputy-Provost of Student Life of Learning. He notes that he and the VP-University Affairs sit on McGill Senate, and that the SSMU President also sits on the McGill Board of Governors, in which he also sits on the subcommittee CAMSR, the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility.

For Senate, the President notes that he sits on the Senate Committee of Physical Development and the Committee on the Rights of Senate.

For student staff, he notes that Sustainability Commissioners, who chair the Environment Committee, as well as the Governing Documents Researcher, who chairs the Comprehensive Governance Review Committee, are both under his portfolio.

For projects, the President notes that his main project is the Five-Year Plan, which he has been working on over the summer and coming to the Legislative Council for approval. He states that the Plan is designed to drastically expand the SSMU offerings in six departments: staff, clubs, services, finance, operations, and advocacy. Secondly, he notes that he is working with the Comprehensive Governance Review Committee, reviewing governing documents and procedures, and putting some recommendations next semester.

Question Period:



There are no questions.

b. Vice-President (External Affairs)

VP External presents.

VP External states that he manages the external affairs of the Society, as well as community affairs, community engagement, union affairs, and political campaigns.

VP External states that his platform was focused on four items: strengthening campaigns, both internally and externally, promoting affordable student housing, promoting community engagement, and promoting responsive and transparent governance. His main goal is to build the political infrastructure and institutional memory of the External Affairs office.

On external affairs, VP External notes that they note that they hired a Political Researcher who will assist the VP External in developing political infrastructure, as well as doing independent research, on advocacy-based items, such as accessibility of education, sexual violence legislation, and so on.

For inter-association relations, he states that there are student unions beyond McGill. He notes that there are both informal relations, such as SSMU's relationship with the Concordia Student Union, and more formalized, with SSMU sitting on forum-based level boards, which are round tables. For federations, VP External notes that SSMU is affiliated with UCRU, the Undergraduate Canadian Research-intensive Universities board. He notes that he sits on the Board and the Advocacy Committee, in which he writes advocacy letters, deciding advocacy priorities, and the development of a new campaign called Debt-Free Degree, as well as Federal Lobby Week.

On Community Affairs, he discusses the Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee, and notes that they have been working on the Royal-Victoria hospital and Hotel-Dieu hospital, noting that these are two hospitals within the Milton-Parc neighbourhood. He states that the advocacy surrounds their usage being transferred to public social uses. He also notes that he sits on the Board of the CKUT. He also notes that there is an Affordable Student Housing Committee within the SSMU, chaired by the Community Affairs Commissioner. VP External notes that the main purpose of the committee is to be the point-of-contact with an organization called UTILE, which is a non-profit housing developer, which works to develop affordable student housing throughout Quebec.

On political campaigns, VP External states that there is the creation of a campaigns guide with the Campaigns Coordinator. He states that they have been supporting numerous campaigns, such as Divest McGill, Climate Justice Action McGill, McGill against Bill 21, Students for Peace and Disarmament, as well as the #TakeJamesDown campaign.



For labour relations, VP External indicates that he sits on the McGill Communities Council, which is the McGill labour union.

For projects, he notes that he created an Honorarium guide with the VP Finance to assist clubs and student groups. He also worked with the VP Student Life to create an Indigenous Stakeholder consultation guide. VP External notes that he helped oversee the creation of the Black Affairs Committee.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

c. Vice-President (Finance)

VP Finance presents.

On general finance and accounting, VP Finance states that his main goal is to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Society, involving regular reporting to relevant entities acting in accordance to the Society's governing documents, as well as making financial recommendations for the Society when necessary. He also states that he is involved in the creation of the annual budget for the following fiscal year, as well as in budget revisions. VP Finance states that he manages and reviews the Society's cash flow both monthly and yearly, and works with the Accounting team for analysis on cash flow. Similarly, VP Finance indicates that he acts as the signing authority for the entire Society. He notes that he has a seat on the Finance Committee. VP Finance also states that he assists with the annual audit, oversees the investment portfolio, provides general accounting assistance, and general finance assistance.

For updates, he states that budget revisions are currently being completed and should be finished by end of the month. He states that the audit is also wrapping up. VP Finance also notes that all accounting procedures have been moved online. He notes that they are also working on automating accounting tasks. VP Finance states that the Finance Committee is currently conducting an investigation into SSMU student fee policies.

From a financial perspective, VP Finance notes that the Society has not been drastically affected, noting significant member growth in the Fall 2020 semester. He notes that as Gert's is still closed, there is no Gert's revenue. Similarly, VP Finance states that the investment portfolio initially took a small hit back in March, but since, has fully re-bounded.



On funding, VP Finance notes that he oversees the disbursement of over \$350,000 in funds every year. He works on the funds being renewed at referenda every few years upon expiry. Similarly, the VP Finance sits on the Funding Committee, and he analyzes under- and over-utilized funds.

For updates, he states that the SSMU Ambassador Fee was the only fee renewed from his end, renewed at \$2.00 per student per term, which provides monetary support for groups that represent McGill at external conferences and competitions. He also states that they have revised the funding application process, noting that he is currently working to shorten the fund disbursement timeline.

On COVID-19 impacts, he states that there have been less funding applications this year, because there are not as many events being held, and that the events being held now are relatively cheaper.

On Clubs and Services, VP Finance notes that he provides general clubs support, working on the Club audit, and ensures that clubs utilize their money appropriately. As well, he works to create an upkeep of SSMU-club bank accounts with RBC, as well as assist in troubleshooting issues with clubs' banking access. He states that banking has moved almost entirely online, which is a huge project. As well, he states that they have implemented virtual tokens. VP Finance notes that they are currently working on developing a better resource and credit card distribution system, as well as improving remote communications with clubs. For services, he states that he reviews service budgets, approves purchases, approves credit card expenditures, approves contracts, and provides financial support when needed. For updates, he states that services now have credit cards. In regards to COVID-19, he states that there has been less Club activity. VP Finance also notes that the Finance training occurred remotely as well. He states that it has been difficult to coordinate the distribution of club banking resources.

On health and dental insurance, he discusses the insurance for Canadian residents. He notes that he works with Student Care, which is an insurance administrator to implement insurance for the Society. He states that he works with Desjardins for insurance. He notes that while dental insurance is available to everyone, health is not available for international students, but that they have access to Dialogue. He states that Dialogue is a telemedicine service. As well, he notes that he is working with Student Care to implement a two-tier insurance plan. On COVID-19, he states that since the insurances were used less this year, they received a rebate, which was used to provide additional services to Members, through the form of Dialogue.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

d. Vice-President (University Affairs)



VP University Affairs presents.

VP University Affairs states that the portfolio is separated into three pillars: equity and advocacy, university affairs, and research and academic resources.

For university affairs, VP University Affairs states that they coordinate the representation of all undergraduate students to the University-levels of governance, mentoring and advising student senators, and appointing all undergraduate representatives to university committees. VP University Affairs states that they serve as Chair of the Senate Caucus. On student rights, VP University Affairs notes that they oversee the Know Your Rights Campaign with the assistance of the Student Rights Researcher and Advocacy Commissioner. As well, they note that they oversee university relations and student representation, and hold McGill administration accountable.

In regards to staff, they note that they oversee the Secretary-General, the SRAC, as well as a number of special researchers.

They note that they sit on the McGill Senate Steering Committee, the Senate Nominating Committee, the Scholarship Review Committee, and the Committee on Student Services.

On equity and advocacy, VP University Affairs notes that they support a couple portfolios, including Black affairs, Francophone affairs, and Indigenous affairs working with and supporting the commissioners and the committees. VP University Affairs also notes that they oversee SSMU's anti-sexual violence mobilization and advocacy, as well as assist in some educational programming. VP University Affairs notes that they oversee equity complaints and accountability. As well, they note that they oversee the menstrual hygiene product project.

For relevant staff, VP University Affairs refers to the AVCS, the SVMAC, the new Black Affairs Commissioner, Equity Commissioners, Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, and Menstrual Hygiene Product Coordinators.

For committees, they sit on the Black Affairs Committee, as well as the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming, the Comprehensive Governance Review Committee, Equity Committee, Equity Complaints Committee, Francophone Affairs Committee, and the Indigenous Affairs Committee.

On research and academic resources, they oversee library development with the Library Improvement Fund and the relevant committee, which oversees study spaces and physical development within libraries. As well, VP University Affairs oversees academic accessibility, including Open Educational Resources, and manages library relations.



For staff, VP University Affairs states that there is the Library Improvement Fund Commissioner, Open Educational Resources Coordinator, and Open Educational Resources assistants.

For committees, VP University Affairs notes the Library Improvement Fund Committee.

On projects, VP University Affairs states that they have been working with employment equity, including rewriting SSMU's Human Resources Policy, concerning issues such as dead naming. As well, they note that they are working on a project to compensate Legislative Councillors and Student Senators. For Open Educational Resources, VP University Affairs notes that beginning in Winter 2021, course packs will be offered for free by the library. They also note that they have been working with the library to oversee the development of study hubs. For campus advocacy, they note that they reviewed the Policy on Harassment and Discrimination. VP University Affairs states that they are currently working on overhauling the university student assessment policy, as well as challenging and re-defining McGill's definition of academic freedom. As well, they note that they amended the Equity Policy to include some language around the banning of tone policing. VP University Affairs notes that they have been working with the VP Student Life on harm reduction advocacy for AMUSE.

VP University Affairs states that the Francophone Academic Rights report has been completed, and that the preferred names usage report is ongoing. They also state that they added two new special researchers, on student health and wellness.

For capacity building, states that they established the Black Affairs Commissioner and committee, and worked on the development and implementation of equity triages. As well, they note that they are working to revive the Textbook Broke campaign. For Senate Caucus, they state that they worked with the Governance Manager to create a Senators Guidebook. They note that they are currently working with the Governing Documents Researcher to better define the Senate Caucus within the Society. As well, they state that they are currently working on increasing Senate representation of smaller schools.

Question Period:

Question:

Councillor Smith inquiries on where he could find the Francophone affairs report.

Answer:

VP University Affairs states that they will investigate and let the Councillor know.



Question:

SSMU Member Andie Habert asks about if the information on harm reduction advocacy will be on the website, or if it will be published to the student body more generally.

Answer:

VP University Affairs states that they are in the initial planning phases with AMUSE. They state that with collaboration of the VP Student Life, they are hoping to bring a policy on harm reduction to Legislative Council in the Winter semester.

Question:

Secretary General asks Brooklyn to speak more about expanding student representation in McGill's governing bodies.

Answer:

VP University Affairs notes that while only thirteen seats on McGill Senate are reserved for students, the vast majority of all Senate activity is conducted by students. They state that there are schools like Social Work, Dentistry, Nursing that are not represented on Senate, and that going forward, they hope to give seats to schools and programs not already represented, but expand the ability of students to advocate to the Senate as well.

There are no further questions.

- e. Vice-President (Student Life)

VP Student Life presents.

VP Student Life states that a major part of her role is to verse the 250+ clubs, services, and independent student groups. She notes that she manages relations between SSMU staff and club/service/ISG staff, as well as providing support. She also oversees SSMU's mental health initiatives along with the Mental Health team. VP Student Life is also responsible for family care policies and practices, and is President of the SSMU Daycare Board of Directors. As well, she liaises and collaborates with McGill student services, including the Wellness Hub, and other student services. She notes that she collaborates significantly with campus life and engagement, and does a lot of outreach with incoming and current students.



On Activities Night, she states that it took place on September 9 and 10, through a platform called Eventus. She states that Activities Night went really well, with over 320 student groups attending, and six to eight sponsors. VP Student Life notes that there were 3,438 active users, 1,653 event RSVPs, and 200,000 booth impressions. She states that over 11,000 messages were shared. As well, they note that this year, they incorporated sessions, which were webinars on different topics that were relevant to students.

On Clubs, she states that this year was especially challenging. She states that many Clubs are currently inactive. However, VP Student Life notes that they are trying to encourage activity and online programming for clubs. She states that the Clubs workshops took place on September 19, 20, and 26, in an online format. As well, VP Student Life notes that they are currently in the development of a club portal. She notes that they also created the SSMU Events Committee.

On services, VP Student Life states that all services that previously had space in the University Centre have now moved back in. As well, she notes that they are developing space agreements for tenants to formalize the process of services having space in the University Centre. She states that she is working with the Services Administrator Assistant to raise the digital profile of services. She also notes that they are currently in the review process with the Services Review Committee, conducting audits and surveys.

For family care, VP Student Life states that they passed a motion on the renewal and increase on the Daycare fee during the fall referendum. She states that they have hired a new Daycare Director. She notes that she is a member of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Family Care.

On mental health, VP Student Life states that their Mental Illness Awareness week took place from October 5 to 8. She notes that they are looking forward to their Mental Health Action week, which is planned for January. She states that the Mental Health Advocacy Coordinator has released a few surveys on remote learning. VP Student Life states that Mental Health round table meetings occur every three weeks. VP Student Life discusses future promotion of Keep.meSAFE.

On miscellaneous responsibilities, she states that she worked with Campus Life & Engagement to assist clubs, and develop programming. She notes that she was overseeing some communications responsibilities over the summer. Concerning university-level committee work, she states that she is on the Committee on Student Services, Fall Reading Break Implementation Committee, and the SAO Advisory Board.

Question Period:

Question:



Senator Daryanani inquires about the potential referendum fee for the mental health website, and what the fee increase is proposed to be.

Answer:

VP Student Life states that they are planning on moving a mental health fee renewal and increase. She states that they are hoping to develop a website for mental health, that serves as a digital wellness solution.

There are no further questions.

9. Adjournment: **17:49**

VP Finance motions to adjourn, seconded by VP Student Life – APPROVED.

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

Jemark Earle, President