



SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

January 28, 2021

The regular bi-weekly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference, on January 28, 2021 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:07**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:07.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Attendance

Councillor Morgan is absent.

The Speaker notes the arrival of the new Environment Representative, Councillor Rhamey.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Legislative Council Public Minutes 2021-01-14 – **APPROVED**

Councillor Bonan motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Councillor Wan.

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

VP Student Life motions to move Confidential Session to follow right after announcements.

Councillor Smith motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Councillor Williamson.

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. Students' National Solution for a Fair Voting System

Gabriel Laurence-Brook speaks on the presentation. Laurence-Brook notes that his organization, a student association, is advocating for electoral reform in Quebec. The organization is non-partisan, and not affiliated with any political party. He also notes that they are supported by 41 student associations and student unions across Quebec, representing 230,000 students.

Laurence-Brook states that his organization is wishing to inform and mobilize the students in favour of electoral reform, as well as acting in a support role for a broader coalition led by an NGO. He notes that they wish to partake in the lobbying process, and to put some pressure on the political parties, because he notes that a lot of them have made a promise to change the electoral system and they have yet to see results.

Laurence-Brook states that there is an issue with the current electoral system, First-Past-the-Post, which was inherited from the Westminster system. He states that it is unfair because the majority of votes that are cast don't count. He states that they want to replace the system with a more proportional system, so that each and every vote counts.

Laurence-Brook notes that almost all provincial political parties in Quebec have agreed to put a new proportional system in place, as well as there being a bill currently that it is proposing to do that.

Laurence-Brook explains First Past the Post, explaining that the candidate who wins the most vote in each and every riding gets the seat. However, the other votes for all of the other candidates do not count to decide who wins the election in the riding. For the party who wins the election, it is the party who has the most seats, noting that you don't need to have a majority of the vote. A majority government should have a majority of the votes, and that the votes should be represented fairly in the distribution of seats in Parliament.

They are proposing to have a system that has a component of proportionality. He notes that they are not planning for a pure proportional system, as fringe parties can get many more seats in government with it.



In Quebec, they are proposing a mixed-member proportional system, meaning that it will be a combination of the current system with a proportional aspect to it. Some of the seats are elected with the current system, and then seats are added which are referred to Party List seats, so that representatives are appointed to compensate for the discrepancies or the distortion in the results of the election.

Councillor Smith motions for a ten minute extension, seconded. – APPROVED

Laurence-Brook continues that these representatives would be floating representatives, with no attachment to local communities, being assigned to a region. One of the improvements of the new system is that one would get two votes on the ballot, voting for the candidate in your local riding, and a second vote for the party of your choice, which is used to calculate the number of compensatory elected officials.

He states that the system combined the strengths of the current system, namely that people like to vote for a local candidate, but that it adds a proportional aspect, allowing the result to be more accurate and representative. As well, it also allows different opinions and parties to be more represented across different parts of the territory. He also states that majority governments wouldn't be any more likely with an MMP system. He also notes that four of the five major political parties are in favour of the particular system.

Gabriel notes that they are asking for the support of all student unions and student associations across Quebec to support the reform, and notes that it would have positive deep effects on the political culture, noting that governments have to work more on a consensus basis, and that they have to build coalitions in order to form governments.

Question Period:

Question:

Councillor Karasick states that a big criticism levied against the MMP is granted disproportionate power to the regions, at the expense of the urban regions.

Answer:

Laurence-Brook states that the regions and the results would be more representative.

Question:

Councillor Smith states that one of the arguments that is often used to change the voting system is that there is too much political power within a certain group of people, and this



reform is seen as a way to bring power back to the citizens. However, he states that one of the biggest criticisms is how the list works. He asks which they would be advocated for, a closed list or an open list system.

Answer:

Laurence-Brook states that the current bill in government right now is advocating for closed lists, meaning that the list is established at the beginning of the elections by the political parties. The list doesn't move because what the government argues is that they want people to be able to vote against someone.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks if the organization has any plans on expanding the movement to the federal level.

Answer:

Laurence-Brook responds that that was something they thought about. However, there is nothing going on in Parliament right now concerning electoral reform. He states that one of the other reasons is that they lack the mobilizing capacity needed, noting that the majority of their supporters are in Montreal and Quebec City.

Question:

Senator Daryanani asks what the correct procedure is to vote on the motion to endorse voting procedure.

Answer:

The Speaker notes that the VP External had planned a motion to follow the presentation. VP External states that his plans were to not to vote on the motion today, but have the presentation as any introduction to an upcoming motion.

b. Finance Commissioner

The Finance Commissioner Duckett presents.

The Finance Commissioner explains that they did their consultation between October and December. He states that between December and January, they put together the report and got all of the necessary data information together.



The Finance Commissioner highlights SSMU's power to pass fees, noting that SSMU has a fairly large discretionary power. The Finance Commissioner notes that the process involves referendum questions for new fees and increasing fees. He states that there are four types of fees: general tuition fees, McGill-approved fees, student society fees, and course fees.

In student society fees, there are five categories, but notes that they are all passed under the same legal authority, naming services fees, membership fees, committee fees, other SSMU fees, and independent student group fees. The investigation is focused on the perceived lack of financial due diligence and the approval of new ancillary fees, and existing fee increases.

The Finance Commissioner states that the current issue is that there is not enough financial evaluation of fee proposals that came through the Legislative Council. In the past, student groups seeking to increase fees or levy new fees often came with proposals that entail the value of their services, but notes that there has rarely been financial documentation to present the proposed funding. This is concerning for a number of reasons, but especially that proposals are fundamentally an issue of finance and financial accountability, and thus, it is important that effective due diligence in evaluating these fees is done.

Further, the Finance Commissioner states that the second issue has to do with low voter turnout, with only a small percentage of the student body making decisions that had financial implications for the whole of the student body.

To continue, the Finance Commissioner highlights the misuse/underuse of ancillary fees revenue, noting that this is one of the more actionable items that Legislative Council can respond to. He states that the issue of under-use of funds has manifested itself primarily in large amounts of money rolling over from year to year, within various funds or within various student groups, noting that it is particularly noticeable within Funding Committee funds and services fees. There are very large amounts that are rolling over in the Community Engagement Fund, for example. A clear majority of the services are running fairly large surpluses year over year, such as the Musicians Collective fee, which was recently renewed. The fee collects just over \$2,000, but notes that they have been rolling over just over \$7,000. However, he notes that there are two services that are doing well fee-expenditure-wise, noting Midnight Kitchen and Nightline.

The Finance Commissioner also highlights a misuse of funds, noting questionable SSMU services expenditures. He states that the goal of the investigation was not to 'penalize' services for their spending. Rather, he notes that they were trying to identify the problems that exist within the current model so that they can make recommendations to move forward in a way that is more beneficial. The Finance Commissioner notes that while they did observe a few issues of questionable expenses, he states that since they did not do a full extensive investigation into every expenditure, that it wouldn't



be fair to the groups in which they found discrepancies, without doing a comprehensive evaluation of all of the other groups at the same time.

Councillor Karasick motions to extend the Finance Commissioner's time ad libitum, seconded by Councillor Bonan.

The Finance Commissioner also states that SSMU has the ability to conduct oversight and recourse for financial mismanagement of ancillary fees. They currently lack the internal structure within the SSMU, the mechanisms to do so. He states that this change would be straight forward, being a change in the Internal Regulations. One of the issues that they ran into when conducting financial evaluations was that a lot of the student groups, especially the services, don't keep industry standard, or in some cases, any financial records of their transactions. He states that the current process requires them to create a budget at the beginning of the year in consultation with the VP Finance, but notes that there are never any checks to observe if they are adhering to their budget.

Lastly, the Finance Commissioner also notes that they identified an accessibility to information about where money is going and how it is being spent. He states that they believe it important that, given the public nature of the money that they are spending, that the information is documented and rigorously made available to students to ensure that there is integrity in the process. He states that this is currently not the case for a lot of fees, including all of the services that are not currently required to publish the budgets.

The Finance Commissioner notes however that the SSMU base fee is actually one of the best run fees, due largely to the fact that they have a very good professional group of individuals within the Accounting department that runs things to stellar standards. As well, the base fee is subject to external audit every year, bringing in one of the industry's highest mechanisms for accountability.

In regards to recommendations, the Finance Commissioner notes that the findings recommend fee consolidation, due to transparency and accountability. As well, he notes that it would help to resolve surpluses. While the surplus remains in separate fees could be used to put down the SSMU debt, or put it towards other initiatives, he states that there are potential legal ramifications and issues with public perception that would arise if they are acting accordingly. By consolidating the fees, it would help with clearing up the way our funding works.

The Finance Commissioner notes that they recommend a consolidation of all of the section 52 fees under the SSMU base fee. He states that there are other ways that consolidation could occur, noting that all Funding Fees could be consolidated into one SSMU Funds fee. He notes that there is a clear perception amongst the students that regardless of how much money the fees line up to, seeing all of the fees nevertheless seems to have a negative perception among the community.



Secondly, they also recommend increased accountability and reporting standards, such as pending reports.

Thirdly, he notes that the investigation also recommends an amendment to the Internal Regulations of Legislative Council, that would allow the Legislative Council to freeze a fee, to lower a fee, or to cancel a fee that has already passed. The SSMU is only legally required to go to the student body in referendum to charge new fees or increase fees. He notes that anything that involves reducing fees or cancelling them is not required to go to the student body. He states that while they do have this power already, it would make more sense, and have better perception if they made an amendment to the Internal Regulations, as a means of codification.

Fourthly, the Finance Commissioner notes that the report recommends changing processes, noting they would like to see an increase in professional and more comprehensive evaluations being conducted into the financial aspects of fees. He states that when new fees are to be charged, or a fee wants to be increased or renewed, that the report recommends that these applications be made to the SSMU Finance Committee first, so that a financial evaluation can be made. From there, he notes that it would be sent to Legislative Council, with the report from the Finance Committee that would discuss the merits of, or lack of, a specific fee. The recommendation comes specifically from the Accounting department, and notes that it reflects industry standards, that if a group wants to pass a fee or increase the fee, they should have to justify it, including mock budgets, and a fairly comprehensive amount of documentation to support why they need money.

Lastly, the Finance Commissioner notes that the investigation is recommending committee changes to process this change. He states that committee changes are dependent on what kind of consolidation occurs, but notes that regardless, they would like to see a committee that, for every type of fee under the SSMU, is evaluated at the end of the year, looks at how it has been spent, and makes recommendations as to the distributions of the money based on need based on current use. He notes that these changes can be adopted into the Committee Terms of Reference.

Question Period:

Question:

Mo Rajji Courtney, UGE Outreach Coordinator seeks clarification, largely concerning consultation. They note that the report claimed to conduct consultation, but in speaking with the Finances Coordinator for the Union for Gender Empowerment, they notes that there were two consultation sessions that were held, noting that the first was held within a business of four business days, and that the other was held with a notice of three(3) business days, noting that neither were scheduled around the availability of SSMU services. They further state that



the recommendations that were included in the report were the same recommendations that were presented to services, noting that none of the services' criticisms or input was actually included in the final report. They note that the report suggested that much of the budget from the 2019-2020 academic year was unused, but points out that they were all required to suspend the services and the use of funds. As well, they note that the report stated that the money stays in their accounts. However, they note that they don't have bank accounts, and that there are very specific processes for how they access their funds, including purchase orders, and check requests. They state that in order for a service to spend money, it must go through the VP Finance and Accounting. They state that a lot of their own personal money is spent through check requests, but notes that since there are so many requests, and that it is such a poor system, much of their own personal spending doesn't get reimbursed. Mo asks the Finance Commissioner if they believe that it is a fair report, given the fact that he had very little consultation with the Services, and that the report and the portrayal of how services and their finances function don't reflect reality.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner responds that it is important to note that while consultations played a role in the investigation, consultations don't play the same role in every evaluation or report that occurs within the SSMU. He notes that the nature of how SSMU finances are operated is a specialized topic that is run by professionals. He notes that the purpose of the consultations was more so to identify problems, with less emphasis on running solutions by people. While some of the recommendations did appear in the consultations, the recommendations were purely based on the merit of the recommendations themselves. Secondly, he notes that they don't suggest that the groups necessarily rolled over a lot of their surpluses last year, noting that they recognized that it was a unique year.

Question:

Councillor Mulvaney asks if the FIOs [frais institutionnels obligatoires] would be included in the consolidated fee, or would it remain in their own category.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that they would remain within their own category just because they are fully administered by the University.

Question:

Councillor Karasick notes that though their voter turnout may be low, SSMU actually has a pretty high voter turnout compared to most of the universities in Quebec and Canada, and is



unsure why turnout is such a concern at McGill. He asks if this is something they should consider.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that it was something the Finance Committee was grappling with, and deciding whether to include it. However, they note that they thought they should include it, just because of how often it came up in the consultations. It goes to contribute to the overall overarching goal of increasing student engagement in student government. The Finance Commissioner also clarifies, noting that the recommendations are issues noted are not a rank order, but rather, in the order of how they came up.

Proxy for Councillor Smith, Grace Jumbo, arrives at 19:29.

Question:

Jeanne Prevost, UGE Finance Coordinator asks a question on the survey. She notes that one the survey that was circulated to students, noting that many claims surrounding undergraduate voices and their disapproval of the management of SSMU funds are based on a survey that claimed to be representative of the student population. However, the survey didn't regulate for population by gender, faculty, year, or program, all of which are necessary to have a good representative sample of the population being surveyed. Additionally, Jeanne notes that there were no limitations placed on the data collection process, to limit one person to submit multiple responses. Furthermore, the survey was circulated in circles that tended to be more prejudicial against SSMU services.

Noting that, Jeanne asks how much weight can necessarily be given by the Legislative Council in its report.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that the role of the survey was not to get formal statistics on what the student body wants. At the end of the day, when it comes to financial operations, it isn't a majority end-game. The survey and consultations largely played the role of issue awareness. If the Legislative Council does want to see that feedback, it could be made available in confidential session. He states that just due to the way that they approached the investigation, the committee didn't necessarily take into consideration who identified the issues, but rather, that the issue is identified in general. He believes that the investigation reflects fairly accurately the current state of the SSMU finances, especially in the problems they address and recommendations that they make.



Question:

Councillor Wan asks how widespread the practice of pulling random numbers out of thin air and deciding how to use the amounts after the fees were approved were.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that he doesn't have a percentage to provide, but notes that it is an alarmingly high number in the range of a large minority/small majority of the groups.

Question 2:

Councillor Wan further asks if services were notified upon identification of discrepancies, and if they were given to correct the situations that they were implicated in.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes his hesitation to make comments on this, because they are held in confidence and health by the Society. He notes that he would be willing to discuss it in a confidential session.

Question 3:

Councillor Wan asks how much time it would take to implement the recommendations outlined in the report. Furthermore, he states that if it is a significant amount of time, he would recommend that Legislative Council place a moratorium on motions regarding new fees and fee increases.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner states that he does not believe it is at the point where they should be passing moratoriums on fees. He states the recommendations are mixed, with some being easy to implement and ones that will take more time. He states that the consolidation of fees will be the longest to do, as it will require a referendum question to the general populace, agreement to cancel a number of fees and increase the SSMU base fee by an equivalent amount. He notes that the other four recommendations would simply take the form of a motion coming to the Legislative Council. He also notes that he believes that they come with different levels of necessity. He notes that the prioritized recommendation should be recommendation two, creating minimum reporting guidelines and applying to all groups. He also states that it would be easy to pass at SSMU Legislative Council is the powers of the Council towards fees, and changes to the Internal Regulations.

Question:

Councillor Karasick asks about recommendation three, new Legislative Council powers. He states that as suggested by the Finance Commissioner, there were concerns about the misuse of funds, but notes that in the way that the recommendation is phrased, it feels somewhat



broad. He asks if there is a plan to put in specific requirements of what constitutes a misuse of funds, so that it doesn't become a political issue.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that SSMU technically already has the power to suspend a fee or lower a fee. By codifying these powers, it would simply just bring to everyone's attention that they exist, and be a more transparent reflection of what Legislative Council is able to do. However, he notes that Councillor Karasick's point makes sense, and states that it would be a discussion to have with whichever Councillor ends up writing a motion that would speak to these powers.

Question:

VP University Affairs states that at a previous Referendum period, a question regarding the implementation of a rollover budget for surpluses was considered as an alternative solution to the problem that is discussed in the report, and asks if this was a solution that had been considered, and if so, why did they come to the conclusion that they did.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that he is not one-hundred-percent certain of the motion, but notes that it is very likely it didn't happen. He notes that they primarily deferred the discussion of treatment of surpluses to professionals, namely, SSMU's Accounting department. He also states that they have issues with surpluses, noting that the money could easily just be spent. He states that just because money exists is not an excuse to spend it.

Question:

Jeanne Prevost states that in Winter 2019, a question was sent to referendum outlining part of the report's recommendation, consolidating rollover budgets into one fund – the Student Life Fund. She notes that it was passed, sent to the Board of Directors, and then sent to referendum, at which point it passed. She asks what value does the recommendation have considering that there is no more rollover of SSMU service fees.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner states if that was a motion that was passed, the contents of the motion were not respected. These fees, even though they could have theoretically been taken and put in the Student Life fund, they were not. Furthermore, he notes that the issue is that once they started putting all of the money into one fund, it would likely lead to the same problem in the specific fund, with no guarantee that it will be used up. VP Finance also explains that in the past in recent knowledge, there have been two motions passed to transfer



surpluses from service departments, as well as some of the other departments into the Student Life fund. He states that these were in 2013 and in March of 2019. He states that these were retroactive fixes, whereas the recommendations of the report are recommendations for fixes moving forward. He states it's not the most ideal move to motion to transfer surpluses, because when a fee is levied from the student body, they agree to the fee specifically to fund a specific service.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks if The Finance Commissioner has any intention on staying for the confidential session.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner states that he can be made available.

Question:

Senator Daryanani states that in accordance with the 10% benchmark, plus or minus a certain fund being spent, if once the Legislative Council will be given the power to freeze the fund or cancel it, if there will be a similar sort of benchmark, that is potentially higher than 10%, to ensure that should an expense arise for a particular service, they have that available for the coming year.

Answer:

The Finance Commissioner notes that the freeze power will be there for exceptional cases. He states that when it comes to evaluating the finance of the various groups within the SSMU, nothing happens overnight. He states that they usually happen on a year-by-year basis, not at a day-to-day, or month-by-month. He states that even if every service theoretically spent 10% over their money one year, SSMU would not just default, noting that SSMU has the resources to draw on.

There are no further questions. The Speaker thanks the Finance Commissioner for their presentation.

c. Presentation concerning Dollarama Warehouse Workers

Mustafa Hanaway, an organizer with the Immigrant Workers Centre presents.



Hanaway states that the Centre has been working with Dollarama for the last ten years. Mustafa states that the Immigrant Worker Centre has been organized with precarious immigrant workers since 2000, including temporary foreign workers under the seasonal agricultural worker program, permanent residents, but first-generation immigrants who are working essential jobs in the economy, namely low-paid, non-unionized, unsafe, and precarious work. Hanaway states that the same things that multinational corporations do in the global South, they also do in Canada, through the use of sub-contracting. He notes that people are being paid below minimum wage, and more than 40 hours a week. Furthermore, a lot of the work is conducted legally, through migrant workers. The Immigrant Worker Centre began in 2009, as a means to bring these workers together, and to defend their basic labour and human rights.

Hanaway explains that one of the important things, even before the Amazon economy, that they organized was in regard to Dollarama, and notes that warehouse work was akin to slavery. They began doing outreach there and started uncovering a lot of stories about Dollarama. The owners of Dollarama, the Roissy family, has a net worth of \$2.5 billion, making them the eighth richest family in Montreal and in Quebec, and the 50th in Canada. Dollarama is a multinational company, with over 1,300 stores in Canada, and 300 stores in Central America. It is the largest discount retailer in Canada and owns and employs over 20,000 workers directly. He states that the distribution centres and warehouses employ over a thousand workers, but that none of the workers work for Dollarama, with all of them working through placement agencies. He states that this creates a racialized work environment.

Hanaway notes that the jobs are grueling, with workers having to move a box upwards of 50 pounds every 20 seconds to make the quota. He equates the Dollarama situation as the Amazon model of the North, representing one of the largest workplaces in terms of warehouses in all of Montreal, employing more people than Amazon at this point. He states that regardless of how long they have worked there, people were not paid over \$15.00 an hour until the pandemic, being paid at poverty wages. As well, 20% of the workers face accidents because of the grueling conditions, and workers don't have a 15-minute lunch break, because it takes 10 minutes to walk to one end of the warehouse. He states that workers are moving to work at Amazon, stating that Amazon was a nicer workplace than Dollarama. Hanaway states that Dollarama was declared an essential business at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and notes that they had to fight to get Dollarama to provide masks and gloves to their workers. It is impossible for the workers to demand better pay, or better health and safety conditions, without the very real fear of employment termination. They are demanding permanent jobs to be able to give them the kind of parity that others enjoy.

Hanaway states that they have been working with the British Columbia government service employees union to present a motion at their AGM next June, to ask around the risks in terms of using



third-party agencies. McGill has invested \$2 million into Dollarama, and notes that they are trying to put pressure on individuals who have invested.

Gaurav, one of the Immigrant Worker Centre organizers, further speaks on his experience. Gaurav notes that he worked at Dollarama for a year.

VP University Affairs motions for an extension ad libitum, seconded by Councillor Williamson – APPROVED.

Gaurav notes that he was working as a pallet building in Dollarama. He explains that he faced a lot of problems during his work, having multiple accidents. There is little flexibility for medical aid for the employees and the workers. He states that they lacked the proper equipment and didn't have any first aid, and directed him to a hospital. He notes that he later requested Dollarama provide belts for living heavy boxes, but they did not. He states that their main demand is for Dollarama to hire them directly. He states that if they are hired by Dollarama, they can potentially get multiple of their demands met, including a potential raise in wages, and medical benefits available for everyone. As well, he also notes their desire to have at least two breaks.

Question Period: There are no questions.

The Speaker thanks Mustafa Hanaway and Gaurav for their presentation.

- i. Motion Regarding Support for Dollarama Warehouse Workers 2021-01-28
--**APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

VP External motivates.

VP External states that the Immigrant Worker Centre, and several other labour-based organizations have been working with Dollarama warehouse workers for over ten years, to protest working conditions and demand better working conditions from Dollarama Inc. He notes that Dollarama has an institutional connection to McGill, given that its founder, CEO, and Executive Chairman are members of the Roissy family whose donations helped establish the Roissy Wellness Hub, as well as the fact that McGill has over \$2 million invested in Dollarama. He states that the action being proposed within the motion is to condemn the exploitative labour practices of Dollarama, and to further support the McGill Corporate Accountability Project in solidarity with the warehouse workers of Dollarama.

Question Period:



Question:

VP Finance asks if the VP External is going to recommend that SSMU also divest from Dollarama in the coming weeks to respond to the motion.

Answer:

VP External responds that given that this isn't one of the reservations explicitly within the motion, the organization has not yet made a determination as to what kind of way it wishes to have the SSMU interact with Dollarama on the level of investment.

There are no further questions.

Debate:

VP university Affairs inquires about the possibility of amending the motion, to also mandate the SSMU to divest from Dollarama. VP External states there is the potentiality that SSMU could potentially act as a shareholder activist within the Dollarama.

Councillor Bonan suggests that a few challenges might arise from divesting, noting that when SSMU's investment advisor spoke, he mentioned that he chose SSMU's investments on a whim. He states that if there was a mutual fund that holds Dollarama stock, it would also be against the initiative.

Samuel Helguero, as part of the McGill Corporate Accountability Project, responds to VP University Affairs' question. Helguero states that the project is speaking to a shareholder in Dollarama who is looking to present some sort of motion to ensure some sort of accountability within Dollarama itself, for its safety conditions and for its use of temporary foreign worker programs. He states that considering that Dollarama is a high performing stock, and that there is no divestment movement from Dollarama, it wouldn't be a strategic use. Instead, Helguero explains that the investments could help them pursue the path of shareholder activism, which he notes Dollarama has been responsive to in the past.

VP External notes that the absence of an explicit resolution to divest from McGill does not preclude the possibility of the development of a campaign.

VP Finance clarifies that while he understands that the intention is not to divest right now, he notes that the Finance Committee is mandated to review SSMU's investments towards the end of the year, to ensure that they align with SSMU's policies and positions. The Committee could make a recommendation to the Board of Directors, and further notes that all forms of divestment have to go through the Board of Directors.

Voting Period:



Senator Daryanani moves to approve the motion by unanimous consent, seconded by Councillor Collins – APPROVED.

The motion is approved by unanimous consent.

8. Announcements

Councillor Wan states that on February 3, 2021, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences is hosting a panel event discussing different perspectives on Sir William Osler, one of McGill's most famous graduates from the Faculty of Medicine, and an overarching topic of discussion on whether historical figures should be assessed based on current societal values. For further information, he refers to the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences website or Facebook page.

VP University Affairs reminds everyone that course packs are offered for free through the library. As well, they note that the Senate Caucus is assembling a working group to amend the internal Regulations of Representation and Advocacy, and notes that they are open to new membership.

VP Finance states that if anyone is thinking of bringing a fee to referendum, to make sure to discuss it with VP Finance first.

Councillor Lee states that there are several Dental students hosting Move for Outreach, an online fitness wellness class occurring the first week of February. He states that McGill Dentistry Outreach, a non-profit organization of McGill's that provides free and reduced-cost dental care for diverse members of the Montreal community who have limited or no access to care. He states that they will be offering boot camps, yoga, and various activities. He notes that the class will be free, but suggests a minimum donation of \$5.00.

The President notes that the Executive Nomination period begins on February 1, 2021 and states that anyone who is interested can contact elections@ssmu.ca for further information.

Councillor Williamson informs the Council of the non-profit community service fair that AUS and CaPS is holding together. She notes that it will be on February 2, 2021 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. She states that it is not limited to arts students, and that there will be a lot of cool different people and organizations present.

The Speaker announces that the Accountability Survey for executives at large is still ongoing, collecting responses from the Society-at-large regarding the Executives' performances as a whole.



9. Confidential Session: **20:46**

The Speaker asks for a five-minute recess, so that a confidentiality agreement may be completed. This moved by Senator Parsons, and seconded by Councillor Wan – APPROVED.

[Legislative Council resumes at 20:44.]

The Speaker asks all members of the gallery to leave the Legislative Council at this time.

The Legislative Council enters into confidential session at 20:46.

10. Question Period

There are no questions.

11. Recess, Consent Items

The Speaker announces that the following motions have been unanimously approved by consent:

- Motion Regarding the Accessibility Policy and the Creation of the Accessibility Committee
- Motion Regarding Amendments to the Nominating Committee Terms of Reference
- Motion Regarding Amendments to the Accountability Committee Terms of Reference

12. Old Business

- a. Motion Regarding the Accessibility Policy and the Creation of the Accessibility Committee 2021-01-14 --**APPROVED**

This motion has been approved by unanimous consent.

- b. Motion Regarding Amendments to the Nominating Committee Terms of Reference 2021-01-14 --**APPROVED**

The motion has been approved by unanimous consent.

- c. Motion Regarding Amendments to Accountability Committee's Terms of Reference 2021-01-14 --**APPROVED**

The motion has been approved by unanimous consent.

13. New Business



a. Notice of Motion Regarding a Policy on Harmful Military Technology 2021-01-28 **FOR APPROVAL**

VP External motivates.

VP External states that this motion is to adopt a policy on harmful military technology, and the military-industrial complex more broadly. He notes that the point is to establish more concrete directives with respect to the SSMU's commitment to a campus free from harmful military technology and advocacy against complimentary technology. He states that there was a working group that drafted this policy, and conducted consultation with stakeholder groups, including SSMU Equity Commissioners, Sustainability Commissioners, as well as the representatives of the Engineering and Science faculties. He states that the intention of the policy is to define terms, and identify points of advocacy for university-facing and external-facing advocacy.

b. Notice of Motion Regarding a Position on Institutions of Public Safety 2021-01-28 **FOR APPROVAL**

VP External motivates.

VP External motivates that the position mainly concerns policing and institutions of the criminal justice system. He states that the position has been sparked by the uprisings against anti-Black violence, especially police violence, and the overrepresentation of marginalized peoples within the criminal justice system. He states that the position has been drafted in consultation with relevant stakeholder groups, including the Equity Commissioners, Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, Black Affairs Commissioner, the Anti-Violence Coordinator, the Anti-Sexual Violence Mobilization and Advocacy Coordinator, and the Mental Health Advocacy Coordinator.

c. Motion Condemning the Quebec Curfew's Disproportionate Impact on Unhoused Individuals 2021-01-28 **--APPROVED**

Councillor Merali motivates.

Councillor Merali notes that the motion was written and submitted before the curfew was overturned by the courts. However, he notes that he has submitted an amendment to the Dais that just amends it to address the government's pandemic response in general, and its lack of care and empathy towards unhoused individuals and other vulnerable groups.

Question Period:



Question:

Councillor Wan asks about the first Be It Resolved clause, and inquires about the addition of migrant workers and populations as an additional group, and asks for context.

Answer:

VP External states that the motion also includes migrant workers due to the fact that they have also been disproportionately impacted by the curfew, much in respect to the often precarious housing and working conditions migrant workers are found in.

There are no further questions.

Debate:

Councillor Wan motions to amend, to add that the Legislative Council support the ruling of the Superior Court of Quebec to suspend the curfew's application to unhoused people within the be it resolved clause. This is a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder.

Councillor Wan motions to amend the Be it Resolved clause, to include that the Legislative Council condemn the applicability of the government of Quebec's pandemic response towards marginalized communities, and particularly unhoused people and migrant workers. This is a friendly amendment by the mover and seconder.

Councillor Wan motions to amend the be it resolved clause, for the SSMU Executive Committee issue a communication articulating the SSMU's condemnation of the applicability of the Government of Quebec's pandemic response towards marginalized communities, in particular, unhoused people and migrant workers. This amendment is friendly by the mover and seconder.

Voting Period – APPROVED

In favour: 26

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 2

The Motion Condemning the Quebec Curfew's Disproportionate Impact on Unhoused Individuals 2021-01-28 is approved.

- d. Motion Regarding the Academic Wellness Proposal 2021-01-28 --**APPROVED**

VP Student Life yields to the Mental Health Commissioner.



Julia Caddy, Mental Health Commissioner, motivates.

The Mental Health Commissioner notes that they hope they can focus discussion on the proposal itself, as opposed to Wellness World only, given that Wellness World is only a minor part of the current proposal. The Mental Health Commissioner states that the general idea and focus is to take an upstream approach to the state of mental health in McGill students, and reflects on studies that continue to show academic pressures and expectations are the number one cause for distress. She states that they have held a working group for the past couple of months, and have been doing consultations with specific student populations, as well as the Mental Health roundtable. She states that moving forward, they need support from Councillors and from Senators, and anyone involved in Senate committees, to gain support for the specific proposals. She states that this proposal not only serves as the academic wellness proposal, but is also a corresponding guiding principles document. She states that the goal is to include the Academic Wellness Proposal and the guiding principles within the current SSMU Mental Health Policy and Plan.

Question Period:

Question:

Councillor Wan inquires about the state of Wellness World, and asks if there are still plans to increase the fee from \$0.40 to \$1.66 per semester at the upcoming referendum.

Answer:

The Mental Health Commissioner explains that when the initial referendum question was brought up, that ideally, Wellness World would be something funded by McGill, and not the students. She notes that that is now the path that they are on, and that it has moved towards a collaborative project with Student Services.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks about the absence of performance metrics, lack of user feedback, and absence of a French portal, and asks if there have been any updates with regards to these effects.

Answer:

The Mental Health Commissioner responds that throughout November and December, they received demos from different companies presenting their solutions. They note that all except WellnessWorld were companies and projects that had been going on for multiple years. However, she notes that they found their needs were still best met by Wellness World, due to its student friendly nature. She states that the implementation at the University of Ottawa has been in progress, and while they don't have specific numbers, she notes that the reception has



been positive. As they move forward, they will look for more specific data to share. As well, she notes that given that the University of Ottawa is largely bilingual, it is expected that the portal will be available in both languages.

Question:

Councillor Wan inquires about existing services at McGill, including the Student Wellness Hub and Keep.meSAFE. He asks the Mental Health Commissioner if she sees Wellness World having a conflicting role with the services, or would there be more of a synergistic group dynamic.

Answer:

The Mental Health Commissioner responds that WellnessWorld does not replace or duplicate any existing current resources. She notes that the main priority of WellnessWorld is to better orient students within the different resources available, and to help them navigate and identify resources that are not available only on campus, but off campus as well. Mo Rajji Courtney, the Mental Health Advocacy Coordinator states they have encountered a lot of students who don't see their needs meet at the Wellness Hub, and do not have the institutionalized direction for them to find services that are offered by SSMU, as well as other resources on campus as well as off-campus resources.

There are no further questions.

Debate:

There is no debate.

Voting Period – APPROVED

In favour: 26

Opposed: 0

Abstain: 2

The Motion Regarding the Academic Wellness Proposal 2021-01-28 is approved.

14. Reports by Committees

a. Executive Committee

The President presents.

The President notes that the Executive Committee signed onto a few open letters. As well, they note



that they approved the hiring of a Bar Manager, once Gert's eventually opens. As well, he notes that there were a few contract extensions and purchases of POS systems and equipment for Gert's.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

15. Reports by Councillors

a. Councillor Sood (Science)

Councillor Sood presents.

Councillor Sood notes that the Science referendum to approve constitutional updates was approved. She states that executive elections are upcoming, and that the appointed positions package is to be sent out later this week. She states that Academic Week is ongoing, and that it ends tomorrow. She notes that the VP Internal has decided that Science Games and Grad Ball are to be held in late April/May 2021, but they are going to begin the planning. For SSPN, she notes that they had an event on Saturday Beer-o Vision, and notes that there may be another event in March. Councillor Sood also notes that she has a Library Improvement Fund meeting occurring on the 30th.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

b. Councillor Lee (Dentistry)

Councillor Lee presents.

Councillor Lee states that they are holding a vote on a referendum on increasing the student membership fee, held on February 1. He states that this fee is primarily to improve student space and to subsidize social activities and events. As well, he notes that they are looking to train the representatives on their Equity Committee, which will be held in February. On committee activities, he notes that the Funding Committee has resumed weekly meetings and to evaluate funding applications. He notes that there is no meeting for the Health and Dental Committee. He states that he is sitting on the University Health and Safety Committee as the Dentistry Senator.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

c. Councillor Karasick (Arts)



Councillor Karasick presents.

Councillor Karasick states that there were four late councils at AUS Legislative Council. He states that CGRC and the AUS Governance Review Committee have been meeting regularly, as well as BOMCOM, which discussed 3501 Peel. He states that the Arts Faculty Council met on Tuesday, January 23. He notes that the Dean of Arts, Antonia Maioni has gone on leave, and was replaced by an acting Dean of Arts. As well, he notes that he has started writing his exit report.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

d. Councillor Kurkcu (Engineering)

Councillor Reed presents in Councillor Kurkcu's absence.

Councillor Reed states that the EUS Council has had four meetings since the last report, and has had a successful election period for the Board of Governors. He notes that two members-at-large were elected, and a new Chair was selected for the term. He states that two new alumni members are now being selected by the selection committee, and that three members-at-large were elected for the EUS Council. He states that all eight of their departments had academic forums, and that there are networking events coming up as well. He states that budget allocations are in the process of being finalized, but notes that the budget has been cut significantly due to a lack of profit, from which they usually get from OAP. They state that the EUS passed a motion for the new IRP, later ratified by the Board of Governors.

Councillor Williamson motions to extend by two minutes, seconded by Councillor Smith – APPROVED.

For internal events Councillor Reed states that Blues Pub isn't running. However, he notes that E-Week was fully online. He also notes that the internal portfolio is being shifted, as there will be a new VP of Events. As well, they note that the EUS allocated the annual engineering undergraduate student fund. He notes that there is no certainty on OAP 2021. As well, he states that the EUS has released two statements regarding sexual violence and mental health resources. He also states that EUS Equity has been continually working on providing resources and handling complaints. Lastly, he states that the next EUS Council is on February 10th at 6:00.

Question Period:

There are no questions.



e. Councillor Bonan (Law)

Councillor Bonan presents.

Councillor Bonan encourages everyone interested in coffeehouse to message the LSA on Facebook to get the Zoom link. He states that the Muslim Law Student Association has a commemorative event of the Quebec City mass shooting tomorrow at 12:30. Councillor Bonan also notes that there is an upcoming yoga session. He indicates that the events are on Facebook. He states that there have been many webinars with renowned lawyers, with one happening on February 9, discussing the story of David Milegaard. He states that LSA Executive meetings are weekly, and Council occurs bi-weekly. As well, he notes that LSA President Beatrice Mackie has been leading a team focused on constitutional reform.

Question Period:

Question:

Senator Parsons inquires if yoga is open to everyone.

Answer:

Councillor Bonan states that it is, but ensures that she checks if the yoga is held by the Yoga Club, or by a law firm, which he suspects she wouldn't like to visit.

There are no further questions.

16. Executive Reports

a. President

The President presents.

The President notes that he has been meeting with the Governance Manager and Governing Documents Researcher about constitutional changes and implementing a Code of Conduct.

On advocacy and representation, he states that there are the weekly Senate Caucus meetings. He also notes that he participated in a sustainability interview with a Ph.D. student and assistant professor, who are working on contributing to some book. He notes that he is still drafting the Committee Terms of Reference with the Five-Year Plan.

He notes that both the Steering Committee and BOMCOM met. The President also notes that he met with the new Bar Manager to discuss their plans for Gert's. He states that there was an all-staff



meeting for full-time SSMU staff. He notes that him and the VP Finance met with Studentcare. As well, he notes that himself, the VP University Affairs, and the VP External met with McGill's new Black Affairs Liaison. He notes that he will be participating in a town hall with the leader of the Green Party about how COVID-19 has impacted students, and what the government can do to support them.

Question Period:

Question:

Councillor Karasick asks if it is the federal or provincial Green Party.

Answer:

The President indicates that it is the federal.

b. VP University Affairs

VP University Affairs presents.

VP University Affairs states that they are hiring a new Indigenous Equity Researcher. They state that the Senate met on January 20, 2021, and that the Committee on Libraries presented a report that stressed the importance of OERs, with no credit to SSMU. Last week, Senate Caucus consulted with the VP External on the Motion on the Positions on Institutions of Public Safety. As well, they note that they also established a working group to revise the Internal Regulations of Representation and Advocacy. They also note that they conducted University Affairs training for the Black Affairs Commissioner, and that they are in the hiring process for the Accessibility Commissioner. They also note that they concluded interviews for the Gender and Sexuality Commissioner today, and notes that there should be someone in the position shortly. As well, on Academic Resources, they note that the coordinator is working to draft a short list of potential future courses for new OER packs and textbooks.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

c. VP Finance

VP Finance presents.

VP Finance notes that the Finance Committee has concluded its investigation on SSMU student fee policies. He notes that the report is complete and can be found on the SSMU website. He notes that they are now working on motions to fulfill some of the recommendations from the report. He states



that the first drafts of all of the departmental budgets are actually complete, meaning that they are head of schedule. For fee renewals, he notes that there are twelve fees up for renewal this semester. VP Finance notes that the finance website is currently under construction. He notes that the Funding Committee continues to meet. As well, he notes that the Fall 2020 club audit review was due on January 25th, but that they have been granting a week extension for some clubs. As well, he notes that the Services Finance Coordinator has been hired. VP Finance notes that the SSPN event was a great success, and that they are currently working on the third virtual event of the semester.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

d. VP Student Life

VP Student Life presents.

VP Student Life states that they have received a few demonstrations regarding club portals online. She states that Activities Night happened last week, and that it was pretty successful. VP Student Life notes that the Clubs Committee has met twice so far. She also states that she attended a Services Committee meeting. She notes that she is booking meetings with the services to check-in, and make plans with the semester ahead. On mental health, she notes that she has been having meetings concerning the updates on Keep.meSAFE. VP Student Life also notes that the Mental Health Round Table occurred on the 21st, and that Mental Health Week is currently ongoing. For the Daycare, she notes that they have a new Daycare Director. As well, she notes that she attended a Fall Reading Week Committee meeting, and provided a comment for a McGill Reporter article.

Question Period:

e. VP External

VP External presents.

VP External notes that the UCRU Governance Committee, as well as its Strategic Plan working group met earlier this month, making progress on formalization of the organization, including incorporation and approving affiliation of member associations. On provincial and municipal political affairs, he notes that he met with the PGSS External last week to discuss international student issues. He notes that the Affordable Student Housing Committee met. On political campaigns, he notes that he is looking into introducing amendments to the Climate Justice policy. VP External has been currently



working on budget submissions. As well, he notes that he has been taking part in onboarding meetings with the Black Affairs Commissioner.

Question Period:

There are no questions.

17. Adjournment: **22:55**

Senator Parsons motions to adjourn, seconded by Councillor Bonan – APPROVED.

Legislative Council adjourns at 22:55.

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

Jemark Earle, President

APPROVED