



SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

February 18, 2021

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference on Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 18:00.

Present: Lauren Hill (Chair, non-voting), Jemark Earle (Officer), Brooklyn Frizzle (Officer), Maheen Akter (Officer), Gifford Marpole (Officer), Ayo Ogunremi (Officer, non-voting, arrived at 21:16, left at 21:44), Paige Collins (Legislative Councillor), Alex Karasick (Legislative Councillor), Benson Wan (Legislative Councillor), Rohan Bhutkar (Member-at-Large), Ana Paula Sanchez (Member-at-Large, left at 21:50), Beatrice Mackie (Member-at-Large), Daniel Dufour (General Manager, non-voting, left at 21:02), Addy Parsons (International Student Representative, non-voting), Chip Smith (Legislative Councillor, arrived at 18:15), Adin Chan (Member-at-Large, arrived at 18:11), Sam Haward (Recording Secretary, non-voting, arrived at 18:54)

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

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

2. Land Acknowledgement

The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the true and constant custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today. Further, the SSMU commits to and respects the traditional laws and customs of these territories.

3. Adoption of the Agenda — **ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Earle asks to move into a confidential session immediately following item 3 as there are some guests who will be presenting. There are no other changes to the agenda. The agenda is approved unanimously.

[The Board enters a confidential session at 18:10.]

[The Board returns from confidential session at 20:26.]

4. Executive Committee Report



Director Earle presents the report of the Executive Committee. They note the hiring of the External Affairs and Community Affairs Coordinators. In addition, the Executive Committee signed on to an open letter *Arrêtons GNL* coalition on behalf of the SSMU. In addition, the Executive Committee approved the job description for the campus crops coordinators.

There are no questions on the report.

5. Discussion on the Renewal of Fees

Director Wan notes that there were three (3) fee renewals proposed by Services that have run surpluses in the past. They ask the Board for their input given that these Services seem to be running a profit year on year, and that the SSMU should be a not for profit organization.

Director Marpole responds that the fee investigation report was brought to the Legislative Council on January 28th, and this would not have given the Services ample time to follow a process that is merely a recommendation at this time. While Director Marpole would have preferred to implement these recommendations now, it would have been an unreasonable scramble for everyone involved. They note that all new fees were reviewed by the Finance Committee and themselves. They conclude that it was unfair for the SSMU to place new processes on student-run services at such short notice, and thus followed procedures from years past for these fee renewal questions. As such, Director Marpole gave his approval to present these fee renewals to the Legislative Council. They note that the report states that a process to lower fees should be implemented in future years, and to lower them now was not in the interest of the Society and the operations of these Services.

Director Smith states that he understands the concerns with the number of fees presented this year. He continues that the fee report was presented three (3) days before fees needed to be submitted to the University, and it would be wrong to punish groups for the reality of this timeline. Director Frizzle agrees that it is important to be critical of the process by which new fees are proposed but this is not the time or the place, and would eliminate their ability to conduct long term financial planning. He further states that these motions have been approved by the Office of the VP Finance and Legislative Council and the Board should not interrupt this process, and should instead act as a rubber stamp in this case.

Director Bhutkar responds to Director Wan, stating that this should not be a legal issue as SSMU's finances are reported as a whole and that the bottom line is not an issue - departmental surpluses are. He agrees with Director Frizzle that these motions should be passed as is, as there is no good way for these Services to function without these fees. Director Bhutkar disagrees that this is not the prerogative of the Board, and suggests that the Board reduce their duration if the SSMU is looking to shift to a new model of charging fees and ask what is the latest date the Board could pass these fees for this referendum period.



Director Frizzle states that they understand and agree, but add that this is a grey area of both politics and financial matters. They continue that the SSMU does not have to wait for fees to expire, so there is no issue with the expiration dates of these fees.

Director Wan states that he would be in favour of shorter fee durations to improve accountability of Services when following new guidelines. Director Marpole agrees with Director Frizzle, stating that they do not believe that it matters when these fees expire.

There is no further discussion.

6. Legislative Council Motions for Ratification:

The Board approves items b, c, f, i-m and o-s by unanimous consent.

Director Smith states that the Faculty of Arts taking control of the Writing Centre's management will have no effect on the services offered to all SSMU members, and has received confirmation on this from the interim Dean of Arts.

a. [Motion Regarding a Policy on Harmful Military Technology 2021-01-28](#) — **REFERRED TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Director Karasick states that they have concerns with the wording in this policy. They state that the scope of the policy is unclear, and that it contains numerous pieces of incorrect information. They state that this is not good governance, and in addition definitions are broad such that it could be interpreted as the SSMU having a position against nuclear power. This motion threatens the SSMU's relationship with the University, and there is no way that it is actionable at the University level. They believe that this motion is infeasible as written.

Director Frizzle states that these concerns were addressed at the Legislative Council, so if there are no operational concerns, they don't understand how the Board of Directors has rationale to act here. They state that this falls under the portfolio of the VP University Affairs, not the Board of Directors. They state that this is a purely political motion and the Board should not interject at this point, given that the concerns raised were already brought up in the Legislative Council. Director Bhutkar states that the notion that something isn't in the Board's purview is false. They continue that Directors have the obligation to ensure that things that pass through the Board are sound, and that Directors can do whatever they see fit to ensure that the corporation functions properly. They state that Directors should be looking at proposed policies with regard to how it impacts relationships between the SSMU and other entities that it works with.

Director Mackie thanks Director Karasick for bringing up this point and the discussions had at the Legislative Council that many Directors do not get to participate in. They state that they believe Director Karasick's concerns are important, and ask them to elaborate on what they believe is



incorrect in this motion. They continue by noting that Director Karasick's concerns come from a place of seeking good governance which is the purview of the Board.

Director Karasick states that many of their points were not addressed properly at the Legislative Council, and this policy does directly affect the Board. As an example of incorrect information, they note that uranium mined in Canada is almost exclusively used for nuclear fuel, not weapons as is stated in the policy. They add that there is an allegation that thermobaric weapons developed at the SWPG (McGill Shockwave Physics Group) have been used in Iraq and Afghanistan, but that this information is not cited and cannot be verified as true.

Director Sanchez states that it doesn't serve the Board to be talking about the veracity of this information. She continues that this can be revised later on if necessary.

Director Frizzle explains that they would like to continue the discussion on the role of the Board of Directors. They state that they understand that under the Quebec Companies Act the Board has no limit on its role, however the SSMU's internal regulations state that the Board should only overturn a motion in the case of a legal or operational threat to the Society. They continue that the SSMU has put these practices in place to give the Legislative Council a way to prescribe the political concerns of the Society, and it is a dangerous precedent for the Board to get involved in this work. They understand Director Karasick's concerns, but do not believe the Board should prescribe the quality of policies, and it is important to maintain this distinction as Directors are not elected. As such, they should not be involved in these discussions.

International Student Representative Parsons states that the Board should not ratify something that contains information that is clearly false. She believes it is a poor precedent for the Board to allow factual inaccuracies. Director Mackie states that they are most concerned by having truth reflected in documents presented by the SSMU. They suggest sending this motion back to the Legislative Council with edits on the areas of concern. Director Karasick explains that the scope of the policy is also a concern, as the motion calls for a cessation of military research at McGill. They believe that the policy was introduced on premises different to those that are written within it, and that the policy notes risks to research opportunities at McGill and does not address them. He concludes that it is completely normal for the Board to ask for revisions, and while they don't believe it should be done often, they do believe it is warranted in this case.

Director Sanchez states that the concern with the scope of the policy may not be met with airtight solutions from the Legislative Council. The best option may be to send this motion back to Council with the sections that are inaccurate to be highlighted. Director Wan agrees that everything approved by the Board of Directors should be properly scrutinized and would second a motion to return this to the Legislative Council.

Director Frizzle states that the Board is doing this against the Internal Regulations of Governance. They continue that these concerns are fair, but that Director Karasick has not presented anything not



addressed at the Legislative Council, and the policy was passed regardless. They do not believe concerns already discussed at Council are a valid reason to return this policy. Director Mackie proposes returning the motion to the Steering Committee to review the facts of the motion. Directors Sanchez and Wan state that they are amenable to this.

[VP External arrives at 21:15.]

[The Board enters a recess from 21:16 to 21:21.]

VP External states that they would like to address concerns with this policy. Director Karasick expresses the points regarding factual inaccuracies and concerns regarding scope. They continue that they are concerned that this policy will harm relationships with the university as its goals will result in a significant loss of funding for the university.

Question:

Director Ogunremi asks why these concerns are sufficient to warrant returning the motion to the Legislative Council and why the motion was not amended at the Legislative Council.

Answer:

Director Karasick states that these concerns were raised at Legislative Council and then dismissed. They state that this is relevant to the Board as it would risk the SSMU promoting false information, or the operations of the Society due to its scope being unclear.

Question:

Director Frizzle asks if this Board can pass this motion within the confines of the SSMU's governing documents.

Answer:

The Governance Manager responds in the affirmative.

Motion to return the motion to the Steering Committee with the sections mentioned highlighted for review, to then be returned to the Legislative Council.

VP External states that this policy is not limited to transparency and is clearly intended to advocate for a campus free from military research. He continues that no amendments were raised at the Legislative Council, and as such they do not believe that these concerns were dismissed as mentioned earlier.

Director Wan states that a motion known to be factually incorrect should not be ratified as it is negligence on behalf of the Board - a legal concern. Director Mackie states that she suggested the



Steering Committee as a review should not propose a problem. She continues that movers of motions at the Legislative Council have a duty to ensure that their motions are accurate. International Student Representative Parsons agrees, and if false information was presented to the Legislative Council this could change the debate or mislead Councillors. She notes that they agree ratifying this motion would be negligence on behalf of the Board of Directors.

Voting Procedure:

In Favour: Director Earle, Director Collins, Director Karasick, Director Wan, Director Bhutkar, Director Sanchez, Director Mackie, Director Chan

Opposed: Director Frizzle, Director Marpole

Abstaining: Director Atker, Director Smith

The motion is not ratified and returned to the Steering Committee.

- b. [Motion Regarding a Position on Institutions of Public Safety 2021-01-28](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

This motion is approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.

- c. [Motion Regarding the Creation of the Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Committee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

This motion is approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.

- d. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Increase of the SSMU Membership Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED**

Items 6d and 6e are discussed and voted on simultaneously.

- e. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Amendment of the Constitution 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED**

Items 6d and 6e are discussed and voted on simultaneously. Director Chan moves to vote on these motions by roll call.

Voting Procedure:

In Favour: Director Earle, Director Frizzle, Director Atker, Director Marpole, Director Collins, Director Karasick, Director Wan, Director Sanchez



Opposed: None

Abstaining: Director Bhutkar, Director Chan, Director Mackie, Director Smith

The motion is approved.

- f. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the Midnight Kitchen Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

This motion is approved unanimously.

- g. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the Safety Services Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED**

Director Wan states that passing Services' fees is not in the interest of the Society at this time and they will be voting against each motion. As these departments are running surpluses, they are in favour of a shorter timeline or lower fee.

In Favour: Director Earle, Director Frizzle, Director Atker, Director Marpole, Director Collins, Director Karasick, Director Bhutkar, Director Mackie, Director Chan

Opposed: Director Wan

Abstaining: Director Smith

The motion is approved.

- h. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the Peer Support Centre Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED**

Items 6h and 6n are discussed and voted on simultaneously.

In Favour: Director Earle, Director Frizzle, Director Atker, Director Marpole, Director Collins, Director Karasick, Director Bhutkar, Director Mackie, Director Chan, Director Smith

Opposed: Wan

Abstaining: None

The motion is approved.



- i. [Motion to Approve the SSAMMOSA Committee Terms of Reference 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- j. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on Renewal of the Mental Health Fee 2021-02-11](#) -- **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- k. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the Anti-Violence Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- l. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the SSMU Access Bursary Fund Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- m. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the University Centre Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- n. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the the Renewal of the TVM: Student Television at McGill Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED**

The motion is approved.

- o. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on Discretionary Funding for Queer McGill 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- p. [Motion Regarding Referendum Question on the Renewal of the Access McGill Ancillary Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- q. [Motion Regarding a Renewal and Increase of the WUSC Student Refugee Program Fee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**



The motion is approved unanimously.

- r. [Motion Regarding MSA Service Fee Referendum Question 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

- s. [Report-Services Review Committee 2021-02-11](#) — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The motion is approved unanimously.

7. Minutes for Approval

- a. Board of Directors Public Minutes 2021-02-04 — **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

There are no changes to the minutes. The minutes are approved unanimously.

8. Motions for Approval

There are no motions for approval.

9. For Discussion

There are no items for discussion.

10. Adjournment: **21:55**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Earle'.

Jemark Earle, President