



# MOTION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO SSMU'S AFFORDABLE STUDENT HOUSING GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS 2021-04-08

Submitted for: 2021-04-08

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-04-08-003
<b>Moved by:</b>	Ayo Ogunremi <i>Vice-President (External Affairs)</i>	<b>Current Status:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
<b>Seconded by:</b>	Darshan Daryanani <i>Senate Caucus Representative</i>		

## Issue

This motion seeks to establish more concrete directives for the SSMU's advocacy on social housing and affordable student housing, by expanding its position on affordable student housing and updating the terms of reference of the Affordable Student Housing Committee.

## Background and Rationale

After the SSMU Public Assembly on Student Housing, the Affordable Student Housing Committee received new suggestions for directions and priorities to focus on in the upcoming year, in order to better meet the principal concerns of students relating to access to housing, including student housing. At the same time, the Committee recognised a need to expand its basis for advocacy on housing-related issues, given the brevity of the SSMU Position on Affordable Student Housing.

To address these concerns, this motions seeks to amend both the ASH Committee terms of reference and the Position on affordable student housing.

## Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with the SSMU's commitment to showing leadership on



matters of human rights, social justice and accessible education, as well as with SSMU's commitment to provide services to strengthen the educational, cultural, environmental, political, and social conditions of its members. This motion builds on the commitments outlined in the Affordable Student Housing Plan, the Accessible Education and Academics Policy, the Equity Policy, Sustainability Policy, the Indigenous Solidarity Policy, and the Accessibility Policy.

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### Consultations Completed

This motion was drafted in collaboration with the Community Affairs Commissioner, the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, McGill Off-Campus & Commuter Student Support, and members of the Affordable Student Housing Committee, in consultation with the Committee at large.

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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Adopting the proposed amendments to the Position on Affordable Student Housing would provide a clear basis for SSMU to conduct the external advocacy that it is called upon to engage in, whether regarding predatory landlord practices, Indigenous homelessness, or the promotion of social housing.

Adopting the proposed amendments to the Affordable Student Housing Committee Terms of Reference would implicate SSMU Executives and staff more in the Committee's activities than has previously been the case. In particular, the proposed amendments would add to the work of the VP Finance and the Finance Committee to ensure that SSMU is not invested in unsustainable housing assets, and the VP University Affairs in conducting advocacy towards the university regarding student residences.

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### Sustainability Considerations

The sustainability implications of this motion are primarily of a social and economic nature, as it seeks to recognise the importance of affordable, accessible, and permanent housing in individual and social well-being.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If passed, the Governance Manager will add the amended Position on Affordable Student Housing to the SSMU Positions Book, and the amended Affordable Student Housing Committee Terms of Reference to the Committee Terms of Reference Book.

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**Motion or  
Resolution for  
Approval**

Be it resolved, that the Legislative Council approve the amendments to the Position on Affordable Student Housing as outlined in Appendix A;

Be it further resolved, that the Legislative Council approve the amendments to the Affordable Student Housing Committee terms of reference as outlined in Appendix B.

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**Results of the  
Vote**

In favour	(CONSENT)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()

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APPROVED



## Appendix A : Proposed amendments

### Position on affordable student housing

In taking a leadership role in advocacy and operations surrounding the movement toward affordable student housing and other sustainable housing options, the SSMU believes:

1. In the aim to decommodify the housing market and in challenging the assumption that having a roof over one's head is a privilege
2. That housing should be clean, safe, affordable, and easily accessible to all.
  - 2.1. That such housing is the foundation for both personal and collective health, wellbeing, and success.
  - 2.2. That exorbitant housing prices impose significant financial burdens on students, negatively affecting their mental health and jeopardizing their academic success.
3. In the decommodification of housing, given that housing is a human right and its access should not be hindered by one's capacity to pay.
  - 3.1. In cooperative, public and non-profit housing as long-term alternatives to market-based housing.
4. That homelessness and housing precarity is a product of systemic factors and structural issues, including but not limited to the financialization of housing, unregulated housing markets, and a scarcity of social (i.e. cooperative, public, and non-profit) housing.
5. That settler colonialism, ongoing settler exploitation of unceded lands, and ongoing systemic discrimination greatly increase Indigenous peoples' risk of experiencing homelessness.
  - 5.1. In the priority of promoting accessible, permanent housing options for Indigenous peoples.
6. In the need to inform students, as well as the general public, of tenants' rights, predatory landlord practices, non-market housing, and other pertinent resources, to give them the necessary tools to comfortably and responsibly navigate housing and its associated issues.
7. That this information should be available in accessible formats, taking into account people with disabilities and those experiencing language or cultural barriers.
8. That affordable student housing can reduce the negative impact of studentification on neighbourhoods.
9. That access to education is inextricably linked to having access to affordable, secure housing and thus, students of low socioeconomic status should be prioritized in the provision of affordable student housing.
10. That the provision of social housing is an especially important aspect of preventing gentrification-induced displacement.



## Appendix B: Proposed amendments

### 1. Affordable Student Housing Committee

#### 1.1. Oversight

The Affordable Student Housing Committee shall be a Committee of the Legislative Council.

#### 1.2. General

The Affordable Student Housing Committee shall explore avenues for securing and promoting affordable student housing, as well as advising developers regarding students' priorities in housing, as well as advising developers regarding students' priorities in housing arrangements and design.

#### 1.3. Responsibilities

The Affordable Student Housing Committee shall:

- a) Conduct adequate research into problems surrounding housing in the City of Montreal;
- b) Plan consultation sessions with students and student groups to get a better understanding of their housing desires and needs;
- c) Advocate for the development of both affordable and social housing, tenants' rights, sanitary living conditions, and the decommodification of the housing market.
- d) Liaise with the Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE) and other groups aiming at affordable housing options, to both plan constructions and give input for ~~it~~ to the design of constructions.
  - i) One member of the Affordable Student Housing Committee, elected from among its membership, shall sit on UTILE's governing bodies to steer its approach in helping secure affordable student housing.
- e) ~~Work with the Legal Information Clinic at McGill to inform students about their housing rights, particularly as this pertains to rent increases.~~
- f) Regularly inform the student body, members of the public and other relevant actors about ongoing housing issues including, but not limited to, the financialization of the market, gentrification, studentification, tenants' rights, and Quebec's unique housing protections.
  - i) In addition to providing information, such sessions shall be used to provide attendees with tangible tools and ideas to combat problematic housing phenomena and to promote more sustainable options.
  - ii) Such sessions should be coordinated with the Legal Information Clinic at McGill and other organisations where possible (HOJO, ACORN, FRAPRU, POPIR, etc.).



- g) Promote existing affordable housing options to the student body in collaboration with the Communications department of the SSMU.
- h) Coordinate with the SSMU VP Finance and Finance Committee to ensure that the SSMU is not invested in REITs and other companies actively working to financialize the housing market.
  - i) Advocate similarly for McGill University to divest from such companies.
- i) Coordinate with SSMU Executives and staff to ensure that the SSMU does not promote housing options that are inaccessible (such as Campus 1 MTL) or that promote gentrification, and advocate for more sustainable housing options, including at McGill University residences.

## 1.4. Membership

The Affordable Student Housing Committee shall consist of:

- a) the Community Affairs Commissioner (Chair);
- b) the Vice-President (External Affairs) (non-voting);
- c) two (2) Councillors;
- d) two (2) Members-at-Large;
- e) a representative from the Inter-Residence Council;
- f) an off-campus representative from COMunity;
- g) a representative from ECOLE;
- h) a Member from the School of Urban Planning;
- i) a Member from the Urban Studies program; and
- j) the Vice-President (Finance).

## 1.5. Meetings

The Affordable Student Housing Committee shall meet ~~bi-weekly~~ monthly, unless special business comes to the attention of the Committee Members. The Committee will be given a full week's notice before a special meeting is convened.

## 1.6. Quorum

The quorum for the Affordable Student Housing Committee is a simple majority of the voting members.

## 1.7. Reporting

The Affordable Student Housing Committee will report to ~~the~~ Legislative Council once per semester on the progress of their work.