



SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

August 19, 2021

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 18:00.

Present: Lauren Hill (Chair, non-voting), Eric Sader (Officer), Claire Downie (Officer), Darshan Daryanani (Officer, non-voting), Sarah Paulin (Officer, non-voting), Paige Collins (Legislative Councillor), Alex Karasick (Legislative Councillor), Rohan Bhutkar (Member-at-Large), Beatrice Mackie (Member-at-Large), Adin Chan (Member-at-Large), Addy Parsons (International Student Representative, non-voting), General Manager (non-voting), Benson Wan (Legislative Councillor), Karla Heisele Cubilla (Officer), Sacha Delouvrier (Officer, non-voting, arrived at 18:36)

1. Call to Order: **18:26**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:26 on August 19, 2021.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair presents the Land Acknowledgment.

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. Attendance

The Chair reads out the attendance of Board members.

4. Adoption of the Agenda -- **APPROVED**

The Agenda is adopted.

5. Executive Committee Public Report



Officer Daryanani presents the Executive Committee Public Report. There were multiple hirings and job descriptions to better improve the Society's operations.

There are no questions on the report.

6. Email Approvals

- a. Motion to approve the dates for Clubs & Services and First Year Council Elections
2021-08-10 --**APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY 2021-08-11**

This motion was approved unanimously by email on August 11, 2021.

Officer Daryanani thanks the Board members for voting on this motion in an efficient manner as this helped with preparations for this election.

7. Motions for Approval

There are no motions for approval in this session.

8. For Discussion

- a. COVID-19 vaccination mandate/motion discussion -- **REFERRED TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Director Wan refers to an email communication about a COVID-19 vaccination mandate for SSMU staff and would like to discuss this. He notes that as per Quebec Labour laws, it is not legal to mandate staff to show their vaccination status, but notes that Councillors, Directors and Executives can fall into the category of accepted groups. Many schools in Quebec and Canada have vaccination mandates in their campuses.

Director Mackie is not certain if SSMU would be able to mandate its representatives at this point. However, advocating McGill University to pass a vaccine mandate would be preferable.

Director Downie expresses her agreement with advocating the McGill Administration to have a vaccine mandate. She notes that she prepared a draft of what could be sent out to call upon McGill University.

Director Sader notes that Executives would not be able to request proof of vaccine status as they are SSMU employees. He is also concerned about advocating for a vaccine mandate with McGill University, as this would pose a concern for international students at the University. Further, he is not opposed to vaccines and is in fact in favour of them. International students have been told by the University that there would not be a vaccine mandate on campus and made financial commitments to attend on campus and rent agreements. Director Sader continues that with McGill University's current



infrastructure of online teaching, they would have to end up barring individuals from an education, who cannot or may not get vaccinated due to religious reasons or other. This would prevent international students from obtaining an education this year, which will lead to a deferral or a loss of a significant monetary sum, which is a serious ask. Given that this discussion is happening two (2) weeks before the academic year begins, it can have serious financial implications on international students.

[Officer Delouvrier arrives at 18:36.]

Director Karasick echoes Director Mackie's comments. SSMU has seen advocacy from faculties and staff for a vaccine mandate, which gives SSMU an advantage to advocate for a vaccine mandate. He notes that it also gives SSMU an advantage as students stand with faculties and staff. As for international students, McGill University indicated in their email from this morning that they will be implementing a vaccination centre on campus, which is a reasonable accommodation. He further explains that exemptions can be accounted for, just as they are with the Quebec government.

Director Chan supports a vaccine mandate and appreciates the idea of this mandate. He explains that the Executive Committee would be best suited to deal with this matter, rather than the Board's time to discuss the nuances at this time. He would look favourably on the Board to delegate this matter to the Executive Committee.

International Student Representative Parsons agrees with comments made above, and notes that it would be useful to review the Town Hall from McGill and this appears to be in discussion on the Agenda later to review what SSMU can adopt in this situation, similar to McGill University. She notes that SSMU has not released a statement or position on vaccines or vaccination campaigns. She explains that it would be useful to release a statement on encouraging vaccinations and vaccination campaigns, as it was not included in the statement that was just released.

Director Wan responds to Director Sader about international students being affected by a vaccine mandate. He explains that if international students cannot be vaccinated or other, it would be useful to have twice a week testing on campus. He further mentions the implementation of the vaccine passport at Gerts' Bar. All bars will be subject to the vaccine passport in Quebec, and asks if SSMU staff will be able to handle and review the vaccine passport.

Director Bhutkar notes that it may be difficult to collaborate or advocate with the University about a vaccine mandate. According to the University's lawyers, to privacy laws within the province, Quebec and McGill cannot disadvantage an individual from participating or entering the University, whether or not they have been vaccinated. He notes that it is a matter of interpretation. It has been made clear from the University that they [McGill University] will not be utilizing the vaccine passports. He further explains that in regards to the Science Undergraduate Society (SUS), they will be utilizing the vaccine passports for events and office space, once they review what the requirements are for using these passports.



Officer Delouvrier responds to Director Bhutkar and points out that McGill University seems to be hiding behind Quebec Laws, and notes that it is entirely doable to implement a vaccine passport. He understands that for equity reasons, we cannot mandate students to do this, but it would be a viable position for SSMU to advocate McGill University for the vaccine mandate. He refers to the University of Waterloo, where even visitors on campus need to present proof of vaccination; however, staff and students at the university are exempted from taking the vaccine, if they are not able to or do not wish to take the vaccine.

[Director Heisele Cubilla arrives at 18:45.]

Director Mackie agrees with Director Chan's comments and does not believe this discussion should happen at the Board level, but should rather be delegated to the Executive Committee. She clarifies that it is up to the SSMU to iron out the policy or exemptions that should be in place for the vaccine passport; these are details that are for the McGill Administration to finalize. There have been many open letters by students and professors at McGill University. Since SSMU does have a representation mandate, SSMU should have a statement including all the open letters that have been circulating and taking a position on this. All the universities that have implemented a vaccine passport have done so in a different way. She further notes that SSMU should advocate for students' needs in this matter.

Director Downie agrees with Director Mackie. She notes that SSMU would not advocate for a policy that would restrict international students or other, from any type of situations or activities. The question at hand remains whether or not SSMU wishes to take a stance on this topic at this time.

Director Sader motions to move the two discussion items and refer them to the Executive Committee for discussion. This is amended to only the first item of discussion. Seconded by Director Chan. This is approved and the item is referred back to the Executive Committee.

Director Wan wishes to discuss the item 8.b.

Director Downie notes that this topic is time-sensitive and the Executive Committee will not be meeting until Monday.

Director Karasick asks to include a timeline until the Board will receive a response from the Executive team, for instance, by Monday.

Director Downie notes that the Executive Committee is scheduled on Thursday afternoons. She further explains that the resources implicated for a statement would not be available until next week.

This item is referred to the Executive Committee for discussion.

b. Gerts' and vaccine passport



Director Wan notes that this falls under the jurisdiction of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, as starting September 1, 2021, all bars and restaurants will require vaccine passports to enter the establishments in question.

Question:

Director Wan asks the Board, Executive and Governance Manager if there are resources available for this.

Answer:

The General Manager responds that Gerts' Bar will adhere to the government regulations. He notes that we will have a security guard at the entrance to scan the passports and capacity requirements.

There is no further discussion on this item.

9. Next Meeting Date:

- a. September 9, 2021 at 18:00 EST

The Chair announces that the next meeting date will be on September 9, 2021 at 18:00 EST.

10. Confidential Session: **18:54**

Director Wan motions for the Board of Directors to enter into a confidential session, seconded by Director Mackie.

The Board of Directors enters into a confidential session at 18:54.

11. Adjournment: **23:24**

The Board of Directors meeting is adjourned at 23:24.

Éric Sader, Vice-President (Finance)