



SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

September 30, 2021

The regular bi-weekly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference, on September 30, 2021 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:04**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:04 on September 30, 2021.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the 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. Moment of silence

The Speaker calls the Council to a moment of silence as this is the Day of the Truth and Reconciliation.

The Speaker invites everyone to reflect and think about the significance of the day.

4. Attendance

The Speaker notes that Councillors Awan, Dakdouki, Kugelmass, Eiley, and Cayard are absent.

The Speaker moves to the agenda item 5 and asks someone to move forward with the adoption of the agenda.

5. Adoption of the Agenda --**ADOPTED**

Councillor Wan has an amendment to move the agenda item 10.a to item 6 on the Agenda.

The Speaker verifies if there are any objections to the Councillor Wan's amendment.

Seeing no objections, the Speaker moves item number 10a to number 6 on the agenda.



The Speaker verifies if anyone else would like to amend the agenda. Seeing no amendment, the Speaker asks to adopt the agenda.

Councillor Wan adopts the agenda, VP Finance seconds the adoption of the agenda.

6. Old Business

- a. Motion Regarding Campus Outaouais Representation at the SSMU Legislative Council
2021-09-23 -- **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The Speaker notes the motion was presented last week and proceeds to give the floor to Councillor Wan to respond to questions.

The Speaker proposes to hold a short presentation period in order to refresh the Council Members as to the meaning of this motion. The Speaker confirms if there are any objections. Seeing none, the Speaker gives Councillor Wan five (5) minutes to refresh the Council on this motion.

Councillor Wan states that this motion aims to include proper representation of Campus Outaouais at Legislative Council. This motion was initially started about a year ago, in October of 2020; however, the motion was repeatedly delayed at many different levels and it resulted in Campus Outaouais having a SSMU requisition on their Council but there are no spots for them on Legislative Council.

Students of the Campus Outaouais are located in Gatineau, Quebec and the students are instructed in French, thus Councillor Wan states that the students on this campus have unique challenges: they are instructed in a different language and are geographically separated from the McGill main campus which is located in downtown Montreal. As such without representation on the Legislative Council, they are not adequately represented and their needs are not adequately voiced at this level. Councillor Wan believes that they deserved a spot at the Legislative Council where representatives could share their concerns.

Question:

VP Finance thanks Councillor Wan for the presentation and asks a question regarding the logistics moving forward after this year. He understands how a representative could easily attend the Council meetings right now as they are hosted online. Considering the geography of the Campus Outaouais, the VP Finance would like to know what is the plan if the Legislative Council moves back to in-person meetings. He further asks if this motion is pushing for the idea that the Legislative Council should stay online, or is there a plan in place if the transition happens.

Answer:



Councillor Wan believes that a hybrid session could be possible, if we return to in-person meetings. He further explains that this motion's scope is not to modify the Standing Rules in any way. Councillor Wan does not want to define the rules for the future Legislative Council within this motion but the Councillor thinks that there are options. For example, in the rules for the Legislative Council, it can be indicated that the students who are not located in downtown Montreal will be able to teleconference into the call. Councillor Wan believes that this option could be extended to the representatives on the Macdonald Campus. Councillor Wan underlines again that the scope of this motion is limited to the student representation and not to how the hybrid sessions would work; that should be defined in the standing rules of the future Legislative Council.

VP Internal Affairs understands that this motion calls for the changing of the Constitution; however, there are already plans on revising the Constitution later this year which would mean that the Constitution will be changed two times in one year. VP is worried about the logistics of this and asks Councillor Wan if this motion could possibly wait until the revision of the Constitution later this year. This way it will only be revised once this year.

Councillor Wan states that this motion was supposed to be addressed at the referendum, where the other constitutional changes would be made, so as such both revisions will be addressed at the same referendum. Councillor Wan underlines that this will be counted as two changes but they will be made at the same time. In the Fall 2020 Referendum, this change was supposed to be passed with other changes but those changes were not adopted due to lack of quorum. Councillor Wan explains that after that experience, it was decided to present this motion as a separate question to avoid any similar issues. The Councillor recaps by saying that two separate questions will be brought up at the same referendum (Fall 2021/Winter2021).

VP Finance notes that MCSS has a seat on the Legislative Council and it is a non-voting seat, and so it is in a somewhat similar position to the Gatineau constituency except for the fact that there is no SSMU equivalent for the Gatineau branch. He would like to inquire if there are any plans or discussions of such alternative service happening, or if the Gatineau constituency is staying within SSMU. VP Finance believes that this would have a difference on whether or not it should be a voting or a non-voting seat: if it is planning on staying within SSMU, it should be a voting seat; however, if it is planning on having something like MCSS, it should be a non-voting position. Outaouais Campus students pay SSMU fees, and in the foreseeable future they are going to stay at SSMU. AS of now the students are paying the same fees as the students who attend downtown campus; So currently in the view of the Councillor Wan the students at Gatineau campus are being taxed without being represented. As such the Gatineau campus students will stay within the SSMU, and to the best knowledge of the Councillor there are no current plans to adopt a local University of Quebec local at Outaouais Students' Society. And if there will be any changes, they can be discussed in the future but for the foreseeable future they are going to be a SSMU student group.



Seeing no questions, the Speaker moves to the debate period, starting with 6 minutes. The Speaker asks those who wish to speak to raise their hands.

Seeing no one wanting to debate, the Speaker proceeds directly to voting on this motion. The Speaker advises the Council members where to find the voting form. The Speaker reminds the Council members to ignore the consent item on top of the voting form as this motion was moved on top.

The Speaker asks the members to raise their hands if they are having any troubles getting to the voting form.

The Speaker announces that the motion passes unanimously.

7. Report of the Steering Committee

The Speaker states that the Steering Committee was held on Monday, September the 27th. The Speaker, the Governance Manager, the Parliamentarian as well as one of the two (2) Councillors elected last time were present at this committee.

The Steering Committee discussed the implementation of the minute of silence that has already been done here today; but more importantly, the Steering Committee discussed possible changes to the schedule of the Legislative Council meetings. All the Council members will receive a form in the next few days asking to collect some data about possible changes to the Legislative Council schedule. These changes will include, but will not be limited to, changes of the date, the time, and the frequency of the Legislative Council meetings.

The next point in the agenda - the Generative discussion - is here to discuss the possibility of changes to the schedule. The main goal here is for all the Councillors to be able to come to this meeting without any trouble and that this meeting does not conflict with anyone's schedule; that way all the Councillors will be able to carry out their job responsibilities of being a councillor.

a. Generative discussion on meeting schedule

The Speaker asks anyone who wishes to speak to raise their hands.

Councillor Djoussou asks if there are any proposed changes to the schedule or if those will be presented after the form has been sent out.

The Speaker says that the form will serve to get an idea of the general idea of the Council regarding the changes.



VP Finance is hesitant about changing the schedule. He assumed that at least for this semester the meeting would be held on Thursday evenings. The VP believes that was the understanding of other Councillors. VP Finance states that he built his schedule around this schedule and it would cause him issues to restructure the schedule. He concludes by saying that he would not want to make any changes to the schedule this semester, but would be ready to do so for the next semester.

Councillor Zhang shares that she has a recurring conflict with this meeting: the Councillor is missing another commitment everytime she attends the Legislative Council. That being said, the Councillor would like to know what would happen to those having recurring conflicts with this meeting and who simply will not be able to attend the meeting if the majority of Council members will not want to change current time.

VP External Affairs says that all the Executives, himself included, have many recurring meetings with external parties, casual and full-time staff. Thus, changing the time of the Legislative Council will be difficult at this time mainly because many recurring meetings are already set for the semester.

Councillor Zhang notes that Councillors were not consulted on the scheduling of the Legislative Council meetings. If this would have been communicated earlier, she would have told the Council that there was a conflict on the Councillor's schedule. Councillor Zhang believes that it is unfair that the schedule was not communicated to everyone beforehand and also that the change is only being proposed now. This situation now is giving the Council a lot of valid issues as expressed by the VPs.

As a returning councillor, Councillor Tiniacos shares the fact that for the past three (3) years all Legislative Council meetings have been held at this exact time and day, on Thursdays at 18:00. Councillor Tiniacos assumes that this is the reason why Councillors were not consulted regarding the schedule. Also, the Councillor says that he was not able to find the proposed schedule or the report of the Steering Committee, and inquires if it would be possible to share these documents in the group chat.

The Speaker apologises and says that he is aware that he is not supposed to intervene but he would like to comment on the subject of the report of the Steering Committee. The Speaker states that the report has not been finalized and this discussion is to get a better sense of possible changes that may or may not occur. The Speaker underlines that the Council wants to adopt what is best for the Councillors, and if most Councillors believe that the change in scheduling is not for the best, it won't happen.

VP External Affairs speaks in regards to the meetings times and conflicts. He notes that a change in time might create other conflicts in schedules of those already having conflicts in their schedules such as the VP himself. The VP adds that he knows that historically the meetings of the Legislative Council have been on Thursdays at this time. VP External Affairs believes that other commitments would be compromised. VP External Affairs thinks that even if the meeting time will be changed for the upcoming semester, member's commitments and obligations should be accounted for.



Councillor Djoussu suggests meeting on weekends so that everyone can attend to their other commitments.

The Speaker says that this will be added as an option on the form that will be sent.

The Speaker asks if there are any other discussion points. Seeing none, the Speaker thanks the members for the productive generative discussion and puts it to an end.

8. Announcements

VP Finance announces that the Funding Committee as well as the Health and Dental Review Committee are looking for Councillors, noting that not enough Councillors signed up for these committees last meeting. The committees want to start meeting as soon as possible. VP Finance states that there are many opportunities: working on one of these committees can impact many people, and there is a lot of work that can be done in regards to social justice. If any Councillor is interested, they can send a message to VP Finance and sign up for a committee. These committees are very important for Clubs and Services and for our insurance program so it is essential to have people on them. VP Finance urges members to apply, if they have not done so already.

VP External Affairs announces that the Affordable Housing Committee also needs councillors on their board. SSMU's partner, UTILE, has found possible lots of land, and the Affordable Housing Committee needs to start meeting ASAP to discuss the different areas on which we could conduct a set plan.

9. Question Period

a. Questions from Councillor Tiniacos (2)

The Speaker reads the questions from Councillor Tiniacos which were sent in advance. The Speaker announces that he will be allowing two (2) minutes per question.

The Speaker announces that the first question pertains to the DriveSafe/WalkSafe programs.

Question from Councillor Tiniacos:

Why are DriveSafe/WalkSafe, two of the most important services SSMU operates, being cut with no words to the student body?"

Answer:

VP Student Life responds that both services are planning to operate in October, though she is not certain of the exact date. These services were not able to start earlier as their volunteer base did not allow them to do so and they started recruiting a lot more people. She further explains that the services in question are trying to get back on track but it is very difficult with



COVID-19 regulations to just through volunteers out there; this would not be safe for the volunteers and the presidents of DriveSafe/WalkSafe are not comfortable with this idea.

Councillor Claret adds that they have a call scheduled with the president of DriveSafe later today and will be able to update the Council on this topic at the next meeting.

The Speaker indicates the second question is regarding the New Royal Vic Project.

Question from Councillor Tiniacos:

Why is the key part of this protest about the lack of student consultation when SSMU and the university have been running consultations since 2017? Why has there been no public student consultation about SSMU's position regarding the Royal Vic?

Answer:

VP External Affairs states that the reason on why the big emphasis on student consultation has been made is because after meeting with the McGill Administration, it became clear, to VP External Affairs, that they [McGill Administration] have not done a proper consultation with many groups that should have been consulted regarding the Royal Victoria Hospital Project. More specifically regarding Indigenous groups, local communities and student communities. At this time, after meeting with the McGill University regarding their master plan for the site, it appears that the University had no willingness to shift and listen to student needs. Regarding the website and the second part of the question, the consultation with the majority of the student body was not made simply because it was a time sensitive issue and the position that was taken stood by the SSMU's Position Book.

The Speaker announces that the question period will be extended for an additional two (2) minutes, this way if there are any other questions that members would like to ask or if Councillor Tiniacos would like to add another question to this list, they can do so.

Councillor Djoussu would like to know if there has been an update on ancillary fees moratorium.

The Speaker states that Councillor Djoussu's question will be deferred to the next Legislative Council. The Speaker asks the Councillor to send an email with the question, so that it could be forwarded to a Councillor or Executive who could answer this question in proper details on the next question period.



Question:

Councillor Khamis would like to know why the SSMU President is not in attendance at today's Legislative Council meeting.

Answer:

VP Internal Affairs responds that the SSMU President is currently unavailable.

Question:

As per Councillor Tiniacos's understanding, it is a part of the duties as the SSMU President to be a part of Legislative Council Meetings, however, this is the second meeting in a row that the SSMU President is not in attendance. Councillor Tiniacos would like to know if the members can expect to have the President, a leading figure of the Society, present at the meetings?

Answer:

VP Internal Affairs says that though the President is supposed to be present at the Legislative Council meetings, he is currently unavailable. VP Internal Affairs says that Executives will continue updating the Council on whether or not the President is available, but at this time, he is not available and this is all that the VP could share.

There are no further questions.

10. Recess, Consent Items

The Speaker skips item 10 on the agenda as there are no consent items at this moment.

The Speaker gives the floor to Councillor Tiniacos.

Councillor Tiniacos wants to pass a motion to suspend the Standing Rules and to move to a generative discussion on The McGill Daily article *Sexism and Silence in the SSMU* and the accountability of the Executives.

The Speaker states that this is in order, but Councillor Tiniacos will need a seconder for this motion. Councillor Khamis seconds the motion.

Councillor Tiniacos understands that this may be out of order and asks if he could motivate this motion briefly.

The Speaker states that that would be out of order. The Speaker can not allow Councillor Tiniacos to motivate this motion as then members would have to be allowed to respond and extend the debate.



The Speaker reminds the Council that a suspension of the Standing Rules requires a 3/4 majority vote. The Speaker creates a Zoom Poll and opens voting.

Voting results:

In favour: 12

Oppose: 5

Abstain: 8

The Speaker announces that the suspension of rules does not pass as it requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote.

11. Reminder for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Events

The Speaker reminds the members that tonight, McGill University is organizing events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The Speaker encourages those who know more details on these events to speak on them. The Speaker encourages the members to participate in these events (if they can). This is essential as students on the unceded territories to participate in the events and truly remember and understand what the land acknowledgements and Orange Shirt Day means.

The Speaker enters the Confidential Session.

12. Confidential Session

The Speaker asks everyone who is not a Councillor or an Executive to exit the call. The Speaker advises those leaving that they can go into a waiting room and then come back or they can leave since it is the last item on the Agenda.

[Legislative Council enters into a Confidential Session, time unknown.]

13. Adjournment: **18:52**

VP External Affairs motions to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councillor Tiniacos.

The Speaker announces that the meeting has been adjourned at 18:52.

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

Éric Sader, Vice-President (Finance)