



# Motion Regarding Progress Updates on SSMU Divestment and Demilitarisation Campaign Mandates 2022-01-20

Submitted for: 2022-01-20

**Submitted to:** SSMU Legislative Council      **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2022-01-20-001

**Moved by:** Yara Coussa  
Arts Representative      **Current Status:**  FOR APPROVAL  
 APPROVED  
 POSTPONED  
 COMMITTED  
 NOT APPROVED

**Seconded by:** Claire Downie  
Vice President University Affairs

**Issue**      Several SSMU policies, namely the [Climate Justice Policy](#), [Policy on Harmful Military Technology](#) and [Divest for Human Rights Policy](#) outline specific mandates for the Society as a whole, as well as for specific portfolios.

**Background and Rationale**      This motion would ensure that the SSMU executives are actively advocating for divestment and demilitarisation, in accordance with the mandates outlined in the [Climate Justice Policy](#), [Policy on Harmful Military Technology](#) and [Divest for Human Rights Policy](#), at the level of the student body as well as the University level, including the McGill Senate and the McGill Board of Governors.

As such, this motion mandates the Vice-President (External Affairs) and the Vice-President (University Affairs) to present reports on the outreach, education and advocacy conducted so far, in accordance with all the mandates outlined in the aforementioned Policies (see Appendix A). These reports should be presented during the “Presentations” section of the March 24th, 2021 Legislative Council.

Furthermore, this motion mandates the Vice-President (Finance) to present a report on the Society’s own investments or other financial relationships with companies linked to fossil fuel extraction (including but not limited to



Royal Bank of Canada) as well as companies involved in any of the activities described in the Climate Justice Policy, Harmful Military Technology Policy, and Divest for Human Rights Policy. The nature of the report would 1) explain and describe our relationship with different corporations we have partnerships and contracts with 2) explain how SSMU is working towards divestment in its own portfolio.

---

### Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with SSMU’s mission and commitment to accountability and transparency. It also aligns with the SSMU’s commitment to demonstrating leadership on matters of human rights, social justice, and environmental protection. The Policy appended to this motion also elaborates the SSMU’s commitments to equity, social sustainability, and international solidarity, as outlined in the Positions Book, the Equity Policy, and the Sustainability Policy.

---

### Consultations Completed

Consultations done with Vice-President (University Affairs), Divest for Human Rights coalition, VP Finance, Vice-President (External Affairs)

---

### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Adopting this motion would promote transparency and the accountability of SSMU Executives on policies and motions that passed because of the important work of student advocacy groups on campus.

---

### Sustainability Considerations

By upholding their mandate to support human rights-based divestment campaigns, the SSMU would be further enabled to promote social, fiscal, and environmental sustainability within the university context, which as defined by the SSMU’s Sustainability Policy, endeavours to address systemic power imbalances within Society and foster a culture of anti-oppression. Moreover, transparency and accountability are key in a sustainable working democracy.

---

### Impact Decision and Next Steps

of If approved, this motion would reinforce the mandate of the SSMU, through the Executive Committee, to support human rights-based divestment campaigns. It would also show that the University Affairs, Finance, and External portfolios are committing to respect their mandates and advocate for divestment.



## Motion or Resolution for Approval

Whereas, the Motion regarding the adoption of the Divest for Human Rights Policy passed in February 16, 2021, mandates the President, Vice-President (University Affairs), and Vice-President (External Affairs) portfolios to advocate in coordination with advocacy groups on campus for divestment;

Whereas, the Executive Committee is accountable to the student body who elected them to represent their interests and advocate on their behalf;

Be it resolved that, the Legislative Council approve the motion mandating the VP University Affairs and VP External Affairs to present a report during the “Presentations” section of Legislative Council showcasing how they have worked towards their mandates outlined in Appendix A;

Be it further resolved that, the Legislative Council approve the motion mandating the Vice-President (Finance) to present a report during the “Presentation” section of Legislative Council showcasing SSMU’s investments and how his portfolio is working toward divestment.

---

## Results of the Vote

In favour	(21)
Opposed	(0)
Abstain	(4)

---



## Appendix A : Relevant excerpt from the DHR Policy:Mandates

### “4.1. External Advocacy

The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs), in concert with student activist organizations on campus, will mobilize a campaign of students and McGill community members.

This campaign will advocate for McGill University to divest from, refrain from investing in, or terminate any other relationships with companies or other institutions listed within this Policy.

At the discretion of the Vice-President (External Affairs), in consultation with relevant stakeholders, this campaign will include, but is not limited to:

- a) Meeting with stakeholder student associations;
- b) Holding protests, demonstrations, and other events around campus; and
- c) Making use of the Society’s social media platforms and communication channels to promote divestment.

### 4.2. University Advocacy

#### 4.2.1. Senate

The Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President will advocate for McGill University to divest from, refrain from investing in, or terminate any other relationships with companies or other institutions listed within this Policy.

In doing so, the Offices of the Vice-President (University Affairs) and President will, among other actions, make use of:

- a) Meetings with faculty, staff, and alumni;
- b) Institutional access to committees and governing bodies;
- c) Senate motions, questions, and policy revisions;
- d) Reviewing relevant documents made available to the Senate, and requesting documents from the Secretariat as necessary.

The Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs) will inform the Senate Caucus of the contents of this Policy and, specifically, the Society’s position on Divestment from the companies outlined in this Policy.



## 4.2.2. Board of Governors

The Society, through the Offices of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and Vice-President (University Affairs), will advocate to the Board of Governors on the issue of divesting from or otherwise terminating relationships with the aforementioned companies.

This advocacy will include, but is not limited to:

- a) The submission of an Expression of Concern to the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility of the Board of Governors; and
- b) Meetings with members of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility of the Board of Governors and of the Board of Governors, at large.

## 4.3. Outreach

The Society will strive to conduct outreach and educate members of the McGill community on the contents of this Policy and its stance on divestment from companies complicit in the aforementioned instances of social harm.

- 1.1.1. To that effect, the Offices of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and Vice-President (University Affairs) will promote the advocacy undertaken under this Policy and regularly update members on the progress of McGill's divestment from institutions listed within this Policy;
- 1.1.2. These promotions and updates will be consistent in form with those of the 'Know Your Rights' campaign and the various political campaigns undertaken by the Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) and will make use of the Society's communications channels, as necessary.

## 5. Accountability

The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) will be charged with monitoring and overseeing compliance with this Policy and reporting on its implementation to the Legislative Council.

- 1.2. To that effect, the Vice-President (External Affairs) will consult regularly with the Officers mandated under this Policy on the implementation of their mandates.
- 1.3. The consultations will inform a Report, presented twice annually to the Legislative Council by the Vice-President (External Affairs).
- 1.4. The Accountability Committee will be notified should an Officer fail to promptly report on their mandate and will investigate such infractions in line with the Committee's Terms of References."