



Motion Regarding the Creation of an Anti-Surveillance Master Plan within the SSMU 2022-01-20

Submitted for: 2022-01-20

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2022-01-20-002

Moved by: Yara Coussa
Arts Representative

Current Status:

- FOR APPROVAL
- APPROVED
- POSTPONED
- COMMITTED
- NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Ghania Javed
Arts Representative

Issue

Many students have been blacklisted, surveilled, doxed or otherwise intimidated by formal and informal groups such as Canary Mission and CampusWatch for engaging in anti-colonial activism or discourse. The existence of these surveillance groups and their targeting of students ultimately suppresses free speech on this campus. Indeed, many students fear that speaking publicly about their political beliefs, or even about their cultural background and ethnic heritage, might result in them being attacked online or in person. To address this problem and promote a campus where freedom of speech and opinion is valued, this motion mandates the internal portfolio to publish a Master Plan that commits SSMU to a comprehensive strategy aiming to combat and ultimately end racist surveillance and doxing at McGill. Further, it commits the SSMU to demand that McGill University condemn blacklist organisations like [Canary Mission](#) and [Campus Watch](#) for undermining the physical safety, freedom of speech and academic freedom of McGill students, faculty and staff, by deploying racist strategies of surveillance and intimidation.



Background and Rationale

On June 30 2021, the SSMU released a [statement](#), which underlined the fact that “many McGill students and faculty have been doxxed in the past few years on public websites like Canary Mission, in an effort to ‘punish’ them for pro-Palestine activism.” Furthermore, the SSMU Executive Committee pledged to “stand against such abhorrent profiling, repression, surveillance and harassment of our fellow students.”

On November 11, 2021, McGill SPHR released a second statement which called for the McGill administration and the SSMU to “each publish a Master Plan for ending racist surveillance and doxxing of Palestinian and pro-Palestine students at McGill University and within the SSMU.” The statement also pointed out that at least 20 McGill students and 6 professors have been blacklisted on Canary Mission as recently as August 2021.

Further, students involved in Uyghur or Tibetan liberation advocacy, as well as Hong Kong-related activism have faced [online intimidation and death threats](#). These forms of intimidation and attacks impact students' mental and physical health, discourage their involvement on campus, and [prevent them from obtaining student union roles](#).

Additionally, since the implementation of Bill 21, Muslim students and [student teachers](#) have been the [target of harassment and bullying](#). Many Muslim students including MSA executives have reported surveillance and intimidation when advocating for local change such as the reversal of Bill 21 and they have also been the targets of [CSIS intimidation](#).

As such, it is SSMU's duty to protect undergraduate students who have been doxxed and targeted by public websites such as Canary Mission, Campus Watch, or online. It is also its duty to advocate for the University to take action and condemn these harmful organisations. These forms of doxxing and surveillance disproportionately impact students of colour and marginalised groups on campus.

Alignment with Mission

This motion would align with the SSMU's Mission to provide service to its students, by protecting them from the harms of racist surveillance, blacklisting and doxxing. It would also align with the SSMU's constitutional commitment to leadership in matters of social justice, environmental protection and human rights.



Consultations Completed

Consultations have been done with the Vice-President (Internal Affairs), the Vice-President (Finance), Vice-President (External Affairs), McGill SPHR, the Equity Commissioners, WIMESSA, MSA, Divest for Human Rights coalition, and Divest McGill.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Adopting this motion would promote the safety of students on campus, showing the SSMU's dedication to fostering a safe environment for their student body, particularly marginalised people of the student body. If this motion were not to pass, the SSMU would not be upholding its mandate to the student body.

Sustainability Considerations

By upholding their mandate to support marginalised students on campus, the SSMU would be fostering a campus where free speech and assembly and liberty of thought are valued and where students are safe regardless of their beliefs or their ethnic background.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

The Vice-President (Internal Affairs) will be mandated to create and publish a Master Plan addressing and fighting against racist surveillance, blacklisting and doxxing within the SSMU and McGill University, to be published by April 7, 2022. This master plan would include the creation of an anti-surveillance commissioner within the SSMU who would lead an internal anti-surveillance committee under the Legislative Council.

Furthermore, the Vice-President (University Affairs), the Vice-President (External Affairs), and the President shall be mandated to advocate for McGill University to publish its own Master Plan for ending racist surveillance, blacklisting and doxxing of Palestinian and pro-Palestine students at McGill.

All the above initiatives shall be carried out in consultation with advocacy groups and no major decision will be implemented without full transparency being provided to the student body.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the motion as outlined in Appendix A, mandating the VP Internal Affairs to create and implement the masterplan by April 7, 2020.



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**Results of the
Vote**

In favour	(24)
Opposed	(0)
Abstain	(2)

APPROVED



Appendix A

WHEREAS, at least 20 McGill students and 6 professors have been blacklisted on Canary Mission as recently as August 2021, in reprisal for their pro-Palestinian political views or activism;

WHEREAS, such blacklisting, surveillance and doxing of students suppresses basic rights of students at McGill University, namely freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of assembly;

WHEREAS, these strategies of intimidation impact students' mental and physical health, and discourage their involvement on campus;

WHEREAS, the SSMU should promote a campus where freedom of speech and other fundamental rights are valued and respected;

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the internal portfolio, in consultation with the concerned advocacy groups on campus, will establish a working group under the Internal portfolio composed of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs), the Equity Commissioners, the Political Campaign Coordinators, Arts Representative Yara Coussa, and Arts Representative Ghania Javed which is mandated to publish a Master Plan to fight against racist surveillance and doxing by April 7, 2022;

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT one or several representatives of the working group, including the Vice President (Internal Affairs) will present updates regarding the masterplan during the presentation section of the April 7, 2022 Legislative Council meeting,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the Vice President (University Affairs), the Vice-President (External Affairs), and the President are mandated to advocate for McGill University to condemn blacklist organisations like Canary Mission and Campus Watch, which directly threaten the safety, freedom of speech and academic freedom of their students and staff.