

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

October 25, 2022

The regular monthly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference, on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:06**

Speaker Ashkir calls the meeting to order at 18:06.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Speaker Ashkir presents the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Attendance

Speaker Ashkir takes attendance.

Present are: Alexandre Ashkir (Speaker), Jaz Kaur (Parliamentarian), Councillors O'boyle, Voustinas, Sakajiri, Djoussou, Tai, Reed, Thom, Seth, Wan, Dadulla, D'Amore, Adler, Whitcomb, Parish (proxy), President Wright, VP Finance Pizarro, VP External Affairs Masny, VP University Affairs Yang

Absent are: Councillors Mickelson, Gurung, Syed, Pollard, Thomas, Griffith, Wang, VP Internal Affairs Williams, VP Student Life Koulibaly

4. Adoption of the Agenda – **ADOPTED**

The Agenda is distributed. Seeing no changes to the Agenda, Councillor Wan motions to adopt the agenda. VP University Affairs Yang seconds the motion to adopt the agenda.

Seeing no opposition, the agenda is adopted.

5. Report of the Steering Committee

Speaker Ashkir states that the Steering Committee met on October 21, and today's motions were presented, which included a motion presented at the last meeting which was supposed to be sent by



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email. It was decided that it would be presented today since the meeting was scheduled. Speaker Ashkir stands for questions.

- 6. Announcements:
 - a. Announcement by VP External Affairs Masny

VP External Affairs Masny states that a bootcamp called Building an Activist Community is coming up, on November 4 through 6. It is a bootcamp of knowledge and skill-sharing, and it is organised by SSMU and other provincial student associations. Their mission is to recognise the historic and ongoing systems of oppression and marginalisation, and the role of various institutions in their perpetuation. It also hopes to give activists tools to fight these systems and foster a sense of community around common struggles. It is a series of workshops, and meals will be provided, and there will also be cultural events. The event is hybrid, and bilingual interpretations will be available. Sleeping accommodations will be provided for those travelling to the event. They are still looking for workshop facilitators, who should reach out to VP External Affairs Masny if interested. There are many events confirmed. The goal is to foster a sense of community around activism and to build knowledge-sharing spaces, to perpetuate activist culture on campus. VP External Affairs Masny stands for questions.

Councillor Djoussou asks if participants must register, or if they can drop into events.

VP Mansy answers that it is possible to drop in, and the registration form helps them account for accessibility needs and dietary restrictions, and to estimate the number of people.

b. Announcement from Councillor Parish's proxy

Councillor Parish's proxy states that Science Games will be taking place from January 10-14, and Hype Night will be November 6, after the activism workshops.

c. Announcement from President Wright

President Wright states that there are a few committee openings for councillors: SSAMMOSA (4 councillors), and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. The Group's meetings will start in November, and they are looking for 1-2 councillors. The Governance Reform Committee will be reviewing the Constitution and Internal Regulations. They are auditing these documents. Interested councillors can email President Wright.

d. Announcement from Councillor Thom



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Councillor Thom states that the Law Students' Association is looking into getting Executives' terms credited, and she asks other faculties how they compensate their executives. This is a good initiative to see how the student government is recognised.

e. Announcement from President Wright

President Wright states that the Board of Directors is looking for appointments from Councillors, as they make many important decisions for the SSMU. If they do not find any, the issue will be put to students through a referendum.

f. Announcement from VP Finance Pizarro

VP Finance Pizarro states that the Funding Committee only has 2 Councillors, 1 Board member and 1 Executive, and he thinks it is important for students to have another councillor on the Committee. This is very important for accountability reasons.

7. Question Period

There are no advanced questions. Speaker Ashkir entertains questions from the floor.

Seeing no questions, the question period is exhausted.

8. Recess, Consent Items

Speaker Ashkir entertains a 5-minute recess to fill out the consent form.

The meeting resumes at 18:28. None of the items were consented to, so they will all be debated.

Speaker Ashkir clarifies what consent items are. The first item received 14 consent votes and 2 debate votes, so it will be debated because it was not approved unanimously.

- 9. New Business:
 - a. Motion Regarding the Referendum Question on the Renewal of the DPS Fee 2022-10-25 – **APPROVED**

VP Finance Pizarro presents the motion. He states that the McGill Daily and Le Délit ["DPS", Daily Publications Society] are asking for a fee renewal, because their fee is coming to expire. There will be



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no fee increase included. It is an independent student group, so they are using the referendum to pass the fee renewal.

The Chair entertains a 5-minute question period, with a 1-minute speaking time per speaker.

Question:

Councillor Wan states that, the last time this motion was presented (2017), the Legislative Council did not endorse it. The Tribune stated that the reasons for not endorsing the fee were because it would cause SSMU to appear to be promoting the Daily, and it was not appropriate to encourage all students to support it, given the Daily's political stances. He asks if there are any additional reasons why the 2017 Legislative Council did not approve the motion, and if there have been any changes to the Daily's political stance.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that he does not have any knowledge of changes nor of the 2017 decision.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks if this is a motion for a fee renewal or an endorsement.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that it is a motion for a fee renewal.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks if a detailed budget will be included on the referendum question, detailing how the fee will be utilised.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers yes, the budget will be submitted by the Daily.

The Chair entertains a debate period.



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Question:

Councillor Wan notes that the fee amount per student per semester should be included in the budget. He asks if there is a plan to add this to the referendum question.

Answer:

Councillor Whitcomb points out that this is a motion to bring this question to referendum, so it would be best to allow students to make their own decision on whether or not to renew the fee. She does not think it is fair to make that decision for students.

VP Finance Pizarro states that, because the motion is for a fee renewal and not a fee increase, the DPS does not need to present a budget.

VP External Affairs Masny echoes Councillors Wan and Whitcomb's statements. The amount of the fee presented in the question should be more visible, because that is one of their primary concerns.

VP Finance Pizarro states that they [DPS] do not need to show a budget, but they can show a reasoning behind the fee amount. Students are able to ask for any financial statements from the DPS.

Councillor Wan states that presenting a budget would allow the DPS to show financial transparency. He understands that it is not necessary to provide a budget, but seeing as this is a significant amount of money, it would be appropriate for the DPS to show how they plan to use this non-opt-outable student fee. He asks councillors if they agree.

Councillor Wan amends the motion to add a *Be it further resolved* statement: "Be it further resolved, that the DPS provide a financial budget on the referendum question to inform students about their financial transactions with this fee."

Councillor Adler seconds the amendment.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period on the motion to amend Motion 9a.

Councillor Adler states that it is important that students know how their money is spent, considering the amount of the fee.

Councillor Dadulla states that he understands that SSMU does not require any organisations to have a budget ready for a fee renewal. He is concerned that this would be unfair to DPS considering this is a fee renewal.



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VP Finance Pizarro answers that this is something that they usually do not do. He states that the Daily Publications Society (DPS) Board Chair has arrived at the meeting.

DPS Board Chair Natacha Papieau states that the DPS has a general meeting, where fee renewals are presented to members for approval. All statements are available freely by request at the DPS office. Papieau suggests adding an unprecedented amendment to the motion to include a budget, as was done on the referendum question regarding a fee increase last year. They would prefer to have that, considering that financial statements are available.

Speaker Ashkir reminds everyone that once an amendment has been presented, they must discuss it and vote on it. An amendment to an amendment can be presented.

Councillor Wan states that he is concerned about not providing financial statements directly on the ballot, as an appendix or not. By making students jump through a hurdle to access these documents, it hinders accessibility. He suggests amending the proposed amendment to include an appendix with financial documentation.

Councillor Adler motions to call the question on the amendment. VP University Affairs Yang seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote by reaction.

With 11 votes in favour and 4 votes against, the amendment to Motion 9.a passes.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period on Motion 9a.

VP University Affairs Yang motions to call the question. The motion is seconded.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote on Motion 9a. He sends the link to the voting form.

With 16 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions, Motion 9a passes.

 Motion Regarding Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) Fee Renewal 2022-10-25 – APPROVED

President Wright yields her time to the Sustainability Commissioner.



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The Sustainability Commissioner states that her job is to consult students regarding actions taken to increase sustainability, and working with the McGill Office of Sustainability to coordinate sustainable initiatives. She also volunteers with the Sustainable Projects Fund (SPF), which is why she believes that it is important for her to speak on the motion today. The SPF aims to build a culture of sustainability across McGill campuses through the development and funding of interdisciplinary projects. It was created by students for the McGill community, and decisions regarding allocation of funds are made by a governance council with representation equal to the financial contribution of its members. The McGill Office of Sustainability stewards the fund through administrative support; they have no control over how the funds are distributed. Students make up half of the vote while staff and faculty make up the other half. Since its creation, the SPF has funded over 300 projects. The Commissioner states that she and the other Sustainability Commissioner support the funding of sustainable initiatives on campus. There are some aspects of the SPF that do not align with the SSMU's definition of sustainability, but in order to discuss those further, this must be sent to referendum. Not sending it through would dissolve the SPF entirely, and stop all current and future projects. This would be considered a substantial loss to the McGill community. During consultation, they received an amendment that acknowledges that McGill's contributions to the SPF do not resolve them from their responsibilities to divest. This does not impact the question being posed, and will not affect the motion's ability to be put to referendum, it reaffirms SSMU's commitment to the moratorium while allowing the fee renewal to be passed.

Question:

Councillor Parish's proxy asks, supposing that the MCSS and PGSS vote yes, and the SSMU does not decide to put this on the referendum, if this means that they are essentially cancelling the fund altogether, even though the MCSS and PGSS voted yes.

Answer:

The Sustainability Commissioner answers yes.

Question:

Councillor Dadulla asks if this does not end up in the referendum, all the SPF money will be abolished and all projects would be stopped. He thought the SPF had funding present, and asks why ongoing projects would be cancelled.

Answer:

The Sustainability Commissioner asks the Mental Health Commissioner to answer this.



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The Mental Health Commissioner answers that the annual funding is \$1,000,000, which ideally would be used up each year. A lot of new projects will require new funding, and ongoing projects often require multiple funds. There are dozens of different student positions approved. They give many examples of projects that do not have extra funding if the SPF does not fund them. If this does not go to referendum, none of these projects will have access to the \$1,000,000.

Question:

VP University Affairs Yang states that he has a conflict of interest on this topic since he applied for the SPF to fund the purchase of reusable menstrual products. He asks how important is cooperation when it comes to sustainability.

Answer:

The Steward of the SPF answers that it is very important, and this is emphasised in the SPF's mandate.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if this fee is the only way for the SPF to get funds, or if they are receiving money from other sources.

Answer:

President Wright answers that it is funded by each students' society and McGill matches the funds.

The Steward of the SPF adds that if the fee is not agreed upon by all parties, it will not be passed.

Question:

Councillor Parish's proxy asks with what percentage the fee was approved at Macdonald Campus.

Answer:

The Steward of the SPF answers that Mac Campus approved the fee with 86% in favour.



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Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks, if this motion fails, if SPF would still exist and be able to renew the fee in a few years, or if it will have to find other ways of financing.

Answer:

The Mental Health Commissioner answers that there is a clause within the SPF, that if any party does not approve the fee, the SPF is dissolved. Projects that have been funded would be archived and individual applicants would be in charge of finding their own funding.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny states that the Mental Health Commissioner said that they have until May to vote Yes or No on the referendum question. They ask for clarification on this matter.

Answer:

The Steward of the SPF answers that a no-result of any of the 3 students' societies would abolish the SPF entirely. If SSMU members vote no, the SPF will be abolished. Projects funded by last fiscal year's funds will be funded, but on May 1, they would no longer be able to provide funds.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks, since this is a non-opt-outable fee, if all non-opt-outable fees fall under the ancillary fee umbrella, or if there are different types of non-opt-outable fees.

Answer:

President Wright answers that the SPF does not qualify as an ancillary fee since it is a student-funded fee. So, it does not fall under the policy that would limit the amount. Even if it did, the policy does mention increases to new fees.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny asks why this is being presented in the fall referendum period and not in the winter one, considering that it has been named by the Sustainability Commissioner that work would like to be done to push SSMU's position in the SPF. They are confused because the deadline is in May.

Answer:



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President Wright answers that the deadline to ensure that all steps of the process are met is the Fall referendum, because they would get an answer as to whether the students have approved this. Then, they will be able to work on the outcome in the winter.

There are no further questions.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period.

Councillor Parish's proxy states that their first year at SSMU was as an MCSS Representative, when SSMU had a history of neglecting the MCSS. Should the Council decide not to approve this motion, this attitude would be enhanced. It would be terrible if MCSS and PGSS would have to pay for SSMU's decision, because many beneficiaries of the SPF are from Macdonald Campus. Many of their spaces are very old, so MCSS is applying to the SPF to get new green equipment. The SPF benefits many students, and not putting the motion on the referendum would not be democratic.

Speaker Ashkir reminds everyone that speaking time is one (1) minute.

Councillor Wan proposes an amendment: Be it further resolved that a detailed budget be included directly as an appendix to the referendum question.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks what the thought process was for a cancellation of the SPF if even one of the three students' societies do not approve it.

Answer:

The Mental Health Commissioner answers that the SPF was established to be able to collaborate across campuses, so the idea is that if one society pulls out, the collaboration is no longer happening. The SPF does not discriminate between student, staff and faculty applications, so if SSMU pulls out, the entire body of undergraduates is no longer participating in the democracy of the SPF or the funding, which dissolves the collaboration.

VP External Affairs Masny states that they want to propose another amendment when Councillor Wan proposed his, so they ask if they can propose their amendment after Councillor Wan's is voted on.



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Speaker Ashkir answers yes. He asks if there is a second to Councillor Wan's amendment. Councillor Djoussou seconds the amendment.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period on the amendment.

President Wright requests clarification on the contents of the proposed budget, since this fund reviews applications and then accepts them. It would be hard to give a preliminary budget. She asks if this is a breakdown of what can be expected based on previous years, because if that is not the case, this might be very difficult if not impossible.

Councillor Dadulla points out that the wording of the amendment does not make sense. He does not understand how they can add a budget to a referendum question. He thinks it was originally said that the budget should be added as an appendix.

Councillor Wan answers that he did mean to say appendix, and may have misspoke. With regards to President Wright's question, a forward-facing budget might be hard, but financial statements are still available. Any financial projections can be estimated. If this can't be done, a backwards-facing budget can be provided to show how this fee was utilised.

The Steward of the SPF states that transparency is important to the SPF, so every fall, the Annual Report is presented. It is impossible to project future years, but they have the Annual Report that was presented two weeks ago. It is on their website, but it can be provided again as an appendix.

Councillor Parish's proxy (Proxy Tiniacos) states that MCSS already voted on the question, it is unfair that SSMU is asking for a budget while the question has already been approved.

The Mental Health Commissioner indicates that there is transparency on how money is used for every project on the SPF website.

VP University Affairs Yang states that because the SPF is part of McGill (a public institution), documents must be given out for free on request. This clause is very redundant, because documents are already available.

Councillor Wan agrees that there are good efforts to promote financial transparency, his main concern is for accessibility. By asking students to jump through hoops to access these documents, the financial accessibility is inhibited. By appending the financial summary, transparency would be improved. Details could also be included in the appendix, which would further improve accessibility.



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Councillor Whitcomb motions to amend the amendment: instead of including a detailed budget on the referendum question, a link to the website that outlines the Annual Report be provided on the referendum question. This would allow students to look at what has been done in the past. This might be a less laborious process.

Councillor Parish's Proxy Tiniacos seconds the amendment to the amendment.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a discussion period on the amendment to the amendment.

The Steward of the SPF states that there is a clause in the referendum question that states that further information is available on the SPF website.

Councillor Wan expresses a guarded support of this amendment. He wants to increase financial transparency and accessibility, and making students click many links to access figures reduces accessibility. He agrees that the numbers are somewhat accessible, having the numbers readily available through a direct link or an appendix on the motion would be the most accessible.

Speaker Ashkir reminds everyone that the discussion now must be focused on the amendment of the amendment.

VP University Affairs Yang motions to call the question on the amendment to the amendment. Proxy Tiniacos seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote on the amendment to the amendment by reaction.

The amendment to the amendment passes.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a discussion on the main amendment.

Councillor Wan motions to call the question on the amendment. Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote on the amendment by reaction.

The amendment passes and is adopted within the motion.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a discussion period on the motion.



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VP External Affairs Masny proposes an amendment that they will submit via email and then read it aloud. At the beginning of the motion, they want to contextualise the question. They want to add two Whereas clauses: Whereas, it is acknowledged that the definition of sustainability within SSMU is not reflected by the current, active decision within the SPF Governance Council to exclude considering applications of social and economic sustainability focus projects and Whereas, it is important to recognise the positive impacts of the projects funded by the SPF do not outweigh the harm caused by McGill's refusal to divest. They add that this would go before the question on the document.

Councillor O'Boyle seconds the amendment and proposes a spelling change.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period on this amendment.

Proxy Tiniacos states that this amendment is misleading to the student population by using the word 'divest.' It is important to recognise that many projects contribute to professors' work in agricultural and environmental science, which have a large impact on environmental research. This contributes to the sustainable goals of McGill and the students' societies. This play on words can mislead students to vote no on the motion, while the SPF has a sizeable impact on the environment.

VP External Affairs Masny states that the reason why the paragraphs in question come before the resolution is so that divesting is not part of the question, but it is taken into consideration when presenting the question. It is important to identify McGill's investment in fossil fuels, which is greater than the SPF projects.

Councillor Whitcomb states that this content should be considered by students. It is not their job to force students to agree on any controversial issues, their role is to allow students to answer that question themselves. This amendment does not have a direct impact on students' consideration of the question. Bringing Divest McGill into the question might be out of its scope.

VP External Affairs Masny notes that they understand concerns, they have positions that will be voted upon and renewed. The current definition of sustainability is not always respected, so they thought it would be important to contextualise it. They think it is all related, because they must consider McGill's entire sustainability initiatives to vote on the question with enough information.

Question:

President Wright asks if this motion is for the consideration of the Council, and if it will be included in the question posed to students.

Answer:



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Speaker Ashkir answers yes, and clarifies that the first clauses will not be included in the referendum. The resolution and everything after it on the document will be included in the referendum. Everything else is an explanation for the Council.

Proxy Tiniacos motions to call the question on the amendment. Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote on the amendment.

With 8 votes in favour, 6 votes against and 2 abstentions, the amendment is approved.

Speaker Ashkir resumes debate on the main motion.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if the Office of Sustainability has any say on McGill's investments regarding fossil fuels.

Answer:

The Steward of the SPF answers that the Office of Sustainability has no say in investments, the Office of Investments deals with that.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if the Office of Sustainability has tried to convince the Office of Investments to pull back from investments in fossil fuels.

Answer:

The Steward of the SPF answers that they have not, but the Office of Investments has a new position that is looking into making investments more sustainable.

VP External Affairs Masny states that they met with the Office of Investments recently, who told them that they do not have any power over investments, and that it is up to the Board of Governors.



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Speaker Ashkir states that at this time, the Dais would look favourably upon a motion to call the question.

Proxy Tiniacos motions to call the question. Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote.

With 14 votes in favour and 2 abstentions, the motion passes.

c. Motion Regarding an Interim Provision to the Internal Regulations of Governance Concerning Councillor Reports 2022-10-06 - **APPROVED**

Proxy Tiniacos states that this motion wants to reduce the number of Councillor reports to one per faculty per semester, due to overlap and redundancy of the reports. In his personal experience last year, there were times where Science councillors merged their reports. This motion would make reporting more efficient and make meetings more efficient.

Speaker Ashkir states that this motion was presented once before, and it was asked to be sent to consultation, to provide a schedule in the motion. Now that a schedule is included for different faculty reports, the motion is being presented again. It was decided by the Steering Committee that it would be more efficient to present this motion during the meeting instead of by email, since there was a Council meeting added. Speaker Ashkir entertains a question period.

Question:

Councillor Dadulla asks what is meant by 'relevant IR clauses' in Appendix A.

Answer:

Speaker Ashkir answers that IR stands for the Internal Regulations, meaning the Internal Regulations of Governance in this case. The documents can be found on the SSMU website.

Question:

Councillor Dadulla asks if Appendix A would explain the current regulations, not the regulations in place after the motion passes.



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Answer:

Speaker Ashkir answers that he believes so.

Councillor Whitcomb states that the change would be having one report per constituency rather than per councillor. This cuts down reports for constituencies with more than one councillor.

Seeing no further questions, Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period.

Councillor Djoussou states that there is a resolution that increases the length of reports' question periods. He asks if they could re-allocate the time to something other than a question period, because sometimes there are no questions. He suggests allocating extra time on an ad hoc basis, to anything that requires further attention. He proposes an amendment that he will send to email.

Speaker Ashkir corrects a typo in the motion.

Councillor Whitcomb seconds the amendment.

Speaker Ashkir entertains a debate period on the amendment.

Proxy Tiniacos motions to call the question. Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote on the amendment by reaction.

With 13 votes in favour, the amendment passes.

Speaker Ashkir returns to debate on the motion.

Proxy Tiniacos motions to call the question.

Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to call the question.

President Wright motions to vote by acclamation.

Speaker Ashkir clarifies that this method of voting involves him asking if anyone is opposed.

Councillor Whitcomb seconds the motion to vote by acclamation.



Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories. <u>ssmu.ca</u> | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Seeing no opposition, Speaker Ashkir entertains a vote by acclamation.

Seeing no opposition, the motion is unanimously acclaimed.

Speaker Ashkir states that he will send the updated report schedule after the meeting.

10. Adjournment: **20:00**

Speaker Ashkir declares the meeting adjourned at 20:00.

President Wright reminds Councillors to send her an email if they want to sit on the Board, as they need a full Board to vote on the referendum. There will be an email coming around for Councillors to approve the question, and all seats.

Risann Wright, SSMU President