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SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

February 15, 2023

A supplementary Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference, on Thursday, February 15, 2023 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:12**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:12.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Attendance

The Speaker takes attendance.

Present: Councillors Mickelson, Voustinas, Sakajiri, Djoussou, Tai, Reed, Wan, Dadulla, Whitcomb (proxy: Andres Perez Tiniacos), Parish, Adler, Wang, President Wright, VPs VP Internal Affairs Williams, Koulibaly, Pizarro, VP External Affairs Masny, VP University Affairs Yang.

Absent: Councillors O'Boyle, Rustogi, Dakdouki, Syed, Nam, Pollard, Thomas, Thom, Seth, Griffiths, D'Amore, Fakih.

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

The agenda is distributed.

Seeing no corrections or additions, Proxy Tiniacos motions to adopt the agenda.

Councillor Voustinas seconds the motion.

Seeing no opposition, the agenda is adopted.

5. Announcements



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There are no announcements.

6. Question Period

There are no questions.

7. Recess, Consent Items

The Speaker sends the consent items form in the Zoom Chat. He entertains a recess to allow everyone to vote on the consent items.

- 8. New Business:
 - a. Motion Regarding a Fee Increase For Drivesafe Referendum Question 2023-02-09 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

The motion is approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

 Motion Regarding the Renewal of the Environment Fee Referendum Question 2023-02-09 – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

The motion is approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

c. Motion Regarding the Referendum Question on the Increase of the DPS Fee - 2023-02-09 – **APPROVED**

VP Finance Pizarro presents this motion. He states that the DPS approached him very late about a renewal, so he did not have much time to spend on their budget. The Council needs to make sure the budget follows SSMU's policies since the DPS is an Independent Student Group. They deserve to be presented here since they are an ISG. Their fee was supposed to be increased last semester, but the group feared that it would not be approved so their fee was renewed last semester and is up for increase now. They did not have any increases since 2008, and they run two publications, as opposed to the McGill Tribune. Because of inflation, their operations are not sustainable without a fee levy. The fee is going from \$6.00 to \$7.50 per semester. VP Finance Pizarro stands for questions.

The Speaker entertains a question period.

Question:



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Councillor Reed asks for context about the funding of other McGill publications, such as the Tribune, and if they are funded by SSMU.

Answer:

VP Student Life Koulibaly answers that the Tribune also has a fee levied to the student body.

Question:

Councillor Parish asks if there have been other reasons for the fee increase, and what the increased budget would go towards.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that they did not submit a budget, but they might need to provide one on the referendum question.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if the increase is fixed to inflation rates, or if there have been other calculations done to figure out the increase.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that the fee is not fixed to inflation.

Question:

VP Student Life Koulibaly asks why there is no end point for the question, and why the [McGill] Tribune and the [McGill] Daily both have non-opt-outable fees.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that they can put winter 2028 as an end date, but he cannot answer the second.

VP External Affairs Masny states that they cannot find the motion in the Drive, and they do not have access through the link in the agenda.

The Speaker shares the Motion with the Council.

VP External Affairs Masny states that the Speaker made it accessible to Councillors and not Proxies. They suggest giving everyone access.



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The Speaker states that he usually allows everyone to access the document after debate period, in case there are amendments. He gives access to Proxies.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny asks for precision about the rising costs of the DPS's operations, and where the new money will be going.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro cannot answer, other than that prices are different today than they were in 2008. The DPS is not expanding their operations, because they would need much more money to do this. Even with their fee increase, they will still have trouble operating.

Question:

Councillor Voustinas asks if a budget will be attached to the referendum question on the ballot.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that it is an ISG, they are not required to but they can be asked to provide one.

The Speaker entertains a debate period.

Councillor Wan motions to amend the motion to include a budget on the referendum question presented on the ballot. VP Student Life Koulibaly seconds this amendment.

Seeing no opposition, the amendment is made.

VP Student Life Koulibaly motions to amend the question to add a Winter 2028 end date.

Councillor Voustinas seconds this amendment.

Seeing no opposition, this amendment is made.

VP Finance Pizarro motions to call the question. Councillor Wan seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, the Speaker entertains a vote.



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With 15 votes in favour, 1 in opposition and 1 abstention, Motion 8.c passes.

d. Motion Regarding the Fee Increase of the TPS 2023-02-09 – APPROVED

VP Finance Pizarro presents this motion. He states that the TPS asked for an increase very late. Their fee was increased in 2019, and in 2021-2022 their total expenses were \$150,000, but their total expenses are now projected to be around \$200,000. The increase is due to increased activities, new employees, and a 60% increase in stipends. There is also excess profit accumulated over the past two years. To ensure growth, they need a fee increase.

The Speaker entertains a question period.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny asks if they have \$100,000 in reserves.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that this is correct, such reserves will help with writing expenses for a limited period.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny asks if they currently have this money in reserve.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers yes, they currently have it saved.

The Speaker entertains a debate period.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks VP Finance Pizarro if he received an estimate about how long the reserve funds would last.

Answer:



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VP Finance Pizarro answers that they would have asked for a larger fee increase if they did not have this money saved, money that came from the fact that they did not have to pay rent for 2 years. They said it would last a limited period.

Question:

VP External Affairs Masny states that TPS has excess money; if they did not they would ask for a larger increase. They ask what this increase would look like.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that he does not have this number.

Councillor Wan states that he is conflicted, because he likes that the TPS is being transparent about their finances, but he cannot judge whether they really need this money, given their reserves.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks VP Finance if he knows how much the Tribune spends.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that their projected expenses for the year are \$200,000.

Question:

Councillor Wan asks if it would be possible to clarify on the ballot that the TPS has this reserve, to further add to financial transparency. He asks other councillors what they think.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that this would be a great idea if they had more time. The budget is presented on the ballot, but adding this on the ballot would not give students enough context and might be leading in nature.

VP External Affairs Masny asks the Council how they feel about mandating the TPS and Elections Officers to add a provision in the question about the reserve fund and how long it will last, and why it is insufficient.



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Councillor Djoussou states that Councillor Wan made a good point, but this has been a recurrent issue where students do not understand the newspaper's operations. Telling them that the TPS have a reserve fund with no other information about their expenses and revenues would make things confusing. Having a budget in the referendum question would be more relevant and allow students to make a sound choice.

Councillor Dadulla notes that the TPS is a news provider, like the DPS. Perhaps someone with more information on these Societies could help.

VP Student Life Koulibaly states that budgets could be complicated to understand, especially because the TPS has only one newspaper and the DPS has two. DPS has a higher fee subsequently. She is a bit confused about their role in the Council about approving a question from an ISG. Her understanding is that they are independent, so they could put it to the student body another way. The last time they had a fee increase was in 2019, and they have this reserve, so they might not need the increase right now. Without a budget, the Council is taking their word as truth about their expenses and revenues. It seems as though their expenses are being covered by the reserve. Their fee expires next year, so an assessment can be done then.

Councillor Wan states that he will vote in favour of this, since the TPS brought up their reserve. The reserve might make him think that the TPS's operations are sustainable, but he will forgo that knowledge and push this vote to the student. The reserve will probably be on the ballot anyways.

The Speaker notes that Councillor Adler left the meeting at 19:00.

VP External Affairs Masny finds it hard to evaluate questions without budgets being attached, because they affect how the Council votes. It would be interesting to revise the Elections regulations to include the budget requirement in the questions, because it has proven helpful in many cases.

VP Student Life Koulibaly states that in the IRs of finance, it says that ISGs can levy fees at the referendum. They only go through SSMU because they provide groups with a platform.

Councillor Reed asks if this meeting is hybrid.

The Speaker answers that this is a Zoom meeting.

Councillor Wan motions to call the question.

Councillor Reed seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, the Speaker entertains a vote.



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With 11 votes in favour, 1 in opposition and 5 abstentions, Motion 8.d passes.

e. Motion Regarding the Implementation of the Legal Essentials Plan Fee 2023-02-09 – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

VP Finance Pizarro presents this motion. He states that during the summer, SSMU signed a contract for legal insurance for one year. The plan allows unlimited consultation on any matters, including representation in court until the case is closed. The plan covers employment, housing, academic and human rights disputes, as well as small claims and mediation. This year, there was not much data to understand the effects of the plan, so the Health and Dental Committee decided to propose the plan for two years. There were also conversations about extensions, and in consultations with other student associations, it seems that the plan will be beneficial. It costs \$30 per year, and if you join in the winter it costs \$20 for the remainder of the year. VP Finance Pizarro stands for questions. The Speaker entertains a question period.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if this service is available during the summer.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that it will be available for the whole year, until August 31.

Question:

Councillor Djoussou asks if the service is complementary to the current legal advice office at SSMU, or if there is an overlap between the services.

Answer:

VP Finance Pizarro answers that the legal clinic is not run by professionals, so they cannot give official recommendations. In this sense, the services will not be overlapping.

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

Councillor Adler motions to call the question. Councillor Wan seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, the Speaker entertains a vote.



With 17 votes in favour, Motion 8.e is unanimously approved.

f. Motion Regarding Ecole's Fee Renewal Referendum Question 2023-02-09 – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The motion is unanimously approved by the Council.

g. Motion Supporting the Introduction of Haven to the McGill Campus – **POSTPONED** (until further discussion with HAVEN allow for a longer trial period)

VP University Affairs Yang presents this motion. He states that in consultations with Haven, they have agreed to provide a two-month trial run, where McGill students will have free access to the app. This would allow SSMU to see if people like the app, and if people use it. This motion endorses the adoption of the introduction of the app for the free trial. This would be done through a MOU.

The Speaker entertains a question period.

Question:

Councillor Adler asks if there is a way to amend the question to include the types of data that would be collected during the trial period. This would give future Councils a better idea of usage rates and if it would be beneficial.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang answers that he was planning on doing a survey and collecting usage data.

Question:

Councillor Voustinas asks when the free trial will start.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang answers that it will start as soon as the MOU is signed; they are only waiting on SSMU's approval.

Question:



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Councillor Voustinas asks if this will be enough time to decipher if Haven is popular on campus, even if it comes into play as soon as possible, since they are already halfway into the semester.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang answers that they have been negotiating this for a while, and they decided to use it in January but the processes take a while to implement Haven. So, there is sufficient time to collect data throughout February, March and April. It is better to go ahead and see if they can collect data; if not they can re-evaluate.

Question:

Councillor Adler asks how the presentation about Haven was planned; if SSMU sought it out or if the company pitched it.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang answers that he asked them to provide the presentation.

Question:

Councillor Voustinas asks if it is possible to negotiate a free trial for a year, because she does not see how two months can be enough to collect data.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang states that this is a possibility.

Question:

Councillor Parish asks what the process would look like if this service would be implemented as a student fee; if it would need to wait until the Fall 2023 referendum.

Answer:

VP University Affairs Yang answers that the fee would need to wait until the referendum, because they would need to analyse data after the free trial ends. During this time, they cannot have another referendum.

The Speaker notes that Councillor Wan leaves the meeting at 19:27.

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



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VP External Affairs Masny states that VP University Affairs Yang invited Haven to do a presentation, but their first contact with the company was through an email to VP External Affairs Masny about the service. They put Haven in contact with Councillor Wang. After doing more research and the presentation, they are concerned that they are moving hastily considering the severity of sexual harassment. The answers given in the presentation are not reflected in the motion nor the MOU. Councillor Adler states that he agrees with Councillor Voustinas's questions; he is sceptical that this two-month free trial is not sufficient to figure out if they want to use the service long-term.

VP University Affairs Yang states that he is open to going back to negotiating to extend the free trial. He does not think they are moving too quickly, because it is only a trial period and it is in the MOU to collect data. Nothing that is decided now is binding. He notes that they want to collect data to determine the benefits of the app.

The Speaker notes that Councillor O'boyle joins the meeting at 19:30.

VP University Affairs Yang motions to amend Motion 8.g to extend the trial period.

Councillor Wang seconds the amendment.

Seeing no opposition, the amendment is made.

Question:

Councillor Voustinas asks how VP University Affairs Yang and Councillor Wang can be mandated to go back to negotiations, to address her and Councillor Adler's concerns.

Answer:

The Speaker answers that the best thing to do is postpone the motion until further negotiations.

Councillor Voustinas motions to postpone Motion 8.g.

Councillor Adler seconds this motion.

The Speaker entertains a vote by reactions.



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Question:

VP External Affairs Masny asks if they are voting on the postponement of Motion 8.g.

Answer:

The Speaker answers yes.

Motion 8.g is postponed until further discussion.

h. Notice of Motion Regarding Proposed Amendments to the Internal Regulations of Student Groups

VP Student Life Koulibaly presents this Notice. Amendments were made that were not in line with policies, and further amendments were made to implement guidelines at the committee level and within her portfolio. If anyone wants to discuss the amendments, they can reach out to her. A few amendments are to change attendance requirements at GSVP workshop, and changing club fees so that clubs can lower their fees. There was a change on alcohol purchases, and some context has been provided for alcohol events.

- 9. Reports by Faculty:
 - a. ASUS

Councillor Sakajiri presents the ASUS report. He states that there is now a VP External, after the original resigned in November. They are going to AUS for help with elections. They had many successful events, including a formal, many academic events and first-year events. Councillor Sakajiri relays information between SSMU and ASUS. There are more events coming up, and some ASUS motions are coming up within the AUS to clarify their status as a faculty organisation. Councillor Sakajiri stands for questions.

b. Education – **POSTPONED**

This report is postponed.

c. Dentistry – **POSTPONED**

This report is postponed.

d. Medicine – **POSTPONED**



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This report is postponed.

e. FYC – **POSTPONED**

This report is postponed.

- 10. Reports by Committees:
 - a. Executive Committee

President Wright presents the Executive Committee Report. She states that there had been some approvals for new roles, minutes, and other things that needed to be approved to manage the legal functioning of the Society. She stands for questions.

b. Clubs Committee – **RATIFIED**

VP Student Life Koulibaly presents the Clubs Committee report. They have approved and rejected some applications, and she reminds everyone that the score required for a group to be approved is 24, so only 2 groups were approved. There was one club who changed their constitution; this was also approved.

Seeing no questions and no opposition, the Clubs Committee Report is ratified.

c. Community Engagement Committee – **POSTPONED**

This report is postponed.

VP External Affairs Masny states that there is no Community Engagement Commissioner, so the committee could not meet. They are currently recruiting and should be able to meet soon. If anyone is interested, they should join the committee.

d. Environment Committee

The Sustainability Commissioner, Shuchita, presents the Environment Committee Report. They state that the Committee is up and running, and their main goal is to build more of a community between environment groups on campus. They have done this by promoting events and attending Board meetings. They have also done social media and website updates, and have held social events and workshops, such as a trivia night and finance workshop. They are also building a working relationship with McGill's Office of Investments, who reached out to them to develop a respectable relationship.



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They met and spoke about representation on different Boards to set the sustainability targets. They want to formalise discussions about divestments and open up conversations about McGill's investments and goals. Projects include two different policies, which are at the consultation stage and a SSMU SDG Plan. They want to propose an SDG plan for the SSMU context, to see what is left to do. They are currently finishing up the first draft. The Sustainability Commissioner stands for questions.

e. Mental Health Committee

The Mental Health Commissioner, Maya Willard-Stepan, presents the Mental Health Committee Report. They state that the Committee is made up of the Commissioner, two Coordinators, and VP Student Life. Each Coordinator has their own committee of student volunteers. All committees meet weekly, and have their own tasks. They cover outreach, advocacy and policy work. The Mental Health Committee has completed action items from the previous Mental Health Policy, which expires in 2023. The only part of the plan that was not successfully implemented was the plan to increase the fee, which has now been approved to go to referendum. They are working on designing the MyWellness platform, which was not functional so it has been removed and the Wellness Hub is working on it. They are monitoring the situation, and updates will be provided. They sit on the Subcommittee of Academic Accommodations, to push for a form that acts as a medical note once per semester. This acts as a replacement due to lack of appointments at the Wellness Hub for those who need emergency accommodations. This form is now going for formal vote in March, and the goal is to have it available. The Suicide Prevention Framework is in the works. Co-design is going well. There is an Academic Plan for Academic Wellness that is going well. They have formed a task force with the Deputy Provost, VP UA, and others to tackle various issues of wellness on campus. They also got approval to create a mental health module on MyCourses. The Mental Health Award was approved, and so there will be a \$1,000 award for professors who support mental health. The Advocacy Coordinator is working on Eco-Week with the Sustainability Commissioners. The Outreach Committee has tabled during orientation and during Activities Night, and there has been a bunch of social media work. The Mental Health Roundtable has had good turnout each month to learn about mental health and talk about collaboration. The Mental Health Commissioner stands for questions.

f. Services Review Committee – POSTPONED

This report is postponed.

g. Comité des Affaires Francophones

Le conseiller Tai présente le Rapport du Comité des Affaires Francophone. Ils ont créé un projet pilote de traduction, pour soutenir l'équipe de communication de l'AÉUM puisqu'il y a plus de documents à traduire. Ils ont participé à l'initiative de francisation de McGill, et les Règlement internes ont été modifiés. Ils organisent des événements pour la Francofête, incluant des sorties gratuites, des



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expositions, et cetera. Les projets en cours incluent la rédaction d'un nouveau plan de francisation pour l'AÉUM, un soutien de l'équipe de traduction et de communication, et la création d'un nouveau site. Du 9-31 mars, la Franco Fête de McGill se passe, incluant la journée internationale de la francophonie. Le Comité invite les groupes étudiants à y participer.

- 11. Executive Reports:
 - a. President

President Wright presents her report. She states that she supervises the governance department, and oversees the incoming executive elections and nominations, for which an email has gone out. She governs the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors and the Legislative Council. She chairs the Executive Committee and supports motions that are submitted. She supports the Board and called a special meeting, and announces that she has been conducting interviews with the Nominating Committee with the hopes of nominating Members at Large to the Board. She has consulted with students and councillors on their motions, most of which have been reviewed. President Wright sits on the Governance Reform Committee, the Environment Committee, the Health and Dental Review Committee, the Steering Committee, and SSAMOSA. The GRC is looking to review the constitution from an EDI lens. She works with the Senate, its committees and the Board of Governors, to represent students at McGill. President Wright sits on the McGill administration's advisory committees. She supports her staff and has been attending Black History Month events, and she manages many other departments. She is currently working on a policy for inter-faculty relations, SDGs and the Grocery Program. President Wright stands for questions.

b. VP Finance

VP Student Life Koulibaly presents VP Finance Pizarro's report. She states that he has worked with Clubs and Services on their requests, which is a lot of work. He worked with services to present their fee referendum questions. Work has been done to prepare next year's budget. The Funding Committee is reviewing applications, and they still have excess funding. There will be news about changing banks at the next meeting. He is working with PGSS on health insurance for international students, and he is working on the Food Coalition. VP Finance Pizarro also sits on many committees.

c. VP Student Life

VP Student Life Koulibaly presents her report. She states that the Clubs Committee has been reviewing applications, and she made some changes to the application process. The Services Committee has been meeting, and surveys have gone out for services review. She is working with the Building Director on storage issues, and putting together a plan for storage for student groups. She has been working with Midnight Kitchen's operations and expansions. VP Student Life Koulibaly is also working on



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spaces for student groups, since they don't have enough space. She has been doing some translation, and has been doing IR consultations for the Notice. The Events Committee handed out some sanctions about maintaining club status and misuse of space. Coffeehouses are every Thursday, and service workshops happened, and sanctions were handed out for those who missed them. The Academic Accommodation Form is being developed with the Mental Health Committee, which is going to referendum in March. WellWeek happened, and work is being put towards a new policy. Black History Month events happened on February 1 and were a success, and there is work being done for more black student activities on campus. There is a social event on February 23, with refreshments. VP Student Life Koulibaly is planning a cultural soiree in March with SUS, for which registration is open. The launch event went well. Gerts Cultural Nights have been attracting many people, and SLASA is on February 24 at Gerts.

The Speaker notes that Councillor Pollard arrives at 20:18.

d. VP University Affairs

VP Student Life Koulibaly presents VP University Affairs Yang's report. She states that he has been working on the academic wellness dashboard, to monitor different activities. He is working on a for-credit health and wellness course. He is working to edit the Academic Freedom Policy. He hired a new Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, and is expanding the Committee. There have been new hirings for the menstrual product initiative, which is expanding to residences. The January 24 pickup was a success, and they tabled at the Sustainability Symposium. He hired a Sustainability Commissioner, and there is a full team working on open education resource expansion. VP University Affairs Yang is planning an event with Concordia, and he hired a new Gender and Sexuality Commissioner who has been giving out funding for transgender advocacy. He has meetings with the McGill administration and the Senate. He sits on many other committees. He has been working with HR and the Daycare Board. He has been working on bringing Haven to McGill and expanding harm reduction initiatives through the Wellness Hub.

e. VP External Affairs

VP External Affairs Masny presents their report. They state that they attended UCRU, and monitored sidewalks around McGill for accessibility reasons. They are currently studying the Charter of the new provincial students' federation, and wrote a letter to their municipal representative as per their mandate. They collaborated with PGSS to work on Bill 96 work. They finalised research on advocacy, and attended the McGill Community Council. They worked on affordable housing, and are doing a survey to gather data on housing situations for students. They support Indigenous advocacy around Montreal, and reviewed the care agreement for more actionable items. They started to form the Community Engagement Committee, which will be up and running soon. They met with Student Life and Engagement about relaunching activities. VP External Affairs Masny helped Divest McGill and other



groups, including the Food Security Campaign. They helped the Indigenous, Francophone, Equity and Black Affairs Commissioners. They sit on various SSMU committees.

f. VP Internal Affairs

VP Internal Affairs Williams presents her report. She states that she onboarded a PR coordinator, and developed SSMU merch which was given away at Activities Night and on social media. She is working on translations for the website. The Fac-o Hype Night sold out, and was a success. Fac-o is three weeks away, and teams are formed and tickets are on sale. Information is available on the website. She is planning Grad Frosh. They sit on FYC, which had various events and the Therapy Dog event happened. They suggested a trip to Quebec City for first-years, and in collaboration with the EUS Junior Council planned a banquet. She is working on food vouchers for first-years during exam periods. There is an alumni networking event coming up, and information comes out next week. There is another Thrift at SSMU event at Gerts, and clothes will be donated. She met with the CKUT Board, and sits on many other committees.

The Speaker states that quorum was lost halfway through the reports, so he is forced to adjourn the meeting.

12. Confidential Session

The Confidential Session is postponed due to lack of quorum.

13. Adjournment: 20:29

The Speaker declares the meeting adjourned at 20:29.

Risann Wright, SSMU President