

# BACoN-AToR Plan

Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming,  
Accelerating Towards our Renaming Plan

Adopted on 2021-04-08





## Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

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## Students' Society of McGill University

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# Board Ad-Hoc Committee on Naming

## Background

### Mandate

The Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming (“BACoN”) was established as an ad-hoc committee of the Board of Directors following a resolution adopted for this purpose on June 11, 2020. The Committee was mandated to propose commemorative names for the 3501 Peel building and the William Shatner Building (“University Centre”). Distinct from the protocols followed for past commemorations, the Committee was founded to ensure that any candidate for proposal would align with the SSMU’s beliefs and stated positions.

### Membership

For the duration of its preliminary deliberations, throughout the Summer 2020 to Winter 2021 academic terms, the Committee was composed of the following members:

- **Brooklyn Frizzle**, *Chairperson*, SSMU Vice-President (University Affairs);
- **Annabelle Couture-Guillet**, *Secretary*, SSMU University Affairs Secretary-General;
- **Jocelyne Couture**, SSMU Indigenous Affairs Commissioner;
- **Amandri Dahanayake**, SSMU Equity Commissioner;
- **Lauren Jelinek**, SSMU Sustainability Commissioner;
- **Juliette Chesnel**, Commissaire aux affaires francophones de l’AÉUM;
- **Hussain Awan**, SSMU Clubs Representative;
- **Noah Merali**, SSMU Services Representative;
- **Jemark Earle**, SSMU President;
- **Ayo Ogunremi**, SSMU Vice-President (External Affairs);
- **Gifford Marpole**, SSMU Vice-President (Finance);
- **Maheen Akter**, SSMU Vice-President (Student Life);
- **Darshan Daryanani**, AUS Arts Senator;
- **Risann Wright**, Black Students’ Network Vice-President (Advocacy);
- **Mustafa Fakh**, Muslim Students Association President;
- **Grey Cooper**, Queer McGill Events Coordinator;
- **Mo Rajji Courtney**, Union for Gender Empowerment Outreach Coordinator;
- **Ella Wischnewsky**, Divest McGill Representative;



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- **Gabriel Masi**, Member-at-Large;
- **Michael Rhamey**, Member-at-Large;
- **Luca Lexhan-Cianciaruso**, Member-at-Large.

# Committee Activity

## Naming Guidelines

### Guiding Philosophy

The Committee determined that the primary goal of any commemoration would be to elevate the contributions of significant individuals, causes, or ideas, particularly those that are not already well-known. The Committee resolved to give priority to those individuals, causes, and ideas that are at the heart of community-based advocacy, especially those in direct relation to McGill and the SSMU.

The Guiding Philosophy was established with the expectation that the Committee would be flexible in its considerations and remain open to diverse ideas and submissions. The Committee's decisions would not be influenced, however, by financial incentives or donations.

### Guidelines

The Committee considered those who embodied the SSMU's Mission and the three pillars of the Constitution:

1. **Service** - those who have strengthened the educational, cultural, environmental, political, and social conditions on campus;
2. **Representation** - those who have uplifted marginalized and oppressed voices and fought for all students on campus;
3. **Leadership** - those who have demonstrated leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection.

The Committee first considered past and present SSMU Members who have made significant contributions, alongside non-SSMU Members, McGill Alumni, and non-McGill students.

The final selection of any individual for commemoration would be contingent on the Committee's ability to receive consent, either from the individual or their family.



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## Submissions

From September 3 to December 9, 2020, the Committee accepted submissions through a Google Form distributed with the SSMU's listserv and social media. The form received 18 responses, including 27 submissions of names. While several comedic submissions were removed from consideration by the Committee Chair and the Secretary, the complete list of responses was made available to Committee members. Several submissions were also proposed by Committee members throughout the selection process. The submissions for consideration were compiled into a Submissions Book that was used to guide the Committee's deliberations.

## Deliberation

All decisions of the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming, following the election of the Members-at-Large, were made by consensus. As such, no submissions were finalized or tabled without the consent of all Committee members present.

From October 2 to November 27, 2020, the Committee made use of the Naming Guidelines to consider all eligible submissions, one-by-one, until a preliminary consensus was reached on three front-runners and a list of honourable mentions (see Preliminary Decisions).

## Consultations

All Committee members were encouraged to consult their respective constituencies to both source new submissions and discuss existing submissions. Notably, Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, Jocelyne Couture, and Senator Darshan Daryanani were responsible for consulting the First People's Justice Centre for Montreal and the Special Advisor (Indigenous Initiatives) for the Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic).

Throughout January of 2021, pending Council endorsement, the Committee undertook consultations with relevant stakeholders, including community organizations, student groups, committees, clubs, and services. As set out in the Terms of Reference, the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming presented a Preliminary Report to the Board of Directors for information and to the Legislative Council for endorsement, for which it received unanimous approval.

## Preliminary Decisions

### Front-Runners

Weighing both the Naming Guidelines, the interests of the constituencies of Committee members, and the advice of consulted stakeholders, the Committee reached a consensus on three front-runners, one



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of which respectfully declined their nomination. The two remaining front-runners served as the preliminary finalists, pending final approval.

### Siila Watt-Cloutier - Accepted

Siila (“Sheila”) Watt-Cloutier is an Inuk McGill alumna and a past president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Watt-Cloutier served as the spokesperson for the peoples of the Arctic during the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. A Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Watt-Cloutier is a longstanding advocate for the rights of the Inuit people who fought for educational reform in Nunavik and Quebec to improve education for Inuit youths while maintaining their cultural heritage.

*Submitted by Sarah-Isabel Poindexter-Ibarra.*

### Mariame Kaba - Respectfully declined

Mariame Kaba is a Black McGill alumna who protested against South African apartheid during her time at McGill. Kaba was instrumental in bringing the prison abolition movement into mainstream consciousness. Kaba founded Project NIA, dedicated to ending juvenile incarceration, and helped found the Chicago Freedom School, based on the Freedom Schools of the Civil Rights Era. An author, Kaba’s work has been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Huffington Post.

*Submitted by Mohammed Odusanya.*

## Honourable Mentions

The following submissions were also extensively deliberated by the Committee. While a consensus was reached that these submissions did not fulfil all of the criteria set out in the Naming Guidelines, the Committee recommends that spaces within the University Centre and 3501 Peel be named in recognition of these individuals.

- **Abe Okpik**; an Inuit man who fought for the use of official surnames by the Canadian Government, rather than government-issued disc numbers, for Inuit people.
- **Patricia Monture-Angus**; a Mohawk activist, educator, author, and lawyer who served on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples with Honorary Doctorate from Queen’s University.
- **Laurent Duvernay-Tardif**; a Knight of the National Order of Quebec, spokesperson for Héma-Québec, football player for the Kansas City Chiefs, and the fourth medical school graduate to play for the National Football League.



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- **Oscar Peterson;** known as the “King of inside swing” and “Maharaja of the keyboard,” a jazz pianist, virtuoso, composer, Order of Canada recipient, and Montreal native with over 200 released recordings and eight Grammy Awards.
- **Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait;** a McGill alum, physician, and philanthropist from Kuwait who founded the humanitarian Direct Aid Society and helped build hundreds of schools, hospitals, training centres, and two colleges.
- **Marlene Dixon;** a former McGill Faculty member, vocal feminist and proponent of gay liberation and anti-racism who founded the Marxist-Leninist Democratic Workers Party.
- **Joyce Echaquan;** the mother of seven who died as nurses at Montreal's Joliette hospital made racist and disparaging remarks.
- **Kai Cheng Thom;** a transgender McGill alum, ALA Stonewall Honor author, social worker, and Queer advocate with four published books, recognized by Emma Watson and Julie Andrews for their respective book clubs.
- **Charles Richard Drew;** a McGill alum and first African-American surgeon to be an examiner on the American Board of Surgery, is known as the “Father of Blood Banking.”
- **Rosemary Brown;** a McGill alum, the first Black woman to be a member of a Canadian Parliamentary body and to run for leadership of a Federal political party who contributed heavily to the British Columbia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People.

## Proposals

### Renaming Proposals

Following the endorsement of the Preliminary Report by the Legislative Council, the Committee resolved to develop final proposals for the renaming of the University Centre and 3501 Peel Building. While two individuals had been selected for commemoration, full names had not been selected for either building.

The following proposals will serve as the new names for the University Centre, following authorization from the Board of Directors.





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## University Centre

The Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming proposes that the University Centre be renamed as the **Siila Watt-Cloutier University Centre**, in recognition of the Inuk McGill alumna, Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Inuit rights activist, and environmentalist, Siila Watt-Cloutier.

## 3501 Peel

At this time, the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming has not made a final decision on a name for the 3501 Peel Building. As such, the Committee will continue its consultations and deliberative activity over Summer 2021 and potentially into Fall 2021, in order to arrive at a final decision.

## University-Level Recognition

In 1992, a SSMU Referendum approved the renaming of the University Centre to the “William Shatner University Centre”. The University, however, refused to recognize the renaming because of its nonconformity with University policies. While 3501 Peel is owned entirely by the SSMU, the naming of the University Centre must, technically, be approved by McGill’s Board of Governors.

In establishing the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming, the Board of Directors mandated the Vice-President (University Affairs) to secure the University’s recognition of the SSMU’s naming proposals for its two buildings. As of 2006, the naming of buildings on campus is governed by [Policy Related to the Naming of University Assets](#), which outlines the current procedures for the submission and approval of naming proposals.

## Negotiations

Following the finalization of both proposals by the Committee, the Vice-President (University Affairs) entered negotiations with the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) and Vice-Principal (University Advancement) to ensure that the renaming of the University Centre would be formally recognized by the University.

## Scholarship Proposal

Citing the unlikelihood of the Board of Governors to approve the renaming of the University Centre without a significant donation, Vice-Principal (University Advancement) suggested the establishment of a scholarship to accompany the renaming.



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Committee members expressed initial concerns over the sincerity of the scholarship proposal. Following consultations with Siila Watt-Cloutier, however, the Committee approved the continuation of negotiations.

Pending the finalization of a Letter of Intent, currently being drafted by the Office of the Vice-Principal (University Advancement), several details have been tentatively agreed to by the Vice-President (University Affairs), Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), and Vice-Principal (University Advancement):

1. The scholarship would be jointly funded by one million dollars from the SSMU and four million dollars of donations procured by McGill University Advancement, totalling five million dollars;
2. The scholarship would be dedicated to supporting Indigenous students at McGill University;
3. While contributing donors may be ceremonially acknowledged, the scholarship and renaming will honour Siila Watt-Cloutier, first and foremost; and
4. The recognition of the renaming of the University Centre by the University would be contingent on the ability of the SSMU to contribute its portion of the scholarship, regardless of whether or not University Advancement is able to procure the remaining four million dollars.

## Next Steps

### Student-Body Consultation

While the Terms of Reference indicate that the finalized proposal will be considered by a Referendum of SSMU members, the delays resulting from extended discussions with the Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning) and Vice-Principal (University Advancement) prevented a Referendum Question from being considered during the Winter 2021 academic term.

### Town Hall

As such, the Committee has opted to pursue a consultative Town Hall, open to all SSMU members, before the end of the Winter 2021 semester. The Town Hall would serve as a forum to formally unveil the proposals of the Committee and receive feedback from Members. The Committee believes, furthermore, that an open forum would allow for greater transparency and more detailed feedback from Members.



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## Authorization

Following the completion of student-body consultations, barring substantial negative feedback from Members, the Vice-President (University Affairs) will submit to the Board of Directors a motion to authorize the renaming of the University Centre as outlined above (see Renaming Proposals).

Subsequently, a Letter of Intent, drafted by the Office of the Vice-Principal (University Advancement) will be presented to the Board of Directors, by the Vice-President (University Affairs), for ratification.

## Funding

The Vice-Principal (University Advancement) intends to procure the four million dollar portion of the scholarship through multiple private donors by the end of the Fall 2021 semester. To incentivize private donations, the SSMU will contribute one million dollars to the scholarship.

## Student Fee

The contribution of the SSMU will be funded by the creation of a new student fee, which would collect the one million dollar sum over five years. Supported by the Executive Committee, the Vice-President (University Affairs), will propose such a fee question for inclusion in the Fall 2021 Referendum period.

Should the fee question be approved for inclusion in the Fall 2021 Referendum period, the Vice-President (University Affairs) will form a campaign, dedicated to ensuring a successful 'Yes' vote. The 'Yes' campaign will be executed in collaboration with the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner and may request support from the constituencies represented on the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming. The campaign will be further supported logistically by the Communications Department.

## Board of Governors Approval

Following a successful 'yes' vote, approving the creation of a student fee dedicated to funding the SSMU's contribution to the scholarship, the Vice-President (University Affairs), assisted by the President, will be responsible for coordinating approval by the Board of Governors and University-level recognition of the renaming of the University Centre.

## Approval Procedures

As outlined in McGill's Policy Related to the Naming of University Assets, letters of approval will be requested from the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), the Vice-Principal (University



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Advancement), and the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance). These letters, alongside an extensive written proposal, drafted with the assistance of the Vice-Principal (University Advancement) will be communicated to the Principal.

Following the assembly and consultation of a University-level ad-hoc committee, the Principal will, ideally, recommend approval of the Naming Proposal to the Board of Governors. Following Board approval and legal review, the name will be publicly announced by the University, after which all relevant documents will be updated to reflect the newly adopted name.

## Renaming Ceremony

Following the recognition of the renaming of the University Centre, the Executive Committee will organize a renaming ceremony, or renaming ceremonies, for the University Centre and 3501 Peel. The renaming ceremony may also serve as an unveiling ceremony for the scholarship.

The Executive Committee will be assisted logistically by the Operations, Building, and Communications Departments and may request assistance from the Office of the Vice-Principal (University Advancement).

If possible, considering government and campus restrictions surrounding COVID-19, Siila Watt-Cloutier will be asked to attend the renaming ceremony as guests of honour. If applicable, the SSMU will offer to finance travel and accommodation costs.

In recognition of the time and effort dedicated to the renaming of the University Centre and 3501 Peel Building, members of the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming will be asked to attend the renaming ceremony or ceremonies, as secondary guests of honour.

## Accountability

The Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming, Accelerating Towards our Renaming (BACoN-AToR) Plan, will be overseen and primarily executed by the Vice-President (University Affairs), with the assistance of the Executive Committee.

As such, the Vice-President (University Affairs) will report regularly to the Executive Committee and at least monthly to the Legislative Council on the execution of the Plan. Any delays to the Plan will also be reported to the Board of Directors, as they occur.



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A final report on the history and execution of the Plan, including recognition of the efforts of the Board Ad-hoc Committee on Naming, will be drafted by the Vice-President (University Affairs) and presented to the Legislative Council, following the successful completion of the Plan.