



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

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SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

February 02, 2023

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference on Thursday, February 02, 2023 at 18:00.

Present: Alexandre Ashkir (Chair, non-voting), Jaz Kaur (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Val Masny (Officer), Kerry Yang (Officer), Marco Pizarro (Officer, non-voting), Benson Wan (Council Member), Coco Jie Wang (Council Member), Peter Tai (Council Member), Julia Nam (Council Member), Risann Wright (Officer), Hassanatou Koulibaly (Officer, non-voting)

Absent: Cat Williams (Officer, non-voting)

Content Warning: mentions of sexual violence and harrasment

1. Call to Order: **18:08**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:08. He reminds everyone that the meeting is recorded.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair presents the Land Acknowledgement.

The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the true and constant custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today. Further, the SSMU commits to and respects the traditional laws and customs of these territories.

3. Attendance

The Chair takes attendance.

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

The agenda is distributed.



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Seeing no corrections or changes, Director Wan motions to adopt the agenda.

Director Wang seconds the motion to adopt the agenda.

Seeing no opposition, the agenda is adopted as distributed.

5. Executive Committee Public Report – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Director Wright joins the meeting at 18:11.

Director Wright presents the Executive Committee Public Report. The weekly meetings were attended, and some motions were approved, including hirings. They also approved letters and statements, and they signed onto letters to support various campus initiatives. She highlights that some hirings were done for student services, which is why there were so many hirings. Director Wright stands for questions.

The Speaker entertains a question period.

Seeing no questions, Director Yang motions to ratify the report.

Director Wan seconds the motion to ratify the report.

Seeing no opposition, the Executive Committee Public Report is ratified.

6. For Discussion:

a. Directors on HR committee (Director Yang)

Director Yang states that they need three (3) directors to sit on the HR Committee, which deals with various HR matters. He asks if any non-Executive Directors would be available to sit on the committee.

Director Wan states that he would love to, but he does not have much time in the next few weeks since he has residency interviews coming up. If these seats remain unfilled by the end of the month, he can sit on them.

Director Yang states that, for the GSVP Committee, they need 2 directors. There are complaints that are ongoing, which cannot be completed without a full committee.

Question:



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Director Wan asks if any of these matters could wait until February 26.

Answer:

Director Yang states that matters might have to wait if there are no Directors available. They need several Directors to sit on the committees.

Director Wang states that she has the opposite situation from Director Wan, so if the Board needs someone to help out for a short period of time she can do it.

Director Yang would appreciate that, even if it is just to process some complaints.

Director Wan suggests an Action Item to appoint Director Wang to the committees until the last week of February, when he will take over.

Director Yang is amenable to this, but it depends if Director Wang is amenable to this.

Question:

Director Wan asks the Chair which he would prefer: an action item or a motion.

Answer:

The Chair answers that an action item can work.

Director Wan proposes Action Items b.i and b.ii.

Director Wang states that she can help out temporarily, but she might not be available after February 18.

Question:

The Chair asks Director Wang if the action items fit her schedule.

Answer:

Director Wang states that February 26 might not be a good date for her.



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The action items are changed to reflect Director Wang's schedule (February 20).

The Chair asks Director Wan if the action items fit his schedule.

Director Wan answers that he won't be available until February 26, but hopefully one week of vacancy will not be a problem. Director Yang answers that this is fine.

The Chair entertains a vote on Action Items b.i and b.ii.

- b. Directors on GSVP committee (Director Yang)
 - i. **Action Item:** To appoint Director Wang to the GSVP and HR Committee to February 20, 2023 – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
 - ii. **Action Item:** To appoint Director Wan to the GSVP and HR Committee starting February 26, 2023 to the end of their term – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Seeing no opposition, Action Items b.i and b.ii are unanimously approved.

7. Motions for Approval:

- a. Motion to approve the spending of \$23,160.50 for period underwear from Period Aisle (Director Yang) – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Director Yang presents Motion 7.a. It is similar to the Motion presented in the Fall 2022 semester. Any motion over \$10,000 must be approved by the Board, but the Menstrual Health budget can accommodate this purchase. They do have SPF funding, but this will be used after February. There will be a pickup on February 17, 2023, and they are completely out of sizes XS, S and M period underwear, which are very popular and need to be replenished. Director Yang will purchase various colours and sizes.

Question:

Officer Pizarro asks where the money is coming from, the budget or the fees.

Answer:

Director Yang answers that it is coming from the excess from COVID years, during which nothing was spent.

Question:



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Director Wan asks, in the event that they run out of excess COVID-19 funds and they don't have enough to bridge the SPF funding period, if there are other options to fund the gap.

Answer:

Director Yang answers that they never purchased the total amount of money that the fee collected, so there is quite a bit of money in excess.

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

Director Yang motions to call the question by unanimous consent.

Director Wan seconds the motion to call the question.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote by unanimous consent.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 7.a is unanimously approved.

8. Confidential Session: **18:40**

Director Yang motions to postpone Motion 7.b. until after the confidential session. Director Wan seconds this motion.

Director Wright motions to enter the confidential session. Director Wan seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, the Board enters the confidential session at 18:40.

9. Motions for Approval:

- a. Motion to approve the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with HAVEN, a campus safety app, for a free trial period until April 2023 (Director Yang) – **POSTPONED UNTIL NEXT MEETING**

Director Yang presents Motion 9.a. HAVEN is a campus safety app, which students can use if they feel that they are in danger. The app can locate where a student is, to help out campus security. The agreement will entail a trial period, to see if the app works in the university context, and to see if it is suitable for McGill. Throughout the process, they will be collecting data and sending out surveys to evaluate whether or not they want to use HAVEN in the future.

The Chair entertains a question period.



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Question:

Director Masny asks why Director Yang is bringing this to the Board rather than the Legislative Council.

Answer:

Director Yang answers that he spoke with the Governance Manager about this, because it does concern the day-to-day operations of the SSMU. The Governance Manager suggested to him it needed to be handled either by the Executive Committee, who oversees the day-to-day operations of SSMU, and the Board, because it is the highest governing body. If the Motion was presented to the Council, it would only be a notification.

Question:

Officer Koulibaly asks why this was brought forward as a motion rather than a discussion item, because it seems to be something that needs to be further discussed.

Answer:

Director Yang states that discussions have been ongoing since late August 2022 and they have not occurred in isolation. Various members and bodies have been consulted. This is a Motion to do a trial run, and to see how students like it and if they want to keep it.

Question:

Director Wan asks if there are any potential risks to implementing this as a trial run.

Answer:

Director Yang answers that there are, because HAVEN is new [startup]. SSMU does not know too much about the app, and if they implement it as an app and students don't like it, there might be some backlash from students who did like it. They need to make it clear that this is a trial run.

Question:

Director Wan asks if other schools have tried or implemented HAVEN, or if any schools have rejected the offer. He asks if the app required geo-tracking students, because he is aware of class action lawsuits against Tim Hortons for tracking students.

Answer:



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Director Yang states that the app tracks student data, but it is protected and encrypted. The app seems to follow the law, and they take data concerns very seriously. From his understanding, HAVEN has been used at Western, and the Universities of Toronto and Ottawa.

Question:

Director Masny asks Director Yang to clarify if the app was used at the universities mentioned.

Answer:

Director Yang states that the University of Toronto rejected the app, the University of Ottawa implemented it and Western University is still trying it out.

Question:

Director Masny asks Director Wang to clarify her role in this project.

Answer:

Director Wang states that this falls under her mandate, to raise awareness about street harassment and gender-based sexual harassment on and off-campus. She has been in communication with HAVEN, and she was made aware that confidentiality was an issue. There have been conversations about the app's confidentiality. In their terms and conditions, it says that all data does not get sent back to their database, so it stays on the user's phone and is destroyed upon upload.

Question:

Director Masny states that they have a few concerns: they ask what the training mechanisms are for the app's 'Angels,' who intervene in situations of harassment.

Answer:

Director Yang answers that, given all members of the McGill community take the It Takes All of Us training, that would be the basic bystander training. 'Angels' aren't supposed to be trained individuals, the approach is more survivor-centric in that victims can text or call someone to come help them. Campus security also has mechanisms for these situations.

Question:

Director Masny asks, if people intervene, if there is support for bystanders who intervene in the app.



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Answer:

Director Yang answers that this takes away from the scope of the app; it is a campus safety app that focuses on the person using the app rather than the bystanders.

Director Masny states that their question is within the scope, because if they encourage people to use the app they will also encourage them to register as 'Angels,' which will impact their behaviour.

Director Yang states that support includes explanations of proper procedures in cases of sexual violence as well as resources. The app is about campus safety, but there are other services such as SACOMMS or OSVRSE that provide bystander support. If the app provided bystander support, it would be redundant since McGill services already provide this.

The Chair entertains a debate period.

Director Wang clarifies that 'Angels' are not trained professionals, they are pre-determined contacts that users can select to add into the app. When you enter the app, there is a big button on the screen, which will send a message to 'Angels' that has been customised beforehand. If you press the button twice, it will call those contacts, and if you press it three times you would call campus police or 911 if you are off-campus.

Question:

Director Wan asks why UofT did not use this app.

Answer:

Director Masny states that they can ask, but this was not discussed with UCRU.

Director Wright states that at the time of UCRU in December, the UofT representative told her that they were not going to be using HAVEN. They expressed concerns with how the app works on their campus.

Director Wan notes that he is ambivalent about this; it is a good application to offer for students, especially since they have seen data that would support the usage of this application. A trial run is a good financial idea as well, since it would not cost much. However, there are some security and data concerns. UofT opting out is not a red flag, but the Board should not base their decision on theirs. It



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might be a good idea to ask UofT why they didn't implement the app. He is leaning more towards this application than against it.

Officer Koulibaly indicates that there was a survey that went out, and 73 students filled out the survey. The questions were drafted without an AVC, so she is unsure that she has faith in the survey. She thinks there would be much more data protection that needs to be agreed on. She disagrees that this agreement is non-binding; introducing something to the student body implies endorsing the app.

Director Yang answers that he understands that the survey questions were not the best. The sample size was small, but the app has been promoted on listservs and in campus media. VP Student Life reached out to HAVEN, and Directors Wang and Yang reached out to HAVEN about security. He agrees that more thought needs to be put into this motion, so he suggests introducing it to the Legislative Council before moving forward. The trial period is not an endorsement, they must let students know that this is a trial run and that they will decide to implement this app with the data they receive.

Director Masny agrees with Officer Koulibaly, and states that SSMU's position favours the reduction of policing. They wonder how this app fits into this position, and they think there are many gaps. They move to table this motion until the next Board meeting, at which they will be able to edit the MoU to reflect better data protection and other clauses.

Officer Koulibaly states that she was initially part of the discussion with HAVEN, and it was continued without her. She raised her concerns about the app at the Executive Committee. She understands that Directors Yang and Wang have spoken with HAVEN, and having an agreement in writing is key for liability concerns. She still stands on her previous comments about the endorsements. As student representatives, they have a lot of power and would be held responsible for the third party having access to students.

Director Masny motions to table this motion until the next Board meeting (February 16), awaiting revision of the contract and answers to questions raised. Director Yang seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, the motion is postponed until the next meeting.

Director Masny asks if they can add action items.

The Chair answers yes. He asks Director Masny which action items they want to add.

Director Masny adds some Action Items. They ask Director Yang if these Items make sense.

Director Yang answers yes, and asks if they could take on the negotiations.



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Director Masny answers that they should not go forward with this at this time, but they can support Director Yang. However, they have not been part of the conversation since the beginning.

The Chair asks Director Masny if they still want to include the Action Items.

Director Masny answers that, for this contract to be considered, data concerns need to be addressed.

Officer Koulibaly clarifies that the data protection clauses are only one of her many concerns with this app. She does not think she can provide assistance at this time.

Director Wan suggests Action Item 9.b.i.

Director Wright is amenable to this Action Item. She suggests that Director Masny could be involved as well.

Director Wan suggests a February 9 deadline for reaching out, and suggests providing an update by the next meeting.

Director Yang states that he can have HAVEN come present during the Legislative Council, to answer questions and have a discussion about the app. He proposes Action Item 9.b.ii.

- i. **Action Item:** For Director Wright to reach out to UofT student union concerning the rationale behind their decision about the HAVEN App by February 9 and provide an update by next Board meeting– **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The Chair entertains a vote by unanimous consent on Action Item 9.b.i.

Seeing none, Action Item 9.b.i is unanimously approved.

- ii. **Action Item:** For Director Yang to reach out to HAVEN for a presentation at next Legislative Council meeting – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The Chair entertains a vote by unanimous consent on Action Item 9.b.ii.

Director Wright asks Director Yang if the best way forward is to start with a presentation from HAVEN or one from him.

Director Yang states that the HAVEN presentation first would be better.



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Seeing no opposition, Action Item 9.b.ii is unanimously approved.

10. Legislative Council Motions For Approval:

a. [Motion Regarding Uyghur Rights](#) – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The Chair states that Motion 10.a was presented at Legislative Council and must be ratified by the Board.

Question:

Director Yang asks the Board if anyone knows if consultations have been done with Uyghur members or community groups.

Answer:

The Chair notes that there is a note that consultations have been done in the motion itself.

Director Yang states that they do not know the composition of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, it could be mostly non-Uyghurs. Having more information on the composition of the group would be helpful.

Director Masny states that they met with the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project representative, and the member who represents Montreal is of Uygur descent. They remind everyone that this motion was moved by students.

Director Yang understands that this motion has been brought forward by students, but getting Uyghurs on Board is important. He suggests tabling the motion until consultations can be done.

Question:

Director Masny asks why these concerns were not raised at the Legislative Council, since the motion has passed through the General Assembly and the Legislative Council.

Answer:

Director Yang states that his concerns were brought forward at the Legislative Council.



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Director Wan thinks that the Board should stick to financial and legal issues when it comes to motions, and leave advocacy and political debate to the Legislative Council. While the concerns may have been brought up at the Legislative Council and the General Assembly, the Board is not the best forum within which to address them. However, if a lack of consultation has legal or financial risks, that could be relevant to the Board.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair reminds the Board that they should look at the motions within the Board's purview (legal and financial). He entertains a vote.

Motion 10.a is unanimously ratified.

b. [Motion Regarding a Policy to Support Trans Students On Campus](#) – **APPROVED**

Director Masny states that, following the incident at the Faculty of Law, students have mobilised for transgender rights and have demanded better action from SSMU. This includes better services and care. In their role, they put forward this motion so that SSMU can adopt a future policy that will be comprehensive in terms of needs for advocacy.

The Chair entertains a debate period.

Director Yang motions to call the question.

Question:

Director Wright asks, outside of the content of the Motion, if there had been consideration regarding defamation, since the Motion names the professor involved.

Answer:

Director Masny states that this Motion was written in collaboration with the Faculty of Law representative, so she took care in ensuring that this question had been addressed.

Director Wan states that, when there have been motions against particular companies, they have tried to stay generic. Whenever they mentioned particular companies, they ran into issues and had to perform additional consultations. He is unsure if they understand all the legal repercussions of naming this professor. Consultations should be done to ensure that the Board is not stepping on anyone's toes.

Director Wright emphasises that this should not be delayed, she is just generally concerned about the risk. If there is any assurance that can be given, she would be happy to hear them.



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Director Masny states that the professor is named in his relation to the LGB Alliance. It states his associations with the alliance, which has been publicly denounced as a transphobic organisation. To them, this is not a legal risk. They aren't worried, since it has not been brought forward to them in conversations with students or the administration. They second the motion to call the question.

Director Wright thanks Director Masny for their perspective. If most people on the Board agree, she is happy to move forward with this.

The Chair entertains a vote by reaction on calling the question.

The Chair entertains a vote on Motion 10.b.

With 5 votes in favour and 2 votes against, Motion 10.b is approved.

11. Adjournment: **21:00**

Seeing no further motions, the Chair declares this meeting adjourned at 21:00.

Alexandre Ashkir, SSMU President