



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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

MOTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF AN UPDATE OF AMENDMENTS TO THE SSMU GENDERED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY 2024-03-28

Submitted for: 2024-03-28

Submitted to:	SSMU Board of Directors	Document no.:	BOD-PUB-MOT-2024-03-28-001
Moved by:	Alexandre Ashkir SSMU President	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Lalia Katchelewa VP University Affairs		

Issue

This motion seeks approval for an amended SSMU Gendered and Sexual Violence policy due to inadequacies in the expired policy regarding investigative clarity and norms in procedural fairness. The revisions, developed through extensive consultations with internal departmental leaders, Executives, Commissioners and legal entities, address shortcomings by prioritizing procedural fairness, responsiveness, and inclusivity. Thorough legal reviews ensure alignment with standards and best practices. SSMU aims to establish a contemporary framework, reflecting a commitment to a safe, respectful, and supportive environment while upholding principles of procedural fairness and justice.

Background and Rationale

The proposed amendments to McGill University's Students' Society (SSMU) Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy are crucial for several compelling reasons. Firstly, the existing policy, developed in October 2018, is outdated, failing to account for the evolving landscape surrounding issues of gendered and sexual violence. Over the years, nuanced cases have emerged, underscoring the necessity for a more comprehensive policy that addresses the diverse nature of such incidents.



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Secondly, the hiring of an Equity & Policy Specialist underscores the need for a clear delineation of responsibilities within the policy framework. The proposed amendments ensure that the specialist's role and obligations are explicitly outlined, fostering transparency and accountability in handling cases related to gendered and sexual violence.

Moreover, the lack of a legal review for the existing policy exposes the SSMU to potential legal liabilities. The proposed amendments have undergone a comprehensive legal review, aligning the policy with current legal standards and best practices. This not only mitigates the risk of legal challenges but also demonstrates a proactive commitment to compliance with the law.

Clarity in investigation norms is another critical aspect addressed by the proposed amendments. With a rapidly changing societal landscape and turn over of Anti-Violence Coordinators, increased clarity in the step-by-step conducting of an investigation is paramount, the policy amendments provide explicit guidelines, enhancing the effectiveness and fairness of investigations.

In essence, these amendments are not merely a procedural formality; they represent a proactive and necessary step toward ensuring the SSMU's commitment to addressing gendered and sexual violence responsibly. By adopting these changes, the SSMU not only reflects the evolving understanding of these issues but also fortifies its position by minimizing legal risks and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the policy in safeguarding the well-being of its community members.

Alignment with Mission

A more effective, procedurally fair, and clear Gendered and Sexual Violence policy aligns with the SSMU's mission by enhancing the services provided by the SSMU to its members and demonstrating leadership in human rights, social justice, and equity. This alignment underscores the SSMU's commitment to fostering an inclusive community that upholds human dignity and bodily sovereignty, without discrimination based on personal characteristics.

Consultations Completed

Consultation for the amendments to this policy include the following:

- Anti-Violence Coordinators
- SSMU President
- VP University Affairs
- VP Student Life



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- VP Sustainability & Operations
- Human Resources Director
- Human Resources Manager
- Governance Manager
- Gender & Sexuality Commissioner
- Mental Health Commissioner
- Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students Association (SACOMSS)

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The approval of the amended Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy for the SSMU presents risks and resource implications. The expanded workload for the Equity & Policy Specialist, by managing the development and delivery of training along with serving on additional complaint committees, may lead to burnout and stress, necessitating careful resource allocation for support. Additionally, assigning mandated decision-making responsibilities to the Human Resource Director in the complaint management process requires allocating resources, such as training and support systems, to ensure effective policy implementation and maintain the well-being and efficiency of both specialists in their critical roles. Finally, the amended policy expands on situations in which an external third-party investigator may be utilized for investigations. The decision to utilize this option, though only to be used in the scenario of no other internal qualified party being available to manage a complaint, still poses financial burdens on the SSMU if utilized.

Sustainability Considerations

The approval of an amended Gendered and Sexual Violence policy for the SSMU, characterized by increased clarity and procedural fairness, aligns seamlessly with the organization's sustainability mission. A clear and fair policy fosters a supportive and inclusive community, essential elements in the SSMU's commitment to social justice and human rights. By addressing issues of gendered and sexual violence responsibly, the policy contributes to the well-being of its members, creating a sustainable and equitable campus environment. This alignment underscores the SSMU's dedication to holistic sustainability, emphasizing justice and equity in addressing social concerns.



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Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Approving a new Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy (GSVP) has noteworthy impacts. Firstly, the policy must undergo translation from English to French to ensure accessibility in our bilingual community. Secondly, the implementation of annual training requirements places an additional responsibility on the Human Resources (HR) department, requiring adequate resources and tools for effective execution aligned with policy objectives and diverse community needs. Additionally, the formation of the GSVP Review Panel and GSVP Appeal Panel earlier in the year is crucial for prompt policy enforcement, demanding proactive support from the Board of Directors and SACOMSS to facilitate its establishment and enhance the overall responsiveness and efficacy of the GSVP in addressing gendered and sexual violence within the SSMU Community.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Board of Directors approve the new Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy, starting **X, 2024** and ending on May 1st, 2029 linked [here](#).

Results of the Vote

In favour
Opposed
Abstain