



## 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 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

April 4th, 2024

The regular bi-monthly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held in the Lev Bukhman Room of the University Centre and by teleconference, on Thursday, April 4th, 2024 at 18:00.

*La rencontre régulière bimensuelle du Conseil législatif de l'AEUM se tiendra dans la salle Lev Bukhman du Centre universitaire et par vidéoconférence le jeudi 4 avril à 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.

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.

L'AEUM reconnaît que l'Université McGill est située sur le territoire traditionnel et non cédé des nations Anishinaabeg et Haudenosaunee. L'AEUM reconnaît et respecte ces nations comme les véritables et constants gardiens des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous rencontrons aujourd'hui. En outre, l'AEUM s'engage à respecter les lois et coutumes traditionnelles de ces territoires.

### 3. Attendance

The Speaker takes attendance.

Present are: Councillors Porter, Rajan, Baybayon, Sakajiri, Renaud, Tai, Yang, Trica-Mavrodin, Rylo, Fraser, Nounke, Zukerman, Foxman, Fournier, Maselli, President Ashkir, VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly, VP Internal Affairs Barlas, VP Student Life Dakdouki, VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer, VP External Affairs Gaither, VP University Affairs Katchelewa.



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Absent are: Councillors Li, Chemaly, Wehbe, Duncan, Shannon, Li, Grall-Johnson, Mabilia, Gertsvolf, General Manager Marcus-Sells.

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

The Agenda is distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Agenda is adopted.

5. Minutes for Approval:

- a. SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2024-03-21 – **APPROVED**

The Minutes are distributed.

Seeing no corrections or opposition, the Minutes are approved.

6. Report of the Steering Committee

The Speaker presents the Report of the Steering Committee. He states that they met twice this week, on Monday and on Thursday before the meeting. They reviewed the many motions they received. The motions approved are on the Agenda, including some business that arose from the last meeting. Other motions that were submitted late were pushed to the next meeting, which has been scheduled for April 18. The Speaker stands for questions.

7. Report of the VP Internal and First Year Council

VP Internal Affairs Barlas presents the Report of the VP Internal and FYC. He states that FYC has their therapy dog event tomorrow, in the University Centre on the first floor. He has been attending the CL&E Orientation meetings, and SSPN's weekly meetings. They held a jam session, a mixer, and they are planning a Gerts night and will be running a face-painting station at OAP Lite. FYC had a talent event in the EUS ballroom, which was very highly attended. The First-Year Fee failed to pass again this semester; there is some leftover money for next year, but they need to sit down to discuss their lack of funding with the VP Finance. The Scarlet Keys were given out by the McGill President in mid-March. Communications are super busy with the SSMU Awards. April 9 is the last listserv for the school year. VP Internal Affairs Barlas is continuing to hold his office hours until the end of final exams. SSMU Awards are tomorrow in the University Centre, and most of the work is completed. SSPN has one more spot for a Councillor to join. He thanks everyone for a great year, and stands for questions.



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#### 8. Reports by Committees:

##### a. Library Improvement Fund Committee

VP University Affairs Katchelewa presents the Report of the Library Improvement Fund Committee. She states that they met in November and January, and they have their last meeting of the year coming up soon. There were many student hires for different branches, which are approved by the Committee. They provided 24-hour access to the library, purchased ergonomic furniture for the Law Library, and put mobile desks around campus. They have had issues integrating furniture into the Music Library, but they are working with the administration to ensure that everything can be installed. Proposals from previous years include upgrading charging stations in Schulich Library, expanding mobile desks, and improving the Music Library. VP University Affairs Katchelewa reminds everyone that everyone can apply for the Library Improvement Fund, as long as their initiatives are feasible. This is a great opportunity for students to make their spaces more accessible or provide more resources.

##### b. Services Review Committee – **RATIFIED**

VP Student Life Dakdouki presents the Report of the Services Review Committee. She states that they revamped the Services Review process, as criteria were not clear. They defined criteria and improved consistency, to be more fair to services and be more transparent for students. Before presenting the results of the Services Review, she states that there is a full report of all 18 services, including their self-report and interviews, including methodology. There are criteria, reasonings, and scores for each criteria level to provide feedback to the service being reviewed. She notes that external user surveys were distributed, but only 4 received responses, mostly to the ASN. Feedback from users is something the Committee is looking to expand. She motions to extend her speaking time by 2 minutes.

President Ashkir seconds this motion.

Seeing no opposition, VP Student Life Dakdouki's speaking time is extended. She adds that services can either pass, pass with reservations, or fail the review. It is important to evaluate all services because they all levy a fee. They use up a lot of SSMU resources and student money. Pass means that things are going well; pass with reservations means that there are some things to improve, and failure means that the service is not achieving its mandate. One service failed this year. She asks for a minute to share the correct version of the presentation with the Parliamentarian. She motions to extend her time until she is done speaking.

VP External Affairs Gaither seconds this motion.



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Seeing no opposition, VP Student Life Dakdouki's speaking time is extended. She adds that each slide of the presentation includes the service's score from last year, their current score, and some suggestions. The full reports have much more detailed suggestions and information. The ASN passed with reservations, they just need to increase their services and advocacy. The BSN passed with reservation, they lost some points because their budget did not contain actuals. The committee was quite strict on budgets this year, so many services lost points because they did not submit adequate documentation. DriveSafe passed, but they should scale up their operations to meet demands. The EDC passed with reservations because they need to refocus on their mandate. MSERT passed. McGill Students' Nightline passed with reservations, as they need to improve their documentation. The Midnight Kitchen passed with reservations because their budget and institutional sustainability were issue areas. The Musicians' Collective passed with reservations as they are not appealing to a wide crowd; it was only a few bands that were getting practice times. There were also issues with their budgeting and long-term sustainability, meaning that exit reports, handovers, and training for new executives were not up to par. The MSA passed, as did the Peer Support Centre. The Plate Club has improved, as they were not operational last year. They have office hours and other activities, but they passed with reservations because they need to continue to build their operations back up. Queer McGill passed, but there was a decrease in workshops because their Coordinators did not have the capacity to host more. SACOMSS failed, because many of their services (support groups, support line, etc.) are not being offered and they are not fulfilling their entire mandate. They have been working to get back up, but it seems like they might need to refocus the whole service. They struggle providing services because they are not trained professionals, so it can be hard to provide support without expertise. SACOMSS have a month to deal with the issue areas, and they have a meeting set up with VP Student Life Dakdouki to discuss the issues. SNAC passed, and the Committee was impressed with their institutional sustainability. The Flat Bike Collective passed, but they had concerns with institutional sustainability. TVM passed, but had some budget issues, so the VP Finance will help develop a budget template for services. The UGE passed with reservations, because the usage of their service was mostly just in their office. There should be more events and workshops, as their mandate entails. WalkSafe passed with reservations, as they had issues with advertising and usage, which has led to volunteer and staff levels. They also had issues with their budget. There was one constitution change, which the committee is waiting for clarification on.

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#### **Question:**

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks what feedback the Services are receiving, as the presentation was very broad.

#### **Answer:**

VP Student Life Dakdouki answers that they are being sent a report with the results of the review, and each point is broken down and clarified. All information used in the review was



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provided by the Service. Questions can be directed to VP Student Life Dakdouki or the Services Coordinator, to assist the services in their improvements.

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#### **Question:**

Councillor Foxman asks if access can be updated for the Slides presentation, as the hyperlink does not work.

#### **Answer:**

VP Student Life Dakdouki answers that she will update the access, and asks the Parliamentarian to share the link in the meantime. She states that the folder link should work.

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Seeing no further speakers, the Speaker entertains a vote on the Report's ratification.

Seeing no opposition, the Services Review Committee Report is ratified.

- c. Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy Committee – **POSTPONED**
- d. Indigenous Affairs Committee – **POSTPONED**
- e. SSAMMOSA Committee – **POSTPONED**

These reports are postponed.

- f. Environment Committee

The Sustainability Commissioner presents the Environment Committee Report. They state that the Committee was quite successful this semester: their aim was to function as an independent club and be a support system for sustainable initiatives on campus. They identified that outreach and communication were issues among the existing initiatives. Their aim was to promote sustainability in student groups and initiatives, and bring together resources for these groups. They created a Slack channel to share resources and share events, which was constantly being updated with new events and projects. The Committee created a smaller Environment Committee Executive, which worked on procedural and administrative matters, including outreach, graphic design, discussion topics, and more. The Executive was made up of students, and they did most of the administrative work. Their meetings shifted to bi-weekly, and they updated other members through Slack. They established a sustainability corner on the listserv, which is a continuous process. They did a trivia night at Gerts, discussed the Climate Justice Policy and sent in a request to edit it. They discussed the moratorium on fossil fuel investments, and they do not want to renew the moratorium. They advertised sustainable



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clubs on campus. The Committee held the Spokes Conference, including a speaker event and a tabling event.

9. Recess, Consent Items

The Speaker entertains a recess and asks everyone to complete the consent items form.

Motions that were consented to include the renewal of the Climate Justice Policy, the approval of the Environment Committee's funding request for Trash2Treasure, and the Renewal of the Milton-Parc Relations Working Group. These motions will not be presented or debated.

10. Motions for Approval:

- a. [Motion Regarding Renewal of Climate Justice Policy](#) – **CONSENTED**

This motion is approved by unanimous consent.

- b. [Motion Introducing the IRs of Sustainability and Operations](#) – **APPROVED**

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly presents Motion 10.b, which was presented as a Notice at the last meeting. She states that the IRs are being introduced as there is little documentation to govern her portfolio. The IRs include what she envisions the role to be, and contains guidelines on the VP's interaction with various staff, Executives, and Committees.

Seeing no questions, the Speaker entertains a debate period.

Councillor Rylo motions to postpone this motion since Councillors did not have access to it until tonight.

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly answers that the document is the same as it was when the Notice was presented.

Councillor Rylo rescinds his motion.

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly states that she would be happy to postpone this motion because these are IRs and are the second-most important governing documents at SSMU (after the Constitution), so everyone should have adequate time to review them.

Councillor Renaud motions to call the question.



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Councillor Sakajiri seconds.

The Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10b passes.

- c. [Motion Regarding the Approval of the Environment Committee Funding Request for Trash 2 Treasure](#) – **CONSENTED**

This motion is approved by unanimous consent.

- d. [Motion Regarding the Renewal of the Milton Parc Relations Working Group](#) – **CONSENTED**

This motion is approved by unanimous consent.

- e. [Motion Regarding Amendments to the Internal Regulations of Finance](#) – **APPROVED**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer presents Motion 10.e. She states that all changes are highlighted, and there are two sets of changes: sections have been added to avoid large deficits, as much as IRs can do without contradicting other governing documents; the revised operating budgets were also changed because SSMU was mandated to review its budget twice per year, but in practice only does so once per year. It is a lot of work for employees and overlaps with the preparation of the new budget. The Accounting Team also finds it bizarre to review the budget 4 months before the end of the fiscal year. The Board still has the ability to mandate revisions, though. Other changes include those to funding guidelines, to give the Funding Committee more leeway as it currently has some restrictions. VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer motions to extend her speaking time by 1 minute.

President Ashkir seconds this motion.

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer continues that the new guidelines give the Funding Committee more guidelines. For example, they added a clause that allows them to restrict funding to clubs who have already received funding the same year. Another modification outlines the staff who are paid out of the operating budget and the staff who are paid out of other fees.

The Speaker entertains questions.



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#### Question:

Councillor Renaud states that there was a change to the procedure that outlines that efforts will be made to recruit members to the Finance Committee, to avoid not meeting quorum. She asks what will happen if recruiting efforts are not fruitful.

#### Answer:

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that they had originally included a clause to allow the Executive Committee to recruit members for the Funding Committee if they cannot do so. The Governance Reform Committee was concerned with the amount of power this clause gave the Executive Committee, so she removed it. She can add this clause back if Legislative Councillors desire it.

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#### Question:

Councillor Foxman asks Councillors to speak through the Zoom as she cannot hear people speak. She asks where Commissioner salaries have come from in the past, and how funds have previously been distributed, because there was a guideline introduced that mandated the Commissioners be paid out of their respective Committee's fees.

#### Answer:

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that the motions that created or increased the fees all require the staff person to be paid out of the fees, but there has been inconsistencies in these clauses' applications due to communications with the payroll staff. This clause seeks to make it clear where staff are paid from, because not all staff were being paid out of the funds they were supposed to be. For example, some staff were paid out of the Operating Budget instead of the fees their roles come from. There are only a handful of fees that have not included a staff member in their fee.

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#### Question:

Councillor Foxman asks where the money comes from to support fee increase campaigns if the committee does not have enough money to fund them, because it is the Commissioners' role to run fee increase campaigns and these campaigns can incur costs.

#### Answer:

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that fee campaigns do not necessarily incur costs, it mostly involves having the Commissioner draft the motion and referendum question. Knowing whether or not fees need to be increased is best done by the relevant Commissioner rather than the VP Finance, because the VP Finance is less involved in the Committees' activities. These staff members can run a free campaign via social media. The Commissioners are paid





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staff, and running a fee increase campaign would be part of their job if these amendments to the IRs pass.

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VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly adds that the IRs of Elections give some money to every campaign, so they would be used to cover fee increase campaigns.

VP External Affairs Gaither, who held this item for debate, states that his comments were addressed.

Seeing no further speakers, the Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10.e is approved.

f. [Motion Regarding the 2024-25 SSMU Operating Budget](#) – **APPROVED**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer presents Motion 10.f. All budget lines are in the first document attached, but this is not very helpful, so she put together another document that outlines the changes being made this year. The 2023-2024 budget accounted for a \$700,000 deficit, and next year's budget accounts for a \$460,000 budget, most of which is salaries and the other part is other non-staff related expenses. No services are being expanded, and all other costs have been kept to a minimum. There is very little VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer can do to reduce costs any further.

The Speaker calls on VP External Affairs Gaither, who held this item for debate.

VP External Affairs Gaither states that he held this motion for debate because he fears that motions are not being paid attention to because they are approved by unanimous consent. He wants people to review the motions and ask questions, so that the Legislative Council can be a form of accountability for SSMU.

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#### **Question:**

Councillor Porter asks if staff-related costs are only salaries, or if they include other costs. He asks what the non-staff costs include

#### **Answer:**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer states that salaries include full and part-time staff and their benefits, RESP contributions, and vacation pay. The other fees vary between departments, but



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include for example physical materials for Communications. All other expenses are divided between departments. The exact budget lines vary as well, and include many small expenses.

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VP Student Life Dakdouki adds that the rest of expenses are only 8% of total expenses because they reduced everything else as much as they could, such as Council retreats, extra events, and more. They should usually be spending more on services for students; they have cut to the barebones. SSMU requires a lot of staff to operate, and Services have their own fees, but SSMU services incur costs to SSMU.

Councillor Renaud motions to reopen the question period.

The Speaker states that questions can be posed during the debate period.

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#### **Question:**

Councillor Renaud asks what the process is to reduce services and operations, and if this has happened in the past. She adds that the motion clarifies that operations reductions are not the prerogative of the VP Finance.

#### **Answer:**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that reducing operations is a Board matter. Reducing operations has not happened much in the past, and is usually followed by a reopening of those operations. She cannot decide alone to reduce operations or entire departments, and reducing services' operations is a much lengthier process and falls outside her capacity. This requires going through all governing documents to ensure that what they are doing is constitutional.

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly adds that the Board would be the one reducing operations, but reductions could come from students based on their demand for services. If there are going to be service reductions, this would come from students as they are the most affected by reductions. Even if the Board decides to reduce services, the reductions would be approved by students regardless, as the Board cannot decide to permanently cut services.

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#### **Question:**

Councillor Rylo asks how SSMU makes revenue from Elections.

#### **Answer:**



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VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that they rent out their voting platform, Simply Voting, to other faculties and departments, which pulls in minimal revenue.

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### **Question:**

VP University Affairs Katchelewa asks what the big differences are between this year's and next year's budgets.

### **Answer:**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that there have been many small changes, which are all included in the changes document and include explanations. It includes surpluses and deficits in each department, with an explanation. Casual staff have been moved into their respective fee departments, which might reduce or increase some costs in some departments. In the Governance department, there is a reduction in costs because staff have been moved into their relevant department. VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer can go through the whole budget if needed, but encourages Councillors to review it on their own time.

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Seeing no further speakers, the Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10.f is unanimously approved.

### 11. Reports by Councillors:

#### a. Athletics

Councillor Renaud presents the Athletics Report. She states that this is the first Athletics report of the year, as she enrolled in the Council late. The Varsity Council's Awards Gala is tonight, and they had a Valentine's Day candy sale to subsidize the cost of the gala and contribute to purchasing cameras for the night. This Sunday, they are hosting a marathon of sports events, and began the semester with a Varsity event that pulled in 200+ attendants. They held a nutrition information session, and had Black History Month programming. Their current VP Equity & Diversity is working on onboarding varsity athletes, because sometimes services offered by Varsity are not obvious to new students. They are trying to figure out how to host bonding events. The McGill Athletics and Recreation Advisory Board is made up of Athletics employees and members. The McConnell Arena will be closed next year, and Martlet and Redbird hockey practices and games will be relocated to Place Bell.

VP Student Life Dakdouki motions to extend Councillor Renaud's time until she is done speaking.



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President Ashkir seconds.

Seeing no opposition, Councillor Renaud continues. Athletics is applying for government grants to renovate the pool and the sports complex's ventilation system. There are over 10,000 users of the recreation facilities, including fitness centre members and intramural participants. Redbirds hockey won bronze at Nationals; and McGill hosted the Canadian championships this year. The VP Varsity Affairs won an award for leadership, academics, and sports. The Martlets won a championship as well.

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### Question:

VP Student Life Dakdouki states that it is cool to hear the results of sports teams. She asks if Councillor Renaud can think of any ideas to improve student engagement with sports, and offers for SSMU to help promote games with faculties and departments, or doing joint events. McGill is missing school spirit and she feels that students would show up to sports events.

### Answer:

Councillor Renaud notes that this has been an ongoing issue after the pandemic. The Varsity Council would love to work with SSMU to increase advertising and school spirit. She adds that many athletes are looking for community engagement opportunities, and ways to keep busy during the off-season. They would be open to volunteering with clubs or committees. They have a VP Community Outreach on the Varsity Council, who is responsible for community outreach initiatives and would be open to work with SSMU.

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- b. Nursing (NUS) — **POSTPONED**

The report is postponed.

### 12. Executive Reports:

- a. VP External – **POSTPONED**
- b. VP University Affairs – **POSTPONED**
- c. VP Student Life – **POSTPONED**

The reports are postponed.

- d. VP Operations and Sustainability



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VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly presents her reports. She states that there was an inspection of the cafeteria in the University Centre, and they want to find a tenant for that space. There are some Space Fee improvement projects, for example a new pool table at Gerts. They are introducing some fixes to the spaces, as some have mistaken the sliding doors between rooms for whiteboards. The Spokes Conference was last week, and it was a week-long event. The IRs of Sustainability & Operations were approved, and Hellenic Heritage Month was celebrated as the last Cultural Night of the semester. VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly is working on her exit report and trying to train the incoming VP Sustainability & Operations, as she received no training. Space agreements for occupants were renewed, and one office space has been dedicated to a student group that has been on the waitlist for 2 years.

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#### **Question:**

VP External Affairs Gaither asks if it would be possible to put a sign on the new pool table to show that it was paid for by the Space Fee.

#### **Answer:**

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly answers yes.

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The Speaker congratulates VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly on her final report after two years in office.

#### 13. Question Period:

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#### **Question:**

Councillor Baybayon asks if there are candidates for President and VP Finance.

#### **Answer:**

President Ashkir answers that they have had some interest for both positions, and candidates will be announced next week.

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VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer clarifies that she has received one nomination and the President has received three. If she does not receive another nomination by tomorrow at 17:00, the deadline will be extended again. If anyone knows anyone interested, they should be encouraged to apply. Many people



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have reached out but are intimidated by the full-time job. It would be great to have more than one candidate for better democracy.

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks the Dais if they were expecting this meeting to go past 21:00, as they have scheduled another meeting.

The Speaker answers that they expected a regular meeting today, so that they can have another regular meeting next time. They will have 4 or 5 motions at the next meeting.

14. Announcements:

a. SSMU Awards (Deputy Speaker Fallis)

The Deputy Speaker states that the SSMU Awards are tomorrow, and invites were sent out a few weeks ago. She encourages people to attend as some councillors are nominated for awards. The awards will take place from 18:00-21:00 in the Ballroom.

15. Adjournment: **19:46**

La conseillère Renaud annonce qu'elle a apporté des beignes et elle encourage tous à en prendre un.

The Speaker declares the meeting adjourned at 19:46. The next meeting will be in two weeks and will be the final meeting.

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Alexandre Ashkir, SSMU President 2023-2024