



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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

SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

May 23, 2024

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference and in the SSMU Boardroom on Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 18:00.

Present: Jonathan Dong (Chair, non-voting), Lisa Pennel (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Sierra Fallis (Deputy Speaker, non-voting), Alexandre Ashkir (Director), Lalia Katchelewa (Director), Liam Gaither (Director), Amina Kudrati-Plummer (Officer, non-voting), Hassanatou Koulibaly (Officer, non-voting), Maya Marcus-Sells (General Manager, non-voting), Nadia Dakdouki (Director), Jean-Sébastien Léger (Director), Elina Qureshi (Director), Eliot Bergeron (Director), Jacob Shannon (Council Member), Incoming Executives (non-voting)

Absent: Jon Barlas (Officer, non-voting), Yvonne Bejjani (International Student Representative, non-voting), Fawaz Halloum (Director)

1. Call to Order: **18:06**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:06. The Chair for this meeting is the Deputy Speaker.

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.

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



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The Chair takes attendance.

4. Introductions – **POSTPONED**

The Chair states that all the Incoming Executives should be present, but only two are currently. She suggests postponing the introductions until everyone is present.

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

The Agenda is distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Agenda is adopted.

6. Minutes for Approval:

- a. SSMU Board of Directors Public Minutes 2024-05-02 – **APPROVED**

The Minutes are distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Minutes are approved as distributed.

6. Legislative Council Minutes for Approval:

- a. SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2024-04-04 – **APPROVED**
- b. SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2024-04-18 – **APPROVED**

The Chair states that two sets of Legislative Council minutes will be approved at the Board because the Dais deemed that it would be too difficult to reach quorum via an email motion to the Council.

Question:

Director Léger asks how they can adopt the Minutes when they were not present and cannot confirm their accuracy.

Answer:

The Chair answers that the Board can approve these minutes because it is the highest governing body at SSMU. She adds that some Executives were present.



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Question:

Director Bergeron asks if the minutes are being approved or ratified.

Answer:

The Chair answers that they are being ratified similarly to how they approve Legislative Council motions at the Board.

Officer Kudrati-Plummer adds that if the minutes are not approved here, they run the same risk of being approved by a Council who was not present at the meeting, as they will be approved next year.

Director Bergeron motions to vote as a bloc on Minutes 8a and 8b.

Seeing no opposition, Minutes 8a and b are approved.

7. Elections SSMU Presentation

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) gives the report on the Winter Referendum and 2024-2025 Executive Elections. He states that it was originally presented to the Legislative Council on April 18, 2024, but it is the same since there have not been any elections since. There were 4,306 (19.1%) votes in the Executive elections, an increase from last year. This was attributed to the extended campaign period (from one to two weeks) and a combined campaign and polling period, which allowed for a more efficient period. Two positions did not have any candidates, which is why a by-election for the President and VP Finance positions were held. Only two positions were contested, and three were uncontested, which disincentivized voting. There were fewer candidates than last year. The election was promoted online through Instagram and FaceBook, Executives promoted the election, and email blasts were sent. There is a high abstention rate despite promotion efforts, which has always been their biggest issue. The Executive election and Winter referendum were on different ballots this year, unlike last year, because voter apathy has been attributed to too many questions on one ballot overwhelming students. Having two ballots makes voting more accessible, and increased voter turnout as students tend to be disincentivized if they see too many questions on one ballot. The CEO states that having separate ballots should become policy. There was a high spike of turnout after the first email blasts, followed by peaks during following email blasts. The first email blast is the most important. There is also a last-minute peak during the last hours of the election, which is not attributed to email blasts. There is an important relationship between email blasts and voter turnout, although many people have unsubscribed from the emails and are hard to reach. Many people complain about election emails being spam, even though the emails stop being sent once they vote. There are some ways to improve email communications while encouraging students to vote, such as putting QR codes around campus. In the referendum, there were 4,332 votes (19.2%), up from last year. Having separate ballots helped. There were 19 questions, and 18 were fee-related, and the other



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one regarded the nomination of next year's auditor. The Queer Equity Support fee, Walksafe fee increase, BSN fee increase, LICM fee renewal and increase, Clubs fee increase, Campus Life fee renewal and increase, Student Academic Support Services fee increase, ASN fee increase, Library Improvement Fund fee renewal, Keep Me Safe fee renewal, creation of Students Rights fee and fund, the nomination of the auditor, and the MUSTBUS and Student Support student-initiated questions were approved. The only questions that failed were the SSMU Membership fee increase, the Student Services Referral fee increase, and the First-Year Fee reinstatement. There is a general apathy towards SSMU generally, resulting in the failure of some fees. Students vote against most questions that are not clearly related to SSMU. Often, students do not research the policies and fees and vote based on the names of the fees. This can be reflected in the referendum results, and students vote no without knowing what the fee is for. Referendums can be useful for clubs to pass policies, not just for fee increases. Students are still overwhelmed by the number of questions, which is why he is suggesting that ISGs hold their own referendums, like the DPS does. Email blasts were more successful than they were for the Executive election, so they are clearly effective. Students are more enticed to vote in the referendum than in the Executive elections. Issues with this voting period include too many referendum questions, too few Executive candidates. There was a discrepancy between the departure of the previous CEO and the new one, meaning that many internal processes were delayed and caused disruptions. There is also not enough clarity for online campaigning. The IRs of Elections & Referenda give discretion to the CEO for online campaigning, and since then online campaigning has increased. So, they want to propose clear guidelines for online campaigning. They also want to update outdated norms, for example updating the paper ballot section because all voting occurs online. It is hard to enforce voting and campaigning regulations in-person, so they will be reviewed during the summer. The CEO stands for questions.

Question:

Director Bergeron asks if SSMU emails were sent to spam inboxes.

Answer:

The CEO answers that this happens a lot, because the emails are sent from Simply Voting. Since every voter is linked to their email, it is improbable that the emails will reach the wrong person. They try not to send too many emails, but they must do so to advertise the election.

Question:

Director Bergeron asks if they have worked with faculties to include advertising the election in their listservs.

Answer:



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The CEO answers that most faculties use Simply Voting for their elections, so they sometimes include the links in their listservs. This has not been done for SSMU-wide elections, though, but could be explored.

Question:

Director Bergeron asks if there are any ways to enhance Elections & Referenda literacy, as clubs are not sure how to use referenda to approve policies or plans.

Answer:

The CEO answers that clubs can use referenda to approve many things, because the entirety of SSMU members vote on referenda. This is why few questions are often posed via referendum.

Director Bergeron thanks the CEO for his presentation.

8. Confidential Session: **18:30**

Director Gaither asks why they are going into a confidential session.

The Chair answers that the Board discusses confidential legal and financial matters in these sessions. They will also discuss the second part of the Elections SSMU presentation, which is confidential. This is why the confidential session is being moved up.

The Board of Directors enters into a Confidential Session at 18:30.

9. For Discussion:

- a. Finance Committee Restructuring (Officer Kudrati-Plummer) – **POSTPONED**

10. Executive Committee Public Report (Director Ashkir) — **RATIFIED**

Parliamentarian Pennel notes that they have not approved the Executive Committee Public Report.

The Chair asks if this can be done via email.

Speaker Dong suggests approving it quickly now.

Director Ashkir presents the Executive Committee Public Report. He stands for questions.



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

11. Announcements

a. Thanks to the outgoing Executives (Dais)

i. Recognition of long service

1. Officer Koulibaly (2 years as an Executive)
2. Director Dakdouki (2 years as a Councillor, 1 year as an Executive)
3. Director Ashkir (2 years as Speaker, 1 year as an Executive)

The Chair thanks the outgoing Executives for their hard work. She thanks Officer Koulibaly, Director Dakdouki, and Director Ashkir for their many years of service.

12. Adjournment: **22:49**

The Chair declares the meeting adjourned at 22:49.

Director Ashkir thanks the Dais for their great first year with the Board.

Dymetri Taylor, SSMU President 2024-2025