



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

March 21st, 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, March 21st, 2024 at 18:00.

La rencontre régulière bimensuelle du Conseil législatif de l'ÉUM se tiendra dans la salle Lev Bekhman du Centre universitaire et par vidéoconférence le jeudi 21 mars à 18:00.

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

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:06. The Acting Speaker for this meeting is the Deputy Speaker, Sierra Fallis.

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'ÉUM reconnaît que l'Université McGill est située sur le territoire traditionnel et non cédé des nations Anishinaabeg et Haudenosaunee. L'ÉUM 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'ÉUM 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, Tai, Yang, Trica-Mavrodin, Rylo, Fraser, Duncan, Shannon, Nounke, Grall-Johnson, Foxman, Fournier, Gertsvolf, Wehbe, President Ashkir, VP



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Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly, VP Student Life Dakdouki, VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer, VP External Affairs Gaither, VP Katchelewa.

Absent are: Councillors Li, Renaud, Chemaly, Qian, Maselli, VP Barlas, General Manager Marcus-Sells.

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

The Agenda is distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Agenda is approved.

5. Minutes for Approval:

- a. SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2024-02-29 – **APPROVED**

The Minutes are distributed.

Seeing no changes or corrections, the Minutes stand approved.

6. Report of the Steering Committee

The Speaker presents the Report of the Steering Committee. They met on Tuesday and reviewed motions being presented today, which were mostly notices and the motion for a special election. They determined some criteria for notices to provide some guidelines. Motions presented as notices should be completed by the following Steering submission deadline, substantive actions being taken and appendix items should be included, and consultations should be completed by the following Steering submission deadline. The next meeting will be the last meeting of the semester, and the Speaker reminds Councillors to read all important documents prior to the meeting, which are made available on the Monday prior to the meeting. Councillors should consider whether motions need to be debated during the consent items form. The Speaker notes that the suggested time frames for each point are listed beside each item and that the Dais will try to constrain debate to these time limits. Reports at the next meeting include the First-Year Council, the Clubs & Services Representatives, the Inter-Residence Council, the Faculty of Nursing, the Library Improvement Fund Committee, the Services Review Committee, the Gender & Sexual Violence Policy Committee, le Comité des affaires francophones, the Indigenous Affairs Committee, and the Finance Committee. The Speaker stands for questions.

7. Reports by Committees:

- a. Governance Reform Committee



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President Ashkir presents the Report of the Governance Reform Committee. They have worked to review the Internal Regulations of Governance. The review that was done of the IRs resulted in many changes that will be helpful for the future. Through consultations and other work, the Committee has finalized the IRs. The Committee has assembled some recommendations for next year including review of other IRs to eliminate the many inconsistencies, clarifying the hierarchy between the English and French versions of documents, creating standard procedures for granting status to SSMU-affiliated associations and enshrining this process in governing documents, conducting research to simplify the process to remove an Executive Officer, conducting comprehensive review of General Assembly to encourage student participation. The work has begun on many of these recommendations, and the GRC believes it will take more than one year of work. President Ashkir stands for questions.

- b. Environment Committee – **POSTPONED**
- c. SSAMMOSA Committee – **POSTPONED**
- d. External Affairs Committee

Jacob, the External Affairs Commissioner, presents the External Affairs Committee Report. They state that they only met once, even though they are supposed to meet monthly. Many people agreed to attend but attendance was low. The Committee decided that their structure should be reconfigured. They want to centre their committee activity around those they are meeting with, as their biggest issue was not adequately representing the community's needs.

- e. Milton-Parc Relations Working Group

VP External Affairs Gaither presents the Milton-Parc Relations Working Group Report. This group is tripartite: it represents students, the administration, and the community. There are many representations from the Milton-Parc citizens' committee. Their main goal was to review the CARE agreement between the 3 parties, which is outdated and does not mention homeless people in the area. They realized that they needed to foster relationships between students and the community before they could review the agreement. They have some events coming in the spring. The Working Group has met three times, to discuss projects.

- f. Funding Committee – **RATIFIED**

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer presents the Funding Committee report. The Committee meets on a weekly basis and has revised some finance guidelines since they are running low on funds. The changes were implemented in February and will be revised once more in the summer. They had a total



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of 354 applications for funding, 259 of which were approved, 40 were rejected, and 45 are pending. Many of the funding applications were only for partial funding, so less money was given out than was requested. The Committee is looking into revising the funding guidelines and putting limits on the number of participants in one project, because some initiatives with low attendance cost a lot. The SSMU Awards of Distinction are coming up. All funding approvals are public if Councillors wish to see them.

Seeing no opposition, the Funding Committee Report is ratified.

g. Health & Dental Review Committee:

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer presents the Health & Dental Review Committee Report. They have met twice because it has been hard to meet quorum. Studentcare gave a training session on their health & dental plan, and they received another presentation about their usage rates for 2022-2023. They are seeking improvements for the Gender Affirming Care Plan, because they have received complaints about the coverage. They do not have the usage rates for the plan yet as it only began in September. They also want to improve clarity on the Gender Affirming Care Plan because it only covers surgeries, but the Dental Plan covers hormone replacement therapy and voice therapy, but this is not clear so many are unaware that this service is offered. Studentcare noted that they are expanding mental health resources for the Gender Affirming Care Plan. The Committee also wanted to look into international student coverage, but Studentcare noted that McGill is reluctant to share details about it and Studentcare does not know how students use the plans.

The External Affairs Commissioner states that a coalition of trans student groups at McGill has been trying to improve coverage of gender affirming care, and they ask if they are tied to this coalition.

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer answers that Studentcare brought this up during their meeting. The Health & Dental Review Committee does not have the capacity to do advocacy, and the coalition is better suited and better informed of what is lacking. They will pressure Studentcare to increase coverage of gender affirming care, though. She suggests emailing her to organize a meeting between the Health & Dental Review Committee to meet with the coalition.

h. Clubs Committee – **RATIFIED**

VP Student Life Dakdouki presents the Clubs Committee Report. She states that the Committee is chaired by the Clubs Coordinator, and the report must be ratified as they are accepting new clubs. Most groups who made constitutional amendments had very small changes and they were all approved. 3 interim status applications were approved and 2 full-status applications were approved. There was also an approved name change. The Clubs Committee is now focusing more on guidelines



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and reviewing the club applications process, instead of reviewing the evaluation rubric as was previously done. They will also review the existing clubs because there are a lot of clubs. The criteria has become stricter, but clubs that have already been approved are not held to this new standard.

Seeing no opposition, the Clubs Committee Report is ratified.

8. For Discussion:

a. Update to Club Applications (VP Student Life):

- i. Board of Directors Motion to approve an Interim Provision to the Internal Regulations of Student Groups and the Clubs Committee Terms of Reference to stop review and approval of Interim and Full status club applications until October 31st, 2024

VP Student Life Dakdouki states that a motion was passed by the Board of Directors to stop approving new clubs, because of the financial constraints. There are currently 238 clubs, so approving new clubs is not realistic. The deadline is October 31, because Clubs Committee does not meet over the summer and applications usually reopen as soon as the Committee is able to meet, because of the time it takes to assign Councillors to the Committee. They have also stopped approvals because the Clubs Coordinator is overworked, and they want to review the club application process as it is not currently functional. New clubs are held to such a high standard, whereas old clubs are not. This pause is to ensure that the regulations are updated so that new applications know when they can expect to hear back.

Question:

Councillor Sakajiri asks if some clubs will risk losing their club status if the guidelines are revised.

Answer:

VP Student Life Dakdouki answers yes, but they would send a warning before revoking their status and help them meet the guidelines. There would be no immediate revocations, and all changes would be brought to the Legislative Council. This process will be very long.

9. Motions for Approval:

- a. Motion Regarding Special SSMU Executive Elections Winter 2024 – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**



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President Ashkir presents Motion 9a. No candidates presented themselves to the positions of President or VP Finance. SSMU needs these Executives to function, so this motion begins a by-election following a timeline. The nomination period would begin next week, to allow some people who expressed interest after the election began to run. These positions are key to SSMU, because running a student union without them would be difficult. The nomination period would run from March 25 to April 5, with a campaign period from April 9-19, and a voting period from April 10-19. President Ashkir stands for questions.

Seeing no questions, the Speaker entertains debate.

Councillor Sakajiri motions to call the question and vote by unanimous consent.

VP Student Life Dakdouki seconds.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 9.a is approved.

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks why there were no consent items form sent.

Parliamentarian Pennel answers that there was only one motion today so it was not needed.

10. Notices of Motions

The Speaker clarifies that they will present the notices and entertain questions, but there will be no debate or voting. All notices will be presented as motions at the next meeting.

a. Notice of Motion Regarding Accountability at the SSMU

President Ashkir presents Notice 10.a. He states that this motion took a year of work, to ensure that they have a solid policy proposal. This motion comes from a lack of accountability processes, especially the Accountability Committee, which has not met in 3 years. This proposal would allow the Committee to function properly. It will allow it to hold Executives, Directors, and Councillors Accountable to their roles, particularly to plans and policies. An Accountability Commissioner role will be created, which will create a new isolated department of SSMU that will be independent from influence by other departments. The Plan includes research on normalization of accountability, which is the end goal of the Plan: accountability should be normalized at the SSMU and engrained in its cultural fabric. The Plan creates a mandate that will be felt for years to come, and will have a positive impact. President Ashkir stands for questions.



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Question:

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly states that she looked over the Accountability Commissioner's role, and asks if this role would exist consistently in the future, or if they would just implement accountability structures as needed.

Answer:

President Ashkir answers that this would be a permanent, casual position. The position would exist permanently, similarly to the way the Chief Electoral Officer position exists for Elections SSMU.

Question:

Councillor Grall-Johnson asks why the Accountability Committee has not met in 2 years.

Answer:

President Ashkir answers that the current Committee has difficulty meeting, mostly because there are no members at large, who are the only voting members. The committee's mandate is also quite outdated. By having a Commissioner, there will be more effort going towards recruiting members and running the committee.

Question:

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks who drafted the plan.

Answer:

President Ashkir answers that the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator drafted the plan.

b. Notice of Motion for Amendments to the Internal Regulations of Governance

President Ashkir presents Notice 10b. The Internal Regulations of Governance have been overhauled, to make sure they are more consistent with the Constitution and the current functioning of the Society. Modifications are highlighted in yellow. This document has been a long-term project and is desperately needed. President Ashkir stands for questions.

c. Notice of Motion Introducing the Internal Regulations of Sustainability and Operations



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VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly presents Notice 10c. She states that this Notice introduces the Internal Regulations for Sustainability & Operations. When the previous IRs were created, this role was not active, so there are very few guidelines for the role, so it is necessary to determine the VP Sustainability & Operations' mandates.

d. Notice of Motion Regarding the Renewal and Amendment of the Climate Justice Policy

VP External Affairs Gaither presents Notice 10d. The Climate Justice Policy is expiring and needs to be renewed. The university announced their commitment to divestment, which changes the policy a bit. VP External Affairs Gaither stands for questions.

e. Notice of Motion Regarding Amendments to the Policy on Harmful Military Technology

VP External Affairs Gaither presents Notice 10e. The moratorium on ancillary fees until divestment from fossil fuels will expire on May 1. Instead of renewing it, they have decided to add a moratorium clause to the Policy on Harmful Military Technology. The Policy is not expiring, they just want to update it. They want to propose a moratorium on ancillary fee increases until McGill divests from harmful military technology, such as companies who are engaging in the military industrial complex.

11. Reports by Councillors:

a. Arts and Science (ASUS)

Councillor Sakajiri presents the ASUS report. He states that some Executive positions were reshuffled since some people went on exchange and some positions were vacant. They discussed the tuition hikes, because ASUS has been highlighted as at-risk. They consulted the VP External about the hikes. They have amended their constitution, changing some by-laws and election policies. They are preparing for the spring elections and their gala on April 2, which is a murder-mystery theme. This event is in collaboration with some departmental organizations. Their General Assembly is happening tonight, in McMed. Councillor Sakajiri has been meeting with the Steering Committee, and doing his job of liaising between SSMU and ASUS. He will begin his exit report because he will not run for SSMU representative again, and will attend the ASUS events.

Question:

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks where the information about the ASUS Gala is, since she cannot find it on their website.

Answer:



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Councillor Sakajiri answers that the link is in the listserv, otherwise it is on the SUS website where they sell merchandise and tickets. He can also send the link to the Legislative Council group chat.

b. Environment (MESS)

Councillor Fraser presents the MESS report. They had two General Assemblies, and met quorum at neither. They plan to reschedule the meeting until next semester. The AUS VP External passed a motion to amend their by-laws to limit funding to institutions complicit in settler colonialism. The VP Academic is working on the TA strike, which might be indefinite, so professors might need to adjust their assignments. They had an alumni cocktail event which was successful, and they continue to have MESSY Mondays with coffee and teas. They have also had therapy dog events. MESS has a new merchandise order open, the last for the semester. They now have tote bags and tumblers. Terra Journal is being published in early April. The MESS Gala is tomorrow, and all tickets are sold out. They have a Relay for Life event on Saturday, and anyone can make a team. They also have a spring end-of-year picnic at the Y-intersection, a meet-your-major event next Monday, and a trivia fundraiser at Gerts the same day.

c. Athletics – **POSTPONED**

12. Executive Reports:

a. President

President Ashkir presents his report. He states that SSAMOSA will be presenting their report at the next meeting, which includes the plan for the Master Plan review. They have been reviewing the current master plan to develop a new one with a more strategic outlook to allow SSMU to advance through tough times. The Inter-Faculty Relations Plan will be presented at the next meeting. He is working on the MoA with the Executives, and many other affairs. The Grocery Program is recruiting volunteers, and the link is on social media. The distribution dates are April 9 and 10. He encourages those who would benefit from the program to apply, so that they do not need to worry about securing food during final exams. President Ashkir stands for questions.

Question:

VP Student Life Dakdouki asks who is eligible for the Grocery Program.



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Answer:

President Ashkir answers that the program is open to SSMU members, and there are some other eligibility criteria. He encourages those with food needs to apply.

Question:

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly asks if the Grocery Program has a report, since most of their fees usually present a report. She asks how the numbers have increased to 400 boxes, since the fee has remained the same.

Answer:

President Ashkir answers that there are 400 boxes because this was what was passed in the Legislative Council motion last year. He agrees it would be a good idea to have the Grocery Program present a report, so that they can maintain accountability.

Question:

VP External Affairs Gaither asks if any of the Grocery Program Coordinators attended the Food Security Summit last Friday.

Answer:

President Ashkir answers that the Coordinator could not attend, and he could not either, which is regretful. The Coordinator has been in communication with the food services on campus (SNAC, Midnight Kitchen), to better expand the Grocery Program.

b. VP Finance

VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer presents her report. She states that the budget is almost complete; she was hoping to submit it today but there were some internal delays so it will be presented at the next meeting. She has been going through all transactions to ensure that everything is in the right place. She is developing itemized budgets for each department, to ensure that each department knows how much money is provided for them. VP Finance Kudrati-Plummer has also been working on club bank accounts with RBC, because there are many backlogs. They have been removing old users, but this takes a long time as the RBC website takes a long time to load. She is working with VP Student Life Dakdouki to determine a process to remove excess accounts, because it could cause complications. She is also working on Updating the IRs of Finance, but consultations are not yet complete so the motion will be presented at a later date. She wants to make sure that the Internal Regulations prevent



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them from falling into a deficit again, and she is ensuring that all fund regulations are updated and outlined. They have also been working on financial accountability on the Accountability Policy. The Finance Committee will probably not meet again, as it has been hard to meet quorum. She is working on improving the auditing process, which has many issues. Switching banks is not viable, because no other banks have the capacity to handle all of SSMU's bank accounts, other than RBC and Scotiabank. They left Scotiabank in 2019, and switching banks is a huge hassle and it would not be worth it to switch back to Scotiabank because of past issues and ethical concerns. If they were to switch banks, they would have to reform how clubs use their money, which they do not have the capacity to do.

c. VP Operations & Sustainability – **POSTPONED**

13. Question Period:

VP External Affairs Gaither states that he is looking for one Councillor to sit on the Community Solidarity Fund Committee, which will meet twice before the end of the year for 30 minutes. They have some cool projects in the works. He asks if anyone wants to join this committee for a couple of meetings.

Councillor Baybayon states that he will join the Committee.

Question:

VP Sustainability and Operations Koulibaly states that motions to come have been mentioned, but they were not presented as notices. She asks if they will foresee an extra meeting to accommodate these new motions, or if the Steering Committee will just stop accepting notices.

Answer:

The Speaker answers that they could add an extra meeting, so ideally all motions are submitted by the deadline, next Sunday.

Speaker Dong adds that the Dais cannot call a special meeting, but the Council can do so if they wish. If there are notices of motions presented at the last meeting, they can be passed by email. In this case, they should include a written version of the presentation of the motion.

14. Adjournment: **19:11**



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The Speaker declares the meeting adjourned at 19:11.

Alexandre Ashkir, SSMU President 2023-2024

APPROVED