



MOTION REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF A MASTERPLAN FOR ADDRESSING RACIST SURVEILLANCE AND DOXXING WITHIN SSMU AND MCGILL UNIVERSITY 2023-03-09

Submitted for: 2023-04-06

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-04-06-001

Moved by: Val Masny
Vice-President (External Affairs) **Current Status:** FOR APPROVAL
 APPROVED
 POSTPONED
 COMMITTED
 NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Angelica Voustinas
Arts Representative

Issue

Many students have been blacklisted, surveilled, doxed or otherwise intimidated by formal and informal groups such as Canary Mission and CampusWatch for engaging in anti-colonial activism or discourse. The existence of these surveillance groups and their targeting of students ultimately suppresses free speech on this campus. Indeed, many students fear that speaking publicly about their political beliefs, or even about their cultural background and ethnic heritage, might result in them being the target of such intimidation tactics

To address this problem and promote a campus where freedom of speech and opinion is valued, this motion mandates the internal portfolio to publish a Master Plan that commits SSMU to a comprehensive strategy aiming to combat and ultimately end racist surveillance and doxxing at McGill. Further, it commits the SSMU to demand that McGill University condemn blacklist organizations like [Canary Mission](#) and [Campus Watch](#) for undermining the physical safety, freedom of speech and academic freedom of McGill students, faculty and staff, by deploying racist strategies of surveillance and intimidation.



Background and Rationale

On June 30 2021, the SSMU released a [statement](#), informing the student body that “many McGill students and faculty have been doxxed in the past few years on public websites like Canary Mission, in an effort to ‘punish’ them for pro-Palestine activism.” Furthermore, the SSMU Executive Committee pledged to “stand against such abhorrent profiling, repression, surveillance and harassment of our fellow students.” An ongoing independent and confidential [investigation](#) was launched through a third-party service to assess the magnitude and protect those wanting to come forward.

Further, students involved in Uyghur or Tibetan liberation advocacy, as well as Hong Kong-related activism have faced [online intimidation and death threats](#). These forms of intimidation and attacks impact students' mental and physical health, discourage their involvement on campus, and [prevent them from obtaining student union roles](#).

Additionally, since the implementation of Bill 21, Muslim students and [student teachers](#) have been the [target of harassment and bullying](#). Many Muslim students including MSA executives have reported surveillance and intimidation when advocating for local change such as the reversal of Bill 21 and they have also been the targets of [CSIS intimidation](#).

As such, it is the SSMU’s duty to protect undergraduate students who have been doxxed and/or targeted by public websites such as Canary Mission, Campus Watch, or online. It is also its duty to advocate for McGill University to take action by condemning these harmful organisations and offering adequate support to students impacted by doxing.

Alignment with Mission

This motion would align with the SSMU’s Mission to provide service to its students, by protecting them from the harms of racist surveillance, blacklisting, and doxing. It would also align with the SSMU’s constitutional commitment to leadership in matters of social justice, environmental protection and human rights.

Consultations Completed

In 2021, Consultations were done with the Vice-President (Internal Affairs), the Vice-President (Finance), Vice-President (External Affairs), McGill SPHR, the Equity Commissioners, WIMESSA, MSA, Divest for Human Rights coalition, and Divest McGill.



In 2023, Consultations were done with the Vice-President (External Affairs), the VP (Finance), the Black Affairs Committee. In addition, a survey and request for input was sent to the student body via the internal listserv.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Adopting this motion would promote the safety of students on campus, showing the SSMU's dedication to fostering a safe environment for their student body, particularly marginalized people of the student body. If this motion were not to pass, the SSMU would not be upholding its mandate to the student body.

Resource implications include the increased salary for the equity commissioner role pursuant to new responsibilities relating to this resolution.

Sustainability Considerations

By upholding their mandate to support marginalized students on campus, the SSMU would be fostering a campus where free speech and assembly and liberty of thought are valued and where students are safe regardless of their beliefs or their ethnic background.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Were this motion to be adopted, the Plan would be properly formatted by the Governance team and uploaded to the SSMU website by the Communications team.

The University Affairs and Presidential portfolio will begin their advocacy and the Anti-Surveillance Commissioner's job will begin to be assembled by the Internal portfolio. The steps of the Plan will be followed for the next three years, with the possibility of expansion and edits.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council recommend the adoption of the Masterplan For Addressing Racist Surveillance and Doxxing within SSMU and McGill University in Appendix A to the SSMU Board of Directors.

Be it further resolved that, should the SSMU Board of Directors adopt the Masterplan in Appendix A, it shall be in effect as of date of the Board's ratification.



Office of the Speaker | Bureau du président du conseil
Tel: (514) 398-6800 | Fax: (514) 398-7490 | speaker@ssmu.ca
3600 McTavish St., Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3
Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

Results of the Vote	In favour	(16)
	Opposed	(1)
	Abstain	(2)

APPROVED



Appendix A : Master Plan for addressing racist surveillance and doxxing within SSMU and McGill University

The issue:

Doxxing, also spelled "doxing," is derived from the term "dropping dox," or "documents." This practice involves taking private information about someone e.g., their phone number, home address, email address etc and then spreading it around the internet or via other means of getting it out to the public. This can include being put on a [Blacklist](#), a list of persons who are disapproved of or are to be punished or boycotted. The use of Blacklist "is considered retaliatory as it is intended to create financial [and reputational] hardships for those named on the list."

The creation of a Master plan within SSMU is response to the gravity of doxing as harassment, revenge, or intimidation tactic that is increasingly being used on university campuses across North America, including at McGill, particularly when it comes to targeting individuals supporting, advocating, and expressing themselves on polarizing political issues.

[Numerous](#) students, professors, and faculty members of McGill University have been doxxed, surveilled, and subjected to various forms of harassment and bullying. This includes being put on the blacklist organizations such as the [Canary Mission](#) and [CampusWatch](#) online for their pro-Palestine views. These organizations target politically vocal individuals and seek to suppress their free speech through reputational damage. Due to the risks and repercussions of doxxing, many students are fearful of speaking publicly about their political beliefs, or their cultural background and ethnic heritage. Administrators need to understand the magnitude of the impact of being listed on such platforms and act with due diligence to support students and faculty.

Other student groups recently impacted by doxxing include those involved in Uyghur or Tibetan liberation advocacy, as well as Hong Kong-related activism. Some have faced [online intimidation and even received death threats](#). Moreover, since the implementation of Bill 21 *An Act respecting the laicity of the State* in Quebec, Muslim students and [student teachers](#) have also been the [target of harassment and bullying](#). Many Muslim students including Muslim Student Association executives have reported being surveilled when advocating for local change such as the reversal of Bill 21 and have also been the targets of [CSIS intimidation](#). Moreover, students in a private group chat discussing COVID19 measures were also doxxed by the [media](#).



These attacks impact students' mental and physical health, discourage their involvement on campus, [prevent them from obtaining student union roles](#), and impact their career prospects. McGill university has displayed selective indignation in its commitment to student support and has not institutionalized any form of support. This inaction infringes McGill's own Student Charter of Rights, its Policy on Harassment and Discrimination, and its Equity Diversity and Inclusion plan. It is imperative that the university administrators step up and take the lead in [responding](#) to this threat to their students and their educational communities. Several academics [have written](#) about the need for university policies on harassment to be amended to reflect technological and digital realities.

Some universities across the US and Canada have taken the lead and made institutional commitments to ensure support. This requires embedding support within existing offices. For example, the [University of Northern British Columbia](#) encourages members of its community that "are harassed, trolled, or doxed" to contact their communications office and have guidelines to protect and support after disclosure. Additionally, [UC Berkeley](#) refers to students impacted by doxxing to their Student Services.

As such, a working group was [mandated](#) by SSMU's legislative council to come up with a masterplan to address the doxxing and blacklisting of students.

The Plan:

What SSMU has already done:

On June 30 2021, the SSMU published a [statement](#) condemning Canary Mission and similar blacklist organizations.

Action Items:

The SSMU shall take the following steps to combat and racist surveillance and doxxing on campus:

- 1. The inclusion of an *Anti-Surveillance and Doxxing* under the portfolio of the Equity Commissioner (deadline: October 31 2023);**
 - a. The mandate of the commissioner will be to advocate to the McGill community on:
 - i. What doxxing / online harassment looks like;
 - ii. The next steps to take if you have been doxxed;
 - iii. The rights of students who have been doxxed;
 - iv. A guide for executives on helping students that have been doxxed;
 - v. A guide to UA advocacy in regards to McGill Administration;
 - vi. Advocacy on internet safety in general, and;
 - vii. Chair an anti-surveillance committee.



2. The addition of a standing anti-surveillance agenda under the Equity Committee chaired by the aforementioned commissioner (deadline: October 31 2023);

- a. The committee's composition should be amended to include :
 - i. The Equity commissioners (co-chair)
 - ii. The VP University Affairs
 - iii. 1 Legislative Councillor
 - iv. 1 Representative of the Divest for Human Rights (DHR) coalition or in their absence a Political Campaign Coordinator
 - v. five (5) to eight (8) Members at Large, selected through an application process conducted by the Equity Commissioners.
 - vi. Human Resources Director (non-voting)

3. The creation of an anti-surveillance peer support group; (deadline: December 31 2023);

- a. In addition to emotional support being indispensable for students, this group seeks to support students in managing their doxxed email or social media accounts. Based on the needs and desires of the student, the group may help with:
 - i. Reading through and deleting threatening messages as well as blocking corresponding users;
 - ii. Documenting any harassment to support legal action;
 - iii. Assist with removing personal information off the internet through [data broker opt-outs](#).

4. The creation of an anti-doxxing and online security toolkit (see Appendix) (deadline: December 31 2023);

- a. The public-facing document will list all doxxing resources and preventive security measures in an easily accessible manner that are available to students, staff, and faculty.

5. Make legal support available to all doxxed individuals or groups (deadline: December 31 2023);

- a. This plan mandates the VP(Finance) to bring forth the Legal Protection Plan (available through Student Care) at the Fall 2023 referendum, which would give all students access to legal advice and lawyers as well as a hotline should they ever need time-sensitive help would the question in the Winter 2022 referendum were to fail

6. The University Affairs and President portfolios shall lobby the McGill University administration to take an explicit, public stand against blacklisting organizations targeting their students, faculty, and staff. This stand by the McGill administration must include:

- a. A public condemnation of doxxing and surveillance of students and faculty, including condemnation of the blacklisting of over 20 students and faculty on Canary Mission.
- b. A public pledge to support students, faculty and staff who are targeted in these ways.



- c. Announce concrete measures to provide legal and other assistance to blacklisted or cyberbullied students, faculty and staff.
- d. Revise its Policy on Harassment and Discrimination to ensure it includes doxxing.
- e. The Vice-President (University Affairs) and President shall present a report on their respective progress with this action item to the Legislative Council (**deadline: February 28 2024**).

Appendix: **Anti-Doxxing Toolkit**

You have been doxxed, now what?

Take a deep breath. We know this is scary. Blacklisting is a way to silence people and for the oppressive status quo to prevail. We are sorry you are experiencing this and we will do our best to support you during this.

Here are some mental health resources to help support you in these trying times:

- [Keep.meSAFE](#), 24/7 access to licensed counsellors available to all McGill students
- [Peer Support Center](#) at McGill
- [McGill Students' Nightline](#)
- [Tel-Aide](#): 514-935-1101
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text 'CONNECT' to 686-868
- [Suicide Action Montreal](#): 1-866-277-3553

Step 1: Reaching out to the equity commissioners

Reach out to the equity commissioners so that they may assist you and guide you through this process. If you are not comfortable reaching out to the equity commissioners, reach out to the Vice President Internal, the Vice President University Affairs, or any member of the SSMU Executive Committee. You can also contact your representative to SSMU, you can find their contact information on SSMU's [website](#). We also invite you to reach out to advocacy groups on campus such as SPHR, the Black Student Network (BSN), the Muslim Students Associations (MSA) that can advocate on your behalf in symbiosis with SSMU.

To contact the equity commissioners, you may reach them at the following email address: equity@ssmu.ca



Office of the Speaker | Bureau du président du conseil

Tel: (514) 398-6800 | Fax: (514) 398-7490 | speaker@ssmu.ca

3600 McTavish St., Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

To contact the Vice President Internal, you may reach them at the following email address:

internal@ssmu.ca

To contact the Vice President University Affairs, you may reach them at the following email address:

ua@ssmu.ca

To contact SPHR, you may reach them at the following email address:

mcgillsphr@gmail.com

Step 2: Exploring your options

OPTION 1: On-campus advocacy

The Office of the Dean of Students (DoS) and the McGill Ombudsperson are mandated to advocate for students and will help provide resources to you. If you wish for us to do so, the SSMU (either the equity commissioners or SSMU execs, whichever option you are most comfortable with) will accompany you in your meetings with them.

To contact the DoS and Ombudsperson:

Office of the Dean of Students | 514-398-4990, deanofstudents@mcgill.ca

McGill Ombudsperson | 514-398-7059, ombudsperson@mcgill.ca

OPTION 2: MACES Legal Protection Program

The Legal Protection Program “[MACES Legal Protection Program](#)” offers unlimited access to a legal consultation service to consult a duly certified lawyer in your province of study regarding any legal question via a toll-free legal assistance helpline. It will also include further counsel should you qualify for legal representation. Program services will be provided by members in good standing of the Barreau du Québec. SSMU is in the midst of implementing a similar program, consult the student care website to know more.

OPTION 3: Access to Justice Resources in Quebec

We have gathered a non-exhaustive list of free justice organizations found in the *Barreau du Québec* website. For an exhaustive list of free or low cost legal services, visit [Boussole juridique](#).

For all of these justice centers, we will accompany you through the whole process of reaching out and contacting them, if you wish for us to do so.



Office of the Speaker | Bureau du président du conseil

Tel: (514) 398-6800 | Fax: (514) 398-7490 | speaker@ssmu.ca

3600 McTavish St., Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

Community Justice Centres

Community justice centres promote access to justice by fostering citizen participation through information, support and referral services provided as a complement to existing resources.

[Access their website](#)

Clinique Droit de cité

The mission of the *Clinique Droit de cité* is to provide support to marginalized individuals to help them rectify their legal situation or defend their rights.

[Access their website](#)

Mile End Legal Clinic

Through its three service points located in three community organizations in three different neighbourhoods (Mile End, Little Burgundy and Park Extension), the Clinic offers weekly free walk-in consultation sessions to individuals from the greater Montreal region. The law students and lawyers who volunteer at the MELC provide legal information, advice and support in various legal fields.

[Access their website](#)

Mobile Legal Clinic

The Mobile Legal Clinic's mission is to promote access to justice for the homeless, the impoverished and the marginalized members of our society.

[Access their website](#)

Éducaloi

Éducaloi is a non-profit organization whose mission is to inform Quebecers of their rights and obligations by providing access to high quality legal information presented in plain and accessible language.

[Access their website](#)

Young Bar of Montreal



Office of the Speaker | Bureau du président du conseil

Tel: (514) 398-6800 | Fax: (514) 398-7490 | speaker@ssmu.ca

3600 McTavish St., Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

The Young Bar of Montreal offers free legal services to the public: hearing preparation assistance, call-in legal clinic, on-site small claims mediation, legal information service at the Montreal Municipal Court and *LET'S TALK LAW* service for 12- to 20-year-olds.

[Access their website](#)

Option 4: Palestine Legal

[Palestine Legal](#) is an organization that provides legal advice, Know Your Rights trainings, advocacy and litigation support to college students, grassroots activists and affected communities who stand for justice in Palestine. Palestine Legal also monitors incidents of suppression to expose trends in tactics to silence Palestine activism. You can contact them through their contact form if you fear that you have been doxxed by an organization like Canary Mission. The equity commissioners or the executive member of your choice will accompany you through the process.

OPTION 5: Reclaiming your voice and name

Many people who have been formally doxxed by Canary Mission have reclaimed their voice and name by adding themselves to the [Against Canary Mission](#) list that celebrates the courage and resilience of organizers for Palestinian freedom. The site enables people who have been doxxed and who have been vilified by Canary Mission to publicly showcase their activism and achievements. Because of their social justice work, they have been the targets of smear campaigns by Canary Mission, the anonymous blacklist site which has published false and defamatory accusations against them. If you wish to contact the website to highlight your accomplishments, we will also accompany you in this process.