



## 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.

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# MOTION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUTION & GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP 2024-10-10

Submitted for: 2024-10-24

**Submitted to:** SSMU Legislative Council      **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-10-24-003

**Moved by:** Dymetri Taylor  
*President*      **Current Status:**  FOR APPROVAL  
 APPROVED  
 POSTPONED

**Seconded by:** Emma Chen  
*Arts Representative*       COMMITTED  
 NOT APPROVED

## Issue

The SSMU's Constitution has not been reviewed in 3-4 years, and many issues continue to exist which stem from the Constitution and its organisation.

In the past, the SSMU Legislative Council and Judicial Board served as the be-all-end-all decision-making bodies in their respective fields. However, that power has since moved to the Board of Directors, which initially served as a rubber-stamping body. It is only in recent history that the Board became the highest decision-making body at the SSMU. The current Board's functioning was only implemented in 2015-2016 due to concerns about breaching the Quebec Companies Act and was enacted hastily.

Furthermore, some of the Executive Job Descriptions require fleshing out to strictly detail the responsibilities of the positions. In the past, these existed and were readily available; however, around 2016, this information began to no longer be regularly circulated.

## Background and Rationale

The SSMU's current iteration of the Constitution dates back to 1999; however, it has seen significant changes over the past 25 years— enough change to become nearly unrecognisable. Of course, that is due to the high



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usage of the internet and general globalisation of the world; however, other changes or additions were done hastily without extensive thought as to how they might later affect the operation of the Society.

The clearest example is the change from the Legislative Council operating as the Board of Directors to the existence of the Board as a separate body, which in turn renders the Legislative Council nigh-obsolete. That change further affected the Judicial Board and its operations. Before this change, the judicial board would assist in resolving student disputes and was a trustworthy body.

Beyond that, the Executive roles and what they entail require better descriptions, such as the VP Internal being renamed to the VP Communications & Events (as it was initially), as with the VP Student Life, which was originally VP Clubs and Services.

Beyond that, the IR: Governance saw some amendments last year; however, these changes have left the Legislative Council, General Assembly and Judicial Board in a precarious position. There are limitations as to what can be changed for the time being, due to Gerts being directly under the SSMU, instead of being a subsidiary of the SSMU.

The last change to the Constitution was in 2021, which changed some vocabulary regarding the Legislative Council, as seen in the current rendition of the Constitution.

The reason for this motion being presented is that the Governance Reform Committee is limited in what it can do within a given year, especially when it comes to such an essential document as the Constitution. Thus, this working group would consist of members of the Governance Reform Committee, amongst many others who may be interested. Each member would be assigned a category/focus to finish before the Winter Referendum and bring a finalised proposal for the referendum. As an example, some interested members of the working group would work with the Judicial Board to better define its place within the society.

Approving this motion would allow for a greater contingent of individuals to work towards a common goal of improving the Society compared to the smaller reach and expertise that the Governance Reform Committee possesses.



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### Alignment with Mission

This aligns with the SSMU's mission to service the undergraduate community at McGill, which has fallen by the wayside in recent years, and serves as a chance to improve the SSMU for the future.

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### Consultations Completed

As the purpose of this motion is to begin consultations with students regarding the SSMU's Constitution and Governing Practices, none have been made as of this time.

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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Choosing to approve this motion would come with the anticipated risk of time and effort, as well as disagreements, that may arise when there are conflicting opinions, as can emerge in any situation.

Further, there is the risk that the purpose of the Constitution may be misunderstood in that it serves as the Framework of the Society and could have proposed amendments that could have lasting consequences for the operations of the organisation.

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### Sustainability Considerations

Potential physical copies of the Constitution would be printed for individuals to look at due to personal work preferences.

Other than that, this motion doesn't present any sustainability concerns.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion is approved, the President will serve as the Chair and be tasked with establishing and coordinating a working group to work primarily on the Constitution with a sub-focus on the Internal Regulations of Governance for a mandate lasting until February 20th, 2025.

The working group would be permitted to create sub-working groups to allow for the group to more efficiently look at the many facets that make up both the Constitution and IR: Governance.

The working group will then be required to present their results by February 20th, 2025, before the end of the Winter Referendum Nomination Period, to be put on the ballot.



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The working group would be open to any Legislative Councillor, Director or Officer to participate in, especially regarding the sections which concern their respective roles.

Further, members-at-large would be open to participate as well, with preference given to members of their respective faculty associations.

The working groups would receive access to the archives, which document previous decisions that the SSMU has made in the past regarding constitutional changes, to provide a foundation on how to proceed.

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### Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approves the establishment of the Governance Revision Nexus (GOVERN) Working Group to look at amendments and improvements to the Constitution and Internal Regulations: Governance, with a mandate lasting from October 24th, 2024, to February 20th, 2025.

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### Results of the Vote

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	( )
Abstain	( )



## Appendix A : Terms of Reference

### Governance Revision Nexus (GOVERN)

#### Oversight

The Governance Revision Nexus (GOVERN) will be a working group of the Legislative Council until February 20th, 2025.

#### General

The GOVERN aims to produce revisions to the Internal Regulations of Governance and the SSMU's Constitution to further improve the organisation's efficiency.

#### Mandate

- a. Review the current SSMU Constitution;
  - i. Propose amendments to Legislative Council for February 20th, 2025, to be put on the Winter Referendum Ballot - 2025
- b. Review the Internal Regulations of Governance;
  - i. Propose recommended amendments to the Legislative Council by February 20th, 2025, to be voted on by Council

#### 23.4. Membership

The GOVERN Working Group shall have the President presiding as Chair, with all Legislative Councillors, Officers and Directors serving as Ex-Officios, with the ability to participate at their own discretion.

Other students who are members of the SSMU may be invited to participate or be consulted at the discretion of either the Chair, GOVERN, or its sub-working groups.

#### Consultations

SSMU Staff, such as the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, may be consulted by the working group.