



## 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.

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

# MOTION REGARDING THE SSMU POLICY AGAINST ANTISEMITISM 2024-11-07

Submitted for: 2024-11-07

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-11-07-001
<b>Moved by:</b>	Hugo-Victor Solomon <i>VP External</i>	<b>Current Status:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
<b>Seconded by:</b>	Seraphina Crema Black <i>Legislative Councillor</i>		

## Issue

The SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism aims to address the lack of specific guidelines and measures to combat antisemitism within the SSMU community. It seeks to improve advocacy, communication, and education about antisemitism, the policy also aims to fill gaps in the existing Equity Policy by providing culturally, ethnically, and religiously sensitive measures to respond to antisemitism robustly.

## Background and Rationale

The Policy presented in Appendix A, the Policy Against Antisemitism (PAAS), aims to provide sensitivity and specificity to existing and future frameworks of advocacy and equity reporting processes. Notably, it references the definitional frameworks of the Jerusalem Declaration Definition of Antisemitism (JDA) and the Nexus Document, a task force affiliated with Bard College and the University of Southern California.

In brief, the JDA definition framework and the Nexus Document were chosen in part for their high degree of specificity concerning examples of historical and contemporary antisemitism. After consultation with the Equity and Policy Specialist (now HR manager), there is a strong degree of confidence that this definition, with revisions from participating student



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.*

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

groups, would make it easier to identify and respond to antisemitism allegations.

---

### Alignment with Mission

#### Alignment with the SSMU Equity Policy:

*Equity Policy, Part II: 4.2.1.a-b:* Mandates bi-annual meetings with Jewish groups and ensures continuous dialogue and advocacy, aligning with the Equity Policy's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all student groups.

*Equity Policy, Part II: 4.3.1.a-c:* Includes measures such as providing Kosher food options and ensuring events do not conflict with Jewish holidays, promoting accessibility and inclusivity in line with the Equity Policy's guidelines on event planning and inclusivity.

#### Alignment with the SSMU Constitution

*Preamble: Leadership:* Aligns with the SSMU Constitution's preamble, which emphasizes leadership in promoting equity and inclusivity. By addressing antisemitism specifically, the policy demonstrates SSMU's leadership in tackling discrimination and fostering a safe student environment.

*Commitment to Human Rights:* The policy's foundation on the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, inspired by international human rights declarations, aligns with the SSMU Constitution's commitment to upholding human rights and combating all forms of discrimination.

#### Alignment with the 2021 Judicial Board Ruling on BDS Policies:

*Freedom of Expression:* The ruling acknowledged the importance of freedom of expression, allowing for legitimate criticism of states and policies, provided it does not cross into discriminatory or antisemitic territory. Similarly, the Policy supports freedom of expression by allowing for legitimate criticism of state actors from various political perspectives while clearly defining what constitutes antisemitism. This ensures that freedom of speech is protected without crossing into discriminatory territory.



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

## Consultations Completed

Internally, All SSMU Executives (President, VP Internal, VP Finance, VP Sustainability and Operations, VP University Affairs and VP Clubs and Services), the General Manager, HR Manager (former Equity and Policy Specialist), both Equity Commissioners, all 12 members of the External Affairs team, (with additional feedback throughout the process from the External Affairs Coordinator and Commissioner, the Popular Education and Events Coordinator in addition to both Political Campaign Coordinators) were reached out to for consultation and were instrumental in providing specific feedback.

Furthermore, in terms of consultation with the McGill Administration, both the Dean of Students Office and the Jewish Students Liaison were thoroughly consulted on mandates relating to their offices and the broader context of this Policy's implications at the University.

Concerning internal stakeholders, the same self-identifying Jewish groups who were signatories to the previous 2018 motion re: antisemitism and are currently active were contacted again following an initial first draft. Specifically, Hillel McGill, Chabad at McGill, The McGill Chavurah, Independent Jewish Voices McGill, and the McGill Jewish Studies Association were all contacted for consultation.

It is worth noting that: of the five groups who responded to consultation requests (noting that the Jewish Studies Association declined to participate, citing their not being a group dedicated to Jewish life), a clear majority opted to participate in the collaborative process and shared their honest and candid feedback concerning the policy.

This feedback was indispensable in helping to add extra sensitivity around particular examples and counterexamples while laying clear aspects which were not properly cited and required caveats or revision. Informal consultations also included meetings with the individual representatives and members of the aforementioned Jewish groups in one-on-one or round table settings over the past months. In all, the majority of participating Jewish groups supported this policy.

---

## Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism may face potential risk factors including insufficient engagement from the McGill Administration, which could hinder effective advocacy for Jewish students seeking OMR complaint assistance. Furthermore, the policy's reliance on bi-annual

---



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

meetings and workshops may not be sufficient to address ongoing issues promptly.

---

### Sustainability Considerations

To ensure the sustainability of the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism, it's crucial to ensure regular review and updates through collaboration with other executives and the Equity team, and to engage continuously with stakeholders. Implementing and allocating resources for educational programs and aligning the policy with existing frameworks will, through consultation with HR and the Governance team will foster a cohesive approach to ensuring this Policy's longevity.

---

### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion is passed, the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism will go into effect. Specifically, the consultation process of students will begin to be outlined for implementation either at the end of the Fall Semester or the beginning of the Winter Semester.

---

### Motion or Resolution for Approval

**Be it resolved that** the Legislative Council approve the Policy in Appendix A, the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism, effective for a period of 5 years until January 1st, 2030.

---

### Results of the Vote

In favour	( )
Opposed	( )
Abstain	( )

---



## Appendix A : SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism

# SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism (P.A.A.S.)

**Adoption Date:**

**Expiry Date:**

## 1. DESCRIPTION

The SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism (*hereafter referred to as “the Policy” or “the P.A.A.S.”*) in line with existing policy<sup>1,2</sup>, achieves two goals:

1. To provide a set of contextualized guidelines and perspectives with which to identify and adequately address the issue of antisemitism within the SSMU community and membership;
2. To introduce new measures for improving advocacy, communication, education and trust between Jewish student groups, the SSMU, and members of the McGill Administration.

The P.A.A.S addresses the absence of specific language within the current Equity Policy<sup>2</sup> framework of the SSMU (*hereafter referred to as “the Society”*) and the lack of culturally, ethnically, and religiously sensitive policy measures—two factors which have hindered the Society’s ability to respond to the needs of Jewish students on campus robustly.

The Policy derives the foundation of its definition from both the [2020 Jerusalem Declaration Definition on Antisemitism](#) (*hereafter referred to as “the JDA”*) and the [Nexus Document](#). The base of the JDA framework is an academically rigorous and contextualized guide to understanding ostensible presentations of antisemitism endorsed by hundreds of academics worldwide. The following passage contains background information obtained from the Jerusalem Declaration website:<sup>3</sup>

*[The definition] was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression. Initially signed by 210 scholars, it has now around 350 signatories...*

*[The definition] is inspired by the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the 1969 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 2000 Declaration of the*

<sup>1</sup> [SSMU Equity Policy, 2021](#): Part II: 4.1.1, 4.2.1.a-b, 4.3.1.a-c

<sup>2</sup> [The Constitution of the Students’ Society of McGill University 2021](#): Preamble: Leadership

<sup>3</sup> <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/> Note: as with the 2018 Motion, the framework of the source definition was adapted to accommodate standing policy, precedent, and the needs expressed by community consultation.



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

*Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, and the 2005 United Nations Resolution on Holocaust Remembrance, we hold that while antisemitism has certain distinctive features, the fight against it is inseparable from the overall battle against all forms of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender discrimination.*

Additionally, the Nexus Document was included as it addresses the implications of contextualizing antisemitism in the realm of political speech and contemporary discourse, serving as an additional guide to help the Society grapple with the complexities and nuance at the intersection of Israel and antisemitism. The following is a quote from their website:

*“Nexus supports an inclusive approach to defining antisemitism, opposing the codification of a definition of antisemitism which could limit free speech and be misused for political purposes. Through education, advocacy, and strategic engagement, we strive to bring Americans together in the critical fight against antisemitism, ensuring our efforts strengthen rather than divide our communities.”*

In addition the Society will also implement various actionable measures internally and address issues of insufficient advocacy or reliable communication. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following: bi-annual meetings with Jewish groups on campus to provide an opportunity to relay concerns and to further collaborative discussions vis-à-vis advocacy steps the Society can take beyond this Policy; a direct channel of communication and consultation with, the Dean of Students<sup>4</sup>; and added sensitivity around planning events during Jewish holidays and ensuring Kosher food options at SSMU events whenever possible.

Despite previous efforts brought by SSMU representatives and executives, there has been no ratification of a comprehensive policy to address the critical and ever-present issue of antisemitism. The P.A.A.S serves, as mentioned above, to remedy both the definitional and advocacy-related aspects and to add a needed degree of specificity to current and future iterations of the Society's Equity Policy.

In recent months, consultation and collaboration with Jewish groups have yielded troubling conclusions: that genuine and urgent concerns are ignored or otherwise not consistently acknowledged by the McGill Administration and that channels to address problems of antisemitism within the Society lack both specificity and sensitivity. Meanwhile, other incidents have suggested a broader trend of Jewish students having their identities as Jews called into question by those who disapprove of their principles, stances, and convictions.

---

<sup>4</sup> Pending the availability of the Dean, Associate Dean, and the staff of the Dean of Students Office.



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.*

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

## 2. Scope

### This policy applies to:

- Members, clubs, and services of the SSMU,
- SSMU staff and personnel
- Councillors, Officers, and Directors of the Society

This Policy will not impact the regulations, procedures, guidelines, and definitions of McGill. This Policy will furthermore not interfere with or impact in any way any definition used for McGill's reporting processes, including but not limited to the McGill [Office of Mediation and Response](#).

### In the following contexts:

- The current SSMU Equity Policy Processes and Procedure or any future iteration
- Implementation of current or future mandates, motions, policies, and plans
- Any and all communications, actions, or other professional collaboration with or about antisemitism, including:
  - Allegations and reported experiences of antisemitism within the scope of a Staff member's duties with the Society or a student member's equity complaint.
  - Any future definition, statement, or media communique regarding antisemitism by the Society or discussion held by the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Legislative Council.

## 3. Definitions

### **3.1 Jewish person, a Jew<sup>5</sup>:**

A Jewish person or a Jew identifies with Jewish cultural, historical, and/or religious heritage.

This identity can be predicated on various factors, including:

1. Ethnicity
2. Religious observance, tradition, or practice
3. Cultural or community affiliation

---

<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is important to consider that Jews have a rich and diverse history that spans centuries and continents. As such, for many Jews, their Jewish identity is shaped by both ethnicity and religion, though that might not always be the case.



## 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.

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

### 3.2 Jewish Group:

For the purposes of this policy, a Jewish group refers to a group of current SSMU members who compose a group of majority Jewish individuals and hold events, discussions, or meetings on or off campus relating to Jewish cultural, religious, spiritual, or political life.

### 3.3 Antisemitism<sup>6</sup>:

Broadly speaking, antisemitism includes discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jewish people as Jewish people (or Jewish institutions as Jewish), as well as conditions that intentionally discriminate against Jews and significantly impede their ability to participate as equals in political, religious, cultural, economic, or social life<sup>78</sup>.

#### a. General Guidelines and Examples

- i. All allegations of antisemitism made by Jews, like all allegations of discrimination and oppression in general, should be given serious attention.
- ii. Antisemitism can manifest in language, actions, or other media.
  1. Examples of antisemitic *language* may include slurs or stereotype-based insults, such as the notion that most or all Jews are wealthy, inherently stingy or miserly, or unpatriotic.
  2. Examples of antisemitic *deeds* may include: assaulting someone because they are Jewish and/or their relationship to Israel or lack thereof, attacking and/or threatening a synagogue or Jewish school, painting swastikas, or refusing to hire or promote people because they are Jewish.
- iii. Antisemitism can be direct or indirect, explicit or coded<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> [JDA, 2020](#) Note: this definition is the part of the foundation of the definitional section of this policy.

<sup>7</sup> Note: that the combination of the following sections (3.4. e-g) may not be sufficient to determine with complete and unambiguous certainty that an incident is or is not antisemitic. Rather, this collection of examples and counterexamples serves, for one, to be able to better identify contexts which would allow the Equity and / or Human Resources reporting processes to better address the root cause of a situation and employ specific strategies to address it.

<sup>8</sup> <https://nexusproject.us/nexus-resources/the-nexus-document/> this document represents the other half of the foundation of the definitional section of this Policy.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the statement: “*The Rothschilds control the world*” is a relatively common example of a coded expression regarding the alleged power of “the Jews” over banks and international finance—one which is clearly disproportionate, conspiratorial, and beyond the scope of reality.





## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

1. For example, directly demanding or indirectly insinuating that a Jewish person must legitimate their Jewish identity through ancestry, religion, or ethnicity due to their lifestyle or personal beliefs<sup>10</sup>.
  - a. This may additionally manifest through racialized microaggressions directed at Jews of colour when they disclose their Jewish identity (i.e assuming they must be converts, asking them intrusive and skeptical questions about their ancestry and parentage<sup>11</sup>).
2. Furthermore, grossly exaggerating Israel's influence in a malicious or conspiratorial manner beyond the scope of the facts can be a coded way of racializing and stigmatizing Jews<sup>12</sup>.
- iv. Antisemitism is furthered by denying or minimizing the Holocaust, including:
  1. Claiming that the deliberate Nazi genocide of the Jews did not occur.
  2. Alleging there were no extermination camps or gas chambers.
  3. Stating that the number of victims was a fraction of the actual total.
- v. **Classical antisemitism** is the insinuation and portrayal of Jewish people as inherently and disproportionately “evil”, violent<sup>13</sup>, or linked to malicious and secret conspiracies to take over the world (i.e. controlling the world government, Hollywood, news media, and the global banking system)<sup>14</sup>.
- vi. What is true of racism is also true of antisemitism: it is racist to essentialize (treat a character trait as inherent) or to make sweeping negative generalizations about a given ethnic group.
- vii. It is antisemitic to advocate for political solutions that deny Jews – because they are Jews – the right to self-determination and/or the right to physical safety and full human, civil, and religious rights.

---

<sup>10</sup> Bad-faith and intentional casting of doubt on the nature of a Jewish person or group's identity as Jewish within the broader community due to their lifestyle, personal, or political beliefs may be considered ostensibly antisemitic in the same sense.

<sup>11</sup> <https://forward.com/news/474074/jews-of-color-study-discrimination-black-asian-latinx/>

<sup>12</sup> For example, a critique of the American Political Lobbying Entity, AIPAC for its role in shaping the outcome of some primary or general elections in the United States is a valid political critique, whereas blaming AIPAC for the fall of society and believing its members pull all the strings in all levels of government more than any other could be an example of antisemitism.

<sup>13</sup> See the especially egregious notion referred to as [blood libel](#).

<sup>14</sup> One notable example is the allegation by United States lawmaker Marjorie Taylor Greene that [“Jewish space lasers”](#) were responsible for a deadly wildfire in California.



**b. Examples from the Israel-Palestine Discourse that ARE Ostensibly Antisemitic<sup>15</sup>:**

- i. Applying the symbols, images and negative stereotypes of **classical antisemitism** (see point v above) to the State of Israel.
  1. As such, it is antisemitic to use symbols and images that present all Jews as collectively guilty for the actions of the State of Israel.
- ii. Holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel's conduct or treating Jews simply because they are Jewish as agents of Israel.
- iii. Holding individuals or institutions, because they are Jewish, *a priori* culpable of real or imagined wrongdoing committed by Israel.
  1. This may include requiring people, because they are Jewish, to condemn Israel or Zionism publicly.
- iv. Assuming that non-Israeli Jews, because they are Jews, are necessarily more loyal to Israel than to their own countries (i.e **dual loyalty**)<sup>16</sup>.
- v. Denigrating or denying the Jewish identity of certain Jews because they are perceived as holding the "wrong" religious or political position (whether too critical or too favourable) on Israel.
  1. This may include: labelling another Jewish individual as a 'fake Jew,' 'token Jew,' or 'self-hating Jew' based on personal disagreements with another's religious beliefs, personal convictions, or political inclinations.
- vi. Treating Israel differently solely because it is a Jewish state, using standards different than those applied to other countries.
- vii. Saying that Jewish people cannot have a future within the boundaries of modern-day Israel-Palestine, given the established legacy of coexistence between Jewish, Arab, Druze and Muslim communities for centuries in the area<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>15</sup> Whether speech or conduct about Zionism and Israel is antisemitic should be based on the standards for speech or conduct that apply to antisemitic behaviour in general.

<sup>16</sup> In other words: considering Jews to be a priori incapable of setting aside their loyalty to the Jewish people and/or Israel.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-206581/>



**C. Examples from the Israel-Palestine Discourse that ARE NOT Ostensibly, Antisemitic:**

- i. Using language and political discourse in support of the Palestinian demand for justice and the total grant of Palestinian political, national, civil and human rights, as guaranteed under international law<sup>18,19</sup>.
- ii. As a general rule, fact-based criticism of Zionism, or nonviolent political action directed at the State of Israel and/or its policies should not, as such, be deemed inherently antisemitic.
  1. Furthermore, opposition to Zionism and/or Israel does not necessarily reflect specific anti-Jewish animus nor purposefully lead to antisemitic behaviors and conditions. (For example, someone might oppose the principle of nationalism or ethnonationalist ideology. Similarly, someone's personal or national experience may have been adversely affected by the creation of the State of Israel. These motivations or attitudes towards Israel and/or Zionism do not necessarily constitute antisemitic behaviour).
  2. It is additionally neither antisemitic to criticize or oppose Zionism (as with any other national movement) as a form of nationalism<sup>20</sup>, nor to argue for a variety of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean.
  3. It is furthermore not antisemitic to support arrangements that accord full legal equality to all inhabitants "*between the river and the sea*"<sup>21</sup>,

---

<sup>18</sup> [UN Charter: Article 1; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\)](#): “

- 1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- 2. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.
- 3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realisation of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.”

<sup>19</sup> [The Supreme Court of Canada](#), in dismissing a defamation lawsuit against a defender of LGBTQ rights, affirmed the following: “counter-speech motivated by the defence of a vulnerable or marginalised group in society” exists in “close proximity to the values at the core” of constitutional protections of speech.

<sup>20</sup> See the following paper for an in-depth historical comparison analysis: [Israel Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1 \(Spring, 2003\), pp. 91-104](#)

<sup>21</sup> A legal review carried out by Lawyers at another [Canadian University, UofT](#), found that in Canada, since freedom of expression is protected under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) (Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11 a: Fundamental Freedoms 2



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

whether in two states, a binational state, a unitary democratic state, a federal state, or in another form.

- iii. Using accusations of antisemitism as a tool to suppress criticism of Israel is dangerous on many levels. It distracts attention from bona fide antisemitism, infringes on the principle of freedom of expression, and militates against constructive dialogue and debate among people with differing opinions.
- iv. Bringing forward evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state is similarly not antisemitic in a *prima facie* sense<sup>22</sup>. This includes its government, institutions and founding principles. It also includes its policies and practices, domestic and abroad, such as the conduct of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, the role Israel plays in the region, or any other way in which, as a state, it influences events in the world.
- v. Paying disproportionate attention to Israel and treating Israel differently than other countries is not *prima facie* proof of antisemitism. (There are numerous reasons for devoting special attention to Israel and treating Israel differently, e.g., some people care about Israel more; others may pay more attention because Israel has a special relationship with the United States and receives \$4 billion in American aid).
  1. For example: journalism, speech, or media using some or all of the words occupation<sup>23,24</sup>, apartheid and genocide<sup>25</sup> to describe fact-based,

---

*“Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication”, any restrictions on speech, including the phrase “from the river to the sea” must be carefully balanced against this fundamental right. “Furthermore, the history of this slogan demonstrates that while there is a case to be made that some global actors may use it with an eliminationist meaning, it is generally understood in Canada to be a call for recognition and change, justice and freedom. The slogan is used in a number of different contexts and can have multiple meanings in terms of what kind of future is envisioned in Israel and Palestine. Scholars with expertise in the subject conclude that the slogan is a call for an end to the structures of violence that have impacted Palestinian life for decades. Moreover, for all writers examined, the meaning of the slogan is recognized to depend on the speaker and context.”*

<sup>22</sup> Even contentious, strident, or harsh criticism of Israel for its policies and actions, including those that led to the creation of Israel, is not per se illegitimate or antisemitic

<sup>23</sup> As described in a [legal review written by Legal Scholar and Canadian Professor Alex Neve](#) and endorsed by multiple McGill Professors in the Faculty of Law: “The occupied status of Gaza and the West Bank is recognized as a basic factual premise by authoritative international legal institutions and organisations including various [United Nations bodies, committees and independent experts](#), the International Court of Justice, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch.”

<sup>24</sup> As also mentioned by [Professor Neve in their article](#): “[Two separate UN investigations](#) have concluded that Israel’s 56-year-long occupation of Palestinian territories is illegal, due to its initiation in an act of aggression, its prolonged and ostensibly permanent duration (no other occupation lasting longer than ten years has been found to be legitimate), its practices of land annexation and apartheid, and its denial of Palestinian self-determination.”

<sup>25</sup> As also mentioned by [Professor Neve in their article](#): “[UN Experts and more than 800 international law and genocide scholars](#) have characterized Israel’s current military assault on Gaza as giving rise to a risk of, or even



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.*

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

internationally recognized, and thoroughly documented actions of the Israeli government are ostensibly not antisemitic, so long as the content is verifiably factual<sup>26</sup>.

2. Similarly, speech or media addressing verified and well-evidenced racial discrimination and systemically racist structures<sup>27</sup>, including apartheid<sup>28, 29</sup>, is not antisemitic<sup>30</sup>.

---

amounting to an unfolding, genocide, defined by the [UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and Rome Statute](#) as certain acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” Legal experts have also provided detailed opinions on this question in the context of litigation that has been commenced in the United States, alleging that US officials have breached their duty to act to prevent genocide.[23] That includes an opinion from Canadian academic William Schabas, widely recognized to be one of the world’s leading legal authorities with respect to genocide.[24]

<sup>26</sup> As also clarified by [Professor Neve in their article](#): “Terms such as “occupation,” “apartheid,” and “genocide” have established legal meanings, applicable to Israel’s actions and practices towards Palestinians.

<sup>27</sup> “Israel is not a state of all its citizens... [but rather] the nation-state of the Jewish people and only them”:

Message posted online in March 2019 by Israel’s then prime minister, [Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

<sup>28</sup> It is worth noting that Human rights organisations and independent UN experts concur that [Israel’s system of rule over Palestinians meets the legal definition of apartheid](#). As of 2024-10-01, these groups and entities include: [Amnesty International](#), Human Rights Watch, Yesh Din, [Harvard Law School’s International Human Rights Law Clinic](#), Addameer, Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, [B’Tselem](#), [the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967](#), and the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

<sup>29</sup> According to the [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#): Apartheid consists of: “inhumane acts [...] committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.”

<sup>30</sup> As observed [by Israeli human rights organisation, B’Tselem](#): “The Israeli regime, which controls all the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, seeks to advance and cement Jewish supremacy throughout the entire area. To that end, it has divided the area into several units [Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Israel], each with a different set of rights for Palestinians – always inferior to the rights of Jews.”



## 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.

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

- vi. Supporting boycotts, divestment and sanctions writ large as commonplace, non-violent<sup>31</sup> forms of political protest against states is not ostensibly antisemitic<sup>32, 33, 34, 35, 36</sup>.

## 4. Context

### 4.1 At SSMU

As mentioned in the [Description Section](#) of this Policy, numerous issues have arisen internally within the Society with respect to a lack of sensitivity, understanding, and guidelines regarding antisemitism. Furthermore, no consistent policy or motion exists in place to fill in this gap of advocacy and definitional specificity. A previous [now-expired and unrenewed motion in 2018](#) attempted to remedy this issue, although it lacked the comprehensiveness and clarity to warrant renewal or re-institution.

This Policy and its definitional framework will serve to supplement the existing and future iterations of the Equity Policy in addition to other motions and policies relating to discrimination as the broadness of previous policies, specifically the Equity Policy, do not currently address the uniqueness of what comprises experiences of antisemitism and antisemitism writ large - namely its encompassing of cultural, ethnic, and religious dimensions of identity.

The added aspects of workshop options facilitated either internally or through partnerships with community academic experts in antisemitism<sup>37</sup> will provide further opportunities to increase

---

<sup>31</sup> Nonviolence, for the purpose of this document, refers to the OHCHR definition regarding the right of peaceful assembly: “Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. The right of peaceful assembly includes the right to hold meetings, sit-ins, strikes, rallies, events or protests, both offline and online.”

<sup>32</sup> Historically, the SSMU has supported numerous student-led campaigns calling for the boycott of and divestment from a variety of industries and or national entities. Examples include: [Policy Against Harmful Military Technology](#), [Divest for Human Rights Policy](#), and the [Ethical Partnerships Policy](#).

<sup>33</sup> [2021-01-19 | Reference re Interpretation and Scope of the Reference re Legality of the BDS Motion and Similar Motions](#)

<sup>34</sup> [2021-04-23 Reference re Motion on Divest for Human Rights Policy](#)

<sup>35</sup> As stated by Richard Falk, Albert G Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University and former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967: “In the end, we are left with the imperative of protecting free speech, especially in calling genocide genocide, and with a challenge to take all responsible action to end this scourge by actions that go beyond words of lament and condemnation, and consider what forms of boycott, divestment, and sanctions can be brought to bear to stop genocide in Gaza.”

<sup>36</sup> McGill, notable absolved students who were involved in a BDS effort in 2018 of antisemitism <https://forward.com/fast-forward/393909/voting-pro-israel-candidates-off-student-govt-wasnt-anti-semitic-mcgill-say/>

<sup>37</sup> For an example, see <https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/curriculum>



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

sensitivity and educational background regarding antisemitism and integrate understanding of the issue into existing mechanistic conceptualizations of anti-oppression at the SSMU.

## 4.2 At McGill University

As mentioned in the Description section, the Society has previously been unable to adequately advocate for Jewish students outside the scope of the SSMU due to the lack of workable policy and language in the Society's equity policy. This policy will address that absence, strengthening the Society's ability to advocate at McGill for its Jewish student community.

Through consultations, Jewish students have made the Society aware that they have felt they have been waiting too long to speak with members of the McGill administration and that their concerns weren't being relayed effectively. They have also identified that there is an inadequate level of support and or lack of role clarity with respect to the position of McGill's Jewish Students Liaison at present, despite motivations to pursue collaborative projects with the Liaison.

## 5. Framework

As mentioned in the scope and description sections, the main emphasis of the definitional aspect of the Policy is overwhelmingly predicated on and largely pulled directly from the language and general framing of the Jerusalem Declaration Definition of Antisemitism.

The aforementioned content, specificity, and definitional aspects of this Policy will be applied to and current and future iterations of the Equity Policy as well as any reporting process internal to the association regarding allegations of harassment in addition to allegations of antisemitism raised pertaining to any current and future policies ratified and put in place by the Society.

## 6. Advocacy / Promotion / Communication

### 6.1 Campus Advocacy

#### 6.1.1 Bi-yearly meetings with Jewish Groups:

Within the first three weeks of each academic semester, the Vice President of External Affairs and External Affairs Commissioner, in collaboration with the Vice President of University Affairs, if possible,



## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

will extend the invitation to meet with any Jewish group<sup>38</sup> or individual(s) who expresses wishes to meet to discuss concerns relating to allegations of antisemitism experienced by the members of the group and/or other avenues of advocacy and representation regarding antisemitism and Jewish life not yet explored by the Society<sup>39,40</sup>.

#### 6.1.2 Kosher food options where possible:

In collaboration with the Vice President of Internal Affairs and the Vice President of Sustainability and Operations, the Vice President of External Affairs will endeavour to offer Kosher food options at SSMU events (events directly facilitated by the SSMU portfolios, internal events) when requested and available.

#### 6.1.3 Conscientiousness towards religious holidays:

The Vice President of External Affairs, in collaboration with the Vice President of Internal Affairs, will ensure that SSMU events<sup>41</sup> do not conflict with the religious holidays, including but not limited to Jewish holidays celebrated by the Society's membership where possible, to limit the inaccessibility of prominent student experiences. The Vice Presidents will work to find alternatives with individual students who seek to voice their complaints<sup>42</sup>.

#### 6.1.4 Campus Workshops about Antisemitism:

The External Affairs portfolio, led by the Vice President of External Affairs, will support and ensure the delivery of workshops/training addressing antisemitism in partnership with community organizations with expertise and an educational background in such trainings<sup>43</sup>. The workshops will occur at least once each semester and will be available to staff and SSMU members.

## 6.2 University Advocacy

#### 6.2.1 Facilitating Meetings with the Dean of Students:

Following the aforementioned bi-yearly meetings, each group consulted would have the option of having their concerns conveyed directly to the administration employing a meeting with the Dean of

---

<sup>38</sup> See Section 3.2

<sup>39</sup> The groups may further be identified by their current or recently expired status with the SSMU, registration at recent and previous Activities Nights, and an active on-campus or social media presence.

<sup>40</sup> Note that this mandate serves to establish connection on a continuous basis if needed, rather than institute a one-time space for discussion.

<sup>41</sup> I.e Events directly facilitated by the SSMU portfolios and internal events

<sup>42</sup> This may extend, if so requested, to workarounds for Shabbat whereas events can be facilitated without required smartphone use.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/curriculum> (as an example)





## 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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Students facilitated by the Vice President of External Affairs and, if necessary, SSMU President, pending the availability of the Dean<sup>44</sup>.

#### 6.2.2 Facilitating Meetings with the Jewish Students' Liaison:

Similarly, following the bi-yearly meetings, representatives from the groups met in consultation could also request meetings with the Jewish Students' Liaison, pending the Liaison's availability facilitated by the Vice President of External Affairs if need be and so requested.

#### 6.2.3 Facilitating Office of Mediation and Reporting (OMR) Reports:

The Vice President of External Affairs and the office of the Vice President of University Affairs will work together to help any SSMU member to bring allegations of antisemitism to McGill's process through the [OMR submission](#) or to provide information on booking consultations with the office.

#### 6.2.4 Senate and Board of Governors Representation:

The SSMU President and Vice President of University Affairs, following consultation with the Vice President of External Affairs after their semesterly consultation with Jewish groups (as outlined in [section 6.1.1 of this Policy](#)), will convey the main actionable conclusions originating in the consultation sessions the McGill University Board of Governors and Senate, respectively, in an anonymous fashion which is consistent with the guidelines mentioned in [Section 3 of this Policy](#). Furthermore, the Vice President of External Affairs will help the student contact their faculty Senator, with the consent of the student in question.

## 7. Reporting and Accountability

### 7.1 Legislative Council and Executive Committee Reporting and Accountability

The Vice President of External Affairs will note the principal conclusions and takeaways from their meetings with the Jewish groups consulted pursuant to [mandate 6.1.1](#) of this Policy and share them at the next Legislative Council and Executive Committee meetings after the consultation with the majority of student groups.

---

<sup>44</sup> Please note that for points 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 the office of the Dean of Students and that of the Jewish Students' Liaison are always open to walk ins or appointments, notwithstanding any additional facilitation or support offered by the SSMU in helping organize meetings.



## **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.*

[speaker@ssmu.ca](mailto:speaker@ssmu.ca) | [ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

## **7.2 Accountability Commissioner Supervision**

The SSMU's Accountability Commissioner will ensure that reporting of the takeaways of meetings conducted by the Vice President of External Affairs are properly reported according to the standards outlined in [mandate 7.1](#) of this Policy.

FOR APPROVAL