



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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

SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

January 7, 2025

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference and in the SSMU Boardroom on Thursday, January 7, 2025 at 18:00.

Present: Jonathan Dong (Chair, non-voting), Jessica Bakar (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Sierra Fallis (Deputy Speaker, non-voting), Abe Berglas (Officer, non-voting), Hugo Solomon (Officer, non-voting), Pauline Jolicoeur (Director), Dymetri Taylor (Director), Maya Marcus-Sells (General Manager, non-voting), Hamza Abu-Alkhair (Council Member), Honoah Xu (Director), Dylan Seiler (Director), Fawaz Halloum (Director), Elina Qureshi (Director), Seraphina Crema Black (Council Member), Sophia Garofalo (Director), Rishi Kalaga (Council Member), Emma Chen (Council Member)

Absent: Zeena Zahidah (Officer, non-voting)

1. Call to Order: **18:07**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:07.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair presents the Land Acknowledgement.

The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the true and constant custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today. Further, the SSMU commits to and respects the traditional laws and customs of these territories.

L'AEUM reconnaît que l'Université McGill est située sur le territoire traditionnel et non cédé des nations Anishinaabeg et Haudenosaunee. L'AEUM reconnaît et respecte ces nations comme les véritables et constants gardiens des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous rencontrons aujourd'hui. En outre, l'AEUM s'engage à respecter les lois et coutumes traditionnelles de ces territoires.

3. Attendance



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The Chair takes attendance.

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

The Agenda is distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Agenda is adopted.

5. Confidential Session:
 - a. There is a Confidential Session this evening.

6. [Executive Committee Public Report 2025-01-07](#) – **RATIFIED**

Director Taylor presents the Executive Committee Public Report. On December 3, there were many email motions to hire employees for Gert's, as it opened yesterday. They also purchased merchandise for Winter Activities Night. They did some hirings, reviewed and updated some pay grades, and updated some job descriptions. On December 11, they hired a Community Affairs Commissioner, created a new Menstrual Health Product Coordinator position, and increased contract hours. They recommended that the Board approve the Health & Safety Committee Terms of Reference, which will be discussed later this meeting. On January 6, they approved motions extending the Gert's bartender's hours and transferred some of the VP Sustainability & Operations' duties to VPs External and Internal. They created a new club sanctions masterlist, which had not been updated for some time.

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

7. Minutes for Approval
 - a. [SSMU Board of Directors Public Minutes 2024-12-03](#) – **APPROVED**

The Minutes are distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Minutes are approved.

8. Legislative Council Motions for Ratification
 - a. [Motion approving the Winter 2025 Referendum Dates](#) (Director Taylor) – **RATIFIED**

Director Taylor motions to suspend the rules to add Motion 10c.

Director Xu seconds.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10c is added to the agenda.



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Director Taylor presents Motion 8a. He states that the election dates went to the Legislative Council for approval first. The nomination period is from February 3-21 and the campaign and polling period is from March 10-21, which gives Elections SSMU a week to send the financial questions to McGill for review, which was an issue last semester.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 8a is ratified.

b. [Motion on Gender Neutral Washrooms](#) (Officer Berglas) – **FOR RATIFICATION**

Officer Berglas presents Motion 8b. They state that this motion seeks to increase the number of gender neutral washrooms to be in line with other PGSS and McGill buildings.

Director Kalaga states that constituents are concerned about this motion because it would create a gender neutral bathroom in a bar. They should not go forward with this motion without having received adequate feedback on it. The consultations proposed have been with SSMU employees working on this project, but the McGill community has not been sufficiently consulted on. Director Kalaga will vote against this motion as he did at the Legislative Council. This does not mean that he is being transphobic, and the constituents who are concerned about this motion are not being transphobic either; they are concerned with their personal safety. There are already gender neutral bathrooms in the SSMU building, and reducing the number of gendered bathrooms to one means that there are fewer options for women. Unless the Gerts bathrooms are the ones that remain gendered, there is the concern for female safety in a bar setting. Twenty to thirty people have brought this up to Director Kalaga as a concern, and other Directors must know that this is a concern.

Officer Berglas states that this motion is in line with the Trans Advocacy Plan and other SSMU positions. The PGSS only has gender neutral washrooms and has events with alcohol, and they have not experienced any issues. They should not choose between women's comfort and the ability of transgender people to use the bathroom, because this is unreasonable. Most of the Legislative Council did not take issue with this, so it should be passed at the Board. Officer Berglas thinks that members who are not part of a minority group cannot decide if their actions or comments are discriminatory to the minority group in question.

Director Seiler asks Director Jolicoeur what the BOMCOM's and Building Director's opinions on this motion were in terms of Quebec building code.

Director Jolicoeur answers that BOMCOM reviewed this motion and found a piece of legislation that the motion violated. Officer Berglas brought up that this piece of legislation does not apply at the last



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Legislative Council meeting, but Director Jolicoeur is unsure how it applies. There were some complications because McGill owns the University Centre and SSMU would need permission to do renovations.

Officer Berglas states that they received the piece of legislation in question a few hours before the Legislative Council meeting; they ask if the legislation was discussed at the BOMCOM meeting.

Director Jolicoeur answers that the Building Director discussed it at the BOMCOM meeting.

General Manager Marcus-Sells asks to see the piece of legislation in question, because in her conversations with the Building Director, she has not been shown any legislation that demonstrates that the motion is illegal. She thinks that the legislation in question specifies a minimum number of gendered washrooms depending on building occupancy, but does not explicitly require them to be gendered.

Director Jolicoeur states that the legislation is linked to the BOMCOM report, which is in the minutes of the last Legislative Council meeting. She presented this report on the VP Operations' behalf, but it was discussed that during the HVAC renovations, they had to add a female bathroom because they were one short.

The Chair asks Director Jolicoeur to share the report with the Board.

Director Taylor states that he forwarded the report to the Board. The legislation in question specifies that bathrooms have to be gendered.

Officer Berglas is disappointed by the BOMCOM report, because it seems that they did not discuss this piece of legislation in depth despite claiming to. They think that, since McGill and PGSS have interpreted the legislation as meaning that a gender neutral bathroom is one that is appropriate for both men and women, the motion is legal.

Director Abu-Alkhair states that he spoke about this motion with some of SSMU's services, and the MSA (Muslim Students' Association) had some issue with it. There is a prayer room on the same floor as Gerts, so women who wear the hijab must wash up in a female-only space. They expressed concerns about this motion.

General Manager Marcus-Sells states that they should try to take all the concerns of their constituents into account, and suggests that the bathrooms in the basement should remain gendered. They could look into a more detailed legal review of this legislation before moving forward. All bathrooms are described in the legislation as gendered, so it makes it unclear as to how gender neutral bathrooms



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would fit the requirements. Gender neutral bathrooms can likely fit some of the requirements, so they might be able to satisfy all needs.

Officer Berglas states that this motion does not deprive women of a women's washroom, it simply requires them to go up or down a floor to go to the washroom. They should change the default when it comes to washrooms to make the University Centre a more equitable space.

Director Crema Black states that this argument can be used the other way as well; they are not depriving gender non-conforming and transgender people of a washroom, they may simply be required to go up or down a floor to access a gender neutral washroom.

Director Seiler states that it is important for transgender students to be able to safely access a washroom, and for Muslim students to be able to practice their religion. They should find a balanced middle ground to ensure everyone feels safe in the University Centre. The legislation is unclear and may be outdated, but the motion may require legal review.

Director Crema Black asks how many bathrooms there are in the University Centre, and wonders if there is a possible middle ground.

General Manager Marcus-Sells answers that there is a set of gendered bathrooms in the basement, first and third floors, a gender neutral bathroom on the second floor, and she is unsure about the fourth floor.

Director Crema Black states that there is space to add a gender neutral washroom, but it does not mean that they need to limit their gendered washrooms to one of each gender.

General Manager Marcus-Sells states that these concerns could be balanced during the execution of this motion. She is confident that the legal review will ensure compliance with the law during the execution of the motion.

Officer Solomon asks if consultations emphasized a specific set of washrooms remaining gendered, and asks Officer Berglas if they have considered further consultations with groups impacted by this motion.

Officer Berglas answers that this initiative is being led by the Gender & Sexual Advocacy Commissioner, so they are not aware of all the consultations they performed.

Director Taylor states that it might be a good idea for their lawyers or the Board to review McGill policy, because the University Centre is a McGill building and must follow the University's policies.



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Director Seiler states that the most important thing is to ensure that everyone feels safe using the washroom in the University Centre, and to reduce the distance transgender students need to cover to access a washroom. They should consider the concerns of the constituents mentioned by Directors Kalaga and Abu Alkhair, and alter the motion as necessary.

Director Xu states that there is no implementation plan in the motion, and asks if bathrooms would be added, removed or simply converted.

Officer Berglas states that washrooms would likely be converted into gender neutral bathrooms.

General Manager Marcus-Sells notes that they are not able to add washrooms to the University Centre, so existing washrooms would be converted.

The Chair suggests a motion to give direction to the conversation.

Director Taylor motions to suspend the rules to add Motion 10d.

Director Xu seconds Motion 10d.

Director Jolicoeur amends Motion 10d; she suggests ratifying Motion 8a contingent on the legal review considering that it passed at the Legislative Council with a large majority.

The Chair states that this would be better as a separate motion.

General Manager Marcus-Sells suggests that they can task the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator with reviewing McGill policy rather than pay their lawyers to do it.

Director Taylor states that this is a friendly amendment.

Director Crema Black asks what MMGC is.

The Chair answers that it is the law firm that SSMU has hired.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10d is added to the agenda.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair entertains a vote on Motion 10d.

Director Seiler asks which motion they are voting on.

The Chair answers that they are voting on Motion 10d.



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Seeing no opposition, Motion 10d is approved.

Director Chen asks if the Board can postpone this motion until they receive the results of the legal review.

The Chair answers that this is an option.

Director Seiler motions to postpone the ratification of Motion 8b pending the results of the legal review.

Director Kalaga seconds.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 8b is postponed.

9. [Nominating Committee Redacted Report 2025-01-07](#) (Director Taylor) - **RATIFIED**

Director Taylor presents the Report of the Nominating Committee, which was tasked with hiring one Judicial Board member, for which applications were open in October and November. There were four applicants, and all were interviewed. Candidates were interviewed in late November by the Parliamentarian and another member of the Nominating Committee when possible, via Zoom. The Committee voted via email in December on each of the candidates. The Nominating Committee recommends the nomination recommendation of Candidate 2 to the Judicial Board Member-at-Large position. Candidate 2 demonstrated interest in the Judicial Board, and highlighted their relevant education and work experience they would bring to their role. The candidate had good knowledge of SSMU's governing documents, and had a good interview overall. The Committee is currently conducting interviews for a Board of Directors member, and for up to four Nominating Committee members. They will also be looking for Board of Directors International Student and Alumni representatives.

Director Halloum asks if there is a self-disclosure mechanism to ensure that there are no pre-existing relationships between committee members and candidates.

Director Taylor answers that committee members are subject to the Conflict of Interest Policy, which also applies to the Board of Directors. It is up to individuals to declare their conflicts of interest, but sometimes individuals choose not to disclose existing relationships.

Director Halloum asks if Director Taylor has interviewed candidates he knew, and if he disclosed it.

Director Taylor answers yes.



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Seeing no further speakers, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, the Report of the Nominating Committee is ratified.

10. Motions for Approval

- a. Motion to approve the nomination recommendation of Candidate 2 to the Judicial Board Member-at-Large role for a term beginning immediately until November 14, 2025 – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Director Halloum asks Director Taylor which candidate he knew, and if he recused himself.

The Chair states that the names of candidates are confidential.

Director Taylor answers that Director Halloum should refer to the confidential minutes from the meeting where they discussed the new Board of Directors members. He votes in accordance with his conflicts of interest.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10a is approved.

- b. Motion to appoint Director Xu to the Finance Committee, beginning immediately until November 14, 2025 (Director Xu) - **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Seeing no speakers, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10b is approved.

- c. Motion to approve the updated [Terms of Reference](#) for the Health & Safety Committee (Director Taylor) - **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Director Taylor presents Motion 10c. The Health & Safety Committee is a committee of the Board, and is focused on full-time employees. The committee ensures the health, safety, and well-being of all employees, and compliance with labour laws. It is composed of various staff members and Executives, who manage first-aid kits in the office, and other safety concerns. The Terms of Reference need to be updated, to ensure that the union, managers, and employees can work together.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10c is approved.



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- d. Motion to approve a budget of \$1,000 for MMGC to get a legal review pertaining to the Motion on Gender Neutral Washrooms and its adherence to Quebec law (Director Taylor) – **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**
- 11. For Discussion
 - 12. Adjournment: **21:41**

The Chair declares the meeting adjourned at 21:41.

APPROVED