



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

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SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

October 3, 2024

The regular bi-monthly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held in Room 232 in the McGill University Leacock Building on Thursday, October 3, 2024 at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:05**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:05.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

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

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

3. Attendance

The Speaker takes attendance.

Present: Councillors Chen, Kalaga, Weissman, Renaud, Kim, McKay, Bérubé, Nounke, Li, Crema Black (proxy), Farhat, Kohler, Zhao, Kumar, El Murr, President Taylor, VPs Zahidah, Jolicoeur, Solomon, Berglas.

Absent: Councillors Engo, Pinard-Milette, VPs Baltes, Muñoz.



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

The Agenda is distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the Agenda is adopted.

5. Minutes for Approval
 - a. SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2024-09-19 – **POSTPONED**
6. [Report of the Steering Committee \(3\)](#)

The Speaker presents the Report of the Steering Committee. She states that the Committee met on Tuesday night and discussed tonight's motions. Everyone was present. She adds that there were many meetings of the Steering Committee before the General Assembly.

7. Announcements
8. Executive Reports **(6)**
 - a. [President](#)

President Taylor states that the Executive Committee has been meeting weekly, and they are starting to hire Gerts staff. Hopefully Gerts will be open in the coming months. Councillors Kalaga and Crema Black have been appointed to the Board, and the Nominating Committee is looking for Board members and will be conducting interviews.

Councillor Weissman states that Councillor Chen has arrived.

President Taylor continues that the Governance Reform Committee met for the first time and planned their goals for the year, which will be reviewing the IRs of Elections & Referenda and the Board's Committees to ensure better efficiency and organization. The Strategic Management Committee has not yet met, but will start working on the strategic plan soon. He notes that he met yesterday with their legal counsel about the Management Agreement, so they will be able to begin negotiations soon and hopefully be able to have subtenants.

Councillor Zhao states that he cannot access the documents on the Agenda.

Parliamentarian Bakar answers that all the documents are available as PDFs in the shared drive.

VP Berglas answers what happens if the Nominating Committee does not receive any member at large applications.



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President Taylor answers that the positions will open up to councillors, or will be left vacant until applications are received.

Councillor Renaud asks if President Taylor was involved in the decision to increase campus security this weekend.

President Taylor answers that there is a special meeting of the Board of Governors tomorrow, but he was not consulted prior to the decision.

VP Solomon asks if President Taylor has thought of questions to ask at the Board of Governors meeting tomorrow.

The Speaker notes that questions at this time should be pertaining to the contents of the report.

President Taylor answers that he has thought of a few, but is open to suggestions from the Council. His main questions are why the security will be upped, why the decision was made at the last minute, and why students were not consulted.

- b. Vice-President Operations & Sustainability - **POSTPONED**
- c. [Vice-President Internal](#)

VP Zahidah states that she has launched the SSMU Jobs website page, instead of using job recruiting software. She is starting interviews for positions within her portfolio next week, and may conduct interviews via Zoom during reading week. She updated the nomination kits for first-year council elections, and the main change was that the number of signatures was increased from 25 to 50, as per the constitution. This might make it more difficult for candidates to run, but they will do a lot of outreach to spread the word. She is looking to get liquor permits for spaces in the University Centre, because right now only Gerts and the ballroom have them. She joined the McGill Alumni Student Engagement Council. VP Zahidah presents the events schedule for the semester.

- 9. Reports by Councillors **(9)**
 - a. [Arts \(AUS\)](#)

Councillor Kalaga states that the report is organized by portfolio. The President has been working on the budget, which is now available on their website. Their committees are now up and running, notably the Equity Committee. Enrollment is above average this year, as they are in most faculties. They do not know the exact number, but they are still able to provide services to students. The faculty ran its first speaker event since the pandemic, and it was a success. Departments have started running events. The finance portfolio has completed its budget, and audits are being done and their mandates



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are being reworked. Councillor Kalaga notes that non-AUS groups cannot book spaces in the Arts or Leacock buildings. SSMU using the Leacock building is an exception right now. Lockers can be booked for free at the AUS office. Their merchandise store is up and running.

Councillor Weissman states that the VP External is planning a graduate school fair on November 6, done in collaboration with SUS. It will be held in the SSMU Ballroom. Their commissions are focusing on high engagement events this year. Sponsorships AUS has been revitalized after not being active last year. The VP Social is running BDA, and EPIC is hiring right now. VP Academic is launching free peer tutoring for the first time since the pandemic, mostly for the smaller departments. The AUS writing centre is being revamped after being inactive for a few years, and will be more of a drop-in service. ASEF is launching, so students not being paid for their work can apply for it.

Councillor Chen states that VP Communications is working on listservs, and they are revamping the AUS website. The Fine Arts Committee is starting up soon. The Arts Senators started a “Senators’ Scoop” section in the listserv, which is keeping students informed about administrative decisions. They have made an input form for students to submit academic issues to be brought to the senate. Curriculum committees have begun.

Councillor Weissman states that the e-flagging service will no longer be available after this semester. This service allowed fail grades to be marked as anomalies due to personal issues. The policy will be terminated because no other faculty nor university has this service.

Councillor Bérubé asks if AUS is contacting the union that is forming within the Faculty of Arts.

Councillor Kalaga answers that AUS is separate from the union. Questions about the union can be directed to the President or VP Internal, because it mostly has to do with the Arts Council rather than AUS.

Councillor Weissman notes that the relevant contact information is on the AUS website.

b. [Sciences \(SUS\)](#)

Councillor Zhao states that their committees have begun. Department orientation was a great success, and the gala planning has begun. Equity & accountability trainings have been scheduled. The President is also working on office cleanup and website updates. VP Academic is working on a research panel with MSERT and a complaints form. The Grad Fair is occurring on November 6. The Academic Committee proposed a new course about sand. VP Finance is hosting a finance roundtable for SUS departments, and the General Council proposed all departmental budgets at its last meeting. VP Events worked on frosh, and Science Games are being planned for January 7-11, 2025. Grad Ball is



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on April 4, 2025. VP External formed committees, and obtained a sponsorship from Alto's for their General Council meetings. They are working on sponsorships for Grad Ball. They want to bring back trivia nights in collaboration with SSPN, and they are looking to revive the science bar. Clubs and service representatives have been appointed, and there is a new club: McGill Women in Computer Science. VP Sustainability is working on the truth & reconciliation page of the SUS website and they have the first Sustainability Committee meeting next week. They are also working to make the SUS office more sustainable. The Science Senator sits on the Committee of Teaching & Learning which met on September 24.

c. [Management \(MUS\)](#)

Councillor Nounke states that the first-year representative elections began, and their goal for this year is to be more organized and have better communication. They also want to increase their funding. They are working on policy changes, which will be finalized by the end of the week. They are updating the POS system at Dave's. They are also planning on proposing a fee increase, and determining whether or not it is a conflict of interest for VPs to hold other positions within the faculty. VP SEDI is recruiting sustainability analysts and is working on the Sustainable Initiatives Pitch Competition. VP Communications is working on centralizing their portfolio to make it more streamlined. VP Corporate Relations is encouraging internal sponsorships among clubs, and has acquired sponsorships from management and financial service firms. They have also been working on a sponsorship package. VP Events worked on Frosh, which went well, and they are planning Carnival and weekly 4à7s. VP Finance has a new employee, the Controller, and is preparing this year's audit.

Councillor Li states that VP Internal planned Clubs and Activities Night, and they are currently recruiting for a few positions within the portfolio. Events and room bookings are running smoothly, and stricter guidelines are being developed to avoid booking conflicts. Corporate tabling issues were resolved, and they launched locker rentals. They are planning a networking event. VP Academic held a meet your professor event, which was a success. They expanded the tutoring services. The Desautels curve has been eliminated, and they are planning a statement about the new grading policy. VP Communications is working on their social media, and is working on their website and merchandise. VP Human Resources updated the recruitment policy, and created new interview grids. They will also be working on audits and updating the HR Handbook.

Councillor Kalaga asks for more information on the fee increase, and what it would go to.

Councillor Nounke answers that the last time they had a fee increase was a few years ago, so its goal is to catch up with inflation. The extra funding would provide more services to students. He is unsure how the revenue would be distributed exactly.



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Councillor Weismann asks if the fee is \$30 for the year, or for the semester.

Councillor Nounke answers that it is \$30 per year.

10. Reports by Committees

a. Black Affairs Committee - **POSTPONED**

11. Question Period **(5)**

VP Zahidah states that she was contacted by Campus Life & Engagement about a program called the Midterm Bounce Back Program. She asks if other faculties were notified of this.

Councillor Weissman answers no, but this is a nice initiative since the Dean of Arts has noted that they want to catch students before they fail, rather than forgive grades.

VP Zahidah states that she can forward the information to faculties. She adds that they are having a fair on October 29. They asked her for information on workshops or tools for students. If any faculties have any events or resources, they can be sent to her so that she can send them to CL&E.

The Music Proxy answers that MUSA was notified of this program and have planned a workshop.

VP Solomon asks if the Law Councillor can tell them what SSMU can do to support the law strike, or give them an update.

Councillor Bérubé states that the Faculty of Law has been on strike for almost five weeks. Classes began today, but everything is contingent on negotiations between their union and McGill. There is a lot of background information that may not be pertinent to the whole Council. If everything goes smoothly, they should reach an agreement before October 8. If they do not reach an agreement, the strike will continue. They have received clear threats from the administration that their semester will be cancelled if the strike continues. Councillor Bérubé welcomes other faculties to contact him if they are curious about their mobilization efforts.

Councillor Renaud states that prior to the suspension of the strike, there had been threats of the semester being cancelled. She asks Councillor Bérubé if this is a possibility even if there is an agreement is reached.

Councillor Bérubé answers yes; they are 5 weeks into the semester, but law students just had their first day of school today. It would be hard to imagine a full semester if the strike continues for future weeks. They are hoping to reach an agreement by October 8, and if this does not happen, it will be catastrophic for law students.



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Councillor Weissman notes that the AUS President has not heard about the Midterm Bounce Back Program. He asks VP Zahidah about the details of the program.

VP Zahidah states that the program is designed to help students manage stress between midterms and finals with workshops, events, peer support. The program runs from October 21 to November 1, with a mini fair on October 29. They are asking SSMU if they have any events like this planned. It seems like the program will mostly be composed of resources and a fair. She will forward any more information to the Council.

12. Recess, Consent Items (5)

The Speaker states that the Consent Items form is in the drive. If everyone votes to consent to a motion, the motion will be approved and not debated. Otherwise, they will be debated.

The Speaker states that Motions 13a was consented to. Motions 13b-d will be debated.

13. Motions

- a. [Motion Regarding the Transfer of Sustainability and Operations Portfolio Jurisdiction to the Vice President Sustainability & Operations](#) (President Taylor) - **APPROVED**
- b. [Motion Regarding Community Solidarity Fund Increase Referendum Question](#) (VP Solomon) - **APPROVED**

VP Solomon presents Motion 13b. He states that the fund was created in Winter 2024. All the money in the fund was used to support various events and initiatives on and off-campus. They are able to directly fund Indigenous solidarity initiatives without going through bureaucratic processes, and this helps them fulfil their mandates and create stronger ties to their community. They have 10 members at large this year, and participating in the Community Solidarity Fund allows students to become changemakers in their communities. The fund aligns with their solidarity mandate, and supports other SSMU policies and projects.

VP Berglas asks if the referendum question needs to specify the initial cost of the fee, the increase, and the new price.

President Taylor answers that there is the chance that some people do not fully read the question, so it is important to include all three amounts. The administration might waive this requirement if the increase is only \$1.00.

VP Berglas suggests amending the question to include all three amounts.



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The Speaker notes that amendments will need to wait until debate.

Councillor Zhao asks if there is any way to see what the money is used for.

VP Solomon answers that they require impact reports for accountability purposes. If groups request funding proactively, they provide $\frac{2}{3}$ of the funding before the impact report is provided, and $\frac{1}{3}$ afterwards. If they do not fill out the impact report, they will be reminded until they do so. All groups have completed the impact reports so far. They also ask for receipts in the case of retroactive funding. Given the flexibility of the fund, they can also donate to funds and see what the funding is being used for.

Seeing no further changes, the Speaker entertains debate.

VP Berglas motions to amend the motion to rephrase the referendum question.

VP Solomon states that these are friendly amendments.

President Taylor makes a wording change.

VP Solomon states that this is a friendly amendment.

Councillor Weissman states that he is in favour of this motion. It is an opt-outable fee, and students can opt-out if they disagree with the fee.

Councillor Kalaga motions to amend the motion to make a wording change.

VP Solomon states that this is a friendly amendment.

Music Proxy asks who oversees the disbursement of the fund.

VP Solomon answers that the fund is chaired by the External Affairs Commissioner and managed by himself, as he is the one who signs the finalized accounting forms. He follows up with the accounting department and community groups to ensure that funding has been distributed.

Seeing no further speakers, the Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 13b is approved.



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c. [Motion Regarding the Legislative Council Nominations to the Board of Directors](#)
(President Taylor) - **APPROVED**

President Taylor presents Motion 13c. He states that Councillor Chen has nominated herself to the Board, in the Councillor 4 seat. There is still another vacant seat. The motion approves the nomination of Councillor Chen to the Board of Directors.

VP Berglas states that there is an error in the “be it resolved” clause.

President Taylor states that this was in case any other councillors wanted to nominate themselves. If no one comes forth, this section should be removed.

Councillor Weissman motions to amend the motion to strike the relevant section.

President Taylor states that this is a friendly amendment.

Councillor Kalaga states that, as a current member of the Board and a colleague of Councillor Chen, she is an excellent candidate for the Board. He encourages everyone to vote in favour of this motion.

Seeing no further speakers, the Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 13c is approved.

d. [Motion Regarding QPIRG-McGill Fee Increase Referendum Question](#) (VP Solomon) -
APPROVED

VP Solomon presents Motion 13d. He states that the QPIRG McGill fee will be increased by \$1.75 per semester, and it is opt-outable. QPIRG is a registered ISG, and his portfolio works closely with them. They hold many events, such as Culture Shock at the end of the month, and they have an activist library and a working group program that allows many small student initiatives to access resources. The fee has not been increased since 2015, despite a 25% inflation increase. They struggle to find ways to make ends meet, but they have continued to provide exceptional services and host great events. They also provide workshops throughout the year in collaboration with SSMU and other community groups.

Councillor Weissman asks if the suggestion on the Google Document will be included.

VP Solomon states that he will accept this suggestion.



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Councillor McKay asks what percentage of students opt out of the fee, and if the increase will make it more likely that students opt out of the fee.

President Taylor answers that McGill provides a list of those who have opted out, and this report should be released this week. The report will show the money they lose from the opt-outs this year.

VP Solomon asks Councillor McKay to repeat the second part of her question.

Councillor McKay asks if increasing the fee will increase the number of students who opt out, thus decreasing the revenue from the fee. She thinks that \$1.75 is not going to make a big difference.

VP Solomon answers that QPIRG needs this fee increase to operate, rather than grow their services.

VP Jolicoeur states that she is planning on analyzing the opt-out statistics to see how they change revenues.

Councillor Weissman states that he is in favour of this motion. This fee is opt-outable and will be voted on by students at referendum. If students do not opt-out of the fee, that is on them.

VP Berglas motions to amend the motion to make a wording change.

VP Solomon states that this is a friendly amendment.

President Taylor states that QPIRG has a few different names, so they need to look into which name they need to use.

The Speaker suggests adding the exact name when it is determined.

VP Berglas answers that they are amenable to this. These referenda questions are important, so they remind everyone to review their motions before bringing them to the Council.

President Taylor states that the fee should be called QPIRG-McGill.

VP Solomon states that this is a friendly amendment.

VP Jolicoeur motions to call the question.

Councillor Weissman seconds.



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Seeing no opposition, the Speaker entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 13d is approved.

VP Zahidah makes a quick correction to the motion.

Parliamentarian Bakar corrects the typo.

Councillor Weissman motions to set the adjournment time to 19:30.

Councillor Kalaga seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the adjournment time is set to 19:30.

14. Notices of Motion

- a. [Notice of Motion Regarding Amendment to the Internal Regulations of Finance](#) (VP Jolicoeur)

VP Jolicoeur states that this is a notice because an amendment to the Internal Regulations requires a notice. She is just fixing a small typo, where the name of the Queer Equity Support Fee was incorrectly referred to as the Indigenous Equity Fee. She notes that she needs a seconder.

Councillor Chen seconds this motion.

VP Jolicoeur asks if she can motion to change the rule about requiring notices of motions for internal regulation changes.

The Speaker answers that to change the provision, a motion would be required, which would require a notice. It could be done at the next meeting.

Councillor Renaud adds a discussion item about the increased security this weekend.

15. For Discussion

- a. University's decision regarding security and closure of campus this weekend (Councillor Renaud)

Councillor Renaud asks the Executives if they were consulted before the decision was made. She opens the floor to Councillors to share how they feel about it. In Athletics, the senior managers were not notified, even though they met with Angela Campbell an hour before the decision was announced.



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VP Solomon states that this reminds everyone of what happened after the dismantling of the encampment, when there were a lot of very strict measures put into place with no consultation with students. This led to very high levels of disruption, for example Midnight Kitchen staff not being able to prepare their food, and students not being able to access their labs and months of research being wasted. These measures call into question the administration's respect of students' integrity, and their ability to function as a students' society. The professors also likely feel the same, so this disappointment is widespread.

VP Zahidah states that none of the Executives were contacted before the decision was made. She thinks that the administration is fear mongering and makes campus inaccessible for no reason. She is amenable to writing a statement about the decision if Councillors are amenable.

Councillor Bérubé states that it is unfortunate that the law students will be forced to have two of their likely only days of classes online. More generally, this measure is very inflammatory and many students feel like they are stuck in the middle of an issue they are not a part of. He has been asked many questions about this, and they are wondering why the decision was made and if perhaps there are concerns not being shared with students.

VP Berglas states that they get nervous when there are heightened security measures. They posed a question about this at the Senate; they asked if security was informed about the Charter of Students' Rights. The answer was no, because the administration claimed it was not possible to inform all security guards of university policies. There has also been undercover security on campus, which is unnecessary. The Office for Mediation and Reporting has also been acting strangely about complaints about security harassment, and they have been claiming that security guards are not part of the McGill community. Complaints have been successfully submitted by rephrasing.

Councillor El Murr states that the presence of security on campus does not make campus feel safer; it does the complete opposite. It feels as though security guards are present to oppress students rather than protect them and as though security is protecting the administration from students. He has had bad experiences with security guards, especially during summer and Frosh. He would leave campus late at night after an event, and the security guards would bombard him with questions and prevent him from going where he needed to go. He asks if there is anything that SSMU can do to improve the situation.

The Speaker notes that they have reached their adjournment time.

Councillor Renaud motions to extend the meeting until 19:40.

VP Zahidah seconds.



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VP Solomon states that he met today with an Executive from Macdonald campus, who noticed that they were required to have security at events that had not previously required security. The security did not make students feel safer and actually reduced their enjoyment. There was communications between the administrations and security services downtown and at Macdonald. His portfolio and VP Berglas's are focused on this issue, and they are looking to provide students with resources about their rights and avenues of reporting. VP Berglas has created a complaints form, has informed students what security guards can and cannot do, and what students must share with a security officer. McGill spent around \$700,000 on security after the encampment, and they should remember that protests are a protected right under the Charter of Rights & Freedoms. The administration is counting on students not to know this, or to buy into their biased arguments. They are putting their own safety and integrity at risk when safety is weaponized.

Councillor El Murr asks if the \$700,000 spent on security came from.

President Taylor answers that the Executives were only notified of the decision 45 minutes before the email to students was sent out. McGill gets its funding from the Quebec government, then tuition. The money for security was either from one of these two sources. They can rearrange funding to be able to afford the security.

Councillor Renaud is open to working with a VP and Councillors to draft a statement on this matter, and bringing this as a motion at the next Council meeting.

The Speaker notes that Councillor Renaud can propose a non-binding action item if she wants.

Councillor Renaud proposes Action Item 16a.

President Taylor suggests that those interested raise their placards and the Parliamentarian can note them.

16. Action items

- a. Create a working group including VP Berglas, VP Zahida, VP Solomon, Councillor Renaud, Councillor Berube, and Councillor Zhao, for the drafting of a LC statement on the increased security measures from October 5th-7th

17. Adjournment: **19:37**

The Speaker declares the meeting adjourned at 19:37.