



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

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# [NOTICE OF] MOTION REGARDING THE SSMU POLICY AGAINST ANTISEMITISM 2025-04-03

Submitted for: 2025-04-03

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2025-03-20-002
<b>Moved by:</b>	Hugo-Victor Solomon <i>Vice President External Affairs</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>	Hamza Abu Alkhair <i>Services Representative</i>		

## Issue

The SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism (hereafter “Policy”) aims to combat antisemitism within the SSMU community through improved advocacy, communication, and education about antisemitism—all while ensuring that free speech and international law are recognized and respected in service of better protecting our Jewish peers, regardless of their politics.

Furthermore, 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, contextualized within the present moment of cultural and political discourse.

**This Policy was extensively reviewed by the SSMU’s Legal Counsel at Melançon Marceau Grenier Cohen s.e.n.c, and the SSMU Judicial Board, which concluded that the Policy’s text is in full compliance with all applicable SSMU Governing Documents, precedent, and Provincial and Federal Laws, notably C-38 - Companies Act and A-3.01 - Act respecting the accreditation and financing of students’ associations.**

Although there was a temporary 1-year Motion regarding antisemitism in 2018, it was never renewed nor fully implemented due to its incongruent and largely symbolic approach. As such, there has never been a lasting Policy document at SSMU addressing antisemitism thus, this motion to



adopt the Policy should not be considered an update or revival with respect to any existing ratified SSMU Policy.

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

### Conclusions on Background:

- Lastly, I wish to emphasize that one of the central issues regarding antisemitism on campus today is not only about isolated incidents against individual Jewish students but rather a broader failure in education, camaraderie, and community cohesion.
  - The intensity of the current political divide has significantly shaped campus discourse and interactions, restricting our ability to come together effectively as a community.
  - I am proud that the discussions surrounding this policy, despite their inherent difficulties, have provided a valuable opportunity for Jewish students from across McGill to engage with one another and exchange diverse perspectives—something challenging to achieve given the depth of existing divisions.
  - While I do not expect this policy alone to resolve all these complex issues, nor do I consider myself, as the mover of this motion, capable of single-handedly bridging these divides, my sincere hope is that we can collectively embody the Jewish tradition of respectfully disagreeing and thoughtfully engaging in debate, all while acknowledging and honouring our fundamental humanity and shared values.
  - We are stronger when we reject dehumanization and accept a plurality of expression, even and especially when we might disagree
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with it. It might feel safer to only exist in echo chambers where we all agree with one another, but learning and growth are only possible when we invite discomfort in and let it reveal what we have left to understand.

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## 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.

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## Consultations Completed

[Please see Appendix B for a full overview of Consultations Completed](#)

### Internal SSMU Personnel and Legal Counsel—all in support:

- Lawyers from the legal firm Melançon Marceau Grenier Cohen s.e.n.c: reviewed the Policy for its legal implications, and concluded the content of the Policy as it stands is compliance with all SSMU documentation and relevant Provincial and Federal statutes.
- SSMU Internal Legal Counsel and Corporate Secretary: helped me review the feedback from Jewish groups and implement changes wherever possible to address concerns or amendments and also examine the hypothetical legal issues regarding the content and implementation of the policy.
- The SSMU Legislative Council, Steering Committee, and Dais
- The SSMU Board of Directors
- President
- VP Internal
- VP Finance
- VP University Affairs
- SSMU Director of Clubs and Services
- General Manager
- HR Manager (former Equity and Policy Specialist): affirmed the importance of adding more specificity to the application of the Equity policy both internally and externally.
- Both Equity Commissioners: affirmed the necessity of giving the Society better and more specific tools to meet the current moment and add increased sensitivity to intersectional issues.
- All 13 members of the External Affairs team, especially:
  - External Affairs Coordinator and Commissioner,
  - Popular Education and Events Coordinator to
  - Political Campaign Coordinators

### McGill Administration—no official position on the content of the policy, but provided feedback and potential avenues of collaboration:

- DPSLL Angela Campbell: affirmed support for key measures of education and the potential for larger-scale collaborative workshop projects in collaboration with the Jewish Students' Liason
- McGill Dean of Students: affirmed the wording of mandates regarding the Position of DoS and provided helpful critiques of the wording of the definitional section.
- The Jewish Students' Liason: affirmed the wording of mandates regarding her position and potential avenues for follow-up



workshops following the passage of the Policy around sensitizing students to manifestations of antisemitism

**Jewish Groups on Campus—mixed conclusions:**

- 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 and given multiple opportunities across multiple months to voice their concerns, [as seen in Appendix B](#).
- Multiple letters were also circulated to Legislative Councilors, one in favour, one against, each with tens of signatures from across campus.
  - However, the letter against the Policy explicitly called the “platforming” of nonzionist or anti-zionist Jewish students as “tokenized,” which was framed by the letter as dangerous—a sentiment undoubtedly antithetical to the SSMU’s values of tolerance, inclusion, and anti-oppression.
- McGill Chavurah: firmly in favour of the initial draft and provided specific feedback regarding the intersections of colourism and antisemitism to ensure the Policy would have a real-world emphasis and actionable framework.
- IJV McGill: firmly in favour of the initial draft and emphasized the importance of protecting *all* Jews—regardless of Politics—without compromising either safety or free speech.
- Hillel McGill: although in opposition to the original, unamended draft, the Hillel team nevertheless provided a clear list of feedback points in good faith within the designated time window.
- In their message to me, Hillel raised concerns about but not limited to the following points:
  - Inadvertently condoning a “double standard” with respect to evidence-based critiques of Zionism and Israel;
  - Not explicitly mentioning the equivalent right of the Jewish to self-determination per the UN charter;
  - And the use of the phrase “*from the river to the sea*,” albeit only in a context describing constitutional arrangements.
- These points, among others, were expressly integrated into the current version of the document in light of the candid feedback communicated by Hillel.
- Chabad at McGill: unfortunately, the Chabad team explicitly refused to participate and threatened legal action against the mover of this



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motion when they were asked, with follow-up, for consultative feedback on the initial draft.

- 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.

It must be underlined that this feedback was indispensable in adding further sensitivity regarding particular examples and counterexamples to maximize the Policy's efficacy. Over the past many months, this wide array of feedback also helped elucidate which sections or definitional points were not properly cited and required caveats or revision.

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

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### 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, foster a cohesive approach to ensuring this Policy's longevity.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion is passed, the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism will go into effect for a period of five (5) years as is the case for any SSMU Policy; however, **it may be edited or removed at any time by the Legislative Council and/or the General Assembly by a simple majority** in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Section 08-7.1: Power to Adopt of the Internal Regulations of Governance "Policies and Plans can be adopted, amended, or rescinded by the legislative council, the General Assembly, or by Referendum." As such, if adopted by the Legislative Council



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and Board of Directors, the Policy would by no means constitute a “*fait accompli*” as it could nevertheless be removed.

Specifically, the consultation process with Jewish students and groups will begin to be outlined for implementation either at the end of the Fall Semester or the beginning of the Winter Semester.

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### 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 April 3rd, 2030.

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### Results of the Vote

In favour	(0)
Opposed	(0)
Abstain	(0)

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## 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;

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<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



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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 Definitional Background of the Policy:

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.

Notably, during the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese to the SSMU in the fall of 2024, **she explicitly mentioned the JDA by name** as an example of the kinds of Policy measures that are prepared to address the complexity and urgency of the current moment.

The following is an excerpt from the Jerusalem Declaration website<sup>3</sup>.

*[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 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, sections of the Nexus Document were integrated into the PAAS as it addresses the nuanced implications of contextualizing antisemitism in the realm of political speech and contemporary discourse. 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*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/> The following passage contains background information obtained from the Jerusalem Declaration website: “[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... 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.





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*in the critical fight against antisemitism, ensuring our efforts strengthen rather than divide our communities.*

To this extent, the SSMU officially recognizes and commits to addressing systemic antisemitism as a phenomenon that can occur within governments, governmental and non-governmental corporations, organizations, and institutions; the criminal justice system; universities (or any constituent part); student groups, including SSMU; and many other systems, procedures, and organizations.

As such, 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.

### A Note on the Unfeasibility of Adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism:

It is worth noting that the IHRA definition was suggested as the framework in lieu of the subsequent policy. Nevertheless, as the SSMU is bound by precedent and *active* Policy, there must be no mistake that the IHRA definition must unambiguously be rejected. For one, its glaring lack of specificity between Zionism and Judaism poses a direct threat to the SSMU's foundational principles of free expression, academic freedom, and human rights advocacy.

Notably, Kenneth Stern, a self-described proud Zionist and the primary author of the IHRA definition—who served for twenty-five years as the American Jewish Committee's in-house expert on antisemitism—has explicitly opposed its application within university settings, asserting that it was never intended as a regulatory tool on campuses<sup>5</sup>. Stern also cautioned that the wide-scale promotion of the I.H.R.A. definition poses “*one of the most significant threats to the [University] campus today, and to Jewish students and faculty*”<sup>5</sup>. As described by Stern, its misuse could suppress free speech, particularly concerning pro-Palestinian perspectives.

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

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/persons-of-interest/the-problem-with-defining-antisemitism>



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The recent targeting of Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University student activist detained without any criminal conviction—though singled out as antisemitic under IHRA—leaves little to the imagination regarding the very real dangers of leveraging the IHRA definition to silence legitimate political discourse. As such, Khalil's detention, celebrated by the Trump administration, underscores how the IHRA definition can be exploited to suppress pro-Palestinian voices under the guise of combating antisemitism.

Moreover, since 2021, SSMU, in line with world-respected international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, has recognized and condemned Israel's practices as constituting apartheid. This stance has been an integral part of SSMU's official policy for four years, inherently opposing multiple key premises of the IHRA definition. Specifically, one of the IHRA's illustrative examples says that: "*claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour*" as antisemitic, a characterization that could unjustly categorize critiques of Israel's policies toward Palestinians as antisemitic. Additionally, McGill University's administration has consistently refused to consider adopting the IHRA definition, acknowledging its potential to infringe upon academic freedom and suppress critical debate. Notably, at Columbia University, the IHRA definition was recently invoked against Jewish students, further demonstrating its problematic application. Collectively, these instances highlight the imperative for SSMU to reject the IHRA definition, thereby safeguarding the organization's commitment to free expression, academic freedom, and the legitimate advocacy for Palestinian rights.

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.

## 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 McGill's regulations, procedures, guidelines, and definitions nor impose obligations upon McGill Administration or Staff members. This Policy will furthermore not interfere



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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

In outlining this definition, the SSMU does not wish to stifle legitimate free speech of any kind, all while acknowledging the key role that **intent, context, and/or outcome** may have in the way that an individual's speech and actions are perceived and felt.

### 3.1 Jewish person, a Jew <sup>6</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

### 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.

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<sup>6</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.



### 3.3 Antisemitism<sup>7</sup>:

1. 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 discriminate against Jews and significantly impede their ability to participate as equals in political, religious, cultural, economic, or social life<sup>89</sup>.

#### a. General Guidelines and Examples

- i. All allegations of antisemitism raised 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>10</sup>.
  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>11</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

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<sup>7</sup> [JDA, 2020](#) Note: this definition is the part of the foundation of the definitional section of this policy.

<sup>8</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>9</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>10</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.

<sup>11</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.



- converts, asking them intrusive and skeptical questions about their ancestry and parentage<sup>12</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>13</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>14</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>15</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.
- b. Examples from the Israel-Palestine Discourse that ARE, *Prima Facie*<sup>16</sup>, Antisemitic<sup>17</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.

<sup>12</sup> <https://forward.com/news/474074/jews-of-color-study-discrimination-black-asian-latinx/>

<sup>13</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>14</sup> See the especially egregious notion referred to as **blood libel**.

<sup>15</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.

<sup>16</sup> **Prima facie** is a Latin term meaning “*at first sight*” or “*on its face*.” It refers to something that appears to be true, valid, or sufficient based on initial evidence or observation, but that may be subject to further examination or rebuttal.

<sup>17</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.



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- 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>18</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>19</sup>.
- C. Examples from the Israel-Palestine Discourse that ARE NOT, *Prima Facie*, 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>20, 21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> In other words: considering Jews to be a priori incapable of setting aside their loyalty to the Jewish people and/or Israel.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-206581/>

<sup>20</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>21</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.



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- 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 behaviours and conditions<sup>22</sup>.
  2. It is not necessarily antisemitic to criticize or oppose Zionism (as with any other national movement) as a form of nationalism<sup>23</sup> nor is it to promote a plurality of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean.
- 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—as with any other national entity—is similarly not *prima facie* antisemitic. 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.
  1. For example, factual content conveyed in journalism, speech, or media using some or all of the words occupation, apartheid and genocide to describe fact-based, internationally recognized, and thoroughly documented actions of the Israeli government are not inherently antisemitic<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> For example, someone might oppose the principle of nationalism or ethnonationalist ideology regardless of the country. 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

<sup>23</sup> See the following paper for an in-depth historical comparison analysis: [Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. 6 No. 3](#)

<sup>24</sup> As written in the [report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1967](#) Dated October 2024, "First, in its Advisory Opinion of July 2024, ICJ declared the prolonged presence of Israel in the whole of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including its colony regime, as unlawful and aimed at annexation. It stated that Israeli annexation was designed to be permanent, creating "irreversible effects on the ground", "undermin[ing] the integrity of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" and seeking to "acquire sovereignty over an occupied territory". The legal implications of these well-defined legal terms and standards must be respected with due diligence to international legal obligations and as concluded in the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur.



- v. Paying disproportionate attention to Israel and treating Israel differently than other countries is not *prima facie* proof of antisemitism<sup>25</sup>.
- vi. As per ratified SSMU Judicial Board conclusions<sup>26, 27</sup> and McGill Administration precedent<sup>28</sup>, supporting boycotts, divestment, and sanctions writ large as commonplace, non-violent<sup>29</sup> forms of political protest against the actions of a state—such as Israel—are not inherently antisemitic<sup>30</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>31</sup> will provide further opportunities to increase

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<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> See [2021-01-19 | Reference re Interpretation and Scope of the Reference re Legality of the BDS Motion and Similar Motions](#)

<sup>27</sup> See [2021-04-23 Reference re Motion on Divest for Human Rights Policy](#)

<sup>28</sup> In 2018, [the McGill Administration absolved students involved in the BDS movement](#) from allegations of antisemitism.

<sup>29</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>30</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>31</sup> For an example, see <https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/curriculum>





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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 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,



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will extend the invitation to meet with any Jewish group<sup>32</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>33,34</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>35</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>36</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 and the McGill Administration and Jewish Students' Liason, where possible, with expertise and an educational background in such trainings<sup>37</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>32</sup> See Section 3.2

<sup>33</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>34</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>35</sup> I.e Events directly facilitated by the SSMU portfolios and internal events

<sup>36</sup> This may extend, if so requested, to workarounds for Shabbat whereas events can be facilitated without required smartphone use.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.antisemitismcurriculum.org/curriculum> (as an example)



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Students facilitated by the Vice President of External Affairs and, if necessary, SSMU President, pending the availability of the Dean<sup>38</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.

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<sup>38</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.



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## **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.

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## Appendix A: Judicial Board Decision Regarding the Validity of the Policy Against Antisemitism:

 (HVS-20) SSMU Judicial Board Motion Regarding the Policy on anti-semitism.pdf

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## Appendix B: Affidavit of VP Solomon Regarding the Consultation Process During the Writing of the PAAS

 2025-02-28- Supplemental Affidavit of Hugo-Victor Solomon, VP External of the SSMU - FINALE.pdf

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