



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

April 8, 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 Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 18:00.

Present: Jessica Bakar (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Sierra Fallis (Deputy Speaker, non-voting), Hugo Solomon (Officer, non-voting), Zeena Zahidah (Officer, non-voting), Pauline Jolicoeur (Director), Dymetri Taylor (Director), Maya Marcus-Sells (General Manager, non-voting), Hamza Abu Alkhair (Council Member), Sophia Garofalo (Director), Rishi Kalaga (Council Member), Emma Chen (Council Member), Rajan Duncan (Director), Joshua Chin (Alumni Representative, non-voting), Alison Glaser (Internal Counsel/Corporate Secretary, non-voting), Simone Brown (Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, non-voting), Fawaz Halloum (Director)

Absent: Jonathan Dong (Chair, non-voting), Abe Berglas (Officer, non-voting), Honoah Xu (Director), Dylan Seiler (Director), Seraphina Crema Black (Council Member)

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

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:07. The Chair for this meeting is the Deputy Speaker, Sierra Fallis.

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'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.



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3. Attendance

The Chair takes attendance.

Director Kalaga notes that he is the proxy for Directors Seiler and Crema Black.

The Chair answers that the Dais are aware of this.

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

The agenda is distributed.

Director Abu Alkhair postponed Motion 9g.

Director Kalaga asks why it is being postponed.

Director Abu Alkhair answers that more consultations with services are required.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 9g is postponed.

5. For Discussion

a. Notice of Termination of MoA (Director Taylor) – **TABLED**

Director Taylor states that McGill sent SSMU a notice of termination on Friday, due to last week's strike. SSMU supported the peaceful protest, and obliged by all regulations. Other groups blocked access to classes, which is why McGill sent the notice. The notice is a combination of years of campus and SSMU relations with the administration. Presumably, the mediation will be about how SSMU operates as a democratic institution and allows students to bring issues to the forefront. McGill does not like when SSMU takes a stance on an issue that is controversial. McGill will try to make SSMU change its policies during mediation, or change how motions are approved. If there is no MoA, the lease on the University Centre will be void, because there is a provision in the lease that outlines that any breach of the MoA will result in the termination of the lease. If the lease ends, clubs and services with offices in the building, as well as Gerts, LICM, campus media, and storage and booking spaces would be affected. Fees would not be affected, with the exception of fees that can no longer be carried out, such as the Building Improvement Fee that pays for the University Centre. Other similar fees would be affected, but most fees are protected under the Act respecting the accreditation of student unions. If McGill stopped them from collecting these fees, they would go to court and likely win.

Director Kalaga asks which fees Director Taylor is referring to.



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Director Taylor answers that McGill cannot stop SSMU from collecting the Base Fee or any service fee, because students have voted on them.

Director Kalaga asks if this applies to fees collected through Minerva.

Director Taylor answers yes. If McGill prevents SSMU from collecting fees, they would be breaching provincial law. The University is also required to provide the money from the fees within 30 days of collecting it. They would not be allowed to use the MoA termination as rationale for preventing SSMU from accessing the fees.

Director Kalaga asks what McGill can prevent SSMU from collecting.

Director Taylor answers that the only fees affected by the termination of the MoA are very specific, and would not be needed without the MoA. For example, fees related to the University Centre.

Director Kalaga asks if any club fees would be affected.

Director Taylor answers no.

Officer Solomon adds that club fees have been voted on by students.

The Chair reminds everyone to raise their hands to be called on.

Director Taylor states that club fees can still be handed out if there is no MoA. The use of the name McGill would also be affected, so clubs and services would not be able to use the name McGill. Clubs that pride themselves on being able to use the McGill name for prestige would no longer be able to do so. ISGs that have their own MoAs with McGill would not be affected, but those that do not would be.

Director Kalaga asks if SSMU would need to stop using the name McGill.

Officer Solomon answers no, because SSMU is incorporated so it is not subject to the same regulations as clubs.

Director Taylor states that he will propose two motions. One is to appoint a mediator, mediation will start once McGill and SSMU agree on a mediator and will last until June. The mediator in question has experience with universities, so he will understand the context very well. The second motion would appoint Me Glaser and Director Taylor to be the SSMU's representatives in mediation. The suggestions would come back to the Board for approval.

Parliamentarian Bakar notes that it is difficult for the members on Zoom to hear in-person.



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Officer Solomon asks how many representatives SSMU will send. He asks if both will be lawyers.

Director Taylor answers that there will be one mediator present, who will be agreed upon by both sides. Hopefully McGill will agree with SSMU's mediator. SSMU will also send two representatives.

Officer Solomon asks who the two representatives will be.

Director Taylor answers that they will be Me Glaser and hopefully him.

The External Coordinator suggests that Officer Berglas be a representative, and suggests creating a committee of students who can help during mediation.

Director Taylor answers that this would be a decision that the Board should take.

The External Coordinator states that it would be more democratic to involve students in this process, as this issue is quite important to them.

Director Kalaga states that it is important to create a consultative body for students to share their opinions. He suggests forming a subcommittee that can make suggestions to mediators. He thinks that Director Taylor is the most equipped to represent SSMU during mediation, because of his role as President and because of his knowledge. He has been re-elected, and these negotiations will be important this year and next year. Director Taylor has proven to be someone that McGill likes to work with. Officer Berglas has not proven this, and this would make the mediation process difficult. Director Taylor is familiar with the administration and has SSMU's interests at heart. A committee can be easily created via a motion.

The External Coordinator suggests that the consultative body be organized under the External Affairs portfolio. Officer Berglas was privy to the MoA negotiations, so they understand the process very well. They should look for someone who will take a tough stance against the administration. McGill is very repressive, and students are concerned that they are infringing on their rights.

Officer Zahidah asks if they are discussing the MoA termination process.

The External Coordinator answers yes.

Director Kalaga states that this discussion can occur later as there is a lot of business on the agenda. Director Taylor has never shown submission to the administration; he has put his reputation on the line for SSMU multiple times. The Board has been shown that Director Taylor is trustworthy for this role.



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The External Coordinator notes that Officer Berglas was consulted many times during the strike process. Students want someone who was attentive during the strike, and who will stand up for democracy.

Officer Zahidah states that Director Taylor has worked hard during his term. She would appreciate more respect to Director Taylor, and discuss demands for mediation more practically. Mediation needs to go well, so their position cannot be against the administration. The goal is to mediate, and to figure out where concessions can be made so that the MoA is not terminated. There is a lot of business tonight, so she would appreciate it if the comments were concise and respectful.

The External Coordinator asks if SSMU will commit to rejecting revisions to the MoA that limit students' ability to act in solidarity with Palestine.

Officer Zahidah answers that mediation has not begun, so they do not know what McGill's requests are yet.

Member Vogel states that, given McGill is taking a step to restrict activism on campus, it seems odd that SSMU is taking a non-aggressive stance. He asks if SSMU will commit publicly to standing for students' political rights, and to protect students' right to protest and stand for Palestinian liberation.

Officer Solomon answers that students have the right to protest. Any encroachments of the rights would be a breach of the law, and SSMU would not be afraid to use legal resources to ensure that students' rights are protected. SSMU will ensure that students' rights are protected.

Officer Zahidah states that students should be involved in the negotiation process. It is difficult to involve students who do not work at SSMU, because their ability to prepare for meetings varies. Employees are more well-versed in the context, and this is why they are more often involved. She agrees that a working group should be created, and adds that they will not know how intense McGill's demands will be until mediation begins.

Member Broughton states that they are currently on the Board of AMURE, and has been involved in other labour organizations at McGill, but that they are present on their own behalf. Mediation inherently requires compromise, but they think that they need to keep in mind McGill's reasons for entering mediation. Student unions exist to protect students from the administration. Mediation needs to be respectful, but student unions' protective role needs to be kept in mind. The student union is not supposed to act as a mediator between students and the administration. SSMU needs to remain a student institution, and there is a lot to be learned from labour unions' behaviour when dealing with McGill, such as AGSEM. AGSEM took certain actions that were excellent, and AMUSE has also done excellent work. Connections should be built between SSMU and labour unions, because McGill is trying to crush student protests like it has tried to repress labour organizations. SSMU can learn a lot



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about keeping the membership engaged from labour unions, as the process is similar. McGill's previous MoA was very generous to McGill compared to the MoAs of other Quebec universities. Students have a right to a student union, even if there is no MoA. They should bargain from a position of strength, as they have a legal right to a student union. An open mind is necessary for mediation, however.

The Chair notes that she will entertain a 1-minute limit to speeches. She will notify speakers when their time is up.

Director Halloum states that it is heartwarming to see so much student interest in this issue. He supports the idea of a working group with students involved. Hopefully, negotiations will lead to more independence for SSMU in future MoAs. The last MoA conceded a lot to McGill, and allowed them to control who SSMU's Executives are.

Me Glaser suggests making a list of potential concessions and a list of demands. If the Board decides to create a working group, this might be a good place to involve students. During negotiations, more flexibility will be required. Whoever is chosen to represent SSMU in mediation should be provided with a list of non-negotiables and negotiables. These items will not be communicated to the administration, but they give the impression of fairness and concession. Tactics will depend on who McGill chooses as its representatives. The tone could be conciliatory without actually conceding.

Officer Solomon states that those who are interested in joining a mediation working group should provide a formal outline of their ideas, so that the Board can examine it once they review the motions. He thinks that, given his work with AGSEM during their strike, there is strength in having a bargaining committee because they can decide on non-negotiables. Having only two mediation representatives is exhausting, and more consultation will be required.

Member Duggal asks why SSMU has not spoken out against McGill's use of the MoA as a tool of repression, and if they will denounce it as an attack on student advocacy for Palestine.

Officer Zahidah states that SSMU cannot easily push out a statement like that, because they are a company. Anything they publicly state can be a liability, so the Board has to be careful about statements they make, as students probably do not want SSMU spending more money on legal cases.

Member Headrick asks that any revision to the MoA that limits students' ability to organize for Palestine be non-negotiable.

Officer Solomon states that the purpose of creating a working group is to answer those questions. The University preventing mobilization on any issue is a non-starter and illegal. He suggests resuming this conversation in the motion section of the meeting, once an idea for the committee has been provided.



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Director Kalaga suggests forming the working group at the end of the agenda as they have a lot of business tonight. Once they review the business, they can go back to this discussion. The Board wants to hear everyone's comments, but they need to get through the other motions. He suggests tabling the discussion and entertaining motions, and returning to the discussion once the motions are completed.

Director Duncan seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the discussion is tabled.

6. [Executive Committee Public Report 2025-04-08](#) – **RATIFIED**

Director Taylor states that on March 31, they approved the budget for the end-of-year dinner, approved hirings and contract hours. On April 8, there were a lot of HR approvals, especially for services and summer operations. There was a motion to approve the referendum report, which was made by VP Berglas. It is a combination of the comments from the previous referendum, and will be uploaded to the SSMU Instagram next week.

Seeing no questions, the Chair entertains a vote.

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

7. [Nominating Committee Public Report 2025-04-08](#) – **RATIFIED**

Parliamentarian Bakar states that the Nominating Committee was hiring for an International Student Representative on the Board, which is a non-voting position. They received two applications, which were both approved for interviews. The committee recommends Candidate 1 to the position; they are a student with a strong extracurricular background and seemed well-suited for the position. They had previous experience on the Health & Dental Committee and good knowledge of the Board's role within SSMU. They had experience managing budgets and financial and legal experience, aligned with the functions of the Board, and were able to provide examples of issues that affect international students and solutions. Candidate 2 is a first-year student with interest in the SSMU, and had good qualities such as problem solving and conflict management. Overall, they showed a lack of knowledge of the role, so they were not recommended for the position.

Seeing no questions, the Chair entertains a vote.

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

8. Minutes for Approval

a. [SSMU Board of Directors Public Minutes 2025-03-25](#) – **APPROVED**



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The minutes are distributed.

Seeing no changes or oppositions, the minutes are approved.

9. Approved Motions from 2025-04-03 Legislative Council
 - a. [Motion Regarding the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism](#) (Officer Solomon) – **RATIFIED (4 in favour, 2 opposed, 1 abstention)**

The Chair reminds Directors that they can vote by bloc on motions for ratification if they wish.

Officer Solomon states that this motion was finally approved after 10 months, two votes, and a lawsuit. He thought this would have been approved earlier, but this was a good experience and will be good for law school. He is excited for this policy to benefit students, and he hopes that no one else has to have their identity questioned because of their politics, which this policy seeks to prevent.

The Chair entertains questions.

Member Benzaquen states that there are many Jewish student groups who are still opposed to this policy. He states that Jewish student groups have been critiquing the policy and procedure used to approve it, not Officer Solomon. He asks Officer Solomon what feedback he has received about this policy recently.

Officer Solomon answers that the policy was debated and approved at the Legislative Council. The substance of litigation was about the procedure of approval, so he is surprised to hear that there are content-related concerns. He understands that members have critiques, which is why he has acknowledged them. He suggests moving forward with the discussion.

Member Benzaquen states that he never made any personal allegations against Officer Solomon. His concern is about the content and the procedure, which relates to the content. He asks Officer Solomon to describe the feedback he has received about the policy.

The Chair suggests that the questions be related to the substance of the policy, otherwise they will move on to ratification.

Director Garofalo reminds members that the MoA discussion was moved to the end of the agenda to ensure that they can review other business. She asks members to maintain respect for each other.

The Chair asks members to maintain decorum, even on Zoom.

Director Abu Alkhair motions to call the question.



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Director Garofalo seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Director Abu Alkhair asks if Board members can vote by proxy for absent Directors.

The Chair answers yes, per the standing rules.

With 4 in favour, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention, Motion 9a is approved.

The Chair notes that Director Kalaga is acting as a proxy for two absent Directors.

- b. [Motion concernant le soutien à une lettre proposant un dialogue sur la protection et la promotion du Français en milieu universitaire](#) (Officer Solomon) – **RATIFIED**

L'officier Solomon explique que cette motion vise à distribuer une lettre ouverte qui explique le rabais des frais de scolarité accordé aux étudiants Français, et qui demande que ce rabais soit donné aux étudiants d'autres pays francophones ou qui ont étudié en français. L'administration est d'accord avec cette initiative.

Director Abu Alkhair motions to call the question.

Director Kalaga seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 9b is ratified.

Director Kalaga motions to vote by bloc on Motions 9c, d, and f.

Director Abu Alkhair seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote on Motions 9c, d, and f.

Seeing no opposition, Motions 9c, d, and f are approved.

- c. [Motion Regarding the Creation of SSMU Food Pantry, Amendments to the Food Security Policy, and Amendments to the Internal Regulations of Finance](#) (Officer Solomon) – **RATIFIED**



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- d. Move to adopt an interim provision of the IRs of Governance: Legislative Council (art. 11.6) to clarify that the obligation to indicate the vote of each Councillor be suspended for votes by secret ballot for a time lasting from April 3rd, 2025, to April 4th, 2025 – (Director Taylor) – **RATIFIED**
- e. [Motion Regarding Amendments to the Policy on Harmful Military Technology](#) (Officer Solomon) – **RATIFIED**

Officer Solomon states that a lot of work and consultation went into this motion, by the Policy & Mobilization Researcher and Councillor Renaud, the mover of the motion. Originally, the idea was to remove the moratorium on ancillary fees, but they developed a way to retain the moratorium but to ensure that essential fees are approved. For example, the Athletics fee cannot get funding any other way because they are financially distinct from McGill. If there are any ancillary fees that are created, there will be benchmarks to meet including authorization from SSMU. The moratorium is still in place, but SSMU can help fund Athletics. The other mandates in the Policy were updated and simplified to clarify the obligations of External Affairs.

Director Halloum asks if this motion implements a moratorium on ancillary fee increases. He asks if there would be any change to the existing Athletics fee.

Officer Solomon answers that the moratorium is already in place. They are not removing it, they are stipulating that a fee like Athletics can go through as long as it meets specific criteria, including $\frac{2}{3}$ approval by the Legislative Council, the approval of the VP External, and the fee must not go against the spirit of the policy. The moratorium still has teeth, even if it is not the most effective tool to pressure the administration. It was previously part of the Climate Justice Policy, and was moved to this policy. The climate justice issue was resolved through another means.

Member Broughton states that the new provisions require ancillary fees not to fund military research or development. The previous motion demanded divestment from military technology. They ask if there is a further definition elsewhere, and ask how a fee would be indirectly funding military research. The argument could be made that by levying fees from students, that they are funding military research indirectly.

Officer Solomon answers that McGill has not defined military research. They wanted to ensure that they could provide accountability through Legislative Council and External Affairs. If there is a specific amendment that Member Broughton wants to bring, Directors would be interested.

Director Kalaga asks if the motion needs to be re-approved by the Legislative Council if the Board amends it.

The Chair answers no.



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Director Halloum states that extracurricular fees cannot be levied by the university, and cannot use tuition money towards it. This is why every university in the province has to levy an athletics fee through a student union.

Member Headrick asks if SSMU will support this policy and the right of students to stand for divestment, regardless of pressure from the administration. They ask if SSMU is willing to enter direct confrontation with the administration on the basis of threats due to this policy.

The Chair reminds everyone that the Board deals with financial, legal and operational matters, and suggests gearing questions and speeches towards these topics. The political aspect of this motion was addressed at the Legislative Council.

Officer Solomon states that they are mandated to follow the policy. SSMU will always support student mobilization.

Officer Zahidah asks whether the VP External would need to review the fee increase proposal to see whether it abides by the policy.

Officer Solomon adds that they would need to ensure fee increases abide by the criteria in the policy.

Officer Zahidah asks if the Legislative Council will then approve the fee question to go to referendum.

Officer Solomon answers yes, via a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

Officer Zahidah asks what would happen if the Legislative Council feels that the VP External did not do their due diligence, and if there is a recourse measure.

Officer Solomon answers yes.

Member Broughton states that they support this policy and upholding a policy approved by the Legislative Council without amendments, as amending it would be less democratic.

Director Kalaga motions to call the question.

Director Taylor seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 9e is approved.



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- f. [Motion Regarding Amendments to the Consultation Policy](#) (Director Taylor) – **RATIFIED**
 - g. [Motion Regarding Changes to the IRs of Student Groups](#) (Director Abu Alkhair) – **POSTPONED**
10. Motions for Approval
- a. Motion to suggest [NADEAU, Denis - Conférence des arbitres du Québec](#), as our Mediator for the MoA Mediation (Director Taylor) – **APPROVED**

Director Taylor states that this motion would propose Denis Nadeau as the mediator for the MoA mediation.

Director Kalaga asks if SSMU and McGill have to agree on one mediator, and if each side sends two representatives. He asks if these five people work out the MoA.

Director Taylor answers yes, and adds that the mediation will be more about the relationship between SSMU and McGill given that they are working with a notice of termination. The MoA likely will not be changed much. Neither side is negotiating changes, because they will need to return to their respective authorities. At the very least, the representatives will come back to the Board for approval, or the President on the McGill side.

Director Duncan asks if there is a second option in case this mediator is not approved.

Director Taylor answers that MMGC recommended this mediator. They do not have a backup right now, because they have to appoint representatives by Wednesday and then they have two weeks to decide on the mediator. Hopefully, they will come to an agreement, but if not, they will come back with another suggestion.

Director Duncan asks if the deadline will be extended if the mediator is not approved.

Director Taylor answers that this could be the case. They have two weeks to choose a mediator, and if one is not chosen in this timeframe, McGill can decide to rescind the notice of termination. The mediation process will last two months.

Member Broughton asks if Denis Nadeau was recommended by MMGC or used by SSMU before.

Director Taylor answers that this is the first time that SSMU is entering mediation of this sort, so there is no history of mediators to reach to. MMGC recommended Denis Nadeau.

Officer Zahidah asks on what grounds Denis Nadeau was recommended, and asks if they want to seek recommendations from their IC/CS given that McGill is likely to choose an aggressive mediator.



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Director Taylor answers that Me Glaser recommended this mediator; he is a retired professor and very progressive and respected, with public sector experience.

Director Duncan motions to call the question.

Director Kalaga seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10a is approved.

- b. Motion to approve the nomination recommendation of the Nominating Committee appointing Candidate 1 to the Board of Directors International Student Representative position for a term until November 14, 2025 (Director Kalaga) – **APPROVED**

The Chair notes that this motion needs a mover.

Director Kalaga moves Motion 10b.

Seeing none wishing to speak, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10b is approved.

- c. Motion to approve a working group of the Board of Directors to be coordinated by the VP External for consultation on the MOA mediation process (Director Taylor) – **APPROVED**
- d. Motion for IC/CS to be representative 1 for MOA mediation (Director Taylor) – **APPROVED**
- e. Motion for President Taylor to be representative 2 for MOA mediation (Director Abu Alkhair) – **APPROVED (6 in favour, 1 opposed)**

11. For Discussion

- a. McGill Injunction (Officer Solomon)

Officer Solomon states that all the documents relevant to this point have been shared with Directors. He wanted to notify the Board and members that McGill is seeking a provisional, interlocutory and permanent injunction against SPHR. There are no named plaintiffs, and the injunction will impact anyone who is aware of its existence. The injunction essentially prevents protests on lower campus, no matter the issue; it is extremely vague and problematic. Students should be aware of the injunction, because if it succeeds, everyone will be impacted.



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Member Benzaquen asks how many voting members are present.

The Chair answers that there are 6 present and 2 proxies.

Member Benzaquen asks if the voting members can be listed.

The Chair answers that attendance was taken at the beginning of the meeting, and refers member Benzaquen to the attendance list at the top of the agenda.

Member Broughton asks if the injunction is easily accessible. They state that there are unions going on strike in the future, and they ask if McGill has included picket activities in the injunction, as this is protected under law.

Officer Zahidah states that the injunction is public, so it will be accessible in the near future. Given the nature of the injunction, she doubts that McGill took picketing into consideration.

Director Kalaga adds that once their lawyers have approved sharing legal documents related to the injunction, they will do so. They have to ensure that no confidential information is shared without permission.

b. Notice of Termination of MoA cont'd (Director Taylor)

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

Director Kalaga seconds.

Officer Solomon states that he can create the Terms of Reference for the working group now.

The Policy & Advocacy Coordinator offers to help Officer Solomon.

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

Officer Zahidah states that because this mediation is so serious, she would feel more comfortable with a formal process to nominate people to the working group. She does not want to create a committee where people join as they wish.

The Policy & Advocacy Coordinator states that a formal list of working group members would need to be created, and then they can receive consultations. Once she creates the template, she can send it to Officer Solomon and membership can be debated.



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General Manager Marcus-Sells asks if the Board intends to have the working group be the representative of the SSMU in mediation, or if it is more of a consultative body. She asks if the Board intends to have a motion to pick the two mediation representatives tonight.

Officer Zahidah answers that they do intend to pick the two representatives; the working group will not be a representative. The working group will provide consultation with students.

Director Kalaga states that balancing the working group with Directors, Councillors, and members is a good idea, and the working group can collect consultations via a form. This structure is what most working groups follow.

Director Halloum asks if the Board would be amenable to having at least two members join the working group, to be evaluated by the Nominating Committee.

The Chair clarifies that this is not in the Nominating Committee's scope.

Officer Solomon states that the members who are present should propose themselves, and the working group can be expanded from there.

The External Coordinator states that the consultative body serves to receive direct student engagement. It defeats the purpose of the working group if the Board chooses its members.

Director Kalaga states that the Board wants to have student engagement with this working group, but they cannot have too many students trying to make one decision. He suggests that consultations be done via Google Forms, or the committee can invite people to share their opinions. Students will be part of the working group, but it cannot be open to all students because that will be much too broad and things will not get done. He suggests following the regular working group structure, which can expand as they see fit.

Officer Solomon adds that they are not choosing working group members now, they are noting those who are interested in recruiting the members of the working group. Most successful working groups have had 7-12 members, and there could be more delegates and more extensive consultations could be held. There is a difference between a decision making committee and a consultative forum; they are not always the same thing.

Officer Zahidah notes that she is interested in being part of the working group.

Officer Solomon states that the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator has shared the draft terms of reference. He shares them with Officer Zahidah.



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Director Kalaga asks Officer Solomon to share the terms of reference with the Board.

Director Abu Alkhair asks what the structure of the working group will be.

Officer Solomon states that some of the External Affairs employees should be considered, because they have experience working across multiple student constituencies. He got a lot of feedback on the Policy on Harmful Military Technology thanks to them.

Officer Zahidah recommends that at least one or two members at large who are not SSMU employees be part of the working group.

Director Kalaga suggests having 3 Directors, 3 Legislative Councillors, 3 members at large, 2 representatives from External Affairs, and more members with approval from the working group.

Member Headrick suggests himself as a member at large.

The Chair suggests approving the motion and then figuring out the membership of the working group.

Director Duncan motions to call the question on Motion 10c.

Director Taylor seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10c is approved.

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

Director Duncan seconds.

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

Member Broughton asks what IC/CS stands for.

The Chair answers that it stands for the Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary, who is the SSMU's internal counsel.

Director Abu Alkhair motions to call the question.

Director Kalaga seconds.



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Seeing no opposition, the Chair entertains a vote.

Seeing no opposition, Motion 10d is approved.

Director Abu Alkhair motions to suspend the rules to add Motion 10e.

Director Kalaga seconds.

The Chair entertains a vote on adding Motion 10e to the agenda.

With 7 in favour, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention, Motion 10e is added to the agenda.

Director Abu Alkhair motions to call the question.

Director Duncan seconds.

Director Halloum states that he saw some hands raised for discussion.

Director Abu Alkhair rescinds his motion to call the question.

Member Duggal states that SSMU has conceded to the administration in the past. He asks the Board and Director Taylor how they will seek to prevent this in the current meditation.

Director Taylor answers that everything discussed at the mediation meetings will be shared with the working group and the Board for a final decision.

Member Broughton states that the first mediation representative should be the IC/CS. They feel that any decision about the second representative should be done in consultation with the Legislative Council.

Director Kalaga states that he suggested that Legislative Councillors be put onto the working group, and those who volunteer will be passionate about the issue and elicit further consultation with other Legislative Councillors.

Officer Zahidah states that they are working on a tight deadline. They need to choose representatives by Wednesday, and the final Legislative Council meeting was last week. They have created a working group, and they will ensure that the application and nomination process is thorough. They need to make a decision urgently, and there is no time to make that decision other than at the Board.



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Member Li states that they are the SSMU's Political Campaigns Coordinator. They have spoken to SSMU members who are part of many advocacy groups, who are concerned about their ability to partake in political activities and SSMU's commitment to upholding student democracy. They ask Director Taylor if he commits to upholding student democracy and decisions made through referendum.

The Chair reminds everyone to refer their speeches to the Chair.

Director Taylor answers yes. If McGill will try to hamper the whole democratic process, the whole point of SSMU's existence, there is a key misunderstanding about what SSMU is meant to be. They are supposed to be a student union, but it has gotten confused since the Board was created in 2016. The democratic process is supposed to be their forte, and for McGill to prevent SSMU from taking stances is antithetical to SSMU's purpose. If McGill has an issue, they should try to get students more involved in student governance rather than try to censor the SSMU.

Member Broughton thanks Director Taylor for his commitment. They ask if SSMU and its mediation representatives will not agree to anything without consulting with the working group and other relevant groups.

Director Taylor states that the mediation representatives will come to the Board to receive approval for any decision. This discussion can be had at subsequent meetings. The mediation process has not begun, so they do not know what McGill's demands are going to be. Many of these questions therefore may or may not be relevant. The working group will be consultative, and until they hear McGill's demands, it cannot function. They should wait and see before any commitments are made.

Member Broughton states that McGill would not enter into mediation unless they believed that there was something in their relationship with SSMU that needed to change. They ask if the Board can commit to not making an agreement with McGill on any substantive issue without consulting the working group or other legislative bodies.

Director Taylor answers that this is guaranteed. They will not sign anything without consulting the working group and the Board. McGill will present their demands, and SSMU will consult with the working group before responding. There will be no backroom deals.

Member Headrick states that SSMU does not act like a typical student union; they do not have the historical political power of a student union and have conceded in negotiations, including at the last MoA negotiations. They ask if Director Taylor will commit to being offensive against the administration in these negotiations, to start clawing back the rights of a student union. They ask if there will be an effort to get what SSMU wants rather than find a middle ground.



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Officer Zahidah states that they cannot enter mediation with McGill with an offensive stance. They have to enter it in good faith, which means that they need to assume good faith from both parties. The inherent nature of mediation is to find a middle ground. She notes that neither she nor Officer Solomon have voting power on the Board, and the last thing they should concede is student democracy. She recommends for those who feel passionate about student democracy to continue to be engaged. There are peaks of student engagement that are confusing, so she would love for the rest of the Board meetings to be highly attended, because this helps ensure that no concessions on student democracy are made.

Director Halloum thinks that it would be more conducive for democracy to have fewer of these important issues discussed in confidential sessions, and more discussed in public sessions. He notes that the notice of default at the beginning of the year resulted in SSMU's dismissal of SPHR as a SSMU club, and the recent negotiations conceded many of students' democratic rights. He asks if Director Taylor will call a Special General Assembly on any issue that affects students as a result of this mediation.

Director Taylor answers that a Special General Assembly is a large effort for SSMU's staff. He commends Officer Solomon for his efforts on the last one. Calling a GA for any issue on the mediation is not feasible due to the massive logistical efforts required. If it was possible, he would, but it is not feasible as a GA takes months of preparation.

Member Headrick states that SSMU is not entering mediation with a good faith partner. McGill has forced SSMU into mediation to suppress students' right to protest, because they were unsatisfied with how students exercised this right through SSMU processes. It is important to understand that they should not be trying to figure out the best concessions to make; they should be trying to mobilize student power to stop the administration's attempts to repress student voices. This should be a commitment made going into mediation.

The Chair asks everyone in-person to speak up a bit as some people on Zoom are having trouble hearing.

Director Kalaga notes that Director Taylor was elected President by students, and this is very much in his purview. It is unrealistic to expect a General Assembly to be called for any decision. They would not hit quorum, and the meetings would not be productive. Director Kalaga trusts Director Taylor to do his job and trusts the working group to make appropriate recommendations. He trusts that the Board will approve all major decisions, thus there are three different mechanisms for accountability in the mediation process. He is comfortable with the decisions made so far.

Member Broughton understands the difficulty in organizing General Assemblies. They ask if it would be possible to take advantage of the Simply Voting platform to send out plebiscite questions related to



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mediation, as was done during the last referendum. If McGill is making specific demands, it might be useful to consult students this way.

The External Coordinator thinks that this is a great idea. They note that it took a long time to reach quorum for the last Executive elections, but that the strike reached quorum in about a day. Students clearly have faith in striking, and they are clearly pro-Palestine and want their voices to be heard. This is a valuable opportunity for SSMU to listen to its students, and they call on the Board to adhere to students' demands.

Officer Solomon asks if these are the demands of the strike or the demands to do the GA.

The External Coordinator answers that the demand is to protect student democracy. Transparency is very important.

Officer Solomon states that the recommendations of the working group should be binding on the mediation representatives. If they are not, their status as representatives should be called into question. They are ensuring that student democracy is protected. The administration does not play on good faith, but expects it from SSMU. There is a way to show up and be polite, but also hit McGill where it hurts.

The External Coordinator states that this working group is a direct way for students to become more involved in student democracy.

Officer Zahidah states that it is unclear what the recommendations are. They need to be practical and as democratic as possible. She states that everyone on the Board is an individual who gets scared and feels responsible for the position they are in. The best way to move forward is for members to continue to attend the Board and have their voices heard.

Director Garofalo motions to call the question on Motion 10e.

Director Kalaga seconds.

The Chair entertains a vote on calling the question.

The Chair entertains a vote on Motion 10e.

With 6 in favour and 1 opposed, Motion 10e is approved.

12. Confidential Session: **20:15**

- a. There is a Confidential Session this evening



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The Chair asks all members to leave the meeting as they will be moving into a confidential session. She thanks them for their attendance. She entertains a recess.

13. Adjournment: **20:25**

The Chair declares the meeting adjourned at 20:25.

APPROVED