



Elections SSMU

Fall 2025 Election Report

Presentation to the Legislative Council



Association étudiante
de l'Université McGill
Students' Society of McGill
University

December 4th, 2025

List of Elections in Fall 2025

Election	Dates	Eligible Electors	Number Voted	Turnout
First Year Council	Sept. 10 - Sept. 17, 2025	7021	1195	17.0%
Ratification of the Strike Motion passed in the Fall 2025 General Assembly	Sept. 30 - Oct. 6, 2025	25345	9190	36.3%
Fall Referendum	Oct. 27 - Nov. 7, 2025	25332	4829	19.1%

First Year Council

Turnout: 17.0%

15% Quorum reached: 12 hours before polls closed

Positions & Candidates

- Record number of candidates running, with all but 1 positions contested!
- Elections SSMU maintains the position that more candidates encourages more participation, and will encourage candidacies for the Winter 2026 Executive Elections.

Position	Candidates	Withdrawn*	Candidates in 2023
President	8	1	1
VP Internal	5	0	3
VP External	6	1	3
VP Finance	1	0	3
VP Student Affairs	7	1	1

**Those who withdrew after election opening still have their name on ballot*

Results

All SSMU elections are conducted using ranked ballot.

Position	Elected	Voters abstained from ranking candidates for this position
President	Esther Lim	20.7%
VP Internal	Aline Zhu	37.2%
VP External	Charley Letham	34.5%
VP Finance	Helios Loritza Chery	34.3%
VP Student Affairs	Valentina Perez Rojas	39.9%

Full results can be found in the pdf Report, page x

Analysis

- Number of candidates running don't seem to have boosted voter turnout by much.
- High amount of abstains (up to 39.9% for one position) is deeply concerning, showing a huge portion of first years did not feel engaged about the First Year Council.
- More work can be done to introduce first year students to Elections SSMU, the relevance of FYC, and the importance to vote throughout their McGill studies.
 - Incorporate in the SSMU first year presentation?
 - Consider running debates like executive elections?
 - Elections hiring done earlier next year?
 - Working with professors that teach common first year courses?
 - Consult with current FYC?

Technical and Ballot Issues

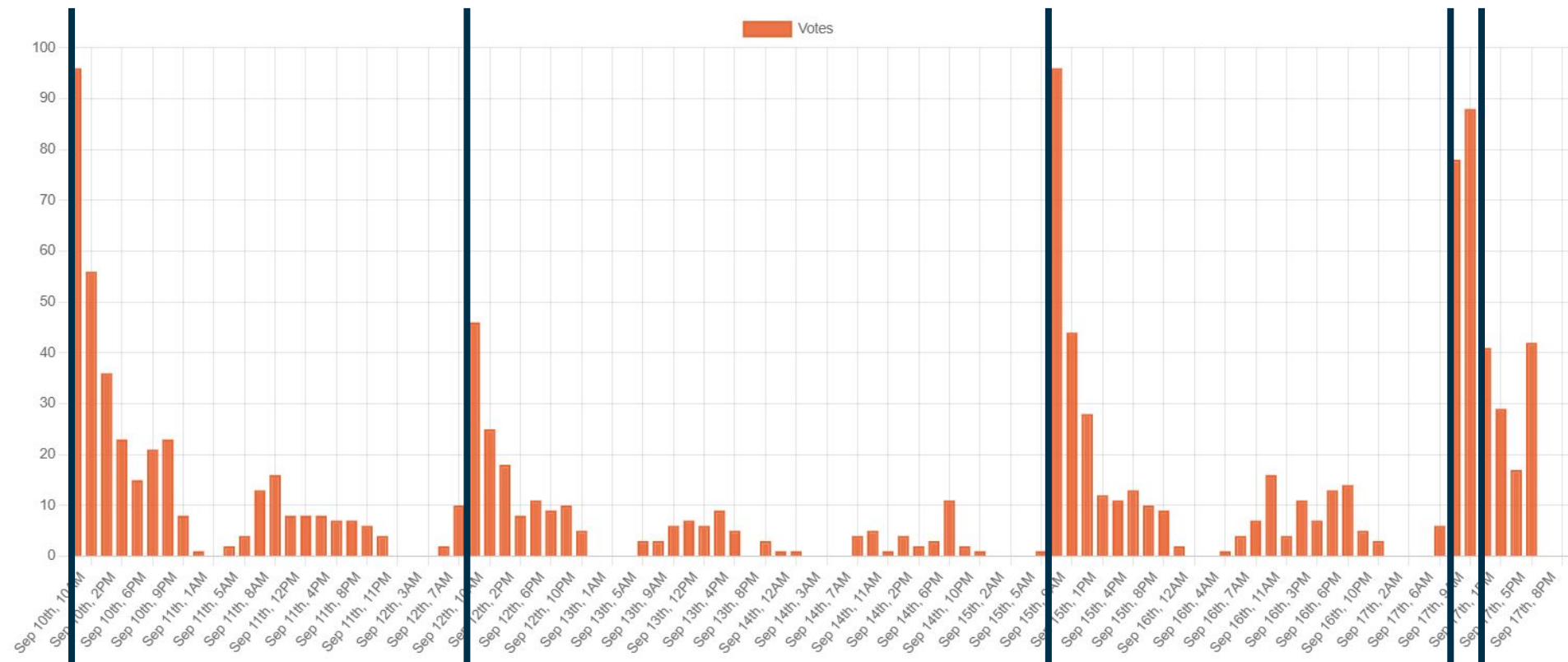
- Ballot had to be re-run due to improperly filtered elector list (U1 students who were not newly admitted were accidentally included)
 - New corrected ballot was sent out 40 minutes after old ballot
 - 59 votes casted in old, void ballot
- Counting method set to borda count instead of instant runoff (as specified in our IRs). Although both are preferential voting methods, results can differ.
 - Manual recalculations with the instant runoff method revealed the outcome will not have changed, although some 2nd and 3rd place switched places
 - Results delayed around 12 hours due to running verifications

User Reported Issues

All reported issues were resolved, no electors were prevented from voting.

Issue	Number	Outcome
Received email but did not have access to the ballot (alias emails)	2	Voter list updated with non-alias email - votes could be casted
Unable to vote	1	Non-first year student - not eligible to vote

Turnout Chart (1195 electors voted)



Black vertical line = email blast to those who haven't voted

Email blasts

Effective, but leads to certain students unsubscribing.

- Extremely problematic for first year students as they've effectively blocked any future simplyvoting emails in their McGill life.
- Can still vote but must manually log in to ssmu.simplyvoting.com

We must balance the number of email blasts - not too little, but also not too excessive.

Email Blast	Time	Number of Unsubscribes
Already unsubscribed earlier		18
Original Email	Sept 10 @ 10:33	1
Reminder #1	Sept 12 @ 12:00	5
Reminder #2	Sept 15 @ 10:00	8
Reminder #3	Sept 17 @ 10:00	4
Reminder #4	Sept 17 @ 12:55	5
Number of NEW unsubscribes due to this election		23

Ratification of the General Assembly Motion Regarding a Strike for Divestment from Genocide

Turnout: 36.3% (highest turnout in at least 12 years)
10% Quorum reached: <2 hours after polls opened

Question & Background

Whereas, SSMU members have submitted a motion proposing a one-day solidarity strike at McGill University on October 7, 2025, in support of divestment from companies implicated in genocide;

Whereas, the SSMU Governing Documents authorize democratically supported motions to call a strike;

Whereas, if a majority votes “yes,” the motion will be adopted and a strike on October 7th, 2025 will be declared, during which SSMU will communicate information on the strike, its intent, its members' demands, and the right to strike; participation in the strike remains voluntary under the SSMU Internal Regulations of Governance;

Whereas, if a majority votes “no,” the motion will be rejected and the SSMU will not go on strike;

Are you in favour of a strike on October 7, 2025, for the reasons outlined above and in the motion?

- Purpose of ratifications is to ensure that SSMU members agree with any motion that passes in a General Assembly or Special General Assembly
- These have become more and more common in recent years -
 - Winter 2025: Motion Regarding a Strike in Support of Palestinian Liberation (17.0%)
 - Fall 2024: Motion to impeach President Taylor (16.9%)
 - Winter 2022: Motion Regarding the Removal of Officer Daryanani (12.6%)

Results

Motion ratified.

Choice	Electors	Percentage*
Yes	5778	67.5%
No	2776	32.5%

**Those who abstained are not counted in the percentage*

Abstain	636	6.9%
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Total Voted	9190
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Campaign

- “Yes” Campaign registered
 - 21 registered SSMU members
 - Expenses: \$126.50 fair market value declared from 550 posters
- 1 instance of verbal altercation with SSMU members during flyering
- Constant struggle with external support online from organizations outside of McGill
 - According to our IRs, campaigning is to be done only by SSMU members.
 - Elections SSMU recognize that external support is sometimes out of control of campaign, but expects reasonable effort to attempt to remove these posts.

Analysis

- SSMU members do vote!
- Million dollar question - How can we try to bring this momentum and motivation to vote to our referenda and elections?
 - Create hype for our elections?
 - Emphasize the importance of referendum questions? Student fees are important.
 - Incentivize running as an exec and create healthy competition?
 - Encourage campaign forming?
 - Improve SSMU image?
 - Increased visibility of Elections SSMU?

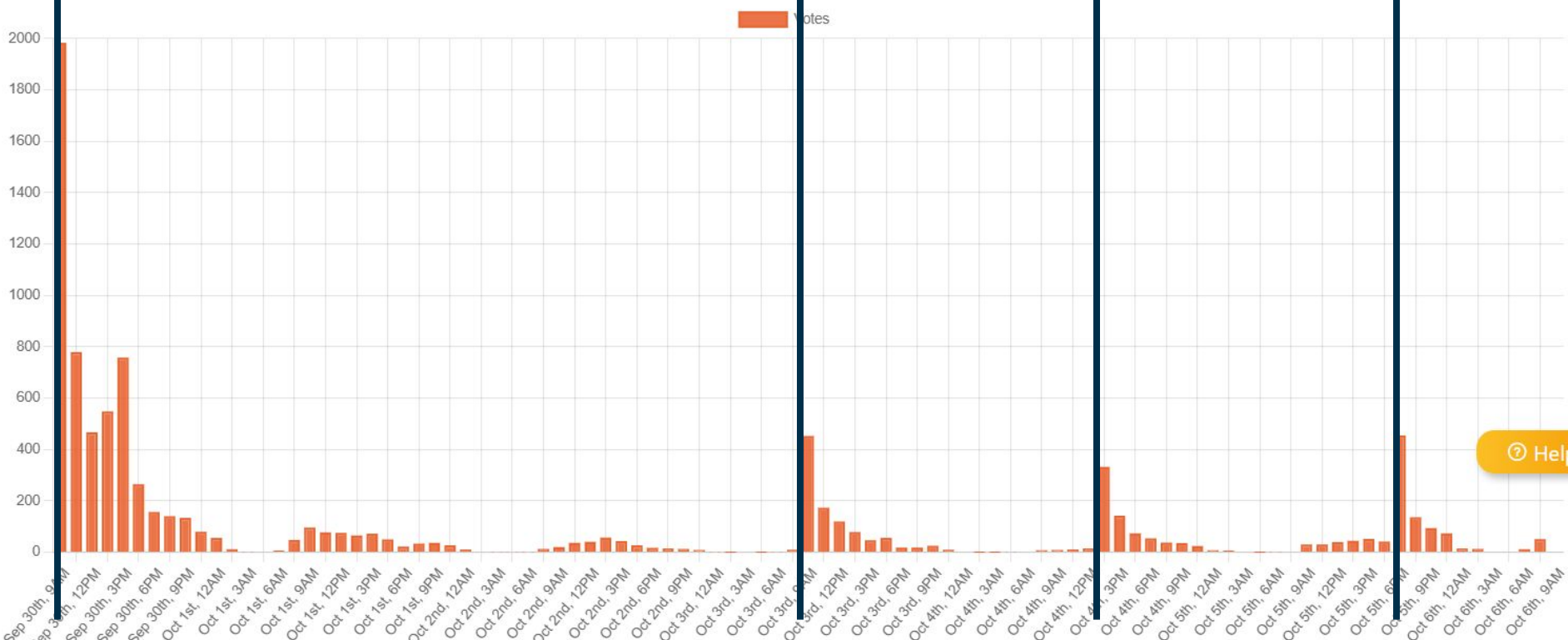
User Reported Issues

All reported issues were resolved, no electors were prevented from voting.

Issue	Number	Outcome
Received email but did not have access to the ballot (alias emails)	30	Voter list updated with non-alias email - votes could be casted
Unable to vote	2	Both instances students were not eligible (PGSS members)

Couple members voiced concerns that having to email to gain access to ballot is cumbersome and repetitive, including the Union of Gender Empowerment (UGE) - SSMU service. **This issue has since been fixed for the next election.**

Turnout Chart (9190 electors voted)



Black vertical line = email blast to those who haven't voted

Email blasts

Starting this election we have decided having 3 reminders (a total of 4 emails) is the best balance.

Email Blast	Time	Number of Unsubscribes
Already unsubscribed earlier		933
Original Email	Sept 30 @ 9:00	3
Reminder #1	Oct 3 @ 9:00	3
Reminder #2	Oct 4 @ 14:00	4
Reminder #3	Oct 5 @ 18:00	7
Number of NEW unsubscribes due to this election		17

Fall Referendum

Turnout: 19.1%

15% Quorum reached: 3 days before polls closed

On the ballot

Choice	Number	Note
Legislative Council Initiated Questions	6	
Member Initiated Questions	0	7 proposed to Elections SSMU 5 approved to collect signatures (all failed to meet the rule where no faculty can't be >30%) 0 progressed to Board Ratification
Plebiscite Question	1	Floor motion passed at Legislative Council

Long ballots are a common occurrence for SSMU referenda - concerns for ballot fatigue.

- Winter 2025: 15 (not counting executive elections)
- Fall 2024: 9
- Winter 2025: 19

Results

4 questions passed, 2 questions rejected. Narrowest margin was decided by 91 votes.

Question	Yes	No	Abstain
Increase of the Student Services Fee	48.3%	51.7%	15.0%
Renewal of SSMU Access Bursary Fund	80.8%	19.2%	10.7%
Renewal of the Access McGill Ancillary Fee	75.9%	24.1%	12.1%
Reinstatement of the First Year Council Fee	53.2%	46.8%	16.6%
Creation of the Gender Affirming Care Fee	51.1%	48.9%	12.3%
Increase of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) Fee	47.6%	52.4%	15.0%
Renewal of the Musician's Collective (MUSCO) Fee	66.0%	34.0%	15.0%

Results - Plebiscite Question

- See attached report (Summary of Responses - SSMU Fall 2025 Referendum Plebiscite Question: “What events would you like to see on campus?”) for detailed results - I cannot summarize everything written there here.
- 4829 SSMU members voted (out of 25332 eligible members). Out of the people who voted, **541** members elected to submit a response for the plebiscite question. 21 responses had no events to propose, with responses such as: “Idk” (Response 182), “Not sure” (Response 337), “Nothing really” (Response 399), “Rien en particulier” (Response 370), “ummm no clue” (Response 534).

- **Social & Entertainment**
 - Music
 - Parties and Dances
 - Competitions and Campus-wide activities
 - Community, Interactions with other students, and Interfaculty Events
 - Non-alcoholic events
- **Creative, Media, and Performing Arts**
 - Art, Dancing, Drama
 - Books
 - Board Games
 - Movies
 - Costume and Cosplay
- **Food**
 - Free food
 - Food events or sales
 - Food insecurity
 - Campus Markets
 - Midnight Kitchen

- **Festivals and Culture**
 - Events surrounding a festival / holiday
 - Events surrounding culture
 - Events surrounding special groups
 - Events surrounding religion
- **Sports**
- **Career, Academic, Life Skills**
 - Career Fairs
 - Opportunities and assistance of future jobs
 - Opportunities and assistance of future studies or academic enrichment
 - Skills and Workshops
 - Networking events
- **Mental Health, Wellness, Activism**
 - Mental Health, Wellness, and Stress Reduction
 - Activism

- **Free Things and Events**
 - Free things
 - Free events
- **General Feedback**
 - The need to increase or decrease events on campus
 - Feedback about SSMU
 - Concerns about referendum questions
 - Concerns about spending more money on certain fees

Summary of responses

SSMU Fall 2025 Referendum Plebiscite

Question: "What event would you like to see on campus?"



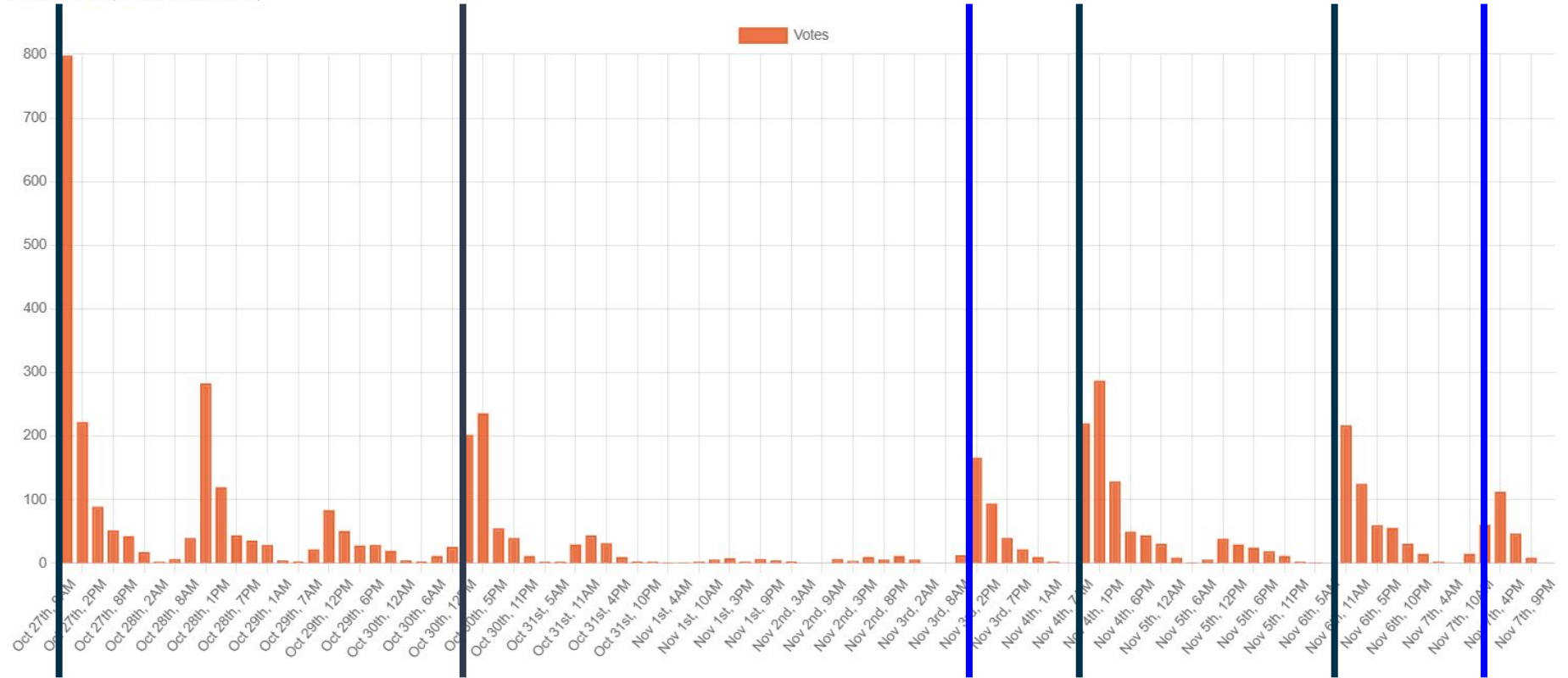
Campaign

- 2 campaigns were registered
- “Yes” Campaign - Muslim Student Association
 - 30 registered SSMU members
 - Expenses: \$30 fair market value declared from 150 posters
- “Yes” Campaign - Gender Affirming Care
 - 30 registered SSMU members
 - Expenses: \$149.08 fair market value declared from tabling fees, stickers, and flyer printing
- Information Campaign - StudentCare / Alumo (not considered a registered campaign)
 - Considered an external organization and was not allowed to campaign (solicit members to vote a certain site)
 - Limited to providing general information and could help the “yes” campaign

Issues

- 2 fee questions submitted late to McGill - approved in time
- 2 questions modified by McGill request
 - Gender Affirming Care: Delayed implementation from Winter 2025 to Fall 2026 due to IT issues relating to opt-outs.
 - Muslim Student Association: Claims an increase and renewal can't be run at the same time, Fall 2031 revised to Winter 2028 (when the fee expires). Questions that include increase + renewal have been done before - to clarify with McGill.
- Typo in Musician's Collective Fee (fee implementation should be Fall 2026 instead of Fall 2025) - McGill accepted results despite typo
- MSA Campaign head reported few members from the Faculty of Medicine did not get the ballot - requested students to email Elections SSMU, none received. Verification of the voters' list seemed to include everyone.
- **0 issues regarding alias emails this time!**

Turnout Chart (4829 electors voted)



Black vertical line = email blast to those who haven't voted

Blue vertical line = emails sent by StudentCare

Email blasts

- StudentCare emails to SSMU members were as effective than SimplyVoting emails, despite not having a personalized link but rather a generic link at the bottom.
- Shows students do read their emails.
- Considering sending email outside of SimplyVoting to avoid students unsubscribing.
- Messaging emphasized voting, including abstaining will remove you from the email list, and to not unsubscribe - didn't seem to make too big of a difference.

Email Blast	Time	Number of Unsubscribes
Already unsubscribed earlier		954
Original Email	Oct 27 @ 9:00	3
Reminder #1	Oct 30 @ 14:15	6
Reminder #2	Nov 4 @ 8:00	3
Reminder #3	Nov 6 @ 8:00	2
Number of NEW unsubscribes due to this election		14

Getting out the vote

- Flyering for 3 days, handed out around 200 flyers - **questionable effectiveness, plan to decrease frequency next election**
- Tabling at UC (with some candy and gadgets) on Nov 6 - **plan to do more and expand at other places**
- Emailed around 50 professors with 200+ lecture classes throughout different faculties - **professors were receptive, plan to do more next time, targeting programs with less participation**
- Emailed campus media, SSMU services, all legislative councillors, all Faculty student associations, FYC to inform them about the vote
- Targeted emails to certain program associations
- Dropped off flyers at SUS, EUS, EdUS, Queer McGill
- Listservs submitted to AUS, SUS, CSUS, MPSA, DSS, PSSA and more - **plan to have a database of all available listservs for ease of submission**
- Follow-up with those having issues with alias emails in previous responses - many happy responses that it's fixed for this election
- Raffle (5 gift cards, 10 Gerts' free coffee, 10 movie tickets) - **plan to continue and look for more enticing prizes**

Plans for Winter elections

- Continuing initiatives from the last elections
- Workshops/information sessions for running as an SSMU exec and referendum question writing to spread the news earlier before nomination period
 - Hopefully we motivate more people to run and have less uncontested elections
 - Reduce barriers on submitting member-initiated referendum questions
- Campaign debate is planned to be moved in person, with online streaming. Early advertising to be done to hopefully increase more participation.
- Will consult current execs on how to improve the electoral process and input on the workshops/debates
- Plan to work with EA staff and encouraging electoral participation. Reach to more staff?
- Tabling and participating in Winter Activities Night
- Consult with the faculties with lowest turnout

**Voter Turnout by Faculty and
Program**

SSMU Fall 2025 Referendum



Submitted by Mike Lee, Chief Returning Officer
Updated as of 2025-11-28

Voter Turnout for the Fall Referendum - by Faculty and Program

For more a detailed summary - please consult

*Appendix 2: Voter Turnout by Faculty and Program - SSMU Fall 2025
Referendum*

Turnout for Fall Referendum by Faculty

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
FACULTY OF LAW	719	259	36
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HLTH SCI	927	306	33
INTERFACULTY, B.A. & SC.	652	149	22.9
FAC DENTAL MEDICINE & ORAL HS	170	34	20
FACULTY OF ARTS	8102	1624	20
TOTAL	25332	4829	19.1
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	5167	983	19
SCHOOL OF PHYS & OCC THERAPY	225	41	18.2
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC	455	83	18.2
INGRAM SCHOOL OF NURSING	856	149	17.4
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING	3804	635	16.7
DESAUTELS FACULTY MANAGEMENT	2565	342	13.3
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	1690	224	13.3

Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>100 students)

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
LAW	712	256	36
MEDICINE	913	298	32.6
LINGUISTICS	124	39	31.5
POLITICAL SCIENCE	1330	343	25.8
SOCIAL WORK	168	43	25.6
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING	159	18	11.3
STATISTICS	157	17	10.8
UNDECLARED - BCOM STUDENTS	263	25	9.5
PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION	238	19	8
PERFORMANCE JAZZ	113	9	8

Arts Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>75 students)

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
LINGUISTICS	122	38	31.1
HISTORY	313	86	27.5
PHILOSOPHY	131	35	26.7
PSYCHOLOGY	1807	273	15.1
COMPUTER SCIENCE	254	30	11.8
STATISTICS	94	7	7.4

Science Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>50 students)

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
PHYSICS	185	45	24.3
BIOCHEMISTRY	256	61	23.8
MEDICAL PREPARATORY	93	22	23.7
PHYSICS & COMPUTER SCI	52	8	15.4
STATS & COMPUTER SCIENCE	129	17	13.2
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING	99	11	11.1

Engineering Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>50 students)

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	752	150	19.9
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	425	82	19.3
BIOENGINEERING	276	53	19.2
CIVIL ENGINEERING	440	60	13.6
ARCHITECTURE	152	20	13.2
CO-OP IN MINING ENGINEERING	124	14	11.3

Management Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>50 students)

Faculty	Electors	Voted	Turnout
ECONOMICS	57	11	19.3
BUSINESS ANALYTICS	85	16	18.8
ACCOUNTING	341	54	15.8
FINANCE	978	114	11.7
MATH AND STATS FOR MANAGEMENT	53	6	11.3
UNDECLARED - BCOM STUDENTS	263	25	9.5

Proposed changes to IRs

- Consulted multiple times by the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator
- Meetings with the President, Internal Counsel, and Deputy Returning Officer
- Proposed IRs are on the agenda for the LC on December 4th

Thank you!

Questions?

Mike Lee, Chief Returning Officer
elections@ssmu.ca

