



# MOTION REGARDING ETHICAL PARTNERSHIPS

## 2026-03-26

Submitted for: 2026-03-26

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-ID26-03-26-002 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Dymetri Taylor <i>President</i>	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Meghan Lai <i>Senate Caucus Representative</i>		

**Issue** This motion seeks to annul the Ethical Partnerships Policy and mandate the SSMU to begin working on a replacement Governing Document that is realistic and clear.

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**Background and Rationale** [Discussion Item: Ethical Partnerships Policy](#)

“This discussion item concerns the [Ethical Partnerships Policy](#), acting as both an update on the mandates described in the policy, clarification about its applicability and suggestions for next steps. This Policy includes 9 pages of background, context, and rationale compared to its 2 pages of mandates and reporting requirements. A lot of this information is unnecessary and, now, outdated. Additionally, the language used within this Policy highlights that these undertakings should only be done to **the best ability of the organization** (e.g. “strive to ...”), without giving concrete or specific information about how this can be done.

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Section 6.1. was achieved and a report was presented to the Legislative Council on [March 21, 2024](#), which highlighted that there is **no realistic alternative** to SSMU's current banking practices without sacrificing the quality or amount of services provided by the SSMU to its Members, Clubs & Services. Section 6.2.1. describes a revision of the Policy by the end of the 2023-2024 year which **never came to fruition**. There are **many other sections that raise questions left unanswered**. For example, in section 7.5., who are relevant parties? For section 7.1. Do these concern SSMU sponsorships or student groups sponsorships or both? What is the line of acceptability in enforcing these partnership guidelines on student groups? Which partnerships/investments are acceptable given the broader context of financial demands of the SSMU and the interconnected nature of most major companies?

In previous years, this policy has been superseded by SSMU's significant financial deficit (as described in section 2.6.), but this no longer applies for the 2025-2026 year. Now, our Sponsorship department has described concerns about the interpretation and enforcement of this policy, especially in trying to balance it with the financial output expectations for the department. The Staff also does not feel they have adequate guidance to be able to do their work in this area. For the sake of transparency to students and clarity for our Staff, we must address the concerns related to this policy and create an action plan to resolve them.

*Impact on investment*

The current framework is not clear on if this boycott applies to individual companies only or to index or other assets, which would indirectly encompass these boycotted companies, such as the S&P 500 or other index or funds. It is difficult to balance having a good return on investment with navigating a structure of divestment too broad or that is not easily actionable in practice. Also the **clarification on what type of investment** (stock, bonds, ETF, GIC, savings accounts, etc...) would be needed to ensure a proper implementation of such a policy as it is not always clear what can and can't be done. This does not mean that we can't identify companies or industries which we would not want to invest in, such as tobacco and arms manufacturing, but that we must **adopt a framework**

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**that is clear, actionable and balances all the relevant considerations related to our investing.** That framework can then serve as instructions to our investment firm and guide our investment decisions.

*Impact on sponsorships*

The current framework does not provide an actionable plan and guidance on the management of sponsorships with SSMU directly and creates uncertainty and incapacity to effectively implement the current policy to sponsorships as **there is not a list of companies**, only industries and sometimes specific companies. In certain cases, this lack of clarity creates impossible situations, mainly where there are new companies or sectors added to the boycotted group, as there is a lack of guidance on how to manage these sponsorships mainly when companies of which SSMU does business with, but would also be considered as a boycotted group (ex: bank, technology, other service providers). Also, the objective of seeking sponsorship is to provide **additional resources to SSMU to better provide services and activities to its membership**. Although there is room for limits, which are appropriate, these limits must also balance other factors and must not become a systematic strain on the capacity to collect additional resources to provide to the membership.

*Impact on students groups*

The implementation of such a policy to student groups would likely result in **reduced funding opportunities, less resources overall and would restrict some operations significantly**. The reality is that our over 230 clubs have limited financial resources and capacity to get additional revenue from sponsors to help them develop projects and events. Some of them depend on sponsorships from companies related to their field of activities, which sometimes would go against specific divestment mandates from companies which are indirectly related to the boycotted companies (ex: banks, commodities, technology).

*Impact on banking*

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Changing banks with the current operations of SSMU, with more than 200 bank accounts, 30 credit cards and a mortgage would be difficult to implement while not disturbing operations of the SSMU, its clubs and services. Due to the high volume of operations, accounts and needs, SSMU needs the services of a major and reliable bank with the capacity to serve its operation and cashflow management needs. The banking landscape has not significantly changed since the report done in March 2024 in Montreal and Canada. A report done today would likely come to similar if not the same conclusion that there is **no real alternative to banking with one of the Big 6 banks without having a significant impact on the quality of service and our operations.**

This concern related to this specific Policy comes alongside a more general discussion within the Governance department of the problems associated with **the number and quality** of Governing documents that SSMU Staff and Executive Officers are mandated to abide by. Concerns include contradictory information between documents, long/difficult to read documents, the sheer number of documents under SSMU, the high variability in their enforcement, and the unrealistic expectations placed on Staff to keep up with changes.

In my role as the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, I have (behind the scenes and to the best of my ability) been working to try and fix some of these issues. This includes **enforcing higher standards in the explicitness and quality of writing, prioritizing consultations, minimizing overlap/redundancy**, etc. However, this work comes with its own challenges. Enforcing higher standards and consultations leads to longer editing/drafting periods, which delays SSMU's ability to create and implement governing documents in a timely manner. Minimizing overlap/redundancy requires massive labour, as seen in the [comprehensive review of the IRs](#) over the summer.

Even though we are trying to address these individual concerns as they arise, this does not address the core difficulty created by SSMU's innumerable policies and mandates. We are exploring how to fix this issue and taking first steps, namely by removing Policies as a type of Governing Document and reprioritizing the Positions Book as the primary document

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for SSMU governance, with Plans focused on the **concrete realistic** implementation of the **aspirational** Positions as the secondary (re: more elaborative) documents.

Still, there remains the question of what should be done about existing Policies. As we have seen in this instance, there are Policies that **do not align operationally with what is realistic** for the SSMU to do. Rather than completely do away with Policies all at once, which still contain important information and mandates for SSMU, we want to be considerate of how we can phase out these documents with care. As stated in the motion for reprioritization of the Position Book, **Policies of the SSMU will remain in effect until their expiration or annulment.** However, in cases like this Policy where there is limited opportunity for realistic enforcement, the Legislative Council has discussed the relevant mandates in the past, and the Policy contains elements that are outdated/incorrect, I would encourage the Legislative Council to annul the Policy and create a Plan in its place.

My recommendation is to put forward a motion (as I have written [here](#)) that **annuls the Ethical Partnerships Policy effective immediately and mandates the SSMU to create a document (either a Protocol or a Plan) that provides guidance for the Sponsorships department on realistic enforcement of our Positions through our partnerships.** If this is undertaken by the SSMU, I recommend that myself, the Sponsorships Coordinator, the Vice-President (Finance) and the Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary be the primary individuals considered for this project. Whether this is a Protocol or Plan will affect the timeline, but the projected conclusive document will be completed at the beginning of the next academic year.”

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**Alignment with Mission**

This motion is in line with SSMU mission to provide exemplary service by increasing transparency and reducing growing concerns related to Governing Documents (particularly the unrealisticness of the Ethical Partnerships Policy in its current format).

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**Consultations  
Completed**

Sponsorship Coordinator  
Student Life Operations Director  
Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary  
Policy & Advocacy Coordinator – Primary writer  
President  
Vice-President (Finance)

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**Risk Factors and  
Resource  
Implications**

The annulment of the Ethical Partnerships Policy increases the risk of SSMU disregarding the important considerations included within this document about conducting partnerships ethically, but this will be mitigated by the creation of a designated Governing Document that addresses the same concerns.  
The Positions Book will continue to be upheld, as affirmed in this motion, so the core principles of Ethical partnerships will still apply.

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**Impact of  
Decision  
and Next Steps**

If approved, the SSMU, particularly the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, Sponsorships Coordinator, the Vice-President (Finance) and the Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary, will be tasked with creating a Governing Document (either a Plan or Protocol) that sufficiently and realistically addresses how SSMU can conduct ethical partnerships.

If approved, the Ethical Partnerships Policy will be archived following the period of dissolution of the Board of Directors.

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**Motion or  
Resolution for  
Approval**

Be it resolved that the Ethical Partnership Policy be annulled effective immediately.

Be it further resolved that the SSMU continue to uphold its positions as described in the Positions Book.

Be it further resolved, that the SSMU (particularly the individuals described in this motion) be mandated to create a sort of Plan or Protocol to address ethical partnerships and provide guidance for the Sponsorships department on realistic implementation.

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Results of the Vote	<input type="checkbox"/> In favour	(24)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Opposed	(0)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	(0)

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APPROVED