



Elections SSMU

Winter 2026 Election Report

Presentation to the Legislative Council



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

April 9th, 2026

List of Elections in Winter 2026

Election	Dates	Eligible Electors	Number Voted	Turnout
Special Plebiscite Concerning Proposed Amendments to the SSMU Constitution	Feb. 16 - Feb. 19, 2026	23957	1482	6.2%*
Executive Election	Mar. 9 - Mar. 20, 2026	23957	6019	25.1 %
Winter Referendum		23957	4089	17.1 %

Special Referendum *No quorum for plebiscites, as results are non-binding

Special Plebiscite Concerning Cut Varsity Teams and Competitive Clubs

Turnout: 21.1%

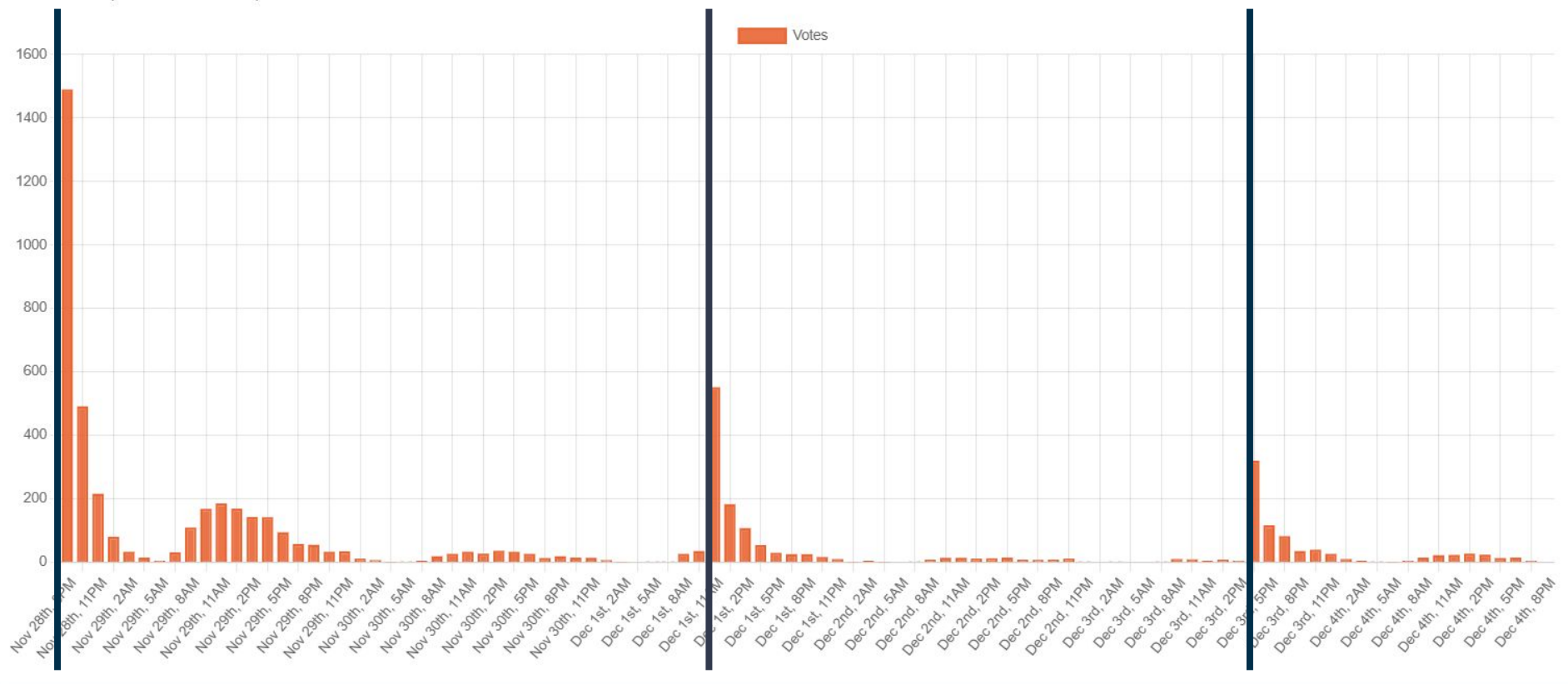
Do you agree that the _____ should be reinstated?

Team	Yes	No	Abstain
Badminton varsity team (men/women)	92.0%	8.0%	11.8%
Baseball varsity team (men)	92.1%	7.9%	11.1%
Fencing competitive club (men/women)	87.4%	12.6%	15.4%
Logger Sports competitive club (men/women)	81.5%	18.5%	19.4%
Nordic Ski competitive club (men/women)	89.9%	10.1%	12.6%
Rugby varsity team (women)	94.8%	5.2%	7.4%
Field Hockey varsity team (women)	92.9%	7.1%	8.7%
Sailing competitive club (men/women)	86.1%	13.9%	15.7%
Figure Skating competitive club (men/women)	91.1%	8.9%	11.5%
Golf varsity team (men/women)	85.0%	15.0%	14.0%
Lacrosse competitive club (women)	92.1%	7.9%	9.7%
Squash competitive club (men/women)	88.0%	12.0%	14.7%
Tennis competitive club (men/women)	93.9%	6.1%	9.3%
Track and Field varsity team (men/women)	97.3%	2.7%	3.4%
Volleyball competitive club (men)	92.7%	7.3%	9.2%

Analysis

- **7 day** polling period instead of the usual 14 days - the Special Plebiscite still attracted a **higher voter turnout** than the Fall Referendum despite the election being **unscheduled**, showing the membership is selective in voting.
- Great way to solicit opinions from members.
- No campaigns, no issues with voting!

Turnout Chart (5848 electors voted)



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

Turnout for Special Plebiscite by Faculty

Rank	Prev. Rank*	Faculty	Electors	Voted	%
1	3	INTERFACULTY, B.A. & SC.	652	242	37.1
2	1	FACULTY OF LAW	719	201	28
3	5	FACULTY OF ARTS	8102	2159	26.6
4	6	FACULTY OF SCIENCE	5167	1258	24.3
5	10	FACULTY OF ENGINEERING	3804	797	21
6	7	SCHOOL OF PHYS & OCC THERAPY	225	47	20.9
7	11	DESAUTELS FACULTY MANAGEMENT	2565	534	20.8
8	12	FACULTY OF EDUCATION	1690	329	19.5
9	8	SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC	455	61	13.4
10	2	FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HLTH SCI	927	112	12.1
11	4	FAC DENTAL MEDICINE & ORAL HS	170	19	11.2
12	9	INGRAM SCHOOL OF NURSING	856	89	10.4
		TOTAL	25332	5848	23.1

*Rank for the voter turnout of the SSMU Fall Referendum 2025

Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>75 students)

Program	Electors	Voted	Turnout
HIGHEST TURNOUT			
FOUNDATION PROGRAM (Interfaculty)	96	45	46.9
HISTORY (Arts)	313	112	35.8
FOUNDATION PROGRAM (Arts)	754	261	34.6
POLITICAL SCIENCE (Arts)	1330	445	33.5
SOCIAL WORK (Arts)	168	43	25.6
LOWEST TURNOUT			
DENTISTRY	170	19	11.2
SECONDARY ENGLISH	136	15	11
PERFORMANCE JAZZ	113	11	9.7
INTEGRATED NURSING	577	40	6.9

Special Plebiscite Concerning Proposed Amendments to the SSMU Constitution

Turnout 62%

Background

- Plebiscites are non-binding and are used for acquiring the opinion of Members.
- This is the second plebiscite held in the 2025/26 school year, following the Special Plebiscite Concerning Cut Varsity Teams and Competitive Clubs in December 2025.
- Passed by Legislative Council on February 12, 2026 unanimously.

Results & Voter Turnout

Special Plebiscite Concerning Proposed
Amendments to the SSMU Constitution



Submitted by Mike Lee, Chief Returning Officer
Updated as of 2026-02-21

Questions & Results

Question 1. Which body should serve as the Society's highest governing authority?

Electors may choose **one** of the following options.

- **Legislative Council: 51.5% (586 votes)**
- The Board of Directors: 38.4% (440 votes)
- The Executive Committee: 10.5% (121 votes)

Question 2. What do you believe should be the quorum for a Student Strike?

Electors may rank **any** (one or more) of the options from 1 up to 5. For instance, an elector may limit their selection to their top two preferences by marking them 1 and 2, respectively.

- **20%: 4114 points**
- 30%: 4050 points
- 15%: 3786 points
- 40%: 3529 points
- 50%: 2998 points

Borda count method was employed for this question. The way the points are calculated is as follows:

Borda Count votes are counted as follows:

- *Each option receives 5 points each time they are ranked first, 4 for being ranked second, and so on, with a candidate receiving 1 point for being ranked last.*
- *Unranked options are given 0 points.*
- *Points are added up from all votes.*

Questions & Results

Question 3. Do you have any feedback on the proposed amendments to the Constitution?

136 responses were received, with 125 responses containing actual context. Some examples that are considered having no context: “.” (#2), “No” (#63), “n/A” (#129), “ծՅԻ” (#136), “meow” (#128).

For individual comments and a summary of responses, consult [Appendix 1.](#)

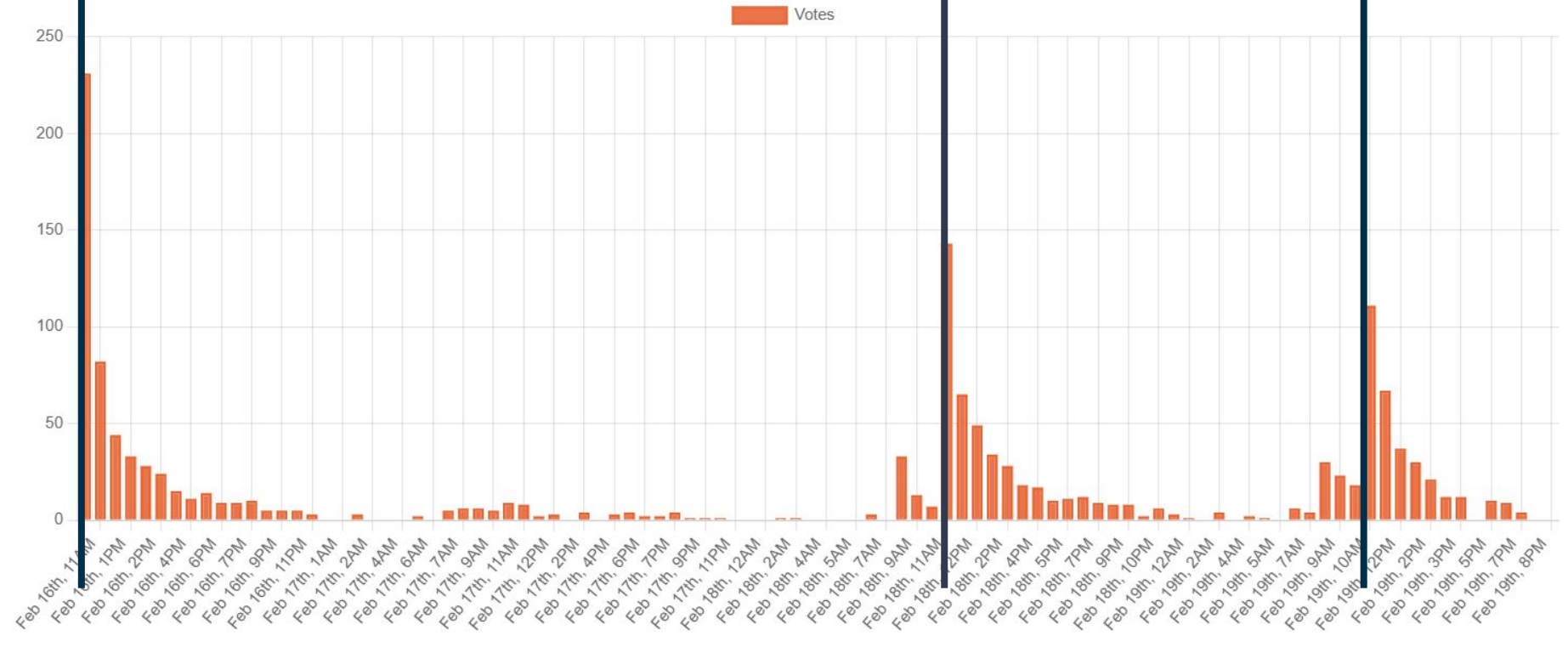
Key takeaways

- A vocal minority was upset how the ballot and questions were presented, namely the lack of consideration of the General Assembly as the highest authority and no option to maintain strike quorum at 10%.
- Our student body is **very** split whether we should maintain/eliminate strike quorum or drastically increase strike quorum. Some took the opportunity to express dissatisfaction of recent student strikes.

Analysis & Takeaways

- Very low voter participation compared to the previous Special Plebiscite - the average student seem to have little interest and understanding of governance processes.
- Many students did not understand the meaning of plebiscite and the fact the questions are not meant to be binding - Elections SSMU will attempt to educate and engage the membership in the future.
- The use of borda count on Question 2 made interpretation of results confusing - further questions of similar nature (including the currently running Special Referendum will be done via instant runoff - to signal a clear winner).
- Students tune out SimplyVoting emails. The focus group for unengaged voters was run during the polling period, where virtually no one had an email a plebiscite was happening.

Turnout Chart (1482 electors voted)



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

Executive Election

Turnout: 25.1%

15% Quorum reached: 6th day of polling period

Positions & Candidates

- Record number of candidates running, with **all** positions contested! No extended nominations triggered this election.
 - 14 candidates for 5 positions
 - Last year: 10 candidates for 7 positions
- No withdraws throughout the whole process!
- Creation of a coalition (S.T.A.N.D.), first coalition for executive elections created ever since slate campaigning is allowed.

Position	Candidates	Candidates in 2024
President	2	1
VP Clubs & Services	3	2
VP Internal	4	1
VP External	3	2
VP University Affairs	2	1

Historical Number of Candidates

Position	2026	2025	Nov 2024 (Byelection)	April 2024 (Byelection)	2024	Sept 2023 (Byelection)	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
President	2	1	-	3	0	-	1	3	3	2	2
Vice-President (Clubs and Services)	3	2	2	-	2	-	1	2	1	2	1
Vice-President (Internal)	4	1	-	-	1	-	1	3	1	1	2
Vice-President (External)	3	2	-	-	2	-	2	1	1	2	1
Vice-President (University Affairs)	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	2	2
Vice-President (Finance)	Hired position	2	-	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	3
Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability)	Eliminated position	1	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-

Results

All SSMU elections are conducted ranked ballot (instant runoff voting).

Position	Elected	Voters abstained from ranking candidates for this position
President	Hamza Abu-Alkhair	26.0%
VP Clubs & Services	Acadia Knickerbocker	27.8%
VP Internal	Maggie Tang	23.4%
VP External	Justice Bongiovanni*	12.2%
VP University Affairs	Meghan Lai	29.8%

Full results can be found in

** Candidate disqualified April 7th*

Campaigns & Spending

Candidate Campaign	Number of registered members	Spending
Abu-Alkhair	5	\$0.00
Bongiovanni	20	\$255.55
Callaghan (S.T.A.N.D.)	22	\$65.38
Desjardins (S.T.A.N.D.)	22	\$26.92
Duddy-Hayashibara (S.T.A.N.D.)	25	\$23.48
El Hosini	0	Not submitted
El Murr	3	\$17.00
Gagawchuk (S.T.A.N.D.)	25	\$27.12
Haiboub (S.T.A.N.D.)	0	\$85.72
Knickerbocker	1	\$0.84
Lai	10	\$25.50
Tang	11	\$16.80
Smithson	0	\$70.50
Wang	3	\$29.32

Audits are ongoing, final expense reports will be published on the SSMU website upon completion of audit.

Analysis & Insights - Nomination Process

- An info session done early (a week before nomination period) gave candidates time to think about running.
- QPIRG also ran an info session on their own.
- Updates on nominations received encouraged students to come forward to apply.
- Nomination package was revamped, stating eligibility criteria and work hour expectations, including in the summer. Due to this, no candidates were deemed not eligible by McGill this time.
- 35% faculty rule was annoying to enforce (for both elections officers and candidates), but did encourage candidates to seek out students from all faculties. Candidates were able to get signatures from all faculties and schools combined.

Analysis & Insights - Campaigning

Process

- High number of complaints, mostly via the Elections Complaint Form, which was launched on the 2nd week of polling modelling the Accountability Concerns Form.
- Candidates had an individual Google drive, which helped with tracking campaign members, in-person campaigning, and social media approval.
- Active monitoring and the requirement to declare accounts used for campaigning helped with enforcement.
- Most violations come from the fact that the candidate did not have their campaign material approved before posting.
- Very high number of posters being teared, defaced, and destroyed.
- Lack of access to cameras from McGill buildings made enforcement hard.

Analysis & Insights - Polling Process

- In-person transition of debate was generally successful. Live stream on TVM Youtube has 200+ views.
- The Elections and Referendum was done on 2 separate ballots (as opposed to last year), mainly due to the long length of each election.
- McGill proposed some very long whereas clauses to their questions.
- The separation had an effect on the turnout for the Referendum, but we were able to capture the true voter turnout for each election.
- Campaigns from candidates played a huge role in getting people to vote, with most people we tabled have encounter a candidate or more during the period.
- High voter turnout (25.1%) compared to previous elections.
 - 2025: 15.7%, 2024: 19.1%, 2023: 16.9%, 2022: 12.9%, 2021: 15.2%, 2020: 16.4%
 - Highest turnout after 2018 (32.8%. same ballot as the Fall Reading Break

Winter Referendum

Turnout: 17.1%

15% Quorum reached: 2 days before polls closed (whew)

On the ballot

Choice	Number	Note
Legislative Council Initiated Questions	9	
Ratification of Members of Large of the Board of Directors	1	
Member Initiated Questions	0	1 proposed to Elections SSMU, decided to submit question as motion to Legislative Council in the future.
Plebiscite Question	0	

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

- Fall 2025: 7
- Winter 2025: 15 (not counting executive elections)
- Fall 2024: 9
- Winter 2024: 19

Results

All questions passed!

Question	Yes	No	Abstain
Renewal of the WUSC Student Refugee Program Fee	81.7%	18.3%	9.7%
Increase of the WUSC Student Refugee Program Fee	67.2%	32.8%	12.3%
Increase of the SSMU ECOLE Project Fee	62.8%	37.2%	19.5%
Renewal of the McGill Writing Centre Ancillary Fee	70.9%	29.1%	16.8%
Increase of the McGill Student Services Ancillary Fee	65.4%	34.6%	17.6%
Renewal of the University Centre Fee	63.2%	36.8%	20.8%
Renewal of the Anti-Violence Fee	77.0%	23.0%	14.6%
Increase and Renaming of the SSMU Grocery Program Fee	73.2%	26.8%	15.9%
Renewal of the SSMU Daycare Fee	72.7%	27.3%	17.3%
Ratification of the Board of Directors Members-At-Large	80.0%	20.0%	49.0%

Campaigns

- 2 campaigns were registered
 - “Yes” Campaign - WUSC Renewal/Increase
 - 15 registered SSMU members
 - Expenses: \$100.55
 - “Yes” Campaign - ECOLE Renewal
 - 8 registered SSMU members
 - Expenses: \$20.55
- 3 campaigns attempted to form, but was not successful in getting 50 signatures
 - “Yes” Campaign - McGill Student Services Ancillary Fee
 - Information campaign containing neutral information launched
 - “Yes” Campaign - McGill Writing Centre Ancillary Fee
 - Information campaign containing neutral information launched
 - “Yes” Campaign - SSMU Grocery Program Fee
 - Information campaign containing neutral information launched

Motions passed in the Feb 26, 2026 LC

- a. Motion to suspend sections 6.2 and 6.12 of the IRs of Elections and Referenda to allow the related SSMU staff to campaign for the following referenda: - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**(President Taylor, Councilor Lai)
 - i. Renewal and Increase of the University Centre Fee
 - ii. Renewal of the Anti-Violence Fee
 - iii. Increase of the SSMU Food bank Fee
 - iv. Renewal of the SSMU Daycare Fee
- b. Motion to suspend section 6.21 of the IRs of Elections and Referenda to allow the following external bodies to campaign: - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**(President Taylor, Councilor Lai)
 - i. ECOLE for the Increase of the SSMU ECOLE Project Fee
 - ii. The McGill Writing Centre for the Renewal of the McGill Writing Centre Ancillary Fee
- c. Motion to apply the Writing Center fee to the same condition as motion 14a) (VP Aloudat, Councilor A. Yu)- **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

As the current IRs stand, external organizations (defined any organization outside of SSMU clubs, services, and clubs under faculty councils) are not allowed to campaign. In addition, SSMU execs and staff are expected to remain neutral.

Analysis & Insights

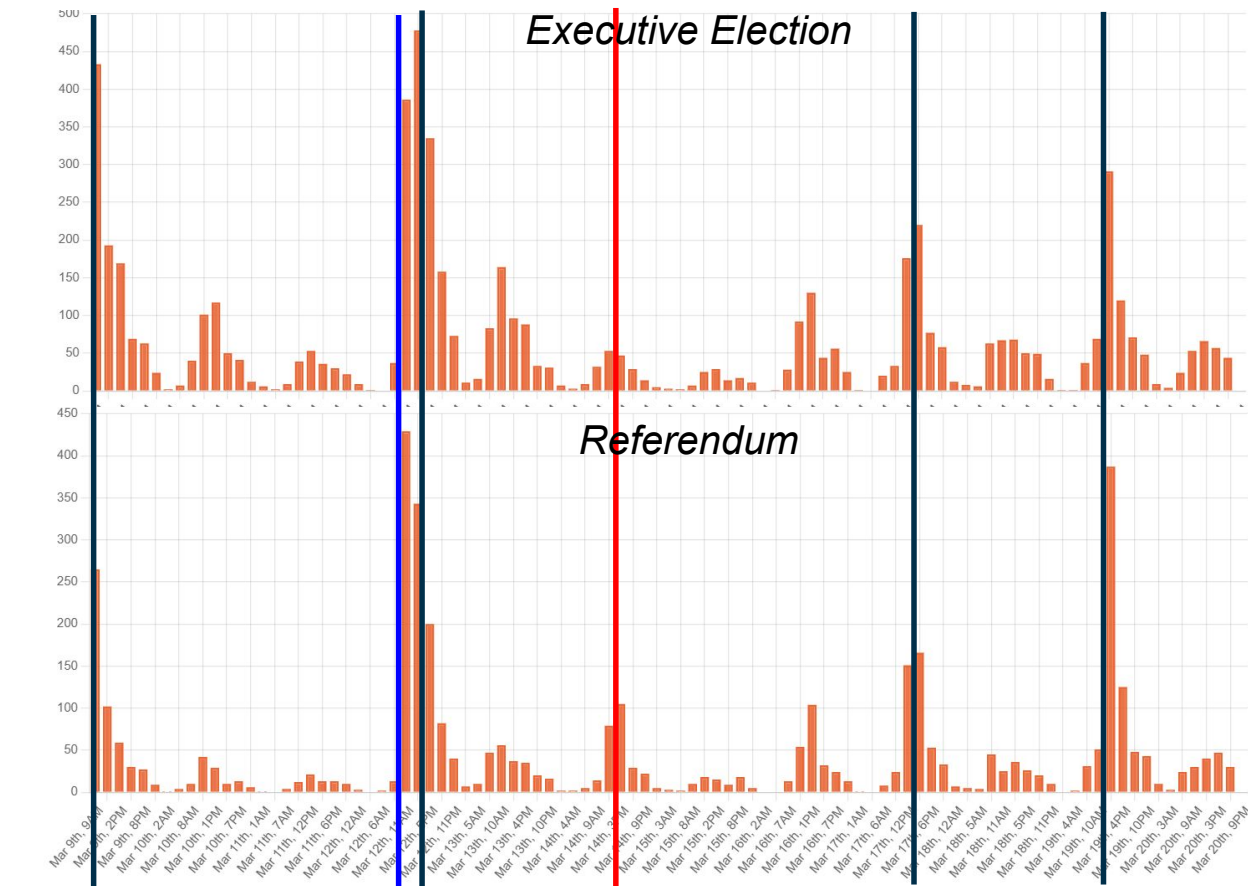
- An info session was done to encourage students who want to submit student-initiated questions to start early, and to introduce students to new changes to the IR. No one attended.
- The increase from 25 to 50 signatures seems to hindered many campaigns forming and considerable delays for those who did eventually form one.
- Students are less engaged for the referendum, and voter turnout severely lagged behind the executive elections.
- Long whereas clauses can be a hindrance to students casting a vote, and how it can be presented requires further investigation.
- Very few issues in campaigning when compared to the elections.

Executive Election

Email Reminders

- March 9: Initial Joint Email Blast
- March 12 1pm: Email reminder for Referendum
- March 12 5pm: Email reminder for Elections
- March 14 2pm: Email to counsellors, directors, and execs who haven't voted
- March 14 3pm: Email reminder for those who voted only one election
- March 19 1pm: Joint Email Reminder

Referendum



Vertical line = email blast to those who haven't voted

Technical, Ballot, User Reported Issues

- None!
- Ever since issue with alias emails was fixed in Oct 2025, no issue with not being to vote has occurred!
- Few requests to remove votes, both in election and referendum, for various reasons.

Email blasts

Effective, but leads to certain students unsubscribing.

- Extremely problematic for 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	Number of Unsubscribes
Already unsubscribed earlier	842
Special Plebiscite (SSMU Constitution)	15
Unsubscribes from other elections	12
SSMU Executive Elections & Winter Referendum	33
Unsubscribes from other elections	7
Special Referendum (SSMU Constitution)	17
Number of NEW unsubscribes due to elections this semester	107

Getting out the vote

- Focus on BIG raffle prizes.
 - Two (2) \$355 prizes, equivalency to a full year of SSMU + services fees for a full-time student
 - Ten (10) Chef on Call Vouchers, thanks to the DRO
- More focus on tabling this election compared to Fall Referendum. Stickers and timbits available.
 - Thank you Seraphina, Susan, and EA staff for all your help tabling.
 - Tabling on most days of polling period.
 - Locations: UC, Redpath-McLennan, Music
 - Few complaints regarding elections were filed during tabling sessions
- Emailed around 200 professors with large lecture classes throughout different faculties - **professors were receptive**
- Listservs submitted to AUS, SUS, CSUS, MPSA, PSSA and more - advertising about debate and elections
- Emails to clubs, faculty councils, councillors, directors about the election.
- Social media outreach - updates on voter turnout, faculty turnout, and thank you to Minaal for the reels.
- Ask us anything on Instagram - 1 question from Susan :(
- Email blasts are more creative now

Voter Turnout by Faculty and Program

SSMU Executive Elections &
SSMU Winter Referendum 2026



Submitted by Mike Lee, Chief Returning Officer
Updated as of [2026-04-06](#)

Voter Turnout for the Executive Elections & Winter Referendum - by Faculty and Program

Turnout by Faculty

Rank	Faculty	Electors	Election		Referendum		Avg.
			Voted	%	Voted	%	%
1	FACULTY OF LAW	617	231	37.4	228	37	37.2
2	SCHOOL OF PHYS & OCC THERAPY	225	93	41.3	35	15.6	28.45
3	INTERFACULTY, B.A. & SC.	620	190	30.6	120	19.4	25
4	FACULTY OF ARTS	7556	2057	27.2	1402	18.6	22.9
5	FACULTY OF SCIENCE	4934	1271	25.8	946	19.2	22.5
6	SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC	437	99	22.7	83	19	20.85
7	FACULTY OF ENGINEERING	3647	921	25.3	569	15.6	20.45
8	DESAUTELS FACULTY MANAGEMENT	2361	557	23.6	255	10.8	17.2
9	FACULTY OF EDUCATION	1615	312	19.3	203	12.6	15.95
10	INGRAM SCHOOL OF NURSING	844	136	16.1	123	14.6	15.35
11	FAC DENTAL MEDICINE & ORAL HS	169	24	14.2	23	13.6	13.9
12	FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HLTH SCI	931	128	13.7	102	11	12.35
	TOTAL	23957	6019	25.1	4089	17.1	21.1

Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>50 students)

Faculty	Program	Electors	Voted	% Voted
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	ENVIRONMENT	62	27	43.5
SCHOOL OF PHYS & OCC THERAPY	PHYSICAL THERAPY NP	107	46	43
SCHOOL OF PHYS & OCC THERAPY	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY NP	114	47	41.2
FACULTY OF ARTS	HISTORY	307	118	38.4
Faculty	Program	Electors	Voted	% Voted
FACULTY OF ARTS	STATISTICS	93	13	14
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	KINDERGARTEN & ELEMENTARY ED	403	55	13.6
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HLTH SCI	MEDICINE	913	123	13.5
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION	230	26	11.3
INGRAM SCHOOL OF NURSING	INTEGRATED NURSING	566	60	10.6

Programs with highest and lowest turnout (>50 students)

Referendum

Faculty	Program	Electors	Voted	% Voted
FACULTY OF LAW	LAW	612	226	36.9
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MUSIC	PERFORMANCE VOICE	54	16	29.6
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	MEDICAL PREPARATORY	93	26	28
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	ENVIRONMENT	62	17	27.4
FACULTY OF ARTS	RELIGIOUS STUDIES	52	14	26.9

Faculty	Program	Electors	Voted	% Voted
DESAUTELS FACULTY MANAGEMENT	FINANCE	894	80	8.9
FACULTY OF SCIENCE	STATISTICS	56	5	8.9
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	KINDERGARTEN & ELEMENTARY ED	403	35	8.7
FACULTY OF ARTS	STATISTICS	93	8	8.6
FACULTY OF EDUCATION	PHYSICAL AND HEALTH	230	17	7.4

Thank you!

Questions?

Mike Lee, Chief Returning Officer
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