Conseil d'administration
Board of Directors

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.
Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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AÉUM SSMU

SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

September 15, 2026

APPROVED

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) was held by teleconference and in the SSMU Boardroom on Tuesday, September 15 at 18:00.

Present: Hamza Abu Alkhair (Director), Keith Babayon (Director), Simon Ngassam (Director), Meghan Lai (Director), Harry Wang (Director,) Jason Wang (Director), Rhys Jones (Director), Ammar Lila (Director), Seraphina Crema-Black (Director), Paul Prendergast (Director), Acadia Knickerbocker (Officer, non-voting), Maggie Tang (Officer, non-voting), Joshua Chin (Alumni Representative, non-voting), Olivia Ginnetti (Governance Affairs Coordinator, non-voting), Melissa Proietti (General Manager, non-voting), James Reid (Speaker, non-voting), Brigitta Chan (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Alissa Gharzouzi (Recording Secretary, non-voting).

Late: Yasmin Beeai (Deputy Speaker, non-voting)

1. Call to Order: **18:13**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:13.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair gives the land acknowledgment.

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'AÉUM reconnaît que l'Université McGill est située sur le territoire traditionnel et non cédé des nations Anishinaabeg et Haudenosaunee. L'AÉUM 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'AÉUM s'engage à respecter les lois et coutumes traditionnelles de ces territoires.

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

The agenda is distributed.

The Chair notes that the Secretariat would favour moving the confidential session earlier in the agenda.

President Abu Alkhair moves to bring the confidential session forward on the agenda.

The Chair asks whether there are any changes or additions to the agenda.

Officer Knickerbocker moves to add a discussion item entitled "Student Group Workshops" to the public agenda.

The Chair asks whether there are any further changes or additions to the agenda.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to adopting the agenda as amended.

Seeing none, the agenda is adopted as amended.

4. Confidential Session:
    a. There is a Confidential Session this evening
5. Legislative Council Motions not Disallowed
    a. Confirm the Council Representatives (Director Ngassam, Director Babayon) - **APPROVED**

The Chair notes that the Secretariat requires a motion to confirm the Council representatives as Directors.

Director Ngassam moves to add a motion to confirm the Council representatives as Directors, seconded by Director Babayon.

The addition is approved unanimously.

6. Minutes for Approval
    a. Board of Directors Public Minutes 2026-07-21 - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Minutes are distributed.

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The Chair asks whether there are any proposed changes to the Minutes.

Seeing none, the Chair asks if any are opposed to approving the Minutes.

Seeing none, the Minutes have been approved unanimously.

b. Board of Directors Public Minutes 2026-08-18 - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Minutes are distributed.

The Chair asks whether there are any proposed changes to the Minutes.

Seeing none, the Chair asks if any are opposed to approving the Minutes.

Seeing none, the Minutes have been approved unanimously.

7. Announcements
    a. Welcome to new Board members! (Speaker Reid)

The Chair welcomes the new Board members.

b. Closing of the Accounting Books for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (Director J. Wang)

Director Jason Wang announces that the external audit for the 2025-2026 fiscal year began that morning and that the accounting books are finalized. Outstanding payments can no longer be charged to the previous year's operating fund; all expenses must now be allocated to the current fiscal year's budget.

c. Announcement by Internal Counsel and Corporate Secretary

Internal Counsel Glaser introduces herself as the SSMU's Internal Counsel and Corporate Secretary, explaining her role as legal counsel and head of governance. She welcomes the incoming Directors and thanks them for volunteering their time. She notes that the Board of Directors is the Society's highest authority and emphasizes the significant responsibilities associated with serving on the Board. She will deliver a formal presentation at the next meeting on Directors' fiduciary duties, confidentiality obligations, due diligence, and other responsibilities. She emphasizes the duty of care owed to fellow Directors and McGill students and encourages members to approach their responsibilities seriously, exercise patience, and engage in constructive disagreement rather than arguing or agreeing for its own sake. She reminds Directors that they are colleagues working together to serve students and that the meeting also constitutes a workplace for some participants. She stresses the importance of treating everyone with respect. She asks Directors to sign their non-disclosure agreements and emphasizes

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that confidential information must remain confidential, including when speaking with individuals who may already know its contents but were not present at the meeting. She further reminds Directors that the Board speaks with one voice and that members must uphold its collective decisions, even when their individual positions differ.

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Seeing none, Announcement 7c is concluded.

Recess: **19:00**

President Abu Alkhair moves to recess for 10 minutes, seconded by Director Harry Wang.

The Chair asks whether there is any opposition.

Seeing none, the meeting is recessed for 10 minutes.

Call to Order: **19:13**

8. Motions for Approval
    a. MOTION REGARDING INTERNAL TRANSFER TO GENDER AFFIRMING CARE FUND FROM OPERATING FUND (Director J. Wang, Director Lai) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Jason Wang presents Motion 8a, seeking retroactive approval of a $20,000 transfer from the previous fiscal year's operating fund to the QUIPS Fund. The previous gender-affirming care insurance agreement with Alumo was signed without a corresponding student fee, requiring payment from the operating budget and ultimately leading to the plan's cancellation. The SSMU subsequently agreed to reimburse affected students for eligible treatments and surgeries. These reimbursements were later paid from the QUIPS Fund to alleviate pressure on the operating budget, although this use did not reflect the fee's intended purpose. A $20,000 transfer to replenish the QUIPS Fund was budgeted in the previous fiscal year but was not completed. The motion seeks the Board's approval to address this outstanding transfer.

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Director Jones asks about the total expenditure on gender-affirming care insurance, the proportion represented by the $20,000 transfer, and the amount drawn from the QUIPS Fund.

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Director Jason Wang responds that the expenses date back two fiscal years and that the $20,000 amount was determined and budgeted at that time. He refers members to previous documentation for the discussion supporting that amount.

Director Crema Black asks whether a fee question is planned for the next referendum.

Director Jason Wang clarifies that a gender-affirming care fee was approved the previous year and that coverage through Alumo is currently in effect.

Director Jones asks whether the optional $10 fee will cover payments to Alumo after opt-outs and whether this will be the final transfer from the SSMU operating budget.

Director Jason Wang confirms that this is the final transfer from the operating fund to the QUIPS Fund. He explains that Alumo charges only for students who remain enrolled, so students who opt out are not billed and costs correspond to fee participation.

The Chair asks whether there are any further questions.

Seeing none, the Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to passing the motion by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8a is passed by unanimous consent.

b. Motion Regarding the Approval of Movie Night Budget (Officer Tang, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Tang presents Motion 8b, seeking approval of the budget in Appendix A for movie nights on September 22 and 29. She notes that Legislative Council unanimously approved the initiative.

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Seeing none, the Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to approving the motion by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8b is approved by unanimous consent.

c. Motion to run a special referendum for a plebiscite question on the McGill Yearbook (Director Abu Alkhair, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

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President Abu Alkhair presents Motion 8c, noting that it was previously discussed at Legislative Council. He anticipates its launch the following day and confirms that the wording was recently drafted and translated.

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Director Ngassam asks about the anticipated turnout percentage.

President Abu Alkhair hopes that Activities Night and the upcoming movie nights will increase student engagement, indicating that he would be satisfied with a turnout of 20%.

Director Jones asks when voting will begin.

President Abu Alkhair confirms that voting will open the following day.

Director Ngassam asks whether the elections team has concerns about voter fatigue from multiple ballots, particularly its potential impact on turnout and quorum for the fall referendum.

President Abu Alkhair acknowledges this concern, noting that the special referendum, a potential General Assembly motion, and the fall referendum could result in three separate ballots. The Chief Returning Officer has recommended sending only one Simply Voting reminder for the special referendum, rather than the usual two or three, to reduce the risk of students opting out of communications.

Director Jones asks why the question cannot be included in the fall referendum, suggesting that there is no significant urgency.

President Abu Alkhair explains that an earlier vote would allow the project to proceed during the current academic year, although its initial implementation would be less developed than if a full summer and semester were available for preparation.

Officer Knickerbocker and the Deputy Speaker leave the meeting at 19:42.

Director Ngassam supports including the question in the fall referendum, noting that repeated ballots may reduce willingness to vote even among students who remain subscribed to Simply Voting emails.

Director Jones asks when the fall referendum is scheduled.

Director Crema Black asks how much planning time is required to produce the yearbook.

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President Abu Alkhair outlines the remaining work, including budgeting, determining the project's scope, consultations, potential hiring or contracting, design, and production. Printing quotes indicate a minimum turnaround of six weeks, and the yearbook must be completed in time for convocation.

The Chair indicates that the voting period will be October 6, 2026.

Director Crema Black asks whether beginning planning in early November would be significantly more difficult than starting the following week.

President Abu Alkhair confirms that it would.

The Chair asks whether there are any further questions.

Seeing none, the Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Director Crema Black considers the interval between the proposed vote and the fall referendum sufficient to avoid significant voter fatigue.

Director Harry Wang suggests that a potential General Assembly vote is likely to attract substantial participation. He notes that the previous winter referendum barely reached quorum despite a lengthy interval following the fall referendum and encourages greater efforts to promote voting.

Director Jones clarifies that the proposed plebiscite would not establish a fee and asks whether a successful result would lead to a funding question in the fall referendum. He suggests that this would justify holding the plebiscite earlier, whereas postponing a fee question until winter would prolong uncertainty for planning.

President Abu Alkhair asks whether concerns about voter fatigue relate to ballot length or multiple voting periods. Director Ngassam clarifies that his concern is the number of separate ballots. He explains that the plebiscite would gather student input before Council considers funding options. These could include a student fee, operating funds, or sponsorship, drawing on the SSMU Handbook's sponsorship model.

Director Jason Wang clarifies that the plebiscite is intended to assess demand for a yearbook and students' willingness to pay. Decisions about funding through a fee, sponsorship, or direct sales would follow that consultation.

Director Jones reiterates that, if a fee is required to complete the yearbook within the academic year, including it in the fall referendum would provide greater certainty and support holding the plebiscite now.

APPROVED

President Abu Alkhair agrees that a fall fee question should remain an option, subject to Council's direction and consultation regarding the budget. He notes that fees approved in the fall take effect in winter, while those approved in winter take effect the following fall.

The Chair asks whether there is any further discussion.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to passing the motion by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8c is passed by unanimous consent.

d. Motion to approve the $2396.08 expense for the Video Matrix Rack through the Capital Expenditure Fund. (Director J.Wang, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Jason Wang presents Motion 8d, seeking approval of an unbudgeted expense to repair the video matrix rack at Gerts Bar, which is old, damaged, and non-compliant. He proposes funding the repairs through the Capital Expenditure Reserve Fund to reduce pressure on the operating fund.

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Director Prendergast asks what the video matrix rack is.

Director Jason Wang explains that it holds equipment associated with video displays, including television screens.

The Chair asks whether there are any further questions.

Seeing none, the Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to passing the motion by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8d is passed by unanimous consent.

e. Motion to approve the $9853.36 expense for the Audio Matrix Rack through the Capital Expenditure Fund. (Director J.Wang, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Jason Wang presents Motion 8e, seeking approval to update the audio matrix rack at Gerts Bar with functioning equipment. He clarifies that the proposed upgrades address poor audio quality and dysfunctional equipment rather than a safety or compliance concern and would improve the bar's operations.

APPROVED

The Chair opens the floor to questions.

Seeing none, the Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Seeing none, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to passing the motion by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8e is passed by unanimous consent.

f. Motion to add the changes to the committee terms of reference 8.4 as written in 9.a (Director Abu-Alkhair, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Following Discussion Item 9a, the Chair asks whether there is any opposition to passing Motion 8f by unanimous consent.

Seeing none, Motion 8f is passed by unanimous consent.

g. Motion to extend the VP Clubs & Services's deadline set in sections 4.10.c and 5.10.d to provide Workshops from (3) weeks to (6) weeks for the Fall 2026 workshop (Director H.Wang, Director Abu-Alkhair) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Following Discussion Point 9b.

Director Jones asks whether the proposed extension is permanent or limited to one year.

Director Harry Wang yields his time to Officer Knickerbocker.

Officer Knickerbocker clarifies that the extension applies only to the workshop in question and would not amend the Internal Regulations or affect future deadlines, including those in winter. She cites a precedent from the previous October, when the Board granted a one-time extension to the Vice-President Finance's deadline to submit a budget report. The proposed wording follows that motion.

President Abu Alkhair suggests specifying Fall 2026 workshops in the wording to clarify the extension's scope.

Director Harry Wang accepts the proposed wording as a friendly amendment.

The Chair asks whether there is any opposition to approving the motion as amended by unanimous consent.

APPROVED

Seeing none, Motion 8g is approved as amended by unanimous consent.

9. For Discussion
    a. Changes to Committee Terms of Reference 8.4 (Parliamentarian Chan)
        i. 8.4. The Nominating Committee shall consist of:
        a. the Parliamentarian (Committee Chair, non-voting);
        b. one (1) Equity Commissioner (non-voting, upon request)
        c. two (2) Councillors;
        d. ~~three (3)~~ Two (2) Directors;
        e. two (2) to four (4) Members at Large; and
        f. SSMU's Internal Counsel and Corporate Secretary (non-voting, upon request).

Parliamentarian Chan presents Discussion Point 9a concerning the Nominating Committee's composition under Section 8.4. Following consultation with President Abu Alkhair, she proposes replacing one Director with two Councillors to address potential conflicts of interest arising from Directors selecting other Board members and ensure that Directors do not constitute a majority. The proposal also responds to historical difficulties recruiting members at large to the Committee.

The Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Director Ngassam asks whether routing Nominating Committee recommendations through Legislative Council before Board approval has been considered.

Parliamentarian Chan indicates that a meeting is planned that week with Director Harry Wang, the former Parliamentarian, and Internal Counsel Glaser to discuss the nomination process.

Director Harry Wang explains that the proposed composition would provide a more balanced selection process and address concerns about Directors selecting other Directors. He also suggests considering the General Manager as a non-voting member, particularly for appointments such as Vice-President Finance that involve substantial collaboration with staff.

President Abu Alkhair suggests considering a separate Board committee for executive hiring, with potential participation from Councillors, Directors, the Comptroller, and the General Manager. Its composition and mandate could be considered separately from the current motion, with appropriate consultation.

Director Crema Black supports considering a dedicated Vice-President Finance hiring committee and asks whether the Nominating Committee could also establish a formal recruitment process for members at large across committees.

APPROVED

Director Harry Wang notes that recruiting and interviewing members at large for numerous committees would create a significant workload, particularly given the Nominating Committee's own recruitment challenges.

President Abu Alkhair moves to suspend the rules to add a motion adopting the amendments to Section 8.4 of the Committee Terms of Reference outlined in Discussion Point 9a, seconded by Director Ngassam.

The Chair asks whether there are any further points of discussion.

Seeing none, Discussion Point 9a is concluded.

b. Student Group Workshops (Officer Knickerbocker, Director H. Wang)

Officer Knickerbocker presents Discussion Point 9b, requesting an extension of the deadline for student group workshops from three to six weeks after the start of the semester. Activities Night, a vacancy in the Student Life Operations team, and staff illness have placed pressure on staff's ability to meet the deadline established in the Internal Regulations of Student Groups. The extension would allow the workshops to be rescheduled to October 2 and 3 if deemed necessary following a staff meeting on Thursday.

The Chair opens the floor to discussion.

Director Jones supports the extension but suggests holding finance and auditing training as early as possible to help new student group finance executives maintain adequate records before the first-semester audit.

Officer Knickerbocker explains that the workshops are returning to an in-person format and share a single University Centre booking. Holding finance training separately would incur nearly $4,000 in additional costs associated with security, cleaning, and staffing. She proposes distributing the finance workshop slides in advance and directing questions to the full-time Clubs and Services Finance Coordinator during the delay.

President Abu Alkhair supports providing materials in advance, suggesting that this would help participants prepare questions and reduce the volume of individual inquiries.

Director Harry Wang moves to extend the Vice-President Clubs and Services' deadline to provide workshops under Sections 4.10.c and 5.10.d from three weeks to six weeks, seconded by President Abu Alkhair.

APPROVED

The Chair asks whether there are any further points of discussion.

Seeing none, Discussion Point 9b is concluded.

10. Executive Committee Public Report 2026-09-15 – **RATIFIED**

President Abu Alkhair presents the report.

Director Ngassam raises concerns about potentially confidential information and suggests postponing the report to the end of the agenda.

Director Crema Black moves to amend the report, seconded by Director Ngassam.

The amendment is approved unanimously.

President Abu Alkhair confirms that he has reviewed the report and removed the dollar amounts.

The Chair asks whether there is any opposition to ratifying the report as amended.

Seeing none, the report is ratified as amended.

11. Motion to amend the Public Report to remove the hourly rates (Director Crema-Black, Director Ngassam) - **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Director Crema Black moves to amend the public report to remove the hourly rates, seconded by Director Ngassam.

The amendment is approved unanimously.

12. Adjournment: **19:54**

The Chair asks whether there is any outstanding business.

Seeing none, the Chair adjourns the meeting at 19:54.

APPROVED