Appendix A-1: MOTION REGARDING THE ACADEMIC BOYCOTT OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM EXCHANGE PROGRAM (“HUJI BOYCOTT”) 2026-09-28

Submitted for: 2026-09-14

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-IDYY-MM-DD-SIN (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Sumayya Kheireddine *Student, SSMU Member*	Current Status:	☐ FOR APPROVAL ☐ APPROVED ☐ POSTPONED ☐ COMMITTED ☐ NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Tameem Hartman *Student, SSMU Member*		

Issue

The Student Exchange Agreement between McGill University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem ("HUJI") is set to expire in 2028, with universities required to negotiate renewal terms nine months prior — i.e., by late 2027. This motion asks the SSMU General Assembly to compel the President and Vice President of University Affairs to advocate against renewal or reinstatement of the exchange program, consistent with SSMU's existing Policy Against Genocide in Palestine and the Policy on Harmful Military Technology.

Background and Rationale

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The proposed motion follows substantial student mobilization[1] in response to the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions, [2] specifically against McGill's institutional relationship with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem ("HUJI"). Israel's occupation of Palestine has continued for 77 years, and the last three years in particular have seen a genocide in Gaza that has damaged or destroyed 97% [3] of Gaza's educational infrastructure.[4] HUJI cannot be considered a bystander to this scholasticide [5] for the following reasons:

1. HUJI contributes directly to the Israeli military, hosting military training on campus and providing financial and academic support to soldiers—proclaiming itself as the university with the "most important ties and collaboration with the Israel Defence Force."[6]
2. HUJI's campus is built in part on illegally occupied Palestinian land.[7] Notably, one of its campuses in Mt. Scopus is located on UN-recognized illegally occupied Palestinian territory and has

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[1] Daoud, Jamal. "Commentary: Human Rights and the Ga." *The Tribune*, February 8, 2010. https://www.thetribune.ca/opinion/commentary-human-rights-and-the-ga/.
[2] "Academic Boycott," BDS Movement, accessed September 10, 2026, https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott.
[3] European Training Foundation, "Education and Employment in Gaza: Facts and Figures, February 2026," https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/ETF%20Education%20and%20employment%20in%20Gaza%20Report%20Feb%202026.pdf.
[4] Ahmed Al-Najjar, "Makeshift Gaza University Offers Chance to Resurrect Academic Studies," Al Jazeera, accessed September 10, 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/4/11/makeshift-gaza-university-offers-chance-to-resurrect-academic-studies.
[5] "UN Experts Deeply Concerned over 'Scholasticide' in Gaza | OHCHR," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed September 10, 2026, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza.
[6] "The Hebrew University in Times of War," Australian Friends of the Hebrew University, November 22, 2023, https://austfhu.org.au/when-duty-calls-the-hebrew-university-is-always-there/.
[7] Maya Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel: How Israeli Universities Deny Palestinian Freedom* (London: Verso, 2024); https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-203463/.

expanded into "expropriated" land from the Palestinian village of Issawiyyah.[8]

McGill is no stranger to academic boycotts. In 1985, McGill became the first university in Canada to divest from and adopt a boycott-related stance against companies and institutions tied to apartheid South Africa.[9] And so, in passing this motion, McGill would follow in its own footsteps, as well as the footsteps of the University of Amsterdam, who suspended its student exchange program with HUJI in March of 2025.[10]

Currently, McGill and HUJI maintain a Student Exchange Agreement, signed in December 2023, that permits each university to send and receive up to three full-year undergraduate students per year. The Agreement expires in 2028, with renewal terms due for negotiation by late 2027 — the decision this motion addresses.

This motion is consistent with, and fulfills, SSMU's existing policy commitments. The **Policy on Harmful Military Technology** (2024–2029) mandates that SSMU advocate for the cessation of harmful military research and any connection to the military-industrial complex at McGill; HUJI's direct role in training and equipping Israeli Offense Forces (IOF) personnel places it squarely within that mandate. The **Policy Against Genocide in Palestine** (2025–2028) requires SSMU to demand that McGill cut ties with institutions complicit in genocide, settler-colonialism, apartheid, or ethnic cleansing against Palestinians; HUJI's conduct as described above brings it within that demand. Taken together, these policies establish that SSMU

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[8] Bimkom, "Survey of Palestinian Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem 2013," 2014. https://bimkom.org/media/pages/archives/d16a4a78e2-1768309280/ej-survey_final-book-2014_eng.pdf.
[9] Sophie Durocher, "McGill Prend Position Contre l'apartheid," *The McGill Daily Francais Vol.75 No.031*, November 20, 1985, https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-mcgill-daily-francais-v75-n031-november-20-1985-12708/mode/2up.
[10] Hoger Onderwijs Persbureau, "Uva Halts Exchange with Israeli and Hungarian Institutions," *Erasmus Magazine*, December 19, 2025, https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2025/03/17/uva-halts-exchange-with-israeli-and-hungarian-institutions/.

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already *has* a mandate to pursue this academic boycott — this motion calls for the operationalization of that mandate specifically with respect to HUJI.

Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with SSMU's existing mandate to advocate against McGill's ties to institutions complicit in human rights violations, as established in the Policy Against Genocide in Palestine and the Harmful Military Technology Policy. It calls on SSMU elected representatives to represent the student body's position at the McGill Senate in support of the academic boycott of HUJI, consistent with these existing commitments.

Consultations Completed

Consultations occurred with the SSMU's External Affairs and University Affairs portfolio, the Governance Affairs Coordinator, and Internal Counsel.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Discrimination Concerns

A risk factor is that students from certain ethnic or linguistic backgrounds may perceive this motion as discriminatory. This is mitigated by the fact that the motion addresses the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as an institution — on the basis of its ties to the Israeli military and its role in the actions described in the Background section — rather than on the basis of the ethnic or national background of its students, faculty, or affiliates. On this basis, the motion is consistent with, rather than contrary to, SSMU's values regarding non-discrimination. This Motion is not intended to target individual students or student groups, but rather to focus solely on McGill's institutional relationships.

Staff and Volunteer Capacity

The communications and outreach obligations set out in "SSMU's Role" (member communications, faculty and departmental outreach, and Senate advocacy) fall within the existing scope of the relevant SSMU roles and do

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not require additional resources or a dedicated budget beyond ordinary operations.

Institutional Relationship

Advocacy of this kind may affect SSMU's working relationship with McGill administration in the near term. These are not easy conversations, and they can be quite polarizing and elicit strong feelings. However, we believe that approaching these issues with respectful dialogue and in the spirit of free expression should alleviate many concerns. This on its own, however, is not a reason to withhold action where the underlying position has student support and policy backing.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion receives a simple majority vote at the General Assembly, with a quorum of no less than 350 Members, it shall proceed to an online ratification process. The voting form shall be sent to members within 7 days, and the online voting period shall remain open for as long as deemed necessary by SSMU. Ratification shall be deemed successful under the same thresholds: a simple majority vote, with participation from no less than 10% of SSMU's constituent body.

If ratified, this motion shall take and maintain effect on the day following ratification and shall remain in force until the earlier of either (a) a decision not to renew the Memorandum of Agreement between McGill and HUJI, or (b) September 28, 2031, five years after passage, consistent with the standard applicability period for SSMU motions.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the SSMU compels the SSMU President and Vice-President of University Affairs to present, no later than the Senate meeting of January 13, 2027, a motion mirroring the language of this motion, calling for the student exchange program between McGill University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) to neither be renewed nor reinstated.

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Be it further resolved that SSMU encourage all faculty and departmental student associations to endorse and uphold the academic boycott.

Results of the Vote	☐ In favour ()
	☐ Opposed ()
	☐ Abstain ()

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