Concordia Student Union – Council of Representatives

CSU Special Council Meeting – Agenda
Wednesday, November 6, 2019
CSU Conference Room, 18h30, S.G.W. Campus

<u>**Agenda**</u>

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Referendum Question to Increase Fee Levy
4. Adjournment

Meeting officially called by CSU Councillors Ahmadou Sakho, Christiane Sakr and Salman Fahim Syed, as per By-Law 6.6.3.

1. Call to Order

Meeting is called to order at **18h51**.

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. TiohEá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

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2. Roll Call

Council Chairperson: Caitlin Robinson
Council Minute Keeper: S Shivaane

Executives present for the meeting were: Patrick Quinn (Academic & Advocacy Coordinator), Désirée Blizzard (Finance Coordinator), Chris Kalafatidis (General Coordinator), Marin Algattus (Internal Affairs Coordinator),

Councillors present for the meeting were: Hannah Jamet-Lange (Arts & Science), Ahmadou Sakho (Arts & Science), Maha Siddiqui (Arts & Science), Salman Fahim Syed (Gina Cody School of Engineering & Computer Science) Elizabeth Tasong (Arts & Science), Amman Houara (Arts & Science), Esther Morand (Arts & Science),

Executives absent for the meeting were: Melize Ferrus (Loyola Coordinator), Eduardo Malorni (Student Life Coordinator), Isaiah Joyner (External & Mobilization Coordinator)

Councillors absent for the meeting were: Nicholas Hamel (Arts & Science), Christiane Sakr (Arts & Science), Leigh Kusaj (Arts & Science), Elias Huckel-Fidalgo (Arts & Science), Victoria Pesce (John Molson School of Business), James Hanna (Gina Cody School of Engineering & Computer Science), Naomi Barney Purdie (Arts & Science), Lindsay Surerus (Arts & Science), Arad Andrew Banis (John Molson School of Business), Jarrad Haas (Fine Arts)

Hannah Jamet-Lange moves to excuse Isaiah Joyner, Eduardo Malorni and Melize Ferrus from meeting. Seconded by **Marin Algattus**.
Motion carries.

3. Referendum Question to Increase Fee Levy

Ahmadou Sakho: We called this meeting to talk about this referendum question we're interested in pursuing. "Do you agree to increase the existing $0.30 fee-levy of the non-academic clubs by $0.08 per credit to a total of $0.38 per credit, effective winter 2020?" *We*'re going through a lot of financial difficulties, and these are scars we've inherited form the past two years. We are in deficit due to two reasons. In 2017, Clubs had too much money and had a large surplus. The executives at the time decided to decrease their fee levy. They expected a surplus in 2018, but that didn't happen because the school also decided to cut funds. Hence, there was a deficit. In the following year, they tried to do a budget-balancing. This was a lot of internal restructuring, so students didn't absorb the costs. It didn't save us due to fiscal mismanagement and a lot of mistakes.

Marin Algattus: The consequence is that we had a smaller budget. In last year's budget, external financing was accounted for but planned external budget is not concrete because they still needed to apply and receive from external funding. They budgeted badly. They had a $90k deficit in Actuals. The measures we took included detailed budget approvals and budget considerations. But we have no more money.

Salman Fahim Syed: The amount $0.08 was decided because we have an increase in the number of clubs, and we are still getting applications for clubs. An increase in fee levy by 8 cents a credit will bring in $59k, which makes up for the difference in Clubs budget from 2018/2019 and 2019/2020.

Maha Siddiqui: Clubs bring a lot of benefits to students. For us to fully carry out our mandate, we need this fee levy increase. Once those funds are allocated, we will ensure that clubs create a post-mortem report on what the funds are used for. On Sep 16, Policy met, and we went over the policy on clubs where we cemented Policy 4.2.4 for Clubs.

Maha Siddiqui presents the following referendum. Seconded by **Désirée Blizzard**.

WHEREAS Clubs and Spaces have a budget of $224, 000 this 2019-2020 academic year;
WHEREAS Clubs and Spaces has a $1, 505 deficit this 2019-2020 academic year;
WHEREAS Clubs and Spaces is no longer able to fund student clubs this year;
WHEREAS CSU seeks "to promote the educational, political, social, recreational and cultural interests of its members" (as per by-law 2.1.a);
WHEREAS CSU endeavours to "to consider and support activities which enhance the quality of life for students of Concordia University" (as per by-law 2.1.i);

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approves the following question for referendum:

"Do you agree to increase the existing $0.30 fee-levy of the non-academic clubs by $0.08 per credit to a total of $0.38 per credit, effective winter 2020?"

Elizabeth Tasong: In the long term, will this fix the deficit?

Ahmadou Sakho: The way we planned it; we will not have a deficit any more. This fund will help us fill the gap between this and last year. At our last meeting, we gave $3000 from next semester's budget to clubs, and we still couldn't satisfy those clubs. We will back the amount we provide clubs with policies we're working on right now.

Marin Algattus: We also tried to make a sustainable solution by looking at numbers from last year. When calculating numbers, eight cents was better than five cents. We can afford to support clubs the way we want to.

Alex: Is this a fee levy that students can opt out of?

Salman Fahim Syed: No.

Alex: You can't opt out of the CSU fee levy?

Salman Fahim Syed: No.

Esther Morand: Will you come back to the current fee levy number?

Ahmadou Sakho: We plan for this to be permanent.

Salman Fahim Syed: If we see any changes, we can always reallocate. But for now, it will be permanent.

Ahmadou Sakho: In previous years, there's been a lot of switches in fee levy. A significant portion of our money was from the university, but then we were cut. We have the highest number of clubs in CSU history. We still have new clubs we have to account for.

Désirée Blizzard: The highest fee levy for clubs was in 2014 with $0.30, but we only had 50 clubs. Now, there's a strain in your committee. This should be a sustainable solution.

Salman Fahim Syed: This will cater to sports clubs, not just cultural clubs.

Chris Kalafatidis: I want to voice my concerns. We're adding this question mid-election, and it's bad practice. I believe we have to not withstand?

Chairperson: There's nothing about deadlines in the by-laws.

Salman Fahim Syed: We spoke to the CEO, and there's no issue with this.

Chris Kalafatidis: It says it needs to be sent to Policy.

Chairperson: That's for non-CSU matters.

Chris Kalafatidis: You are in an unfortunate position. We're not exactly the most organised union; It's not your fault. This speaks to how we need stronger policies.

Esther Morand: How many clubs are there this year?

Marin Algattus: About 160. Last year there were 120.

Esther Morand: How many are we expecting for Winter?

Salman Fahim Syed: We still have 5 in our list. We don't know how many applications there will be then.

Elizabeth Tasong: There was a $103k funding cut? How much funding does the university give you now?

Maha Siddiqui: 0.

Marin Algattus: The university realised they over-allocated.

Maha Siddiqui: We were hit doubly hard. First, with the fee levy decrease and then the university. $6k in deficit turned into $80k.

Elizabeth Tasong: Will this rise?

Salman Fahim Syed: We're going to put things in policy based on accountability. We're going to take precautions with financial management.

Elizabeth Tasong: So there are many more clubs. We can't accommodate all of the clubs.

Maha Siddiqui: That's why this increase is calculated. We have seen a dramatic increase. We need a proportional equation. It's not fair for us to nitpick.

Amman Houara: I'm wondering how the university cut us off. Don't you think this referendum to create a fee levy will remove any opportunity to re-discuss this with the university?

Ahmadou Sakho: The univeristy removed funding because we didn't need that money at the time. They took it out retroactively after they planned the 2018-19 budget.

Marin Algattus: The school didn't take away $100k. We have a fee levy. When we decreased it, they realise they gave us $100k more than they were supposed to.

Amman Houara: But it wasn't a mistake. When they stopped, there were consequences. Creating a fee levy will give a message that we have the means to pay for clubs.

Maha Siddiqui: Them taking away $130k is technically illegal, but pursuing that would be very expensive. We can work in tandem with the administration. Now the number of clubs has doubled. A lot of these clubs have sought out sponsorships from the Dean of Students. We've been referring them everywhere and elsewhere.

Chris Kalafatidis: We need better financial policy.

Hannah Jamet-Lange: I like the idea of clear policy. How will you make sure clubs follow this? It's putting a lot of strain on people running a club.

Maha Siddiqui: Being in a club is a valuable experience. When you are asking for a club, you need to sign a club's contract. It's strict. We give them responsibility. It's only an increase in workload at the end of the year for the director.

Hannah Jamet-Lange: Will you help them with that?

Marin Algattus: Yes. Right now, we have 20 new clubs. We sit down with them for an hour and help them through the paperwork.

Maha Siddiqui: We plan to do another workshop where we provide them with tools. Marin created this amazing workshop on how to secure sponsorships and how to a budget.

Shivaane: 50 clubs in 2014 to 100+ clubs in 2019 is a drastic increase. I know there's going to be stricter policies but was there a reason for that increase?

Salman Fahim Syed: It was due to a rise in student interest and awareness. In the past, students were not actively coming to CSU to create clubs. After 2014 people have been more active.

Patrick Quinn: Is there any rule in putting a maximum on how much you can give to a club?

Marin Algattus: We're already going to review the club's policy. It's all going to be reviewed. Depends on what Policy committee decides.

Salman Fahim Syed: We'll work with the Finance Coordinator on how there'll be a cap for each club.

Amman Houara calls to question. **Désirée Blizzard** seconds.

Salman Fahim Syed: Can we vote on this?

Chairperson: It doesn't benefit you.

Désirée Blizzard: Every time a councillor presents an issue, is that a conflict of interest?

Maha Siddiqui: Any councillor can support it and present it, but we'll already know what their vote would be.

Salman Fahim Syed: But if we set that precedent, every presentation a councillor presents, they have to rescind.

Chairperson: If the three don't vote, we don't have quorum.

Marin Algattus: They're not doing this for any financial gain.

Hannah Jamet-Lange: It's not COI.

Elizabeth Tasong: It's not COI.

Chairperson: If you believe it's a COI, you can abstain.

Salman Fahim Syed: This doesn't benefit us. It helps the students and students' space.

VOTE
For: 6
Opposed: 1
Abstentions: 0
Motion Carries

Patrick Quinn: We're presenting a consultation on systemic racism. Isaiah will be doing that. We will be sending out a statement. I'm thinking of bringing a motion about PEQ.

Marin Algattus: We might also do a General Assembly about this.

4. Adjournment

Hannah Jamet-Lange moves to adjourn.
Seconded by **Salman Fahim Syed**

Meeting adjourned at **19h36.**