

Concordia Student Union - Council Of Representatives

CSU Special Council Meeting

Wednesday, July 03, 2024

Via Zoom, 18h30

1) **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson calls the meeting to order at 18h41.

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.

2) **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) Approval of Previous Minutes
- b) Chairperson's Report
- c) Executive Reports
- d) Ratification of Committee Reports

Kareem Rahaman motions to ratify all items under the consent agenda.

Seconded by **Elsa Younes**. Motion passes unanimously.

3) **PRESENTATIONS AND GUEST SPEAKERS**

- a) CSU Operations Budget 2024-2025

Soud El Ferjani: I just wanted to give a preview and because I don't have all the numbers, I won't be approving everything today. I will show the revenue and expenses of the CSU. Our revenues for this year are 2.2 million and for last year it was 2.3 million. Our revenues from the fees are pretty similar to last year so we're still around 2.1 million. As for HOJO, the budget this year is going to be 220K, last year was 234K, and after removing all the expenses, we are left with a

deficit of 20K. For the Advocacy, the numbers are not 100% accurate, but the budget is estimated to be 400K, which is a drop from last year's 498K, but it is expected to be fixed. For LIC, the income has dropped to 286K from 375K, but again I still don't have all the numbers, but we will go over the actual numbers in the next meeting. For clubs, it was 285K this year compared to 295K from last year, the difference is not too big and the deficit is close to last year too. For the total, we have a surplus of 26K. Last year, we budgeted for a surplus of 69K. Overall, I think we're good, but once we have all the numbers, it would be more accurate.

Drew Sylver: Could we go over the 4 subsections back in the consent agenda thoroughly rather than approving them all at once?

Michelle Lam: Typically, we don't go through them one by one, as councillors are usually expected to read them before the meeting and I did open the floor up to council for an opportunity to ask questions, but there was no request to speak on it, which was why we moved on. If you have any concern about any one of them, you can reach out to the executive in charge of the document for clarification, but as they are approved and ratified already, we typically don't go back to keep the efficiency.

Elsa Younes: I was wondering if we will get a full breakdown of the budget, for HOJO specifically?

Kareem Rahaman: As we are still in the process of hiring and restructuring, we don't have the full numbers right now, but we will have it. This is just the summary version of it, as we are still waiting on the full numbers.

4) APPOINTMENTS

a) SSAELC Fund Committee

Michelle Lam: Executives, have you determined the chair for the SSAELC Fund Committee?

Kareem Rahaman: It would be me.

Michelle Lam: Can you explain what the SSAELC Fund is and the time commitment?

Kareem Rahaman: A fund that was created a couple of years ago that was transitioned into the Student Space Accessibility Education and Legal Contingency Fund. It's a fund that collects and accrues interest for student projects in these specific areas. The time commitment is 5 times throughout the year for 30 minutes each and the responsibility is to approve things that were already approved by Council. We have a lawyer, professor, and general manager that sits on the committee and what we do is make sure the council follows the rules before we put the project there.

Michele Lam: How many councillors are you looking for on the committee?

Kareem Rahaman: One.

Drew Sylver: Can we go into depth about the SSAELC Fund committee?

Kareem Rahaman: Basically a pool of funding money that is distributed to different student projects. Most of them are tied up in furniture funds, food sustainability funds and things like that.

Drew Sylver: Can I put my name tentatively on there?

Michelle Lam: There is only one position and there are three councillors interested in joining the SSAELC Fund, so if you'd like to nominate yourself tonight, you will all give a brief motivation and then council will vote.

Drew Sylver, Elsa Younes, Dani Bobrowski nominate themselves. Seconded by **Orly Wazana**.

Michelle Lam: Give us a brief summary of why you want to join the committee.

Dani Bobrowski: I would like to join this committee because I want to make sure that large amounts to be approved are in line with the CSU ethics and guidelines and I think that it's something I am equipped to do.

Drew Sylver: I think it's very important, there is much needed oversight and I would like to do the best I can to represent the 34000 students that we represent as effectively as possible with the necessary oversight needed and that is why I think I will do well in this position.

Elsa Younes: So first I'm in Building Engineering so I love buildings and I think it's very important that all these large amounts of money is spent correctly and I think I'm capable of that because I was the president of the ECA last year, so I've dealt with budget, finances, money, all of that and It's very important to be on this committee and I'll put the time to work with people in the committee.

Michelle Lam: I ask everyone to message me one by one to who you would like to appoint to the committee.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote.

Michelle Lam: In a vote of 7-6-2, Elsa has been appointed to the SSAELC Fund committee.

Elsa Younes has been appointed.

b) Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL)

Maria Chitoroaga: CCSL is Concordia body committee where there's the same seat for students as well as for Concordia admin and Concordia representatives

on their sides. It's a Concordia Community where you meet up to look at student projects and decide which project gets funding, where there are sub-committees each person is appointed to. Most big student projects apply for funding for CCSL. We meet once or twice a month, depending on the subcommittee you end up joining. The workload is not too heavy or light because you will have to review funding and project applications. There are spots for 2 councillors and 2 executive spots.

Kareem Rahaman motions to appoint **Maria Chitoroaga** and **Moad Alhjoor** to CCSL. Seconded by **Elsa Younes**. Objected by **Drew Sylver**.

Drew Sylver: So my objection is because I do have a belief that something happened over the past couple of days that was quite abhorrent. I'm sorry to do this here, but we're going to. This is not a point of order, but this is an objection regarding the official CSU statement put out on Canada Day. The statement put out was not only offensive but deeply anti-Canadian. This puts in jeopardy the very credibility of this establishment and for what. Any CSU account, profile, email, phone number, etc. is releasing the statement that they are releasing on behalf of the students, hence the Concordia Student Union. All 34000 students and this is why I really need to push this. And this does kind of appear to be a small radical minority, which does kind of seemingly have or is a proponent of divisive, inflammatory exclusionary and downright hateful rhetoric, which clearly looks like it's trumping the views of the actual population of the 34000 students. Moreover, I don't actually just call on these two, but I do call on every single executive who is responsible for this, not the ones who are not, but those who are to resign. I apologize, but that is my objection.

Michelle Lam: Appreciate you bringing this up, but we are discussing the Concordia Council on Student Life. This sounds like a conversation that should be happening outside of Council, but I will give the executive to provide one response and we will go back to discussing the committee.

Kareem Rahaman: The CSU has a law firm and I can guarantee you that this statement was within our policy and nothing was wrong with it. We ran this by the

law firm. You are on the board of the CSU and you are also represented by this law firm. This was a decision made by the law firm as well. We were within our policies. Coming to a council meeting and demanding that these people resign from their jobs without giving any proof or substance that we've breached a policy is an abuse of power and extremely disrespectful.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote.

11 YES

4 NO

Drew Sylver and **Aron Kessel** vote no.

Maria Chitoroaga and **Moad Alhjoog** are appointed to the Concordia Council on Student Life.

Michelle Lam: There are two open seats for councillors. Is there anyone who would like to nominate themselves?

Elsa Younes nominates themselves. Seconded by **Michael Lecchino**.

Elsa Younes: First, I am familiar with the CCSL. I've attended one meeting, but I wasn't allowed to attend the rest. I think GCS representation in this committee has been really, really bad and that's the main reason why I want to be in this committee as a GCS councillor and we have good projects and I am very interested in contributing to that committee.

Aaron Rosenbaum nominates themselves. Seconded by **Kareem Rahaman**.

Aaron Rosenbaum: I think it's important for students to be represented and as a councillor, I want to represent the people that voted me in.

Elsa Younes and **Aaron Rosenbaum** are appointed to the CCSL. Voted in unanimously.

c) CSU Community Action Fund (CAF)

Danna Ballantyne: The CAF is generally run by the external executive. It exists to offer funding to Concordia and external community-led initiatives that are aligned with the CSU position books. It's an opportunity to help grassroots organizing within the community. We are looking for two or three councillors and the time commitment is once a month.

Jenin Alafranji, Drew Sylver, Salma Hashem, Maryam Mouhammed, and Anastasia Zorchinsky nominate themselves. Seconded by **Leen Al Hijjawi**.

Jenin Alafranji: I'm very passionate about helping underfunded grassroots community groups and I feel like there's a lot I can learn from the people in the committee and a lot that I can contribute to.

Drew Sylver: I think it's important as a councillor because the community surrounding the school is as important as the school and being able to be involved and making sure things are funded is very important to me, as well as the experiences that will be gained, alongside the existing knowledge I have going into this.

Salma Hashem: I would love to be with community-led initiatives and help underfunded move to meet their financial targets.

Maryam Mouhammed: That committee would be an opportunity for me to be more involved to have an important role in helping people financially.

Anastasia Zorchinsky: Hi guys, I want to run because I'd love to help the community and especially grass-root initiatives and I think I represent very well in this committee.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote.

Salma Hashem, Anastasia Zorchinsky, and Jenin Alafranji are appointed to the Community Action Fund.

d) Library Services Fund Committee

Maria Chitoroaga: The Library Service Committee was founded in 2018 that is a fee-levy that students pay into between the CSU and the library, and the money is used to make the library better. We need 2 councillors and 2 executive positions are open to sit on this committee with the head librarian. Quarterly meeting to discuss projects that the Library Service Fund is working on and brainstorming new ideas. It's a fun space to come together as a student to think outside the box to improve the library. The work is not too crazy and a two-hour meeting every three months. I sat on it this past mandate and I would like to sit on the committee again because I'm an English Literature student I love this kind of this stuff and I think of going into a librarian career and I still am, so it's something that is near and dear to my heart as I care about the cause.

Orly Wazana: What projects did you work on in the past or will work on this year?

Maria Chitoroaga: This year we discussed adding furniture up the stairs in the library for people to sit down or rest and the Library Course Reserve is fully funded by the Library Services Fund as well as the individual study pods that we are working on right now. We are also working to add original artwork at Loyola's Vanier Library.

Aron Kessel: What exactly is a fee levy group?

Kareem Rahaman: Basically a small amount of money that is attached on top of your fees.

Maria Chitoroaga and **Leen Al Hijjawi** nominate themselves. Seconded by **Aron Kessel**.

Maria Chitoroaga: Like I explained a little bit before, it falls into what I do with what I do with my undergraduate studies. I love books and the library space and

it's an important community space, as well as something that I'm passionate about, so it would be nice to marry it into my executive work.

Leen Al Hijjawi: I'm in the library a lot because I am in political science and I love being comfortable in the library and I would love to add to the library to make it as comfortable as possible for the students to study or rest.

Objected by **Drew Sylver**.

Drew Sylver: Sorry, I just want to be consistent to make sure that it is known in the minutes that I do have an objection, only if it is the case that the two executives that are running were also involved in the statement that was released that I did call, I feel like I should be consistent if they call, if they were part of the executives that were involved, I obviously object.

Michelle Lam: As noted, does anyone have any objection that's relevant to their experience sitting on Library Services Fund Committee.

Leen Al Hijjawi: I personally don't feel like it is not relevant to this, but I don't mean to dismiss your feelings.

Maria Chitoroaga and **Leen Al Hijjawi** are appointed to the Library Service Fund.

Drew Sylver, Orly Wazana, Dani Bobrowski, Michael Lecchino, and Aaron Rosenbaum nominate themselves. Seconded by **Vanessa Massot**.

Drew Sylver: I think it is very important to be involved with and understand on a personal level the literature and the most important part of Concordia, the library. That's where you go to study, educate yourself, and learn new things. Being involved is so supremely important to best represent the populous. My background in political science, the literature in Political Science is fundamental, so on top of the things I've previously stated, being a Political Science major and not needing and having that experience is fundamental.

Orly Wazana: I would like to be part of the committee because I spend a lot of time in the library to study and it's a place where you should be able to focus and get inspired and I would love to contribute to ideas relating to that and I would also like to add more books related to different degrees; I'm in Engineering, so I would like to add more books related for that to give more resources to students, as well as making the library a more comfy, cozy place like Maria said.

Dani Bobrowski: I would like to nominate myself to this committee because I'm someone who values literature and spends a lot of time in the library and it's an important service for students and I would like to be on the committee to make decisions for it.

Michael Lecchino: Good evening everyone, I hope you all are having a wonderful evening and it's a pleasure seeing everyone. I worked with Maria last year in the Library Service Fund Committee and it was a pleasure. I will start by discussing my track record on the committee. I've worked on a number of projects including working on the Leisure and Wellness Section, a special section dedicated to fiction books, puzzles, and games to improve the experience of students in the library and it was fun seeing people using it and suggesting improvements. We also worked on the Art Vault partnership with the committee, which consists of artwork developed by students and alumni and it was great seeing Vanier Student Expo for the first time, dedicating certain walls to student artists and building out their career as future artists. Lastly, my mother has worked in the library for 39 years and I'm very thankful for having a strong bond to the library and hopefully looking forward to serving on the committee and improving for many students.

Aaron Rosenbaum: Hello, something that I'm passionate about is maybe a lot of students don't know about is that library service also goes to help the workshop space, where students can go use 3d printers can create 3d models, do loom work and it's a great thing, especially for Engineering students or all students. The people who work there are extremely kind to students and courteous to the

many students that deal with that, so putting in your work is important to me and I would love to do that.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote. **Dani Bobrowski** and **Michael Lecchino** are appointed to the Library Service Fund Committee.

e) Signing Officers

Kareem Rahaman: Signing officers are responsible for signing thousands of documents and contracts over the year and it is a big time commitment. You should commit to this role for the year and you are expected to read all of these documents. The busiest time might be May and 2-3 hours per week throughout the year and we are looking for 2 signing officers.

Drew Sylver and **Omar Hassanein** nominated themselves. Seconded by **Leen Al Hijjawi**. **Omar Hassanein** is appointed as a Signing Officer.

Drew Sylver: So when it comes to signing officers, there is a lot of oversight and I care deeply and persistently about it and I think that is important. It is a time commitment, but I am more than willing to commit that time for the oversight that the student union needs. That's why I think it's an important job to me and the union as a whole.

Omar Hassanein: Hi everyone, I'm interested so I can be involved with the CSU and be more invested in the way it operates, making the right decisions, which the CSU is doing right now.

Aron Kessel: Could you state your faculty and program?

Omar Hassanein: I'm in Computer Engineering and Gina Cody Faculty.

Drew Sylver: and I'm in Political Science.

Objected by **Salma Hashem, Dani Bobrowski,** and **Maryam Mouhammed.**

Salma Hashem: I object against Drew's nomination after he objected today against 2 councillors. I do think his reasonings are biased and I don't feel comfortable having him in that position.

Dani Bobrowski: I do object to Drew's nomination after his comment today, particularly, the comment calling the executives a small radical minority that they represent the student body.

Maryam Mouhammed: I just want to agree with Salma and Dani, I feel like he made an inappropriate comment, so I would like to object as well.

Drew Sylver: I understand that is a fair objection and everyone here cares about the best interest of the union and It's important to have objections, but to think it's biased, I don't see how it is. I feel as though we need to protect the best interests of the union and that there is no bias. I try to not come with bias, but there is a bias and my intention is to hold those who acted on that bias responsible and kindly resign.

Michelle Lam separate nominations.

Omar Hassanein is appointed as a signing officer.

Aron Kessel: How does bias affect the position of a signing officer?

Kareem Rahaman: It could cause delays in signing documents that affect operations.

Orly Wazana and **Anastasia Zoerchinsky** requests for point of information.

Orly Wazana: Just for clarification with those who objected, what bias are you referring to?

Dani Bobrowski: I did not say bias, but the comments that he made today that reveal unprofessionalism, but I will now say bias because the claims he made were unsubstantiated with a clear anti-agenda to what we put out as a statement.

Anastasia Zoerchinsky: I thought the statement was written and approved by the executives, but it seems like a council member also was part of the statement. I would like to understand the bias and how the council member was involved in the statement. Thank you.

Drew Sylver: I do feel those objections are not illegitimate.

Michelle Lam: I will cut discussion as it is outside the scope of discussion.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote to the appointment of **Drew Sylver**.

6 YES

12 NO

Drew Sylver is not appointed.

Zeyad Abisaab nominated themselves. Seconded by **Leen Al Hijjawi**.

Zeyad Abisaab: I believe I have the appropriate experience as I've been at the school for a long time and I know a lot about how things work generally and I feel like I can contribute to the student union and I'm committed to the role.

Objected by **Anastasia Zorchinsky**.

Anastasia Zorchinsky: I object because I also think that Zeyad has a bias towards campus and I've seen him lead extremist activities on campus and outside campus and I don't think he is capable and relevant to be in this position.

Michelle Lam: It wouldn't be a relevant objection as he didn't do anything tonight.

Drew Sylver: I feel like we're talking about bias, which I was accused of. Does the way someone conducts themselves within the purview of this meeting, is that the only standard we're going to use because how are we going to hold people accountable?

Michelle Lam: Understood, but the objection against you was based on your behavior tonight, as opposed to Zeyad's claim which we can't substantiate because he hasn't done anything tonight.

Dani Bobrowski: I would like to say what Anastasia claimed was quite racist and unsubstantiated.

Zeyad Abisaab: I want to say if we can please stay respectful, as that was a disrespectful comment that was made.

Michelle Lam: I am not hearing any relevant objection. I recommend reaching out to the judicial board if there is a complaint against a councillor or anything that has happened in this meeting tonight.

Zeyad Abisaab is appointed as a Signing Officer.

5) **Setting the Time and Location of Regular Meetings**

Kareem Rahaman: Historically, it is done on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm and I think we should keep that.

Michelle Lam: Talking about the location of where we will meet, the options are virtually, all in person or hybrid. In my opinion as the chairperson, it is challenging hosting a hybrid format given the size of council and as happened during the last meeting, it was challenging to moderate when there are two different discussions happening at the same time, but it is up to council on how you meet.

Moad Alhjoj: The execs will still meet in the conference room, but I think an all online meeting works the best.

Mohamad Abdallah: I think anything between an online and hybrid model is best because as an Engineering student, it would be easier to arrange my schedule to accommodate the meeting.

Mohamad Abadallah motions to make the meeting online for councillors and in person for executives. Seconded by **Kareem Rahaman**. Motion passes unanimously.

Michelle Lam: Now we can move onto agreeing on a time for the meeting. The current proposal is keeping 6:30 pm.

Orly Wazana: I would like to have a discussion to postpone the meeting to 7 pm.

Maria Chitoroaga: I am of the opinion to keep 6:30 pm because meetings can run long and it's to facilitate to student's classes. It works best for the majority.

Vanessa Massot: I think it's feasible to do it once a month, but it's not ideal for people to have to stay till midnight.

Michelle Lam calls for a vote on the time for either 6:30 pm or 7 pm for the entire mandate.

YES 14

NO 2

The Regular Council Meeting will meet at 6:30pm online.

6) Council Retreat and Training

Dania Zeitoun: I'm still finding people to offer training to, so they haven't been finalized yet, but once they are I'll send emails. As for the retreat, I'm still planning for that but it will be ready for the next Regular Council Meeting.

7) CSU Email Addresses

Kareem Rahaman: Some people may not have access to the CSU email, but if you don't, I strongly recommend coming into the office so our receptionist can direct you to the IT services or just email me, but it's important to have access to it.

Aron Kessel: So there it is the only official channel for all CSU things?

Michelle Lam: Yes.

Kareem Rahaman: Thank you for coming to the meeting. We appreciate that everyone comes to our meeting and we will call another SCM within the next two weeks, but it should be shorter.

I also want to comment on the statements CSU has put out. We have consulted a legal team and we want to make sure that we follow all the rules. It's fine to have questions, but when certain comments that were made, such as "radical extremist minority" or calling another councillor an "extremist" should be left out of the meeting and should only discuss CSU business. If you would like to bring something to the agenda, submit to the chair before 5 pm on Friday, and you can have it added to the agenda. If not, my office and email is always open, but everyone here makes decisions based on the interest of students.

Drew Sylver: I agree, I think it's important that everything should be approached with scrutiny. And we are all here to do everything in the best interest of the CSU. I think it is within the business of the CSU, the way that the CSU conducts itself on every platform.

Aron Kessel: Unrelated to the current conversation, but could you please provide all the information on committees before the meeting as it is hard to vote on them?

Michelle Lam: Absolutely, I'll leave that with the executive and you can make an effort to submit any documents before 5 pm Friday, so I can put it in the council documents.

Orly Wazana: Does receiving documents on the Friday before Wednesday apply to the Special Council Meetings too?

Michelle Lam: It only applies to the Regular Council Meeting. Because it's only a two or three business day heads up, the deadline would be Monday.

Elsa Younes: Is there a quorum to be met in a Special Council Meeting?

Michelle Lam: Quorum, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the council size will always need to be met, but attendance is not recorded for SCM.

8) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.