



## Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.*

### SSMU Office of the Speaker

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# MOTION REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF THE STANDING RULES FOR THE 2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 2023-09-11

Submitted for: 2023-09-11

**Submitted to:** SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-09-11-002

**Moved by:** Alexandre Ashkir  
*President*

**Current  
Status:**

- ☐ FOR APPROVAL
- ☐ APPROVED
- ☒ POSTPONED
- ☐ COMMITTED
- ☐ NOT APPROVED

**Seconded by:** Alexandra Nitu  
*Management Representative*

## Issue

This motion seeks to adopt the Standing Rules for the 2023-2024 Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Legislative Council.

## Background and Rationale

While the Robert's Rules of Order provides a general framework for formal, efficient group meetings by balancing the rights of members while facilitating democratic debate and decision-making, the Standing Rules are mechanisms by which Robert's Rules of Order can be fine-tuned for any given group, such as the Students' Society of McGill University ("the Society") Legislative Council.

## Alignment with Mission

Aligned with SSMU's Constitution and Internal Regulations following parliamentary procedures that have been simplified to the SSMU.

## Consultations Completed

This motion was drafted in consultation with the Speaker, Parliamentarian, Deputy Speaker, Governance Manager, and the SSMU President.



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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

In order to adequately operate during Legislative Council meetings, the adoption of the Standing Rules will ensure a smooth meeting flow and include deadlines for submission of motions and reports.

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### Sustainability Considerations

In drafting this motion, we took into consideration the year-long operations and regular governance meetings in the goal of being efficient and respectful of Council members, staff and guests.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Should this motion be approved, the Standing Rules will be adopted immediately in parliamentary procedure concerning the Legislative Council.

Should this motion fail, the meetings of the Legislative Council will lack decorum and proper parliamentary procedures.

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### Motion or Resolution for Approval

*Be it resolved*, that the Society's Legislative Council 2022-2023 adopt the Standing Rules in Appendix A to maximize the efficiency of Council meetings.

*Be it further resolved*, that the Legislative Council recommend the ratification of these Standing Rules to the SSMU Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

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### Results of the Vote

In favour	()
Opposed	()
Abstain	()

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## Appendix A

# STANDING RULES FOR THE 2023-2024 SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### 1. Scope

- 1.1. The following rules may be suspended by a three-quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote at any time in accordance with 6.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.

### 2. Meetings

- 2.1. Meetings of the Legislative Council shall be held in person, with a teleconference option available, once biweekly, during the academic year.
- 2.2. Should the method or place of meeting change, this change shall be communicated to the Council Members, as well as the general membership.
- 2.3. The time to adjourn for all meetings of the Legislative Council beginning at 18:00 will be set at 21:00
  - 2.3.1. Following Robert's Rules, the Council may move to set aside the orders of the day with a three quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote before the meeting is declared adjourned by the Speaker,

### 3. Decorum

- 3.1. All members of the Legislative Council must carry themselves with decorum to demonstrate the respect they hold for their office.
- 3.2. All members must be punctual.
  - 3.2.1. Consistent tardiness will merit warning, and may result in suspension as per the Accountability Committee and/or the Speaker's discretion in accordance with 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
- 3.3. Two (2) unexcused absences, even if they are not consecutive, will result in immediate suspension in accordance with article 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.



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- 3.4. A Councillor may only send a Proxy under the following conditions:
  - 3.4.1. The Proxy holds an elected position within the same Faculty Association or non-faculty constituency (i.e., Athletics, Clubs, First Year Council, Senate Caucus, and Services) as the Councilor,
  - 3.4.2. The Councilor has sent written or electronic notice to the Speaker with the name, constituency, and elected position of the proxy at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the meeting through the provided digital form,
  - 3.4.3. Each Councillor may only send a proxy a maximum of two (2) times in the given academic year,
- 3.5. Each Proxy will receive access to a temporary SSMU email address for the duration of the meeting for the purposes of accessing Council documents and voting on behalf of their Constituency at Council,
  - 3.5.1. Prior to this, the proxy must sign a Confidentiality Agreement, as distributed by the Governance Manager.
- 3.6. Absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis by the Accountability Committee for the following non-exhaustive set of reasons:
  - 3.6.1. Physical illness, mental health, family/friend emergency, and an assessment that conflicts with the time of Council meetings.
  - 3.6.2. If an absent Councillor arranges a proxy to take their place, the said absence will be excused so long as the proxy maximum has not been surpassed.
- 3.7. Council members may not speak without first being recognized by the Speaker, unless when making an incidental motion.
- 3.8. The following may be ruled as Out of Order by the Speaker at their discretion, subject to a successful Point of Order by Councillors:
  - 3.8.1. Aggressive or abusive behaviour, such as shouting or personal insults;
  - 3.8.2. Disrespectful comments or conduct;
  - 3.8.3. Spreading malicious rumours or gossip;
  - 3.8.4. Discrimination or harassment;
  - 3.8.5. Offensive comments/jokes or body language;
  - 3.8.6. Isolation, deliberate exclusion and/or non co-operation;
  - 3.8.7. Laughing at inappropriate situations; and
  - 3.8.8. Texting or messaging during a given meeting, pertaining to discussion, inside and outside of the meeting room;
  - 3.8.9. Disrespectful or discourteous language and behaviour;
  - 3.8.10. Comments that make reference to personalities or motivations;



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- 3.8.11. Statements that contravene the Charte des droits et libertés de la personne (Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms), and/or the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- 3.8.12. Disruption or hindrance of the ability of the meeting to continue in good order, including but not limited to, speaking out of turn, engaging in side conversations, knocking on desks, clapping, snapping, and other behaviour deemed by the Speaker to be disruptive;
- 3.8.13. Misgendering of Councillors, whether intentional or not
  - 3.8.13.1. Councillors must address each other formally, usually in the form “Councillor [Last Name]”, and avoid referring to one another using third person pronouns to promote a cordial environment.
  - 3.8.13.2. Should any Councillor notice the misgendering of another Councillor, they may call this to the attention of the Speaker on a Point of Personal Privilege.
  - 3.8.13.3. Should a Councillor be misgendered but does not feel comfortable raising a Point of Personal Privilege themselves during the meeting, they may contact the Speaker who will raise it during the next meeting of the Legislative Council.
- 3.9. The Speaker is vested with the authority to remove any individual from the meeting for repeated or extraordinary violations of the Standing Rules or Internal Regulations of Governance and may seek assistance to carry out this order when required.
- 3.10. When Guest Speakers are present, all laptops, excluding those of the dais, must be closed in respect to the Guest Speaker.
  - 3.10.1. In the case of virtual meetings, Council members will be asked to stay muted until called upon.

## 4. Reports

- 4.1. All Executives must submit a report detailing their activities related to the Society since the last meeting in which the previous report was submitted.
- 4.2. All Councillors representing a constituency and Committees must submit a report detailing their activities related to their constituency to-date and those planned for the remainder of the semester on a rotating basis following a schedule determined by the Speaker.
- 4.3. All Committees must submit a report detailing their activities related to their Committee following a schedule as determined by the Committee Terms of Reference.



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- 4.4. All reports must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM ET five (5) days immediately preceding Council generally on Sunday.
- 4.5. Late reports shall be equivalent to half of one absence for the purposes of determining suspension in accordance with 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance, unless excused by the Accountability Committee per 2.5 of the Standing Rules. Late reports shall be considered by no later than 48 hours before the Council meeting, generally on Tuesday by 11:59 PM ET.
- 4.6. Failure to submit a report prior to the deadline as indicated in section 3.5 in these rules shall be equivalent to one absence for the purposes of determining suspension in accordance with 2.3 of the Standing Rules, unless excused by the Accountability Committee per 2.5 of the Standing Rules.

## 5. Speaking

- 5.1. The Speaker reserves the right to interject or interrupt at any time when responding to a Point of Information, Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, to enforce parliamentary procedure, the Standing Rules, and/or the Internal Regulations of Governance, or to maintain order.
  - 5.1.1. The Speaker may extend this right to the Parliamentarian at their discretion.
- 5.2. To speak, members must raise their placards to alert the Speaker.
- 5.3. In the case of virtual meetings, members add their name on the Speaking List.
- 5.4. Members of the Gallery may participate in discussion or debate by using the 'Raise Hand' feature via the virtual platform.
- 5.5. When another member has the floor, no other placard may be raised in order to be respectful of the member speaking, except where allowed by parliamentary procedure.
  - 5.5.1. When rising with an interrupting point or motion as defined by parliamentary procedure, members must raise their placards and hold them high while waiting to be recognized.
  - 5.5.2. In the case of virtual meetings, members must write their names on the Speaking List while waiting to be recognized.
- 5.6. When granted speaking rights, members must address the Speaker and use a microphone should one be available.



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- 5.6.1. During virtual meetings, the Speaker will provide speaking rights via the digital platform.
- 5.7. The following time limits for speaking will be enforced by the Speaker. A simple majority can extend all time limits:
  - 5.7.1. A default speaking time of one (1) minute.
  - 5.7.2. A default speaking time for Councillor reports of three (3) minutes.
  - 5.7.3. A default speaking time for Executive and Committee reports of three (3) minutes.
- 5.8. The default speaking times for Councillor, Executive and Committee reports will be immediately followed by a question period of five (5) minutes.
- 5.9. Unless a member requests otherwise, their placard will include their pronouns, in both English and French. Members may request their pronouns be added, removed, or changed at any time.
  - 5.9.1. In the case of virtual meetings, their display name shall substitute as a placard, in which the member can include their pronouns.
- 5.10. Guest Speakers and members of the gallery shall be asked to introduce themselves by the Speaker with their Constituency/Faculty/Position, Name, and Gender Pronoun.
- 5.11. The official Minutes should use the correct pronouns as provided from 4.7 and 4.8 above, or refer to individuals' names if no pronouns are specified.

## 6. Presentations and Generative Discussion

- 6.1. To help facilitate the generation of ideas, process of consultation, and collection of feedback, members of the Legislative Council may submit generative discussion items to the Steering Committee within the same deadlines as for Main Motions set out in 6.2 of these Standing Rules.
  - 6.1.1. A report or other relevant background information should be submitted to the Parliamentarian to provide members of the Legislative Council with sufficient context by the submission deadline for Main Motions.
  - 6.1.2. Generative Discussion items may not be raised from the floor.
- 6.2. Generative Discussion items shall be structured debate moderated by the Speaker but shall not have a motion or resolution flowing from them.
- 6.3. Each Generative Discussion item shall have a maximum of ten (10) minutes on the floor, subject to a motion to extend this time.



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- 6.4. There shall be a maximum of two (2) Generative Discussion and Guest Presentation items on each agenda of the Legislative Council.
  - 6.4.1. The Steering Committee is vested with the authority to select which Generative Discussion items and Guest Presentations are inscribed on each agenda.
  - 6.4.2. Items pertaining to General Discussions and/or Guest Presentations shall be requested 48 hours before the meeting date shall be submitted to the Speaker and Parliamentarian with the relevant information.

## 7. Main Motions

- 7.1. Main motions require one (1) Mover and one (1) Seconder to be presented before the Legislative Council, with the following stipulations:
  - 7.1.1. The Mover and Seconder may not both be members of the Executive Committee.
  - 7.1.2. The Mover and Seconder must both be recognized Representatives to the Legislative Council.
  - 7.1.3. The foregoing rules shall not apply for motions that must be moved only by the Executive Committee (e.g., the budget).
- 7.2. Members must submit main motions to the Parliamentarian through email, by 11:59 PM ET seven (7) days preceding Council, generally on the Thursday prior.
  - 7.2.1. The recommendations of the Steering Committee will be sent to the Mover and Seconder within 48 hours of the above deadline. Movers will then have until 11:59 PM ET five (5) days prior to the meeting of the Legislative Council to submit the final version of the motion to the Parliamentarian.
    - 7.2.1.1. At this point, the motions can no longer be amended before Council, including the withdrawal of Movers and Seconders.
  - 7.2.2. During Council, after the Mover and Seconder have had the opportunity to motivate their motion for a maximum of two (2) minutes, a question period of a maximum of five (5) minutes shall precede debate.
- 7.3. The Mover of a Notice of Motion shall be allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes to introduce their motion and provide context.
  - 7.3.1. There shall be no question period or debate following an introduction of a Notice of Motion.
- 7.4. Up to two (2) motions submitted after the deadline enumerated in 7.2 of these Standing Rules shall automatically be considered a Notice of Motion, at the discretion of the Dais.





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- 7.4.1. Up to two (2) motions submitted after the deadline shall be considered as a Late Motion, at the discretion of the Dais.
- 7.4.2. A mandatory two (2) minute-recess will be granted for the Dais to review the motion.
- 7.4.3. All other motions submitted after the deadline will be presented for consideration for the next Legislative Council.
- 7.5. In the case of urgent business, the requirements set out by 7.2 and 7.3 of these Standing Rules may be waived by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority vote of the Legislative Council in accordance with 11.2 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
- 7.6. Prior to the start of Old Business, the Speaker shall request a motion for a five (5) minute recess to allow Councillors to vote on all motions inscribed on the agenda using the prescribed electronic means with two options: Approve or Debate.
  - 7.6.1. Should any motion not receive unanimous consent on the “Approve” side, the motion shall be subject to the regular course of question period, debate, and vote as set out in the Internal Regulations of Governance and these Standing Rules.
  - 7.6.2. A motion receiving unanimous consent shall be approved without question period, debate, or a formal vote and shall be listed as a consent motion in the public voting record and in the minutes.
  - 7.6.3. The individual votes of Councillors on consent items will not be shared publicly. The regular voting record for formally questioned, debated, and voted on motions will continue to be published.

## 8. **Subsidiary, Incidental, and Privileged Motions**

- 8.1. The following list simplifies the order of precedence for all motions from highest to lowest in accordance with parliamentary procedure. Motions with a smaller number (i.e., closer to 7) have precedence over those with a larger number (i.e., closer to 8):
  - 8.1.1. Incidental Motions (when in order)
    - 8.1.1.1. Incidental motions are to be considered in temporal order as they have no defined order of precedence within themselves.
    - 8.1.1.2. Appeal the decision of the chair, consideration by paragraph or seriatim, division of a question, division of the assembly, motions relating to nominations, motions relating to methods of voting and the polls, objection to the consideration of a question, request to be excused from a duty, suspend the rules, point of parliamentary inquiry, request of information, point of order, and request for permission to withdraw or modify a motion.
  - 8.1.2. Privileged Motions



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- 8.1.2.1. Vacate the Chair
- 8.1.2.2. Fix time to adjourn (if another question is pending)
- 8.1.2.3. Adjourn
- 8.1.2.4. Recess (if another question is pending)
- 8.1.2.5. Raise a question of privilege
- 8.1.2.6. Call for orders of the day
- 8.1.3. Subsidiary Motions
  - 8.1.3.1. Lay on the Table
  - 8.1.3.2. Previous Question/Calling the Question
  - 8.1.3.3. Limit or extend limits of debate
  - 8.1.3.4. Postpone to a certain time
  - 8.1.3.5. Commit or refer
  - 8.1.3.6. Amend
  - 8.1.3.7. Postpone indefinitely
- 8.1.4. Main Motion

## 9. Amendments

- 9.1. All amendments must be submitted to the Parliamentarian in writing via email.
- 9.2. Amendments that correct language, spelling, grammar, singularity or plurality, or sentence structure without altering the intention of the motion do not require an amendment and shall be corrected by the Steering Committee automatically.
- 9.3. After a motion has been motivated by its Mover and Seconder but before the question period begins, friendly amendments may be made only if the Mover and Seconder unanimously accept them. They will be included without debate or a vote.
- 9.4. After inclusion of friendly amendments (if any), a question period shall follow.
- 9.5. Upon the exhaustion of the question period, the motion becomes the property of the floor and debate may begin.
- 9.6. Subsequent friendly amendments may be made once the motion is property of the floor only if no other member objects.
- 9.7. In the case of objection by a member, the proposed amendment will follow the general amendment process.
- 9.8. Once an amendment has been proposed, it must be seconded before debate on the amendment may begin.



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- 9.9. At the exhaustion of the debate period or with no further debate, a vote on the amendment will be called requiring a simple majority.

## 10. Voting

- 10.1. For all Main Motions and subsidiary motions of substance as determined by the Speaker, an electronically recorded vote will be considered the default voting method. At their discretion, the Speaker will waive this requirement and inform the Legislative Council when they are doing so.
- 10.2. After entering into voting procedure, Councillors have a right to motion for any other voting method (as per parliamentary procedure). This will follow debate and a majority vote.
- 10.3. For votes related to procedure or incidental/privileged/subsidiary motions of non-substance, a vote by placard (counted by both the Speaker and the Parliamentarian) will be considered the default voting method.
- 10.3.1. In case of virtual meetings, for votes related to procedure or incidental/subsidiary motions of non-substance, voting will occur through virtual polling via the digital platform.
- 10.3.2. In case of virtual meetings, for votes of subsidiary motions, voting will occur first by unanimous vote. If unanimity is not possible, voting will then commence through virtual polling via the digital platform.

## 11. Email Motions

- 11.1. Motions may be sent by email to Council members for approval outside of a regular meeting only after receiving **explicit written permission** from the Speaker;
- 11.1.1. Email motions should **only** be sent in the case of an time-sensitive matter,
- 11.1.2. The voting period for an email motion is 72 hours,
- 11.1.3. An email motion must be submitted using the full motion template,
- 11.1.4. Requests for email motions should be sent by email to the Speaker, copying the Parliamentarian and Governance Manager,
- 11.1.4.1. Requests for email motion must include a justification for the motion including justification for it being sent by email instead of being presented at a meeting of the Legislative Council,
- 11.1.5. Motions sent by email directly to the members of the Legislative Council without prior permission from the Speaker or the Parliamentarian, will be considered invalid and as such, any vote or consequence from the motion will be null and void.