**Student Representative Assembly Meeting 20O**

**Sunday, February 21, 2021 at 5:00pm**

**Remote Meeting, Microsoft Teams**

**This meeting was done remotely through Microsoft Teams, due to the unusual circumstance laid out by the response to COVID-19.**

**Called to Order at 5:04pm**

**CALL OF THE ROLL**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present:** | Aminaei, Anderson, Au-Yeung, Bagtasos, Baig, Birch, Chopra, Da-Re, De Silva, Del Castillo, Dhindsa, Dixit, Egbeyemi, Fraser, Jones, Mesic, Naik, Samson, Sariaslani, Seymour, Singh, Stathoukos, Tsai, Tse, Violin, Wang |
| **Absent Excused:**  |  |
| **Absent:** | Chui, Noble  |
| **Late:**  | Chelverajah |
| **Others Present:**  | V. Scott (Recording Secretary) |
| **Chair:** | Rhea Jangra  |

**Territory Recognition**

* The SRA would like to recognize today that we are situated on traditional Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe territories through the ‘Dish with One Spoon Wampum Treaty’.

**Adoption of Agenda**

**Moved** by Singh, **seconded** by Tsai that the Assembly adopt the agenda, as presented.

**Amendment**

**Moved** by Dhindsa, **seconded** by Dixit that the agenda be amended to include the following motion:

* Moved by Dhindsa, seconded by Egbeyemi that the McMaster Students Union adopts the Respondus and privacy concerns statement.
* Dhindsa stated that the issue should be addressed.

**Amendment to the Amendment**

**Moved** by Dhindsa, **seconded** by Egbeyemi to amend the amendment to the agenda to read as: "Moved by Dhindsa, seconded by Dixit to amend the agenda to add Respondus and privacy concerns as Business Item #3"

* Dhindsa stated that this was to add it to the agenda properly.

**Vote on Amendment to Amendment**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Vote on Amendment**

**Moved** by Dhindsa, **seconded** by Dixit to amend the agenda to add Respondus and Privacy Concerns as Business Item #3.

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Amendment**

**Moved** by Tse, **seconded** by Stathoukos that the agenda be amended to include the following motion under Business: **Moved** by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, **seconded** by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that the Assembly move into the Committee of the Whole to discuss MSU Bylaw 7/A - Electoral Procedures.

* Tse stated that they emailed everyone beforehand and that this would just be a discussion.
* Stathoukos stated that they had a great discussion at the last meeting and this would be great to share data collected.

**Vote on Amendment**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Vote to Adopt**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Adopt Minutes**

**Moved** by Tse, **seconded** by Jones to adopt the minutes from SRA meeting 20M – January 24, 2021, as circulated.

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Announcements from the Chair**

* The Chair welcomed everyone back from Reading Week and hoped it was restful. They announced that SRA General Election nominations were now open and to please promote widely. They asked anyone attending the meeting to please fill out the Observer’s List.

**Report Period**

**1. Arts and Sciences – report circulated**

* Egbeyemi summarized the report.

**2. Business Caucus – report not submitted**

* Dixit stated that the DCS election happened and Lauren Murphy was the new president. They stated that the caucus has been surveying constituent groups about the ‘no confidence’ vote and the faculty was split. Dixit gave a shoutout to Egbeyemi for the Ath and Rec newsletter. They added that the caucus is working with DCS to promote SRA Generals.

**3. Engineering Caucus – report circulated**

* Baig presented the report.

**Questions**

* Da-Ré asked if collecting information for services meant that they were promoting the service reviews or collecting separate data. Baig responded that they were looking at qualitative data of what constituents were engaging with and then getting numbers on what engineering students feel they didn’t directly benefit from. Baig added that once they were able to get a direction on that, they would be able to put something together.
* Da-Ré stated that if they wanted assistance, they would be happy to help with some of those conversations.

**4. IG Committee Report – report circulated**

* Singh went over the report.

**5. Services Committee – report circulated**

* Birch went over the report.

**6. Executive Board – report circulated**

* Singh went over the report.

**7. Vice-President (Administration) – report circulated**

* Tse summarized the report.

**8. Elections – Presidential Election – Hargun presented**

**Information Period**

* Da-Ré stated that they wanted to give an update on General Assembly planning. They thanked everyone who passed along suggestions for platforms that could be used.
* The Speaker announced that the MSU Awards nominations were closing in the next few days and that everything was on the website.
* Da-Ré gave a shoutout to Jess Anderson and Negar Asli for being nominated for the YWCA Trailblazer Awards.
* Tse stated that they were currently discussing with the University what the return to campus would look like, and would be consulting with students. They stated that there would be a Committee of the Whole at the next meeting to discuss a few questions on what students would like to see when returning to campus. Tse added that the oversight committee was hoping to have a final set of recommendations by April and it was very important hearing from students in this time. Tse announced that the OUSA General Assembly delegation applications were open. Tse reported that UCRU had been working on bylaws for formalization of the organization. They stated that they will be circulating that to the SRA later this week and would love some feedback to pass along. Tse announced that EIO has sent out a student experience survey asking for feedback on different services on campus, including MSU, Security Services, and other partners.

**Question Period**

* Violin asked the VP (Finance) what was happening with the Business Units and their status with lockdown. Anderson responded that they’ve been working with MUSC and the University in evaluating when everyone will be allowed to be back on campus. Da-Ré added that it looked like MUSC was adding longer hours and that Hospitality will be opening La Piazza on March 1.

**Business**

**1. Operating Policy - Welcome Week Charitable Giving**

**Moved** by Anderson, **seconded** by Da-Ré that the Assembly approve the proposed amendment to **Operating Policy - Welcome Week Charitable Giving**, as circulated.

* Anderson went over the memo with the Assembly. They stated that Noble wanted to make sure all the policies were up to date.

**Vote on Motion**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**2. Proposed changes to Bylaw 8 – Policy Approval Process**

**Moved** by  Da-Ré, **seconded** by Anderson that the Assembly approve the proposed changes to **Bylaw 8 - Policy Approval Process**, as circulated.

* Da-Ré went over the memo with the Assembly and stated that hopefully the edits will clear up confusion for policy edits and creations.
* Tse brought attention to clause 11 which stated that advocacy statements needed two days notice in order to be discussed.

**Vote on Motion**

**In Favour: 24 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0**

**Motion Passes by General Consent?**

**3. Respondus and Privacy Concerns Statement**

**Moved** by Dhindsa, **seconded** by Egbeyemi that the McMaster Students Union adopts the following statement:

**Whereas**, any vetting process for approving the use of Respondus assessment tools has not been sufficiently and clearly communicated to students, and it has not been clearly communicated with students whether or not other proctoring softwares were required to undergo a vetting process before being used in a McMaster course; **and**

**Whereas**, there has been at least one instance of a McMaster course using a proctoring software other than Respondus during the 2020/21 academic year; **and**

**Whereas**, even though students consent to the use and associated risks of Respondus assessment tools when enrolling in a course, Respondus maintains that they reserve the right to modify [their] [Privacy Policy](https://web.respondus.com/privacy-policy/) and [Terms of Use](https://web.respondus.com/tou-monitor-student/) at any time1,2; **and**

**Whereas**, Respondus’ failure to actively and publicly inform students of any Privacy Policy and Terms of Use modification makes it difficult for students to provide informed consent to the use of Respondus assessment tools; **and**

**Whereas**, the [December 2nd Avenue to Learn (A2L) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) post](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/FAQ-Online-Proctoring.pdf) and associated communications from the University fail to sufficiently address concerns regarding data storage, including but not limited to whether the legal or contractual standards that must be met for data storage and use are upheld3; **and**

**Whereas**, the A2L FAQ does not clearly outline what happens to the data that was collected from students after the storage period has elapsed; **and**

**Whereas**, the omission of all information regarding data storage may cause students to feel as though their privacy rights are being infringed upon; **and**

**Whereas**, the A2L FAQ states that “[student] information is not shared with any other third-party, including recordings and personal information”, yet the A2L FAQ also states that Respondus uses “[independent, third-party security firms to perform penetration testing and other vulnerability scans](https://web.respondus.com/tou-monitor-student/)”, potentially allowing access of student data from third parties4; **and**

**Whereas**, these two inconsistent statements have led students to doubt McMaster’s transparency with Respondus’ privacy practices; **and**

**Whereas**, the A2L FAQ does not provide information on how [aggregated and biometric data](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/PIA-Report-Online-Proctoring-Respondus.pdf) is processed or used by Respondus, or how this processed data is used5; **and**

**Whereas**, students have not been sufficiently informed on how the [research that is being conducted using their data](https://web.respondus.com/tou-monitor-student/) will be used in the future6; **and**

**Whereas**, security breaches leave student data vulnerable7,8; **and**

**Whereas**, Respondus “[disclaims any responsibility for any harm resulting from downloading or accessing any information or data through Respondus Monitor”](https://web.respondus.com/tou-monitor-student/)9 **and**

**Whereas**, Respondus also [“disclaims any responsibility for the deletion, failure to store, mis-delivery, or untimely delivery of any information or data”](https://web.respondus.com/tou-monitor-student/)9; **and**

**Whereas**, McMaster University has not announced their responsibility should any harm or data mis-management come to fruition; **and**

**Whereas**, Respondus claims they “shall not be liable if a security breach occurs, if the site malfunctions, or if information is misused or mismanaged in any way to your detriment”; **and**

**Whereas**, there have been security breaches related to the use of proctoring softwares at other Canadian universities, [such as WesternU](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/western-students-alerted-about-security-breach-at-exam-monitor-proctortrack-1.5764354#:~:text=0-,A%20security%20breach%20of%20Proctortrack%2C%20the%20software%20Western%20University%20uses,home%20using%20their%20own%20computers)10; **and**

**Whereas**, McMaster University has not publicly and transparently assured student data protection in a potential security breach, **and**

**Whereas**, the A2L FAQ does not provide clarity to standards met when referring to the fact that Respondus is [“securing”](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/FAQ-Online-Proctoring.pdf) files stored on a student’s computer3; **and**

**Whereas**, many students have shared experiences of heightened and unreasonable levels of anxieties and fears specifically due to the use of Respondus assessment tools; **and**

**Whereas**, there was an insufficient and unclear student consultation process in the initial Summer 2020 Privacy Impact Assessment process conducted by the University and subsequent implementation of online learning academic assessment guidelines, leading students to feel that they have been unable to voice their concerns; **and**

**Whereas**, many McMaster University courses have employed alternative testing methods, modifying their assessments to maintain academic integrity, without the use of Respondus assessment tools; **and**

**Whereas**, the University of Ottawa has implemented a policy stating that “[students can choose not to consent to Respondus](https://uottawa.saea-tlss.ca/en/transition-to-remote-teaching/respondus-faq)” and that [instructors will have alternative options in place if a student chooses not to conse](https://uottawa.saea-tlss.ca/en/transition-to-remote-teaching/respondus-faq)nt, however, McMaster University hasn’t clearly communicated alternatives should students choose not to consent to Respondus11; **and**

**Whereas**, many of these concerns have been brought to the attention of the university directly by students through multiple avenues (including open letters, emails, face-to-face meetings, and direct student reports to the Secretariat’s Office and Ombuds Office) but have yet to be fully addressed; **therefore**

**Be it resolved** that the 2020/2021 Student Representative Assembly (SRA) shares in the disappointment of the McMaster community concerning the insufficient and unclear communication to students regarding the adoption and use of Respondus assessment tools, and the failure to address student concerns; **be it further**

**Resolved**, that the 2020/2021 SRA reiterates the MSU’s stance that Respondus assessment tools should not be used for academic assessments unless all other alternative options have been thoroughly considered and researched; **be it further**

**Resolved**, that the 2020/2021 SRA calls on McMaster University administration to thoroughly and diligently respond to student concerns and provide straightforward and unambiguous information on data usage and privacy concerns; **be it further**

**Resolved**, that the 2020/2021 SRA calls on McMaster University administration to immediately and clearly communicate with students that it is within their right not to consent to the use of Respondus, and to work with instructors to ensure that alternative assessment methods will be provided for the course if a student chooses not to consent; **be it further**

**Resolved**, that the 2020/2021 SRA also calls on the McMaster University administration to actively involve students in any further decision making concerning the methodology of academic assessments.

* Dhindsa went over the memo that was circulated earlier to the Assembly. They stated that there had been continuous concerns about student privacy since COVID. They stated that there was a lack of sufficient data for students to understand what the risks were and the information provided by the University has been ambiguous and difficult to interpret. Dhindsa thanked Egbeyemi, Da-Ré, Tse, Singh, and Au-Yeung for their help.
* Egbeyemi stated that this added more stress on top of everything going on right now. They added that this was bolstered by concerns about the recent chem 1A03 exam.
* Da-Ré thanked Singh and Egbeyemi for putting this all together and working to advocate. They stated that this motion had their full support.
* Violin asked what happened in the chem 1A03 exam. Violin ceded the rest of their time to Egbeyemi.
* Egbeyemi stated that they only received informal reports and that others could probably speak more to this. They heard of heightened test anxiety and with the use of Respondus, there had been stress on personal devices.
* Dixit stated that his constituents had experienced heightened anxiety as the program picks up on noise and if someone’s eyes didn’t move, a notification would pop up. They added that a lot of students were saying that they were getting notifications about their laptops draining and going through blackouts.

**Vote on Motion**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**4. Committee of the Whole – Bylaw 7/A – Electoral Procedures**

**Moved** by Tse, **seconded** by Violin that the Assembly move into the Committee of the Whole to discuss MSU Bylaw 7/A - Electoral Procedures.

* Tse stated that they would like to talk about votes of confidence so that they can give the Internal Governance Committee direction.
* Violin stated that they were excited to share feedback.

**Vote on Motion**

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Moved** by Noble, **seconded** by Anderson that the Assembly recess for five minutes.

* Noble stated that there had been a lot of information to consider and it would help for everyone to take a step back and consider it.
* Anderson stated that this break would help them clear everything up.

**Vote on Motion**

**In Favour: 20 Opposed: 1 Abstentions: 0**

**Opposed: Egbeyemi**

**Motion Passes**

**Recessed at 6:51pm**

**Called to Order at 6:56pm**

**CALL OF THE ROLL**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present:** | Aminaei, Au-Yeung, Bagtasos, Baig, Birch, Chelverajah, Chopra, De Silva, Del Castillo, Dhindsa, Dixit, Egbeyemi, Fraser, Jones, Mesic, Naik, Samson, Sariaslani, Seymour, Singh, Stathoukos, Tsai, Tse, Violin, Wang |
| **Absent Excused:**  |  |
| **Absent:** | Chui,  |
| **Late:**  | Anderson, Da-Re, Noble |
| **Others Present:**  | V. Scott (Recording Secretary) |
| **Chair:** | Rhea Jangra  |

**Moved** by Tse, **seconded** by Dhindsa that the Assembly move out of Committee of the Whole and to Rise and Report.

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Rise and Report**

* Tse reported that the Assembly discussed the student data received through polling efforts of caucuses. They stated that the data will be forwarded to the IG committee and be analyzed. Tse added that there was consensus that whatever body is voting in an election, it would be the same body voting in a possible vote of confidence. Tse clarified that no changes would be made for any upcoming elections for the remainder of this year.

**Time of Next Meeting**

**March 7, 2021**

**5:00pm**

**Remote Meeting, Microsoft Teams**

**CALL OF THE ROLL**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present:** | Aminaei, Anderson, Au-Yeung, Bagtasos, Baig, Birch, Chelverajah, Chopra, Da-Re, De Silva, Del Castillo, Dhindsa, Dixit, Egbeyemi, Fraser, Jones, Mesic, Naik, Noble, Samson, Sariaslani, Seymour, Singh, Stathoukos, Tsai, Tse, Violin, Wang |
| **Absent Excused:**  |  |
| **Absent:** | Chui, Fraser  |
| **Late:**  |  |
| **Others Present:**  | V. Scott (Recording Secretary) |
| **Chair:** | Rhea Jangra  |

**Adjournment**

**Moved** by Chelvarajah, **seconded** by Singh that the meeting be adjourned.

**Motion Passes by General Consent**

**Adjourned at 7:20pm**

/vs