



Memo

From the office of...
The President

To: Members of the Student Representative Assembly (SRA)
From: Denver Della-Vedova, President & CEO
Subject: BDS and Equitable Purchasing
Date: September 13, 2021



Background

May 19th the Board of Directors elected to make a post on the MSU socials in support of students affected by the ongoing violence that was imposed by Israeli military forces on the people of Palestine. The statement read as follows.

“The McMaster Students Union (MSU) stands with all students in the McMaster community affected by the violence imposed by Israeli military forces on the people of Palestine. The MSU condemns the ongoing aggression and joins the international chorus of voices calling for an immediate ceasefire. Moreover, the MSU denounces all forms of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and prejudice suffered by students, across our diverse community.

In March of 2015, the undergraduate students of McMaster University, via the annual General Assembly, voted to join the international campaign of Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS). As such, the MSU exited contracts with specific vendors and modified its investment portfolio, to reflect students’ democratic voice in denouncing the continued oppression and occupation of Palestine. Recognizing both the immediate humanitarian crisis, as well as anti-Semitism faced by members of the Jewish community, the MSU has made a financial donation to the Palestine Children’s Relief Fund, Hamilton’s Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Hamilton Jewish Family Services, and The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Six years have passed since students voted to support the BDS movement. As such, the Board of Directors of the MSU intend to bring forth debate for the continued support of BDS to the Student Representative Assembly (SRA). Students should have their voices heard by their elected representatives. Moreover, the SRA will encourage a safe, respectful, and open debate about political issues of this nature, free from threats of violence or fear to members of the campus community.

Students looking for immediate mental health support can reach out to counselors via the MSU’s Student Assistance Plan at realcampus.ca/mcmaster or contact the Student Wellness Centre via wellness.mcmaster.ca.

Students, through the annual General Assembly, voted to adopt the tenants of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).”

Proposal

I have proposed that the SRA adopt the following statement in support of this previous messaging and in support of the student decision made by GA in 2015. With it comes a few recommendations for the MSU that I have already begun to explore to expand our transparency and reach in this matter. The biggest addition is looking at equitable purchasing as a whole; something that I had intended to build off of Giancarlo's sustainability policy from last year. Ideally, this will expand the scope of the MSU's sustainability and equitable purchasing.

This statement was created from a series of conversations with several stakeholders around campus (clubs, students, SRA members, ect.)

Moved by Della-Vedova, seconded by ____ that the McMaster Students Union adopts the following statement:

Whereas, The SRA denounces all forms of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and prejudice experienced by students, across our diverse community; and

Whereas, The SRA will continue to uphold the beliefs and values of its student body, both as representatives as well as through all our systems for student engagement such as general assembly; and

Whereas, through General Assembly in 2015 the MSU was tasked to

“Recognize that the continued occupation of Palestinian land and suppression of their fundamental human rights; Join other student organizations around the world by endorsing the 2005 call for Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions called for by 170 different groups representing the Palestinian Civil Society; and

Commit to identifying and divesting from companies that support or profit from Israeli war crimes, occupation and oppression of Palestinians; and

Affirm that students have a vital role in supporting struggles for social justice and human rights, stand in solidarity with Palestinians' struggle for self-determination and freedom; and

Commit to ethical purchasing policies and fair-trade practices around the globe through the renewal and review of the MSU's Social and Ethical Purchasing Policy and procedures.”

;and

Whereas, the SRA denounces the violence imposed upon the people of Palestine; and

Whereas, the MSU has already stopped purchasing from, and will continue to refrain from purchasing from Dell, HP, IBM, Electronic Data Systems, Formula Systems, Matrix and Motorola; therefore

Be it resolved that the SRA will continue to support all students in the MSU community while amplifying their voices, **be it further**

Resolved, that the MSU will explore an equitable purchasing policy during fall 2021 to encompass both prior sentiments expressed by students and to further their commitment to fair, equitable and harm free trade through selective purchasing, **be it further**

Resolved, The MSU will publicly share companies which it has made conscious efforts to avoid due to misalignment with the motion passed at GA 2015 and this motion