



Student Representative Assembly Meeting 24E
Sunday, July 21, 2024 at 12:00pm (EDT)
Remote Meeting, Microsoft Teams

Called to Order at 12:07pm

Call of the Roll

Present: Arora, Begun, Black, Bolca, El-Kadi, Hobbs, Khan, McKay, McLean, Modi, Newman, Popovic, Rahman, Sweeney, Wang
Absence Excused: Abbott (LOA), Batusic (LOA), Begun, Jeyakumar (LOA), Long (LOA), Mahmoud, Pickering (LOA), Qannam (LOA)
Absent: Dodd, Hu, Olejarz, Schaub, Sogaokar
Late:
Others Present: D. Stajcer (Recording Secretary)
Chair: Abigail Samuels (MSU Speaker)

Territory Recognition

- The SRA would like to recognize today that we are situated on traditional Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe territories through the 'Dish with One Spoon Wampum Treaty'.

Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Khan that the Assembly adopt the agenda, as presented.

Amendment

Moved by McLean, **seconded** by El-Kadi that the Assembly amend the agenda to include the circulated motion.

- McLean informed the Assembly that the statement was first drafted when the encampment was set up, and that they served as a medic for it. They observed a sense of community and noted it was a safe space for students to unite. McLean said they spent two months consulting with student organizations/groups, graduate student leadership, constituents with the goal of having the MSU address the event and current state of negotiations with university administration. McLean brought up previous advocacy related motions and wanted to highlight that history should not be erased by cohort turnover. They noted that the related motion that passed in November 2023 addressed the escalation in violence, but it has become clear that pace must be kept with the changing landscape and work to amplify student voices. McLean added that no student or staff member will feel comfortable until there is complete divestment from corporations complicit in human rights violations.
- El-Kadi clarified that this is to vote to include the motion on the agenda, not a vote on the motion itself.

Vote on Amendment

In Favour: 12 Opposed: 1 Abstentions: 1
Opposed: Newman
Abstained: Wang
Motion Passes

Vote to Adopt

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Khan that the Assembly adopt the agenda, as amended.

In Favour: 11 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 1
Abstained: Newman
Motion Passes

Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Newman that the Assembly adopt the minutes from SRA meetings 24A – April 6 & 7, 2024 and 24B – April 14, 2024, as circulated.

In Favour: 21 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

Announcements from the Chair

- The Chair announced that the SRA retreat was cancelled as the planning began quite late, but were hopeful that more bonding opportunities would arise throughout the school year.

Report Period

1. President Report – Popovic presented

- Popovic summarized the report.

2. Vice-President (Administration) Report – El-Kadi presented

- El-Kadi summarized the report.

3. Vice-President (Education) Report – Hobbs presented

- Hobbs summarized the report.

4. Vice-President (Finance) Report – Sweeney presented

- Sweeney summarized the report.

5. Executive Board Report – report circulated

- El-Kadi summarized the report.

6. Open Educational Resources Report – Sweeney presented

- Sweeney summarized the report.

7. OUSA Strategic Planning Conference Report – Hobbs presented

- Hobbs summarized the report.

8. MSU Policy Papers Report – Hobbs presented

- Hobbs summarized the report.

Business Arising from the Minutes

1. Close nominations for one (1) MSU member to the Teaching Awards Committee

- The Speaker announced that there weren't any nominations and recommended to postpone closing to the next meeting.

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Hobbs to postpone closing one (1) MSU seat to Teaching Awards Committee to SRA 24F.

Vote on Motion

In Favour: 14 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

Business

1. Ratification of Clubs

Moved by Sweeney, **seconded** by Newman that the Assembly ratify the new and returning clubs for the 2024-2025 academic year recommended by the Clubs Advisory Council, as circulated.

- Sweeney reviewed the memo that was circulated.
- Newman said they looked through the report and was both impressed and excited to see more clubs at McMaster.

Vote on Motion

In Favour: 12 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 1
Abstained: McLean
Motion Passes

2. Board of Director Year Plans

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by El-Kadi that the Assembly approve the following Board of Directors' year plans, as circulated:

- President
- Vice-President (Administration)
- Vice-President (Education)
- Vice-President (Finance)

- Popovic reviewed their year plan.
- El-Kadi reviewed their year plan.
- Hobbs reviewed their year plan.
- Sweeney reviewed their year plan.

3. Caucus Year Plans

Moved by Sweeney, **seconded** by Rahman that the Assembly approve the following Caucus Year plans, as circulated:

- Arts & Science
- Business
- Engineering
- Health Sciences
- Humanities
- Kinesiology
- Science
- Social Sciences

Amendment

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Hobbs that the Assembly amend the motion to read: “**Moved** by Sweeney, **seconded** by Rahman that the Assembly approve the following Caucus year plans, as circulated:

- Arts & Science
- Engineering
- Health Sciences
- Kinesiology
- Science
- Social Sciences”

Vote on Amendment

In Favour: 13 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

Vote on Main Motion

Moved by Sweeney, **seconded** by Rahman that the Assembly approve the following Caucus year plans, as circulated:

- Arts & Science
 - Engineering
 - Health Sciences
 - Kinesiology
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
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- Arora briefly reviewed the Science caucus year plan.
 - Popovic asked a member from the Social Sciences caucus to review their year plan, as it was circulated late.
 - Modi reviewed the Social Sciences caucus year plan.

Vote on Motion

In Favour: 14 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

4. Advocacy Related Motion

Moved by McLean, **seconded** by El-Kadi that the Student Representative Assembly adopt and release the following resolution in support of students' demands for McMaster University's divestment from stakeholders partaking in human rights violations, as noted:

Whereas, McMaster University should be a community free from hate-speech, harassment, and racism, wherein dialogue, events, protests, and discussion should be lawfully protected and peacefully undertaken; and

Whereas, the government of Canada recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination and sovereignty; and expresses support for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace; [\[source\]](#) and

Whereas, this statement comes in light of the worsening severity and scope of attacks against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and the continued perpetration of systematically oppressive practices against the Palestinian people, including the 1.9 million Palestinians internally displaced and the 38,000 Palestinians murdered or willfully killed in Gaza since October 2023 according to the United Nations' Independent Commission at time of writing; [\[source #1\]](#), [\[source #2\]](#) and

Whereas, the UN recognizes a famine occurring within Gaza; the decimation of healthcare infrastructure in Gaza with over 440 attacks on healthcare facilities and 480 healthcare workers killed since October 2023 at time of writing; [\[source #1\]](#), [\[source #2\]](#) and

Whereas, the International Court of Justice has issued an interim ruling in January 2024 finding plausible risk of genocidal acts in the Gaza strip; [\[source\]](#) and

Whereas, a coalition of 60+ McMaster-affiliated groups and student clubs, many operating within MSU, have signed on to an agreement under the name McMaster Apartheid Divest (MacAD) Coalition urging McMaster University engage in a full academic boycott and divest from the State of Israel's practices implicated in human rights violations by the United Nations' Independent Commission; [\[source\]](#) and

Whereas, student groups established a peaceful encampment on campus during May 2024 calling for McMaster University to divest from and end partnerships with companies involved in the State of Israel's practices implicated in human rights violations by the United Nations' Independent Commission, including but not limited to L3 Harris Wescam; call upon Investment Managers to undergo an external auditing process to assess University financial involvement in corporations profiting from human rights violations; condemn the ongoing genocide against the people of Palestine; terminate research collaborations and partnerships with institutions implicated in human rights violations; place the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) definition of anti-Palestinian racism within its institutional framework to support Palestinian students and their allies in their identities and advocacy; and to not only reject the attempt suppression of pro-Palestinian speech and narratives but to provide moral, financial, and academic support to Palestinian students via the provision of scholarships, hardship funds, fellowships, and placements; [\[source\]](#) and

Whereas, 122 faculty signatories of McMaster University consequently urge the administration to agree to above demands; and

Whereas, at time of writing, 16 encampments in protest have been initiated on Canadian post-secondary campuses beginning May 2024, including McMaster University, joining the international chorus of student protests;

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

Resolved, the SRA extends its support for the students peacefully protesting and their legal right to do so as they call for McMaster University's disclosure of and divestment from all corporations funding oppressive structures in the Middle East; be it further

Resolved, the right to protest, which is safeguarded by the fundamental freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, enshrined in the Charter of Rights and in many of Canada's binding international human rights obligations, is an essential human right and a cornerstone to a healthy democracy. McMaster University students shall be unabridged in this right and free from all forms of retribution; be it further

Resolved, that the Student Representative Assembly unequivocally condemns all forms of anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, and antisemitic hatred, as well as all forms of Islamophobia and hate speech, and continues to endorse a campus culture of inclusion and safety; be it further

Resolved, the SRA recognizes the protestors' demand for transparency around the university's investments in and financial ties to banks and companies, including arms manufacturers, that may be linked to the State of Israel's practices satisfying the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of apartheid as eminently reasonable; [[source #1](#), [source #2](#)] be it further

Resolved, the SRA recognizes the protestors' demand for divestment from investments and relations that sustain the State of Israel's practices satisfying the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of apartheid around the university's investments in and financial ties to banks and companies, including arms manufacturers, that may be linked to the State of Israel's practices implicated in human rights violations by the United Nations' Independent Commission, as eminently reasonable; [[source #1](#), [source #2](#), [source #3](#)] be it further

Resolved, the SRA recognizes the protestors' demands for divestment from global exchanges and partnerships with academic institutions who operate in illegal settlements or those that sustain practices carrying out human rights violations against Palestinian peoples according to the United Nations' Independent Commission as eminently reasonable; [[source #1](#)] be it further

Resolved, the SRA urges McMaster University to engage in good faith dialogue with the protestors about the demands they have brought forward.

- McLean said they worked with constituents, student groups, and faculty associations such as Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), the Muslim Students Association (MSA), the Graduate Students Association (GSA), CUPE 3906, and MUFA (McMaster University Faculty Association). They added that the statement mirrors a lot of what has already been done in CUPE 3906 and MUFA. They said this has already been done by student activists on campus, and thought that as the SRA they had an obligation to address it, but also to amplify student voices.
- El-Kadi said that the statement was a result of numerous weeks of work and revisions provided by legal counsel. They thanked McLean for their work and patience. They discouraged the Assembly from bringing forth any amendments now but advised instead to table the motion for further review due to legalities.
- Newman thanked those who crafted the statement for taking student voices into account. They said it was great to represent everyone but the full range of interested parties who could be affected should be consulted. They stated that IJV was not an MSU-ratified club, and they exist outside of the University. Newman asked if the MSU-ratified Jewish group was ever consulted at any point. They

also asked if there were any groups who were consulted last fall that were not consulted this time around and vice-versa. They ceded their time to El-Kadi.

- El-Kadi explained that McLean approached them with the desire to put forth a motion, who was in turn put in touch with legal counsel. They said the difference from last November is that at that time, they were approached by several groups to push a statement.
- Newman asked for more information on the process. They ceded their time to McLean.
- McLean stated that this came mostly from CUPE 3906 and the GSA when they released statements around mid-May during encampment events. They added that the students visiting encampments were asking if the MSU was going to formally address the current state of things. They stated that they began consulting with SPHR. They added that they also attempted to undertake the discussion with Hillel, but unfortunately their leadership did not engage in behaviors that McLean wanted to continue with at the encampment, and that is why they opted to continue conversations with IJV. McLean added that while IJV was not currently an MSU-ratified club, McLean believed they were working towards it. McLean understood the importance of consultation with diverse perspectives but wanted to engage in respectful and peaceful conversation. They stated the main difference was that consultation with Hillel was limited.
- Newman expressed concern with the lack of consultation and thought it would be better to have consultation and respectful conversation on both sides before releasing a public facing statement. They asked if the consultation period could be extended so that everybody can have a voice.
- El-Kadi suggested possibly tabling the motion, but was open to feedback as they were hearing the desire for additional groups to be consulted.
- Khan asked if there was anything in particular that needed editing, as they felt the consultation process was complete and that if nothing specific needed revisions, then tabling was not necessary.
- McLean stated that finalizing the statement was a very lengthy process, as many groups were involved and because it had to be approved by legal counsel. They wanted a game plan on what the discussion would look like before tabling.
- Newman's concern was ensuring that all groups necessary were consulted. They felt there were people who could answer questions on specific edits, who may not have been consulted. They said the motion was circulated on Friday and some people may not have had enough time to review.
- McLean said they wanted to be extremely careful with respect to the wording as it was such a lengthy process getting it approved by legal counsel. They explained the notion of staying in line with international standards and legal standards. They saw the value in consulting with other groups and asked if there were any other groups that would be beneficial. McLean felt if the floor was being open to other groups, they wanted to know how they would conduct behaviour and did not want to be in the same situation as in May.
- Newman reiterated that in the resolution, it spoke to the SRA continuing to support students in the community, while amplifying their voices. Newman wanted to ensure all students in the MSU community who have some type of interest in the issue are represented in the discussions leading to these types of statements. They felt the best way to do this would be to table the discussion.
- Popovic thought it was important as an organization to always create a safe environment for debate and felt it worthwhile to propose a motion to table.

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Newman that the assembly table the motion for further discussion and consultation.

Vote on Motion

In Favour: 7 Opposed: 7 Abstentions: 0
Opposed: Arora, McLean, Khan, McKay, Modi, Rahman, Black
Motion Fails

Back to Main Motion

- McLean felt it was important to note that even with Hillel being involved in the consultation process, there was still an unfavourable response by them to the statement that was released in November. They were willing to have the conversations with going forward, if their behaviour is in line. They believed that working with IJV fulfilled the requirement of diverse perspectives.
- Newman said that no one is ever going to agree with every statement and that was why a holistic conversation involving all parties in an open way should be had. They added that all parties should be included in an honest way, not for views that are consistent with the outside perspective.
- Mclean did not think it was fair to say they were selecting specific groups. They explained that attempts were made, the behaviour was not respectful and therefore, they did not want to continue. They added that they opted to work with IJV as McLean believed they deserved to have perspective. They did not think it was fair to say that some Jewish voices were more important than others.

Moved by El-Kadi, **seconded** by McKay that the Assembly recess for ten minutes.

- El-Kadi said it might be helpful to provide a period for reflection.
- McKay thought the time should be taken to understand all perspectives.

Vote on Motion

In Favour: 12 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

Recessed at 2:22pm

Called to order at 2:32pm

Call of the Roll

Present: Abbott, Arora, Begun, Black, Bolca, El-Kadi, Hobbs, Khan, McKay, McLean, Modi, Newman, Popovic, Rahman, Sweeney, Wang
Absence Excused: Batusic (LOA), Begun, Jeyakumar (LOA), Long (LOA), Mahmoud, Pickering (LOA), Qannam (LOA)
Absent: Dodd, Hu, Olejarz, Schaub, Sogaokar
Late:
Others Present: D. Stajcer (Recording Secretary)
Chair: Abigail Samuels (MSU Speaker)

Back to Discussion

- Popovic thanked everyone for providing their thoughts and suggested voting the motion down due to hearing a few concerning things. They added that the Board would continue to bring groups together to repurpose the motion in a more complete form.
- McLean stated that their concern with postponing was that other groups have already released statements regarding updates on the negotiations. They felt it was neglectful on the MSU's part to not address the current state of negotiations. They said they were willing to go back to Hillel, but also wanted confirmation that they would be respectful. They said there was an invitation, but Hillel's behavior was not acceptable to come into the camp to agitate and put people off. They were unsure what would arise from future discussions with Hillel and did add that it was a very back and forth conversation with the legal team.
- Sweeney thanked McLean for their work on the motion and for going through the proper process. They expressed concern about the language being used about an MSU club and the language about their behaviour. They wanted to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.
- El-Kadi thought there was a clear demonstration to table the motion based on the last vote and feared there was an optics issue. They thanked McLean for their work on the motion but felt the SRA

has demonstrated an interest in continuing consultations. They noted that it would be a group effort and that there is value in future discussions. El-Kadi brought up the amendments from the November statement and said that there was no harm in trying. They encouraged other SRA members to come forward if they wanted to be involved.

- Khan wanted to hear other SRA members' thoughts or concerns and felt the Board members' statements reflected only themselves.
- Hobbs echoed the intention to create a welcoming environment and reiterated that the Board was open to continuing to facilitate conversations.
- McLean stated they were unsure what the term 'respectful optics' was in reference to and asked for clarification.
- Sweeney clarified it was the language being used in different ways.
- Modi said it was apparent that McLean went through a lengthy process to ensure that all voices and legal aspects were considered. They feared if it was postponed, consensus would not be reached. They asked what the expectation would be from additional conversations, that wasn't already received in the past two months.
- Newman believed that as student representatives, all student voices should be represented.
- McLean said they were not trying to exclude a group from the table, but rather it was because they couldn't engage in a respectful matter. They believed that diverse perspectives were met by consulting IJV. They were concerned about where the conversation would lead if the statement was tabled.
- Khan feared they were moving away from the main point and felt McLean has had to repeat themselves multiple times. They reiterated it would be beneficial to hear from other Assembly members.
- Sweeney said that having this dialogue was very important and hoped everyone could work together to have all students recognized and understood. They felt the statement could be improved in some areas to ensure the best statement was put forth.
- McKay asked McLean what changes came about from conversations with different individuals.
- McLean said that IJV helped edit wording and reviewed the changes that came from consultations with IJV. They also reviewed the changes that came from conversations with SPHR and MSA.
- Newman stated they felt as though they were not receiving answers. They felt SPHR and MSA were able to shape the statement whereas IJV had minor changes. They asked how other organizations on campus were reached out to and how they responded.
- McLean said the idea was to introduce Hillel Co-President to the encampment, however it did not get to that point due to their behaviour. They added that IJV played a very significant part in drafting the statement, and that they were very much on-board regarding divestment. They all collectively decided it would be best to support demands put forward by student activists and acknowledge the group as a significant force. They added that IJV wanted to ensure wording being used was already put out by highly respective organizations. McLean apologized for understating IJV's impact and noted their input was very invaluable.
- Popovic felt that as a student union, it was important to create an inclusive environment. They saw sentiment that further discussion was needed and saw a path forward. They said the Board could facilitate towards a more complete motion. They noted it has happened in the past were very willing to work on this.
- Khan said it was fair to go ahead with revisions but felt a timeline would be effective and should be instated, as there have been a few months worth of work already provided and would not be fair to McLean. They asked Popovic what a proposed timeline might look like. Khan ceded their time to Popovic.
- Popovic said that would be very fair and felt it would be created in time to be brought forward for the next SRA meeting.
- McLean asked when the first SRA meeting of the fall term would be.
- Stajcer answered that it will likely be the first Sunday after the school term begins.

- Popovic conducted a straw poll on tabling the discussion until September with further revisions in the meantime.
- Newman said that postponing is simply an act to involve all parties, as they felt not all were adequately involved initially.
- McLean said that the Board of Governors would be drafting something, and the point was to urge them to continue to listen to students and activists. They said there was pressure to get a statement in before September and said an August meeting would be beneficial.
- Newman said they were not against a clear-cut timeline.
- El-Kadi stated that an August SRA meeting could be called to meet timelines, if they had a presentable draft in place.

Vote on Main Motion

In Favour: 6 Opposed: 6 Abstentions: 3
Opposed: Newman, Popovic, Sweeney, Wang, El-Kadi, Hobbs
Abstained: McKay, Bolca, Abbott
Motion Fails

Information Period

- No information was shared.

Question Period

- No questions were asked.

Adjournment

Moved by El-Kadi, **seconded** by Popovic that the meeting be adjourned.

In Favour: 14 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Passes

Adjourned at 3:27pm

/ds