**Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University**

**AUS Climate Strike General Assembly**

**September 25th, 2019, 6:00 PM**

*(6:00-6:44 pm - signing in AUS students)*

* 1. Call to Order
     + 6:44 pm
  2. Territorial Acknowledgement
     + AUS would like to acknowledge that McGill University is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien’kehá:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations. AUS recognizes and respects the Kanien’kehá:ka as the traditional custodians of the lands and water on which we meet today.
  3. Approval of the Agenda
     + Agenda approved
  4. New Business
     + [Motion for the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University to Declare a One Day Strike in Support of Climate Justice](http://ausmcgill.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AUS-Strike-Motion.pdf) [PASSED]
       - Presentation (C-JAM [Ayo])
         * It is with no lack of urgency that we are convened here this evening to strike from classes on Friday, September 27.

Today, we confront a threat to all human existence, the likes and scale of which humanity has never encountered. Today, we confront the *global climate emergency*. Further, we confront the danger, suffering, abuse, brutality, and vulnerability that society has so long inflicted upon its most targetable groups. We confront the *global justice emergency*.

Both justice and the most basic material conditions for justice are at risk of permanent extinction. We face not merely a climate crisis but a climate apartheid, in which economic, racial, ethnic, and gender divides will stratify access to the means of survival in favour of those who have always wielded power, and against those who have always had to organise against it.

We think specifically of the genocidal relation to the Kanien’keha:ka and other Indigenous peoples, on whose land we occupy uninvited, whose homes were taken by the same colonial project driving the ongoing ecological catastrophes, and whose emancipation must be inextricable from this fight.

In response to the climate crisis – though not the social crisis – ten Quebec universities have declared a climate emergency. McGill is the only Montreal university not to sign on. McGill is also the only university in Montreal not to cancel classes for the September 27 demonstration. And last week, the McGill Senate rejected a student-led motion to cancel classes on Friday.

These decisions show total contempt for both the escalating environmental crisis that threatens the future of humanity, and the urgent demands of universal emancipation from oppression. It is with like contempt that we censure the McGill administration, in gathering here to declare a one-day strike in the AUS.

The fight for climate justice has already begun, and it will continue with or without you. But one thing can be guaranteed: whatever we win without you will be far less than what we win with you. Only by organising can we compel our decision-makers to do what needs to be done for climate justice.

Today, we will show the administration that students not only care about climate justice, but that we will stand for it, and against any institution that gets in our way.

Therefore, we bring the following motion to the AUS: Be it resolved, that the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University hold a one-day strike on September 27, 2019 in order to pressure the university and government to meet the demands set forth by the climate strike movement as well as participate in the global mobilization for climate justice.

* 1. Q&A
     + ?: Do we know what we mean by "strike" and how exactly is that defined?
       - C-JAM: By strike we mean we're going to leave our classes, force a strike, and put forwards demands for the uni and government to meet such that if they don't meet it, we will continue striking in the future.
     + ?: So what exactly are we demanding?
       - C-JAM: These are our official demands to McGill.
         * **Acknowledge the virtually unanimous scientific consensus** and publicly state that: “Fossil fuel companies currently cause grave injurious impact, which disproportionately affects traditionally marginalized and oppressed populations that have contributed least to the climate crisis. These populations include but are not limited to Indigenous communities, People of Colour, poor communities, and migrants.”
         * **Divest from its investments in fossil fuels.**
         * **Call on and actively pressure the federal and provincial government to fully recognize the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).** Specifically, we demand immediate recognition of Article 29, noting that “Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and productive capacity of their lands or territories.” Understood within the Canadian context, Article 29 of UNDRIP can be understood as a call to recognize the place of Indigenous peoples as land stewards within Canada. McGill has a duty to recognize land stewardship as a tenet of Indigenous culture and identity, and with this recognition, McGill must demonstrate leadership in championing reconciliation and the rights of Indigenous peoples.
     + ?: So, if we were to keep striking, would that impact our ability to graduate on time?
       - C-JAM (Ayo): First of all, this motion brought forward is a one-day strike for Friday, September 27. That will not affect our ability to graduate. Certain faculties and departments have already cancelled classes and content. Several professors or other instructors have postponed or cancelled, of their own accord, the material scheduled for this Friday. So, with respect to the present motion, no[, this would not impact our ability to graduate on time]. However, the idea of student strikes is that most of its force is at the extent or to the extent that it can create a crisis for the government and to the economy of the province and the country. So, in 2012, there was a 2012 Student Strike in place throughout Quebec. It was successful, largely in part due to the duration and the high proportion of students who joined the strike. The idea of extended or unlimited strikes gives us three reasons that make student strikes prohibitively expensive for the government. If students strike for weeks or months, that would affect graduation. It would be up to the government to cancel the semester. If they do, three things will happen. Firstly, the education system will be jammed/blocked. Secondly, the Quebec economy will lose a substantive amount of student labour, which is obviously detrimental. Thirdly, they will lose revenue from the resulting massive labour shortage. When we talk about student strikes, we are talking about the long-term kind of extended student strike or unlimited strike which will use the power that students have as intellectual workers who want to be understood as such to withdraw that productive capacity to the economy and to the government in order to demand and successfully defend the advance. That's the answer.
     + ?: Would we then be submitting a deadline for our demands to be met or would there be another meeting?
       - C-JAM: To emphasize: the motion in question is for 24 hours. If this extended strike does come up, it would happen at a later GA.
     + ?: I was wondering if this demand for the strike on Friday is for the whole university? Because this is an Arts assembly, right? So as an Arts assembly, could you affect all the departments?
       - Speaker: From a purely legislative perspective, I can answer this. Basically, you (Arts assembly) only have the power of the AUS. If this motion happens tonight, an online ratifying vote would happen for students in the AUS, which would happen tonight. That being said, AUS is the biggest faculty in McGill, so there would be substantive pressure if we said, "Hey, we're not going to classes."
  2. Debate
     + C-JAM: We have one amendment; motion to add a soft picket line clause to the current motion [PASSED]. I want to emphasize that in order for the strike to be effective, we should attempt to enforce it. Add a clause "be it further resolved that the AUS creates a soft picket line committee to block classes." To clarify, we will stand in front of classrooms and let people know there's a strike going on and encourage them to strike, but we will not physically impede students from going to class.
       - Speaker: This amendment is posted in the Facebook event so if you'd like more detail, it'll be there.
       - ?: How does this work with the amendment? Do we decide this now or is this a later thing?
       - Speaker: The first thing we need to vote on is if we agree with the proposed amendment, aka the soft picket line committee. To further clarify, you're (the assembly) not making the committee - that's the AUS' job. What we're debating and voting on now is if you agree whether it's a good idea to have a soft picket line or not. If no one wants to debate the amendment, we'll vote on it. The amendment requires a 50% majority for it to be included in the motion. If it's voted in favour, it will be included in the big motion which we talked about first. Then we would vote on the big motion, which would also require a 50% majority.
       - ?: About the amendment, it's very easy to commit to one day and to go out on Friday and to march. It's very easy for the school to go, "They went out for one day." But what is actually going to make a difference is continuous effort and people continuing to strike otherwise it doesn't matter at all. Also, half your lectures are recorded. So, yeah.
     + ?: Question about the soft picket line. There's the march going on at the same time, so is someone supervising that? Or how does this work?
       - C-JAM: We're in the process of organizing that right now. What we're thinking is that we'd have a committee within C-JAM and have reference people to lead different soft picket lines. We're thinking we cover classes up to 11:30-12:30 since we'll be going to the march at 12. We'll be talking about it more leading up to the strike.
     + ?: Do you think other student societies will have the time, if we decide to put the motion forward, to follow our lead? Like the faculties of science, management, etc. Do you think they'll have the chance before the march to follow in AUS' footsteps? Or do you think that's impossible?
       - President: No[, it's impossible]. So, basically, our constitution outlined that we needed to give the public 5 days notice before we called a GA to motion to strike as a faculty. So, they'd (the other faculties) also need to collect the signatures and stuff five days prior to their potential assembly. They could follow our lead, but it wouldn't be for this Friday.
       - ?: The Mac Campus Student Society voted already for a strike. So people have done it already, so, we're doing good. Yay!
       - ?: May we propose a motion that in the event of an unsatisfactory response from McGill, we could reconvene?
         * Speaker: Please write it out and send it to me or give me a handwritten copy.
         * ?: We can't just set up a strike or another date for reconvening?
         * Speaker: No, sorry, that's not part of the constitution. You could say that you propose calling another GA if the demands are not met or a deadline by which you want to see those demands met, but you can't set a date for another assembly because for any assembly to be called, you need 200 signatures and to present it to the AUS. You can present another amendment if you send it to me.
       - CSAUS: Could Leg[islative] Council put a ballot on the referendum for the arts students to vote again if they'd like to reconvene again?
         * Speaker: For a GA to be called, it has to be 200 petitioned AUS members' signatures*. (She is informed of another option by the President.)* Wait, no, or 8 councillors at Leg[islative] Council.
         * CSAUS: So if the demands are unsatisfactory, we could do that (8 councillors convening and petitioning for a GA to be called)? Perfect.
       - VP External: How do we let the admin know about our strike? Are we preparing an email?
         * President: I have the associate dean's cellphone number. iMessage! So basically, what I'm supposed to do is keep her updated on all the progress we made. So, I'll send her a text after the GA saying, "Hey! Associate Dean! The vote pass/failed!" And then about the ratified vote, then the admin can draft their response and decide if the Arts Faculty would like to cancel classes. I will keep them updated and keep her updated with the motion if it's passed. She said to text her but whatever. She's receiving this information.
       - ?: I'm confused about the soft picket line. We say we're going to stand outside classes, but who's standing outside? Is that covering all the classrooms? Or just in all of Leacock? I don't understand what that means.
         * C-JAM: So, we're gonna try to get all Arts classes. There's a lot. We're making a list of all of them and assigning picketers to all the classes and telling students, "We're on strike, you shouldn't go to class." That's our goal and our progress but I can't guarantee that it'll happen.
       - VP Services: I move the previous question
         * Second mover: Arts Representative Adin
     + Voting: Motion to Add a Soft Picket Line Clause to the Current Motion
       - Amendment passes
     + Debate, continued
       - ?: What happens if the result from tonight's GA and the subsequent online vote are not the same?
         * Speaker: If this motion fails at the online ratification, it is null and void. This [GA] is to move the question into the online voting procedure. Given the turnout here tonight, we need 8% of the entire AUS student body to vote and at least 50% of that 8% to vote in favour of the motion. Between 700-800 people showed up tonight *(Correction: Over 900 AUS students attended the GA that night)* so if all of you and your friends vote on SSMU Simply Voting tonight or tomorrow, then we will meet the minimum for the online vote to pass.
       - ?: Is the online vote being sent out in the email just to this assembly or to the whole Faculty?
         * Speaker: It's being sent out to all Arts Undergraduate students. For those of you who are returning students, it's the same platform and thing as when you vote for your Arts Execs, Arts Reps, and Arts Senators.
       - ?: I'd like to move the question
         * Second mover: Almost everyone
         * [Point of Order] ?: You have to move to call the question because there might be more debate

Voting to call the question

Question is called

* 1. Voting: Motion for the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill University to Declare a One Day Strike in Support of Climate Justice
     + Motion passes!
  2. Adjournment
     + 7:17 pm