



Concordia Student Union - Council of Representatives
CSU Special Council Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2020
Via Zoom, 18h30

1. CALL TO ORDER

The chairperson calls the meeting to order at **18h36**.

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. TiohEá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Chairperson: Caitlin Robinson
Council Minutes Keeper: Michelle Lam

Executives present for the meeting were: Isaiah Joyner (General Coordinator), Sarah Mazhero (Academic & Advocacy Coordinator), Victoria Pesce (External Affairs & Mobilization Coordinator), Daniel Amico (Internal Affairs Coordinator), Manuella Simo (Sustainability Coordinator), Malcolm Asselin (Loyola Coordinator), Holly Mark-Hilton (Finance Coordinator)

Councilors present for the meeting were: Natalia Whiteley (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Tzvi Hersh Filler (Gina Cody School of Engineering), James Hanna (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Anais Gagnon (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Paige Beaulieu (Arts & Science), Shaun Sederoff (Arts & Science), Roman Zelensky (Arts & Science), Christopher Vaccarella (Arts & Science), Matthew Kaminski (John Molson School of Business), Ahmadou Sakho (Arts & Science), Margot Berner (Arts & Science), Lauren Perozek (John Molson School of Business), Howard Issley (John Molson School of Business), Chelsea Okankwu (John

Molson School of Business), Matthew Benzrihem (Arts & Science), Harrison Kirshner (John Molson School of Business), S Shivaane (Arts & Science), Sarah Bubenheimer (Arts & Science)

Executives absent for the meeting were: Eduardo Malorni (Student Life Coordinator)

Councilors absent for the meeting were: *Jeremy Deneault (John Molson School of Business), Jarrad Haas (Fine Arts), Zach Williams (Independent), Arie Barak (Independent), Danielle Vandolder Beaudin (John Molson School of Business), Diana Lukic (Fine Arts), Christopher Kalafatidis (Arts & Science), Marlena Valenta (Arts & Science), Desiree Blizzard (Gina Cody School of Engineering), and Yasmine Yahiaoui (Arts & Science)*

Margot Berner moves to excuse Eduardo Malorni. Seconded by **Tzvi Hersh Filler**. Motion carries.

3. ANNUAL CAMPAIGN PRESENTATION/SELECTION

Victoria Pesce: This is the annual campaign presentation, made by the External and Mobilization Coordinator.

I want to talk about the campaign being about BLM. The emotions do run high and this is a touchy subject. It hits close to home for many. I want to remind everyone to be respectful and listen to your peers. Save your questions for the end.

We are the representative body of all undergrad students, each year the CSU chooses a campaign. We want to pitch the idea of having BLM as the annual campaign.

BLM is an international human rights movement that campaigns against violence and systemic racism to black people.

White privilege is present at all levels and in individual lives, we need to acknowledge and be aware of this. We need to acknowledge the history of this as well, and how white people haven't necessarily done their part to show support to the black community.

Systemic is not the same as systematic.

Inequality is the unequal access to opportunities, equity provides the same opportunities to get to the same level, equality is having the same capability to reach the goal but may not have been done in the same way.

Canada - I'm white so I can't give direct plans into what we're doing but I want to provide information. Racism in Canada is prevalent, and anti-black racism in Canada is systemic, according to a report done by the Canadian government. We can't deny that a lot of the practices in the USA have leaked into what happens in Canada.

Montreal- Racism is still prevalent in Montreal as well. *[Provides examples of police brutality in Montreal]*

Concordia- The computer riot is an example when a professor displayed a clear bias in grading black students vs white students

Current Situation- This is a human rights movement and is international with many public figures getting involved. Concordia students themselves took it upon themselves to write a letter with demands. We, as a union, should support these demands.

We Can't Stay Silent- We as a Concordia union **cannot** stay silent. Our voice is one of the most powerful ones. As the union, we should be doing work to give support to students. We need to be leading the way and be at the forefront because we are the ones who can ensure that these implementations are being carried out in the Concordia campus. We need to change the way students behave on our campus and how we handle racism on our campus. We can't have students feeling misplaced in this community

Recommendations - BLM Conversations: If we want to support, we need to have the black community in the conversation. Their experience is different from other white or POC, as the color of their skin makes an excessive difference. Additionally, how will we hold ourselves accountable and ensure there are consequences to our actions? How will we teach people to do better? Everything we do at Concordia spills out into the real world. We need to unite all universities to *literally* fight for human rights for BIPOC.

We need all students to be advocating for Black Lives Matter.

Sarah Mazhero presents the following motion. Seconded by **Daniel Amico**. Motion passes.

WHEREAS The CSU has historically supported protests that aim to better the lives of their peers and the overall community,

WHEREAS the purpose of the annual campaign is to mobilize and inform students about a current issue that affects students – or a subset of students – and their larger communities;

WHEREAS the CSU's mission is to serve students, defend their rights and act as their highest representatives' body at Concordia;

WHEREAS the CSU stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter movements across North America;

WHEREAS systemic racism remains prominent in Canada and BIPOC members of our communities face discrimination, and disproportionate surveillance, and disproportionate police violence.

WHEREAS

- Regis Korchinski-Paquet from Toronto fell off her balcony when police were present at her apartment
- Bony Jean-Pierre, was shot in the head trying to flee from police in Montreal.
- George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by a white police officer kneeling on his neck while he said, "I can't breathe."
- Breonna Taylor from the United States was shot in her own home by Louisville, Kentucky police conducting a search intended for another person.

- Tony McDade from the United States was fatally shot by a police officer in Tallahassee, Florida.

and multiple other people have been killed by police in Canada recently;

WHEREAS active anti-racism and active participation in the Black Lives Matter movement is essential to securing a safe future for all;

BE IT RESOLVED that the CSU make the annual campaign one that is in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the budgetary impact is nil.

Isaiah Joyner: Thank you Victoria for the presentation and standing in support of this movement. Be very wary when you draw a comparison to current events as this is a sensitive subject. I can't speak about the importance of this campaign enough. Last year with the Climate campaign, it was easier to work in collaboration with community organizations. The mobilization for this is more present and this is a sensitive subject as many of our students are vulnerable. It would be a waste of opportunity and disrespectful if we don't join this movement

Ahmadou Sakho: Racism is a human tragedy. The fact that the CSU can get involved, especially with the momentum that BLM has in the world, is very good. I'm looking forward to this momentum bringing long term improvements at Concordia and city of Montreal

Harrison Kirshner: This movement applies to all of us, regardless of skin color. I look forward to hopefully passing this

Shaun Sederoff: Can we add an amendment? Should we also include Indigenous people? Should we make a solidarity presentation for the First Nations people of New Brunswick?

Victoria Pesce: I'm more than happy to add this into the *Whereas* and make them as two separate points. I'm welcome to any suggestions on how to phrase it

Sarah Mazhero: This was very impactful, and I appreciate you as an ally. As a student union, it's our right and duty to advocate for our students and stand in solidarity for the Indigenous people as well. We can't turn a blind eye to this. I want to reiterate the importance of this both as a black student and as an executive.

Roman Zelensky: It's great energy for us to be fighting racism. I want to clarify one thing: I don't agree with the vocabulary that's being used such as all students **have** to do something. I

want to clarify that we should be careful. Democracy is all about having a choice, even if there are a clear right and a clear wrong

Victoria Pesce: Human rights are not a choice.

Roman Zelensky: Saying all Concordia students **should** do something is wrong

Isaiah Joyner: *point of personal privilege*, this isn't a time for you to shed your opinion. Choose your words very carefully

Roman Zelensky: You guys talk as if you have to do something, but we don't have to

Sarah Mazhero: *Point of Order*

Chairperson: Roman, please be respectful, I'm going to have to cut you off. I would also like to remind everyone that student news platforms are here and this meeting is being recorded, so please have clothes on

Mathew Kaminski: Thanks for highlighting issues that face minority groups. I hope this council overwhelmingly passes this motion.

James Hanna: Listening to the presentation, can you make it a bit shorter what the actual demands are? The campaign is going to consist of having a few talks? What will the campaign consist of? Why wasn't this included in the motion?

Victoria Pesce: I didn't put actions because as a white person I cannot make this call. We cannot tell BIPOC how to deal with the issues they face. Racism isn't something we are going to solve in one day. We need to talk to the BIPOC community to find out what they want us to do. This requires conversations and town halls to find out what the protocols are to fix this issue.

James Hanna: So for now, we will do nothing until we have town halls?

Isaiah Joyner: Last year we did not have concrete demands for the motion. We kept it broad. Victoria is trying to advocate that it's not up to us as a council on what is the right approach to the movement, the keyword is that we are in **solidarity** with the movement

James Hanna: Are we endorsing those demands?

Victoria Pesce: Yes, and finding other ways to improve this movement and hold the administration accountable. I'm not going to have every solution tomorrow, that's why we need to have conversations. The main goal is to stand with the black community, and that's our action.

Isaiah Joyner: We're already working on motions and recommendations. This decision that you're making will allow us to dedicate a number of resources to this movement. We'll still be fighting for this regardless of if it's the campaign

Nicole LaRouge: I'm the campaign coordinator and I want to provide context/comments based on this discussion. I'd like to reiterate what Isaiah said earlier about why it's so important for this to be the annual campaign. As someone working for the campaign department for 3 years, historically the annual campaign has been something that already has mobilization. The CSU has been doing anti-racist work for years and will continue to do so. That being said, because there is so much energy around this movement currently in Montreal, it does send a message
[INTERRUPTED]

Francella Fiallos: Speaking on behalf of our news director, the motion mentions the budget being nil. What does this refer to?

Victoria Pesce: It won't affect our budget, but we already have a budget for campaigns.

James Hanna: Last year we passed a motion that we have a balanced budget that if we have to change a budget line we have to mention it in the motion. Since we have a campaigns budget, we don't have to make any changes to the budget

Ahmadou Sakho: Just to address the initial reservations, I want to remind everyone of our Bylaw 2.1.

Nicole LaRouge: The solidarity with Indigenous people: as someone involved in anti-racist work in Montreal and Canada, I definitely think this is something that's an issue that extends beyond Wetsuweten and what's happened recently. In Canada, statistically, Indigenous people are discriminated against by the police, and it's in-line with the history of colonialism. They're similarly impacted by the BLM movement. They're much more likely to face police violence than most other demographics other than the black community. It would be great if the motion included them, but I would be very general about it. This is not a new thing, but I would also avoid saying things like Native Lives Matter. They've said they don't want to use that phrasing because they have their own movement.

Isaiah Joyner: We can make sure that they are included but don't get into the nitty-gritty, because then we're likely to offend someone

S Shivaane: To address the "We don't need to do nothing if we don't want to"
Leaving the option for students to not support Black Lives Matter is not an option this union should be taking. We need to take a firm stance and protect our Black students. Democracy is about representing and protecting marginalized groups as much as it is about choice. As CSU council officers, when we run and get elected, we represent all students, not just the ones who reflect our own lives. I'm not here just for International and South Indian students, I'm here for Black students too. There is an unproductive pattern of councilors using the term student representation and democracy when it suits motions they want to do, and then falling back on freedom of speech or choice to absolve them of accountability and responsibility. There is a systemic racism issue in the CSU, and we must recognise that.

Sarah Mazhero: We need to look at ourselves and at the student union. I ran to represent minorities. We have to be very mindful and be sensitive to this topic. This is a broader issue that they face, such as representation and police brutality.

James Hanna: This is from my own personal cynicism on movements: what would happen if in two months the BLM movement disappears? Historically

Victoria Pesce: Point of personal privilege. This isn't relevant

James Hanna: Are there any plans if this movement dissolves?

Isaiah Joyner: The movement is not just the BLM organization. We're talking about **our** black community here at Concordia, and will come up with concrete actions here at Concordia. I'm confused as to where this trend is coming from? When we say we're going external, we mean we're going external **of the CSU**

James Hanna: Would anyone be opposed to putting this motion?

Isaiah Joyner: I'm opposed to this. We're just supposed to pick a direction to go with this campaign. If we put all of these contingencies, it's disrespectful because it sounds like we don't trust the movement.

Harrison Kirshner: Should we start voting on this?

S Shivaane presents the following amendment. Seconded by **Shaun Sederoff**. Motion passes.

WHEREAS Rodney Levi of the Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq Nation was shot by a member of the RCMP on June 4.

WHEREAS Chantel Moore of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in New Brunswick was shot by a member of the RCMP on June 12.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the annual campaign be one that is in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement against police brutality and systemic racism

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the annual campaign be one that is in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples of Canada against police brutality and systemic racism

VOTE

15 YES

0 NO

1 ABSTAIN

MOTION PASSES

James Hanna moves to amend the amendment to add an “**and**” in-between *Black Lives Matter Movement* and *against police brutality*. Seconded by **Shaun Sederoff**. Opposed by **Ahmadou Sakho**. Amendment fails.

VOTE:

0 YES

15 NO

1 ABSTAIN

MOTION FAILS

Victoria Pesce: BLM is against police brutality and systemic racism

James Hanna: It seems like better wording. It may seem insignificant but I believe it seems better.

Anais Gagnon: *Point of order*. James is trying to separate BLM from police brutality and systemic racism. There's no point in putting that “**and**”

Ahmadou Sakho: People need to learn more about the BLM movement. BLM has existed since 2013, since the murder of Trayvon Martin. It's highly unlikely that they will disappear, given the global movement that they have. People need to think very carefully before they speak, it can be problematic and disrespectful sometimes.

Margot Berner: There's a small grammatical error in the original motion. Can I amend the motion to change it?

Margot Berner moves to amend where it said Indigenous Peoples *of* Canada to Indigenous Peoples *in* Canada. Seconded by **S Shivaane**. Opposed by **James Hanna**. Motion passes.

VOTE:

13 YES

1 NO

3 ABSTAINS

Tzvi Hersh Filler abstains

Mathew Kaminski abstains.

MOTION PASSES

S Shivaane calls the question. Seconded by **Ahmadou Sakho**.

James Hanna: This is denying that they're a part of Canada.

Harrison Kirshner: The amended wording that Margot presented is good, I don't see the relevance of the Queen in this discussion.

S Shivaane: In response to James' comment that this is against the sovereignty of Canada, that is irrelevant

Harrison Kirshner: Many Indigenous nations are not a part of Canada. The amended motion is great the way it is.

Lauren Perozek calls the question. Seconded by **S Shivaane**.

The motion has now been amended to the following.

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WHEREAS Rodney Levi of the Metepenagiag Mi’kmaq Nation was shot by a member of the RCMP on June 4 in New Brunswick.

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and multiple other people have been killed by police in Canada recently;

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BE IT RESOLVED that the CSU makes the annual campaign one that is in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the annual campaign be one that is in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement against police brutality and systemic racism

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the annual campaign be one that is in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples in Canada against police brutality and systemic racism

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the budgetary impact is nil.

VOTE:

17 YES

0 NO

0 ABSTAIN

MOTION PASSES

MATHEW KAMINSKI VOTES YES
HARRISON KIRSHNER VOTES YES
LAUREN PEROZEK VOTES YES
SHAUN SEDEROFF VOTES YES
CHRISTOPHER VACCARELLA VOTES YES

4. FUTURE JUNE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Isaiah Joyner: Can I amend that an SCM will be called in July, or on a Tuesday or Thursday?

Harrison Kirshner: I think it should be postponed to July but am open to a vote

Eduardo Malorni: Finance committee already mandated us to schedule one in July

Lauren Perozek: I'm open to a Tuesday or Thursday meeting

Isaiah Joyner: I'm against putting it on the one after the 15th, but I'm open to either July 8 or a Tuesday or Thursday.

Isaiah Joyner presents the following motion. Seconded. Motion carries.

WHEREAS at the June 10th regular council meeting, council voted that the GC call a meeting on a Wednesday in June at 6:30;

WHEREAS the remaining two Wednesdays in June are not business days;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GC be mandated to conduct a poll to find a suitable alternative date

5. ADJOURNMENT

Tzvi Hersh Filler moves to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by **Isaiah Joyner**. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 20h11.