



Concordia Student Union - Council of Representatives
CSU Regular Council Meeting
Thursday, February 17, 2022
Via Zoom, 18h30

1. CALL TO ORDER

The chairperson calls the meeting to order at **18h34**.

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 Minute Keeper: Michelle Lam

Executives present for the meeting were: Eduardo Malorni (General Coordinator), Malcolm Asselin (Student Life Coordinator), Harrison Kirshner (Internal Affairs Coordinator), Faye Sun (Sustainability Coordinator)

Councilors present for the meeting were: Emmanuel Gaisie (John Molson School of Business), Calvin Clarke (Arts & Science), Alina Murad (Arts & Science), Caleb Woolcott (Arts & Science), Christopher Vaccarella (Arts & Science), Lauren Perozek (John Molson School of Business), Ikrame Housni (Arts & Science), Hassan Nabeel (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Olivia Integlia (Arts & Science), Boutaina Chafi (Arts & Science), Tzvi Hersh Filler (Independent), Lily Charette (Arts & Science), Jeremya Deneault (John Molson School of Business)

Councilors absent for the meeting were: Noah Mohamed (John Molson School of Business), Ariane Drouin (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Katherine Bellini (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Marissa Profetto (Gina Cody School of Engineering), Wan Hua Li (Fine Arts), Edel Kilkenny-Mondoux (Arts & Science), Paula Colmenares (Independent), Samuel Thibodeau (Fine Arts), Shania Bramble (Arts & Science), Brandon Grimaldi (Arts & Science), Nathaniel Ouazana (Arts & Science)

Executives absent for the meeting were: Camina Harrison-Chéry (External Affairs & Mobilization Coordinator), Aria Khaksar (Finance Coordinator), S Shivaane (Loyola Coordinator), Hannah Jamet-Lange (Academic & Advocacy Coordinator)

3. Ratification of Appointment Committee Minutes

Christopher Vaccarella motions to enter closed sessions. Seconded by **Eduardo Malorni**. Motion passes unanimously.

Eduardo Malorni motions to approve the Appointment Committee minutes. Seconded by **Harrison Kirshner**. Motion passes unanimously.

Christopher Vaccarella motions to enter open sessions. Seconded by **Malcolm Asselin**. Motion passes unanimously.

Eduardo Malorni motions to ratify the minutes from closed session. Seconded by **Christopher Vaccarella**. Motion passes unanimously.

4. Frigo Vert Fee Levy Modification Referendum Question

Hunter (Frigo Vert): Frigo Vert has been a fee levy group since the early 90s. We have mostly student fee levy membership but we also have community memberships. We focus on healthy food, social justice. We focused as a bulk buying club until we got a space on Mackay and evolved into a health food store that offers programming. Our rent has increased and we have evolved as an organization with more programming throughout the pandemic, and this is why we are requesting a fee levy increase.

Malcolm Asselin presents the following motion. Seconded by **Tzvi Hersh Filler**. Opposed by **Tzvi Hersh Filler**. Motion passes.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following question be sent to referendum:

Do you, as an undergraduate student at Concordia, approve of LE FRIGO VERT fee-levy being increased by \$0.13 per credit [bringing their fee-levy to \$0.46per credit, that will now be adjusted to the Consumer Price Index of Canada]? The fee would be effective starting with the 2022 autumn semester, and completely refundable in accordance with Concordia University tuition and refund policy.

Note: Should this pass, this will cause a change in this student fee charge of 0.39\$ per 3-credit course, meaning it will go from 0.99\$ to 1.38\$ per 3-credit course. This charge can currently be opted out from.

VOTE:

7 YES

1 NO

5 ABSTAIN

Calvin Clarke abstains

Malcolm Asselin: We reviewed their documents and they submitted them all on time.

Tzvi Hersh Filler: Who is the VP Finance of Frigo Vert?

Hunter: Within our structure, we operate as a workers collective. We all do a little bit of everything. We have a Finance Committee, that is Peggy, Tasha, and Sarah.

Tzvi Hersh Filler: So to clarify, if revenue comes in that is less than expected, this committee is responsible to send a notification to scale things back?

Hunter: We make budgeting decisions as a collective

Tasha Zamudio (Frigo Vert): We presented a budget with the fee levy committee and since we moved into our accessible space in 2016 on Mackay, we have been running a deficit since the rent is so high. We knew we would be running a deficit since our operating costs were higher, and knew that in the future we would need a fee levy increase. In 2019, we transitioned to a waste free store that also led to our deficit and we took that calculated risk. In 2020, COVID hit and we had to liquidate our perishable merchandise by donating it. Our staffing cost has also been lower because of COVID. We're now planning for a normal year, and with the increases in our wages and rent, we need more money. We can no longer grow or sustain our current activities without a fee levy increase.

Tzvi Hersh Filler: In 2020, there was \$250K in membership and around \$250K in expenses, so they should've broken even but instead there's a reported \$80K in deficit. Since 2017, rent has increased by around \$2000 a year except for this year where it increased by \$10K, but in 2019 the deficit increased by \$30K. There's a third revenue stream that isn't mentioned here, the Frigo Vert is a grocery store. The revenue for membership this year went up significantly, staffing went down. We gave Reggies a one-time loan this year with the stipulation that they would implement changes. Here, we see a consistent 39% jump in fee levy. This seems to be a management issue rather than a lack of fee issue. There should be a plan to restructure.

Tasha Zamudio: We're running a non profit store with affordable and low mark-up prices. We have a broad mandate that includes programming and community events, and are a lot more than a store. It's unfortunate that people only think of us as just a store. We transitioned to a waste free store so that we can focus less on the store and more on our programming. Going back to your document, it is not our entire financial statement and only shows the trends. Our statements from 2019 onward are available on our website and will show how much money we made from the store, which was not a lot. You'll also see our operating costs there that aren't pictured here. The bulk of the money goes to staffing and rent. The money we receive stays the same but costs are increasing every year. The fee levy we're asking for is to sustain us in the future so that we can grow as an organization or hire more staff, and spend more money on community outreach

Caleb Woolcott: I am recusing myself from the conversation as there is a conflict of interest

Tzvi Hersh Filler: In terms of the rent, there is a strong argument that there will be a consistent need for more funds.

Tasha Zamudio: A fee levy increase will be an estimated \$91,000. This year we're spending \$40,000 on our wildly popular PWYC food baskets, and that will be increased to \$60,000. Most of the money will go towards food distribution and the other will go to staffing

Hunter: I'm not sure if you've been to the space, Hersh, but it's not a grocery store. There's a reason why other grocery stores are able to operate but we aren't one, we're a community center. Being a store was not the best way to serve students. You'd be surprised by how much we're able to do with the money we have. We have a wheelchair accessible space and you can't find that many spaces like that on campus. The need for our group is huge, we have had to turn away students who are hungry and can't get access to healthy food. We're one of the only fee levy groups that were running during the pandemic and most of us were just volunteering.

Tzvi Hersh Filler: In the budget breakdown, rent is currently listed for \$112,000 and it's being transitioned to \$114,000. Are you offering the landlord more money if the fee levy increases?

Tasha Zamudio: It's a commercial lease, rent increases every year.

5. Property Acquisition Referendum Question

Eduardo Malorni presents the following motion. Seconded by **Christopher Vaccarella**. Motion passes unanimously.

WHEREAS the SSAELC Fund was created for the purpose of purchasing a property and creating a Student Center,

WHEREAS the Concordia Students have been paying into this fee for over 20 years,

WHEREAS the Fund has finally collected enough capital for the purchase of a property as was its initial goal,

WHEREAS Concordia clubs, student groups and fee levies are in desperate need for new spaces,

WHEREAS the 84.9% of the student body voted in favour of exploring the possibility of purchasing a property in the 2021 General Elections,

WHEREAS the CSU explored several properties to purchase and rent,

WHEREAS the property is directly across the street from the Hall Building,

BE IT RESOLVED the following question be sent to referendum:

Preamble: For the past 20 years, students have paid a small fee alongside their tuition towards the Student Space Accessible Education and Legal Contingency Fund (SSAELC Fund). The SSAELC Fund was created in 2001 with the intention of one day accumulating enough capital for the Concordia Student Union (CSU) to one day purchase a property and create a Student Center. While the Fund has been used for other purposes over the years, its original objective remains the same.

Question: Do you support the CSU purchasing the property at 2045 Bishop Street for the purpose of creating a Student Center pending the successful completion of the due diligence process. The price of the property is 5.5 million dollars.

Note: Voting yes to this question will have no effect on your tuition. Your vote on this question will also not affect any other SSAELC Fund related questions on the ballot

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the budgetary impact of the motion be nil.

Eduardo Malorni: A CSU Student Center would be student controlled and democratically run. There will be office space for the CSU, be a place to host events, and a place for student groups (clubs and fee levies), and will be independent from the University. The property is across the street from the Hall building at 2045 Bishop Street. It's located in a heritage zone but it is not a heritage property, which is good as the property would require some renovations. The building is 13116.90sqft with potential to increase to 17,000sqft. The price is \$5,500,000 and the price per square foot is \$419.31. We approached Concordia for renting spaces and they were willing to

rent spaces to us on Guy St at prices we could not afford. When debating whether to rent or purchase, being a tenant would limit our ability to develop the Student Center as we wished, the location would not be ideal for students and the price was not ideal. Concordia has expressed interest in financially supporting the project. In terms of finances, there are two types of ways to appraise property value: market value vs city appraisal. The city appraisal is the lower of the two values. The SSAELC was created over 20 years ago for the purpose of buying property, and currently has \$12M. We can either purchase the building outright or pay a mortgage. The SSAELC Fund Fee Levy is 40 cents per credit with a 7% average return on investment. We're looking into getting grants to pay for the renovations as it will be a community building. Over the next few weeks, multiple inspections, document reviews, and property analysis will be done. We technically don't need to send this to referendum but since this is such a large amount of money, I think we should get student approval first.

Caleb Woolcott: Why is this the right time to pursue this?

Eduardo Malorni: The University has increased the cost for using spaces for events, we want to provide student spaces for free. We have a good surplus in the Fund where we can expense this and not be in a situation where we can't maintain the building for a longtime or deplete the Fund. Also, the fact that this building is across the street from Hall is a rare opportunity that will not be seen again.

Caleb Woolcott: Is there any timeline for purchasing this building? How long would this renovation take?

Eduardo Malorni: If everything goes well, the building deal will close in April. We can't apply for grants unless we own the building. Then we have to wait for the grant money to come in before we start the renovations. The majority of the building is in usable condition and can be used on day 1 when we own the building.

Lauren Perozek: This is a step in the future of the CSU being more independent from the University. Even though Concordia is acquiring buildings, that doesn't mean it'll be dedicated to student life whereas this building would be

Malcolm Asselin motions to approve the Fee Levy Review Committee minutes. Seconded by **Hassan Nabeel**. Motion passes unanimously.

6. Mental Health Office Referendum Question

Faye Sun presents the following motion. Seconded by **Christopher Vaccarella**. Motion passes unanimously.

WHEREAS the Concordia student body, particularly those with specific mental health conditions, lack sufficient access to treatment and resources for their respective needs, and aren't provided appropriate treatment and resources by the University;

WHEREAS because the student body has become increasingly diverse, marginalized communities will greatly benefit from more diverse and culturally appropriate mental health services provided by an established Mental Health Service Office with dedicated staff for the long-term;

WHEREAS the student body voted 96.8% in favour of establishing a CSU Mental Health Service, which obliges the CSU to honour this demand;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approves the following question and preamble as referendum in the upcoming 2022 General Elections :

Do you agree to create a fee levy for the Mental Health Services office of \$0.45 per credit, annually adjusted to the Consumer Price Index of Canada, to be collected from all CSU members? The fee levy will be effective in the Fall of 2022 and billed in accordance with the university tuition billing and refund policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT budgetary impact is nil.

Harrison Kirshner: Faye and I have been working on the CSU Mental Health Services Levy Referendum with the mental health committee that we co chair. Currently, University Services are over run and lacking investments from the administration. There is a lack of cohesion amongst services and departments which leads to students being unaware of services. Students right now do not have access to preventative measures and only have limited access to support when they are in crisis. Wait times for therapy under the current system can take months and leave students helpless. Even with existing support measures like CSU's Student Care and insurance, the costs are high.

Faye Sun: The CSU Mental Health committee has dedicated itself to create a CSU Mental Health Service levy. There is a dire need for supplementary services and there is support for this, as seen from the student body via a question in the 2020 by-election. We have conducted consultations with Concordia's psychology department and mental health services. If we establish this service, we would hire a department manager, and a RAWCC manager.

Harrison Kirshner: In the future there will be an outward facing position focused on mental health equity, organizing mental health events, and other positions to be determined by the

department manager. The CSU Mental Health Services Office will have a goal to create a cohesion between already existing services available on and off campus

Faye Sun: We will provide free workshops on coping mechanisms and self-care to help students with preventative measures and manage their mental health

Harrison Kirshner: We will also seek to provide free targeted individual and group therapy, prioritizing individuals with diagnosis as well as BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+ individual and religious minorities

Faye Sun: In addition to individual and group psychotherapy, the service will also seek to provide complementary therapies. If the referendum question passes, we will continue to consult with religious and cultural groups on campus. This consultation will continue once the service is established. The goal of this is to understand not only the specific needs of these different groups but also incorporate cultural specific therapies and offer them as complementary therapies.

Harrison Kirshner: The CSU Mental Health Services Office will also seek to provide support, therapy, and offer resources to victims of domestic violence or individuals that feel unsafe in their place of residence

Faye Sun: The Recovery and Wellness Community Centre (RAWCC) is the CSU's new peer-led addictions recovery service, and will be partnering with the Mental Health Services Office

Harrison Kirshner: The cost to students is minimal at \$5.40 per semester for a student taking 12 courses

Jeremya Deneault: The LGBTQ, it said S. Can you clarify what the S stands for?

Tzvi Hersh Filler motions to amend the motion to include the following. Motion is considered friendly. Motion passes unanimously.

Note: Should this pass, this will cause a change in this student fee charge of 1.35\$ per 3 credit courses. This charge cannot currently be opted out from.

Harrison Kirshner: We consider this motion friendly

Tzvi Hersh Filler: I'm uneasy with any increase of fees but I do not oppose this

7. CSU Operational Fee Levy Referendum Question

Eduardo Malorni presents the following motion. Seconded by **Christopher Vaccarella**. Opposed by **Tzvi Hersh Filler**. Motion passes unanimously.

WHEREAS the CSU has grown exponentially in the past few years with new departments, initiatives and grants,

WHEREAS the CSU new expenses that have not existed previously are now routine,

WHEREAS our ability to support students is limited with our current fee levy income,

WHEREAS students have been demanding more from its student union,

BE IT RESOLVED the following question be sent to referendum:

Do you agree to increase the CSU General Operations Fee Levy from 2.38\$ per credit to 2.55\$ per credit (an increase of 17 cents per credit), annually adjusted to the Consumer Price Index of Canada, to be collected from all CSU members? The fee levy will be effective in the Fall of 2022 and billed in accordance with the university tuition billing and refund policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the budgetary impact of this motion is nil.

VOTE:

10 YES

1 NO

Tzvi Hersh Filler voted no

Eduardo Malorni: We have grown quite a bit and are struggling to meet the demands, based on our current operational fee levy. For example, our IT services are not always up to par. Executive salaries haven't gone up in a while. People have approached us saying that they make more money in part-time work than what we do in these positions. We work overtime that goes unpaid because we know that if we don't do the work, no one else will. We didn't want to put in an unreasonably high proposal for the fee levy increase. We did the math and this increase will be able to cover us on a lot of our issues. Our employees are unionized and we are currently in the process of renegotiating the contract. We're trying to stretch the money but we are limited. The 17 cent increase is small in the overall picture but would go a long way for the CSU.

Tzvi Hersh Filler motions to amend the motion to include the following. Motion is considered friendly. Motion passes unanimously.

Note: Should this pass, this will cause a change in this student fee charge of 0.51\$ per 3 credit course, meaning it will go from 7.14\$ to 7.65\$ per 3-credit course. This charge cannot currently be opted out from.

Tzvi Hersh Filler: This is not an opposition. My position on this motion is based on several factors. This is a CSU fee and cannot be opted out from, the way this charge ends up on students accounts, it is compulsory tuition. We're also sending to referendum a 0.45\$ increase. We should try to keep fees as low as possible, considering that our budget does factor in salaries. The operating budget doesn't make sense to be increased. We're dealing with a large amount of money and I don't believe that there is a budget crunch. If the executives want advice on what to cut, I'll provide it. I'm fairly certain that we do not need to increase fees.

Caleb Woolcott: Is there a preamble that will be voted on?

Eduardo Malorni: There isn't one but I could theoretically write one with the CSU mission statement and what we do. If the students don't know who we are and what we do at this point, then maybe we don't deserve the increase

Caitlin Robinson: A preamble isn't obligatory

Harrison Kirshner: For a full time student, this increase is \$2 a semester

8. Diversifying Faculty Referendum Question

Sandra Mouafo (Diversity Coordinator): We want to ensure that the University has a commitment to diversity. The referendum question is:

Do you agree that Concordia's funding and structural efforts should prioritize the immediate hiring of Black and Indigenous faculty and staff across all faculties, and that the CSU endorses these efforts?

S Shivaane presents the following motion. Seconded by **Eduardo Malorni**. Motion passes unanimously.

BE IT RESOLVED the following question be sent to referendum:

Do you agree that Concordia's funding and structural efforts should prioritize the immediate hiring of Black and Indigenous faculty and staff across all faculties, and that the CSU endorses these efforts?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the budgetary impact of this motion is nil.

S Shivaane: This is important. I have had classes where the department wants to offer a course related to diversity but don't have the faculty to teach it. Concordia needs to ensure that Black and Indigenous professors are being offered tenure.

9. Student Housing Project Referendum Question

Eduardo Malorni presents the following motion. Seconded by **Hassan Nabeel**. Motion passes unanimously.

WHEREAS the Woodnote Housing Cooperative Project was successfully completed,

WHEREAS the CSU has been a leader in tackling the student housing crisis,

BE IT RESOLVED THE following question be sent to referendum:

WHEREAS students are currently enjoying renting rates below market value in a prime location at the Woodnote,

WHEREAS housing, and student housing in particular, is in a state of particular crisis in the

Montreal area,

WHEREAS the Student Body has voted in support of initiatives to combat the student housing crisis in the past,

Preamble: In 2015, the Concordia Student Union co-founded the Popular University Student Housing Fund (PUSH) to combat the rising student housing crisis. The goal of the project was to create a democratically run housing cooperative which would house students while also keeping rents below the market value. Finally completed in 2020, the Woodnote was born and has housed Concordia Students for the past two years while meeting the high expectations set out for it all those years ago. Since then, numerous other student associations have followed in the CSU footsteps both in Quebec and across Canada, further cementing the CSU place among those spearheading initiatives to better the lives of students.

Question: Do you approve the Concordia Student Union reallocation of \$600,000 from the Student Space Accessible Education Legal Contingency fund (SSAELC) to launch a second affordable housing project that will house a minimum of 100 Concordia students (with a target of 150), similar to the Woodnote project that currently lodges over 140 through the Popular University Student Housing fund (PUSH), an autonomous non-profit revolving fund co-founded by CSU and UTILE with an explicit mandate to build affordable student housing for students in Quebec?

Note: Voting yes to this question will have no effect on your tuition. Your vote on this question will also not affect any other SSAELC Fund related questions on the ballot

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the budgetary impact of the motion is nil

Eduardo Malorni: All of Canada has experienced a Housing Crisis with student housing being affected particularly harshly. Students have routinely asked the CSU for support regarding housing. The Popular University Student Housing (PUSH) Fund is a rotating investment fund. Student associations invest into the fund, which is then used to build democratically run subsidized student housing. The CSU co-founded the PUSH fund in 2015 with Utile. This led to the creation of the Woodnote. The Woodnote was completed in 2020 and gives priority to Concordia students who enjoy rent rates below the market rates for the area. The community of the Woodnote rotates around the Board of Directors. The Board got off to a slow start due to forming in the pandemic. The new Board is slowly building towards a strong community.

Boutaina Chafi: What is the application process for the Woodnote? How do students get selected to live there?

Eduardo Malorni: It's application based and a committee is formed out of the current tenants and they review the applications

Sean Levis (The Woodnote): Usually the questions are formulated around asking applicants their capacity to contribute to the Cooperative. We pick applicants based on their ideas and enthusiasm to participate, along with their economic background. There's an emphasis on what they can bring to the community

10. ADJOURNMENT

Hassan Nabeel moves to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by **Malcolm Asselin**. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.