



(Natalie Vineberg / McGill Tribune)

## NEWS, SSMU

# Ben Ger wins SSMU presidency amid low voter turnout

Written by Regina Wung on March 18, 2016

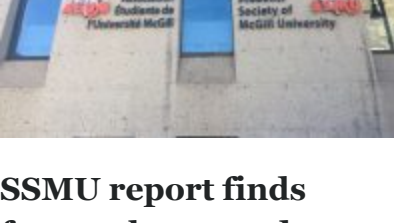
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Following the second-lowest voter turnout since 2005, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) elected Ben Ger as SSMU President with 65.4 per cent of the vote over his opponent, Jordan Sinder. 17.5 per cent of the undergraduate student body participated in the **Winter Referendum** and **SSMU elections**.

Ger's colleagues on the executive team will be Vice-President (VP) Operations Sacha Magder, VP Internal Daniel Lawrie, VP Finance Niall Carolan, VP External David Aird, VP University Affairs Erin Sobat, and VP Student Life Elaine Patterson. Ger is optimistic about delivering his campaign promises.

"I am unbelievably thankful," Ger said. "I'm excited the student body trusts me with this position. I'm looking forward to [next year], hopefully the best year that SSMU has ever had. Council Reform Committee will come through, we are going to include more voices at the table, whether that be exactly at SSMU council or somewhere else. Our finances will be balanced, we'll figure out a way to make sure everyone's happy."

Sinder praised his campaign team and its efforts and declared his continued support for Ger in the future.

"I'm honestly very proud," Sinder said. "We did everything that we could as a campaign team [...] We raised important issues, we engaged students who otherwise might not have been engaged in SSMU politics [...] and I have absolutely no regrets with the campaign that we ran. But with that said, Ben is a great guy, he's been really involved with SSMU, he's well-experienced for this position, and he's going to be a great president. I'm going to be the biggest supporter of his presidency next year, and I look forward to working with him."

Patterson, the only woman on the incoming executive, pointed to equitability as priority for next year.

"I'm really thrilled and so thankful that I get to be in this position next year, and I hopefully get to lay down the groundwork for it," Patterson said. "As far as being the only woman on the executive next year, I am certain that all of the men that I will be working with next year have good heads on their shoulders and that I will be able to convey things to them about [...] gender equality, but also hopefully just equitability in the general sense."

## Winter 2016 referendum questions

The question on whether or not SSMU will affiliate with the new Quebec student federation, the Association for the Voice of Education in Quebec (**AVEQ**), failed, with 62.1 per cent voting "No."

Aird, as incoming VP External, expressed disappointment in the motion's failure.

"I think that it was tough to communicate the true value of joining AVEQ to the student body," Aird said. "I think that the texts that were [...] on the ballots didn't do justice to the true value of joining a federation [...] I think people were reluctant to pay a new fee that they weren't convinced that it would actually benefit them. For that reason, I fully intend on revisiting the question next year, once students have had more time to talk about it, w more time to see what goes on with AVEQ and revisit the arguments in favour and against."

The proposed general constitutional amendments were passed, with 72.7 per cent voting "Yes." The proposed amendments to Articles 13.2 and 13.3, which would have created a General Assembly (GA) steering committee failed, with 52.6 per cent voting "No." The Motion Regarding the Creation of a Club Fund Fee passed, earning 57.4 per cent "Yes," while 81.6 per cent voted for the creation of a mental health fee. The proposal for an increase in the SSMU health plan fee to cover mental health passed, with 73.6 per cent votes in support.

The motion regarding the TVM: Student Television at McGill Fee renewal passed with 54.9 per cent voting "Yes." However, the Motion to Increase the TVM fee failed with 61.9 per cent dissenting. The motion to renew the SSMU equity fee passed with a majority of 65.8 per cent. The motion to renew the SSMU Access Bursary Fund also passed with 67.9 per cent voting for renewal. Both the **smoke-free campus** plebiscite and the on-campus bike facility plebiscite passed, earning majorities of 73 per cent and 83.1 per cent, respectively.

Senators for the 2016-2017 academic year include Science Senator Sean Taylor, Arts & Science Senator Guy Ettlin, Music Senator Mitchel Russo, Engineering Senator Alexander Dow, Education Senator Parvesh Chainani, Medicine Senator Joshua Chin, Law Senator Shannon Snow, and Arts Senators William Cleveland, Casarina Hovecar, and Charles Keita.

An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated in a typo that turnout was 7.5 per cent. The Tribune regrets this error.



## 5 Comments

**Bob LaBeouf**  
March 18, 2016 at 8:24 pm · Reply

"I'm excited the student body trusts me with this position" lololololol 0.65\*7% turnout.

**dignest**  
March 20, 2016 at 12:17 pm · Reply

it's 17% not 7% learn how to read

**Kareem**  
March 18, 2016 at 8:28 pm · Reply

solid 4.5%

**Toni Salomi**  
March 18, 2016 at 8:30 pm · Reply

Its like Kareem just picked his successor and got 50 friends to vote . Lololol

**Johnny Pepperoni**  
March 18, 2016 at 8:37 pm · Reply

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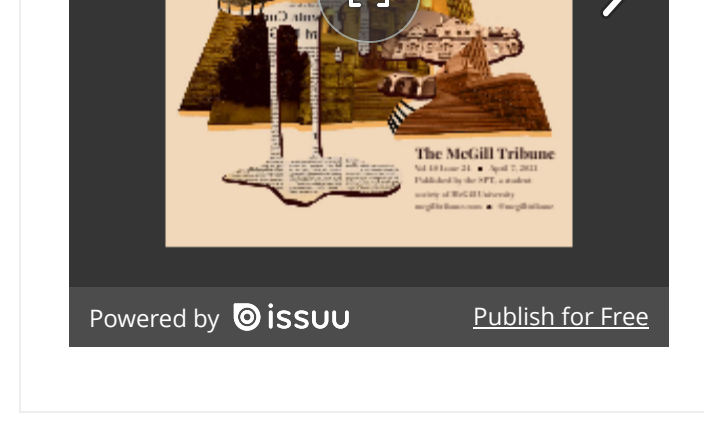
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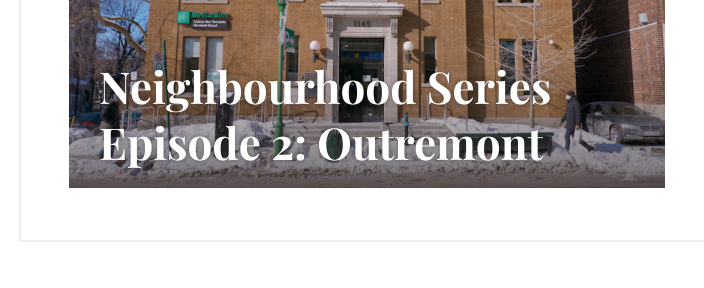
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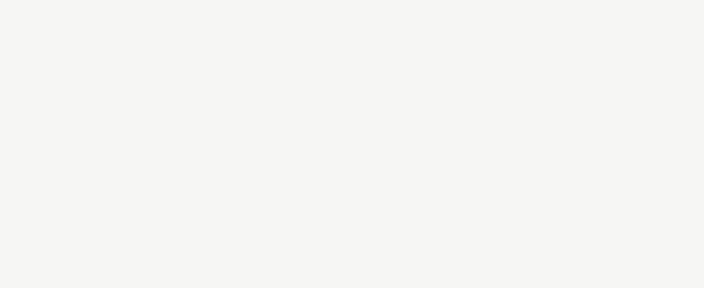
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