

THE McGill Daily

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World Leaders Put on a Disappointing Performance at the COP26 Conference

World leaders are meeting from October 31 to November 12 in Glasgow for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). 120 world leaders and thousands of delegates are in attendance; however, like most large-scale climate change conferences and initiatives, marginalized communities, including Indigenous peoples, are excluded from these conversations. The same leaders responsible for large-scale industrial pollution discuss performative “solutions” to the climate issues created by their respective economies, continuing to disregard the role of global capitalism in exacerbating climate change. This self-congratulatory practice excludes those most affected by climate change, namely those in the Global South, while simultaneously obscuring the role of its main perpetrators.

COP26’s intended purpose is to “bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.” However, the lack of concrete action taken on climate change, mainly by the world’s imperial powers, was evident. No G20 country is in line with the Paris Agreement, despite the fact that they comprise most of the world’s largest economies.

The Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) report on the impacts of climate change recognizes that the impacts of global warming above 1.5 degrees from pre-industrial levels are detrimental to the health of the planet, and notably, will disproportionately impact the lower class and BIPOC. Under the Paris Agreement, 192 parties pledged to meet this target; however, based on current climate policies and continued government inaction by major emitters and consumers, temperatures will rise 2.7 degrees by the end of the century. Inaction only means that the effects of climate change – experienced primarily by the Global South – are getting worse by the second. While it is still possible to attain these goals, this is the “world’s last best chance –” action must be taken immediately.

The world leaders in attendance at these global climate conferences are rich, predominantly white, and predominantly men. These summits are not productive in addressing the climate emergency, because the rich and politically powerful will always choose to prioritize profit over the climate. On October 21, leaked documents exposed

nations including Saudi Arabia, Japan, and Australia lobbying to modify a climate report to downplay the need for reducing fossil fuels. This is extremely hypocritical heading into COP26 and indicates a fundamental lack of commitment from world leaders to enact meaningful climate policies.

Leaders fail to address the main driver of climate emergency: the economic greed of imperial powers. Countries such as Canada have been positioned as climate leaders, despite their continued destruction of Indigenous lands and Indigenous land governance. While Indigenous people make up about 5 per cent of the world’s population, they protect 80 per cent of the world’s biodiversity – despite this, Canada frequently meets Indigenous land protection efforts with violence and further dispossession. Both federal and provincial governments continue to authorize dangerous pipeline projects, log old growth forests, and violate Indigenous land claims. Additionally, the IPCC has stated that Indigenous rights are directly related to climate change: Indigenous land management is more sustainable and effective than current conservation practices.

In order to implement policies that bring about global change, we need to recognize the intrinsic link between imperialism and the climate crisis. Notably, the military is exempt from climate commitments made in conferences such as COP26. During the 1992 Kyoto protocols, a clause was put forth during initial negotiations: despite being one of the largest polluters, the U.S. military is subject to a separate set of regulations regarding CO₂ emissions. Privileging the military over other parts of the government implies that the project of imperialist conquest is more important than preventing the climate crisis.

Indigenous liberation and land governance is inextricably linked to the fight against the climate crisis. Support Land Back initiatives across Turtle Island – donate to Fairy Creek, Tiny House Warriors, 1492 Landback Lane, and the Git’luuhl’um’hetxwit cabin and camp fund. Stay informed on actions that take place locally, such as climate marches and the work of Divest McGill. For COP26-specific information, particularly related to the military, see the helpful toolkits prepared by the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Erratum:

A previous version of the September 27 article, “Bill 96 Perpetuates Linguistic Colonialism,” incorrectly stated that the Viens Commission was submitted by the Coalition of English Speaking First Nations Communities in Quebec. The information cited was taken from a report submitted to the Viens Commission by the Coalition of English Speaking First Nations Communities in Quebec.

The Daily regrets this error.

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Fall 2021 Referendum

The McGill Daily Editorial Board's Endorsements

Increase of the Nightline Service Fee

The McGill Daily editorial board endorses a **"yes"** vote to increase McGill Students' Nightline funding by \$0.55 per semester via the Referral Services Fee.

McGill Students' Nightline provides a confidential and non-judgemental listening service, providing the community with support in all kinds of situations. Not only would the increased fee allow more opportunities for expansion, it would also compensate executives for their many hours of labour. Considering that the Nightline is a much more accessible resource than many other support services at McGill, the organization should remain accessible now and into the future; aligning with anti-oppression principles of compensating people for their labour is critical to doing so.

Safety Fee Network Increase

Note: Coordinating Editor Pandora Wotton recused herself from discussion of this question as she has a personal relationship with the executive director of MSERT.

The Daily endorses a **"yes"** vote for increasing MSERT's service fee from \$3.97 per semester to \$4.32 per semester.

This increase in the SSMU Safety Network Fee would allow MSERT to continue to provide standard and emergency first aid courses for free to all SSMU members, ensuring a safer campus wherein community members are equipped to protect one another. Despite the fact that first aid training is required for many jobs, first aid courses are often expensive and inaccessible for McGill students – therefore, it is essential they remain free of charge. Furthermore, MSERT adopts and promotes harm reduction practices. There have been allegations of the university eliminating harm reduction programming over the past several years – thus the continuation of free MSERT student-run training is crucial.

Creation of the MUSTBUS Fee

Note: Because the Daily's Fall 2019 Commentary Editor had a fundamental role in organizing the MUSTBUS initiative, editors who were on the board at that time recused themselves from discussion of this question. These editors are: James Cohn, Social Media Editor; Nicole Huang, Managing Editor; Abigail Popple, News Editor; and Pandora Wotton, Coordinating Editor.

The Daily endorses a **"yes with reservations"** vote for the creation of the opt-outable \$2 fee towards MUSTBUS.

MUSTBUS is a student-run bus service that would connect the McGill campus to neighbouring cities, such as New York, Boston, and Toronto. The motion reasons that the bus service will boost the mental health of students, as it allows them to visit home more often. Additionally, the motion voices a commitment to being a non-hierarchical, anti-oppressive organization that would offer a "safe(r) space for all travellers, particularly women, queer-identifying people, and people of colour." MUSTBUS does not outline any particular action items that would ensure an anti-oppressive structure and safe(r) space compared to regular public transit. It also must be acknowledged that the creation of a bus co-op is a huge undertaking for a student group; absent from the motion are any plans to ensure the longevity of the service.

CKUT Existence

The Daily endorses a **"yes"** vote for CKUT's continued existence.

A "no" vote would significantly reduce CKUT's operating budget and make its existence impossible. The radio station is a fundamental part of life at McGill, providing many services for students, like employment, internships, journalism, research, and audio engineering, among many others. Vote "yes" to continue CKUT's 24/7 programming and broadcasting and their training for students interested in journalism careers.

QPIRG Existence

The Daily endorses a **"yes"** vote for the renewal of the opt-outable QPIRG fee at \$5.00 per term.

The Daily shares QPIRG's anti-oppressive values; through its working groups and research initiatives, QPIRG provides crucial support to marginalized communities at McGill. As the motion notes, a "no" majority would make it impossible for QPIRG to provide student services and pursue its research mission.

Creation of the SSMU QUIPS Fund

The Daily endorses a **"yes"** vote to the creation of a non-opt-outable \$1.09 per semester SSMU Queer Equity Support Fee.

Because of systemic homophobia and transphobia in postsecondary educational institutions, queer students often encounter barriers to completing their education or receiving support for their research initiatives. Establishing a bursary intended for queer students could go toward reducing these barriers. Extensive consultations have been completed with the Gender and Sexuality Committee to ensure that the creation of this bursary would help meet the specific needs of queer students at McGill.

Constitutional Amendment

The Daily endorses a **"yes"** to the creation of an amendment to the constitution to add a seat to the Legislative Council to represent students located at the Outaouais.

Students at the Faculty of Medicine's satellite campus in the Outaouais currently have no direct representation on SSMU's Legislative Council. Because of the significant differences between Outaouais and Montreal medicine students outlined in the "Background and Rationale" of the motion, Outaouais students would not have sufficient representation in SSMU affairs without the creation of a new position on the Legislative Council. Additionally, there are no foreseeable negative consequences to the creation of a Campus Outaouais representative.

McGill Student Union Democratization Policy

The Daily editorial board endorses a **"no"** vote to this proposed non-hierarchical structure, making the McGill Student Union Democratization Initiative campaign an Affiliated Political Campaign of SSMU.

While the principles behind the policy are commendable, the policy is not concrete enough for us to confidently endorse it. It is unclear how the SSMU Executives and Campaign Staff would be held accountable to the proposed changes. Furthermore, certain parameters, such as the proposed limitations on the power of Coordinators and their decision making, remain undefined. While the Daily supports efforts to democratize SSMU, the motion is not comprehensive enough to fully endorse.

Naloxone Saves Lives

Following up on the MNCS Naloxone and Harm Reduction workshop

Anna Zavelsky
Culture Editor

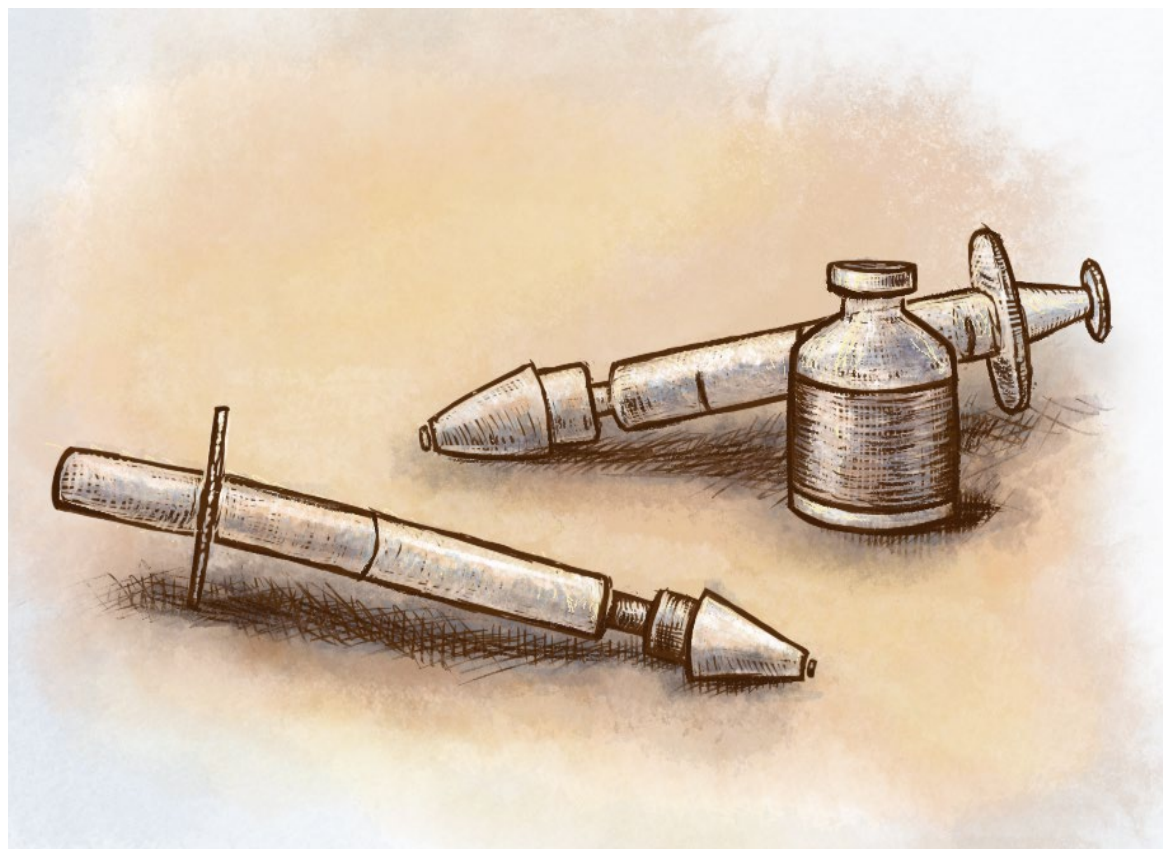
On October 18, McGill Nurses for Community Service (MNCS) held their biannual Naloxone and harm reduction workshop. Co-Presidents Viki Fiamegas and Zoe Chabot told the *Daily* that the workshop was created by past MNCS members in response to a gap between the nursing curriculum and what was happening with the opioid crisis. Naloxone is a medication which, through injection or nasal spray, is able to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. For someone who does not have opioids in their system, Naloxone has no effect. According to Fiamegas and Chabot, becoming trained in administering Naloxone is fairly simple and essential to harm reduction.

In the context of substance use, harm reduction is the practice of providing the resources to allow an individual to safely do so – acknowledging that “individuals coping with addiction and problematic substance use may not be in a position to remain abstinent from their substance of choice,” according to the Canadian Mental Health Association. Harm reduction means providing medical and social services to substance users without judgement in an effort to destigmatize drug addiction, applying a health-oriented approach rather than criminalization. Stigmatization as well as criminalization especially affects low income, unhoused

drug users, as well as drug users with mental illness.

Safe injection sites – supervised facilities that allow safe drug consumption – consist of rooms or booths where individuals are able to consume any substance they need to in a safe environment, reducing risk of overdose and disease transmission; “nurses or trained professionals are on hand to help assist them, whether that be in actually administering the substance [...], assist them in the post-administration process, as well as providing resources on wound care and on how to decrease your consumption, if that’s what the individual wants,” Fiamegas said. Chabot added that safe injection sites provide clean needles and clean tourniquets, preventing the spread of blood-borne diseases that can be spread through injection and have been harmful in the opioid crisis (such as hepatitis and HIV). There are currently four safe injection sites in Montreal: CACTUS, Dopamine and Spectre de Rue are fixed, while L’anonyme is a mobile site that serves the Downtown, South-Central, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, West-Central and South-west neighborhoods.

In November 2020, Vancouver city council approved a motion demanding that the federal government decriminalize illicit drug possession in response to what Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart predicted “to be the worst year yet for overdoses” of illicit drugs. Stewart stated that this approach was “urgently needed.” The proposed “Vancouver model” was submitted to Health Canada



in May 2021, involving a higher criminalizing threshold amount, and instead connecting people with services to decrease substance abuse on a voluntary basis. However, the proposal has faced criticism for its lack of consultation with drug users – the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) calls instead for complete elimination of threshold amounts, which would mean full decriminalization.

Mylène Drouin, Montreal public health director, released a report in November 2020 which showed the increase of substance abuse in the Montreal area during the COVID-19 pandemic. This report, along with Vancouver’s motion, has led Montreal city

Kate Sheridan | Illustrations Contributor

councillors Marvin Rotrant and Christian Arseneault, joined by organizations involved in drug dependency, to push for the decriminalization of drug possession in a January 2021 council meeting. The Association des intervenants en dépendance du Québec (AIDQ), the Association québécoise pour la promotion de la santé des utilisateurs et utilisatrices de drogue (AQPSUD), Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSPD), and the Table des organismes communautaires montréalais de lutte contre le SIDA (TOMS) as well as the HIV Legal Network (HLN) urged “the City of Montréal to take concrete action to decriminalize the simple possession of drugs for personal use” and urged the Plante administration to support the City Councillors’ motion.

The Public Health agency of Canada further echoed that the pandemic has exacerbated opioid-related harms – specifically due to decreased health service provisions. Fiamegas explained that many safe injection sites weren’t allowed to be open due to “essential service” restrictions, were open for shorter hours due to the curfew in Quebec, and were limited in the amount of people they could treat due to social distancing guidelines. In statistics specific to Ontario, pandemic opioid-related harms disproportionately

impacted marginalized and racialized populations.

Quebec’s national opioids overdose prevention and response strategy involved making naloxone kits available for free and without a prescription at any pharmacy. The injectable kits include two doses of naloxone, alcohol swabs, retractable safety syringes, a pair of nonlatex gloves, an instruction manual, and a mouth guard for potential mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Kits are also available with two doses of intranasal naloxone spray. Richard Davy shared a step-by-step instructional video with *The Montreal Gazette* on physical signs that can indicate a potential opioid overdose, how to administer Naloxone, and information on Naloxone kits.

Montreal-based organizations committed to harm reduction include Plein Milieu, which works directly with harm reduction among drug users, the unhoused population and youth 12+, and Head and Hands, an organization that provides medical, legal and social services to Montreal youth. McGill specific harm reduction resources include MNCS, McGill Student Emergency Response Team, a group of student volunteers that provide free first aid services to the McGill and Montreal community, and McGill’s Making Drugs More Accurate, a campus organization that provides free drug checking kits.

“Nurses or trained professionals are on hand to help assist them, whether that be in actually administering the substance [...], assist them in the post-administration process, as well as providing resources on wound care and on how to decrease consumption, if that’s what the individual wants,” Fiamegas said.

Montreal's Deadlocked Mayoral Race

Three major candidates battle for mayor

Robert Muroi
News Contributor

Just over one month following the conclusion of the Canadian federal election, Montrealers once again headed to the polls. In what was expected to be one of the closest elections in decades, three candidates vied for Montreal's top job in the November 7 mayoral election. Here's what you need to know:

The Candidates

Following an upset win that made her Montreal's first ever elected female Mayor in 2017, Valérie Plante sought re-election for the first time. Plante had pulled off what many considered the improbable by defeating then incumbent Denis Coderre, despite trailing by as many as 14 percentage points early in the campaign. An activist turned politician, Plante started her career fighting against tuition hikes and hydraulic fracking before becoming Montreal City Councillor for Sainte-Marie and eventually Mayor. Plante serves as the leader of *Projet Montréal*.

Ensemble Montréal candidate Denis Coderre sought to become Montreal's Mayor by challenging Valérie Plante for the second time. Coderre served as a Liberal Member of Canadian Parliament for Bourassa from 1997 to 2013 (where he briefly served as Immigration Minister), before launching a successful bid for Montreal's top job in 2013. Serving as Mayor until 2017, Coderre lost re-election to Plante. By seeking a second term, Coderre looked to become the first Montreal Mayor in almost 50 years to win non-consecutive terms. Coderre serves as the leader of *Ensemble Montréal*.

The youngest of the three frontrunners, Balarama Holness is a professional football player turned lawyer and political activist. Serving as leader of *Mouvement Montréal*, Holness played in the Canadian Football League for five years. Following retirement, he pursued a legal career, recently graduating from McGill University's Faculty of Law. In 2017, while studying at McGill, he ran for borough mayor of *Montréal-Nord* (as a member of Plante's *Projet Montréal*), losing to *Ensemble Montréal*'s Christine Black. If elected, Holness would have become Montreal's first Mayor of colour.



Eve Cable | Illustrations Editor

The Economy

Coderre has claimed he is the "only party leader capable of bringing spending under control." His economic plan uses a combination of price controls and relief funds to reduce municipal spending and provide support for small businesses.

Accusing both Holness and Plante of being "for defunding the police," Coderre opposes Holness, arguing for an increased police force in favor of community outreach programs.

Ensemble Montréal, as reiterated by Coderre during *Montréal*'s English debate, cites a commitment to "not increase taxes above inflation" while also "capping... [the] increase... [of property taxes to] 2% for [2022]." Coderre and his team also pledged, if elected, to conduct an audit of all the city's expenses in order "to reduce the debt affecting the metropolis." Finally, *Ensemble Montréal* plans on setting aside \$50 million for merchants' associations and community groups.

Leveraging her past two years as Mayor during the pandemic, Plante's economic plan builds on

her already implemented recovery measures - measures that froze the property tax rate and cut city spending throughout COVID-19.

Projet Montréal now aims to continue recovery efforts by aligning property tax increases with the rate of inflation. Plante said her party will invest in the

city, pledging an additional \$16.7 million in funding to *The Village*, doubling its support to the homeless, and promising to spend \$1 million on helping neighbourhood cinemas and artist studios if re-elected.

Holness, comparatively, is pushing for a complete legal reimagination of Montreal, advocating it to receive "city-state status;" he argues that the move would grant the city more taxation powers. *Mouvement Montréal* is also proposing that *Ville-Marie* have its own borough mayor to "help better manage downtown." Finally, Holness is advocating for the creation of "tax exemption zones in

[struggling] commercial sectors," such as *LaSalle*.

Policing

Targeting a complete overhaul of the current system, Holness' *Mouvement Montréal* envisions a plan where decreased poverty, increased infrastructure, and increased police training decreases crime.

"We are about mixed squadrons, we are about helping community organizations, better training for police, de-escalation," said Holness in an October mayoral debate. "There's this idea that we can invest in firearms and police to solve these crimes and that is not the correct solution." As part of his plan, Holness aims to mandate yearly training for all police officers, including specialization training for incidents of domestic violence. *Mouvement Montréal* also aims to reallocate some funding from the *SPVM* towards affordable housing and health services.

Accusing both Holness and Plante of being "for defunding the police," Coderre opposes Holness, arguing for an increased police force in favour of community outreach programs.

To do so, Coderre plans on hiring 250 more police officers if elected, while also promising to double the number of psychosocial emergency and mobile reference support teams available in the

city. His platform also pledges to purchase body cameras for all police officers within the first 100 days of their hire. Finally, *Ensemble Montréal* plans on improving lighting in public places like parks, while adding more security cameras at metro stations — where Coderre claims hate crimes are likely to occur.

Incumbent Valérie Plante aims to strengthen community ties with police officers. Plante's platform would require officers to serve in the same neighbourhood for at least three years, claiming that "community ties are a critical crime prevention tool." *Projet Montréal* then plans to invest \$5 million annually to support community organizations that "work in the prevention of violence and crime among young people and in urban safety." Plante also supports equipping *Montréal*'s police officers with body cameras by 2022, and supports the creation of shelters for women who "are victims of violence."

Housing

Projet Montréal builds on their previous housing plan, advocating for what they claim is the continued success of the *Montréal* housing market. By using land already owned by Montreal — such as the former hippodrome, *Louvain Est*, and surplus land belonging to the federal government — Plante

calls for the creation of 60,000 long term affordable housing units, including an additional 2,000 for students within 10 years; Projet Montréal defines “affordable” as costing 10 per cent below market price. Plante’s Projet Montréal also plans on renewing the Réflexe Montréal housing agreement, as well as allocating \$100 million over ten years towards acquiring land for social housing purposes.

Expressing his belief that “Housing is a fundamental right,” Holness has spent the campaign lamenting “the Plante administration [for taking] 3.5 years to address the housing crisis.”

Mouvement Montréal also plans to build new affordable homes, to the tune of 30,000 (though the timeline has yet to be announced) while also proposing a provincial and federal tax credit for contractors that build affordable rental homes. A Holness administration would vow to close the loophole on the 20-20-20 bylaw. Finally, he plans on steadily increasing the city’s housing budget by 2 per cent each year between 2021 and 2025.

Coderre has attacked Plante’s 20-20-20 bylaw, suggesting that it is chasing developers away. He has instead proposed a plan to increase affordable housing

by over 10,000 over the next four years. Ensemble Montréal, if elected, would also encourage the conversion of disused office towers to residential use, and invest \$25 million in a social and community housing investment fund. Curtially, Denis Coderre is the only leading candidate that seeks to outright abolish the 20-20-20 bylaw; Plante stands by the bylaw while Holness seeks to close perceived loopholes.

The French Language

Balarama Holness is the only leading candidate that seeks to recognize Montreal as bilingual. The Mouvement Montréal plan includes the immediate translation of all government documents, reports, and publicly accessible information into both French and English languages. Holness also opposes Bill-96.

Denis Coderre, during the French debate on October 21, deemed Holness’ bilingual proposal not acceptable. He supports Bill-96.

Valérie Plante joins Coderre’s positions on both Bill-96 and Holness’ bilingual proposal, expressing her belief that

Montréalers are “united by the French language.”

The Environment

[Holness] vows to establish an Independent Advisory Council on Climate Justice to advise the Mayor on environmental policy, and to help the implementation of the city’s climate plan.

Ensemble Montréal, Projet Montréal, and Mouvement Montréal all pledge to continue combat climate change.

In a statement released to the general public, Mr. Coderre announced that “to join in the climate transition, Montrealers will have the wholehearted support of the Coderre-Gelly administration, who will fully assume its role in achieving carbon neutrality by 2045.” They also pledge to continue developing ecological urban farming on farmland in the West End and create neighbourhood

markets in disadvantaged areas. Similarly, Holness also plans for Montreal’s to achieve

net neutrality by 2050 — the target date set by the Canadian government. He also vows to establish an Independent Advisory Council on Climate Justice to advise the Mayor on environmental policy, and to help with the implementation of the city’s climate plan.

Valérie Plante’s Projet Montréal also envisions Montreal achieving net neutrality by 2050. Additionally, she plans on increasing the number of electric buses and city vehicles, and planting 500,000 trees by 2030.

Curtially, Denis Coderre is the only leading candidate that seeks to outright abolish the 20-20-20 bylaw; Plante stands by the bylaw while Holness seeks to close perceived loopholes.

SSMU President’s Leave of Absence Continues

VP Internal asks the *Daily* not to investigate further

Abigail Popple
Coordinating News Editor

SSSMU President Darshan Daryanani has been on a leave of absence since at least September 23, the date of the Legislative Council’s first meeting. Following a claim that he had been suspended from his position, the *Daily* reached out to SSMU executives, councillors, and staff for comment. Despite the Executive Committee’s statement that they “have made a pact to not be afraid to change the system and call out toxic behaviour,” executives did not acknowledge the *Daily*’s question about whether Daryanani’s absence is related to allegations of gender-based discrimination.

Arts Representative and Steering Committee member Yara Coussa wrote that she could not comment on Daryanani’s absence. In response to the *Daily*’s inquiry about whether the leave of absence was related to allegations of microaggressions and gender-based discrimination within SSMU, Coussa said that she could “neither corroborate or [sic] deny these claims,” and had not been made aware of such allegations in her capacity as Councillor or Steering Committee member. Likewise, VP University Affairs Claire Downie declined to comment, writing: “All I

can say on the matter is that Daryanani is currently on leave.”

The *Daily* also contacted Speaker of Council and Steering Committee member Alexandre Ashkir. Although Steering Committee members are tasked with reinstating suspended Officers, Ashkir wrote that “As a part time employee uninvolved and uninterested in these matters, I have no comments on this topic.” Additionally, the HR Director of SSMU holds a position on SSMU’s Gendered and Sexual Violence Committee, but did not respond to the *Daily*’s request for comment.

VP Internal Sarah Paulin told the *Daily* that casual and permanent staff such as Ashkir “have nothing to do with the politics of the Society” and that the *Daily* should only look to executives for comment. “I understand that some of our answers may not be to your satisfaction, but that does not justify reaching out to people who have no implications on campus. I expect the cooperation of [the *Daily*] on this matter,” she wrote, disregarding the fact that many SSMU employees hold positions relevant to the suspension of Officers or instances of gender-based discrimination within SSMU. Moreover, as the *Daily* is an autonomous paper mandated to hold

power to account, SSMU executives do not have authority to exercise oversight on *Daily* investigations. While Paulin confirmed that Daryanani was on a leave of absence, she said “For the sake of the president’s privacy, I would appreciate it if you [the *Daily*] leave it there.”

In another email to the *Daily*, Paulin claimed that SSMU employees are contractually mandated not to speak with the press, and November 4 correspondence with an anonymous source revealed that SSMU staff had recently been instructed not to speak with campus media. A November 5 mass email from Paulin to SSMU’s casual staff that was leaked to the *Daily* stated that SSMU’s employee manual “dictates that [staff] cannot and must not speak to campus media,” the email contains no mention of the contractual obligation which Paulin claims to exist. She reiterated her expectation that employees avoid interacting with the press: “if [journalists] reach out to you in the future, please simply do not respond.”

According to a copy of the Casual Staff Employee Manual obtained by the *Daily*, “Employees are not permitted to address the media and must direct any public question or

requests to the General Manager and the President.” It is unclear if this manual is contractually binding for employees, as it is a document separate and distinct from the Confidentiality Agreement, Job Description and general contract that all casual staff sign upon joining SSMU as an employee. One former employee claimed that employee contracts are different from the handbook, and further said that they had never been told not to speak to campus media during their time as an employee. Regardless, this manual does not restrict the *Daily*’s freedom to request comments from SSMU employees. Another casual employee sent the *Daily* an excerpt of the Confidentiality Agreement which must be signed by casual staff. The Agreement states that employees are “not to disclose or discuss [confidential information] with any other individual, corporation or entity [...] without the prior written consent of the SSMU.” The Agreement defines confidential information as “all personal, proprietary, financial and operational information owned or managed by the SSMU and not otherwise accessible to the general public.” Again, this Agreement does not obligate the *Daily* to exclude

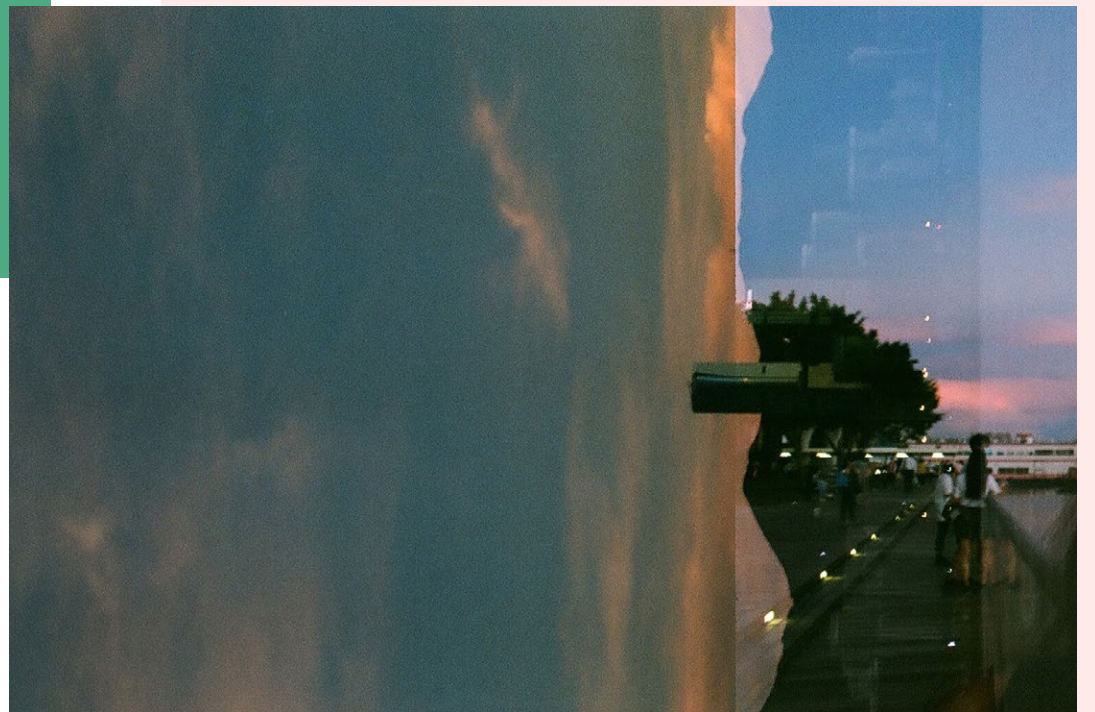
non-executives from requests for comment over the course of an investigation.

Secretary-General Edyta Rogowska told the *Daily* that the October 7, 2021 meeting of the Board of Governors was not attended by any SSMU representative — she clarified that “the process to appoint a SSMU rep to serve on the Board is in progress.” Section 02, Article 8 of SSMU’s Internal Regulations of Governance stipulates that the SSMU Executive Committee must appoint a representative to Board meetings on a per-meeting basis if the President is unable to serve in that capacity. Executives did not respond to the *Daily*’s inquiry as to why the Executive Committee did not appoint a representative to the Board of Governors in Daryanani’s place.

The *Daily* will continue to investigate Daryanani’s absence. Please reach out to news@mcgilldaily.com if you have relevant tips or comments.

The online edition of this article includes images of the documents and email correspondence mentioned above. If you would like to examine this evidence, visit mcgilldaily.com

A TRIP BACK HOME



JOCELYN WONG
FEATURES CONTRIBUTOR

The main turning points in my adolescent years happened after I moved away from Hong Kong. Alongside the constant political turmoil looming in the air, every trip back was no more than an obligation to my family. Graduating at the height of the pandemic resulted in an unexpected journey and return, the longest since I was at the age of 15.



The usual hustle and bustle seemed to come to a halt, with the city taking on a form that felt unfamiliar to me. This feature showcases this slowed down version of home through my newfound love for film photography.



Gender Recognition is Suicide Prevention

Bill 2 is transphobic, regressive, and actively harmful

Arwyn Regimbal
Commentary Contributor

content warnings: *transphobia, suicide*

In 2014, the Quebec education ministry invented “Homophobia,” a mythical monster used in curriculum to teach children about homophobia and transphobia. The recent efforts of the province in the realm of trans rights, however, raise questions regarding the labelling of Homophobia as a “creature threatened with extinction.”

Quebec’s Minister for Justice Simon Jolin-Barette presented Bill 2 on October 21, following a Superior Court ruling that the Civil Code discriminates against non-binary and transgender people in its binary definition of sex. The bill makes changes to family laws in Quebec by accounting for surrogacies, enabling adopted children to access some information, and changes how civil status documents represent trans people.

While the Minister for Justice is responsible for legislation fighting against homophobia and transphobia, this bill is the Legault government’s retaliation against the trans community for demanding the right to be recognized as people with inherent dignity and worth.

The ruling striking down provisions of the Civil Code came on January 28, and was hailed as a historic moment for Quebec’s non-binary and trans community. It affirms that “a person’s identity is the essence of their individuality and their humanity” and finds that the Government’s binary definition of sex is discriminatory and endangers these communities. The judge went further to affirm that transgender individuals, and in particular trans kids, frequently resort to suicide due to the incredible suffering of “living in a world that does not acknowledge their identity and that fights their attempts to affirm it.” This judgement equally denotes that

Correct identification documents [alleviate] distress among trans people, and act as an affirmation of a person’s being.

at least one legal ID with proper sex designation reduces suicidal ideation by 27 per cent and suicide attempts by 62 per cent.

As someone who has volunteered in suicide prevention and who is a member of the Quebec Suicide Prevention Association, trans suicide is a deeply personal matter. Our five word message is simple: “Talking about suicide saves lives.” Our society cannot be content with ignoring the increased stigmatization of a group that is already at an astronomical risk of suicide. While this issue is complex, and involves all of society mobilizing together to end our mental health crisis, the facts show that correctly gendered IDs save lives.

Equal recognition under the law is the least the province should do. In fact, because of recent court decisions, equal recognition is the least the government must do to ensure the safety of the trans community.

While this ruling sparked hope for change in queer communities across the province, the government’s response aims to systematically deny trans people legal recognition. This is part of a wider attempt by the CAQ government at denigrating the rights of minorities which is exemplified by the debate surrounding religious neutrality and “laicity of the state.”

The proposed legislation effectively creates two categories of being for transgender people. All birth certificates would retain the binary notion of “sex,” which is founded on the erroneous notion that assumes sex may only be one or the other. This sex designation can only be changed if one can present a medical letter confirming that medical treatment and surgery have caused a “structural alteration of the sexual organs” which in turn has “permanently changed the applicant’s sexual characteristics.” Applicants must also submit a second letter from a second practitioner confirming the success of the “treatments.”

The government attempts to comply with the wording of the legal ruling by adding a separate category on birth certificates. Applicants can request the addition of “gender designation” on their certificates, which can read as male, female or “X.”

As most identity cards in Quebec refer to “sex” rather than “gender,” the bill provides plausible deniability to issue gender neutral IDs. As previously mentioned, correct identification documents can alleviate distress among trans people, and act as an affirmation of a person’s being. Refusing to issue such documents while hiding behind the definition of “sexual organs” is an attack to a person’s integrity and worth. This is a cruel use of state power that continues a cycle of oppression and exclusion that costs trans people their dignity, and in too many cases, their lives.



Eve Cable | Illustrations Editor

This bill equally contains a provision that allows a person to submit evidence that a change of sex has been requested without an alteration in one’s “organs” when a foreign birth is registered in Quebec. Upon such a disclosure, the government will quash the change to negate anything other than the applicant’s “biological sex” and add a gender designation without further consideration.

This provision, which empowers private citizens to act as vigilantes and guardians of what the state deems an appropriate person, brings the province uncomfortably close to the Texan abortion bill. Enabling anyone to intervene in a migrant’s gender recognition exposes these transgender individuals to violence and endangers their lives.

This provision of the bill is especially contentious seeing as prior to 2015, those hoping to change their name had to publish public notices of such intent. This rule is still in effect for general name changes, but an exemption is accorded to trans people. The intention of this public notice is to enable citizens to object to someone’s name change.

It is important to note that minors wishing to change their legal name and/or gender can have their request denied simply because of parental objection while transgender adults can still be the subject of objections to name changes. Quebec did away with requiring such publications because of a credible fear of violence.

With these new provisions, the Government of Quebec is committing to perpetuating a cycle of violence and is doing so knowingly.

By enabling citizens to intervene in gender affirmation and writing discrimination into the law, Quebec is lending a dangerous amount of legitimacy to perpetrators of violence against transgender people. Transgender youth, by virtue of being more vulnerable and dependent on potentially transphobic parents, will be most emotionally and psychologically affected by these changes, though all transgender people will be unnecessarily subject to inhumane treatment before the law.

Yet the CAQ government is pushing this bill as a net benefit for Quebec society. In his Tweet announcing the bill, Jolin-Barette stated: “This bill, is for our children first.”

Why is it that the state is claiming the protection of youth as vulnerable people, yet refuses to recognize transgender kids as equal people? I argue that the answer lies in the entrenchment of gender as a key legal facet in the Civil Code, and consequently, Quebec society.

Other provinces in Canada tend to not issue “sex change” certificates, because a simple note from a practitioner endorsing the change is sufficient. Out of ten provinces, two issue sex change certificates if the applicant was born outside of the province, one issues commemorative certificates upon request, and Quebec

and Nova Scotia issue sex change certificates to all. The remaining either don’t allow gender changes to those not born within the province, or amend the original acts without a separate certificate.

While even this practice is objectionable and creates unnecessary barriers to trans dignity, no medical or chemical treatment is required. In many jurisdictions, a therapist or psychologist can issue these letters. Nearly every other province issues gender-neutral ID cards. The federal government will print any gender identity on federal documents without medical documentation.

This entrenchment of gender in our society, combined with our government’s aim at protecting family values causes real harm to all of us. From youth who will be denied equal recognition and dignity, to adults who will be forced to provide ID that doesn’t match their lived gender, to those who will be victims of violence simply for being transgender, the CAQ government’s proposal will cause real harm to the most vulnerable among us.

The facts are simple: the Quebec government is comfortable expending the safety and lives of minorities in exchange for political gain. It is actively prepared to retaliate against them for asserting their right to be seen as equal. This exercise of state power to continue oppression is awfully close to the monstrosity “Homophobia” that was invented as a warning.

The Blair Witch Project broke cliches

On the groundbreaking found footage technique

Karthikeya Gautam
Culture Contributor

Horror films are notorious for having conventions so endemic to them that they cross into the realm of sigh-inducing cliches. Deserted manors, extreme weather, and the dreaded staple of jump scares, collectively form the typical horror film, watched and forgotten within the span of hours. It is thus a breath of fresh air when a movie introduces an unattempted mode of expression, unequivocally transforming an entire category of film into something worth watching, or rewatching, this fall.

The Blair Witch Project was cinematically released in 1999, immediately taking audiences by storm for its chilling experience. It follows the story of three film students who travel to the Black Hills – a forest near Burkittsville, Maryland – to film a documentary about the Blair Witch. The legend goes that a woman by the name of Elly Kedward was accused of being involved in witchcraft, hence banished from the town of Blair. Her curse has never left the town, resulting in countless tragedies among residents and visitors. The students interview local villagers and record terrifying testimonies about the Witch on their camera, along with their own experiences in the woods. The three, however, eventually disappear, their camera's contents and equipment being found a year later.

The legend of the Blair Witch [...] had transformed people's ideas about what could or could not actually happen when it comes to the supernatural.

Sound familiar? Although it's become a cliché in itself as of today, the found-footage technique in horror was groundbreaking at the time. The concept of perceiving the plot through a camera operated by characters within the film not only puts audiences in the middle of that scenario, but also helps them relate better to the

characters in question. This creates a sense of uneasiness where you want to escape the situation as much as the characters do, for you become part of the plot. You become the fourth film student, experiencing the legend of the Blair Witch as another character in the movie. Unnamed, unacknowledged, and unaffected, but a character nonetheless.

Moreover, the fact that the footage is labelled as having been “found” raises additional questions. What ultimately happened to the students? Why was it “found” and not “submitted?” Why was the camera left untouched? Inquiries like these shape the movie, but the answers are never delivered. It's a slow burn technique which keeps audiences engaged. The viewer is also never introduced to the Blair Witch herself, instead having to imagine their own interpretation of what this mysterious figure might look like. You are forced to deal with a long, dreadful build-up of horror and suspense, which will make you recoil in your seat during even a slow-paced scene.

The hand-held Hi8s and 16mm camera used in shooting the film have a distinctive quality of their own. This movie, we are constantly reminded, is being shot by amateur film students. Since they have not perfected cinematography, spacing, lighting, or stabilizing the camera, the results form a choppy, shaky medium of delivery. Their attempts to uphold a more professional touch to their documentary is lost as soon as the students realize that they are not simply listening to stories of the Blair Witch anymore, but are themselves experiencing one. As fear takes over, the group's gradual interpersonal breakdown is characterized by increasingly hesitant shooting. The grainy quality of the recording adds to this effect; it's obvious age disconnects the viewer for a moment, and makes them realize that the footage is old and only recently found, before the film pulls them back into this ghostly past.

Praise for *The Blair Witch Project*, however, does not discount the trope of portraying women as the deranged antagonist in horror, which needs to be addressed in order to continue enjoying the genre. The Blair Witch could be observed as being a villain without motive. No background is given to the reason behind her evil, nor is Elly Kedward's character developed beyond witchcraft. This could be attributed to shallow characterization, wherein she lacks a complex and multifaceted personality. Moreover, it perpetuates the association of women to witchcraft, wherein they

were believed to be “more prone to diabolical possession” and essentially “imperfect” following The Black Death. This led to real world consequences, such as the Salem Witch Trials. Had the townspeople, in their testimonies, provided a more in-depth description of the Blair Witch as a member of the town, the duality between her mortal and supernatural sides would have made her all the more terrifying. Although later installments to the franchise do provide a backstory to Elly Kedward, it does not have the same impact as it would have had her character been further emphasized upon right from the start.

The found-footage and camera techniques can be recreated, and have been recreated, in films to follow. However, what is an exceptionally marked quality of this movie is its marketing campaign, which blurred distinctions between reality and camerawork. Being a low-budget indie film with unconventional delivery, its success was not guaranteed. But when *The Blair Witch Project* was first introduced to the public in 1999, it sparked fear and confusion among audiences. It, for as long as the campaign lasted, made the genre of horror cross into our lives, the terror stemming from the notion that this could happen with any of us.

The movie was marketed through the official Blair Witch website, at a time when the

internet had just started to take off in North America. It featured false news reports, newsreel interviews, and inquiries regarding the whereabouts of the three missing students. This kickstarted the first debates across the internet, on forums and discussion boards, regarding the validity of the story. There were factions on both sides, sparking inquiry into not just the truth of this film, but regarding the limits to which the genre of horror as a whole could be pushed. The legend of the Blair Witch, it seemed, had transformed people's ideas about what could or could not actually happen when it comes to the supernatural.

The indie production house behind the film – Haxan Films – kept up the suspense surrounding the film and updated the website frequently. They posted photos supposedly released by the “Frederick County Sheriff's Office,” created lore around the Blair Witch, and even explained their role in the entire situation – they had been hired by the missing students' parents to edit the choppy clips into a film. Even the choice of actors was important – they were still unknown faces, so no one could tell if they were acting or if they had actually been in that situation. Soon, the legend of the Witch had escaped into a field of existence where it was not just a plotline in a horror movie anymore, but recognized and accepted mythology.

Today, the hype around a movie

Praise for *The Blair Witch Project*, however, does not discount the trope of portraying women as the deranged antagonist in horror, which needs to be addressed.

like *The Blair Witch Project* is difficult to recreate. Techniques it pioneered have seeped into horror film conventions to a degree that they do not have nearly the same impact as the original did. It was a one-time phenomenon that could only be experienced in absolute in that moment, in 1999, when you went and sat in the cinema hall, popcorn in hand, looking for answers to questions that had remained unanswered for months. Its impact on the genre of horror is immense, and therefore it remains, to this day, a Halloween staple, and in every sense of the phrase, “based on a true story.”



The NHL Has Failed to Protect Survivors

Emma Hébert
Features Editor

content warning: sexual assault

In an interview with TSN on October 27, Kyle Beach bravely came forward as the plaintiff in a sexual assault lawsuit against the Chicago Blackhawks. Beach, previously named as ‘John Doe 1’ in legal documents, filed the suit against Chicago for failing to punish the team’s former video coach, Brad Aldrich, after he sexually assaulted Beach in 2010.

Beach’s case speaks not only to the toxic culture of silence in professional hockey that enables abuse, but to a general lack of accountability within the National Hockey League (NHL). Kyle Beach was a 2008 first-round draft pick, and a part of Chicago’s team during their Stanley Cup victory in 2010. The assault that Beach described took place in May of that year during Chicago’s playoff run, and was notably brought to the attention of senior staff on the team shortly after it occurred. Al MacIsaac, then-director of hockey operations for Chicago, was informed that there was a sexual encounter between Beach and Aldrich, which Beach explicitly characterized as non-consensual. On May 23, 2010, Chicago’s senior management – their Head Coach, President, General Manager, Assistant General Manager, and Mental Skills Coach – held a meeting to discuss the ensuing course of action. For them, the decision was disgustingly simple: until they had won the Stanley Cup, they would do nothing. Senior

management deliberately chose the “win-at-all-costs” logic; in a more recent interview, then-general manager Stan Bowman recalled head coach Joel Quenneville’s words during the meeting: “it was hard for the team to get to where they were, and they could not deal with this issue now.” In doing so, they decided that the health and safety of their players came secondary to taking home the Cup.

Following this meeting, senior management waited three whole weeks to contact Chicago’s human resources head – a delay “that violated the organization’s sexual harassment policy,” according to the Associated Press. During the interim, Aldrich continued to work and travel with the team. When HR finally did talk to Aldrich, it was after they gave him the option to either undergo an investigation or resign. Aldrich chose to resign and relocate, and as such received severance pay, a playoff bonus, championship ring, and his name engraved on the Stanley Cup. In his interview with TSN, Beach recounted the impact of seeing Aldrich allowed to hoist the cup even after he had reported the assault: “it made me feel like nothing. It made me feel like I didn’t exist. It made me feel like, that I wasn’t important and...it made me feel like he was in the right and I was wrong.” There were absolutely no material consequences for Aldrich’s actions, and he went on to work as the Miami (Ohio) University’s director of hockey operations. While in this position, Aldrich sexually assaulted two more people – a Miami student who worked at the rink and a summer hockey camp intern. Following his resignation

from this position (presumably related to the assaults), Aldrich assaulted a high school student while working as a volunteer high school hockey coach. This incident was investigated by the police, and while Aldrich was convicted of criminal sexual conduct and sentenced to jail time, the Chicago Blackhawks management team was extremely unhelpful in the course of the investigation. When the police contacted Chicago HR for information on Aldrich, the director refused to divulge any details beyond the fact that he had resigned. Although practically everyone in leadership positions within the Chicago organization knew about the assault, they failed to take any action. This resulted not only in the further ostracization of Beach by teammates, who Beach said knew about and commonly referenced the assault, but also to Aldrich continuing to assault people over whom he held power. By allowing Aldrich to resign, Chicago actively enabled further abuse.

Chicago’s enabling of abuse is indicative of larger problems within the world of professional hockey. Allegations of abuse are often swept under the rug, justified by a drive for a winning team. Additionally, Chicago stood firmly behind their star player Patrick Kane in 2010 when he was accused of sexual assault. Although the complainant eventually withdrew charges, the team allowed Kane to attend training camp while he was under investigation. When the press attempted to question Kane, management insisted that journalists stick to “hockey

only.” League commissioner Gary Bettman repeatedly tried to dodge questions regarding Kyle Beach from journalists during a recent press conference, and defended his decision to give Chicago a fine less than one previously issued for a salary cap violation. Bettman also allowed

action might threaten the pursuit of victory. With Kyle Beach, numerous players and staff were aware of the allegations. Instead of intervening, staff delayed action, all while teammates reportedly “teased” Beach about the assault, even using homophobic slurs to further alienate him.

When survivors do try to come forward, they are faced with ostracization and an overall lack of institutional protection. The consensus seems to be that while instances of abuse are widely-known by teammates, coaches, and staff, this knowledge never results in consequences for abusers.

Joel Quenneville, the coach who failed to act on Beach’s 2010 allegations, to coach a game after Beach identified himself publicly, all for the sanctity of ‘the game’. The NHL continues to prioritize profit over the health and safety of its players, and while it claims to have concrete sexual abuse policy, this policy has yet to be seen by the public, and yet to result in an appropriate investigation and restoration process for survivors. Calls to “stick to hockey” are widely reproduced whenever players attempt to bring the toxic culture of professional hockey to light, whether it be in response to sexism, racism, or as in this case, sexual assault.

When survivors do try to come forward, they are faced with ostracization and an overall lack of institutional protection. The consensus seems to be that while instances of abuse are widely-known by teammates, coaches, and staff, this knowledge never results in consequences for abusers. In 2020, 14 previous junior hockey players launched a class action lawsuit against the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), alleging disturbing and continuous hazing rituals, including forms of mental, physical, and sexual abuse. These claims are graphic, and focus on how the CHL has perpetuated a toxic environment that condones violence, discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, all on the underage players they are supposed to protect. This is a culture that encourages and rewards silence – one where everyone is aware of the abuse that occurs without taking action against it, all because taking

Hockey, particularly among professionals, puts winning above everything. Gretchen Kerr, a professor at the University of Toronto who researches athlete maltreatment, observes that the league needs to shift to focus less on winning and more on players’ wellbeing. Kyle Beach’s case highlights the deliberate choice to put the playoff win above the individual. Abuses this severe require sustained, structural change. While the current abuse reporting system within the NHL has “no oversight, transparency, or accountability,” calls have already been made for the league to see a neutral third party investigate future cases of abuse. Concrete measures that protect player safety over league profit are long overdue.

When asked about the future, Kyle Beach responded: “I don’t know when it’s going to be enough for the NHL to step in and say enough is enough and take the necessary steps and take the necessary action to make a difference and protect the players that make the NHL what it is.” The NHL has a responsibility to change, and to change now. Those in power – whether it be the league commissioner, general managers, franchise owners, or the myriad of other senior management and staff – have to stop sweeping allegations under the rug in pursuit of victory. Concrete and transparent reporting and investigation processes with third-party oversight have to be implemented to ensure this never happens again. If the league doesn’t change now, there is no question that abuses, of this kind and others, will continue.



Eve Cable | Illustrations Editor