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Warning: the following contains discussions of sexual violence

For immediate release.

May 8, 2020: DSU Update on Council Decision Regarding Suspension of Executive Member

The Dalhousie Student Union is continuing our work to respond to recent online disclosures of sexual violence. For context on these developments, please see our [last statement](#), dated May 5, 2020.

Following calls from our members, DSU Council held an extraordinary meeting on Thursday, May 7. We want to express our gratitude to all members of Council and the community who contributed to the discussion, particularly to staff from South House and the King's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Officer for their assistance in grounding debate in survivor-centric principles; to the Survivor Support Centre and Katrina Plasse for providing active listening during and after the meeting; and to all DSU Councillors for working to bring forward their constituents' views despite being largely new to their positions.

At this meeting, a motion was passed by Council to suspend the current Vice President, Student Life, Jad Ghiz, immediately for a period of one week. This suspension may be extended by an additional week by a vote of the Executive Committee if needed. Council chose to take this non-disciplinary action to enable further discussion and action on next steps to be carried out in as safe and survivor-centric a way as possible. Council also passed a clause that will mandate the students appointed to this year's Judicial Board to be trained in responding to sexualized violence. We know that creating safer spaces at the DSU and working towards a culture of consent are ongoing processes, and we are committed to continuing to learn and improve as an organization.

The full text of the motion passed is attached, and the official minutes from the meeting will be available after they are approved at the next Council meeting on May 21, 2020.

We understand that members have concerns about the decision to suspend Ghiz without withholding pay. We take the use of our union fees very seriously, and there was an extensive debate at the meeting regarding this decision.

Under our bylaws, Councillors must receive disciplinary motions at least fourteen days in advance of when they are debated. This requirement exists because of the seriousness of taking disciplinary action, and to give all councillors time to consider the motion and consult with their constituents about what action to take.

After consulting legal counsel, it has been determined that any decision to withhold or suspend pay constitutes disciplinary action. As we need to both operate within a survivor-centric model and uphold the Bylaws approved by our membership, the only

option available at this time was to suspend with pay. We also wish to stress that in order to protect the survivor from potential legal ramifications, the decision to comply with our Bylaws around discipline was made with the utmost consideration of the safety of the survivor and the DSU membership.

We hear, understand, and appreciate your concerns around Executive compensation during this time. There was a Notice of Motion given for disciplinary action at the Council meeting happening on May 21, 2020, where this will be further discussed.

The DSU stands in support of all survivors and strives to be survivor-centric in all activities. This is an ongoing process of organizational education and growth. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to DSU president Madeleine Stinson as dsupres@dal.ca.

If you need support, please reach out to the organizations listed below.

Signed,

Madeleine Stinson

DSU President



Survivor Support Centre

Email: survivorsupport@dal.ca

Phone: (902) 425-1066

South House Halifax

Email: outreach@southhousehalifax.ca

Phone: (902) 494-2432

Dalhousie Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES)

Email: hres@dal.ca

Phone: (902) 494-6672

Dal Student Health & Wellness

Website: dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness

Phone: (902) 494-2171

Dal Security

Email: security@dal.ca

Phone – Halifax: (902) 494-4109

Phone – Truro: (902) 893- 4190

MOTION 7.1

WHEREAS the Judicial Board has not yet been appointed for the 2020-2021 year but will be appointed at the meeting of Council on May 21; and

WHEREAS the Judicial Board reports to Council and Council has greater decision-making power; and

WHEREAS serious allegations of sexual violence have been made online about a member of the DSU Executive; and

WHEREAS the Judicial Board Policy enables the Judicial Board to take the non-disciplinary action to temporarily suspend an individual respondent for a period of up to one week, should they find potential for continued serious harm to the organization or another individual pending the results of inquiry; and

WHEREAS the DSU is committed, as per the Equity Policy, to creating equitable and inclusive environments free from harassment and discrimination; and

WHEREAS the DSU recognizes that sexualized violence and rape culture affect people profoundly and differently, and believes that all students have a right to safer campuses; and

WHEREAS the DSU has received feedback from many members, in particular women and non-binary students and others who may experience higher rates of gender-based violence, calling for the DSU to follow survivor-centric principles;

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Jad Ghiz, current Vice President, Student Life, be suspended with pay, effective immediately, for a period of one week as a non-disciplinary action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT at the end of one (1) week, on May 14, 2020, this suspension may be renewed for an additional period of up to one (1) week by a special resolution passed by the Executive Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if said suspension is renewed, this decision will be immediately communicated to Councillors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this non-disciplinary suspension be carried out in order to allow for any potential investigative proceedings to be carried out.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Judicial Board appointees are trained in sexual violence response and will follow the guidelines of the Purple Folder.