



**TO:** Senate  
**FROM:** Senator Türelü  
**SUBJECT:** Question regarding the “Emergency” Measures relating to October 7  
**MEETING DATE:** November 13, 2024  
**DOCUMENT #:** D24-21

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**PREAMBLE:** Recently, a militarized campus has replaced campus security with police and private security presence, creating an atmosphere of fear. In addition, several emails to the campus community have furthered this climate of fear. Between October 2 and 11, the campus community received a barrage of email alerts from the email account [alert@mcgill.ca] regarding “security” measures on campus around October 7. On October 2, the campus community received the first email from the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). After a preamble extolling the importance of “engage[ment] with one another” and our ability to “learn, work, and interact together,” it announced that, unless absolutely necessary, all academic activities are required to move online from October 5-7 (“classes that do not need to be in person must move online”), and a host of emergency security measures will be introduced for this time period, the principal among them being access to campus will be strictly controlled and require a McGill ID. A second email arrived on Friday describing further restrictions to accessing campus and teasing the possibility of extending the lockdown beyond Monday. On October 7, the same account sent out four alert emails. Given that when one of the October 7 alert emails with specific warning of large crowds on McTavish arrived in mailboxes, there were no such crowds there but only provincial and city police, the emergency alert system worked to create fear for those not on site and doubt for those who were on site.

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**QUESTION:** Given that an expected protest does not constitute a traditional emergency, such as a medical emergency, power outage, earthquake, or major disaster, within the mandate of “Emergency Management,” what was the security threat? When the EOC issued the emergency directives, had it consulted the university’s faculty association (MAUT) and the Senate? If not, why? Whom did the EOC consult? What is the process for approving what constitutes an emergency measure to justify changing mode of instruction without consulting the Senate?

What is the process of issuing mass communication about emergencies so that they are effective?

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*\*Please refer to the [Guidelines for the Review of Questions and Motions by the Senate Steering Committee](#) for more information on this process.*

*The following response was provided by Professor Angela Campbell, Interim Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), and Professor Fabrice Labeau, Vice-President (Administration and Finance).*

Thank you for your question, Senator Türeli.

Respectfully, we disagree with the opening premise of your preamble, that is, “Recently, a militarized campus has replaced campus security with police and private security presence, creating an atmosphere of fear.”

McGill Campus Public Safety, including its Security Services unit, remains the principal office responsible for community safety at our university.

Over the last 13 months, we have done all we can to maintain the stability of our campus in the face of a global crisis that has inflicted grief and anguish to many members of our community. We are taking all steps within our capacity to extend meaningful support services for those most impacted by the terrible events in Gaza, Israel, and most recently, Lebanon since October 7, 2023.

Over this period, we have seen protest activities arise, much of which has been within the realm protected by law and our policies. While we are at times pressured to preempt, halt, or intervene in such protest activities, we do not, respecting the fundamental rights of those who engage in them.

However, where activities exceed “protest” as protected by law and McGill’s regulatory landscape, we have intervened to protect the safety and stability of the University. Sometimes, additional security resources have been required to this end.

We do not disagree that many people presently experience “fear” on our campus. But that fear stems from a multiplicity of sources, including activities that have involved harassment, intimidation, unlawful and sometimes forced entry into buildings and classrooms, and damage to property that has involved using blunt or heavy objects to smash windows and doors to university buildings.

To suggest that “an atmosphere of fear” results from the presence of security on campus strikes us as offering a dramatically incomplete account of present circumstances.

Communications issued during the period you indicate (2/10-11/10 inclusive) were anchored to the goal of offering factual information about decisions reached that affected campus activities, which members of our community needed to know to work and learn safely and effectively.

To conclude, we refer to President Saini’s opening remarks, and to the response Senator Campbell provided to a question from the floor following those remarks, at the October 16, 2024 meeting of Senate. That information should address all remaining points in your question.