



Motion Regarding Unpaid Internships

Whereas, in Canada, almost one in four youth is unemployed, underemployed, or has given up looking for work¹;

Whereas, unpaid internships exacerbate social inequalities by excluding from many prestigious and meaningful fields those students who cannot afford to work for free²;

Whereas, unpaid internships are already illegal in most situations in numerous jurisdictions across Canada, but continue to exist because of lax enforcement³;

Whereas, unpaid internships risk eliminating entry-level jobs and lowering starting wages for all, but particularly young workers⁴;

Whereas, recent research suggests there is no advantage in terms of hiring rates or starting salary for graduates with unpaid internship experience, but significant advantages in hiring and starting salary for those with paid internship experience⁵;

Whereas, profit-maximizing private companies and austerity-focused governments have strong incentives to commit wage theft wherever possible:

Be it resolved, that the SSMU pressure McGill University to immediately and permanently stop posting, circulating, promoting, crediting, or otherwise accepting the legitimacy of all internships that are illegal under applicable employment laws;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU develop a policy, in consultation with interested student groups and McGill University, clarifying when unpaid internships should be considered illegal for the purposes of this motion;

¹ "Youth Unemployment and Underemployment in Canada," Canadian Teachers' Federation. 2014. Web. 02 Mar. 2015. <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/Brief-Youth-Unemployment.pdf>

² "Why Unpaid Internships Mean Inequality of Opportunity," Macleans. 2013. Web. 02 Mar. 2015. <http://www.macleans.ca/economy/business/why-unpaid-internships-means-inequality-of-opportunity/>

³ "What is the law?" Canadian Interns Association. 2015. Web. 02 Mar. 2015. <http://www.internassociation.ca/what-is-the-law/>

⁴ Oved, Marco Chown. "Unpaid internships: the most precarious work of all." The Toronto Star. 05 Mar. 2013. Web. 02 Mar 2015. http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/03/05/unpaid_internships_the_most_precarious_work_of_a.html

⁵ "Class of 2013: Paid Interns Outpace Unpaid Peers in Job Offers, Salaries." National Association of Colleges and Employers. 2013. Web. 02 Mar. 2015. <http://www.nacweb.org/s05292013/paid-unpaid-interns-job-offer.aspx>



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Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Office of the Speaker
Bureau de Président du Conseil

FOR APPROVAL

Be it resolved, that the SSMU advocate for the elimination or reduction of tuition fees charged by McGill University for credits obtained in exchange for completing an internship, in recognition of the fact that students should not pay McGill University in order to work for a third party, however, this does not prevent SSMU from agreeing to a reasonable administrative fee charged to students to offset the limited supervisory costs associated with granting credits for off-campus internships;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU pressure all McGill programs and offices related to career development to find, promote, circulate, and encourage internships that pay student workers a fair wage for work performed and that obey all applicable employment laws;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU issue a statement through its online communication channels (including the SSMU website, Facebook page, and Twitter account) condemning unpaid internships and forcefully asking employers in all fields to provide quality paid internships;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU review, under the leadership of the VP University Affairs, current internship possibilities offered on campus, including those offered by the Faculty of Arts Internship Office, to identify and work with stakeholders to increase the number of quality paid internships available to McGill students;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU cooperate, under the leadership of the VP External, with other student associations and advocacy groups, provincially and federally, in promoting paid internships and the fair treatment of student workers;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU report back to the McGill undergraduate community in September 2015 about what strategy the SSMU foresees taking, and any other related developments in implementing this motion;

Be it resolved, that the SSMU require, as a condition of new or continued recognition as a SSMU club or service, that student groups not promote, recruit for, or facilitate any internships that contravene applicable employment laws.

Moved By:

The New Democratic Party of McGill University (NDP-McGill)

Councillor Rourke
Councillor Kpeglo-Hennessy
Councillor Rioux
Councillor Houston
Councillor Dunbar-Lavoie



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Councillor Baraldi
Councillor Benrimoh
Councillor Lin
Councillor Ibrahim