



MOTION REGARDING CREATION OF INDIGENOUS EQUITY FUND AND FEE 2019-09-26

Submitted for: September 26, 2019

WHEREAS, Indigenous peoples' face a variety of social, economic, and pedagogy-based barriers in accessing post-secondary education. These barriers have been reinforced by implementation of neoliberal policies such as the Indian Act and the Residential School System, which utilized western-based education as a forum for destabilizing Indigenous nations, cultures, and languages;

WHEREAS, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission notes the way inadequate primary education and the negative experiences of residential schools have delayed generations of Indigenous peoples' from attending post-secondary education institutions;

WHEREAS, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) simultaneously noted the role post-secondary institutions play in this era of Reconciliation. Specifically, the TRC notes the way an increase in accessibility of post-secondary education will lead to an increase in Indigenous peoples' working in the fields of social work, law, and medicine, who can help address the legacy of residential schools;

WHEREAS, Indigenous students themselves best understand the support mechanisms required to foster a more accessible academic and social environment for Indigenous students at McGill;

WHEREAS, Indigenous student groups organize and facilitate discussions and movements aimed at addressing their own needs and concerns within the McGill community;

WHEREAS, Indigenous student and equity groups require fiscal autonomy in effectively challenging the legacy of colonialism and neoliberal policies;

WHEREAS, the SSMU Policy on Indigenous Solidarity states "the SSMU has a history of leadership on issues of equity and social justice. This dedication has been demonstrated in the creation of an Equity Policy for the SSMU. [The Policy on Indigenous Solidarity] aims to further this commitment by undertaking public awareness campaigns that aim to recognize under-addressed components of Indigenous history, better supporting Indigenous students, and lobbying the University to prioritize Indigenous solidarity in service provision and academia.";



WHEREAS, offering the autonomy necessary for Indigenous students and equity-seeking groups to access the necessary funds to address their own self-identified concerns and struggles fits within the scope of “better supporting Indigenous students” as discussed in the background of the Policy on Indigenous Solidarity;

WHEREAS, the SSMU Indigenous Equity Fund would serve three purposes. Firstly, it would be used to fund the activities of the SSMU Indigenous Affairs Committee and the salary of the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner. Secondly, like other SSMU funds, it would be used to finance projects led by SSMU members that fit within a particular scope, in this case, to support Indigenous students at McGill. Thirdly it would be used as a source of financial support for Indigenous undergraduate students at McGill. Any Indigenous student would be able to apply to the fund for financial assistance for anything from groceries to tuition.

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2019 Referendum period:

Do you agree to the creation of the non-opt-outable \$1.00 SSMU Indigenous Equity Fee, per semester, for all full and part-time SSMU members, to start in Winter 2020 and to be charged until Winter 2025 (inclusive), with the understanding that a majority ‘no’ vote would result in the non-existence of the fund?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the “Whereas” clauses of this motion also be included on the ballot.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the Legislative Council adopts the actionable aspects of this question and that any grammatical or legal changes necessary do not need the re-approval of the Legislative Council.

Moved By:
Madeline Wilson, *Vice-President (University Affairs)*

Seconded By:
Maxine Wu, *Science Representative*

Written By:
Tomas Jirousek, *Indigenous Affairs Commissioner*