



MOTION REGARDING PROPOSED INCREASE TO INDIGENOUS EQUITY FEE REFERENDUM QUESTION 2020-03-12

Submitted for: 2020-03-12

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2020-03-12-006 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Madeline Wilson <i>Vice-President (University Affairs)</i>	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Shreya Dandamudi <i>Arts Representative</i>		

Issue

The Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) maintains a commitment to pursue Reconciliation and Equity for Indigenous students at McGill. This commitment is facilitated through the SSMU Indigenous Solidarity Policy, which recognizes the historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples both within the SSMU and within the broader McGill context. In recognizing the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples at McGill, the proposed \$0.50 increase to the existing \$1.00/student/semester fee will enable the Indigenous Affairs Committee to better support Indigenous students by making services more widely available to Indigenous students.

This recognition of ongoing oppression led the SSMU to mandate the Indigenous Affairs Committee, via the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, to implement targeted services, campaigns, and programming in support of Indigenous initiatives and equity within the SSMU.

Background and Rationale

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.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 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. Further, the 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.

Indigenous students require the fiscal autonomy to confront these challenges discussed by the TRC, which, in the McGill context, includes the development and expansion of the Indigenous Equity Fee.

Alignment with Mission

An increase to the Indigenous Equity Fee would enable the Indigenous Affairs Committee to expand existing services available to Indigenous students, including the subsidization of parking passes for students living in Mohawk territories, while also adapting existing SSMU services to better promote campus accessibility, including the recent expansion of SSMU DriveSafe services to Kahnawá:ke Mohawk territory.

Further, the expansion of the service would enable a more sustainable fiscal base for supporting the hiring and retention of Indigenous staff within the SSMU, including the Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, the Associate Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, Indigenous Equity Researcher, and the Indigenous Affairs Events Planner.

Finally, an increase to the Indigenous Equity Fee would expand the fiscal base meant to support Indigenous student clubs, such as the Indigenous Students Alliance, the Indigenous Law Association, and the Desautels Indigenous Business Society.

Consultations Completed

Consultation was completed by the Indigenous Affairs Committee, as well as counterparts in the First Peoples' House, the Indigenous Studies Program, and external community partners.



Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The proposed fee will pay for the on-going services and salaries of Indigenous Affairs departmental staff. Without this fee increase, future expansions of services will be limited, and the expansion of staff may prove unsustainable.

Sustainability Considerations

There are no sustainability considerations as this is a service.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

The SSMU Indigenous Affairs Commissioner and Indigenous Affairs Committee will be able to immediately expand existing services, and sustainably continue supporting the expanded staff base within the portfolio.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the SSMU Legislative Council approves the following question for the Winter 2020 Referendum period:

"Do you agree with the proposed increase of \$0.50 of the non-opt-outable \$1.00 SSMU Indigenous Equity Fee, per semester (excluding summer), for all full-time and part-time SSMU members, to start in Winter 2020 and to be charged until Winter 2025 (inclusive) when it will be brought to the membership for approval, with the understanding that a majority 'No' vote would result in no increase of the current \$1.00 SSMU Indigenous Equity Fee?"

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the SSMU 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.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(19)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()