



MOTION REGARDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON A RENEWAL AND INCREASE OF THE WUSC STUDENT REFUGEE PROGRAM FEE 2021-02-11

Submitted for: 2021-02-11

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-02-11-017 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Jemark Earle <i>President</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:	Addy Parsons <i>Senate Representative</i>		

Issue

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit organization that partners with universities across the country in order to achieve its goals of increasing youth education, empowerment, and economic opportunity. The WUSC McGill local committee focuses primarily on the WUSC Student Refugee Program (SRP). Through this program each year students from different refugee situations come to Canada to become residents and to pursue academic studies. WUSC McGill provides the sponsorships to allow refugee students to pursue their education at McGill after being displaced from their homes abroad, and the students of the McGill local committee are in charge of meeting these students at the airport, helping them settle in, and generally ensuring that their first year at McGill, and the years that follow, go as smoothly as possible. To cover the costs of our student refugee sponsorships and resettlement, WUSC McGill relies on a student levy which, which at present is set at \$2.00 per student payable by all McGill downtown campus students each year, and allows us to sponsor 3 student each year. Other WUSC committees in Canada, however, have been able to bring more than 3 student (such as UBC who sponsors 8 students each year). WUSC McGill wishes to follow suit and work on increasing our refugee sponsorship for McGill University as well.



By increasing the Student Refugee Program Student Levy Fee from \$2.00 to \$4.00, WUSC McGill would be able to bring 1-2 additional student refugees to McGill each year

Background and Rationale

Founded over 60 years ago, World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit organization that partners with universities across the country in order to achieve its goals of increasing youth education, empowerment, and economic opportunity.

The WUSC McGill local committee focuses primarily on the WUSC Student Refugee Program (SRP). Through this program each year students from different refugee situations come to Canada to become permanent residents and to continue their studies. The students of the local committee are in charge of meeting these students at the airport, helping them settle in, and generally ensuring that their first year at McGill, and the years that follow, go as smoothly as possible. Aside from the SRP program, the local committee also hosts talks and bake sales to raise awareness of, and money for, other WUSC programs such as their sustainability initiatives, fair trade, and their efforts to improve women's access to education.

Alignment with Mission

In line with SSMU's goal of accessibility, WUSC McGill, works hard to counter inequality by promoting fair and equal access to education. Refugees are faced with strong barriers to higher education. WUSC McGill counters impairments and disabilities presented to refugee students when they arrive in Montreal and to McGill University. WUSC McGill supports SSMU in its mission of "improving the quality and accessibility of education" for SRP students. WUSC McGill also promotes sustainability and works with partners such as the Office of sustainability and the Student's housing and hospitality service. Through campus-wide awareness campaigns such as fair-trade coffee and chocolate sales, and inter-group workshops, WUSC furthers the commitment to sustainability and fair trade made by SSMU. Through its many social events over the years, WUSC McGill has also promoted "social, cultural, and personal opportunities" for its members and the wider McGill community. Initiatives such as the McGill Journal on Refugee and Migration Studies MJRMS and round tables and discussions surrounding refugee issues and rights come to mind.



Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Comment specifically on risk factors that taking this decision poses, including any human resource, finance, or other resource implications as well as communications/optics issues.

Sustainability Considerations

The WUSC headquarters in Ottawa, serves as an established contact point for our McGill branch and has provided us with the tools, resources, and training needed to ensure successful support and settlement of sponsored student refugees with the WUSC McGill program. Additional challenges of COVID-19 have resulted in travel delays, quarantines upon arrival, and vulnerability to transmission in over-crowded refugee camps. However, this past December, the WUSC McGill Local Committee has risen to these challenges with flexibility and increased support. The 2020 resettlement was successfully postponed (as opposed to canceled) and upon arrival, students had rooms fully furnished for a two-week quarantine along with the devices and instructions necessary to receive extensive online support and orientation during and after the quarantine period. Fundamental to the mission of all WUSC Local Committees is the promotion of Fair Trade products and sustainable consumer practices. WUSC McGill consistently organizes Fair Trade events, awareness weeks, and is forming partnerships with actors such as Student Housing and Hospitality Services and the Sustainable Development Goals Student Hub.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Upon approval for the Winter 2021 referendum, WUSC McGill will pursue social media campaigning to encourage McGill students to vote "Yes" for the student levy fee increase to support the WUSC student refugee program. If the motion is approved, WUSC McGill will apply to sponsor 4 or 5 students in total, instead of the usual 3, to come to McGill as part of the WUSC student refugee program.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the SSMU Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2020 referendum period:



Question 1: The aim of the WUSC Student Refugee Program is to resettle refugees and give them access to education at McGill: do you agree to renew the Student Refugee Program fee of \$2.00 per semester, payable by all students starting Fall 2021 until Winter 2026 (inclusive) with an understanding that a majority 'No' vote will result in the suspension of the student refugee program and the inability for WUSC McGill to sponsor student refugees in the future?

Question 2: Contingent on its renewal, do you agree to the increase of the Student Refugee Program fee by \$2.00 (from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per semester), payable by all students starting Fall 2021 until Winter 2026 (inclusive), for the purpose of sponsoring 4-5 refugee students a year (up from 3 annually) to come study at McGill, with an understanding that a majority 'No' vote on the fee increase will result in WUSC only being able to sponsor 3 students each year?

Be it further 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 (UNANIMOUS)
Opposed ()
Abstain ()



Appendix A : Relevant Appendix

APPROVED