



# MOTION REGARDING REGARDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON THE AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION 2021-02-11

Submitted for: 2021-02-11

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-02-11-011
<b>Moved by:</b>	Brooklyn Frizzle <i>Vice-President (University Affairs)</i>	<b>Current Status:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
<b>Seconded by:</b>	Alex Karasick <i>Arts Representative</i>		

**Issue** This motion seeks to put forward a Question for Referendum regarding an amendment to the SSMU Constitution allowing Legislative Councillors to be compensated for their work.

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**Background and Rationale** In 2017, the Legislative Council adopted the [Against Unpaid Internships Policy](#) which positioned the SSMU against unpaid and exploitative labour practices. In **Section 6. Screening Criteria** of the Policy, several criteria from the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) were cited as conditional for justified unpaid labour.

While these criteria were not originally intended to apply to non-profit organizations, they are useful in contextualizing the double standard in which SSMU finds itself. Notably, the SSMU currently fails to satisfy the following criteria for its Legislative Councillors and Student Senators:

- 6.1 The training is similar to field-specific or applied training that can be found at a post-secondary institution.
- 6.2 The training is for the benefit of the intern.
- 6.3 The organization providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the intern while [they are] being trained.



6.8 There are clearly defined and articulated learning outcomes for the intern to realize by the conclusion of the internship.

6.9 Regular supervision is given by a professional pertinent to the internship.

All this to say, Legislative Councillors and Student Senators contribute enormously to the functioning of the SSMU. Without the unpaid labour of Councillors and Senators, the SSMU's political decision-making, policy development, and University representation would be brought to a stand-still. With that in mind, this motion proposes to amend **Article 8.9. Remuneration and Expenses** of the Constitution, which currently precludes the compensation of Legislative Councillors for their work.

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### Alignment with Mission

This motion and the proposed Fee increase align with the spirit of SSMU's Against Unpaid Internships Policy, specifically:

**Section 2. Context**, which asserts that reference letters and CV-building are not substitutes for remuneration for any form of labour, particularly as this consistently exacerbates existing inequalities; and

**Section 7.2. Programming and Student Groups**, which mandates that the SSMU shall ensure that all constituent and affiliated student groups of the Society shall not offer unpaid internship opportunities.

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### Consultations Completed

The Presidents' Roundtable, Executive Committee, Senate Caucus, Legislative Council, and Board of Directors were also consulted throughout the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 terms to determine the best way to compensate student representatives for their work.

The Scholarships and Student Aid Office of McGill University was consulted regarding eligibility for and implementation of work-study subsidization for SSMU Representatives.

The Arts Undergraduate Society leadership and former Vice-President (External Affairs), Adam Gwiazda-Amsel, were consulted on their experience advocating for and implementing compensation plans for non-executive student representatives.



Lastly, the Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) revised and approved the wording of the Referendum Question.

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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

While it is not mandated by this motion, the SSMU Membership Fee would need to be increased to equitably fund fair wages for student representatives.

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### Sustainability Considerations

The compensation of student representatives would serve to increase the social sustainability of SSMU's practices and promote a strong, safe and empowering community by endeavouring to minimize systemic power imbalances within society and foster a culture of anti-oppression, as outlined in section 3.2 of the Sustainability Policy.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

This motion and the proposed Constitutional amendment are presented alongside a proposal to increase the SSMU Membership Fee. This Fee increase would fund fair wages for Legislative Council and Student Senators.

Should this motion succeed, a 'yes' campaign would be formed by the Vice-President (University Affairs) to ensure the approval of the Referendum Question.

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### Motion or Resolution for Approval

*Be it resolved, that* the following Question be approved for the Winter 2021 Referendum Period:

“The current Constitution does not allow Legislative Councillors and Student Senators to be fairly compensated for their work. With this in mind, do you agree to the amendment of Article 8.9. ‘Remuneration and Expenses’ of the SSMU Constitution, to remove the sentence ‘Councillors shall receive no remuneration with respect to their duties, excepting honoraria based on financial need?’”

*Be it resolved, that* this motion be included with the above Question for the Winter 2021 Referendum Period.

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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.

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**Results of the  
Vote**

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()

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## Appendix A : Amendment to the Constitution

### **Article 8.9. Remuneration and Expenses**

~~“Councillors shall receive no remuneration with respect to their duties, excepting honouraria based on financial need. The Board of Directors may, by way of resolution, authorize the reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors in the exercise of their duties.”~~