



MOTION REGARDING CREATION OF QUIPS FUND AND FEE 2021-10-14

Submitted for: 2021-10-14

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-10-14-003

Moved by: Claire Downie
VP University Affairs **Current Status:** FOR APPROVAL
 APPROVED
 POSTPONED
 COMMITTED
 NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Yara Coussa
Arts Representative

Issue

Universities have historically been a place of queerphobia and resource monopolisation by privileged communities, intentional and not. This bursary aims to fulfill the systemic issue of queer students not receiving enough support in academia, and also facing more barriers to employment, formal scholarships, and familial support. Additionally, it is to provide support to grassroots research that will further build the support systems of the queer community, that non-queer community members are not able to identify.

This option should be adopted to ensure that the SSMU works towards gender equity in all its communities and capacities, and not neglect the impact of oppression due to gender expression in its advocacy.

Background and Rationale

This motion aligns with SSMU's commitment to leading in matters of human rights and social justice, as well as to support and affirm the needs of all of its members, including those subject to queerphobia. It also is to help address the barriers that queer students at McGill face to completing education or accessing resources for research or community improvement. It works to help act against the queerphobia and marginalisation of queer minorities in academics. It builds on the commitments outlined in the Equity Policy and the Sustainability Policy.



Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with the SSMU Positions on non-discrimination based on sexual identity and gender, and the SSMU Positions book section 10, especially 10.5 “That individuals should be supported and believed in their articulation and experiences of gender inequity, including gender-based violence and oppression,” in relation to gender non-conforming students. The creation of the QUIPS bursary also aligns with SSMU’s focus on helping marginalised and oppressed students access support and education as equitably as possible while at McGill.

Consultations Completed

This bursary comes from the Gender and Sexuality Commissioner, and has been done in ongoing consultation with the Gender and Sexuality Committee since May 2021. VP Finance has also been consulted as to the budget and creation of the fee, as has VP University Affairs.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Risk factors relate to student support of the fee, having enough student applications to use all of the money from the fee, and ensuring that applications are treated without bias. In response to these, the monthly bursary amount has been made informed by how much QPIRG gives out monthly to community members, and how much interest the queer community has had in monetary support in the past. The applications will also be assessed holistically by a dedicated committee. Resource wise this will also include dedication of student and potentially community member time, especially of marginalised voices.

Sustainability Considerations

The sustainability implications of this motion are primarily of a social and economic nature, as it seeks to adopt a more robust basis for SSMU to conduct advocacy on gender equity, and to support the education and participation of queer students at McGill and in the McGill community. The fund will support queer participation in McGill and Montreal and then increase awareness and engagement, allowing it to continue. It follows the precedent set by the Indigenous Equity Fund. This motion serves to promote social sustainability within the SSMU, promoting an inclusive and equitable community that addresses systemic power imbalances within society and fosters a culture of anti-oppression, as per section 3.2. of the Sustainability Policy.



Impact of Decision and Next Steps

This bursary seeks to help queer marginalised students attain an education and receive support in research that allows them to complete their degrees. It also is to let queer people have resources to improve their own communities on campus with autonomy.

Should this motion fail, SSMU's reputation as a social justice-oriented organization would be undermined, and its relationship with its oppressed and marginalized students could be jeopardized.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Legislative Council approves the motion in Appendix A.

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2021 Referendum period:

Do you agree to the creation of the non-opt-outable \$1.09 SSMU Queer Equity Support Fee, per Fall and Winter semester, for all full and part-time SSMU members, to start in Winter 2022 and to be charged until Winter 2027 (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.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(21)
Opposed	(0)
Abstain	(1)



Appendix A : Motion

WHEREAS, Queer people face a variety of social and economic barriers in accessing post-secondary education, and in pursuing research that is centered on their own community. These barriers have been reinforced by the ongoing policing of gender expression. This ongoing denial of queer identity has minimised the importance and validity of queer relationships, and added to neocolonialism against queer people of colour. These barriers can be seen through queer students struggling to safely express themselves in classrooms or in Montreal as a whole, and through the recurring stress many queer students face of not passing as heterosexual or cisgender enough to avoid discrimination by fellow students and staff. As such, these barriers prevent queer individuals from attaining equal resources and opportunities in their education and careers.

WHEREAS, The historical categorization of homosexual sexual relationships as criminal, and continuing to update laws to criminalise relationships, made it hard for queer people to successfully pursue careers in academia. Examples of this include the designation of *dangerous sexual offender* in 1961, and the frequency of accusing queer adults as sexual offenders, ruining careers and reputations. This creates a legacy of homophobia and generalised queerphobia, of queer students not having mentorship, and of minimising the activism that was possible to happen in academia by historically silencing and marginalising non cisgender or heterosexual voices.

WHEREAS, 20 to 40% of homeless youth in Canada identify as under the queer umbrella. These youth are included in the younger demographics at McGill. This includes the younger students who are at risk of homelessness due to difficulty finding employment or safe housing, and students who are currently homeless and struggling to transition out of that. Furthermore, this instability, motivated by systemic and explicit homophobia and transphobia, continues to be an ongoing problem for queer students when trying to find safe and affordable housing.

WHEREAS, Queer students and equity groups require fiscal autonomy in effectively challenging institutionalised homophobia, transphobia, and neocolonialism. This autonomy allows them to support themselves and pursue research and community projects that would otherwise not be possible, allowing them to complete their education and improve the experience of queer students. These needs would not be able to be reliably determined by those outside of the community.

WHEREAS, Queer students best understand the support mechanisms required to foster an accessible academic and social environment for queer students at McGill. As such, their own grassroots research and proposals, if supported and funded, are the best suited for creating a safer experience for other queer students.



WHEREAS, Queer community and student groups have discussions and community spaces that are aimed at addressing their own needs and wants within McGill,

WHEREAS, The SSMU Gender Equity Position 5 states “That individuals should be supported and believed in their articulation and experiences of gender inequity, including gender-based violence and oppression.”

WHEREAS, In 2007 Queer McGill created a similar fund, shows the ongoing need for a fund directed and for queer students on campus. The Queer McGill scholarship was untenable for a student service to continue, but SSMU holds the ability to better support students and allocate time and resources to keeping monetary support available.

WHEREAS, The SSMU Gender Equity Position 6 states “That gender equity is especially important to trans* individuals, individuals who present their gender in a way that is non-conforming to western norms, and non-heterosexual individuals.”

WHEREAS, The SSMU Gender Equity Position 6.1 states “That these individuals should be supported through the allocation of relevant resources and services.” In keeping with this, the QUIPS Funding Committee specifically offers autonomy for queer students, access to funds to support queer students in self-identified needs, and community-identified research needs, affirms and acts.

WHEREAS, the SSMU has historically supported efforts to redistribute funds in such a way to reallocate funds to historically marginalized groups. This is reaffirmed by the Equity Policy, 4.3.1.

WHEREAS, the QUIPS bursary would fulfill the needs of queer students urgently in need, and fund grassroots research to help improve the community and queer living conditions in the McGill community as a whole.



Appendix B : Budget

	Amount	Number in a year	Total	
Fortnightly Bursary Distributions	3,000\$	14	42,000\$	
Summer Meetings Distributions	3000	4	12000	
GSC Salary (16.26x300)	4878	1	4878	
			58,878\$	Total
			Fee Yearly	2.18
			Fee Semesterly	1.09