



MOTION REGARDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON THE INCREASE OF THE SSMU MEMBERSHIP FEE 2022-02-17

Submitted for: 2022-02-17

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Moved by:	Claire Downie <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:	Yara Coussa <i>Arts Representative</i>		

Special thanks to Brooklyn Frizzle (Vice President (University Affairs) 2020-2021) for their hard work on this project and for writing the bulk of this motion. It has been updated only in minor ways and Brooklyn deserves all of the credit on this initiative and their dedication to reducing unpaid labor done at SSMU.

Issue

This motion seeks to put forward a Question for Referendum regarding an increase to the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Membership Fee, dedicated to funding fair wages for Legislative Councilors and Student Senators, compensating them for their work.

Background and Rationale

Participation in student government is an ongoing goal of the Society. However, when time-intensive participation is unpaid, this greatly restricts the ability of many students to participate.. Having a wide range of perspectives and experiences represented is crucial for student representation, and when participation in SSMU is limited to those who can afford to perform unpaid labor, only certain voices are heard. This proposed fee increase would encourage students from historically underrepresented groups to seek positions at SSMU, which would ultimately to the benefit of all students from a range of backgrounds.

Legislative Councilors and Student Senators contribute enormously to the functioning of the SSMU. Without the unpaid labor of Councilors 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 an increase to the SSMU Membership Fee as a means of funding fair wages for student representatives and significantly reducing the amount of unpaid labor at the SSMU.

Job descriptions for [Legislative Councillors](#) and [Student Senators](#) were drafted using the responsibilities outlined in the Internal Regulations of Governance and Representation and Advocacy. These job descriptions were then assigned hourly wages using SSMU Human Resources' Pay Equity Scale, which were used to determine a conservative [budget estimate](#) justifying the proposed Fee increase, with the understanding that SSMU may, in future, be able to receive work-study subsidization from the McGill Office of Scholarships and Student Aid.

The Governance Manager, who is already deeply knowledgeable of the Legislative Council, was selected as the supervisor for the Legislative Councillors. As the Vice-President (University Affairs) already supports the Student Senators, they were chosen as the supervisor.

Alignment with Mission

The SSMU has a long history of opposing unpaid labor at McGill and elsewhere. SSMU's 2017 [Policy Against Unpaid Internships](#) was passed to mandate the SSMU to advocate against unpaid internships at the university level and beyond.

The SSMU recognizes that internship roles are often justified by the claim that students gain experience from working in such roles without pay. This is not entirely dissimilar from serving as a SSMU Senator or Councillor- while much valuable experience is gained by students in these roles, that does not rid SSMU of its role in contributing to unpaid labor on campus.

Consultations Completed

Throughout the development of this motion and the corresponding Fee Question, many stakeholders were consulted.

The Governance Manager and Human Resources Department were consulted extensively in the drafting of job descriptions for Legislative Councillors and Student Senators in the 2020-2021 year, and were consulted during the 2021-2022 year.

The Senate Caucus and the Legislative Council were consulted and invited to share feedback in the 2020-2021 academic year, and briefly in the 2021-2022 academic year.



The Scholarships and Student Aid Office of McGill University were consulted in the 2020-2021 academic year regarding eligibility for and implementation of work-study subsidization for SSMU Representatives.

The Vice-President (Finance) 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 was consulted regarding the proposed SSMU Membership Fee Question, the management of such funds, and budget estimate thereof.

The Arts Undergraduate Society leadership and former Vice-President (External Affairs), Adam Gwiazda-Amsel, were consulted in 2020-2021 on their experience advocating for and implementing compensation plans for non-executive student representatives.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

In order to equitably fund fair wages for student representatives, the SSMU Membership Fee must be increased. The proposed increases shall follow in the question.

Furthermore, the introduction of 40 new paid positions would add to the workload of the Human Resource Department. However, the SSMU has begun seeking a full-time HR coordinator, as per the 5-Year Plan, which will expand the capacity of the department greatly.

Further, the supervision of the Legislative Councilors would add to the workload of the Governance Manager, who was consulted to this effect.

The Senators would be supervised by the Vice-President (University Affairs), with additional support from the University Affairs Secretary-General. However, such supervision is already handled by individuals in these roles, and this is not expected to significantly increase their workload.

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 endeavoring to minimize systemic power imbalances within society and foster a culture of anti-oppression, as outlined in section 3.2 of the Sustainability Policy.

Impact Decision and Next Steps

of Should this motion succeed, an account within SSMU would be created to house the funds collected by the Membership Fee increase. The job descriptions assigned to Councilors and Senators, with the newly created account attached, would be approved by the Executive Committee.



An additional coordinator-level position was created in early 2022 to increase the capacity of the portfolio and compensate for the added responsibilities of the Governance Manager.

The Vice-President (University Affairs) shall oversee the application for and implementation of any work-study subsidies granted by the Scholarships and Student Aid Office.

Throughout the Summer of 2022, SSMU's HR and Payroll departments would prepare for the influx in SSMU employees while the Governance Manager could begin onboarding any Senators who assume office before the Fall 2022 Semester.

Legislative Councilors and any remaining Student Senators would then be onboarded as they are elected by their respective constituencies while the Governance Manager would continue to oversee the implementation of any work-study subsidies.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved, that the following Question be approved for the Winter 2022 Referendum Period:

“Whereas, the SSMU Basic Society Fee is currently:

A faculties:

Full-time (9 credits or more): \$61.30

Part-time (1-8.5 credits): \$29.76

B faculties:

Full-time (9 credits or more): \$45.03

Part-time (1-8.5 credits): \$21.61

Whereas, A faculties are defined as Arts, Education, Engineering, Management, Music, Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Science,

Whereas, B faculties are defined as Medicine, Law and Dentistry.

Whereas, the SSMU Basic Society Fee is indexed to inflation annually according to the Quebec CPI rate.

Whereas, the proposed increase would take place after the 2022 indexation is applied in March.



Whereas, the proposed increase would appear as follows:

A faculties:

Full-time (9 credits or more): \$62.50 (previously \$61.30)

Part-time (1-8.5 credits): \$30.96 (previously \$29.76)

B faculties:

Full-time (9 credits or more): \$46.23 (previously \$45.03)

Part-time (1-8.5 credits): \$22.81 (previously \$21.61)

Do you agree to increase the non-opt-outable SSMU Society Fee by \$1.20, payable each semester (excluding summer) by all members of the Students Society of McGill University, starting Fall 2022?"

Be it further resolved, that this motion be included with the above Question for the Winter 2022 Referendum Period.

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 favor (17)
Opposed (2)
Abstain (6)
