



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

MOTION REGARDING MUSLIM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (MSA) SERVICE FEE INCREASE REFERENDUM QUESTION 2023-02-09

Submitted for: 2023-02-09

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-02-09-002
Moved by:	Hassanatou Koulibaly <i>VP Student Life</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:	Nadia Dakdouki <i>Clubs Representative</i>		

Issue

The Muslim Students' Associations (MSA) opt-outable Service Fee was approved in the Winter 2021 referendum. The MSA acknowledges that the present opt-outable fee is insufficient to maintain the quality and number of services and initiatives offered as it entered its second full year of operation.

This conclusion was reached after taking into account a number of variables, including the continuously increasing inflation rates, the rise in the number of religious holidays observed during the academic year, the need for an increase in a number of budget categories within the MSA, and the requirement for ticketing to sustain the current budget.

The MSA seeks to have its opt-outable Service fee of \$0.99 per student per semester increased to \$1.55 in order to sustain and improve their annual operations as a SSMU Service, providing assistance and support to a substantial number of SSMU Members.

Background and Rationale

The MSA is a SSMU Service that seeks to unite Muslim students at the University by offering necessary services, Islamic prayer, resources, educational tools, and student life activities required to improve these students' university experience through social, spiritual, and professional growth. The MSA has been in operation at McGill for decades, and as a service for its third year now; serving as a source of support and community



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

for Muslims and non-Muslim alike, on campus. In recent years, the number of students the MSA caters to has only increased significantly. For example, the MSA newsletter has over 2000 registered students; the MSA Facebook page has more than 4,000 followers¹; more than 100 students frequent the Friday prayers on a weekly basis².

The MSA has been functioning as a Service for two full years at this time. However, it recognizes that the current budget has led to limitations in the quality, execution, and quantity of services provided. Community engagement is tackled by two (2) main portfolios in the MSA (*Community and Social*) which execute a multitude of events throughout the year. Given the increased demand and quantity of these events, both portfolios spend their entire budget and often require additional funds. The frequency of Islamic holidays throughout the year will also increase due to the moving of the lunar Islamic calendar relative to the Gregorian solar calendar, only leading to a higher demand for services rendered by the MSA. Another annual change is the inflation rates. With these on the rise, the MSA has had to cut down on certain aspects of its services as the cost to execute them has increased substantially.

In order to sustainably and consistently provide these services and initiatives, the MSA has had to resort to ticketing in some of its events. It must be noted that the MSA does not profit from these ticket sales, but rather subsidises the cost to increase the affordability. The implementation of ticketing leads to: still very high ticket prices that discourage students from signing up, inability to cater to a large population due to capping despite increased demands, and prioritisation of affordable event ideas which limit the improvement of our services.

Therefore, by proposing a fee increase, the MSA will achieve the financial support it needs to maintain and improve its services and continue functioning in an effective manner by serving many Members of the SSMU and the Post Graduate Students' Society (PGSS), as per the SSMU and the PGSS's Memorandum of Agreement.

¹ MSA McGill, Friday Prayer Registrations

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nsonBmv-lUbcGu8S_2LDI1j7pQ2GoA71/view?usp=share_link

² MSA McGill, Friday Prayer Registrations

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nsonBmv-lUbcGu8S_2LDI1j7pQ2GoA71/view?usp=share_link



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Alignment with Mission

Ensuring the MSA, a SSMU Service, has the resources it needs to fulfil its mandates and continually improve the services it provides to the Muslim student population, enabling them to successfully practice their faith, is in alignment with SSMU's constitutional role to act in the best interested of its Members as a whole; given that Muslim students are SSMU Members as well.

The SSMU Constitution also states the following:

*"The Society shall strive to provide excellence and quality of service at all times, and shall continue to enhance the quality and scope of these services."*³

This motion is also in line with multiple SSMU's Policies, including:

- *Clubs and Services* are SSMU's Highest Priority Policy, which states that

*"Clubs and services are the Society's highest priority. The Society will actively work towards improving the structure to support clubs and services."*⁴

- *the Equity Policy*, which states that

*"The SSMU has a responsibility as a leader, representative, and service provider to a diverse membership to conduct itself by the highest standards of respect, fairness, integrity, safety, and equitable treatment for all persons."*⁵

By approving this Fee, the SSMU will have achieved its goals of representing its students, fulfilled its constitutional duty to enhance the calibre of services it offers, committed its highest priority to enhancing service structure, and fulfilled its responsibility of maintaining an equitable environment by enabling one of its religious communities to fulfil their required needs.

Consultations Completed

Consultations were conducted with the VP Student Life, VP Finance, SSMU Service Finances Coordinator, and current and previous MSA executives.

³ The Constitution of the Students' Society of McGill University

<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Constitution-of-the-Students%E2%80%99-Society-of-McGill-University-2021-11-15.pdf?x21981>

⁴ Legislative Council Policies: Clubs and Services are SSMU's Highest Priority Policy

<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Clubs-and-Services-As-SSMU%E2%80%99s-Highest-Priority-Policy.pdf?x21981>

⁵ SSMU Board of Directors Policies: Equity Policy

<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Equity-Policy-2021-05-13-to-2026-05-01.pdf?x21981>



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Should the fee increase not pass, the operational capacity of the Service will be hindered, limiting the services the MSA is able to provide and impeding its improvement. Moreover, in order to upkeep the quality of events and cater to the high demand, the MSA risks running into a deficit if an adequate budget is not provided.

Furthermore, if the fee increase does not pass and there becomes a hindrance of operation of the services provided by the MSA, the SSMU risks violating its constitutional role in providing essential services to its different constituencies, and risks violating the SSMU's own implemented policies, as highlighted in the *Alignment with Mission* section of this motion.

Sustainability Considerations

The approval of this fee ensures the long-term viability of the MSA and the enhancement of the services it offers SSMU Members. This will improve its efficiency and enable the Service to launch more sustainable initiatives.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion passes, an MSA Service Fee question will be added to the Winter 2023 referendum ballot, asking SSMU Members if they agree to increasing the opt-outable \$0.99 fee per undergraduate student, per semester, to \$1.55. The opt-outable fee was determined using the Appendix A financial breakdown.

If the fee question passes at the referendum, the MSA will be able to maintain and improve its operations, carrying out its mandates by providing additional services, counselling, support, opportunities for student life, advocacy, and many more resources to Members and the community.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Winter 2023 referendum period:

“Do you agree to an increase of the opt-outable MSA Service Fee from \$0.99 to \$1.55, per semester (excluding summer), for all undergraduate students who are members of the SSMU, to start in Fall 2023 and to be charged until Winter 2028 (inclusive), with the understanding that a majority ‘no’ vote would result in the continuation of current fee until Fall 2026, hindering the quality of services the MSA offers?”

WHEREAS, the Muslim Students' Association's Service Fee is used, in accordance with the SSMU Constitution, to “provide excellence and quality



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

of service at all times, and shall continue to enhance the quality and scope of these services.”

WHEREAS, without proper correction, the MSA Operational Budget is likely to remain low or insufficient, hindering the association's ability to improve the quality of services they offer and properly cater to SSMU members.

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.

Be it further resolved, that SSMU Elections, in collaboration with the Governance Manager, include links of the following to the MSA Service Fee voting ballot:

- This approved motion (Motion Regarding MSA Service Fee Increase 2023-02-09);
- This motion's agenda points;
- And the Voting Records of this Legislative Council meeting.

Results of the Vote

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



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

APPENDIX A - Financial Breakdown and Rationale for MSA Service Fee Increase

The following showcases the proposed increase and associated rationale for specific aspects of the MSA budget in the hopes of providing SSMU Members and Members of its Governance structures a concrete and legitimate source for requesting the fee increase.

Portfolios	Present	Proposed	Rationale
Community	\$10,000	\$19,000	With the lunar calendar moving towards the academic year, more Islamic holidays are happening during the year. During the holy month of Ramadan, the MSA holds weekly iftars (dinners open to all students) that total at around ~\$2000 each. Furthermore, there are religiously significant dates throughout the year as well where Muslims are encouraged to fast (the MSA aims to hold iftars for around 3 of these/year). The two Eid celebrations also fall within the academic year which also total to ~\$2000 each. The community portfolio is also responsible for holding charity initiatives throughout the year. The MSA charity week this year raised more than \$5,000. A substantial budget will allow for investment in more of these initiatives, generating more donations that benefit thousands of those in need. The proposed increase takes each of these into account.
Social	\$3,500	\$9,000	Despite students paying a service fee, the MSA has had to ticket students to avoid a deficit while subsidising some of the costs. In order to reduce ticketing, reduce ticketing fees for events, and not restrict the number of attendees per event, the following increase is proposed. Furthermore, the increase will also allow for an improvement in the quality and increase in quantity of social events as the current budget restricts this
External	\$500	\$1000	The current budget is unsustainable to organise events. It is difficult to be able to secure sponsors and sponsors are not guaranteed annually. Furthermore, many of the external organisations MSA collaborates with are student clubs that do not have the budget to cover all/significant portions of the costs.
Prayer	\$400	\$1,500	The proposed increase is to be able to reward guests giving sermons and maintain prayer spaces. These guests give sermons at the Friday prayers that take place on a weekly basis throughout the year (16/semester). There are around 4-5 guest speakers/semester who we encourage to provide at least 4 sermons/year. As such, the proposed increase allows for them to be rewarded accordingly. As well as this, funds are also required to maintain the MSA prayer space and the various other prayer spaces available around campus.
Communications	\$575	\$1,200	The proposed increase is to be able to provide community members with merchandise and pay for graphic design subscriptions that are to be used throughout the year to promote MSA initiatives.



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

The following highlights the financial breakdown of the MSA Service Fee in the hopes of providing SSMU Members and Members of its Governance structures a concrete and legitimate source and rationale for the fee.

Categories	Amount	Percentage of Total	Details of Budget Category
Chaplaincy, Counselling & Mental Health	\$13,860	24.42%	Used to hire a chaplain/counsellor to fulfil the mental health needs of Muslim students at McGill at a rate of \$22/hr throughout the entire year
Training	\$1,600	2.82%	Used to train the 13+ MSA Executives at the beginning of the year and provide training opportunities with qualified mentors. Note: MSA Executives do not receive any wages or financial remuneration. Value obtained from previous years.
Education	\$2,500	4.41%	Used to pay instructor or scholar fees or honorariums for educational classes and seminars. Classes accessible to the entire McGill community. Rate obtained from previous years.
Prayer	\$1,500	2.64%	Used to maintain and provide the weekly Friday Prayers which attract around 200 SSMU and PGSS Members. Also used to maintain the MSA Prayer Office to allow for the enactment of 5 daily prayers. Dozens of students attend each prayer, every day.
Marketing, Media & Communication	\$2,035	3.59%	Required to maintain the relevant technical consideration for the MSA as a Service. The bulk is to maintain the G-suite for members of the MSA team, which is at \$7.80/user/per month. Other costs include website maintenance, online subscriptions, printing costs, advertising fees, and graphic design costs.
Charitable Engagement	\$1,000	1.76%	Every year, the MSA raises many \$1,000's in charity for those in need, locally in Montreal and the world. This category allows for the appropriate investment in these charitable causes in order to obtain a much higher return on investment, benefitting thousands of those in need.
Community Engagement	\$29,550	52.07%	Used to subscribe to the student life initiatives and events carried out by the MSA throughout the year, including but not limited to MSA Frosh, free community iftars (dinners open to all students), advocacy costs, social events, & the two Eids.
Discretionary (Scholarship/student aid)	\$2,000	3.52%	Used to provide financial aid for those in need.
Discretionary (Contingency)	\$2,702.25	4.76%	Standard 5% of the total budget is reserved as contingency to accommodate for unexpected costs or events throughout the year.
Total Amount	\$56,742.25	100%	



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

The MSA respects the wishes of the students in the event that they wish to opt out of the MSA Service Fee, as this motion is to be passed with the presumption that anyone who wishes to opt out, may do so. The MSA does not wish to benefit from students' ignorance of the Fee's existence and their ability to opt out of paying it, thus, the MSA will publicly advertise and highlight the opt out periods. As a result, the MSA anticipates an opt out rate that is close to the high end.

Total Amount	\$56, 742.25	
Students	22, 500	(undergraduate)
<i>Assuming 0% of students optout</i>	\$2.52	/student/year
	\$1.26	/student/semester
<i>Assuming 15% of students optout</i>	\$2.97	/student/year
	\$1.48	/student/semester
<i>Assuming 18% of students optout</i>	\$3.08	/student/year
	\$1.54	/student/semester
<i>Assuming 21% of students optout</i>	\$3.19	/student/year
	\$1.60	/student/semester
MSa Proposed Fee	\$1.55	/student/semester

If you require any clarifications, information, questions, and/or concerns, please feel free to contact the MSA President at msamcgill@ssmu.ca.