



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

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MOTION REGARDING ECOLE'S FEE RENEWAL REFERENDUM QUESTION 2023-02-09

Submitted for: 2023-02-09

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Submitted to: | SSMU Legislative Council | Document no.: | LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-02-09-016 |
| Moved by: | Val Masny <i>VP (External 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: | Angelica Voustinas <i>Arts Representative</i> | | |

Issue

This is a motion regarding the renewal of ECOLE's opt-outable fee levy that was last approved in the Winter 2018 referendum. ECOLE (Educational Community Living Environment Project) subsidizes the rents of 10 students who live collectively, convivially and as sustainably as possible. These students bring the McGill community together in the pursuit of sustainable living by means of applied student research, alternative education, and community building.

Background and Rationale

Whereas, the ECOLE Project has a mandate to “bring together McGill students, faculty and staff and Montreal community members in the pursuit of sustainable living by means of applied student research, alternative education, and community building”[1];

Whereas, the Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) granted seed funding to the ECOLE Project in October 2013; thereafter, the Project has been funded by the “ECOLE Project Fee” levy since the Fall of 2015, which was renewed in the Winter 2018 referendum;

Whereas, the ECOLE Project is a student-initiated and student-run initiative;



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Whereas, the ECOLE Project has gained status as an Independent Student Group (ISG) with the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU);

Whereas, the ECOLE Project provides a free space booking service that includes the dining room, study room, living room and kitchen. These rooms have been used by several dozen McGill groups since the Winter 2018 referendum;

Whereas, since its launch in the Fall of 2014, ECOLE has provided the McGill community with over 290 events related to alternative education programming. These events are geared to engage in topics related to sustainability and justice, including film screenings, Zero Waste Challenges, potlucks, career discussions, used bookstore crawls, vegan cooking workshops, game nights, meditation & mindfulness circles, organized discussions, formal skill-sharing events, and much more;

Whereas, members of the ECOLE Project pursue yearlong microprojects centred around sustainability topics, with the aim to develop tools and resources to support students pursuing similar projects or initiatives and showcase their projects at annual Symposiums;

Whereas, since the launch of the ECOLE project in Fall 2014, 35+ hands-on community-based projects have been completed by ECOLE members;

Whereas, the ECOLE Project had fewer hired facilitators and was unable to host any physical events during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 measures; thereafter, it had a reduced engagement and presence on campus, which it is working hard to change;

Alignment with Mission

This motion is in line with SSMU's constitutional responsibility of leadership in matters of social justice and environmental protection as well as the SSMU's Climate Justice Policy and the SSMU's Sustainability Policy and positions.

Whereas, ECOLE provides the McGill community with several services and activities (such as those mentioned above) that strengthen the environmental and educational experiences and conditions for SSMU's members.



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Whereas, ECOLE is a leader in sustainability advocacy on campus and actively supports, educates on and advocates for climate justice, sustainable mobility, regenerative agriculture, greening our spaces, divestment from fossil fuels, indigenous leadership, degrowth, etc.

Whereas, ECOLE attempts to further sustainability in its entirety (not just ecological) as stated in the SSMU values “The SSMU recognizes the holistic nature of sustainability and the importance of addressing environmental, social, and economic viability.”

Consultations Completed

Whereas, the VP (External Affairs) and the VP (Finance) have been consulted about the motion via email and no issues were raised. VP Finance Marco asked that we provide our budget which can be found on appendix A.

The SSMU president was consulted and suggested minor changes but said everything looks good.

The Sustainability Commissioner, Shuchita Das, sits on the Board of Directors of ECOLE and was consulted about the motion. She expressed her full support and suggested minor changes.

The Climate Officer of MOoS sits on the Board of Directors of ECOLE and was consulted about the motion. She expressed her support and suggested a minor change.

A member from Divest McGill (our most frequent space users) was consulted about the motion. They expressed full support and suggested minor changes.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

If the Legislative Council was to approve the question for the Winter 2023 Referendum period, this would result in Election SSMU adding this question on the ballot and supporting a possible future YES and NO campaign as per the SSMU Internal Regulations of Elections and Referenda.

If the Legislative Council was to vote against the approval of the question, this would automatically result in the end of the ECOLE Project as soon as the end of the 2023 Winter semester without giving students a chance to weigh in on the decision.



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Sustainability Considerations

Whereas, working to attain social and material sustainability is a key challenge of the 21st century and a priority to the University, as indicated in its Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025 [2]

Whereas, it is stated in the introduction of SSMU's Sustainability Policy that "Students operate a large number of important services for students and are leading movements to improve sustainability at McGill, including the work and advocacy done by groups such as Divest McGill, ECOLE, ..." [3]

Whereas, the ECOLE Project promotes community building by filling the need for a central space on campus where students, faculty and staff members can gather, connect and organize around sustainability;

Whereas, ECOLE has become a symbol of sustainable living, conviviality, and various degrowth principles on campus.

Whereas, ECOLE exists to support and further all aspects of sustainability.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

The approval of the question would result in its addition to the winter 2023 referendum ballot and give the students the chance to vote on the issue.

Whereas, a 'yes' vote to the following question would ensure the financial sustainability of the ECOLE Project as it fulfills its mandate of providing meeting space, sustainable educational learning opportunities, support for student research, and a greater sense of community to McGill students;

Whereas, a 'no' vote to the following question would entail that the ECOLE project will cease to exist after the end of the Winter 2023 semester;



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Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it Resolved that, the SSMU Legislative Council approve the following question for the Winter 2023 Referendum period:

“Do you support the renewal of the opt-outable student levy, titled “ECOLE Project Fee,” of \$2.00 per student per semester, payable by all part-time and full-time undergraduate students who are members of the SSMU, starting Fall 2023 and ending Winter 2028 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the membership for renewal, with the understanding that a majority vote “no” will result in the discontinuity of the operations of ECOLE due to lack of funding?”

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 resolved that, the Legislative Council approves, and recommends the ratification to the Board of Directors, for the motion to appear on the ballot.

Results of the Vote

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In favour | (UNANIMOUS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Opposed | () |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Abstain | () |

[1]<https://www.ecoleproject.com/>

[2]https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/mcgillclimatesustainability2025_-_reduced.pdf

[3][SSMU Sustainability Policy](#)

Appendix A : ECOLE BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023




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 **ECOLE Budget 22/23**

Some photos of ECOLE and our facilitators:)





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APPROVED