



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

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MOTION REGARDING THE CREATION OF THE COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY FUND, FEE, AND SOLIDARITY FUNDING COMMITTEE 2023-10-26

Submitted for: 2023-10-26

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-10-26-004
Moved by:	Liam Gaither <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:	Aishwarya Rajan <i>Arts Representative</i>		

Issue

This motion would support the creation of the Community Solidarity Fund and \$1.00 fee levy, which would provide discretionary funding to social justice-oriented individuals and groups working on projects, initiatives, campaigns, or events that align with SSMU's positions. The distribution of these funds would be overseen by the newly proposed Solidarity Funding Committee.

Background and Rationale

Most of SSMU's current funding opportunities require recipients to have an organizational bank account. However, many grassroots activist groups whose work aligns with SSMU's mission and values may not have such a formalized structure. Therefore, in order to receive funding from SSMU, these groups would have to find a more established organization willing to accept the funding on their behalf. The Community Solidarity Fund would remove this hurdle by not requiring recipients to have an organizational bank account to receive funding from SSMU. This would give grassroots organizations more access to SSMU funding, and widen the range of campaigns that SSMU could support, having a greater impact on the community. This fund would be especially helpful in supporting newer initiatives or those without access to traditional funding sources. This would



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also serve to broaden SSMU's capacity to distribute solidarity funds. Currently the QUIPS, Indigenous Equity, and Black Equity funds can transfer money to individual bank accounts to assist with either individual needs or initiatives addressing the needs of the community targeted by the fund.

A similar fund already exists at the Concordia Student Union (CSU), known as the [Community Action Fund](#). This fund would be in line with many SSMU policies, including the Climate Justice Policy, the Indigenous Solidarity Policy, and Equity Policy, all of which ask the Society to support projects that benefit those communities or causes. This fund would make more resources available for groups working towards these causes.

Alignment with Mission

The creation of this fund would strengthen civic participation at McGill and in the community by providing an additional avenue of funding for individuals or groups looking to undertake initiatives to strengthen their community. This would particularly support marginalized groups who may not have access to conventional funding sources, including many SSMU funds, as the fund is intended to be more accessible, and would make more funding available overall. This would in turn improve the quality of services that SSMU is able to offer with regards to funding, as it would create more opportunities to fund initiatives that would strengthen the conditions of its members.

Consultations Completed

The Funding Commissioner has been consulted, and recommended the creation of this new fund to address a lack of discretionary funding currently offered by SSMU.

The Indigenous Affairs Commissioner and the Equity Commissioners were consulted and expressed interest in being part of the committee managing the fund.

The Equity Commissioners recommended prioritizing initiatives by or for groups impacted by historical and ongoing processes of oppression, and ensuring that all projects are working towards anti-oppression.

The SSMU VP Finance position was vacant during the period where the consultations were completed. To account for this gap, the SSMU VP Student Life and the SSMU VP Sustainability and Operations were consulted.

QPIRG-McGill was consulted given that they have previously accepted SSMU funds on behalf of groups without organizational bank accounts. They claim that the process of doing so has been administratively problematic.



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Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The main risk factor associated with this fund is the possible misuse of funding by recipients. When managing this fund, SSMU endeavors to strike a balance between ensuring that the money is put towards the proposed cause while exerting minimal control over how the recipient uses the money in order to respect their autonomy.

SSMU should implement several accountability measures to reduce the risk that funds are misused. Recipients would be required to submit an impact report within 3 months detailing what the funds were used for. Reapplication to this fund would be contingent on receiving this report. The Chair of the Solidarity Funding Committee (see Appendix I) would be responsible for following up with recipients about the impact report (Appendix III).

Sustainability Considerations

This fund would give SSMU more capacity to support grassroots community initiatives that promote social and environmental sustainability.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If this motion passes, the question of establishing this fund and fee levy will be included in the Fall referendum, allowing SSMU members to vote on its establishment. If approved, the Solidarity Funding Committee (See Appendix I) will be created by the External Affairs Commissioner to oversee the management and disbursement of the fund. The Commissioner shall be responsible for convening the Solidarity Funding Committee as early as mid-January (2024), as this will be when the fee has first been charged to Members.

If this motion does not pass, further consultations will be conducted and improvements will be made to the motion. The question will return to the Legislative Council for approval for the Winter Referendum.



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Motion or Resolution for Approval

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the SSMU Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2023 Referendum period:

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.

The SSMU Legislative Council adopts the actionable aspects of this motion and is responsible for its enactment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2023 Referendum period:

Do you agree to the creation of the SSMU Community Solidarity Fee, managed by the Solidarity Funding Committee? This opt-outable fee would charge \$1.00 per semester (excluding summer), for all full-time and part-time SSMU members, to start in Winter 2024 and to be charged until Winter 2029 (inclusive). This fund would be distributed to social justice-oriented community groups by the Solidarity Funding Committee.

Results of the Vote

In favour ()
 Opposed ()
 Abstain ()



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Appendix I

Terms of reference for the Solidarity Funding Committee (to be included in the Committee Terms of Reference)

1.1 Oversight

The Solidarity Funding Committee shall be a Committee of the Legislative Council.

1.2 General

The Solidarity Funding Committee manages the administration of the Community Solidarity Fund.

1.3 Responsibilities

The Solidarity Funding Committee will:

- a. Oversee funding and explore further avenues for support and solidarity with groups and movements aligned with SSMU's positions and policies;
- b. Review and make recommendations to the Solidarity Funding Committee's terms of reference at the end of the year.

1.4 Membership

The membership of the Solidarity Funding Committee shall consist of:

- a. External Affairs Commissioner (Chair, non-voting)
- b. VP External Affairs
- c. One (1) councillor
- d. Four (4) members at large
- e. At least two (2) commissioners with expertise in the support and direction of marginalized identity affairs, such as:
 - i. Equity Commissioner(s), Black Affairs Commissioner, Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, or the Gender and Sexuality Commissioner

1.5 Meetings

Meetings shall occur bi-weekly during the school year and once per month during the summer. In the event of a time-sensitive funding application, the chair may call a special meeting. Similarly, members of the committee may request the chair to call a special meeting.

1.6 Quorum

The quorum for Solidarity Funding Committee is a simple majority of the voting members.

1.7 Reporting



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The Solidarity Funding Committee shall report to the Legislative Council via the External Affairs Commissioner or the Vice-President (External Affairs). Reporting frequency and dates shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

Appendix II

Terms of reference for the Community Solidarity Fee (IRs of Finance, IR-06 (Fees)):

1. Community Solidarity Fee

1.1 Purpose

The Community Solidarity Fee is intended to provide discretionary funding to individuals or groups who are undertaking initiatives that align with SSMU mission and values, but would not be eligible for traditional funding opportunities. The Community Solidarity Fund shall:

1.1.1 Provide funding to social justice-oriented community groups on campus or in so-called Montreal that do work in line with the SSMU's mission and values, as outlined in the Indigenous Solidarity Policy, the Climate Justice Policy, the Accessible Education and Academics Policy, along with the Trans Advocacy Plan, and the Positions Book.

1.2 Name

The Community Solidarity Fee shall also be known as the 'Community Solidarity Fund' to reflect its role in providing solidarity funding to social justice-oriented projects within the McGill community and beyond.

1.3 Allocation by Solidarity Funding Committee

1.3.1 All applications to the Community Solidarity Fund are assessed by the Solidarity Funding Committee.

1.3.2 Approval of an application will be at the discretion of the Solidarity Funding Committee. Approved applications must be aligned with the various positions, policies, plans and mandates of the SSMU.

1.3.3 Rejection of an application will include a brief explanation provided to the party who submitted the application.

1.3.4 Should an application be approved, the Solidarity Funding Committee shall provide two thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the funding prior to the event or project, and disburse the remainder once the impact report has been returned to and reviewed by the Committee.



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1.3.5 No applying individual or group may receive more than 7.5% of the total value of the Solidarity Fund in a given year.

1.3.6 In the event that a committee member applies for funding or belongs to a group applying for funding, that individual must act in line with the Conflict of Interest policy.

1.4 Allocation by Funding Committee

No portion of the Community Solidarity Fee is allocated by the Funding Committee.

1.5 Funding Structure

Should the committee wish to make changes to the structure of the fund, the Committee Chair shall entertain a formal proposal by any voting member of the Solidarity Funding Committee by no later than the end of October. Any changes that the committee wishes to make to the fund must be based on consensus before being brought for ratification at the Legislative Council.

Appendix III: Impact Report Template

This proposed impact report would be distributed to applicants upon approval of their funding. Rather than a google document, these questions would be added to a Wufoo form hosted on the SSMU website.

Impact Report: [project name]

Introduction

Context & background for your project or event (1-2 sentences)

Impacts



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What were you able to do with the provided funding? Were you able to meet your goal(s)? Be as specific as you can. Statistics, descriptions, and pictures are all welcome!

Spending Proof

Please provide receipts, invoices and other relevant information proving that the funds were used properly.

Date of application:	
Amount applied (\$)	
Amount approved (\$)	
Amount received to-date (\$)	