



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 QUEER EQUITY SUPPORT FEE INCREASE REFERENDUM QUESTION

2024-02-01

Submitted for: 2024-02-01

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-02-01-002
Moved by:	Lalia Katchelewa <i>VP 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:	Jacob Shannon <i>Law Representative</i>		

Issue

The Gender and Sexuality Commissioner is seeking an increase in the non-opt-outable Queer Equity Support fee by \$1.32 per student per semester.

Background and Rationale

The Queer Equity Support fee was initiated in the 2021-2022 school year in order to create an emergency financial support program for queer students, particularly those facing barriers due to homophobia and transphobia, or other systems of oppression. To date, the fund has distributed nearly \$100,000 to queer and marginalized students, primarily in order to support students struggling to pay for food, rent, and medical emergencies. This financial need is common across the student body, but particularly prevalent among queer students, who often face additional financial struggles due to workplace discrimination or a lack of family support.

The fund has faced an overwhelming number of applications, which is particularly noticeable as it is increasingly publicized. On average, only 55% of the funding requested from QUIPS is able to be granted due to budget restrictions. This often leaves people unable to fulfill their basic survival needs, as QUIPS operates as a last resort funding source.



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Additionally, the lack of funding available to QUIPS has prevented the fund from being able to fund grassroots research and community events as highlighted in the fund's Terms of Reference. Under the status quo, such events have had to be set aside in order to prioritize immediate community survival needs, reducing the originally intended impact of the fund.

An increase to the Queer Equity Support Fee would allow QUIPS to better meet the urgent financial needs of McGill's queer community, while also fulfilling its role to support queer organizing and research.

This increase to the Queer Equity Support Fee is also needed in order to correct for a substantial under-budgeting when the fee was initially introduced, which has resulted in the fee being unable to support the full cost of the QUIPS bursary and the GSC salary. If not corrected, this will result in QUIPS having to substantially decrease the amount it provides to students in coming years.

Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with the SSMU Mission by supporting the financial needs of queer students in order to help them obtain an education. It also aligns with the SSMU Positions on non-discrimination based on sexual identity and gender, and in particular with section 10 of the SSMU Positions Book. It also aligns with section 4.1 of the Trans Advocacy Plan, which commits to supporting the QUIPS bursary in order to help remedy the financial inequality faced by Two Spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming students.

Consultations Completed

This motion was developed in consultation with the Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Committee, specifically the VP University Affairs and VP External, and representatives of the Trans Patients Union and the Union for Gender Empowerment. Consultations were also completed with the VP Finance.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

If this motion does not pass, QUIPS will be unable to provide queer students with the financial support they have shown that they need. While it will continue to operate, the limited budget of the fund means that many urgent requests will not be able to be granted or granted in their entirety. Given the critical nature of the support this fund provides, this may cause



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students to remain in unsafe living situations, be forced to skip meals, or even lose their housing.

As this is a non-opt-outable fee, there is the risk that this will present a financial strain to students. We note that this strain is likely to be extremely minimal, as the fee is still under \$3 per semester, and hope that this will be offset by the assistance the fee is able to provide to some students during financial emergencies.

Sustainability Considerations

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

If this motion is approved by the Legislative Council, the question included in Appendix A would be included in the Winter 2024 Referendum Period by Elections SSMU and sent to the Membership for approval.

If the question is approved by the membership, the fee increase will go into effect as of the Fall 2024 semester. This will allow QUIPS to provide essential financial support to queer students.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Council approves the following question for the Winter 2024 Referendum period:

Do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable SSMU Queer Equity Support Fee of \$1.09 per semester to \$2.41 per semester (excluding summer)? The fee will apply to all full and part time members starting in Fall 2024 and ending in Fall 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal. A majority 'no' vote would result in the continuation of the fee at its current rate, severely limiting the ability for QUIPS to provide emergency support to queer and marginalized students.



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Results of the Vote	In favour	(21)
	Opposed	(1)
	Abstain	(5)

APPROVED



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Appendix A: Referendum Question

Do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable SSMU Queer Equity Support Fee of \$1.09 per semester to \$2.41 per semester (excluding summer)? The fee will apply to all full and part time members starting in Fall 2024 and ending in Fall 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the Membership for renewal. A majority 'no' vote would result in the continuation of the fee at its current rate, severely limiting the ability for QUIPS to provide emergency support to queer and marginalized students.

Appendix B: Budget Information

Fee Breakdown	Estimated Amount	Notes
Fall and Winter Bursary Distributions (75.5% of fee)	\$80,000	Approximately \$5000 distributed biweekly
Summer Bursary Distributions (19% of 4.82 fee)	\$20,000	Approximately \$5000 distributed monthly
GSC Salary (5.5% of fee, may increase if needed to account for standard SSMU salary increases)	\$6,048	Approximately 300 hours

Fee Yearly	4.82
Fee Semesterly	2.41



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Budget for QUIPS this semester:

	Amount	Number remaining	Total	
Fortnightly Bursary Distributions	\$2,500.00	9	\$22,500.00	
Summer Meetings Distributions	\$0.00	4	\$0.00	
GSC Salary	17.87 (plus 12% for mandatory employment related costs)	150	\$3,002.16	
Repayment of Salary Taken from Wrong Account by Accounting			\$7,000.00	
			\$32,502.16	Total

Actually in account: \$32,460.69

Original QUIPS budget from 2021:

	Amount	Number in a year	Total	
Fortnightly Bursary Distributions	\$3,000	14	\$42,000	
Summer Meetings Distributions	\$3,000	4	\$12,000	
GSC Salary (16.26x300)	16.26	300 hours	\$4,878.00	
			\$58,878	Total

Fee Yearly	2.18
Fee Semesterly	1.09