



# MOTION REGARDING THE BLACK STUDENTS' NETWORK SERVICE FEE INCREASE REFERENDUM QUESTION 2024-01-26

Submitted for: 2024-02-01

<b>Submitted to:</b>	SSMU Legislative Council	<b>Document no.:</b>	LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-02-01-007
<b>Moved by:</b>	Amina Kudrati-Plummer <i>VP Finance</i>	<b>Current Status:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
<b>Seconded by:</b>	Melanie Renaud <i>Athletics Representative</i>		

## Issue

The Black Students' Network of McGill (BSN) is seeking a service fee increase from \$1.00 per student per semester to \$2.00 per student per semester. The BSN's service fee currently sits at \$1.00 per student per semester, a price-point set during the Fall 2018 Referendum. The proposed increase will go towards increasing the number of students that the BSN's existing events serve, increasing the overall number of events, creating a discretionary fund for external organizations requesting assistance, and decreasing its reliance on external funding for Black Grad. It will also allow the BSN to execute the projects and initiatives outlined in the *Action-Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism* to their full and deserved capacity.

## Background and Rationale

The Black Students' Network is the largest Black student group at McGill and aims to sensitize the McGill community to issues concerning the Black community while making McGill University safe and accessible for Black students.

In 2020, as a response to the civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd, McGill administration published the university's first *Action-Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism*, which promised the "implementation of targeted



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measures aimed at supporting applicants from [the] most underrepresented groups,” and “set ambitious targets for Black students,” when referring to admission rates. Black students currently make up around 4.4% of the McGill student body according to the most recent student demographics census. The following year, McGill administration launched *Branches: Pick Your Pack for Black Youth*, a mentorship program that pairs prospective Black students with current McGill students and staff to aid in their transition from High School and CÉGEP to McGill University life. These combined recruitment efforts from the university have increased admission levels for Black students, but have placed a financial burden on the BSN and its capacity to finance events for an ever-growing Black McGill student body.

The BSN remains the primary advocate for the grievances and complaints of Black students at both the Students’ Society of McGill University level and the McGill administration level. This year, the BSN has faced a repeated lack of funding for its initiatives, especially in the preparation for Black History Month. The BSN has become the primary financial contributor to Black Grad, an annual event outlined in the *Action-Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism* which remains underfinanced even with contributions from McGill administration.

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### Alignment with Mission

The BSN is McGill’s largest representative of Black student interests at the SSMU level, and is committed to centering marginalized and historically disadvantaged voices. This is in line with SSMU’s values of leadership and representation, as BSN is committed to leading the promotion of Black presence to the rest of the McGill community at large.

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### Consultations Completed

On January 25, 2024, the BSN President, BSN Vice-President of Finance, and the BSN Vice-President of Advocacy met with the SSMU Vice-President of Finance to provide feedback on the proposal and accompanying budgets. The SSMU Vice-President of Finance was consulted on this motion and provided feedback. The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator was consulted in the motion-writing process and provided feedback to ensure the motion is in line with SSMU standards.



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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The proposed fee increase will facilitate the BSN's ability to financially sustain events that are proportional in size and scope to the growing Black student body at McGill, as well as non-Black students, with low to no risk factors or resource implications. A fee increase of \$1.00 per semester will offer all students access to more resources, activities, and opportunities to create community without burdening the student body or McGill administration.

### Sustainability Considerations

The BSN plays an integral role in working with the SSMU Equity Committee and upholds the values of the SSMU Equity Policy. The proposed fee increase would allow the BSN to continue to fund initiatives that cater to a simultaneous increase in Black students, while ensuring the sustained development of a Black student group financially able to respond to the demands of the SSMU and of the university.

### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If the 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 to be voted on. If the question is approved, the increase would go into effect as of Fall 2024, and would be made public to both Black and non-Black students. Should the fee increase pass, Members would be charged \$2.00 per semester unless a choice is made to opt-out of the fee payment.

Without this increase, events such as Soul Food, Youth Day, and Black Grad that are crucial to connecting Black students at McGill with the greater Black Montreal community, as mandated in the BSN constitution, in addition to promoting their interests and needs will be limited in size and scope. Crucial services offered by the BSN, including its library, networking events, and opportunities for Black joy and community building will be limited.

### Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Winter 2024 referendum period:

*Do you agree to increase the opt-outable Black Students' Network Fee of \$1.00 for full time members per semester to \$2.00 per semester per student*



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*for full-time students commencing in Fall 2024 until Winter 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the membership for renewal, with the understand that a majority 'NO' will result in a continuation of the fee at its current rate?*

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### Results of the Vote

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()

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## Appendix A: Referendum Question

Do you agree to increase the opt-outable Black Students' Network Fee of \$1.00 for full time members per semester to \$2.00 per semester per student for full-time students commencing in Fall 2024 until Winter 2029 (inclusive), at which point it will be brought back to the membership for renewal, with the understand that a majority 'NO' will result in a continuation of the fee at its current rate?

POSTPONED



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## Appendix B: Proposed 2024-2025 Black Students' Network Budget and 2023-2024 Budget

FALL 2024	
Category	Expected Expenses
General Assembly	\$ 300.00
Activities Night	\$ 150.00
Soul Food Friday #1	\$ 3,000.00
Black Hoco	\$ 6,000.00
Youth Day	\$ 5,000.00
Wellness Hangout #1 (Black Mental Health Education)	\$ 500.00
Charity Event	\$ 300.00
Executive Digitals	\$ 500.00
Political Event #1	\$ 1,500.00
BSN Merch	\$ 1,500.00
CV/Resume workshop	\$ 500.00
Black Alumni Event	\$ 4,500.00
First Year Events	\$ 1,000.00
First Year Frosh Weekend	\$ 4,000.00
New BSN Investment Fund	\$ 5,000.00
Team Bonding	\$ 300.00



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Miscellaneous	\$ 400.00
<b>Total Budgeted Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 34, 450.00</b>

WINTER 2025	
Category	Expected Expenses
BSN Book Catalogue Material	\$ 300.00
Activities Night	\$ 150.00
Valentines Party	\$ 3,000.00
Soul Food Friday #2	\$ 3,000.00
Soul Food Friday #3	\$ 3,000.00
BHM Wellness Day	\$ 800.00
Networking/Internship Event	\$ 3,000.00
Wellness Hangout #2 (Black Mental Health Education)	\$ 500.00
Black History Walking Tour	\$ 600.00
Black Beauty Day	\$ 3,000.00
First Year Events	\$ 1,000.00
Political Conference	\$ 1,000.00
Black Grad	\$ 20,000.00
Black Grad After-Party	\$ 4,000.00
<b>Total Budgeted Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 43,350.00</b>

BSN 2023-2024 Budget: [+](#) BSN Budget for 2023-2024