



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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MOTION REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FINANCE INTERNAL REGULATIONS TO AMEND THE INDIGENOUS EQUITY FUND ALLOCATION 2023-04-06

Submitted for: 2023-04-06

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council

Document no.: LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-04-06-007

Moved by: Kerry Yang
*Vice-President (University
Affairs)*

**Current
Status:**

- FOR APPROVAL
- APPROVED
- POSTPONED
- COMMITTED
- NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Grace Parish
Science Representative

Issue

The Indigenous Affairs Committee maintains a commitment to pursue Reconciliation and Equity for Indigenous students at McGill. This commitment is facilitated through the SSMU Indigenous Solidarity Policy, which recognizes the historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples both within the SSMU and within the broader McGill context. In addition to the implementation of targeted services, campaigns, and programming in support of Indigenous initiatives and equity within the SSMU, direct financial support to Indigenous students and student groups remains a critical priority, as this allows Indigenous students the autonomy to choose where increased support is allocated in their own lives as well as on campus. Increasing this allocation of funding in turn increases feasibility for fiscal autonomy and broadens the opportunities on campus for Indigenous students at McGill, placing the decisions in their own hands.



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Background and Rationale

Indigenous peoples' face a variety of social, economic, and pedagogy-based barriers in accessing post-secondary education. These barriers have been reinforced by implementation of neoliberal policies such as the Indian Act and the Residential School System, which utilized western-based education as a forum for destabilizing Indigenous nations, cultures, and languages.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) notes the way inadequate primary education and the negative experiences of residential schools have delayed generations of Indigenous peoples' from attending post-secondary education institutions. Further, the TRC simultaneously noted the role post-secondary institutions play in this era of Reconciliation. Specifically, the TRC notes the way an increase in accessibility of post-secondary education will lead to an increase in Indigenous peoples working in the fields of social work, law, and medicine, who can help address the legacy of residential schools.

Indigenous students require the fiscal autonomy to confront these challenges discussed by the TRC, which, in the McGill context, includes the expansion of funds allocated towards directly supporting individual students' needs as well as group initiatives.

The current Internal Regulations of the SSMU's Finances, last amended April 14 2022, concerning the Indigenous Equity Fund allocates up to ten (10) percent of the Indigenous Equity Fund as financial support for Indigenous undergraduate students (S. 17.3). In recognizing the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples at McGill, the proposed fifteen (15) percent increase to the existing ten (10) percent allocated as student financial support will enable the Indigenous Affairs Committee to better support more Indigenous students in meeting their basic needs and fostering a more welcoming and supportive environment to work towards creating the necessary conditions for them to thrive in the university community.

Alignment with Mission

An increase to the allocation of the Indigenous Equity Fund as supporting Indigenous students would enable the Indigenous Affairs Committee to directly support the needs and wishes of Indigenous students at McGill to foster the necessary conditions for their thriving. SSMU's mission is to advance the diverse needs of McGill Undergraduate students by providing outstanding services and promoting social, cultural, and personal opportunities. By increasing the allocation percentage, more Indigenous students can be directly supported and have their social, cultural, and personal needs advanced. For example, food and housing security are



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integral to flourishing in any environment, and the strengthening of bonds promoted by community-building events cultivate increased senses of kinship and support. Enabling Indigenous students the autonomy to choose where increased support is allocated allows the Indigenous Affairs Committee to support Indigenous students in specific ways, beyond the provided services and programming.

Consultations Completed

The Indigenous Affairs Equity Researcher, the Indigenous Affairs Committee, the Vice-President External, the Vice-President Finance, and the Vice-President University Affairs.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

A lower allocation of funds from which Indigenous students have the power to choose where they are supported will mean continued dissatisfaction of Indigenous Students in their sense of having their needs met, in feeling heard by the SSMU, and of overall experience at McGill, given feedback that has been received. One potential risk is that by increasing the allocation of funding towards direct support, less Indigenous students might benefit from the fund, and the benefit might be concentrated to a select few. A resource implication is that funds available through the Indigenous Equity Fund will be used more effectively in terms of the needs and desires of Indigenous students at McGill.

Sustainability Considerations

This motion improves economic sustainability because it allows the Indigenous Equity Fund to support Indigenous students directly and allocate funding according to their needs and financial priorities. It also improves social sustainability by increasing the autonomy of the Indigenous Affairs portfolio and allow funding to directly benefit Indigenous students.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

The SSMU Indigenous Affairs Commissioner and Indigenous Affairs Committee will be able to provide increased funding to applicants to the Indigenous Equity Fund. A draft of the application is currently under consideration by the Committee and will be finalized within the next 4 weeks, after which it will be released and students will be able to apply for funding.



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Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approves the amendment to change section 17.3 of the Finances Internal Regulations from Up to ten (10) percent of the Indigenous Equity Fee may be allocated as financial support for Indigenous undergraduate students to Up to twenty-five (25) percent of the Indigenous Equity Fee may be allocated as financial support for Indigenous undergraduate students

Be it further resolved that the Legislative Council approve the amendment of the purpose of the Indigenous Equity Fund to add the following sentence "Moreover, the Indigenous Equity Fund supports Indigenous communities' defense of their land and individuals who wish to travel to join these defenses to provide aid to communities beyond McGill."

Results of the Vote

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| In favour | (UNANIMOUS) |
| Opposed | () |
| Abstain | () |
