



Bureau du président du conseil de l'ÂÉUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

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MOTION REGARDING COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY FUND INCREASE REFERENDUM QUESTION

2024-10-03

Submitted for: 2024-10-03

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-10-03-002
Moved by:	Hugo-Victor Solomon <i>Vice-President 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:	Julien Bérubé <i>Law Representative</i>		

Issue

This motion would support the increase of the Community Solidarity Fund \$1.00 fee levy by \$1.00, for a total of \$2.00. This would increase SSMU's capacity to 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 is overseen by the Solidarity Funding Committee.

Background and Rationale

The Community Solidarity Fund was established in Fall 2023 to provide discretionary funding for grassroots social justice-oriented initiatives. Most of SSMU's funding opportunities require recipients to have an organisational bank account, and the Community Solidarity Fund removes this hurdle. This gives grassroots organisations more access to SSMU funding and widens the range of campaigns that SSMU could support, having a greater impact on the community.

In the Winter 2024 semester, the Community Solidarity Fund was able to distribute funds to groups organising around Indigenous land defence, migrant justice, popular education, trans rights, and tenant rights (see Appendix B). Through impact reports submitted by recipients, SSMU has



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been able to track how recipients have used the funding, and the social impact on the communities concerned. However, almost all available funding was exhausted in the Winter 2024 semester, and as the fund becomes more established and well-known, it's likely that it will receive more applications. A fee increase would allow the Solidarity Funding Committee to accept more applications and decrease the possibility of having to refuse applicants due to lack of funding.

Alignment with Mission

This fee increase would strengthen civic participation among McGill students and in the community by providing additional funding for individuals or groups looking to undertake initiatives to strengthen their community. This would in turn improve the quality of services that SSMU is able to offer, as it would create more opportunities to fund initiatives that would strengthen solidarity with community members and organisations. The work of the Community Solidarity funds currently aligns with section 13 of the SSMU positions book and helps SSMU to fulfill commitments set out in the Equity Policy, Indigenous Solidarity Policy, and Climate Justice Policy to support projects benefiting those communities or causes.

Consultations Completed

- VP Finance
- VP External
- Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
- Solidarity Funding Committee members
- Political Campaigns Coordinator
- Equity/Indigenous Affairs/Black Affairs Commissioners
- Community Affairs Commissioner

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 endeavours 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. To address this risk, applicants are required to submit impact reports (see Appendix C) detailing how they used the money (unless the Solidarity Funding Committee makes an exception). Reapplication to the fund is contingent on receiving the impact report.



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This increased fee could lead to increased financial burden on students; however, given that this fee is opt-outable, students are not obliged to pay it.

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 is approved by the Legislative Council, the question of increasing this fee levy 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 Winter 2025 semester.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the SSMU Legislative Council approves the following question for the Fall 2024 / OR Winter 2025 Referendum period:

Do you agree to the \$1.00 increase of the opt-outable SSMU Community Solidarity Fee from \$1.00 per semester to \$2.00 per semester. The fee will apply to all full and part-time members starting in Winter 2025 and ending in Winter 2030 (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.

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.

Be it resolved that, the Legislative Council approves, and recommends the ratification to the Board of Directors.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()



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Appendix A : Solidarity Funding Committee

Do you agree to the \$1.00 increase of the opt-outable SSMU Community Solidarity Fee from \$1.00 per semester to \$2.00 per semester. The fee will apply to all full and part-time members starting in Winter 2025 and ending in Winter 2030 (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.

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Appendix B : Winter 2024 Budget

Applicant	Description	Amount Requested	Amount Approved
Nous ne serons pas sages	Organizing against transphobia in the Quebec government	\$3000	\$3000
Association des Gardiens du Territoire Nehirowisiw Aski	Resistance to logging efforts on traditional territory (Nitaskinan)	\$5000	\$5000
Decolonial Solidarity	Campaign supporting the Kahnistensera (Mohawk Mothers)	\$1000	\$1000
Montreal Autonomous Tenants Union (SLAM-MATU)	Tenant rights organizing	\$5000	\$5000
QPIRG-McGill	Spring into Action workshop series	\$127	\$127
Solidarity Across Borders (SSF/SAB)	Migrant justice organizing	\$5000	\$4500
South Asian Diaspora Action Collective (SADAC)	Film screenings for Dalit History Month	\$500	\$500
South Asian Diaspora Action Collective (SADAC)	Panellist event on Hinduvta Facism in the Indian Diaspora	\$500	\$192.84

Total fee per semester (Winter 2024): \$1.00, opt-outable

Total funding available (Winter 2024): \$19,319.85

End of semester surplus (Winter 2024): \$0.01



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Appendix C : Fall 2024 Budget (Hypothesized)

This budget is based on the assumption that approximately \$38,600 will be available to donate per semester given the number of students who opted into the fee for the Winter 2024 semester.

There will be two meetings per semester during which one half of the total amount of funding received for that semester through the Community Solidarity Fee will be disbursed according to the SFC Terms of Reference.

SFC Meeting Date	Amount to Disburse
October 2024	\$19,300
December 2024	\$19,300

Total fee per semester (Winter 2025): \$2.00, opt-outable

Total funding available (Winter 2025): \$38,600



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Appendix D : Solidarity Funding Committee Terms of Reference:

Solidarity Funding Committee

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



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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

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.

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Community Solidarity Fund

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.

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