



MOTION REGARDING THE REFERENDUM QUESTION FOR A SSMU MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE FOR OPERATIONS 2024-10-15

Submitted for: 2024-10-24

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2024-10-24-002
Moved by:	Dymetri Taylor <i>President</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:	Seraphina Crema Black Legislative Councillor		

Issue

The SSMU Membership Fee has not seen an increase since 2019 aside from automatic CPI adjustments, but the SSMU has since significantly expanded operations. Given the scale of its operations, the SSMU must increase its Membership Fee in order to continue to provide for its members, the students, and its staff. This motion proposes a Membership Fee increase that will allow the SSMU to address its current financial needs and expand its support of the student body and the livelihoods of the SSMU staff during a time of unprecedented inflation and rise in the cost of living.

Background and Rationale

As per the SSMU's Constitution, the SSMU seeks "to provide excellence and quality of service at all times, and shall continue to enhance the quality and scope of these services." The Membership Fee is used for a variety of elements of the SSMU's operations including building management, staffing, and other crucial amenities. By increasing the Membership Fee, students will have more opportunities to take advantage of the SSMU's assets and be provided assets of greater quality.

Furthermore, the SSMU operated at a deficit of \$400,000 - \$1.3 Million between 2019 and 2024, which it attempted to offset during the Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 referendum. Both of those campaigns failed, which



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resulted in the SSMU having to reduce operations and conduct layoffs, and the SSMU has done so for several years. The SSMU has had to significantly reduce operations, resulting in the lay-off of several employees, and is therefore no longer able to provide the student body and its associated clubs with its previous levels of support. With these significant changes, the SSMU is projected to eliminate its current deficit. This base fee is proposed to allow for the SSMU to provide quality student life that it has been unable to do.

The SSMUnion, the union of the SSMU employees, has required that salary brackets be increased to meet the median pay grade in line with the cost of living. The SSMU currently employs over 100 part-time/student staff and approximately 30 full-time staff who are crucial to all of SSMU's operations and services; however, salaries have been stuck at the 2021 rates and have not been increased.

Per the same agreement, the money generated from this Membership Fee increase will go towards unionised staff salaries. The estimated revenue (\$349,323.09) will cover the increase in staff salaries to bring them to 2024-2025 rates.

Alignment with Mission

The SSMU's highest priority is to maintain a high quality of service for its members which requires adequately paid labor and sufficient funding. The SSMU is committed to paying workers, including its student workers, a fair wage for their work and holds strong pro-worker positions.

Consultations Completed

Consultations have been completed with all of the SSMU Executives, including the VP Finance, as well as the General Manager. The fee increase calculations were further done by the VP Finance.

The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator was consulted to ensure the motion and referendum questions were in line with SSMU standards in documentation.

Extensive consultations with the SSMUnion have been conducted, and the SSMUnion is in support of the Motion, as it will increase all staff salaries.



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Risk Factors and Resource Implications

An increased Membership Fee may pose an economic risk to the student body as they will be responsible for paying more towards the SSMU's operations.

The SSMU, if this motion fails, will be unable to equitably pay its full-time staff, and will continue to maintain its smaller operational scale. This reduction has affected operations, services, and programs that the SSMU offers to its members, such as Gert's Bar, support for clubs & services, political representation, advocacy, and support, as well as all events and activities that foster student life on and off campus.

Sustainability Considerations

This motion is in line with the SSMU's responsibility in long-term planning of finances to ensure year-to-year financial stability as mandated within the Sustainability Policy. As the Membership Fee increase serves to better compensate its staff, it also supports aspects of the SSMU's social sustainability efforts. However, the SSMU recognizes the additional financial burden on the student body and will minimize this burden through exceptional services and support.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Should this motion be approved, the referendum question in this motion will be forwarded to Elections SSMU for review and approval.

Per the IRs of Elections, the SSMU Executive Committee, in collaboration with the SSMU Executives, will assume the responsibility of campaigning for a "Yes" vote on this referendum question.

The Campaign Period for the SSMU Membership Fee increase will be permitted to start on October 25th, 3 days before the proper Campaigning period.

SSMU Staff shall be permitted to assist in the campaigning for a "Yes" vote on the proposed referendum question.

The SSMU Operational Budget shall be permitted to be utilised for campaigning for a "Yes" vote on this referendum question.

Should the Membership Fee increase be approved by referendum, the SSMU will be able to maintain and expand its operations, better providing services to its membership, while continuing to provide its employees fair



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compensation for their work. The funds from this increase will be entirely dedicated to the salaries of employees, allowing these to match market value and providing a salary floor. This would liberate a significant part of the overall operational budget to address current financial needs at the SSMU and allow for the growth of new initiatives and programs.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the following question for the Fall 2024 Referendum Period:

Do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable SSMU Membership Fee, payable by all undergraduate students who are members of the SSMU, as outlined in the table below, per student per semester starting in Winter 2025 to cover salary increases of the staff of the SSMU (excluding Executives) and to facilitate the operations of the SSMU as a whole, with the understanding that a majority “no” vote would result in no increase to the SSMU’s Operational Budget?

Outcomes of Proposed Fee Increase		
Full-Time Students	Faculty Group A*	Faculty Group B**
Current	\$70.95	\$52.12
Increase for Salaries and Operations	\$14.86	\$10.92
New Proposed Fall 2024 Membership Fee	\$85.81	\$63.04
Part-Time Students	Faculty Group A*	Faculty Group B**
Current	\$34.44	\$25.00
Increase for Salaries and Operations	\$7.22	\$5.24
New Proposed Fall 2024 Membership Fee (part-time)	\$41.66	\$30.24



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*Faculty Group A: Arts, Architecture (B.Sc. Arch), Education, Engineering, Music, Management, Nursing, Physical & Occupational Therapy, Science, and Arts & Science.

**Faculty Group B: Law, Dentistry, Medicine.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve, and recommend to the Board of Directors for approval, the report in Appendices A and B.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Legislative Council approves the interim provisions to the Internal Regulations of Elections & Referenda as described in Appendix D

Results of the Vote

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()



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Appendix A: Outcomes of Proposed Fee Increase

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Appendix B: Proposed Fee Increase Calculations

🇬🇧 Fall 2024 Base Fee Calculations

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Appendix C: Where's My Money Going

2024-09 Fee Levy Campaign (Nov 2024)

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Appendix D: Interim Provision to the IR of Elections and Referenda

IR-02: General

6.4 For Referendums only, a specific nomination period of at least seven (7) days for “No” campaigns shall be implemented following the initial question nomination period.

IR-05: Campaign

1.8 Exception - SSMU Base Fee Campaign

In the event of a question on an increase to the SSMU base fee, SSMU Executives and associated Staff may serve as the relevant resources to aid the campaign. Campaign materials for distribution to Members shall go through the same process for expense approvals. This exception shall include specific amendments to the following areas:

- 1.3 Campaigning

In the event of a SSMU Base Fee campaign, campaigning may be carried out by members and associated SSMU staff.

- 1.9 Campaigning Areas

- In the case where Elections SSMU polling stations are located on SSMU-owned property, campaigning must not interfere with freedom of vote and can be moderated by the CEO.

- 2.2 Association Executives

- In the event of a SSMU base fee campaign, SSMU executives may use the same resources and knowledge as in their regular positions as executives. The Chief Electoral Officer reserves the right to monitor and moderate the use of these resources.

- 7.1 Maximum Campaign Spending

- In the event of a SSMU base fee increase campaign led by Executives, the spending limit of \$300 shall not apply. During the nomination period, the SSMU Executives shall propose a campaign budget to the Chief Electoral Officer. The CEO reserves the right to impose a different expense limit for this type of campaign.

- Should there be any confusion on the exceptions for executives during a base fee increase campaign, the executives may refer to the Chief Electoral Officer for further guidance. Changes to these aforementioned exceptions may be enacted at the Chief Electoral Officer's discretion.



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2.3 Abuse of Positions

Anyone holding a position in any Club, Service, or Independent Student Group, must refrain from using that position in order to aid a Campaign other than a Campaign for an existence or fee referendum related to that group.

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