



# MOTION REGARDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON THE INCREASE OF THE WUSC STUDENT REFUGEE PROGRAM 2026-02-12

Submitted for: 2026-02-12

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-ID26-02-12-010 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Student Groups Committee	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

**Issue** WUSC McGill wishes to increase its undergraduate student levy with SSMU to continue funding the Student Refugee Program (SRP). The SRP currently sponsors 9 refugee students every year, having sponsored over 91 students since its inception in 1984.

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**Background and Rationale** World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit organization that partners with universities across the country in order to achieve its goals of increasing youth education, empowerment, and economic opportunities. The WUSC McGill local committee focuses primarily on the WUSC Student Refugee Program (SRP). Through this program, students from various refugee situations come to Canada each year to become residents and pursue academic studies. WUSC McGill provides the sponsorships to allow refugee students to pursue their education at McGill after being displaced from their homes abroad, and the students of the McGill local committee are in charge of meeting these students at the airport, helping them settle in, and ensuring that their first year at McGill and the years that follow go as smoothly as possible. To cover the costs of our student refugee sponsorships and resettlement, WUSC

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McGill relies on a student levy, currently set at \$4.00 per student, payable by all McGill downtown campus students each year. The levy is non-opt-outable in order to ensure stable and predictable funding, which is essential for long-term coordination with WUSC and its partners and for maintaining a consistent number of sponsored students. Making the levy opt-outable would introduce financial uncertainty and risk reducing the program's capacity and impact, which has supported 91 students at McGill since its inception. This levy allows us to sponsor approximately 6 students annually, although our current sponsorship rate is 9 students per year. Currently, there are 33 active students at McGill who would not be here if not for the SRP. The current levy ends in the Winter semester of 2026. To maintain the SRP, we are seeking an increase in the current fee.

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**Alignment with Mission**

Aligned with SSMU's goal of accessibility of education, WUSC McGill promotes access for refugee students facing barriers to higher education. It advances sustainability with partners and fosters "social, cultural, and personal opportunities" through initiatives such as the McGill Journal on Refugee and Migration Studies (MJRMS) and other events and initiatives.

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**Consultations Completed**

Before bringing this motion to the floor, it is expected that you consult with the relevant Commissioner(s)/Committee(s)/Officer(s). Explain these consultations here. Each individual/group consulted must include the rationale and information provided during the consultation. I.e., what did the individuals/groups being consulted conclude about the motion? Were they in favour or against it?

Consultations must adhere to the [Consultation Policy](#).

Motions pertaining to finances must be discussed with the Vice-President (Finance) in advance. All motions must be approved by the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator ([pac@ssmu.ca](mailto:pac@ssmu.ca)) for formatting and structure.

- ~~I have read and completed the requirements outlined in the Consultation Policy:~~

*(A minimum of two consultations, with at least one Executive Officer and the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator)*



The motion was drafted in collaboration with WUSC McGill, the VP of Student Life, VP Finance, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, and the President.

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## Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The Student Refugee Program (SRP) is primarily funded through student levies, which collectively support the McGill Students' Pilkington Scholarship Fund. This fund is administered under a tripartite agreement between the McGill Local Committee of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), and McGill University.

The current levy was originally adopted in 2021 for the purpose of sponsoring up to six students per year. In recent years, WUSC McGill has undertaken internal restructuring and expansion of its executive and support teams, increasing its operational capacity and ability to sponsor additional students. With this purpose, we have been pushing the limits of the Pilkington Scholarship Fund to assess the sustainability of sponsoring a higher number of students under this expanded organizational structure.

Since we are legally bound to provide a minimum financial assistance to sponsor each student, failure to increase the levy agreement with SSMU would require a reduction in the number of sponsored students to a maximum of six or seven, directly undermining plans to expand the SRP and increase its impact.

Such an outcome would disrupt the SRP's commitment to providing access to post-secondary education for refugee students and would substantially diminish the program's positive impact on the refugee student population at McGill University. Given the increasing scale of global displacement and refugee crises, maintaining and expanding McGill's role in supporting access to education and refugee resettlement remains a critical priority.

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## Impact of Decision and Next Steps

Upon approval for the Winter 2026 referendum, WUSC McGill will pursue social media campaigning to encourage McGill students to vote "Yes" for the student levy fee increase to support the WUSC student refugee program. Additionally, we will pursue in-person campaigning, address

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large classes, and seek features in major events and galas to maximize our outreach efforts. If the motion is approved, WUSC McGill will apply the increased fee to sponsor a total of 10 students every year to come to McGill as part of the WUSC student refugee program.

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**Motion or  
Resolution for  
Approval**

Be it resolved that the SSMU Legislative Council approves the following question for the Winter 2025 referendum period:

*Contingent on its renewal, do you agree to the increase of the non-opt-outable WUSC McGill Student Refugee Program fee by \$2.00 (from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per semester), payable by all students starting Fall 2026 until Winter 2031 (inclusive), for the purpose of sponsoring 10 refugee students a year (up from 6 annually under the current fee) to come study at McGill, with an understanding that a majority 'No' vote on the fee increase will result in WUSC only being able to sponsor 6 students each year?*

Be it further resolved that the SSMU 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

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**Results of the  
Vote**

- In favour (26)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (0)



## Appendix A: Memorandum Of Agreement

Please find attached [here](#) the Memorandum of Agreement between McGill Local Committee of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), and McGill University.

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## Appendix B: 2026-2027 Budget Predictions For A Single Sponsored Student

This prediction was prepared by the Scholarships and Student Aid Office, and it outlines the breakdown of funding allocated toward each student's cost of attendance for the upcoming year 2026-2027.

2026-2027 WUSC Budget Prediction for 1 student			
3647 university			
	WUSC	Offered by SSAO	Notes
Grocery card		\$ 50	No change from 2025-2026.
Living expenses until first week of school (prorated)	\$ 100		If the student arrives before September, an extra \$100 per week.
Setup fees	\$ 800		No change from 2025-2026.
Startup fees to LC	\$ 200		Information is not shared directly with the student.
Meal Plan	\$ 3,600		Saver meal plan, \$1800 per term.
One Card	\$ 500		Can be used if the meal plan runs out. It rolls over to next year.
Grocery	\$ 2,800		No change from 2025-2026. \$350 per month for 8 months (and access to Saver meal plan).
Residence/rent	\$ 7,159		*Rates for 2025-2026 as 2026-2027 rates are not yet available*. \$850/mo for Single Room, approx. 8.4 months. "Charged 8 full months + 2 prorated months (Aug 23-31) and (May1-3)." This amount includes a one-time Res Life activity fee of \$30.
Tuition & Fees	\$ 5,736.87		Based fee rate for 2025-2026 *incl expected increase of 3%* on 15 credits/term - Arts
IHI (Fall only)	\$ 385		New as of 2025-2026 - no change for 2026-2027
Monthly allowances	\$ 4,800		No change from 2025-2026. \$400 per month for 12 months.
Living off of res during summer	\$ 2,000		No change from 2025-2026. \$500 May to Aug
Books	\$ 1,000		No change from 2025-2026. \$500/term

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Technology allowance; such as phone, tablet & laptop	\$ 2,500		<p><b>Laptop:</b> Increase from \$1350 to \$1500 for 2025-2026 (no change for 2026-2027)</p> <p><b>Tablet:</b> \$1000 (New expense as of 2025-2026 as requested by WUSC LC) (no change for 2026-2027)</p> <p><b>Phone:</b> \$500 (no change for 2026-2027). Merging all electronics into one category for 2025-2026</p>
Winter clothing	\$ 450		
Summer installation	\$ 600		No change from 2025-2026 \$300 is given in the fall upon arrival if the student has to cook in residence, and \$300 in the summer.
Travel bursary	\$ 2,500		Increased from \$1500 to \$2500 as of 2025-2026 due to invoices received . Cover 100% of scholars' travel loans. An estimated \$1,500 per student average could be more or less variable.
Conferences	\$ 250		No change from 2025-2026. For in-person WUSC International Forum fees and accommodations.
Medical Expenses (Vision and Dental)	\$ 1,000		Reducing from \$2K to \$1K to divert to electronics. Need for med expenses should be lower due to IHI in 1st term. With supporting documents, coverage of Vision and Dental expenses up to \$1k (for fees not covered by student insurance) by the Pilkington fund. (no change for 2026-2027)
Emergencies			If necessary, covered by SSAO by loan or bursaries.
Sponsoring fee	\$ 5,000		
	\$ 41,381	\$ 50	
<b>Total for 1 student:</b>	<b>\$ 41,431</b>		

## Appendix C: 2025 September Pilkington Fund Projections (with the possible increase)

This prediction was prepared by the Scholarships and Student Aid Office, and it outlines the Pilkington Fund projections over the next five years, taking into account the possible increase we will attempt during the Winter 2026 referendum. Please find the projections attached [here](#).

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