

Motion to run a plebiscite referendum on the McGill Yearbook 2026-09-10

Submitted for: 2026-09-10

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-IDYY-MM-DD-SIN (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Hamza Abu-Alkhair <i>President</i>	Current Status:	☐ FOR APPROVAL ☐ APPROVED ☐ POSTPONED ☐ COMMITTED ☐ NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Seraphina Crema-Black <i>Music Councillor</i>		

Issue

Old McGill, the University's official undergraduate yearbook, published for over a century, was discontinued in 2016. This motion seeks to place a non-binding plebiscite question on the ballot to measure student support for its reinstatement and appetite for a modest funding mechanism.

Background and Rationale

Old McGill was a continuous fixture of undergraduate life from 1898 until its discontinuation in 2016. Its cessation left McGill among the minority of large Canadian universities without a formal commemorative record of a student's time on campus. Peer institutions, including [e.g., Queen's and Bishops], have retained or revived comparable publications, typically underwritten by a small, dedicated student fee and a print-on-demand or pre-order model.

Over the summer, the President's office has developed a full reinstatement proposal: obtaining preliminary quotes from established yearbook publishers (Friesens), modelling several funding scenarios, and scoping a

Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM
SSMU Office of the Speaker

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.
Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.*

speaker@ssmu.ca | ssmu.ca | 3501 rue Peel, Montréal, QC, H3A 1W7



hybrid print/digital distribution model designed to minimise financial exposure to the Society.

The remaining unknown is the one that matters most: **does the membership actually want this, and would they pay for it?** Committing SSMU staff time, capital, or a binding fee referendum before answering that question would be premature and fiscally imprudent. A plebiscite is the appropriate, low-cost instrument for directly gathering a democratic mandate from students. Because a plebiscite is non-binding, it commits the Society to nothing beyond acting on credible data, strictly a strong result would provide the legitimacy needed to move forward with the project.

Alignment with Mission

The initiative advances Service, delivering a tangible commemorative keepsake to members, Representation, democratically testing a proposal before committing resources, and Leadership, stewarding a long-standing institutional tradition and student heritage).

Consultations Completed

- Consultations Completed:
- Governance Affairs Coordinator
 - Executive Committee
 - General Manager
 - Communications Team

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Financially, the motion incurs no cost. Since it is non-binding, it doesn't hold SSMU to be able to create a fee or add staff, contracts, capital expenditure etc.

From a human resources perspective, after speaking with the communications team, its reinstatement will follow a similar model to that of the handbook.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If approved, it shall be added to the Elections SSMU Ballot running from Sept. 16th to 30th. The office of the President as well as Elections shall report the results to the Legislative Council following the close of voting. Should results show clear support, the proposal outlined in Appendix A will be discussed at council along with the feedback written by the membership. This would be a time to propose funding scenarios and feedback on how to put this project to action.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the plebiscite question outlined in Appendix B, be approved to be put to a special referendum from Sept. 16th to Sept. 30th, which will be administered by Elections SSMU. (time for translation)

Be it further resolved, the ballot will consist of the following format:

Picture 1.

Picture 2.

Link: <https://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/>

WHEREAS, Old McGill, the University's official undergraduate yearbook, was published continuously from 1898 until its discontinuation in 2016, leaving McGill among the minority of large Canadian universities without a formal commemorative record of a student's time on campus;

WHEREAS, peer institutions, including Queen's University and Bishop's University, have retained or revived comparable yearbook publications, typically underwritten by a small, dedicated student fee paired with a print-on-demand or pre-order distribution model;

WHEREAS, over the Summer the Office of the President developed a preliminary reinstatement proposal, including quotes obtained from an established yearbook publisher (Friesens), multiple funding scenarios, and a hybrid print/digital distribution model designed to minimize the Society's financial exposure, as outlined in Appendix A;

WHEREAS, the outstanding question is whether the membership supports reinstatement and would be willing to fund it, and committing SSMU staff time, capital, or a binding fee referendum ahead of that determination would be premature;

Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM
SSMU Office of the Speaker

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.
Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

speaker@ssmu.ca | ssmu.ca | 3501 rue Peel, Montréal, QC, H3A 1W7



WHEREAS, a non-binding plebiscite is the appropriate, low-cost instrument to gather a direct democratic mandate from Members without committing the Society to a fee, staffing increase, or capital expenditure;

“Do you support the reinstatement of the *Old McGill* Yearbook?”

☐ Yes

☐ No

“Up to how much would you be willing to pay for the Yearbook?”

☐ [Text box]

“Leave any additional comments, questions, or concerns about the *Old McGill* yearbook reinstatement below.”

☐ [Text box]

Results of the
Vote

☐ In favour ()

☐ Opposed ()

☐ Abstain ()

Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM
SSMU Office of the Speaker

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.
Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

speaker@ssmu.ca | ssmu.ca | 3501 rue Peel, Montréal, QC, H3A 1W7



Appendix A : Proposal

 Reinstating the McGill Yearbook

APPROVED