

Student Representative Assembly Meeting 23N
Sunday, February 4, 2024 at 5:00pm (EST)
Council Chambers, GH 111

Delegation from the Floor

Set Parameters

Moved by El-Kadi, **seconded** by Otchere that the Assembly set parameters to be five minutes for the presentation and ten minutes for questions.

Passes Unanimously

1. Food Accessibility Initiative – Popovic presented

- Popovic noted that if re-elected, they promised students to address food insecurity and unaffordability. They added that students have unfortunately expressed that they are skipping meals to combat cost of living. Popovic presented his idea, known as the Food Accessibility Initiative, in which the MSU Organizational Fee would be increased by a modest \$5.00 (including CPI increases). They said their plan is to use this increase in fees to serve free soup and bread for two hours each day, four days a week, every week, for the entire school year. Popovic advised the Assembly that the proposal and associated costs have been reviewed with Wesley Chaplin, TwelvEighty Kitchen Manager, who expressed utmost confidence that this could be executed. Popovic added that with these costs, over 700 servings per day could be provided, totaling approximately 75,000-90,000 portions served. They noted that the program may require the addition of a part-time staff member to assist with the delivery. Popovic explained that this initiative was inspired by and largely modelled around an already successful program being run out of Dalhousie University.

Questions

- Abbott said that this initiative has the potential to be a great idea. They asked if consultations with students were done to gauge interest and where the number of 750 per day came from and if it is attainable.
- Popovic answered that two things were done. They said the first was assessing overall interest from the Presidential campaign period. They noted that students seemed extremely eager, and said no negative discussions were had. Popovic said the second thing was looking at how successful a similar program is at Dalhousie University. They said Dalhousie has wait times of up to 45 minutes, not because they take too long, but because there are so many people interested. Popovic felt that more students could be served daily, but wanted to ensure it was affordable and felt the \$5.00 cap is where students felt it was appropriate.
- Samuels asked Popovic to discuss the considerations made to ensure the food options are inclusive.
- Popovic answered that the goal is to serve two different soup options each day to accommodate all dietary needs. They added that the cost example provided was based on chicken noodle soup and lentil soup, as the ingredients appeal to all diets. Popovic added that Wes Chaplin, TwelvEighty Kitchen Manager, has significant experience in a vegan restaurant.
- Mahmoud asked if TwelvEighty could handle the volume of 750 servings per day during the lunch hour, while also still operating and serving their regular menu. They asked if there are other location options to if there is high engagement.
- Popovic clarified that it would be a 'grab-and-go' service with pre-packaged soups. They added the soups would be distributed from the window that is to the left of the TwelvEighty doors as this space is currently not being used. Popovic added that students would line up to receive the soup and there would be no service inside of the restaurant.
- Forbes asked if the \$5.00 goes directly to the soup or does it pay for hiring staff to assist.

- Popovic answered their intent is to spend the additional \$5.00 on batch ingredients. They added that there is a chance an additional staff member may need to be hired and if so, it would be a part-time student staff who would work for three hours per day, four days a week to assist with packaging and distribution.
- Forbes asked if the additional hire would be a volunteer position.
- Popovic answered that the idea is for it to be a part-time paid role, which could be taken from our existing operating budget.
- Abbott asked if it would be first come, first served or if there is potentially for a reservation-based system.
- Popovic answered that the plan is for it to be first come, first served but noted the system could be evaluated after seeing how it pans out.
- Yang brought up the idea of hiring a part-time staff member and asked if the MSU Food Collective Centre could potentially provide volunteers to assist.
- Popovic answered it is not a set-in stone system and was open to all ideas that would make the initiative run more efficiently.
- George asked how this initiative would benefit students who do not eat this type of food or those who would not be able to access it.
- Popovic answered that if the program is successful, more money can be allocated towards it. They added that they are trying to compromise between a reasonable fee and reasonable quantity/amount of portions distributed. Popovic said the goal is to serve for two hours per day as this logistically made the most sense. They added that 750 servings is not a cemented number and can be re-assessed in the future. They also said that if there is a clear demand, the overall program and allocation of funds can also be re-assessed.
- El-Kadi reiterated that \$5.00 per year is a reasonable first step and the program can be evaluated in the future.

Business

1. Food Accessibility Initiative

Moved by Popovic, **seconded** by Okosagah, that the Assembly call a referendum, coinciding with the 2024 SRA General Election, for the Food Accessibility Initiative, to increase the MSU organizational fee by \$5 per student, as outlined in the memo circulated.

- Popovic was eager to see the vote and thought that sending this to referendum was the best move. They added that they promised students that if re-elected, they would provide this option. They encouraged Assembly members to come forward now with any questions.
- Okosagah stated that it was a good initiative.
- Yang asked if an opt-out options is feasible after the referendum is passed. Yang ceded their time to Popovic.
- Popovic said there is no opt-out option currently available, and is a reason for the fee being so low. They reiterated it would be available four days a week, every week, for the entire school year. Popovic added that it would be a quick way for students to earn their money back if they take advantage of it.

Vote on Motion

Passes Unanimously