



Branches Program

Final Report 2021/22

Prepared by the Branches team in Enrolment Services





The Branches Team would like to acknowledge that McGill University is on land which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations.

We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

In these exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many have found themselves in areas outside of Montreal, and we invite you to discover and acknowledge the lands where you are situated.

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Pick Your Path

A learning and mentorship experience for under-represented youth

Overall PYP concept

PYP is an online learning experience providing secondary school students with paid professional and educational development. PYP students are paired with a McGill student mentor and attend online workshops and seminars led by professionals and professors. These workshops are meant to equip students with the tools needed to make informed and empowered decisions about their education and get an in-depth, personalised, and unique view into university education with the ultimate goal of increasing McGill student enrolment through direct engagement and development opportunities.

PYP 2022: the program branches-out to different target groups

Unlike previous years, and with the expansion of Branches' mission to outreach to a wider audience of under-represented youth from different communities and backgrounds, the Branches team worked this year to deliver the PYP program in several versions of the program, tailoring each version to a target audience such as Indigenous, Black and First Generation Low Income youth. The result was the engagement of an overall higher number of students in the program, a diversification of participants coming from different backgrounds, as well as the establishment of new partnerships and an increase in Branches' and McGill's networking activities with various under-represented communities.

Pick Your Path – Black youth

A learning and mentorship experience for Black youth

Overview and participation

The Pick Your Path for Black Youth (PYP) program was created responding to McGill University's Action Plan on Anti-Black Racism, which states that:

- *McGill University can and should do more to connect actively with the Montreal Black community, so that our campus can better reflect our city's strong demographic diversity.*
- *Our university must develop concrete strategies to enhance Black student access to McGill, notably by working with local high schools and Cégeps that have strong Black representation.*

Hence, PYP Black is a paid mentorship experience for high school students aged 14 to 17 years old. The program is designed to expose Black youth to various areas of study and equip them with the tools needed to make informed and empowered decisions about their educational path whenever that time comes.

The program pairs Black high school students with a Black McGill student or alumni mentor. Throughout the program, participants learn about various areas of study through workshops conducted by students, professors and/or professionals of the Montreal and McGill Black community. Additionally, the students will work with their mentor on a project of their choice that aims to answer the guiding question, "What are my next steps in my path of education?".

For its first cohort, the program ran from October 2021 till April 1st, 2022, and engaged Black students from grades 9, 10 and 11. We initially received 14 student applications (more than what we expected for the first run), with more students showing interest after the application deadline closed, as well as a considerable amount of mentor applications (a total of 48). A total of 12 students enrolled, and 14 mentors were selected for the program.

Partnerships

We collaborated with external partners such as Sabi Hinkson; Science teacher at Loyola high school and community leader, as well as the Quebec Board of Black Educators, and we recruited students from Loyola High School, Royal West Academy, Lasalle Community Comprehensive High School, Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, Howard S. Billings High School, MIND High School and John Rennie Highschool.

We collaborated with internal (McGill) partners such as the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Dental Medicine, Desautels Faculty of Management, the Financial Aid Office, the Faculty of Law, McGill's Black Students Network, McGill's Black Youth Outreach (student club) and the Faculty of Science, to set up faculty-specific workshops and other group activities.

Mentors, mentees and parents

Mentees had the opportunity to connect one-on-one with their mentors throughout the program to share knowledge, experiences, and concerns and to have their questions answered. They also worked on the projects which they presented on the final wrap-up session. Mentees reflected on their experiences, sharing the following feedback:

"I was able to get a better understand of what I wanted to pursue with the help of my awesome mentor"

"The sense of comfort. Being able to freely express my thoughts and concerns all while gaining the utmost knowledge."

Whereas parents who engaged in a reflection session on the dreams & interests for their child really enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on this subject, as well as the opportunity to connect with other parents. They also expressed a desire to connect more in-person and to get more involved in the program.

Mentors, on the other hand, enjoyed their exchange with mentees, recognizing the value of their role in empowering young students, and reflecting on their personal takeaways from this experience:

"I mostly enjoyed the opportunity to build connections with my mentee as well as some of the other mentors in the program. As much as my role as a mentor was meant to support my mentee in planning their academic and career journeys, in a lot of ways it allowed for a lot of introspection and examining of my own path and plans for the future."

Additional feedback from all parties involved was collected and is currently documented in order to make improvements on the next cycle.

Impact

During the consultation phase of building the program, community partners identified that black youth in Montreal don't see themselves or feel that they would not belong at McGill as it is perceived as a prestigious and elite institution that is out of their reach. Survey shows that after participating in PYP, participants have a better attitude towards McGill and see it as a good fit for them.

PYP also gave parents the opportunity to meet other parents that are facing similar issues as them. It provided a safe space for them to have conversation around racism and discrimination that impacts their child's educational experience. The program also helped increase parents' confidence in supporting their child through their education and increase their knowledge of post-secondary education.

According to the mentor survey, mentors are confident that their mentee is more interested in higher education and equipped to go through the transition, after completing the program. Also, alumni mentors appreciated the opportunity to get involved with McGill and give back to their community. The program was a great way for many mentors to build community with other students.

Finally, the program helped change how McGill is perceived amongst these Black students. It made McGill more approachable to them and introduced to them a more positive image of the institution. Moreover, through the program, Branches benefitted from connecting with members of the Black community at McGill - such as staff, alumni and professors from different departments - whereas McGill benefitted from building relationships with local Black groups and community centers.

Pick Your Path –Low Income youth

A learning and mentorship experience for Low Socio-Economic Status (including First Generation Low Income) youth

Overview and participation

The overall model of the program is to provide mentees with the knowledge and morale needed to create a map of their educational and career goals. Workshops were related to educational and career planning and meant to prepare students for completing their assignments with their mentors. Mentors helped students with their assignments as well as provided them with general knowledge of McGill and support throughout their academic year.

We ran the program with the participation of 5 students from Monarch Park school (Toronto, February 16, 2022 – April 20, 2022) and 8 students from the Joliette school (Quebec, March 16, 2022 – May 10, 2022) and a total number of 12 mentors.

The program was designed around a series of 6 workshops, which received high attendance overall, and which addressed themes such as strategic study skills, student strengths and interests, transitioning to university and then to career life, how to write a cover letter and CV, and reflections on getting university-ready and finding support.

Mentors, mentees and parents

Students assignments were built around identifying their strengths and interests and using them as a roadmap to guide their educational and career research. Students left the program with positive accounts that they felt they knew more than before: (i) if they would like to attend university; (ii) what they would like to study in university; (iii) the extracurriculars they would like to participate in at university; and (iv) the types of careers they would like to pursue.

Feedback from the mentees affirms that this project is a great opportunity for students who are unsure about what to study at university to learn what they want to do in the future and learn about the different opportunities that are available to them at university, as well as understand how undergraduate and graduate programs work, connect with people they wouldn't have been able to connect with otherwise, and bond with a mentor, find common interest with a university student model, and feel supported on their quest to higher education, among other benefits.

Parents valued the reward being made out in their child's name – as participants received a monetary compensation, and mentors expressed the importance of deepening the relationship with mentees to better serve them in the cycles ahead – as the dynamics between mentors and mentees are key in this type of learning environment.

Finally, reflections from the organizers imply that:

“Given that they are not yet technically ready to apply, I believe creating these ‘emotional connections’ with McGill is more fruitful than a more traditional information/recruitment session.”

Examples of student profiles and the impact of the program on them

Zunaira Yaqoob – Monarch

Zunaira’s family immigrated to Canada just a few years ago from Pakistan. Her mentor was also a teenage immigrant to Canada which was really important for them to bond over. Zunaira appreciated that her mentor was also an immigrant to Canada. Despite her many extracurriculars, and working for 15 hours a week, Zunaira was a very dedicated and committed student in the program.

Zunaira benefitted from getting additional help from the PYP program in building her CV and finalizing her application in order to apply for a summer internship. She made it through both rounds of interviews but has not yet heard back about whether she was accepted or not. Nevertheless, helping her achieve a real, short-term goal motivated her to complete the program.

Marzia Rahman – Monarch

Marzia is a very creative and curious student who struggled when transitioning into secondary school. She has a lot of interests related to leadership and justice. She was more active in younger years of life in student politics and extracurriculars but struggled to maintain motivation and interest as she entered secondary school.

Marzia was able to work on her confidence and goal-setting a lot throughout the duration of the program. She was not very confident in her skills or cognizant of the value she would get from different activities she had been involved in. Marzia was able to work with her mentor to identify her strengths and build goals she was comfortable working towards achieving. She writes:

“PYP has also encouraged me to seek more leadership opportunities, which I always wanted to but never seriously pursued.”

While before the program Marzia was overwhelmed by the amount of different options of educational and career paths she could pursue, after the program she began to rather appreciate them.

Marzia really benefited from having a mentor who understood her. Both her and mentor are queer which allowed them to connect well. Seeing how active and confident her mentor was also served to inspire Marzia into being more confident and active herself. Her lack of confidence and motivation was able to improve with a positive role-model. This was fundamental for Marzia to realise her strengths and be interested in pursuing

her passions.

Gianna Duperreault – Joliette

Gianna is a very multi-talented student overall interested in science and the fine-arts. She completed all her assignments with shocking haste, though at no cost to their quality, and was highly organised. In spite of her high-performance, Gianna was still not very certain of what she wanted to do, because she is interested and has talent in many domains. Moreover, she is a first-generation student who may have struggled to navigate post-secondary education alone. She writes:

“My goals for this project were to familiarise myself with the academic and professional world and acquire knowledge about my educational path to come. I was not planning on going to university before this and now I might have changed my mind.

I really enjoyed having a mentor that understood me and that had lived through what I’m about to have to go through. She was a really big help and I actually think that we became friends during this process.

This program helped me think about my strengths and values, which is not something someone usually just sits down to think about. I believe that this was also the most important thing that I learned during this program.

Looking at all the possible jobs, it made me realise that I’m not the only one who believes that music can have such a strong impact on people, hence why music therapy exists.”

Gianna really benefited from having a mentor who shared so many common interests with her. Moreover, her mentor - a master’s student in the Schulich School of Music - was able to inform her of the wide range of music related careers that exist. She also used her program research assignment to research different programs, mixing life and social sciences with music and fine-arts.

Gianna also highlights the importance of the strength-exercises in the early part of the program. Like other students, she struggled to recognize achievements in her life and value-adding skills and characteristics that she has. Gianna greatly benefited from reflecting on her strengths and learning how to market them.

Pick Your Path – Indigenous youth

A learning and mentorship experience for Indigenous youth

Overview, participation, and main outcomes

The PYP program for Indigenous youth is a paid opportunity that is open to students in high school and CEGEP. Students participate in a series of workshops extending over a period of four to six weeks every year and ending with a final project. Working with a student mentor from McGill University, students get to explore academic and career paths that match their interests.

The program was initially organized by the Indigenous Outreach Associate in collaboration with John Abbott College and Dawson College's Indigenous pathway programs, for the period of February 23rd to March 29th, 2022.

A total of 7 Indigenous CEGEP students participated in the program, as well as 6 mentors.

Students from PYP Indigenous joined the PYP Low Income cohort, and similarly, they attended a series of 6 workshops which addressed themes such as strategic study skills, student strengths and interests, transitioning to university and then to career life, how to write a cover letter and CV, and reflections on getting university-ready and finding support.

In addition to these workshops, participants also benefitted from a session with McGill's Indigenous Recruiter, which was very informative to them. Many students were able to receive answers to their concerns about higher education. Students also expressed an interest in further exploring the careers they're interested in and their wish that the program would have a longer duration so they can connect more frequently with their mentors.

On the other hand, the program also helped maintain and strengthen Branches' partnerships with John Abbott College and Dawson.

Explore McGill

April 8, 2022 – An exploratory day on campus

Overview and participation

Explore McGill invites Quebec high school groups to register for a day of educational activities at McGill's downtown campus. The program introduces students to university life and learning by taking part in academic workshops, a lunch provided by McGill and a campus tour in the afternoon. Students are presented with a list of activities to choose from so they can exercise agency in the information and experience that interests them.

On April 8, 2022, a total of 70 students from 3 high schools and 2 CEGEPS - in the company of their teachers and guidance counsellors - attended Explore McGill. Students participated in workshops and presentations held by faculty members and representatives from several McGill faculties such as Management, Chemistry,

Medicine and Dentistry, Law, and Science, as well a presentation by the First Peoples House and a student panel. Breakfast, lunch, and a campus tour were included in the program as well.

Students were asked to identify the workshops of their choice early on in their application forms. A registration process was put in place and students were assigned to their respective workshops as they arrived on campus.

Workshops were coordinated with faculty staff and designed to provide students with insights on the several study fields, and for some, to provide them with a hands-on fun learning experience, such as with Chemistry and Science. Students were also encouraged to ask questions to get the answers they need as they start to think about their post-secondary studies.

The student panel hosted several McGill undergraduate panelists who shared their relevant experiences with the students, providing them with insights on lived experiences on campus, university life, other opportunities on campus and how to make the most of your time at McGill. Whereas breakfast and lunch took place at round tables and presented the students with the opportunity to mingle with each other and share their insights on their workshop experiences with their teachers and counsellors. To wrap up their visit, students went on a campus tour, guided by McGill's Welcome Center tour guides, so they can become familiar with McGill grounds and get a feel of what it's like to come to McGill.

Partnerships

Explore McGill is a one-day event that requires the Branches team to coordinate with and mobilize several external and internal partners.

As such, members of our team coordinated with teachers and guidance counsellors from Howards S. Billings, KSS, Beurling Academy, Dawson and John Abbott College to encourage their students to apply for Explore McGill and bring them on campus on the day-of. While we built on Explore McGill as an opportunity to strengthen existing connections with institutions and groups we've worked with before, we also used this opportunity to establish new strategic connections that can be employed for other Branches programs (such as with McGill's Chemistry Outreach, Brain Reach and LEX)– an endeavour that lends it's way to reconsider Explore McGill as a strategic event that ought to be planned well ahead of time and for specific dates on our yearly timeline, in coordination with other Branches programs that can benefit from these connections, all year long.

Our team also collaborated with and mobilized several McGill Faculties and units (as described above) as well as the Faculty Club as the main venue for the event, and the Welcome Center for the campus tour. We also engaged volunteers from the ES team, as well as a number of McGill students/Branches ambassadors to help us with the registration process, logistics and coordination on the day of the event.

Impact

Bringing students on campus makes for a fun and exciting field-trip day, through which students become more open, pre-disposed and motivated to discover something new, creating a segue into a more in-depth planning of their future path of education. Exposing them to the knowledge shared during the workshops helps them better choose their fields of interest for their post-secondary education, altering the way they think about their future studies, honing-in on what really speaks to them. Our student ambassador, Elijah Aedo-Castillo reports:

“I also was able to participate in the Explore McGill program and I recall speaking to a young Dawson student from a reserve in Northern Quebec. He spoke about wanting to become a social worker because he seeks to address systemic issues that directly affect his community. After going to the McGill Faculty of Law and participating in the L.E.X outreach workshop he expressed that on second thought maybe he’d like to pursue a legal education (something he had hitherto never considered). I think this exemplifies how, when students are given the opportunity to broaden their horizons and engage with the endless possibilities of higher education it can ignite something powerful within them. With these empowering experiences students can make connections about how pursuing various vocations can allow them to make meaningful change.”

The flexibility of the workshop format allows students to decide for themselves which workshops they’d like to attend and allows them to explore more than one area of interest, which is instrumental in their decision-making, for their future path of education. One of the school representatives pointed out that what they liked most is *“having a diverse group of youth in our workshop and the flexibility for the workshop format”*.

Bringing together students from different schools and CEGEPS on campus creates a boosting social environment that is fun, encouraging, and helps the more introverted ones feel motivated to engage in activities and discussions around round tables. Also from a school representative:

“We also enjoyed sharing the space with other schools, my students were a bit nervous at first, but as the day went on, they adjusted to it.”

For most students, Explore McGill presented an opportunity to visit and interact with McGill for the first time, and brought them the opportunity to experience firsthand a university-level learning environment that was up to then foreign to them – which hints at breaking a first ‘unfamiliarity’ barrier these students face on their way to higher education.

Wrapping things up, another school counsellor commented:

“The program was very nice and educative the students were very happy and excited.”

On our side, Explore McGill allowed the Branches team to strengthened partnerships with schools. It was also the first time for certain members of the team to meet in person with partners we’ve only exchanged with online. Additionally, Explore McGill allowed us to form new partnerships with different groups on campus such as Chemistry Outreach, Brain Reach and LEX.

Homework Zone

A learning and mentorship experience for Indigenous youth

Homework Zone (HZ) is an after-school mentoring program connecting McGill University student volunteers with elementary and secondary school students in and around Montreal. Celebrating its own 10-year anniversary in 2021, HZ has connected over 1200 McGill student volunteers with over 1500 youth in elementary and high schools, promoting equitable pathways to higher education through academic support, mentorship, and activities for educational enrichment. The program works to enable both McGill and young students from the communities to develop leadership skills and build a support network before they embark on their career path.

Each year, HZ operates as an after-school mentorship program connecting McGill students with elementary and secondary students for 2 hours per week from October to April. Homework Zone volunteers come from all over the world, (almost) every McGill faculty, and every level of post-secondary education. In addition to assisting with academic work (homework completion, problem solving, reading), HZ offers additional support and imagination-based enrichment activities (workshops, speakers, creative challenges).

Partners, mentors and mentees

The latest HZ cycle unfolded from October 5, 2021, till April 7, 2022.

Branches' student ambassadors/program assistants in charge of Homework Zone met with school and community partners to discuss the needs of their students, their availabilities, and expectations, while also recruiting mentors, and planning a weekly calendar including all schools and coordinator schedules.

The final numbers of recruited mentees and mentors per school partner are as follows:

School	Role	Actuals
Kahnawake Survival School (HS)	McGill Mentors	11
	Student Mentees	32
Howard S. Billings (HS)	McGill Mentors	12
	Student Mentees	18
Kahnawake Youth Center (Elem.)	McGill Mentors	14
	Student Mentees	11
Total	McGill Mentors	37
	Student Mentees	61

Participation of mentors and mentees in the HZ Program.

Mentees came from 1 elementary student group, as well as 2 high school student groups. Mentors and mentees met on a weekly basis. Mentors provided academic support to mentees, helping them with homework and addressing learning gaps, while also providing support on a mental level. Besides helping with homework, they also provided a fun learning environment, while starting their sessions with warm-up activities. Other fun activities were planned along the way to provide students with the opportunity to engage in other alternatives ways of learning that are more participatory.

Homework Zone acknowledges the value that multidisciplinary and engaging approaches to education can have, and the program strives to offer diverse programming to participants to ensure student successes. Activities for this cohort were designed and planned with several workshop providers and organizations from the community, and scheduled throughout the duration of the program, addressing academic, cultural, and personal and professional development themes such as: Mindfulness and Movement, Art and Creativity, Seeing Voices American Sign Language Workshop, Gemstone Activity Kits, Video Game Coding Workshop, Primitive Skills: Making Cordage, Primitive Skills: Fire-making, Math and Science Myths and Studying Strategies, CV Building, Career Quizzes, and Mock Interviews.

A reflection dinner at the end of the term brought all mentors together to wrap up on the program, discuss their experiences with Homework Zone, and enjoy mingling with fellow HZ mentors and program coordinators.

Impact

Based on final discussions with mentees, parents, and teachers, the favorite part for several students was getting to know university students and feeling that they know somebody who is currently at a higher level of education but still being able to relate to them, which makes higher education seem more achievable to them. One parent commented that the sessions with the mentor seem to have boosted the student's confidence and he felt special having a McGill student as a friend. Homework Zone created more of a safe space to study,

hang out, talk about life, and get advice. This was reflected in the conversations with the partners/coordinating teachers.

McGill Monday - Black youth

A lunch and learn experience for Black students

McGill Monday is a series of “lunch and learn” designed to pique the interest of Black students in higher education by exposing them to various areas of study and by offering them support in their reflection about their educational path.

Students participating in McGill Monday explore their own interests, learn about various areas of study, and get inspired through workshops conducted by students, professors and/or professionals of the Montreal and McGill Black community.

McGill Monday - Black aims to allow black students from grades 10 and 11 to see themselves represented in higher education and equip them with the necessary tools to make an informed and empowered decision about their educational path.

The program was planned to be every 3 weeks from October to April. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic limitations and capacity, our program coordinators were only able to host one session in December 2022. The program therefore ran in a trial mode, and the session was conducted with 6 students from Beurling Academy. The session started with an icebreaker activity, followed by an introduction of the program. The core component of the session was the Projection Activity, led by McGill students who shared their lived experiences as university students and shared insights on university life and learning. The session ended with a conclusion and an overview on next steps.

At the moment, we are too early in the cycle to expand on the impact of McGill Monday on students. However, we did learn that students were very interested in hearing from university students, are excited about interactive activities, and would like other students – their friends from other backgrounds - join the session as well. That is to say that a better, more inclusive future version of McGill Monday would include any high school student (not only Black students), and possibly CEGEP students as well.

Get University Ready

A series of themed workshops aimed at helping CEGEP students transition to university

Get University Ready is a series of workshops that aim to offer tools and support to future Black university students who are currently in CEGEP, so that they experience an empowered university transition. Workshops are conducted by McGill students, alumni, faculty, and staff who will highlight various ways for students to

maximize their university experience and ensure a healthy transition to university.

The program aims to prepare students for the transition from CEGEP to university and by presenting the resources, community, and opportunities at McGill, we hope that students will complete the program feeling that McGill is a good fit for them.

The program ran from April 2, 2022 till May 7, 2022. Sessions were held on a weekly basis, addressing themes such as the McGill student experiences, opportunities, leadership and clubs at McGill, challenges while navigating university life and well-being techniques, how to use the library resources, financial aid and financial support.

13 students applied, and 6 to 10 students (variably) attended the workshops.

Impact

Overall, the program was appreciated amongst participants. They also really appreciate that McGill reached out to them and the opportunity to interact with McGill.

Get University Ready responds to many needs identified among CEGEP students. They are looking for tangible tools to succeed throughout their education and we were able to share a few resources. Through the creation of a trusting relationship with the participants, they felt comfortable sharing with us their insecurities about attending university as Black students and about the overall transition to university life, which is a starting point in addressing those fears and finding ways to help them overcome these obstacles.

Through the program, students became more familiar with McGill's resources and opportunities and were engaged in building networks with other CEGEP and exchanging contact information with McGill student leaders.

On Elijah Aedo-Castillo's side – our Black student Ambassador/Program Assistant, the impact translates on all personal and professional development levels. In his own words:

"My name is Elijah Aedo-Castillo, and I recently completed my first year as a McGill Faculty of Arts student. I am majoring in Honours History, minoring in Indigenous studies, and will pursue a JD/MBA post-grad."

In 2003, my mom (who was 19 at the time) birthed me and single-handedly raised me until I was 13. Early on, schoolteachers labeled me a troublemaker/class disruptor and I can recall countless detentions and trips to the office. After years of experiencing disparagement, racism and ostracization in school, I grew extremely disillusioned. Around this time (14 years old) I could care less about school and coincidentally ended up getting stabbed. My peers also began getting shot, stabbed, killed, incarcerated, and travelling to and from school became increasingly dangerous. At this point post-secondary education was the last thing on my mind."

Thankfully, the COVID-19 pandemic offered me the opportunity to reorient my academic/professional trajectory, study rigorously, involve myself in community engagement and now I am at McGill.

Working with the Branches has been an amazing experience and an integral part of my university journey. Due to my background, upbringing, and life experiences, I am aware of the various challenges marginalized youth face while navigating the school system. Often young students are inculcated with the belief that they are incapable or unworthy of attending prestigious universities such as McGill due to adverse formative experiences. Other times the families of aspiring students simply do not have the resources to foster a promising educational upbringing. Branches is so important to me and countless other students because its projects enable youth to envision themselves at McGill, tap into their potential and begin to conceptualize how they can realize their greatest aspirations.

So far, working with Camille has been a blessing as she is a wise, amicable, resilient, relatable, and goodhearted mentor who has supported me through and through and has provided me the space to bring various ideas of mine to fruition (such as Get University Ready). [...] I would like to thank the benefactors of Branches McGill for their support and contributions, and I would encourage them to consider how much of an impact their continued support would have on the futures of marginalized children throughout Quebec.”.

On our team’s side, the program allowed us to identify the dynamics of working with CEGEP students as well as understand their needs and the type of information/sessions they are interested in.

Additional insights

We initially planned Get University Ready only for CEGEP students who received an acceptance letter to McGill. We hoped that through the program they would feel more confident in choosing McGill. However, we noticed that many first year CEGEP students participated, which highlights the need for Branches to intervene in CEGEPs at an early stage. It is worth exploring the idea of integrating the workshops of Get University Ready into McGill Monday, to offer workshops in CEGEP during the school year and not only for one month.

Branches Tutoring Program

Student-centered individualized tutoring sessions for academic support

Overview

In line with Branches’ mission to facilitate access to higher education to students from under-represented and disadvantaged communities and building on our past experiences and success with the Branches outreach programs and initiatives in Quebec as well as our established and new connections with schools, CEGEPs and

community organizations, we're looking today to further our outreach in Quebec - and expand it to Ontario students - through our newly conceived Tutoring Program.

As we're reaching out to more students currently underrepresented at McGill, there is an immediate need for straightforward tutoring in subjects like Math, French, Science, History and Writing. Based on recent feedback from high school counsellors (from Montreal, Laval, Sherbrooke and Toronto), under-represented students from marginalized communities and remote areas rarely have the opportunity to be exposed to academic opportunities outside of their area of stay, let alone the opportunity to connect with university students and get a feel of what university life and studies look like. **Through the Tutoring Program, Branches aims not only to provide immediate support to address learning gaps to these students, but also connect them with tutors from McGill and provide them the opportunity to bond with them on a one-on-one basis, learn from them, and refer to them as models of university life. For McGill students who will be trained as tutors, this is an opportunity for them to gain valuable real-life experience in community engagement, mentorship, equity training, as well as leadership.**

In order to best serve students, training, support and a sense of community need to be established. This is also important considering many McGill students are not from Quebec and therefore not familiar with the curriculum and how certain subjects are taught in school. Therefore, a major sub-component of this program is a **Tutor Training Module** which requires extensive research on curriculum leads and best tutoring practices, as well as partnering with internal (at McGill) and external partners, to design and deliver those modules (more details on partnerships below).

Additionally, as we need to reach students in increasingly more remote areas (i.e. Northern Quebec, outlying regions), online tutoring will be considered one of two modes of delivery – in person and online - as it will also help us reach out to more volunteers and students.

Our main goal for this term was to develop and finalize the Project Plan, in view of presenting the plan to the donor, and kicking-off the project as of April 2022.

What it will look like

Students – identified by school advisors and counsellors - will be recruited from high schools (Quebec and Ontario) and CEGEPS (French and English) to participate in the program. An application form/parent approval form and application review and selection process will be put in place to ensure proper screening and registration.

Tutors will be recruited from the pool of McGill undergraduates, and similarly, an application and screening process will be put in place to ensure a proper selection of candidates. Selected candidates will be trained in best tutoring practices and mentorship skills (among other skills) to ensure the best roll-out of the tutoring sessions and deliver best results.

Students and Tutors will be matched, depending on the field of interest, location, availabilities and other criteria to be determined and identified at the level of the application forms (for both ends).

Students and tutors will engage in weekly tutoring sessions (in either Math, Science, English, French, or Writing), at the location and time/schedule they'll both agree on in advance.

Tutors will also oversee the student's progress (tracking and recording progress), in coordination with the student, parent(s) and teacher(s), as well as reporting to Branches' staff on a regular basis.

Students and tutors will also have the opportunity to engage in fun activities such as workshops, reflection events and engaging in an on-going creative project, which will be planned for pre-determined dates, throughout the cycle.

- A research phase will precede the development of the program. As such, our roll-out, practices, activities and knowledge will be backed with research on best tutoring practices, student-centered teaching and learning methods, knowledge of QC and ON curriculum leads, and alternatives perspectives on the teaching of Science, Math, History, English/French, and Writing, among others.

Strategic alignment

The Tutoring Program is a means and an end-goal to outreach to students from under-represented, marginalized, and disadvantaged communities, and a vehicle of support to these students. By providing them with academic support and exposure to university-level experiences, the program aims to facilitate their pathway to higher education and furthermore, bridge the gap between them and McGill. We hope that through these efforts, the flow of students coming to McGill from neighboring areas and communities gradually increases, which contributes to McGill's strategic goal to expand our reach to - and recruit - students from under-represented communities (such as Black and Indigenous).

All the while, as we aim to collaborate with high school and CEGEP counsellors and student support advisors from Quebec and Ontario as well as representatives from community centers for the roll-out of the program, these logistics play a strategic role in expanding McGill's connections with neighboring institutions and community centers – placing Branches in the pivotal role of bridging connections between McGill and these institutions.

Internally, as we plan to connect with other McGill units and faculties to create some of the sub-components of this program, we aim to contribute to the strengthening of the internal network of units at McGill, building into a stronger, more dynamic internal McGill mesh.

Intended impact

Through the Tutoring Program, tutees will benefit from the student-centered personalized support on more than the academic level. As we help them build strength and perseverance to overcome challenges in their education, we look to:

- Help them yield better academic results
- Increase their interest in specific fields of study where they initially faced difficulties
- Improve their skills in time management and study techniques
- Acquire a better perception of higher education and university life by providing tangible examples and lived experiences
- Increase their motivation to pursue post-secondary studies
- Gain perspectives on their next study path and get university-ready

- Increase their enrollment in post-secondary programs and focus on areas of studies that interest them the most
- Acquire a sense of friendship and feel supported through bonding with a university student

On the other hand, the impact on tutors (McGill students) translates into gaining valuable real-life experiences in community engagement, tutoring, mentorship, equity training, and leadership, which builds into their personal and professional development and their record of work experiences.

The impact on McGill translates into Branches' contribution towards the fulfillment of Enrolment Services' strategic goals, as described in the section on 'strategic alignment'.

A 5-year plan

In view of pacing the project in a realistic way, and to maintain a comprehensive vision of the program throughout the coming years, we developed a 5-year plan which unfolds as such:

	YEAR 1: 2022	YEAR 2: 2023	YEAR 3: 2024	YEAR 4: 2025	YEAR 5: 2026
PHASE	Pilot phase	First full iteration	Tailored iteration	Standardization phase	Standard protocol
DETAILS	<p>April 2022 – August 2022</p> <p>Conducting the initial research and preparing for the pilot version + developing the project plan</p> <p>September 2022 – December 2022</p> <p>Releasing the pilot version, with an initial sample cohort</p>	<p>January 2023 – April 2023</p> <p>Closing the pilot, retrospective and reporting on lessons learned, best practices and suggested refinements</p> <p>May 2023 – April 2024</p> <p>Releasing the first full iteration with a first full-size cohort</p>	<p>May 2024 – August 2024</p> <p>Designing a version of the program that aims at tailoring the tutoring sessions to the tutee's cultural background and existing knowledge, building on innovative trends in education such as 'Indigenizing the curriculum'</p> <p>September 2024 – April 2025</p> <p>Releasing the tailored iteration with a focused sample cohort, i.e. an Indigenous (only) cohort</p>	<p>May 2025- August 2025</p> <p>Standardizing the program based on the experiences with previous versions: either merging the full iteration with the focused iteration / or creating several focused iterations tailored to multiple cultural backgrounds – TBD, based on the results from previous years). And adjusting the 'standard version' to the new strategic goals at Branches/McGill.</p> <p>September 2025 – April 2026</p> <p>Releasing the final standardized version of the program</p>	<p>May 2026-on</p> <p>Rolling out the standardized version of the program and re-iterating it as needed, from here on, with the goal of gradually increasing the size of the following cohorts.</p>
MAIN COMPONENTS (AMONG OTHERS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application forms and review process • Recruitment activities (sample cohort) • Tutoring Training Module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile App to match tutors and tutees (more details below) • Recruitment activities (full-size cohort) • Fully developed version of additional activities: workshops, events, and creative project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching/tutoring modules tailored to specific audiences, designed around cultural practices – tailoring the tutoring techniques and contents to specific cultural backgrounds (i.e. teaching science through Indigenous storytelling and Indigenous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final standardized components (the final version of all the components that were conceived in the previous iterations of the program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Tutoring Program Protocol' document, which will be used as the reference for the roll-out of the program from then on.

			knowledge and practices) – centered on further personalizing the tutoring experience.		
MAIN OBJECTIVES	Collect requirements, lessons learned, feedback from all stakeholders – in order to improve on the full version of the program	Develop a full version of the program which including all the core components	Develop a tailored version of the program and test it with specific audiences from target disadvantaged communities	Standardize the components of the program	Create the Tutoring program protocol document + increase the size of the participating cohort

Next steps

Where we're at today:

- April 2022 – August 2022: we are currently researching and preparing for the Pilot Phase
- May 2022: we have just finalised the project plan.

Our plan for the Pilot Phase deliverables is as follows:

2022	Deliverables, logistics, roll-out
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize research and collect research findings • Revised Project Plan • Outreach campaign to high school and CEGEP counsellors (May 10, May 25) • Tutor application form (first draft) • Tutee application/parent permission form (first draft) • Tutor Training Videos (first edit)
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor application form (final) • Tutee application/Parent permission form (final) • Create the Relationship-mapping tool • Agreement/contract for tutors and tutees • Initiate conversation with McGill Education Department, CAPs and TLS • Tutor Training module (start) • Finalize the name of the program • Create the logo
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor Training Videos (final, mid-July) • Tutor Training module (final) • Create the Tutoring program PowerPoint presentation • Create the Tutor Welcome kit – all components (including the Tutoring Program presentation, task list, code of conduct, resources list, training material, scheduling template, assessment template, progress-tracking template, reflection booklet, McGill swag, bus passes (if/as needed)) • Update the Branches website with preliminary information about the program • Create a promo brochure (print and/or digital to hand out at events as needed)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-initiate contact with guidance counsellors who expressed interest in May 2022 • Recruitment campaign for tutors - Post a call for tutors on social (on Branches platforms, other McGill platforms, external partners' platforms), and a call for tutees • Share a promo blurb + call for tutors + call for tutees in the Branches newsletter, the 'What's new at McGill' newsletter, and the First peoples House newsletter • Reconnect with McGill's Faculty of Education to involve their students as tutors • Prepare Exit surveys (to be filled by the tutor, tutee, parent(s), teacher)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post on social (FB and IG) to advertise the launching of the program
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to students identified by guidance counsellors (send them the application forms) • Recruitment campaign for tutors - Outreach to McGill students + send the tutor application form to identified students • Process registrations and confirm participants • Tutors on-boarding event • Tutor training sessions • Matching tutors and students • Procure transportation passes (to both tutors and tutees if/as needed)
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring sessions begin (1 OCT) • Tutors and tutees: first meeting + setting up the schedule of tutoring sessions all the way through mid-December • Regular check-ins (staff, students, parents, teachers)
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tutors and tutees to take selfies and post about their relationship-building and academic experiences on social (User Generated Content campaign) • Regular check-ins (staff, students, parents, teachers) • Mid-term reflection event
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring sessions end (Mid-DEC) • Share surveys and collect answers • End-term reflection event
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the final report (including KPIs and analytics) • Update the website • Post on social (thank you message + highlights of the program) • Send out blurb and images in the Branches newsletter and other relevant newsletters • Update the Branches Master Contact List

The plan will be further revised and iterated as needed.

Outreach

We organized 2 virtual presentation sessions during the month of May 2022, inviting a number of QC and ON high school counsellors and French and English CEGEP counsellors to attend to learn more about some of the Branches programs. During these sessions, we presented the Tutoring Program as one that we plan to launch – in a pilot version - in September 2022, calling those counsellors to collaborate with us later in the year, and bring their students on-board in September.

Following this outreach campaign, we plan to collect leads and re-connect with them by the end of August/beginning of September 2022. Once they identify students on their side who would be interested in taking part in the Tutoring Program, we will share with them the link to the application form so students can apply for the program in due time for October 1st.

More details on the Outreach Campaign (May 2022) are provided in the next section of this report.

Outreach Campaign to Low Socioeconomic Status (LSES) Institutions

Data-driven outreach to LSES French and English high schools and CEGEPs in QC and ON

Overview and goals

The aim of this data-driven initiative is outreach to, and hopefully building long-term relationships with, guidance counsellors and student support advisors from select French and English high schools and CEGEPs in QC and ON. These schools were selected as they are statistically considered Low Socioeconomic Status (LSES). Our end-goal is outreach to students at the selected institutions, as they are statistically likely to have the greatest amount of LSES students. As LSES students are pre-disposed to facing additional barriers on their way to higher education, they would be in greater need and benefit most from the Branches programs.

As detailed below, research was conducted by the Business Analyst Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to identify LSES schools as well as their counsellors and advisors. The Branches team operationalized this data in order to engage with them in the best way we can at the moment, through virtual communications and events.

Research

Data-driven school lists for strategic outreach and recruitment

In support of the Branches Program, the Business Analyst Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion developed data-driven lists identifying schools for strategic outreach and recruitment. Using a data-driven approach, potential partner schools were identified based on statistical information regarding the student composition for aspects such as first-generation students, low-socioeconomic status, and racially diverse demographics. This data was obtained from national government statistics made available through Statistics Canada, statistics and reports made available through provincial government organizations, as well as official reports issued by local school boards. Through this criteria and methodology, data-driven school lists identifying selected schools by major cities and rural areas were developed for; English High Schools in Quebec, French High Schools in Quebec, English CEGEPS in Quebec, French CEGEPS in Quebec, as well as High Schools in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. Each list has the top 20 selected schools based on our criteria and methodology, with the top 10 being our highest priorities for strategic outreach and recruitment while the remaining serve as possible alternates.

Following the recommendations made by the Business Analyst Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, our team collaborated with the ES Recruitment team to cross-check their records with the selected high schools and CEGEPs in order to obtain the names and email addresses of the point persons/guidance counsellors associated with the selected schools. This work was driven by our aim of putting together a final contact list, which we will use for our communications to our intended audience.

Logistics

The Branches presentation

The Branches outreach team prepared a PowerPoint presentation including the most relevant Branches programs that we're planning to relaunch as of September 2022: Explore McGill, the Tutoring Program, PYP (Black, Indigenous, CEGEP...), and McGill Mondays, and which could be of interest to the intended audience.

Questions for the focus group

To operationalize a data-driven framework in our efforts, the Business Analyst Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion supported the Branches Program strategic outreach and recruitment team with developing a set of questions to be asked during events with potential partners. In this way, events such as presentations to high school and CEGEP counsellors can also be leveraged as focus groups from which data can be collected, analyzed, and acted upon.

A post-event survey

Furthermore, a post-event survey was developed in order to gain information and insight on potential partners' interests in our programs and desire for future collaboration, academic support needs of students, accessibility needs of students, transition to university support needs of students, suggestions for how to tailor our programs to their students, and if students from specific communities needed tailored support programs.

Communications

E-invites were sent out to HS and CEGEP counsellors to invite them to join our virtual sessions:

- on May 10, for HS counsellors
- on May 25, for CEGEP counsellors.

The invites (with their corresponding reminder mailings) were set up and sent through the Slate mailing platform. We prepared an English version for the English-speaking recipients, and a French version for the French-speaking recipients.

A couple of samples for the record:



Dear counsellor, academic advisor or student support advisor*,

You are invited to join McGill's **Branches** team on **Tuesday, May 10, 10:00 am to 11:00 am**, for a virtual presentation about our outreach and mentorship programs for high school students and how we'd like to collaborate with **Marymount International Academy** to support your students in the year ahead.

[Branches - McGill's Community Outreach Program at Enrolment Services](#) - works with communities and partners to create sustainable programming that encourages young students to persevere and become lifelong learners. Our transformative mentorship opportunities and networks of support help under-represented learners to overcome barriers to higher education and help them plan their educational paths.

[Register here, join us on May 10](#)

This presentation (in English) will be followed by a bilingual Q&A session. We'd love to answer your questions about our programs and find out more about your students' needs so we can best serve them.



Cher.ère conseiller.ère pédagogique ou conseiller.ère de soutien aux élèves*,

Vous êtes invité.e à vous joindre à l'équipe '**Branches**' de McGill le **mercredi 25 mai, de 10 h à 11 h**, pour une présentation virtuelle sur nos programmes de sensibilisation et de mentorat pour les étudiants du cégep, et sur la façon dont nous aimerions collaborer avec le **Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles** pour soutenir vos élèves dans l'année à venir.

À '**Branches**' – [le programme de rayonnement communautaire de McGill au Bureau des futurs étudiants](#) – nous travaillons avec les communautés et nos partenaires pour créer des programmes durables qui encouragent les jeunes étudiants à persévérer et à devenir des apprenants à vie. Nos opportunités de mentorat transformatrices et nos réseaux de soutien aident les jeunes étudiants sous-représentés à surmonter les obstacles à l'enseignement supérieur et à planifier leur parcours scolaire.

[Inscrivez-vous ici, rejoignez-nous le 25 mai](#)

Cette présentation (en anglais) sera suivie d'une séance de questions-réponses bilingue. Nous serons ravis de répondre à vos questions sur nos programmes et d'être consultés sur les

We also prepared a post-event mailing which includes a recording of our presentation, a link to the post-events survey and our contact information for future reference. The post-event mailing was sent to all attendees (from both sessions) in the hope to collect their consent for future correspondence and their insights on student needs, as well as to learn about the Branches programs that they would see their students engaged in as of September 2022, through the survey.

Collaborating with the Recruitment team on in-person announcements

In tandem with our virtual outreach sessions, the ES recruitment team planned in-person sessions with CEGEP guidance counsellors on May 12 and May 19 for their own goals, however, we collaborated with them to announce the in-coming Branches Virtual Presentation for CEGEP Counsellors planned for May 25. We strongly believe that the in-person announcement boosted the registration to the May 25 session.

Virtual sessions: May 10 (HS), May 25 (CEGEPS)

The first round of strategic outreach and recruitment to schools on our data-driven lists contacted selected schools in Quebec. Meetings took place in May 2022 in order to increase our outreach and further assess the needs of the schools after the first year of collaboration. These meetings to establish relationships for our first year of strategic outreach and recruitment to data-driven selected schools in Quebec reached 10 CEGEPS and 7 High Schools as well as generated almost 40 unique insights based on reflections, suggestions, and questions from counsellors during these meetings.

Focus Group Results

From the May 10 session with high school counsellors

We sent the May 10 e-invite to a total of 103 records associated with 50 high schools across ON and QC in total.

A total of 7 school representatives attended the May 10 presentation.

They represent the following schools:

- Laval Senior Academy
- Lasalle Community Comprehensive High School
- Académie LaSalle
- Beurling Academy
- English Montreal School Board
- Alexander Galt Regional High School
- Kipling Collegiate

The following points and questions were raised by the school representatives during the session:

1. Questions about programs

EXPLORE

- Is EXPLORE offered online, in-person, or hybrid?
- Is there a registration/capacity limit for EXPLORE?
- Are travel expenses covered for participating in EXPLORE (e.g. buses, parking, etc.)?
- Can requests be made to see specific faculties (e.g. law, business, medicine, etc.)?

Tutoring Program

- Is the Tutoring Program offered online, in-person, or hybrid (e.g. for schools outside Montreal)?
- Is there a cost to participate in the Tutoring Program, or are the program's tutoring services offered for free?

Pick Your Path

- Is Pick Your Path offered only for specific communities, or is the program also available to all students?
- Will there be background checks and/or supervision (e.g. for programs with minors)?

McGill Mondays

- Will there be follow ups with/reports to teachers/parents/counsellors about relationship with mentors/tutors and progress in academic success?
 - Will there be programs tailored to specific academic/career paths (e.g. law, business, medicine, etc.)?
2. Programs that stood out for their school and students

EXPLORE

- 1 expressed interest in EXPLORE, but was concerned with cost and logistics for travel from outside Montreal

Tutoring Program

- 1 expressed interest in tutoring and mentorship

McGill Mondays

- 1 expressed interest in having their school and students participate in McGill Mondays
3. Programs that would be a good fit for their school and students
- 1 expressed that mentoring would be a good fit for their students preparing for next step to higher education
4. Student experience or interest in extracurricular academic support
- 1 expressed that yes, they do have students that would be interested, but not sure in which specific programs
 - 1 expressed that they were unsure if their students had any experience with extra curricular academic support programs
 - 1 expressed that their students had a lot of experience with mentorship programs funded by the Quebec government for the past 2 years\
5. Academic support needs for students
- 1 expressed that their students need academic support in tutoring, mentorship, information sessions, choosing a field of study, choosing a university, applying to university, and transition to university
6. Other support needs for students
- 1 expressed that their students need financial, travel, and community support
 - 1 expressed that support was needed for immigrant students to learn more about Canadian/Quebec higher education

From the May 25 session with CEGEP counsellors

We sent the May 25 e-invite to a total of 63 records associated with 25 CEGEPs in total.

A total of 19 CEGEP representatives registered and 15 attended the May 25 presentation.

They represent the following CEGEPs:

- CEGEP Ahuntsic
- CEGEP Andre Laurendeau
- CEGEP de Trois Riviere
- CEGEP de Victoriaville
- Champlain College (Saint Lambert)
- Champlain College (St Lawrence)
- Dawson College
- Heritage College
- John Abbott College [x5]
- Vanier College [x2]

The following questions were raised by the school representatives during the session:

- Can this information be shared beyond guidance counselors (e.g. with academic advisors, career counsellors, student services, access centres, etc.)?
- Are the programs offered in-person, online, or hybrid?
- How do schools and students apply to the programs?
- What are the next steps for schools and students after applying?
- How do students communicate with McGill to apply, to ask questions, etc. (e.g. through their guidance counsellor, through a webform, directly with a specific contact at McGill)?
- Is there a cost to participate in the programs, or are the programs offered for free?
- Is there a maximum capacity for the programs (e.g. how many students can apply)?
- Are part-time, night, and continuing education students eligible to participate in the programs?
- Will McGill provide marketing materials to schools in order to promote the programs to their students?
- Will students get a choice in their tutor (e.g. if they want to be paired with someone with similarities)?
- Will there be tutoring offered for French schools and students?
- Will tutors have EDI training (e.g. on cultural contexts, challenges, sensitivities, etc.)?
- Will the programs/tutors offer mental health support for students struggling with EDI challenges?
- Will information on financial aid be provided?
- Will help for applying to University be provided?
- Will information on holistic review processes and admissions streams be provided?
- What qualifies as socio-economic barriers?
- Are students who participate in the programs expected or required to apply to McGill?
- Are there any benefits for students who participated in the programs when applying to McGill?

Survey results

Survey Responses

A total of 7 people responded to our survey, distributed as such:

High Schools – Response Rate = 42.86% (n = 3/7)

- Alexander Galt Regional High School
- École Cavelier-De LaSalle
- Laval Senior Academy

CEGEPs – Response Rate = 20% (n = 2/10)

- Cegep André-Laurendeau
- John Abbot College [x3]

Professional Reach

We were able to reach out to key contact persons holding the following positions at their institutions:

- Academic Training Counsellor
- Guidance Counsellor
- Orientation Counsellor [x2]
- Social Work Technician
- Chairperson, Academic Success Center
- Chairperson, Student Diversity and Inclusion Office

Future Collaboration and Consent to Contact

Would you be interested in future collaboration between your institution and McGill's Branches, and if yes do you consent to be contacted?

- No, I would not be interested – Response Rate = 0% (n = 0/7)
- Yes, I would be interested – Response Rate = 100% (n = 7/7)*

Consent to Add to Mailing List

Do you consent to being added to the Branches mailing list in order to receive the Branches newsletter, important updates and information, etc.

- No, I do not consent – Response Rate = 0% (n = 0/7)
- Yes, I do consent – Response Rate = 100% (n = 7/7)*

*The resulting numbers from 'consent to contact' and 'consent to add to mailing list' show that we now have the green light to start contacting these 5 institutions and/or strengthen existing connections we have with them, which builds into the success of our outreach initiative.

Next, we plan to maintain contact with these 7 key persons and re-write to them by the end of the summer to coordinate the roll-out of our programs with them.

From the survey responses, we learned about the following:

Student Challenges

- Financial
- Academic
- Racial

- Social
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Transition to University
- Networking
- Relationship building
- Tutoring
- Confidence
- Motivation
- Engagement
- Mobility
- Planning
- Information on and navigating the Quebec Education system (esp. for international/immigrant students)
- Academic guidance (e.g. choosing academic paths based on interests)
- Career guidance (e.g. possible career paths)
- Applying to University
- Orientation to University (e.g. prior to entry)

Student Needs

- Mentorship (e.g. models of students who had their issues and made it through the studies at McGill)
- Tutoring
- Financial aid
- Academic guidance (e.g. more information on University programs)
- Career guidance (e.g. possible career paths after graduation)
- Community building
- Mental health counselling
- Personal motivation
- Promoting available support and extra-curricular programs to students

We'll keep a record of this knowledge in our database and we'll share these learnings with the rest of the team so that we all have a better understanding of the challenges that our target audience faces and the needs of the students so we can better serve them with our programs.