

Memorandum

Secretariat

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TO: Board of Governors

FROM: Edyta Rogowska, Secretary General

SUBJECT: Annual Report on the *Policy on Safe Disclosure* (“Whistle Blowing”)

DATE: May 21, 2020

DOCUMENT #: GD19-63

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE & EXPECTED OUTCOME The Annual Report on the *Policy on Safe Disclosure* (“Whistle Blowing”) is presented to the Board of Governors for information.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE Section 8 of the *Policy on Safe Disclosure* (“Whistle Blowing”) states:

8.1 Once per academic year, the Secretary-General shall make a report to Senate and the Board of Governors, which report shall include:

- (i) the number of reports filed by Disclosers;
- (ii) the number of reports investigated;
- (iii) the number of findings of Improper Activity;
- (iv) the types of action taken pursuant to an investigation.

8.2 The annual report of Improper Activities shall respect the privacy of Disclosers and Respondents.

The Secretariat has also started the practice of informing members of the community of the Policy. For instance, a message informing the Community of the Policy is sent to the community at the beginning of the academic year.

ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES The Report allows the University to continue in its mission of embracing principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity and inclusiveness.

COMPLIANCE WITH UNIVERSITY POLICY The Report was presented to the Senate Steering Committee on May 5, 2020. The Steering Committee received the Report on behalf of Senate in accordance with the plan on the conduct of Senate meetings approved by Senate on April 2, 2020 in light of the evolving situation concerning COVID-19.

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION/EXTERNAL REGULATIONS The *Policy on Safe Disclosure* (“Whistle Blowing”) was adopted in accordance with the *Act to facilitate the disclosure of wrongdoings relating to public bodies*. The Act also makes it possible for members of the University community to submit disclosures to the Québec Ombudsman.

RISK FACTORS

In order to raise awareness of the *Policy*, a webpage highlighting the purpose of the Policy and process for submitting safe disclosures has been created. Regular communications promoting the Policy are also issued to the University community. Please refer to link below for more details:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/safe-disclosure-whistle-blowing-reporting>

**SUSTAINABILITY
CONSIDERATIONS**

The *Policy* provides for a sustainable framework for purposes of addressing safe disclosures made by members of the McGill community.

**IMPACT OF DECISION
AND NEXT STEPS**

The next annual report will be presented to Senate and the Board in the Spring of 2021.

**MOTION OR
RESOLUTION
FOR APPROVAL**

N/A

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Annual Report on the *Policy on Safe Disclosure* (“*Whistle Blowing*”)

Annual Report on the Policy on Safe Disclosure (“Whistle Blowing”)

Introduction

The *Policy on Safe Disclosure (“Whistle Blowing”)* was approved by Senate in May 2007 and by the Board of Governors in October 2007, and came into force on October 30, 2007. Following a review of the Policy, Senate approved revisions to the Policy on November 18, 2015. The revisions were then approved by the Board of Governors on November 26, 2015.

As stated in the Policy, those responsible for the administration and management of academic, administrative or service units are responsible for addressing situations of Improper Activity in accordance with good management practices and existing policies, guidelines and procedures. It is the expectation that members of the University community will continue to use existing channels to report Improper Activity and only resort to this Policy if such channels prove ineffective or are inappropriate in the circumstances. For more information about the Policy, please see: <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies-and-regulations/safe-disclosure-whistle-blowing-reporting>

Section 8.1 of the Policy provides that the Secretary-General report annually to Senate and the Board of Governors on the application of the Policy. This report is presented to Senate and the Board of Governors in discharge of this obligation for the period January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

The annual report shall respect the privacy of Disclosers and Respondents, as stipulated at various points in the Policy.

Report

During the reporting period from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, one confidential disclosure was filed with the Secretary-General in accordance with the Policy. The report was reviewed by the relevant Responsible Officer, who determined that further action was warranted.

The table below provides a summary of disclosures since November 2007 based on the requirements of the Policy.

Reporting Period	Number of reports filed by Disclosers	Number of reports investigated	Number of findings of Improper Activity	Types of action taken pursuant to an investigation
Jan.1, 2019 – Dec. 31, 2019	1	1	1	Disciplinary action
Jan.1, 2018 – Dec. 31, 2018	5	0	N/A	N/A
Jan. 1, 2017 – Dec. 31, 2017	2	2	1	Disciplinary action and other administrative actions
Jan. 1, 2016 – Dec. 31, 2016	1	1	0	N/A
Nov. 1, 2014 – Dec. 31, 2015	4 (3 of which were later withdrawn)	1	0	N/A
Nov. 1, 2013 – Oct. 31, 2014	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov. 1, 2012 – Oct. 31, 2013	1	0	0	N/A
Nov. 1, 2007 – Oct. 31, 2012	0	0	N/A	N/A