

**Secretariat**

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The following items arise from the Information Technology (IT) Committee meeting of May 10, 2021. They are presented to the Board of Governors for information.

**I. FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS****1. IT Disaster Recovery Plan Business Case**

[IT20-14]

The Committee received a presentation on the University's IT Disaster Recovery (DR) Business Case for information. At its last meeting on January 27, 2021, the IT Committee received an update on the University's Disaster Recovery Plan and it was noted that the Committee would receive a presentation on the business case for the University's disaster recovery solution at its meeting in May 2021.

The business case for the IT disaster recovery (DR) strategy includes all critical components and resources that are required to be implemented to improve the university's system resilience in terms of availability, integrity, and confidentiality of data in the event of a major disruptive incident.

The DR business case is based on the following analysis:

- Business impact;
- Assets management and system configuration details; and
- Risk assessment and mitigation strategies.

Following the IT Committee's review and feedback on the DR Business Case, the University is expected to submit a *Dossier d'opportunité* to the provincial government in June 2021. It is anticipated that a recommendation for project approval will be presented to the IT Committee and subsequently to the Board of Governors in the Fall 2021.

**2. Update on Cyber Security**

[IT20-15]

The Committee received an update on cyber security for the period from January 2021 to April 2021. This reporting period had no major incident and included 7 emergency fixes. It was noted that the most significant threats were credential thefts through phishing and through cyber incidents on external sites.

The Committee was informed that following several cyber security incidents in public organizations in 2020, the Quebec Treasury Board issued in January 2021, a cyber security directive "*Plans d'action en sécurité de l'information –15 exigences minimales*" to all ministries and public organizations. The Directive contains 15 measures with which

organizations will have to comply. It was noted that McGill already had several projects and initiatives underway to comply with the directive.

The Committee was informed of the launch of the Canadian Shared Security Operation Center ([www.canssoc.ca](http://www.canssoc.ca)), which is an initiative that was developed by the University of Toronto, Ryerson, McMaster, Alberta, UBC and McGill to investigate the frequency and complexity of cyber security threats facing higher education institutions. It was noted that various initiatives were currently underway to leverage the cyber security skills, resources and tools within Canada's higher education community, by sharing experience and skills to provide more efficient defence against cyber security threats.

### **3. Update on IT Strategic Plan** [IT20-16]

The IT Committee received an update on the implementation of the McGill IT Services Strategic Plan and Roadmap 2020-2025.

In May 2020 the Board of Governors endorsed, on the recommendation of the IT Committee, the [2020-2025 ITS Strategic Plan and Roadmap](#). The Committee was informed that the Roadmap's schedule and costs had been revised in light of significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Some of the elements impacting the Plan's implementation are:

- Shift in priorities to implement remote work and remote teaching activities
- Resource capacity to deliver projects and meet demand
- Hiring freeze and end-user's availability
- Preparatory work and development of business cases taking longer than expected, delaying the start of projects

### **4. Report on IT Initiatives and Projects** [IT20-17]

The Committee received a Report on IT initiatives and Projects, which included a status update of active initiatives and projects funded by proceeds of the \$210M bond as well as a financial summary of both planned and ongoing bond-funded IT projects and initiatives.

As of March 31, 2021, the cumulative bond expenditure on IT initiatives was \$88,395,463.

The Committee received an update on the Financing Plan for Deferred Maintenance and IT Initiatives. It was informed that the spending allocation of the bond was reviewed in light of projected expenditures. It was noted that the IT allocation would be reduced to \$140M from \$210M thereby increasing the deferred maintenance (DM) allocation to \$260M from \$190M. The revised allocation more accurately reflects and aligns with the annual spend rate on IT projects in comparison to the DM spend rate on capital projects, even after considering the increase in government's capital funding.

The Committee also received an update on the Recruitment to Retire (R2R) Project. The Committee was informed that the project had closed at a total cost of \$45M (below the approved budget of \$50.7M). The Committee also received an update on the Auditor General of Quebec's audit of the University's information technology projects, including the R2R project.

Lastly, the Committee received a detailed update on the Network and Information Security Upgrade & Unified Communication Program, which was approved by the Board's Executive Committee in 2015.

The program comprises three sub-projects:

- 1- Network Upgrade Project: this project will increase the University's network capacity, performance, resilience, availability, scalability and overall management to sustain the new IT based education solutions and fast-growing research needs.
- 2- Network Information Security Project: this project will introduce improved technologies to monitor, detect, rapidly mitigate, and protect the University's network infrastructure and data against potential attacks.
- 3- Unified Communications Project: this project will replace the University's aging telephone system with newer technologies that will seamlessly integrate and improve communication channels between members of the McGill community. By providing a new means of virtual collaboration and communications this project aims to contribute to an enhanced student learning environment and increased workplace effectiveness.

The Committee was informed that although the overall progress of the program had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was now progressing well and on budget, with expected completion by the end of 2023.

## 5. IT Unit Activity Report

[IT20-18]

The Committee received an update on general IT Unit-related activities. The report included updates on the following topics:

- [IT 2020 Annual Report](#): this report highlights the work that IT Services (ITS) accomplished with and for the McGill community in 2020, which was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Report describes how ITS and the McGill community adapted to the major disruption created by the pandemic and worked together to deploy solutions and provide the necessary tools and support to pursue virtual work and study.
- Student Recruitment and Admission Initiatives: in FY2020-21, ITS, in partnership with Enrolment Services, implemented a new Student Recruitment System for most regular undergraduate academic programs. ITS is also preparing for the implementation of a new Student Admission System to replace the current

system, uApply. Additionally, in partnership with Communications & External Relations (CER), the whole student admission experience has been improved with the development of a new “academic program finder” and the redesign of the admissions website. The academic admission and program finder website can be found [here](#).

**6. Report on IT Project and Contract Approvals Valued Between \$1M and \$6M** [IT20-12]

The Committee received a Report on IT Project and Contract Approvals valued between \$1M and \$6M approved by the Principal or the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) during the reporting period between January 1, 2021 and April 30, 2021 pursuant to their respective authorities under the *Policy on Approval of Contracts and Designation of Signing Authority*.

The Committee was informed that there were no IT contracts or projects valued between \$1 million and \$6 million to report for the period between January 1, 2021 and April 30, 2021.

**7. Other Updates and Reports**

The Committee received the following for information:

- 2021-2022 IT Committee Meeting Dates [IT20-13]

**END**  
**May 2021**