A close-up portrait of a young man with dark hair and a slight smile, looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark blue t-shirt. The background is a blurred red brick wall.

Impact

MADE

by McGill

The McGill Fund Annual Giving Report 2019



It's More than Just for Kicks

Message from the Faculty Advancement Board

There are almost 26,000 Faculty of Engineering alumni in the world today; however, did you know, only 2,300 of us actually donate to the Faculty? You do the math: that's less than ten percent. Remember the 80/20 rule? Perhaps this should be rewritten as the 90/10 rule. Because it is this ten percent of us who are helping the current generation of McGill students to succeed. We thank you for being one of the ten percent.

Sustainability, artificial intelligence, mobile technology: these and other issues are changing the way we live. Students need to be able to contend with important questions such as these, which makes our collective involvement in the education of the next generation more important than ever. As members of the Faculty Advancement Board, it has been our privilege to influence the kind of education McGill provides to its students.

The \$2B "Made by McGill Campaign" launched this September aims to prepare the University for its third century. One of the goals of the Campaign is to grow the Faculty's Annual Fund (today known as the McGill Fund), which is a huge opportunity for all alumni to get involved. Can we, with your help over the next five years, actually make it to the 80/20 goal of participation?

As members of the Faculty Advancement Board, we are all committed to supporting the Campaign, and helping the Faculty and the University achieve its goals. We believe supporting these goals will not only benefit future generations of students, but society as a whole. For those of you who are part of the ten percent who support the Faculty, we thank you. Please help us as we try to reach even more alumni who care as much

Faculty Advancement Board (FAB)

Members, May 2019 Back row (left to right): Eric Lamarre, Howard Stotland, H  lene Desmarais, Mary-Jean Eastman, Pasquale Di Pierro, C  me Lagu  , Fil Papich, Front row (left to right): Robert Walsh, Marc Novakoff, Jim Nicell, E. Bruce Allan (not pictured: Ronald Chwang, Alexandra Conliffe, Ram Panda, Frank Panarello, Naser Partovi, and John Saabas)

Gopesa Paquette

Cover:

Michael Sukkarieh (BEng'20)

Gopesa Paquette

Over the past 20 years, video games have emerged as a major global industry. Eager to push McGill's Faculty of Engineering to the forefront of gaming research and innovation, Michael Sukkarieh, president of GameDev McGill, is helping to redefine the role that video games can play in undergraduate education.

Today, video games are more than just a niche market: they have crossed over into the mainstream and become a multi-billion dollar global entertainment industry. Montreal is at the heart of a vibrant and world-leading game development community, and thanks to a group of dedicated and talented undergraduate engineers at McGill Game Development Student's Society's (GameDev McGill), the Faculty of Engineering is becoming a valued part of that community. Supported by the Student Initiative Fund (which is directly supported by gifts to the McGill Fund), clubs like GameDev McGill give students the opportunity to learn a wide range of skills, and get their feet wet in areas beyond the classroom.

For the past two years, Michael Sukkarieh (BEng'20) has been Lead Programmer with GameDev McGill. In the fall, he will take on the role of president. Currently interning at Electronic Arts (a massive and long-established player in the gaming field), Sukkarieh values his new leadership position. The role presents him with the opportunity to give back to the organization which drew him to the university in the first place.

Before transferring from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Sukkarieh contacted GameDev McGill's Founding President   lie Harfouche—now a graduate and employed at Ubisoft Montreal—about his interest in the group's activities. The club's presence was a deciding factor in his decision to come to McGill. Sukkarieh is now a recipient of the Brodeur-Drummond Scholarship, the Zeev Vered Award, and was named to the Dean's Honour List.

"I want to work on this"

Like many in the gaming industry, Sukkarieh's interest in the field began by playing games. As his exposure to the engineering behind the development of games grew, his curiosity transformed into ambition. Last summer he interned at Google headquarters in Mountain View, California, where he spent his time working on the video ingestion team. Sukkarieh says the experience confirmed his desire to pursue a game-related career, reinforcing a feeling that he had back when he was just a player: "I want to work on this."

Montreal is a gaming hub and home to the largest studios and developers in the industry, such as Ubisoft Montreal, Electronic Arts, and Square Enix, to name a few. The presence of so many companies means there is a need for talent, making GameDev McGill more than just a club for likeminded hobbyists. Indeed, the group has become an industry pipeline, connecting students with valuable internships, exposure to industry leaders, and eventual job opportunities. Thanks to groups like GameDev McGill and the student executives who volunteer their time to make it all happen, McGill is also becoming a home for students wishing to make a career in a field which continues to devour the entertainment industry.

Busy Club

The club hosts a number of internal events, the most regular of which are "Tech Talks"—one hour presentations on a variety of technical subjects given to members by members. During his tenure as Lead Programmer, Sukkarieh gave several of these talks.

"Teaching itself is such a crazy challenge," he says, "because it really tests your knowledge on the subject. It's one thing to know something, and another to teach it."

Externally, the biggest event the community puts together is the McGame Jam, the second largest video game hackathon in Quebec, where attendees have 48 hours to create a game based on a chosen theme. The event is made possible by the McGill Fund, along with the club's sole corporate sponsor, Ubisoft Montreal. The latter represents a vital connection to the industry,

but Sukkarieh admits they would like to diversify the pool of sponsors.

The McGame Jam also represents a valuable recruitment platform for the industry: "Employers are expecting extra-curricular activities, or side-projects you've been working on after school." Sukkarieh is quick to point out that this does not negate the importance of academic achievement, but rather it sheds light on the long term value of student-run organizations.

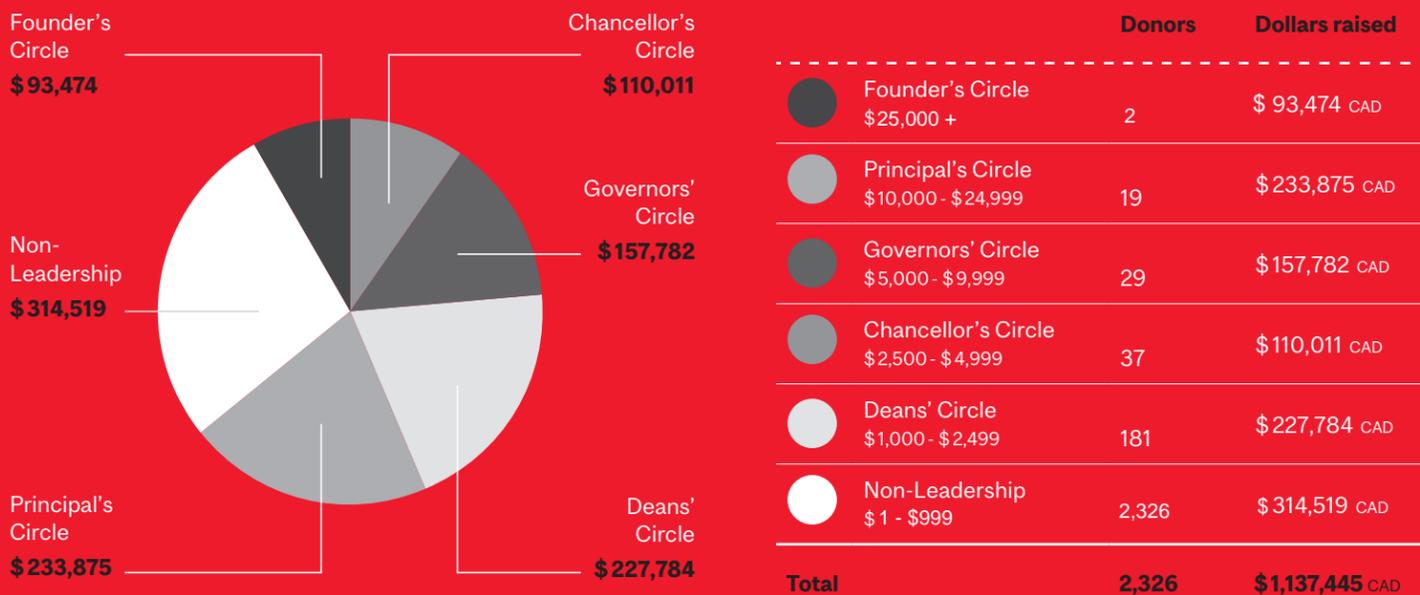
"The club and its events are a catalyst for exactly these kinds of projects," says Sukkarieh, making GameDev McGill a place where skills are built and showcased to potential employers. "Before the club was created, McGill didn't have a presence in the Montreal gaming industry. We wanted to put McGill on the map. I think we have a lot of great talent here."



Michael Sukkarieh (BEng'20) credits the McGill Game Development Student's Society's club for putting McGill on Montreal's gaming industry map.

Gopesa Paquette

2,326 Donors
25,942 Faculty Alumni
8.9% of the Faculty of Engineering alumni give back annually.
Thank you for your support.



Intelligent, intrepid and infinitely hardworking, Chemical Engineering graduate student Sarah Dubois credits philanthropic support for helping her combine serious academics with semi-professional soccer.

Huddled around a hotel television with her fellow team-mates in Italy, Faculty of Engineering graduate and McGill Martlets soccer player Sarah Dubois (BEng'18) is taking in the United States vs France game at the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup. Dubois and the team are on break at the International University Sports Federation (FISU) Summer Universiade in Naples. She's a proud member of Team Canada, but when it comes to picking a favourite in the US-France game, Dubois diplomatically declines—it's the kind of reserve that is emblematic of this young leader.

The motto of the FISU is: "Today's stars, tomorrow's leaders", which is accurate assessment of Dubois, who has that rare ability to juggle high-performance academics and athletics, a skill that was on full display in her many leadership roles at the Faculty of Engineering.

Dubois is passionate about this "innovative aspect of research", which drove her to embark on a Master's program following her undergraduate degree. Her studies focused on how environmental factors affect the human body, specifically, how toxins alter the myometrial tissue of the uterine wall, and how that could cause premature birth and early-onset contractions. For now, however, her studies are on the back burner as she pursues a semi-professional soccer career in Sweden, where she has been since March 2019.

"I'm living off of football, living the dream," she explains. "A football career has more of a time limit than an engineering career."

Learning through Resilience

The fact that she even has a soccer career at all, let alone at this level, is even more impressive given the fact that Dubois sustained a serious injury in her second year at McGill, which left one doctor saying she would never play again.

"I lost sensation in my legs during a game. We weren't sure if it was a hit or a cumulative injury, but I had pain for the next year," she explains. She did "a lot of rehab just to get back to studying normally", and thanks McGill's Sport Medicine Clinic and her coaches for letting her stay on the team.

"They were completely understanding and fundamental to my coming back to the sport. When you're in constant pain, it's not the best thing for the morale, but at rehab I learned patience, diligence and hard work."

It was these qualities that propelled Dubois to excel at both sport and academics; she was a recipient of the Schulich Leader Scholarship and Jean Béliveau Leadership Award (2018). She was also an Academic All-Canadian, made the Principal's Student-Athlete Honour Roll, and the Dean's Honour List. Dubois credits the financial support as instrumental to her success.

"I can't emphasize enough that it's not just about not having any debt coming out of school; it's about the time the funding affords us to study and to explore things that we otherwise wouldn't have time for. For me, it was football and lab work."

Dubois is also appreciative of the help and guidance she has received from key people at McGill: Martlet Foundation trustee Sally McDougall, Head coach Jose-Luis Valdes and Chemical Engineering Professor Christopher Moraes. Combined with the generous support of benefactors, it has put this future leader on solid footing to pursue her dreams.

Sarah Dubois (BEng'18) is thankful to McGill and its donors for providing an amazing environment for student-athletes to pursue their passions.

📷 Courtesy of Sarah Dubois



The high-tech industry is still largely a man's game, with women representing only 25 percent of its workforce. Alumna Vanessa Jones, former president of POWE (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Engineering), explains how the organization still supports her, three years after her graduation.

This year, Vanessa Jones (BEng'16) decided to give back to the cause that inspired her so much during her years at the Faculty of Engineering: increasing the status of women in the field. "When I saw the email asking for contributions to support women in engineering initiatives within the Faculty, I knew from experience how much impact even a small gift can have," she said.

Jones knows this because during her undergraduate years she worked in various aspects of the administration of POWE (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Engineering); in her final year she was the club's president. POWE helps give women engineers, architects and urban planners the same opportunities as their male counterparts by strengthening networks and offering tools that support women in their academic life and beyond. It is one of many student-led organizations in the Faculty that are supported by the Student Initiative Fund, a fund that is sustained through gifts from alumni to the McGill Fund.

"Societal misconceptions make it that girls don't get as much exposure to STEM careers at a young age," explains Jones. "POWE changes that mentality and changes the community."

POWE @ 30

This group was established in 1990 following the massacre of fourteen women in engineering at École Polytechnique de Montréal, on December 6, 1989.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2019-20, POWE has since become one of the Faculty's most visible and active clubs, with a diverse range of activities that promote young women's ambitions for the iron ring.

In particular, POWE's various networking sessions, company presentations, conferences, career building workshops and recruiter counselling forums help propel students into their careers, and Jones was no exception.

"POWE's events and activities gave me tips and insights on what the industry was like and what it was to work as a woman in the field," Jones remembers. "It prepared me for how it was going to be on the outside."

Trained as a software engineer, Jones joined the tech industry in 2016, starting at Deloitte as a technology consultant and product team member. She began to look for "more product-oriented work" and found her match in June 2019 when she hooked up with the Montreal start-up, Dialogue, a virtual healthcare app that connects employees with health professionals. As part of their product management team, Jones focuses on patient-facing applications.

Helping Hand

While Jones may have got her career off to a great start, that's not the reality for a lot of women in the field. As of 2018, 25% of high tech jobs in Canada were filled by women, a number that hasn't budged in the past ten years, and on average a woman makes \$7,000 less than a man for the same work. Three years after her graduation, Jones appreciates the helping hand that POWE gives her in a male-dominated industry.

"We get together whenever there is a situation at work that we want each other's advice on," Jones explains. "It's a support system-- anytime there is a problem in our careers we reach out to the POWE group. I feel like I have this group behind me. They help me know how to approach a situation that I wouldn't be able to without their advice."

In her first year after graduation, Jones stayed in close touch with her alma mater through the POWE Advisory Alumni Board, with whom she met three times a year with to help define their long-term goals and vision. The desire to continue her relationships eventually brought her to Homecoming in 2018, where she was delighted to meet members of the Class of 1959, who still coming back to reminisce about their time at the Faculty. Clearly, this kind of contact is important to Jones.

Staying Power



Vanessa Jones (BEng'16) has fond memories about her extracurricular activities with POWE and maintains close relationships with the women she met during her time with the group.

📷 Junji Nishihata

"What I remember about McGill University is the time I spent in extra-curricular activities and the time I spent with POWE. One of the nice things about life after McGill is that my peers who were with me at POWE are all still really close, even if we are not all in the same engineering field, or even in the same country. Even after McGill, those ties are very strong."

"It's a support system—anytime there is a problem in our careers we reach out to the POWE group. I feel like I have this group behind me."

—VANESSA JONES

Standing Out

Environment and Women's Health

An Edmonton native with Quebec-born parents, Sarah Dubois was scouted by the Martlets as a goalkeeper at the Canada Youth Nationals in 2013, putting McGill on her radar. When she looked more closely at the Faculty's programs, Dubois found that they fit well with her life goals.

Those goals included chemistry and ecology. The Faculty's Chemical Engineering program allowed her to take an additional minor in Environmental Studies, which helped her examine the interconnectedness of the environmental crisis. These combined areas of study gave her a technological background in the environment, as well as a basis in policy making. "It allowed me to approach the technology with sustainability in mind," Dubois says. "If we use the tools of many disciplines, and if we understand how people are affected, then approaches to solving environmental problems can only get better."



The Right Chemistry

Alfred Guenkel's (PhD'73) decision to undertake PhD studies at the Faculty of Engineering lead to an international career in chemical engineering that has benefited hundreds of others. Now, he intends to see that future generations can have the same opportunities he had.

Making the choice to leave a planned gift is no easy decision. For Alfred Guenkel, it was a journey several decades in the making. He first arrived at McGill in the summer of 1967 – a watershed year for Montreal. At the age of 24, the recent graduate from Aachen University in Germany opted to study Chemical Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, supported by a McConnell Memorial Fellowship. Setting foot on Canadian soil during the euphoria and promise of Expo'67, he was immediately impressed with Canada's friendliness.

The young Guenkel had grown up in Aachen, the ill-fated German city that was all but decimated by American forces at the end of WWII. He remembers "playing in the rubble" of bombed-out lots that peppered the city, long after the fighting was done. This grim post-war reality would eventually propel Guenkel to seek a new land far away from the dark memories of his childhood.

"I arrived with \$300 and a suitcase," Guenkel recounts. "I am very thankful for the McConnell Memorial Fellowship. It was about the salary of a secretary at the time."

He received much more than the Fellowship as a student at the Faculty. In addition to his cherished memories of inter-departmental soccer ("I was a bad player, but I could run fast.") Guenkel would eventually meet his future wife, Shizuko Iwasa, a Japanese immigrant who had come to Canada to pursue her profession as a dollmaker.

Alfred and Shizuko Guenkel in front of their rental flat in Bruxelles back in 1971
Courtesy of Alfred Guenkel

Beyond the social aspects that brightened his years at McGill, Guenkel also found the University to be much more open compared to the dull, learn-by-rote experience of his undergraduate at Aachen. Nevertheless, his European background would prove to be useful: Even before he had completed the oral defense for his doctorate, Guenkel was hired by Proctor & Gamble, one of many American companies that were eager to find students with dual European-North American education. Guenkel and his wife were shipped off to Brussels in 1971, but he became homesick for Canada and later moved back to Montreal, where he was hired by leading chemical company Canadian Industries Limited (CIL). This proved to be the turning point of his career.

It was around this time – 1974 to be exact – that Guenkel began making regular contributions to the Faculty's McGill Fund (today known as the McGill Fund), an activity he maintained for 39 years. This eventually led to him making a much larger gift, and then later, his decision to leave something for the Faculty after his passing. "I am forever grateful for receiving the McConnell Memorial Fellowship from McGill," he explained. "I hope that another student at McGill is given the opportunity to do what I was able to do."

Once in a Lifetime Opportunity

At CIL, he had been hired to develop a more efficient process of producing mononitrobenzene (MNB). The young chemical engineer "put his heart into it" and came up with a method that virtually eliminated the energy necessary for its production.

"I lucked out with CIL. It was the biggest Canadian chemical company at the time, and they did some wonderful work. Creating the MNB process was really the foundation of my good fortune. I grabbed a once in a lifetime opportunity and made it happen," he said.

Guenkel later brokered his expertise in MNB into the launching of a start-up company, NORAM Engineering, which grew to become one of the world's leading suppliers of this compound. All of these successes lead to Guenkel being inducted into the Canadian Academy of Engineering in 2002, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia in 2013. Clearly, he has made his contribution to the Canadian economy, and society.

"When I was at McGill there were 30 people in the Department and only four Canadian-born students in the graduating class—it's very international and that's the nice thing about McGill."

"I hope that another student at McGill is given the opportunity to do what I was able to do."

—ALFRED GUENKEL



(Left) Tomas Pavlasek graduation photo from 1944 yearbook
Courtesy of Tom Pavlasek

(Right) Alexandra Conliffe in 2002
Jason M. Huculak



Worlds Apart

Two graduations with sixty years between them—Tomas Pavlasek from the Class of 1944 and Alexandra Conliffe from the Class of 2004 give two perspectives on their Alma Mater, the field of Engineering, and what it was like for them to be a student at the Faculty in their day.

What was happening in the world when you were at the Faculty?

Alexandra Conliffe: I was at the Faculty in September 2001 during 9/11. I vividly remember being in the Engineering Undergraduate Society office when I learned the news.

Tomas Pavlasek: I can give you a feeling of what the world was like Christmas 1941. In that month the Germans were shelling Moscow; the Japanese had taken China and Singapore and were rampaging down the islands towards Australia; and in North Africa, German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel was poised to take Cairo. It was the lowest part of the war.

Why has it been important for you to remain close to the Faculty?

AC: Engineering is a challenging degree, and there's a certain camaraderie you develop with your classmates. I could not have earned my degree without working with my classmates—working on problem sets, studying for exams together. So when I think about the degree, I think about it a bit as a collective achievement.

TP: We were all members of the McGill University Reserve Training Battalion. Half the time we were parading in uniform. In those years, you were not allowed to study unless you were in the army. Those who were able bodied were called up when we graduated in '44, and those who were not, worked in the war industry. It made our class very unified.

What's your most vivid memory of your time at McGill?

AC: Our Engineers Without Borders chapter hosted the first national conference at McGill. We were part of the history of an organization that came together for first time coast to coast. It was a lot of hard work but a privilege to be part of that founding moment of bringing people together around a common cause.

TP: In February 1944 an issue of the McGill Daily was published which, in the social mores of those days, was considered to be a shameful insult to the University. All copies of the issue were promptly seized and the entire Editorial Board, who happened to be made up mostly of engineering students, was summoned to the Principal's office. The Principal informed them that the Daily would be banned for the rest of the term, and that the Board was being dismissed for sully the University's honour. The members of the Board sheepishly left the Principal's office, only to spring joyfully into a run down the main campus road to the nearest popular student hangout to celebrate. The timetable for the final examinations had been posted recently in the Faculty of Engineering: they were overjoyed not to have to toil any more at night to publish the paper.

What were the most important engineering challenges facing the world when you were in school?

AC: When I was at McGill the millennium development goals were announced, and globally people were trying to tackle inequality and injustices. This was one of the reasons that Engineers Without Borders started up. At that time was this sense that the role engineers could play at tackling these global challenges was understated and that engineers wanted to contribute their skills.

TP: Engineering and technology had seen remarkable developments during the war and they were now being applied to peacetime use. The nature of Engineering itself was going through a major transformation. Just think about it—in the intervening years after the war, systems theory, information theory, and robotics all happened.

What advice would you give to a first-year Engineering student?

AC: Try to hold in mind what is the change you want to see in the world and then think about how the skills you're developing can help you achieve it. Engineering is a tremendously technical degree, and it's very easy to lose sight of any broader context for the work. Holding intentionally your thoughts around what a good world looks like and what important change is needed can help contextualize what could feel very technical over the course of four or five years.

TP: Most of the things I have done in my life were not predictable. Often, an opportunity to do something comes as a nuisance, but turns out to be an important thing to do.

Looking back at your time at the Faculty, what are you most thankful for?

TP: Education was very expensive in those days. I would not have been able to go to McGill had it not been for the benevolence of some private individuals who sponsored my studies.

AC: I had a scholarship while I was at McGill that provided summer funding to do interesting work overseas during summers. I spent one summer teaching English in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and I spent another summer in Uzbekistan with Doctors Without Borders. These experiences were very important for me to think about how I could have a positive impact in the world. It would be amazing to make those kinds of opportunities available to more Engineering students.

Alexandra (Alex) Conliffe (BEng '04) is the Director, Grants and Organizational Learning and the Strategic Lead, Climate Change & Environment and Health at the McCall MacBain Foundation. She is also a member of the Faculty Advancement Board (FAB) of McGill's Faculty of Engineering.

Tomas (Tom) Pavlasek (BEng '44, MEng '48 and PhD '58) is a Professor Emeritus at McGill's Faculty of Engineering. He was a research associate in the Department of Electrical Engineering from 1948 to 1952. He was appointed Assistant Professor in 1953, Associate Professor in 1957 and Professor in 1962.

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—MIRIAM BEARD

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