PHILANTHROPY
CHANGES
LIVES

Impact of Giving: 2017-18

McGill
DESAUTELS
Faculty of Management
Faculté de gestion

MANAG
Thank you for your generosity.
Thanks to philanthropic support, our new Donald E. Armstrong Building is buzzing with student activity. I have watched this building transform over the past months, seeing it take its place as one of the tremendous recent achievements of the Desautels Faculty of Management. The Faculty is enormously proud that this is the first fully donor-supported building project at McGill in decades, and in January 2018, it opened its doors for students in our master’s degree programs.

These students are among the best anywhere. They truly deserve, and will benefit greatly from, the new teaching and learning resources the new building offers. QS ranks us among the “Global Elite” of business schools, with such peers as the Harvard Business School and the London Business School; QS particularly cited the employability of our graduates, the impact of our research, and our international academic reputation. In January, the Desautels MBA was also ranked #1 in Canada by the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking.

That reputation is well earned. We attract top students – graduate and undergraduate – not only from across Quebec, but from Canada and around the globe. What makes them the best is not only their academic accomplishments, but also their commitment to society. In spring 2017, one of our BCom students, Chris Bolombo, organized Empower McGill, a conference on disability and business that was the first student-run conference of its kind in Canada. Empower McGill received seed funding from the Desautels Fund, which is a powerful testament to the impact of your annual gifts.

Our researchers are also making a difference in the world. For instance, the McGill Centre for the Convergence of Health and Economics is on the leading edge of research regarding the complex relationship between behavior, food choices, food production and health.

Your gifts have been a crucial part of our success – indeed, your philanthropy has placed us where we are today. Your gifts transform our undergraduate and graduate programs, our research, our facilities and the student experience that comes with a Desautels education. This is thanks to the time, energy and funding that you, our visionary friends and alumni, have generously contributed to this effort. What is more, as today’s students certainly know, you are role models of philanthropic generosity. Your commitment not only makes us better today and tomorrow but, by inspiring future alumni to emulate your generosity, for many years to come.

Thank you.

Isabelle G. Bajeux-Besnainou
Dean and Professor of Finance
Desautels Faculty of Management
Accelerating for Success

Left to right: Students participating in the X-1 Accelerator, Team Dialysave, Tim Tokarsky mentors X-1 Accelerator teams
The Bell X-1, the plane Chuck Yeager flew to break the speed of sound, was mind-spinningly fast.

So when the Desautels Faculty of Management launched its X-1 Accelerator program, the association was clear: “We aim to work with our startups to help them take off, giving them the best chance of flying,” says Renjie Butalid, Associate Director of the Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship.

The McGill X-1 Accelerator complements the McGill Dobson Cup competition, which since 2009 has witnessed over 1,000 teams pitch their startup ideas to panels of judges from the business world. “We wanted to offer another program to support Dobson Cup winners at a later stage in their development,” Butalid explains.

In 2013 and 2014, gifts from Tim Tokarsky, BSc’88, enabled McGill to send one team each summer to a 10-week accelerator program at MIT. But when approached in 2015 to send another team to MIT, Tokarsky, one of the initial supporters of the Dobson Cup, instead offered funding to establish a comparable program at McGill. The McGill X-1 Accelerator program was born.

The 2015 10-week pilot, from mid-June to mid-August, saw five teams benefit from guest speakers, workshops, and other instruction, culminating in a Demo Day in which teams pitched their companies onstage in Montreal before business people and investors. The program has since grown to include six teams in 2016 and eight in 2017. Demo Days also grew, with 2016 participants presenting not only in Montreal but also to McGill alumni in San Francisco and Boston; in 2017, presentations in New York City and Toronto were added to the roster, giving participants a solid month of cross-continent pitches.

One beneficiary of the new program is Dialysave, a 3rd place winner in the Health Sciences Track of the 2017 McGill Dobson Cup with its proposal for a portable, user-friendly and inexpensive hemodialysis machine. “We wanted to grow our company, and the accelerator program has given us a very good education in entrepreneurship,” says Vivian Eberle, currently a second-year BCom student who, with Université de Montréal nursing student Anya Pogharian, created Dialysave. “And the guest speakers, the feedback, and a mentorship with an expert in the medical device industry have been very helpful for us. We met with experts who critiqued our pitches several times over the summer, and now we are focused on product development.”

So far, Dialysave has built two quite promising prototypes and is working on a third iteration. “Were it not for the Dobson Centre and the X-1 Accelerator program, we would not have been able to build our idea further,” Eberle stresses. “The Centre has given us tremendous support.”

Montreal can be a breeding ground for world-class companies, emphasizes Butalid, but succeeding requires getting these young companies out into the world – both in the cross-continent Demo Day pitches and through expanding personal networks of mentors and other contacts. “The reception has been overwhelmingly positive at each Demo Day event,” he says. “This program is giving us a new way to engage our alumni, offering the opportunity to meet with startups and, if they choose, act as mentors or investors.”

For Tokarsky, without whom the program would not exist, the payoff is in being involved with new businesses. “I like helping younger people get into startups, and the Dobson Centre gives an ideal ecosystem,” he says. “Seeing these groups of young passionate people making things happen is wonderfully rewarding.”

The program will continue to grow, as this past summer the John Dobson Foundation donated $2 million over the next 10 years. “This support gives us the capacity to provide more funding for startup founders,” says Butalid. “It has already allowed us to expand the demo tour, connecting the Dobson Centre to the world and reinforcing the McGill brand.”

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– Vivian Eberle, second-year BCom student
Mayelafshar might never have had this professional epiphany, though, as his own circumstances were proving difficult leading up to his exchange. “Going to Russia and living there for a term was expensive, especially for my family’s financial situation,” he says. But a $10,000 HSBC International Business Award enabled Mayelafshar to manage the costs. The program, created by HSBC Bank Canada at 10 Canadian schools, including Desautels, will ultimately benefit six Desautels students.

“The HSBC Award made travelling to and living in St. Petersburg much more relaxed, as I wasn’t worrying about funds constantly,” he says.

The trip was quite an eye-opener, too. “St. Petersburg’s architecture is breathtaking – even little convenience stores look like castles!” says Mayelafshar, who also took time to travel to Moscow and even into western Siberia – both completely different experiences from St. Petersburg.

The exchange opened my eyes to all the opportunities as I move forward in my career. I learned a lot about myself. The fact that I received this scholarship was validating, too. I’m really grateful to HSBC for everything,” he adds.
The Lewis and Margaret Pearl Pugh Fellowship

Donors Paul Pugh BSc’67, MBA’71, and Nora Rainboth felt strongly about the role of education in a progressive society, so they chose to leave a bequest to McGill. “McGill is the institution that gave me the educational grounding to launch my career, and it’s where Nora was first employed,” says Pugh. After making these plans, Pugh and Rainboth also wanted to participate in the MBA Next 50 campaign, which launched at the time of the 50th anniversary of McGill’s Desautels MBA program. Pugh explains that combining a planned gift with a gift for the MBA campaign “seemed like a timely event, as it would allow us to support the University, and particularly a student in the MBA program. Naming this after my parents carries on their legacy of turning education dreams into reality.” Thanks to Pugh and Rainboth’s vision to fuse current and future generosity, the impact of their giving is already making a difference.

“It was hard for me to travel to a school thousands of kilometres from my home and family – it really was a sacrifice for a better future,” says Nitzan Leibovitch, a recipient of the Lewis and Margaret Pearl Pugh Fellowship. Leibovitch came to McGill from her home near Tel Aviv. “But everyone here has been friendly and welcoming, and when I have problems the MBA staff members have been open and helpful.”

Leibovitch studied electrical engineering at Bar-Ilan University, near her home, and upon earning her undergraduate degree she was hired by Intel, where she led engineering projects and garnered awards and recognition within the company. “But after three years I wanted to extend my knowledge and skill set, and to acquire the tools I would need to take on more leadership and financial roles,” she says. “My goal with my MBA is to return to technology, not as an engineer but in a leadership position in product management.”

A determining factor in choosing the Desautels Faculty of Management was the Lewis and Margaret Pearl Pugh Fellowship. “The Pugh Fellowship made coming to McGill a much easier choice,” Leibovitch says. Leibovitch is particularly drawn to the international, cross-cultural flavour of the MBA program. “There is something magical about McGill and Montreal. I love the vibe and the way people of all different cultures get along here,” she says. “I’m an Israeli student meeting others from Lebanon and Syria, getting to know people for who they are. In so many ways, the fellowship is allowing me to accomplish my dreams.”

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SUPPORT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Soutar Career Centre

“McGill students are diverse and bright, but that doesn’t mean they know where their educational journey will take them,” says Marie-José Beaudin, Executive Director of the Soutar Career Centre, dedicated to developing the professional skill sets of the Faculty’s undergraduate and master’s students. “We help students prepare for the competitive nature of the market, we direct them in ways that make sense for their career aspirations, and we ensure they develop a network to support this career direction.”

The Soutar Career Centre is a shining example of the impact of philanthropy. The Centre was previously funded solely through student fees, but additional donor support has allowed the Centre to expand its suite of services and its team: career advisors, business development, and alumni engagement staff. Named in 2012 for Helgi Soutar, BSc’58 and the late Ian Soutar, BEng’58, and supported by dozens of designated gifts from alumni and friends, the Soutar Career Centre has been transformed by donor support. Take, for example, a gift from Brian Stein BCom’81, DPA’82, in honour of his son, David Stein BCom’13, DPA’14, when he completed his studies. Generous contributions like Mr. Stein’s, as well as hundreds of gifts to the Desautels Fund, have made a significant impact to the Soutar Career Centre’s offerings.

Students connect with the Centre at the start of their programs, and are encouraged to begin reflecting on potential career paths and learning how to brand themselves early on. “They learn to understand recruitment cycles: when to apply for positions, what skills to showcase, and so forth, so that by the time they graduate they are prepared to make career-shaping decisions,” says Beaudin. “We help students think about the key skills they need to develop.”

Like many Desautels students, Chris Bolombo, BCom’18, can attest to the Centre’s importance. “They’ve been instrumental in everything I’ve accomplished,” he stresses. “I’ve made important contacts at events, such as the Jaclyn Fisher Management Career Fair. The mentors that the Centre linked me with gave me great advice on what I should be doing now to further my career.”
Bolombo first connected with the Centre to receive assistance in reviewing his application documents and preparing for interviews, but before long was volunteering as a peer advisor, helping first and second year students with their resumés. He eventually went on to train new peer advisors. He also participated in the Centre’s numerous career recruitment events, including the annual Toronto business networking trip, in which Beaudin brings close to 200 students to three days of career development activities and meetings with over 50 companies.

“Our suite of services provides students with some of the tools they need to explore careers. Through one-on-one sessions with career advisors, specialized workshops, and mentorship opportunities, we aim to foster the self-knowledge and competencies that are needed to embark on a successful professional journey,” says Beaudin.

The Centre also assists students in pursuing other initiatives. With its support, Bolombo organized Empower McGill, a spring 2017 conference promoting awareness about disability and the workplace that drew rave reviews not only within the Faculty and across McGill, but nationally. “Since the conference, other universities, including the University of Toronto, have reached out to us, asking to help them do something similar.” The conference was so well received that it is now an annual event.
The Jaclyn Fisher Management Career Fair

This past September saw over 900 students participate in the Jaclyn Fisher Management Career Fair, building networks and exploring career opportunities with representatives from close to 50 companies. “We want to empower students to be confident, and the Jaclyn Fisher Management Career Fair is a great opportunity for students to put on a suit and represent themselves,” says Beaudin. “They learn a lot.” The Fair runs for a full day, with the morning strictly for Desautels students, but the afternoon open to students from across the University. “The Jaclyn Fisher Management Career Fair is a good opportunity to network with potential employers,” says Emily Adams, a double-major in finance and marketing in her final year of studies. “It was great to talk face-to-face with employers and see the prospects that are out there after graduation. It is so different from simply filling out job forms, especially for understanding things like company culture and other intangibles.” Adams served as lead peer ambassador for the 2017 edition of the fair, organizing the student volunteers who helped employers set up booths and ensuring that the event ran smoothly.

The Fair is generously supported by The Jaclyn Fisher Foundation, in memory of Jaclyn Fisher, BA’15, who passed away at 25 after a lengthy battle with inflammatory bowel disease and primary peritoneal carcinoma, a rare cancer. While at McGill she discovered a passion for organizational behaviour, becoming a course counsellor in the Desautels Faculty of Management and later a Junior Steering Committee member, serving as a student leader within a peer teaching program. The Fair is a fitting tribute to her commitment to helping other students.
FACULTY FACTS

{ HIGHLIGHTS }

$40.4 M
the Desautels operating budget for the 2016-17 year

200
course sections per week offered in the Bronfman Building

101
Desautels Global Experts enhance the BCom and MBA experience through guest speaking and mentoring activities

40th
This year is the 40th anniversary of the Joint PhD Program in Business Administration with Desautels Faculty of Management, Concordia University, Université du Québec à Montréal and HEC Montréal

8
Integrated Management Symposia were held in 2016-2017.

The topics ranged from Artistic Integrity and Leadership with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra’s Music Director Kent Nagano to Leadership During Economic Crisis with former Director of the Office of Management and Budget of the U.S. Government, Shaun Donovan.

{ INTERNSHIPS & CAREERS }

3,033
number of full-time positions and internships posted with the Soutar Career Centre in 2016-17

181
BCom, MMF and MBA students who attended the Soutar Career Centre’s annual Toronto recruitment trip in November

$55,571
2017 BCom graduates’ average base salary
Previously:

19 classrooms,

seating 1,285 students

Now, with the opening of the Donald E. Armstrong Building:

26 classrooms,

seating 1,710 (increase of over 30%)

5 computer labs

(with 148 computers in total) available to Desautels students

84%

2017 BCom placement rate

four months after graduation

$85,000

2017 MBA graduates’ average base salary

84%

2017 MBA alumni placement within three months of graduation
Philanthropy is particularly magical when the expertise and passion of a donor can be matched to a project focused on that very same passion. The McGill Centre for the Convergence of Health and Economics (MCCHE) is a world-leader in promoting integrative and interdisciplinary solutions to diet-and lifestyle-related global health challenges, such as obesity and under-nutrition. Enter donor Leslie Jonas, a long-time supporter of the Centre, who enjoyed a successful career in the food industry that saw him build such brands as Delisle Yogourt (since sold to Danone) and Salad Express. "The goals of the Centre fit perfectly with my interests, as does their interdisciplinary approach," he says. "I am happy to have been able to support their activities."

"We are innovating in how we innovate," is how Laurette Dubé, director of MCCHE, describes the model that shapes the Centre’s research.

The idea behind the Centre’s "convergent innovation" is simple but powerful: it seeks to embed health, economic and environmental sustainability into new business model designs from the start, rather than dealing with the consequences after the fact. In that way, it represents an innovation in the way we innovate.

Consider the work MCCHE has done with the humble pulse, the dried seed of a legume plant: while fairly marginal in Canadian diets, legumes, peas and beans are a staple of other diets globally and a source of many
health benefits. MCCHE has been exploring the health, economic and social impacts of pulses since 2012, and worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to have 2016 declared the Year of the Pulse, an initiative that blended awareness-building with knowledge creation and food innovation competitions in over 60 countries.

“In addition to being very healthy, pulses are an agricultural commodity that also captures carbon dioxide, so they have a strong, positive environmental footprint,” says Dubé. “Replacing wheat with pulses in many breads would have a huge impact on our carbon footprint.”

“We took pulses as a test case, because this example lies at the nexus of the environment, health and industry,” says Dubé. “But the same model can apply to other foods, or other issues, like transportation.”

The convergence Dubé refers to takes place across the Centre’s three main research pillars. These include the “Brain to Society” pillar, which focuses on how a more comprehensive understanding of the neuroscience involved in decision-making and reward-processing can be integrated with fields like behavioural economics to support healthier choices. The “Whole-of-Society” pillar draws on digital technologies and big data to encompass and integrate the myriad factors whose impact must be considered in analyses of health and economics. For instance, there are a range of factors contributing to obesity in North America – not simply diet but also transportation and urban design, education, media and others. The “Complex Collaboration” component explores how businesses can work with partners across sectors to address issues impacting individual, social and environmental well-being.

Given the cross-disciplinary nature of the Centre’s research, it includes not only faculty members from Desautels but also from McGill’s Faculties of Science, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Medicine, and Law, as well as affiliates from other universities in Canada, the United States and India. The Centre’s reach is furthered through its three popular webinar series: Convergence Innovation in the Pulse Innovation Program; Consumer Behaviors; and Big Data (this latter co-hosted with the Johns Hopkins Global Obesity Prevention Center and Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center).

“We are at the start of a new industrial revolution, where the digital, the physical and the biological are blurred more than ever,” says Dubé. “So we are confronted with new challenges as well as new possibilities we can tap into.”

The Centre’s emphasis on innovative interdisciplinary research makes philanthropy all the more vital. “Often research grants are in silos, so gifts from donors allow us to fill gaps that we couldn’t if we relied solely on grants,” says Dora Koop, the Centre’s Managing Director.
The Donald E. Armstrong Building

The Desautels Faculty of Management is being transformed. As of January 2018, students in its master’s degree programs have a new home in the Donald E. Armstrong Building. The building is named for Professor Don Armstrong, PhD’54 (1925-2011), the founding Director of the Graduate School of Business, who launched the MBA program in 1963. Thanks to donor support, it will offer faculty and students state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities.

The new facility – formerly the McGill University bookstore, but fully renovated inside and out – will dramatically improve the lives of students in the Faculty’s MBA, Masters of Management in Finance, and new Masters of Finance in Analytics programs. “This expansion gives the Faculty a space gain of close to 20%, almost all of which is geared toward student needs, such as classrooms and study facilities,” says Michelle Forsythe, Building Director and Building Projects Manager for Desautels. With 48,666 square feet (gross), the new facility offers much-needed resources and promises to have a profound impact on teaching and learning in the master’s programs.

One of two hallmark projects in the MBA Next 50 Campaign (the other being the creation of more than 34 new MBA fellowships), the Armstrong Building has been funded entirely by gifts from donors. “Knowing that the Donald E. Armstrong Building was completely funded with the support of donors is incredibly inspiring to me and my classmates,” says Venkatesh Penumathsa, MBA’19. “Students at the Desautels Faculty of Management..."
certainly appreciate the generosity shown by donors, which will re-shape the student experience for generations to come.”

As of late January 2018, more than 34 rooms and 136 lockers had been named by donors. Pierre Robitaille, MBA’66, named a boardroom to recognize the impact that his own MBA had on his career. “I am very grateful for the skills I developed during my MBA at McGill and what it has enabled me to achieve in my career. This is why I am proud to support Desautels’ MBA Next 50 Campaign and to contribute towards the offering of best-of-class building facilities and learning resources to current students and generations to come.”

The building now meets the full spectrum of other teaching and learning needs as well, addressing the demand for quiet study spaces as well as classrooms – some in traditional amphitheatre format, but others with movable student stations so class layouts can be easily adapted for different learning environments. The Armstrong Building also includes a conference room and board room, discussion rooms for students, student offices, and multiple interview rooms. A large space with a movable partition wall will host events and serve as a student lounge.

Master’s students are not the only beneficiaries. The concourse level – the basement – is dedicated primarily to undergraduate students, providing close to 10,000 square feet of study space, classrooms, discussion rooms, lockers, and secure storage for student associations. And because the master’s classes have vacated the third floor of the Bronfman Building, undergraduates will also gain more space.

While most of the renovations took place within the building, its exterior was also redesigned to provide a stronger visual connection with the Bronfman Building, and includes striking windows overlooking the McTavish walkway and Sherbrooke Street. Inside, the building features artwork, some provided by donors, creating a boutique learning environment. In addition, it is a certified LEED (Leadership in Environmental Energy and Design) construction that meets stringent “green building” criteria.
PHILANTHROPY CHANGES LIVES
As the Managing Director of Ulysses Management, a private equity group, Paul D. Barnett, BA’84, invests in promising companies and builds them over the long term into stronger and more valuable enterprises. And as a member of the Desautels Global Experts, he is also committed to investing in McGill students, broadening their education and experiences not only by regular visits from his New York City home to guest lecture in Desautels classes, but also through offering internships and mentoring opportunities.

While a high school senior in the U.S., the Minnesota-born Barnett travelled to Montreal to visit friends who had moved from the U.K., and was given a tour of the city. When they passed McGill, he inquired if the university took Americans. “They said yes, so I decided to stay a bit longer,” Barnett recalls. “And the following week I went to the admissions office to apply.” The application was, of course, successful, and Barnett moved to Montreal, earning an undergraduate degree in economics. Armed with a McGill degree, he moved to New York where he was hired by an investment group, eventually working in merchant banking. “That’s how I discovered I wanted to be involved with owning and building companies,” he says.

As Barnett’s career grew, he became interested in giving back to McGill, and over a decade ago, after meetings with then-Dean Peter Todd, he found a satisfying way to do just that. He began by teaching a class once or twice a year, a commitment he has maintained, working primarily with students in the Faculty’s elite Honours in Investment Management program. “I like sharing my professional experiences when I teach,” says Barnett. “I focus on what Ulysses Management does – buying, building and selling companies – to engage students with the choices we have to make.” He also gives students an opportunity to be personally engaged with these choices: in 2008 he started hiring summer interns to work with his team in New York, and Ulysses Management has enlisted a McGill intern every summer since.

“I insist that our interns get thrown into middle of the mix. I don’t let anyone sit in a meeting and not share their point of view,” he says. “That’s a high expectation for the interns, but they love it.” Barnett’s interns also come from the Faculty’s Honours in Investment Management program, which runs for the final two years of the undergraduate degree, and they are usually between their first and second years of the program.

“This is an important year for students, because if they can get an internship at a major investment bank it improves their chances of getting an offer when they graduate,” he says. “But the interns that work for us forego that, because they know we don’t hire people out of university. I think that’s a good filter – we get those who may have a little more confidence and a higher risk appetite, who see that an internship at a private equity firm is a unique opportunity that they can leverage later.”

“I’ve been fortunate to have a lot of business success, and looking back, it’s easy to figure out why. The road leads back to McGill – it’s where I grew from a child to an adult. It demanded a lot of independence and self-sufficiency, traits that have helped me make my way,” he says. “And now, being able to reach out and have a positive impact on a young person’s career path is very rewarding.”

Paul D. Barnett: Creating Opportunities in Many Ways
Since 1821, McGill has been offering outstanding educational opportunities to students from across the globe, pioneering new areas of research and discovery, and changing how we understand the world. As we approach our University’s 200th anniversary, McGill’s professors, researchers and students continue to tackle the biggest questions in science, culture and human endeavour.

Looking towards McGill’s third century, we hope you will join with us in celebrating and supporting this important work as we embark on The Road To 200 and beyond, and as, together, we create an even better world and a brighter future.