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Thank you for your generosity.
The McGill University Library and Archives is ready to turn the page and begin a new chapter. We are at a special moment, and as I enter my second term as Dean, I am confident that the changes we are facing now will better position McGill to build a Library that truly meets today’s needs and those of tomorrow.

Looking back on the past five years, we have made some truly great strides and as we move forward in reimagining the future of our Library, it has given me the opportunity to appreciate anew the role you personally have played in achieving our goals to date. Thank you.

It is thanks to donors like you that we are able to keep up with this rapidly changing digital world and the many technological advances that are revolutionizing the way we use libraries. It is because of your generosity that we are able to meet the demands of our community, which is growing every day.

More than 10,000 people use McGill’s 13 libraries and special collections daily to conduct research, study or collaborate on group projects; another 500,000 requests for help and assistance are made every year. Whether they are students or faculty, undergraduates or graduates, German majors or doctors in training, the Library has become a 24-hour “home away from home” to serve them all.

To meet their evolving needs, we are actively involved in an exciting Feasibility Study to rethink the Library of 2050 to better meet the evolving teaching, learning and research needs of our community. This report describes a bold initiative that is already underway, the new Research Commons – a state-of-the-art space that is sure to transform the way research is conducted at McGill and help push the boundaries of innovation and discovery.

But with all these modern updates, I’m often asked how the Library can embrace the future while still preserving the past. In this report, we also share stories of some of our most rare and prized acquisitions, such as the prolific collection from one of history’s most notable Enlightenment thinkers, Voltaire, as well as the 19th century anatomical atlases housed in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine. Both of these cherished collections belong to the McGill community thanks to generous benefactors, and they have each significantly bolstered McGill’s international reputation as a centre for scholarly research.

Lastly, we describe the incredible support from our students and the deep commitment they have invested in the Library. It is up to us to make sure that the funds they raise are used in the best way possible.

The Library holds a special place in the hearts and minds of many McGill alumni, faculty, students, friends and donors. I hope these stories inspire you to support us as we look forward to an eventful year ahead.

Colleen Cook
Trenholme Dean of Libraries
McGill University
It’s exam time and the McLennan Redpath Library is buzzing with students. Every cubicle, group study space and computer is occupied, and the crowds keep pouring in.

“Walk into the Library – morning, noon or night – and you will experience a hive of activity,” says Colleen Cook, McGill’s Trenholme Dean of Libraries.

Cook, who acknowledges that McGill’s libraries are becoming severely overcrowded, says it was precisely this space crisis that triggered a massive feasibility study to best determine how the McGill Library and Archives can meet the evolving teaching, learning and research needs of its expanding community.

“Our plans are ambitious, but prudent,” Cook says matter-of-factly.

The study, which began in September of 2014, was unveiled to the McGill community in the fall of 2015; Cook describes it as the first step to building the McGill Library of the future, based upon listening to user needs. The study involved extensive consultation with hundreds of students, teachers, researchers, staff, alumni and donors, as well as architectural firms Shepley Bulfinch and EKM.

A key finding is that the Library has inadequate space to store and expand its print collections, with several branches already exceeding capacity. McGill remains one of the only major academic libraries in North America without access to a permanent, off-site storage facility.
One of the recommendations is to create an on-site robotic storage facility so that current and rare print collections can be kept on hand without taking up the valuable study space sought by students.

The study has also examined how to accommodate the growing digital demands of its users to ensure that the Library can keep up with the latest technological advancements in teaching and learning. One result will be a new Research Commons – a state-of-the-art facility that will be built on the main floor of the Redpath Library Complex; it is to be fully equipped with the newest software, as well as a 3D printer and scanner available to students and faculty engaged in cutting-edge projects.

“It’s a very exciting time,” says Ann Vroom, BA’67, Chair of the McGill Friends of the Library. The Friends, a group of loyal donors who celebrated their 25th anniversary last November, have made it their mission to support and promote the feasibility study, and ensure that the Library can raise the private support from donors needed to carry out some of its innovative projects.

“Libraries are the core and the heart of a university,” says Vroom. “They are going through a revolution and we realize this may be the greatest thing we could do.”

Libraries are the core and the heart of a university - Ann Vroom, Chair of the McGill Friends of the Library
RETHINKING RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION
A place to collaborate and connect. That is the mandate of an innovative new space that will revolutionize the way research is conducted at McGill. Following nearly two years of strategic planning, the Library is ready to unveil the first phase of the new Research Commons, a state-of-the-art space that will be located on the main floor of the Redpath Library Complex.

Conceived in close partnership with Faculties across campus and equipped with the latest technology, the Commons will be designed with a new generation of data-driven students and professors in mind. It will be a place where all can come together to share and discuss ideas, and obtain support and advice through all steps of the research process.

Some defining showpieces will be a high-resolution visualization wall made up of stackable projectors with surround sound; a laboratory equipped with the newest software that will enable researchers to incorporate mixed media into their assignments; and a 3D printer and scanner.

The Commons will also provide one-on-one consultations with knowledgeable and highly skilled research librarians, advice on research publications, and workshops on copyright, grant writing, research ethics and data management, as well as thesis “bootcamps.”

The goal is to foster an environment of team building, collaboration and discovery in what is often considered a solo endeavour, says Sara Holder, Director of the Research Commons.

“Graduate students sometimes feel siloed in labs and don’t know what their peers are working on,” explains Holder, who has been actively involved in the planning process. “The Research Commons gives students a chance to interact, see what other students are doing and be inspired.”

Similar collaborative spaces have opened in many top-tier American universities, but the concept is much less common in Canada, she says. And while 3D printers are becoming one of the most sought-after technologies, Holder says they are often inaccessible to the public.

“She says a recently hired data librarian with an in-depth knowledge of 3D printing will be on hand in the Commons.

Support from the Joan and Clifford Hatch Family Foundation is helping to cover some of the costs of the Research Commons and has been instrumental in the launch of the first phase of the project. The Library will continue to seek new donors to set the stage for innovation and research in this new and groundbreaking context.
The SSMU Library Improvement Fund is an important partnership between alumni and undergraduate students here at McGill - Erin Sobat
McGill students are getting a lesson in philanthropy, but it isn’t from a textbook or a classroom lecture.

For close to two decades, undergraduate students have spearheaded a campaign to give back to the McGill Library, and their generosity is something we can all learn from.

The Students’ Society of McGill University (SSMU), in co-operation with the McGill Alumni Association, created the Library Improvement Fund back in 1996. Today, the Fund is administered by students and is supported by fee contributions of $8.50 per full-time student and $4.25 per part-time student each semester. These contributions are matched by alumni donors.

This past year saw a record-breaking $700,000 raised by the Fund, money that is being used to enrich the academic experience for students while supporting many of the Library’s greatest needs, says Diane Koen, Director of Planning and Resources for the McGill Library.

“They have a committee made up of students who reach out to various student groups to hear what they want,” Koen says. “It is coming from the ground up.”

Since its inception, the Fund has raised money to support 24-hour library access, more comfortable study spaces and student employment opportunities across campus libraries. Some other initiatives from this past year include further seating improvements, new electrical outlets in the Octagon Room of the Islamic Studies Library, and the addition of a wall-mounted screen in the Schulich Library equipped with wireless app-based connectivity.

“The SSMU Library Improvement Fund is an important partnership between alumni and undergraduate students here at McGill,” says SSMU Library Improvement Fund Coordinator Erin Sobat, BA’16.

“It is clear that without this support for our Libraries, we would not be keeping pace with the 21st century. We hope to see this commitment continue well into the future.”

“The students have been extraordinary,” says Koen, who adds that the success of the campaign stems from its grassroots appeal.
Celebrating an 18th Century Literary Giant
The instruction we find in books is like fire. We fetch it from our neighbours, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all. – François-Marie d’Arouet (Voltaire)

Spoken by one of the 18th century’s most controversial and oft-quoted thinkers, François-Marie d’Arouet (1694-1778), better known by his pen name Voltaire, these are words that hold special meaning for the McGill Library.

Two years ago, thanks to the generous donations of a number of benefactors, the Library was able to acquire a large collection of Voltaire’s work, significantly bolstering McGill’s reputation as a top research centre for Enlightenment Studies.

Belonging to the eminent Voltaire scholar, the late J. Patrick Lee, the collection includes nearly 2,000 items covering almost 3,200 volumes. In addition to large numbers of older and more recent editions of Voltaire’s work in different languages, it also includes manuscripts and letters written and received by Voltaire and over 1,000 books published in the 18th century.

The acquisition of the collection has significantly broadened and deepened the McGill Library’s holdings of 18th-century materials, says Dr. Richard Virr, Chief Curator, Rare Books and Special Collections.

“Donor interest and support has made the development of these collections possible in the past and continues to do so today,” he says.

In the fall of 2013, the Library’s Rare Books and Special Collections celebrated the acquisition with an exhibit titled “Voltaire: A Sampling of the J. Patrick Lee Collection.”

Following on the popularity of this exhibit, the Library will host a special symposium next spring, featuring a keynote address by Dr. Robert Darnton, noted Enlightenment historian and recently retired head of the Harvard Library.

The symposium will further build upon McGill’s reputation as the Canadian centre for 18th-century studies and one of the leading centres of its kind in all of North America, Virr says.

“With already strong, and in some cases unique, holdings for David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Collection and the symposium mean the Library can support scholarly research and teaching across a broad spectrum of this key period in Western civilization,” he says.

With already strong, and in some cases unique, holdings for David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Collection and the symposium mean the Library can support scholarly research and teaching across a broad spectrum of this key period in Western civilization,” he says.
Print Volumes in the McGill Library:

+1,856,660 e-books

By the numbers

- **80**: per cent of McGill Library collection that is digital
- **72**: kilometres of bookshelf space throughout the Library: equivalent to the driving distance from McGill’s downtown campus to the U.S. border.
- **316**: languages are featured in McGill’s Collection (including English and French)

**HISTORICAL TREASURES**

- The Library has more than **139,000** music recordings.
- In **1945**, the first library for the School of Social Work was housed in a **bathtub** at 3600 University Street.
- In 2012-2013, **791** people visited **Sir William Osler’s urn**, housed in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine.
- The oldest item in the McGill University Archives is the business journal of the **fur trading firm** of James and Andrew McGill, **1797**.
- The **oldest rare book** in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine is a **clay tablet from Assyria**, dating back to the 8th century BC. It lists medical recipes, including this treatment for eye problems: “slay a scorpion, pull out its tongue, cut off its head, and with its blood anoint the inflamed eye; [the patient] will live.”
The smallest item in the Library’s collection is *Ian Hamilton in A Bottle* by Canadian writer Darren Wershler-Henry. It consists of one sheet of paper measuring 65 x 16 mm inside a glass bottle with cork stopper.

One of the largest rare items in the Library is a map of Russia, published in 1785. The hand-coloured map measures 128 x 282 cm.

The heaviest item is a pre-1824 Columbian Press invented by George Clymer, which weighs about 2,300 pounds.

- **AMAZING ARTIFACTS**
  - Stephen Leacock’s walking stick
  - A 19th century surgical and amputation kit. The blades, saws, scalpels and other instruments are still immaculate and very sharp.
  - A hockey stick signed by members of the men’s McGill hockey team in 1937-1938 and donated by Miriam Tees. Her father, Fred Tees, the team’s trainer, secured the stick as a souvenir for Miriam, who later became a professor in the School of Information Studies.

- **WHAT’S IN CIRCULATION?**
  - Aside from textbooks, the most circulated book is *Mastering French: Hear It, Speak It, Write It, Read It: Level 1 (2003)*.
  - The top three most accessed journals are:
    1) *Nature*
    2) *New England Journal of Medicine*
    3) *Science*
  - The top five loans of e-books and audio e-books are:
    1) *Outliers*
    2) *50 Shades of Grey*
    3) *A Game of Thrones*
    4) *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*
    5) *Dr. Blair’s French in No Time*
  - The most watched DVDs are:
    1) *Planet Earth*
    2) *The Complete Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, produced by BBC & Time-Life Films
    3) Alfred Hitchcock - the signature collection
    4) *Star Wars* trilogy
The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head. — William Osler
William Osler is best remembered for the compassion and enthusiasm he brought to the field of medicine.

As one of McGill’s most eminent medical graduates and faculty members, Osler famously said: “The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head.”

He was the first physician to bring his medical students out of the lecture hall and to his patients’ bedsides, and it is that humanist approach to medicine that prompted McGill to launch an essay competition in his honour.

Now in its third year, the competition, made possible by the Pam and Rolando Del Maestro Osler Medical Student Essay Awards, was established by the Medical Students’ Osler Society and the Board of Curators of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine.

The contest gives undergraduate medical students the opportunity to explore any theme of interest in the history, social studies, sociology, ethics or humanities of the health sciences. It also provides them with the opportunity to be mentored by an expert in their chosen topic, and to use the rich resources of the Osler Library and other libraries at McGill.

Participants compete for prizes ranging up to $1,000 for the winning essay; the first-place winner also receives the Osler Library Board of Curators’ medal and has their essay published on the library’s website.

Medical student David Benrimoh, MDCM’16, has participated in the last two competitions; in 2014, his essay investigating the controversies surrounding universal health care coverage in the United States earned him second place. He was mentored by Professor Nicholas King of the Department of Social Studies of Medicine, Biomedical Ethics Unit.

“I loved working with the excellent librarians to find relevant texts, sorting through rows of old books and picking out relevant titles, and thumbing my way though at least 23 books as well as many online resources,” says Benrimoh, of his time spent researching at the Osler Library. “Libraries are still magical places – and librarians are, more than ever, true wizards – as long as we learn to use them and are challenged to do so.”
Mr. Manguel is a profound storyteller and he engaged with the students for the better part of two hours – it was an amazing experience for us all. - Geoffrey Little
Introducing

Alberto Manguel:
The McGill Library’s First Scholar-in-Residence

Alberto Manguel, distinguished scholar, Guggenheim Fellow and bestselling author of several award-winning books, can now add a new distinction to his impressive resume: McGill’s first-ever Library Scholar in Residence.

The Argentinian-born Canadian writer spent the fall of 2014 in this role, teaching a course in the Department of Hispanic Studies and leading special seminars for students across several disciplines, including a talk entitled “Why a Library?” to students from McGill’s School of Information Studies, as well as a seminar to graduate students working in the field of translation from Montreal’s four major universities.

When Professor Geoffrey Little of the Department of Information Studies found out Manguel was on campus, he invited the famed author to speak to his graduate class.

“Mr. Manguel is a profound storyteller and he engaged with the students for the better part of two hours – it was an amazing experience for us all,” says Little, a sessional lecturer who teaches the History of Books and Printing.

“His visit to the class was a unique opportunity for me and my students to hear from a scholar who has made an important contribution to our understanding of the relationships between words, books and readers. I was personally quite taken with Mr. Manguel’s remark that all writing and printing are simply marks on the page before us. They are signs by which authors form words and meaning.”

Manguel, who is a member of PEN and an Officer of the French Order of Arts and Letters, has had his books translated into over 30 languages and won countless international prizes for his work.

Though today he identifies as a Canadian, Manguel was born in Buenos Aires in 1948 and spent his early years in Tel-Aviv, where his father served as the first Argentinian ambassador to Israel. His family later returned to Buenos Aires and it was there that he met Jorge Luis Borges, one of the greatest literary figures in Argentina. Just 16 at the time, Manguel was working in a bookstore when the blind Borges asked the young employee to read aloud to him at his home. Manguel would serve as Borges’s reader for four years and has called his relationship with the famed author pivotal to his own writing career.

So it is no surprise then that one of the courses Manguel taught during his time at McGill was to students in the Department of Hispanic Studies on the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, and his oft-quoted words that “I am much prouder of the books that I’ve read than of the books I’ve written.”

Manguel continued his packed semester with a special public lecture on “Sherlock Holmes in Buenos Aires: Borges & the Detective Story,” and ended his visit with a talk to a sold-out crowd at the Friends of the Library event “On Reading, Writing and Fiddling with Words.”

Manguel, who shared so much of his time and knowledge during his short stay at the University, left his audience with words to remember him by. “Reading almost always leads to writing. It becomes communal, a dialogue, what you want to share with others.”

His presence on campus dates back to March of 2013, when he delivered the keynote address at the symposium “Meetings with Books: Raymond Klibansky, Special Collections and the Library in the 21st Century.”

The symposium was funded by one of the Library’s most loyal donors, Ethel Groffier, who also happens to be an admirer of the great author. This led Groffier to generously fund Manguel’s position as McGill’s Library Scholar in Residence, so that undergraduate and graduate students could benefit from his vast knowledge and teachings.
EXPANDING RESEARCH
OF FAR EAST HISTORY
AND CULTURE
Since it was established in 1968, McGill’s Department of East Asian Studies has become one of the world’s leading research and teaching centres devoted to the languages and civilizations of China, Japan and Korea. Adding to its reputation is the East Asian collection in the McGill Library, which has grown rapidly in the last few years thanks to university contributions and private support.

Grace Fong, Professor of Chinese Literature in the Department of East Asian Studies, has seen her work benefit directly from donor generosity.

Fong, who teaches courses on Chinese culture, poetry, fiction and women writers, as well as Classical Chinese, has also been directing the popular Ming Qing Women’s Writings Digital Archive and Database Project since its inception in 2003.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Henry Luce Foundation of New York, the project was officially launched by the McGill Library in 2005, giving a huge boost to research on women’s history and culture by providing free access to digitized images and searchable data of women’s literary collections and anthologies from Late Imperial China.

“In the past decade, graduate students and researchers at McGill as well as those from all over the world have produced innovative scholarship using the rich materials and digital resources freely available on the website,” says Fong.

She says the collection is consistently the most accessed digital collection in the McGill Library, with approximately 200,000 monthly users spanning the globe.

“It has enabled new research into the life experiences and cultural achievements of women in imperial China,” she says.

The Luce Foundation, together with other generous benefactors, has also made significant contributions to the East Asian collection through several rare and valuable acquisitions.

“Thanks to the generous philanthropic gifts we have received, our East Asian Studies collections have developed rapidly,” says Macy Zheng, liaison librarian for the East Asian Collection at the Library. She says this support has enabled the Library to develop important collections in areas such as Taiwanese Studies, Japanese manga and anime, Chinese film, Chinese local gazetteers, Chinese archeology and the Siku Quanshu (collections of the four Imperial repositories), to name a few.

“We are now in a better position to provide both print and electronic resources to our community of users,” she says.

“Thanks to the generous philanthropic gifts we have received, our East Asian Studies collections have developed rapidly.” - Macey Zheng
The McGill Library’s digitization program focuses on building digital collections of enduring value. Important content from the Library’s collections is digitized for anyone to access and use freely. Materials are chosen very carefully for digitization. They are ones the Library feels would have the highest impact in terms of preservation and wide appeal. In addition, digitization may enable or increase access to the content of rare, fragile or at-risk collections.

A gift from the Harold Crabtree Foundation facilitated the creation of the online McGill Library’s Chapbook Collection. Almost 1,000 chapbooks, small, unbound books peddled on the street from the 16th until the early 19th centuries, are now available for online reading, full text searching or downloading. Chapbooks on this site cover a variety of topics, from dramatic works to children’s material, local history to household manuals to fortune telling. The site also features explanatory essays putting these works in their publishing and historical contexts.

Most of these digitized materials have been loaded into the Internet Archive’s Digital Books Collection, a non-profit site that hosts over 6 million public domain e-Books. Depositing these digitized chapbooks with the Internet Archive makes them available to more users globally and allows them to be searched alongside similar materials held at other institutions. In addition, most of these digitized chapbooks have been deposited with the HathiTrust cooperative to ensure their long term preservation, and the texts have been encoded in a way that will allow us to make them available for high-end text mining research in the future.

Secondly, support from the Foundation permitted the Library to significantly scale up digitization of theses and dissertations written by McGill students. McGill’s eScholarship repository features McGill theses and dissertations accessible to the public. The Library purchased a scanner system, with support from the Foundation, further increasing digitization capacity, both in terms of total throughput and speed. The Library has been able to digitize six years of theses (from 1945 to 1950), consisting of 526 items and over 78,000 pages. All McGill Library users can discover these works now and use them in their own research.

Lastly, the Library recently announced the digitization of historic McGill student publications dating between 1875 and 2001, also made possible through the Crabtree Foundation. Newspapers of all kinds are rich resources for historians; they reflect the time period in which they were created, and provide a glimpse into society and McGill at the time. This extensive digital collection currently includes over 10,000 issues from a range of McGill student publications including The Fortnightly, The McGill Outlook, Le Délit, The McGill Daily, the Law student journal Quid Novi, The Dram and the Failt-Ye Times.