

Dear Student Experience Enhancement Fund (SEEF),

On behalf of the 2020 MENU (Meeting des Étudiants en Nutrition à Montréal) otherwise known as the Nutrition Games organizing committee, we want to deeply thank you for the generosity of your funding that made our project possible. For the first time, McGill's Macdonald campus had the honour to organize the event that was supposed to take place from March 13th to March 15th and gather Nutrition students of five universities from Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City and Moncton. McGill University started taking part in this event only four years ago, therefore it was truly an honour to be the host university this year after a few years of memorable participation.

Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, we took the heartbreaking decision to cancel our event only 24 hours prior. As you probably know, most school events were getting cancelled on March 12th and the Macdonald campus decided to close its doors, where we were planning to spend most of the weekend's activities. We were very disappointed to cancel everything we have worked so hard on since May 2019 and to disappoint the 121 students who had been impatiently waiting. However, we are still very grateful for your fund because it was a tremendous help in the organization of an event of this magnitude. We could not have put so much time and attention to small details if it had not been for your generosity. We still want to focus on the positive side of things and make you see how memorable our event would have been if it had taken place, and how we still succeeded at making our participants happy at the last minute.

Initially, MENU is supposed to be a three-day friendly competition between universities offering the Nutrition program in Eastern Canada. Students from each university need to show strong team-bonding skills and work together through the week end to win points and possibly be the winning team. However it is not only a competition; the weekend includes great gatherings, conferences, intellectual and athletic activities as well as networking with experts and companies working in the field of Nutrition or Food Science. Each year, the event's intent is to offer an outside of class experience to students so they can meet with potential future colleagues and discover uncommon job opportunities in the field of Nutrition. This year, each of us has been working hard to find three amazing guest speakers (Anne-Julie Tessier, Julie Aubé and Julia Lévy-Ndejuru), plan the activities that were supposed to take place on Macdonald campus, find a gallery to host traditional Saturday evening banquet and a hotel to welcome all the participants as well as our last conference on Sunday morning. Also, we had the brilliant idea this year to involve the Foodservice Systems Management class students to plan and prepare two extraordinary meals for our event.

On the eve of the event, when all our plans were falling apart, we tried to find solutions such as organizing the event elsewhere, planning other activities and substituting the meals that were supposed to be made by our school's students. Nevertheless, the provincial government was launching new recommendations by the hour and it would not have been a responsible decision to host an event gathering nearly 150 students. Once we announced the bad news to our

participants, we still worked hard to offer them some of the activities virtually. We met the day after to film some content for our Facebook page, we were able to set up virtual live conferences and we filmed our prize draw. We have been arranging the delivery of the bags we prepared with products from our sponsors and took the time to thank all of our sponsors on social media. We are also still working to get the most money out of our reservations and partially reimburse our participants. Overall, we fell in love with the process of organizing such a big event and we definitely all acquired great skills during these months of hardworking.

The participants were very understanding and supportive, and they greatly appreciated that we took our last energy reserves to organize a virtual event for them. Here are testimonies from two participants:

“I just want to say a big thank you to all the people on the MENU 2020 committee. When I heard the news that the event that I’ve been waiting for months was cancelled, I was devastated. But then I thought, « I can’t imagine how the committee must be feeling right now ». I know how hard everyone of you have worked to make this experience amazing for all of us who were coming to visit you. Most of all, I appreciate the effort that you put to make sure that we’d still get the best experience possible despite the circumstances and also, in such a short amount of time. What made me even more sad, is that I didn’t get to meet you all in person because I absolutely loved your personalities during the livestreams ! Hope I’ll get the chance next year when we will be welcoming you to ULaval.” - Rosemarie Gauthier, ULaval

“A lot of students were depressed when they found out that our weekend at McGill that was supposed to be our getaway before returning to school had been impacted by COVID-19. This virus was going to stop us from having conferences and meeting new people, but no! The organizing committee was able to put together an improvised and entertaining version of MENU. They surprised us by filming clips that reflected their personalities so that their energy and efforts would not go to waste. We won’t forget these Facebook lives and virtual conferences for a long time. Congratulations to the organizing committee of MENU 2020, we are very thankful and cannot wait to meet you in person in 2021.” - Madie Cloutier, ULaval

As you may have realized from these statements, Laval University is next in line and will officially be the next host university for MENU 2021. We are excited for them and will be giving them recommendations based on our experience as organizers to ease their jobs. We truly believe that they can plan an event that will make everyone forget about this year’s unfortunate period.

Again, we thank you for believing that we could make students’ experience more special and enriching and hope that we did not disappoint you.

Sincerely,

Meri Makaryan and the rest of the MENU 2019 organizing committee.



Merci 1000 fois aux dons de produits si généreux



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