

### Introduction

What if undergrads could design and teach a course at McGill, and both they and their students would receive credit for their participation? At UBC, UC Berkeley, Stanford, and at least nine other universities, they already can.

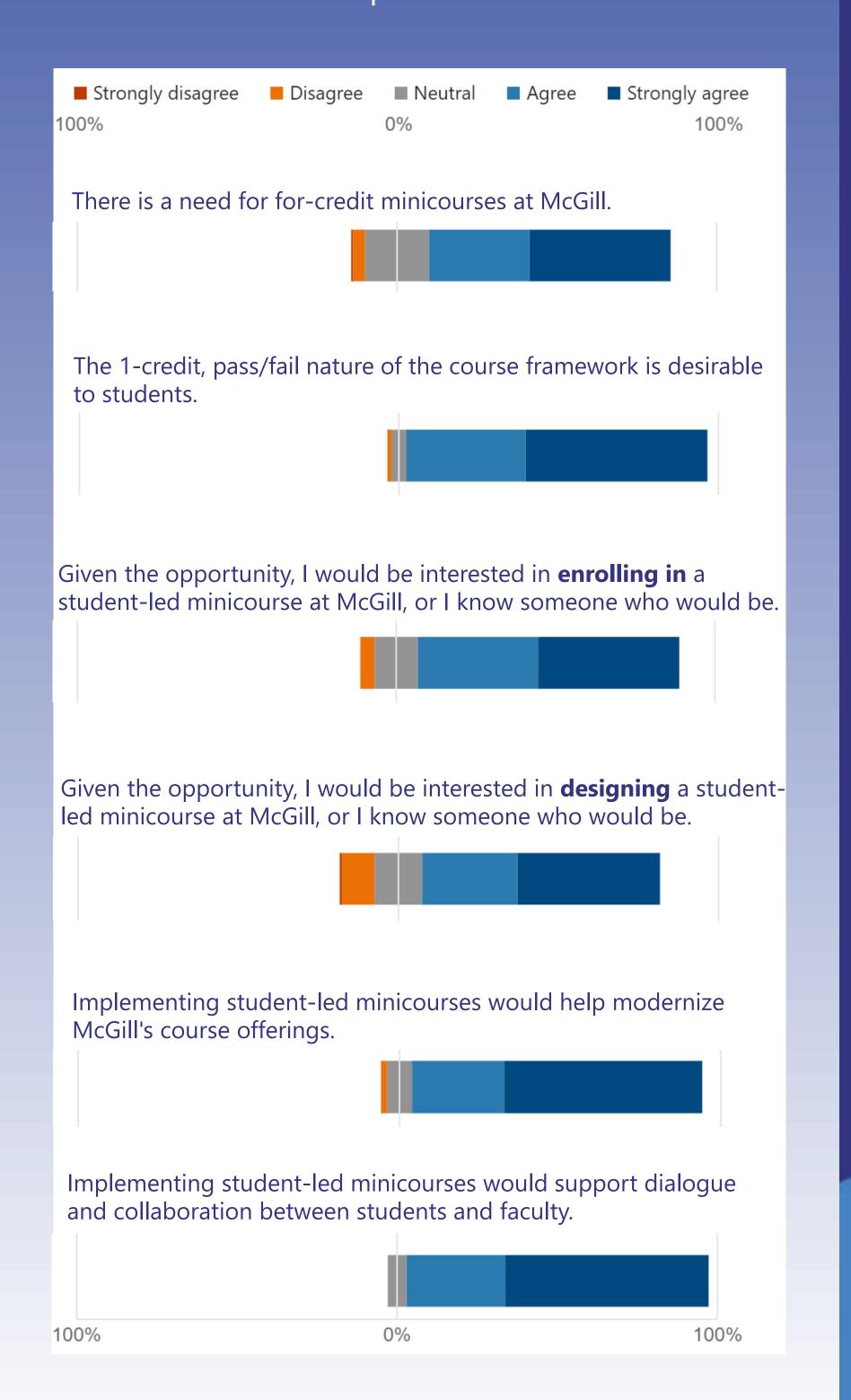
This research project involves creating a pilot program for 1-credit, pass/fail mini courses designed by students under faculty supervision to be offered through the Faculty of Science at McGill. Upper-year undergraduates would spend a semester learning teaching skills following course approval.

#### Methods

Summarized in the arrow diagram.

#### Results

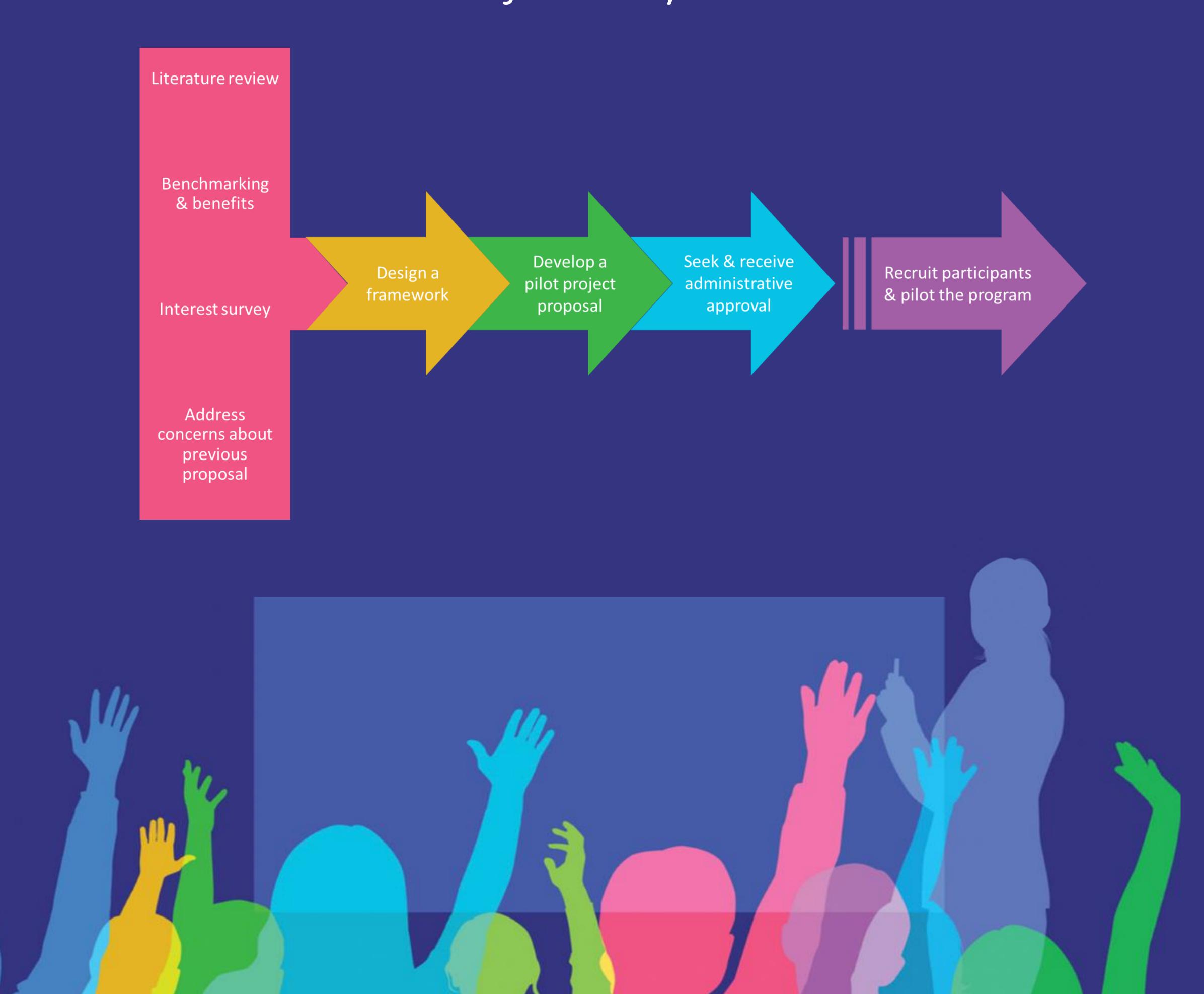
While this project is ongoing, an anonymous interest survey has been completed. It was sent to current members of the Science Undergraduate Society by email. 160 students indicated their level of agreement with the six statements shown below, and 24 wrote short-answer responses.



# Students taking the wheel

Designing a framework to implement student-led mini courses at McGill

Providing students with the opportunity to design courses allows them to become *drivers*, rather than passengers, on their educational journeys.





#### Discussion

The results of the survey indicate that BSc students at McGill are highly interested in student-led mini courses. Survey respondents cited several potential benefits, for example:

- The chance to study unique topics in a low-stakes environment under the guidance of approachable, knowledgeable peers
- The opportunity to learn teaching skills and build one's CV
- Strengthening partnerships between professors and students

As with driving a vehicle, student instructors will need to be prepared in advance for the responsibility and power involved in teaching.

#### So what?

Students are seeking ways to "take the wheel" and empower themselves academically. First-years can benefit from student-led mini courses by exploring interesting topics before having to declare a major. Conversely, for students reaching the end of their degrees with a 1-credit deficiency, mini courses could help them graduate on time. Overall, this project will mean more opportunities for McGill students.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Office of Science Education; my supervisor, Dr. Tamara Western; Rohan Bhutkar, who previously worked on this project; and all those who have supported me in preparing for the Undergraduate Poster Showcase.

# Presenter Information

Emma Arnell

Contact:
emma.arnell@
mail.mcgill.ca

