

Principal's Task Force on

RESPECT & INCLUSION

in Campus Life

Final Report

April 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2017, the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life took on a mandate to understand the status of respect and inclusion in community life on McGill's campuses. Our first step was to listen.

We listened at an Open Forum in the Leacock Building. We heard opinions in writing through a university-wide survey. We received 18 letters from representative groups, including political and religious groups, teaching and administrative associations, and Senate subcommittees. And we made spaces to talk. We welcomed students and staff to meet with us in residences, at Thomson House, at Macdonald campus, and in seminar rooms across the downtown campus. We listened to students and deans, professors and technicians, part-timers and full-timers.

We heard that our polity could better foster respect and inclusion if we dedicated more space, time, and resources to making room for dialogue and listening. The foundations of collective life at McGill are not in a critical state, but there is a real need for more transparent, humane, and empathetic communication between all members of our community.

In this Report, we outline five key recommendations and 24 specific action items to promote respect and inclusion on our campuses. As we listened, we heard that the University's mission is not always tightly integrated into decision-making and communications. And we distilled from our consultations that five key areas require attention if McGill is to fulfill its commitment to fostering respect and inclusion in campus life: mission, trust, governance, communications, and space.

Underlying all of this is the critical importance of opportunities and spaces for open discussion that builds trust and respectful engagement with people and ideas. The idea is to make space to connect people from all parts of campus life. Some practical and symbolic actions could be taken immediately. Some steps will take a longer time and a greater effort to realize. In crafting our recommendations, we hope to demonstrate that the work done by this Task Force is part of an ongoing and important conversation, one that should continue far into the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Force would like to acknowledge our outstanding research associates Hanna Azbaha Haile, Sarah Berger Richardson, and Marika Giles Samson who have made a tremendous contribution to our work through their intellectual rigour, research excellence, and rich insights into the McGill community. Without their dedicated support, the work of the Task Force under such a tight timeline would not have been possible. It has been our privilege and pleasure to work with them.

We also want to extend our sincere gratitude to the generous administrative support by Rafael Frota, Angela Mansi, and Maria Babiak. Irina Susan-Resiga guided us through the process of designing the campus-wide survey and the analysis of the survey data. Doug Sweet provided significant logistical support during the consultation phase. We are also grateful for the assistance of McGill IT services, especially Gabriel Smith and Leila Wagner.

Above all, our work would not have been possible without the generous participation of the members of the McGill community and resource people who contributed to our consultation process. Their insights, concerns, aspirations, and suggestions inspired us to do our best and serve our community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|---|----|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 | Conclusion: Living Our Mission | 20 |
| Thinking About Respect and Inclusion in Context..... | 4 | Afterword | 21 |
| What Came Before..... | 5 | Appendix A: Summary of Recommendations and Associated Action Items..... | 22 |
| Establishing Credibility..... | 5 | Appendix B: Members of the Task Force..... | 24 |
| Part I: What we have learned | 6 | Appendix C: Terms of Reference & Timeline..... | 25 |
| The value of listening..... | 6 | Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire..... | 26 |
| How we listened..... | 7 | Appendix E: Focus Groups..... | 29 |
| Survey..... | 7 | Appendix F: Open Forum Announcement..... | 31 |
| Focus Groups..... | 8 | Appendix G: Group & Individual Submissions..... | 32 |
| Open Forum..... | 8 | Appendix H: Meetings with Resource People..... | 33 |
| Open Call for Submissions..... | 8 | Appendix I: External Research & Selected Bibliography..... | 34 |
| Resource Interviews..... | 8 | | |
| Beyond McGill..... | 8 | | |
| Part II: Recommendations | 10 | | |
| Theme 1: Mission..... | 10 | | |
| Background..... | 10 | | |
| Recommendation..... | 13 | | |
| Theme 2: Trust..... | 13 | | |
| Background..... | 13 | | |
| Recommendation..... | 14 | | |
| Theme 3: Governance..... | 14 | | |
| Background..... | 15 | | |
| Recommendation..... | 15 | | |
| Theme 4: Communications..... | 16 | | |
| Background..... | 16 | | |
| Recommendation..... | 17 | | |
| Theme 5: Space..... | 17 | | |
| Background..... | 17 | | |
| Recommendation..... | 18 | | |
| Part III: Moving Forward | 19 | | |
| Ensuring an Ongoing Conversation..... | 19 | | |

INTRODUCTION

THINKING ABOUT RESPECT AND INCLUSION IN CONTEXT

The Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life was created in November 2017 with the mandate "to recommend a set of concrete measures by which the University may ensure the full and effective operationalization of its core principles across all University activities but with particular consideration paid to student life at McGill."¹ These core principles - academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity and inclusiveness - are set out in McGill's Mission Statement & Principles.²

McGill is not the only university confronted with the challenge of balancing multiple core principles in the service of higher education, or reflecting on the particular place of respect and inclusion in campus life. These are issues that have been at the heart of debates in many North American university campuses, especially over the past few years. In the case of a recent incident at Wilfred Laurier University, the President issued a response in which she framed the issue as a question of how universities should encourage and implement their foundational principles "in a world that's more aware of the importance of inclusivity and yet, at the same time, is growing more polarized [...]".³

Tensions are rising as long-standing academic traditions are challenged by new ways of thinking. But these debates are not confined to campus contexts. For the last several years, institutions worldwide have undergone significant evolution. The status quo is being interrogated, as constantly evolving cultural discourses are questioning the value of rationality, expertise, and even truth itself.

Ideally, universities should be well positioned to navigate these choppy waters. We are institutions built around a core of critical thinking and originality. Our research instills a culture of innovation. The teaching mission of the university provides a tailor-made vehicle for deeply con-

textual, nuanced, and properly informed discussions. McGill University has, for almost 200 years, been a place where people come to learn and grow, as students, as professionals, and as scholars. While a great deal has changed at the University, our consultations have confirmed that, regardless of one's particular role, the appetite for learning and growing at McGill remains unabated.

This Task Force was mandated to undertake a broad and multifaceted consultation to recommend measures that can be taken to ensure the operationalization of McGill's core principles across all University activities. The Task Force mandate is independent of the investigation that was undertaken by Professor Boudreau into allegations of anti-Semitism arising from the SSMU General Assembly on 23 October 2017. This particular event received considerable attention from campus, local, and national press. The tone and content of this reporting undoubtedly led to questions, both on our campuses and beyond, as to whether members of the McGill community work and study in a respectful and inclusive environment. While we are not mandated to look into this incident in particular, it serves as one of many examples where the principles of respect and inclusion can be tested in the life of the University, and in the lives of the individuals who constitute the McGill community.

In interpreting our mandate, and in response to feedback from many members of the community, we have given serious consideration to whether we should define "respect" and "inclusion". We have declined to do so, for two reasons. The first is that the practice of inclusivity means accepting that such important, and common, words may bear a plurality of meanings, and that this plurality is, in itself, an element of diversity. Second, as will become apparent, the expression and realization of these core values of campus life - of community life - will look different in different contexts.

¹ For full Terms of Reference, please see Appendix C.

² Available online at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/mission>.

³ Statement available online at <https://www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2017/nov/laurier-responds-to-recent-media-articles.html>.

WHAT CAME BEFORE

This Task Force is part of a continuous process of institutional introspection, adaptation, reaction, and growth. The observations and recommendations in this Report are neither the beginning nor the end of that process. The work of this Task Force should thus be seen in the context of a number of policy initiatives that serve to enable McGill's Mission and Principles. In addition to the ongoing work of numerous University offices, committees, and working groups, we have found the following recent or current projects to be of particular relevance:

- The Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement (2011)
- Report on the Open Forum on Free Expression and Peaceful Assembly ("Manfredi Report", 2012)
- Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (2013)
- Statement of Academic Freedom (2014)
- Report of the Open Forum on the Recommendations of the 2016 CAMSR Report on Divestment (October 2016)
- Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education (June 2017)
- Ad Hoc Panel to Conduct a Campus Study of Sexual Violence (March 2018)
- Committee for the Implementation of the Policy Against Sexual Violence (ongoing)
- Working Group on Principles of Commemoration and Renaming (ongoing)

Many of these documents have been well received, and some have had a demonstrable impact. The Manfredi Report, for example, resulted in the adoption of the Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in April 2013 and triggered recent revisions to the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. On the other hand, implementation of many of the recommendations of the Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement is perceived by some important stakeholders to be incomplete, leading them to question the depth of the University's commitment to equity.

At times our work was met with scepticism, or even cynicism, due to perceptions that task force or working group structures are used as a device to be seen as "doing something" without actually "doing something of sub-

stance". This is unfortunate, as a task force can be effective in addressing difficult, emergent problems that by their nature are cross-cutting in their scope and are without a natural "champion" in an organization's structure.

"... we are concerned that this initiative, will only be just that - a symbol; a token effort to demonstrate that the university is listening to its community while in practice ignoring all that it has heard in favour of the status quo."

- Submission from the REP Subcommittee⁴

We also encountered the perception amongst some members of the community that the Task Force was focused on the October 2017 SSMU General Assembly incident rather than the much broader scope described in the formal mandate. This conflation likely arose because the Boudreau investigation and the formation of this Task Force were announced in the same email message. Nonetheless, as described below, the quality of representations and engagement by members of the McGill community with the Task Force and its mandate were both excellent, and often inspiring to Task Force members.

ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

Having opened the channels of active listening, we believe that it is of great importance that conversations on respect, inclusion, and the meaning and purpose of our community continue. As this Report makes clear, McGill University, like many present-day institutions, is at a critical juncture in terms of mutual trust and collegiality between its members.

We are a large and increasingly diverse community. At times, our differences may appear greater than what unites us, with the latter expressed in our collective Mission: excellence in learning, teaching, research, and service to society. If we continue to see ourselves through the lens of increasingly small units of identity, discipline, and professional role, we will become increasingly alienated, which in turn will fuel existing cynicism and disengagement. If instead we seize this moment to affirm our collective commitment to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge – to the very idea of the University as a force for good – we can revitalize our sense of community and advance our collective purpose.

Ultimately, the Task Force believes that a University community that embodies respect and inclusion is built on principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness. Setting this in motion requires a conscious recommitment to the Mission and Principles by leaders in all sectors and at all levels in the University. This includes what we refer to as "University leadership" (members of the senior central and faculty administration), as well as the leadership of all those who represent students, unions, and associations on our campuses.

4 The Joint-Board Senate Committee on Equity's Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons.

PART I

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

THE VALUE OF LISTENING

The process of actively listening to those members of the McGill community who were willing and able to contribute to our consultation process has been very instructive. Over the past six months, we learned that institutional listening is both challenging and vitally important. Listening is key to fostering an environment of trust amongst individuals, trust by individuals in the organization, and trust by the organization in individuals. Listening also requires time, openness, and a willingness to engage with ideas that are challenging or disruptive.

In McGill's increasingly heterogeneous community, our differences sometimes limit our ability to identify what we in fact have in common. Overly cautious interactions and a hesitation to engage have unfortunately resulted in a culture of passive listening (acting like we are listening, but not really engaging with each other). This culture limits our capacity to give each other the benefit of doubt.

We need to foster a culture of active listening. This requires respect, and a nuanced and rigorous engagement with ideas. We recognize that building a university community that is experienced as inclusive for all of its members will be an ongoing process. We need to engage with each other honestly, as this builds trust and paves the way for better interactions with one another. A university should provide an environment where curiosity and the courage to ask questions are celebrated rather than silenced or penalized. This dynamic needs to be modelled from the top and fostered in all learning environments.

"Inclusion isn't a place, a placement, or a policy. Inclusion is an emotion. It is feeling valued; it is feeling like you belong."

– Professor Tara Flanagan, Faculty of Education

Learning is an active, dialectical, and iterative collective endeavour that should allow for mistakes. Indeed, the opportunity to engage in critical debates is what separates the university from other institutions; when we hesitate to speak up or ask questions, we miss an opportunity to learn and grow.

Our consultations pointed to the classroom as a good “ground zero” for modelling active listening and principled navigation of contentious issues. In the classroom, instructors can set the tone for respectful and inclusive engagement regardless of the subject matter, and moderate conversations with sensitivity. We heard of some good practices aimed at modelling conversations around difficult or controversial topics. One practice has a professor admitting their own intellectual or personal struggle with the controversial subject matter being discussed. Another has the professor asking students to give each other the benefit of the doubt, in recognition of one's own limitations and the likelihood of mistakes resulting from unconscious bias. Knowing how to model conversations on subjects that naturally lend themselves to dialogue and debate is invaluable. However, this kind of learning model can be applied in all settings regardless of the subject matter being discussed. It is effective in balancing dominating voices and promotes the appreciation of perspectives that one otherwise might not have previously encountered.

Principles of active and empathetic listening are not easily applied to substantive debates concerning the legitimacy of certain types of speech on campus. While listening to different perspectives is essential for learning, it is difficult to reconcile the right of every person to be heard and the argument that some views are so harmful that they should never be tolerated. There are no easy answers, but in order to accomplish the task we were assigned, we committed ourselves to broad and non-judgmental listening.

We recognize that there are limits to any kind of institutional listening, and that we did not hear from everyone who may have wanted to contribute to our consultations. While the specific limitations of our different consultation methods are discussed in the Afterword, a general observation about who is heard and who is left out in a process such as this should be made. While in-person consultations are necessary, in practice there is a very

small subset of the total community who participate and speak. There is a possibility that these participants do not represent the majority opinion. There is little question that those with the strongest opinions, particular on issues that get significant airtime, and those with the loudest voices tend to be heard more than others. Moderate voices and people who are less vocal are often left out of discussions. Active participation in community life may be a right, but it is one that many do not exercise for reasons of accessibility, availability, timing, language, or confidence.

HOW WE LISTENED

When the Task Force was established, the terms of reference provided a specific list of tasks and timelines for completing its work. We were mandated to:

- 1.....**Design and implement a University-wide survey of students, faculty and staff to assess the extent to which our existing structures facilitate or inhibit free expression, respect and inclusion, with the survey to be completed by 7 December 2017.**
- 2.....**Consult broadly with students across both campuses, through student organizations and via scheduled focus-group consultations, across the period November 2017 through January 2018, to identify areas of particular concern and/or strength.**
- 3.....**Identify and examine successful initiatives and best practices at peer institutions with respect to the protection and promulgation of core values.**
- 4.....**Hold an Open Forum on Campus Culture in January 2018, with a focus on community-building and mutual understanding, and drawing from the results of the Fall Term campus survey and consultation process.**
- 5.....**Identify areas of University life that are susceptible to being particular sources of tensions and where the operationalization of our core principles needs attention.**

The Task Force's approach to listening informed our interpretation and operationalization of our mandate. We sought to create spaces for individuals and groups to express themselves without reservation, mindful that we had an obligation to translate what we heard into meaningful recommendations. This meant that we structured our consultation process in a way that placed greater emphasis on problem-solving than problem-identification. For example, the call for written submissions on behalf of University associations and groups invited specific recommendations, and focus group discussions were moderated to encourage conversations about what could or should be done. Because it is impossible to do justice to every idea or concern we heard in this Report, we have distilled what we heard into cross-cutting themes.

Our efforts on the consultative processes mandated by items 1, 2, and 4, as well as additional initiatives, are set out below. While we outline here the processes that we undertook, the results of those processes are reflected in the thematic discussion in Part 2.

SURVEY

In accordance with the Task Force's terms of reference, within the first two weeks of operation a university-wide survey (Appendix D) was designed and disseminated to students, staff, and faculty on Monday 4 December, with a deadline of Thursday 7 December. A link to the survey was sent to students, staff, and faculty via an All Note (MRO). In addition, the survey was announced in both the student and staff versions of "What's New", and a final reminder was sent before the survey ended. We later learned that a large number of course instructors and sessional lecturers had not received the direct link email invitation to participate in the survey. We regret this oversight, and want to take this opportunity to urge the inclusion of these staff members in future university-wide surveys.

The survey was prepared and delivered in non-ideal conditions (a two week draft-to-implementation time frame, little time to design and re-design survey questions, no opportunity to do a pilot run) resulting in some imperfections. For example, the survey was seen as mischaracterizing the relationship between free speech and principles of respect and inclusion as mutually exclusive rather than mutually reinforcing. Moreover, exclusionary language was inadvertently used in what was a survey about respect and inclusion: terminology of "academic" and "non-academic" staff was used, rather than the more appropriate "academic" and "administrative" staff.

The overall response rate was 4.5%. Of 5,772 academic staff, 496 (8.6%) responded, 499 members of the 3,638 administrative staff (13.7%) responded, and 1,202 of 39,261 students responded (3.1%). It is noteworthy that the Task Force received considerable negative feedback from students about the timing of the survey as it was conducted in the last week of term. This concern even extended to the view that the timing was indicative of a disregard for student participation.

The survey consisted of both directed choice and open-ended questions, and Task Force members and staff reviewed over 3,000 written answers, which included specific concerns and proposals. The questions were designed to read the pulse of the McGill community and gather information about how principles of respect, inclusion, freedom of expression and academic freedom are experienced on campus. With response rates of 3.1% to 13.7% detailed statistical analyses are not appropriate. Nonetheless, the results were valuable in issue identification and helped guide the choice of the discussion questions in subsequent consultations.

Despite low response rates overall, several key themes emerged among those who did complete the survey. However, the views we encountered on each theme were diverse and often did not reflect any consensus on what is being done well and what should be improved. While keeping in mind the caveat that consultations tend to reflect opinions on the far ends of the spectrum rather than those in the middle, there was significant polarization among respondents about the Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) movement, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and the experiences of Palestinian students and allies on our campuses. Many respondents also mentioned the Residence Life Race Project, and this led to the creation of a Focus Group specifically about residence life. We heard from respondents from the Macdonald campus that they feel excluded from many discussions that occur on the downtown campus. And we heard from students and faculty that the classroom can be a safe space where a diversity of opinions and perspectives can be respectfully discussed, but it can just as easily be a space where controversial questions are dismissed or harmful discussions poorly managed. We heard from graduate students and international students who felt socially isolated and overlooked by student services.

It was in reviewing the survey results that the five themes highlighted in the Report began to emerge. These themes came into sharper relief in our subsequent Focus Group and Open Forum consultations.

FOCUS GROUPS

Building from the survey results, five (5) student-centered, closed-door focus groups were organized in January 2018 (Appendix E). These were held on both campuses, at different times on different days to try to accommodate a variety of schedules. Four of the focus groups emphasized specific themes: Teaching and Learning, Social Spaces, Graduate Student Life, and Residence Life, while a fifth one gave participants at the Macdonald campus an opportunity to identify any concerns. Each of the five groups had space for 20 participants, and the signup system reserved 15 spaces to students. Although the groups on Teaching and Learning, Social Spaces, and Graduate Life were all oversubscribed with substantial waitlists, actual attendance was disappointing, particularly among students. Bad weather may have played a factor on several dates (an ice storm, for example, occurred on the same day as the focus group on Social Spaces).

| | Students | Staff | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Open – Macdonald Campus | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Teaching and Learning | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Social Spaces | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| Graduate Student Life | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| Residence Life | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Total | 35 | 20 | 55 |

Overall, while we had space for 100 people in focus groups, only 55 members of the McGill community participated. Nonetheless, conversations during these focus groups were candid and constructive, and several participants have continued to engage with the work of the Task Force by sending in further feedback via email and other means.

OPEN FORUM

The Open Forum on Campus Culture was held on the afternoon of Wednesday 24 January. It was advertised across the University, both electronically through email and What’s New and with a hundred printed posters displayed prominently on both campuses (Appendix F). Around 50 people attended (including Task Force members and Task Force resource staff, and some members of University leadership who were present solely to observe); 38 people picked up numbers in order to speak. At its peak, there were 25 people live-streaming the Forum and, as of 17 April, 183 people had watched it online, either live or subsequently. Several people who attended this Open Forum were recognized by members of the Task Force from prior attendance at a focus group session.

The subject-matter of the Open Forum was left as open as possible to facilitate the open expression of community concerns, and three different Task Force members moderated the discussion. Each moderator presented a topic for discussion (respect and inclusion; concerns and ideas; how to move forward), although participants were free to raise other points as well.

OPEN CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Task Force made an open call inviting on-campus groups to share their collective concerns and experiences and to propose recommendations via a 1 to 2- page written document sent to the Task Force email account by 31 January 2018 (see Appendix G). This call was boosted by a deadline extension and a concerted solicitation of campus organizations, and ultimately resulted in 18 group submissions.

In addition to these group submissions, the Task Force received a number of emails from individual students, faculty, and staff. Members of the community expressed their opinions on aspects of respect and inclusion, their confidence (or not) in the Task Force consultation process, and shared their personal experiences and frustrations.

RESOURCE INTERVIEWS

In addition to the foregoing, in the period between February and April, we met with numerous on-campus resource people with specific insight into issues of respect and inclusion, including students, staff, and faculty. A complete list of these consultations can be found in Appendix H.

BEYOND MCGILL

The question of what constitutes respect and inclusion and how they relate to university spaces more generally is an active concern of many of our peer institutions. Equity, diversity, and inclusion have been identified as one of Universities Canada’s (formerly the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada) five strategic priorities, in recognition of the social and academic value of empowering and mobilizing a range of ideas, talent, perspectives, and experiences.

“We believe our universities are enriched by diversity and inclusion. As leaders of universities that aspire to be diverse, fair and open, we will make our personal commitment to diversity and inclusion evident.”

– Universities Canada, Statement on principles on equity, diversity and inclusion (October 2017)

As noted above, institutional contemplation of the issues raised in this Report is not unique to McGill. Some of the more public (highly mediated) debates have focused on perceived tensions between university commitments to principles of respect and inclusion on the one hand and principles of free expression and, less frequently academic freedom, on the other. We note that early in our consultation process many survey respondents flagged a conceptual problem with framing these issues as mutually exclusive or necessarily in conflict. These comments prompted us to be cautious about the way in which we drew on the proliferation of university policies and statements of principle on freedom of expression.

While instructive, we have decided that this Report would better serve the needs of this community by focusing on promoting respect and inclusion both as an end in itself, and as a means of establishing the necessary trust to engage critically with challenging ideas and concepts in the pursuit of higher learning.

Despite our commitment to tailoring this Report to the McGill context, for the purpose of comparison we provide here a few references to the ways that other universities have approached these issues. During the life of this Task Force, an incident at Wilfrid Laurier University, in which a teaching assistant was censured for using materials that some students found to be transphobic, led to the establishment of a Task Force on Freedom of Expression. To seek community input into their work, the Laurier Task Force have circulated a Draft Statement on Freedom of Expression, which includes the following statement:

"Laurier challenges the idea that free expression and the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion must be at odds with one another. Instead, the university embraces the concept of "inclusive freedom" which espouses a commitment to the robust protection of free expression and the assurance that all voices – including those who could be marginalized or excluded from full participation – have an opportunity to meaningfully engage in free expression, enquiry, and learning."⁵

The concept of "inclusive freedom" echoes the perspective that we heard here at McGill, that thinking about free speech, on the one hand, and respect and inclusion on the other, is a false dichotomy. Indeed, it is crucial that universities find a way to marry the values of free expression and respect and inclusion on campus, and Laurier's framing of "inclusive freedom" is certainly one way of doing that.

"Historically, we have done a better job at ensuring liberty for some than for others. Strong feelings about that inequity have given rise to many of the campus protests we have witnessed - or been a part of - in the last few years. As we look to the future, our goal ought to be to have liberty and equality, free expression and diversity, in more or less equal measure for all citizens. [...] As educators, we hold the potential to bring about this bright future in our hands every day."

– John Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces* (2017)

Meanwhile, one of the most robust ongoing discussions has been at the University of British Columbia, which has for many years been engaged in a process of articulating community standards on respectful debate and freedom of expression.⁶ In November 2017, a working group convened by the Senior Advisor to the Provosts on Academic Freedom presented a draft statement on freedom of expression to President Santa Ono. The university is still "workshopping" its statement, a process as interesting as the statement itself. Feedback received by the university is readily accessible on its website and includes novel deliberative mechanisms such as peer-reviewed commentaries on the statement, the publication of alternative versions of the statement, and class discussion feedback.

⁵ Available online at: <https://wlu.ca/about/values-vision-mission/freedom-of-expression/statement.html>.

⁶ See, for example, the President's Message to the University Community on Respectful Debate (April 6, 2017), online at: <https://president.ubc.ca/featured/2017/04/06/presidents-message-to-the-ubc-community-on-respectful-debate-2/>; and the Draft Statement on Freedom of Expression (November 8, 2017), online at: <https://academic.ubc.ca/freedom-of-expression-statement>.

⁷ Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression (January 2015), available online at: <https://freexpression.uchicago.edu/sites/freexpression.uchicago.edu/files/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>.

⁸ John (Jay) Ellison, "Dear Class of 2020 Students" available online at: https://news.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/Dear_Class_of_2020_Students.pdf.

We also looked at the University of Chicago's statement on freedom of expression. A significant number of survey respondents who suggested that free speech should be the primary operating principle of the University specifically advocated that McGill should adopt a similar, or even identical, position. The University of Chicago position is captured in the following excerpt from its 2015 Report of the Committee on Free Expression:

"... In a word, the University's fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the University community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission. ..."⁷

This view was then famously promulgated in an open letter from Dean of Students John Ellison to the incoming class in September 2016, as follows:

... Once here you will discover that one of the University of Chicago's defining characteristics is our commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression. This is captured in the University's faculty report on freedom of expression. Members of our community are encouraged to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn, without fear of censorship. Civility and mutual respect are vital to all of us, and freedom of expression does not mean the freedom to harass or threaten others. You will find that we expect members of our community to be engaged in rigorous debate, discussion, and even disagreement. At times this may challenge you and even cause discomfort.

Our commitment to academic freedom means that we do not support so-called "trigger warnings," we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual "safe spaces" where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own. ..."⁸

These different approaches to freedom of expression and inclusive freedom are a natural outcome of the greater heterogeneity of the people on university campuses throughout North America today, as well as a generational shift (to be discussed below). Greater diversity is both essential and challenging. New ways of thinking drive innovation and intellectual evolution, which lie at the core of the mission of any excellent university. Despite these clear benefits, the university is not insulated from the broader project of navigating diversity in the wider society – to define and articulate our collective aspirations and expectations of each other in the face of difference.

PART II

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report are set out around five cross-cutting, and often overlapping, themes that we have identified: mission, trust, governance, communications, and space.

THEME 1: MISSION

Background

McGill's Mission is to advance learning and knowledge creation and dissemination "by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society."⁹ In fulfilling its mission, McGill embraces five principles: academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness. These principles are foundational to McGill's identity, and should be embedded in all that we do. Throughout our consultations and deliberations, we were struck by the dedicated ways that students, staff, and faculty contribute to the flourishing of these principles. However, we also learned of gaps between existing policies and practices and stated University principles, which effectively prevent us from "living our mission". A failure to anchor policies solidly within the University's five principles undermines the potential for McGill to be a place where all members can learn and grow.

The groundwork for the promotion of respectful debate and conversations around contentious issues at McGill was explicitly laid five years ago, when a consultation process at McGill led to the creation of a Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Peaceful Assembly that "Members of the University community have the right of freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly."¹⁰ These rights were grounded in the idea that:

"... McGill is a place for open and frank dialogue, both inside and outside the classroom. The University values the variety of opinions and experiences of members of the McGill community and encourages the open and respectful expression of that diversity. Respect for the meaningful expression of dissent requires tolerance for a certain degree of inconvenience, including inconvenience that may arise from the means by which opinions may be expressed."¹¹

However, while the context of the debates leading up to the drafting of this Statement centered on protests and demonstrations against University leadership, concern is now focused on establishing limits in cases of debate between peers, at the level of student government, and in classroom settings. This is reflective of an apparent generational shift in views on free speech, reflected in public survey data.

"This generation has a strong and persistent urge to protect others against hateful, discriminatory, or intolerant speech, especially in educational settings. [...] This is the first generation of students educated, from a young age, not to bully."

– Erwin Chereminsky & Howard Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus* (2017)

We heard a number of views on how to navigate this evolving reality on our campuses, many of which are reflective of the broader public

⁹ Available online at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/mission>.

¹⁰ Available online at: https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/a_statement-of-principles-concerning-freedom-of-expression-and-peaceful-assembly__0.pdf.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

debate. We were struck by the survey results, albeit from a limited sample, that indicated that, while some members of the community felt that they needed to restrict expression on the basis of personal identity, a significant number felt that they had to be careful about expressing their views on the basis that they might be denounced by their colleagues (39.3% were “very” or “extremely” concerned), an inaccurate account of their views would be posted on social media (45.4%) or an official complaint would be filed (27.9%). While the percentages were slightly higher for students, these were concerns expressed by both students and staff. It is this kind of chill on “viewpoint diversity” that has prompted the creation of organizations like Heterodox Academy, a global membership association that consists of more than 1,700 professors and graduate student affiliates who support increasing political and ideological diversity on university and college campuses.¹²

The Task Force discussed the value of an institution-led means of promoting respectful debate on contentious issues outside the classroom setting. In this regard the Task Force was drawn to a number of initiatives in universities worldwide. One is the Munk Debates at the University of Toronto, which provides a forum for leaders to debate the major issues facing society. Another is the recently developed Cardinal Conversations at Stanford University. This series provides “a forum for the Stanford community to explore a diversity of ideas on challenging issues with leading thinkers and public intellectuals from campus and beyond.... Address[ing] some of society’s most complex issues and expos[ing] the campus to a wide range of perspectives and views.” These examples may serve as inspirational starting points or templates for a McGill initiative in this regard.

In a broader sense, it is evident that a number of recent and ongoing initiatives reflect a conscious and deliberate attempt to align policies and practices with our Mission Statement and Principles. While cognizant of current discussions about sexual violence on our campuses, we note that significant efforts have been mobilized in the past few years to create and implement policies, services, workshops and campaigns on consent and sexual assault awareness and prevention. This includes the Policy Against Sexual Violence (2016) and the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination Prohibited by Law (2017). The Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education supports a number of initiatives on our campuses, including #ConsentMcGill, trauma sensitive yoga, a rape aggression defence course, a podcast (Taking it All Off), and Sexual Assault Awareness Week, to name a few, as well as the ongoing work of the Ad Hoc Panel to Conduct a Campus Study of Sexual Violence and the Committee for the Implementation of the Policy Against Sexual Violence. SSMU is also in the process of developing its policy (SSMU Gendered and Sexualized Violence Policy).

This year has also seen efforts to address the issue of defining and interpreting what constitutes the “university context”, especially in the case of allegations of misconduct involving members of the McGill community occurring off-campus in private settings. The Charter of Students’ Rights was revised in October 2017 to include a reference to the “university context” (defined as activities or events organized and supported by the University, whether or not on University properties) and revisions to the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures may include a more expansive definition.¹³

We have seen how McGill (and members and groups within the university community) is responding to emerging equity challenges through

new policies and processes. However, policies alone cannot ensure that McGill embraces its foundational principles in all aspects of University life. Policies are not a substitute for necessary changes to institutional culture and practices. Nor can policies fulfill their potential if they are poorly communicated, or worse, used to deflect the responsibility to engage in the serious conversations that remain to be had about how to facilitate meaningful access and participation for the most marginalized members of our community.

Policies are important but also have their limits. Their significance is limited for most people in their day-to-day activities. This is where community trust and relationships are crucial. We focus on trust in Theme 2. Moreover, the complexity of existing policies and the ways in which they attempt to balance a range of community interests need to be communicated more effectively, with greater transparency and empathy. We focus on communications in Theme 3. This is not intended to excuse policy gaps or implementation failures, but rather to remind both those responsible for policy development as well as those who live with these policies that the task of anchoring them to the McGill Mission and Principles requires dialogue, dedication, and a shared commitment to collegial governance. It also requires the allocation of dedicated time and resources.

“McGill has developed no plan, policies or mechanisms for the accommodation of disabled employees, or the progressive return of employees following disability leaves. Nor has the University attempted to be proactive in adopting measures eliminating barriers to employment faced by support staff (or others) in protected groups - such as disabled or transgendered workers.”

– Submission from MUNACA

It has become apparent to the Task Force that equity projects arise in a haphazard manner, marked by uneven and often unstable resourcing, weak reporting structures and accountability mechanisms, and a general lack of coordination. For example, while significant advances have been made over the past few years to support students with physical disabilities and mental illness, we heard frustration from MUNACA that similar support structures do not exist for staff. Concerns were also expressed with respect to McGill not moving quickly enough in implementing clearer progressive return guidelines for employees coming off disability leave.

It was made clear to the Task Force through various mechanisms that insufficient progress has been made on issues of equity and diversity. We heard through the survey, Open Forum, and Focus Groups that the complement of teaching staff and staff providing student services is not diverse enough. There were complaints that the implementation of the recommendations of the 2011 Report of the Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement is incomplete. A significant number of survey respondents were alarmed by the paucity of gender-neutral bathrooms. Others were disappointed by the failure of the University to provide a Muslim prayer space. Inadequate mental health support was also a recurring concern, as were feelings of exclusion among international students.

Our consultation process highlighted a range of ideas on both the benefits and the unintended consequences of initiatives conceived to enhance inclusive participation within the University. For example, we

¹² For more information, see <https://heterodoxacademy.org>.

¹³ A report on this subject was made to Senate in November 2017, available online at: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/9_d17-25_mcgill_context.pdf.

were alerted to an equity-promoting initiative in Residences that, ironically, has triggered its own equity concerns. A significant number of survey respondents mentioned the “Rez & Race” Project, which, after detailed consultations with a number of staff, and discussion in the Residence Life focus group, we learned is a 3-hour long substantive program. The Task Force had a number of concerns with respect to the form, content, and facilitation of the workshops offered in Residence. In particular, the Anti-oppression, Race, and Colonialism workshop offered in residence was put in place in response to students who sought a common set of understandings and guidelines on how to live together in a shared space where interactions would inevitably lead to interpersonal conflict and issues. However, our understanding is that the workshops were devised without sufficient consideration of how the implementation could harm instead of improving the student experience.

“... students who have lived in residence have experienced the systematic exclusion of anti-Semitism as a form of discrimination from the officially mandated “Rez Project” and “Race Project” programming.”

– Submission from Chabad McGill

Most of the survey respondents who mentioned the programme indicated that it imposed a very specific worldview, with facilitators dismissing contrary views as ignorant, thereby making those with differing views feel uncomfortable, excluded, and, perhaps not surprisingly, resentful. Effects lingered long after the training session itself, and are diffused throughout campus. For those who found the sessions enlightening, it framed their intellectual, social, and cultural worldview. For those who found it alienating, it had a chilling effect, sending a message that a plurality of views on race, privilege, and the effects of colonialism, is not tolerated at McGill. Given the large proportion of students who live in residence for at least some part of their time at McGill, it can be safely assumed that this programme has had a significant impact on campus culture and discourse. Despite this impact, University oversight of this programme has been minimal, and reporting relationships remain unclear.

“On a brighter note, Rez and Race Project are amazing initiatives which can create a real difference in campus life. We believe that educating students about Jewish identities and anti-Semitism through existing programs such as Rez and/or Race Project can spark a positive change at McGill.”

– Submission from Am McGill

We offer the example of the “Rez & Race” Project (noting the problematic use of the pejorative term “Rez” by an equity-oriented initiative) not to comment on ongoing discussions about proposed revisions to the program, but rather to highlight how challenging it can be to develop policies and programs that manage to balance the relationship between our core Principles and contribute to advancing the University’s Mission in a respectful and inclusive way. For example, while peer-to-peer training may be particularly effective in some circumstances, this is an area that requires expert facilitation. Oversimplification of difficult and sensitive topics can be harmful and the potential for oversimplification is greater when the objective of a workshop is advocacy rather than increased understanding. Finally, transparency and accountability in terms of monitoring and evaluating

programs is crucial. There is inadequate monitoring and follow-up as well as insufficient information gathered regarding the quality and efficacy of these programs.

In the wider University, the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office (SEDE) provides education and awareness-raising programs on equity and diversity, through training, workshops, events, and activities. SEDE was created 12 years ago with a view to supporting University units seeking to learn more about equity and to embed equity into their practices. We heard through our consultations that SEDE resources are in high demand, and that their equity education advisors are regularly called upon to provide training sessions and review programming and curricula, especially their new Indigenous Equity Advisor. SEDE’s Café Collab series was described by many as a successful format for navigating difficult topics and bringing together a range of the community to share diverse experiences and to learn about how they might engage effectively with equity-related subjects. SEDE’s Social Equity Undergraduate Research Awards were also highlighted as an effective way to integrate equity training and academic research by allocating funds for undergraduate students in the Faculties of Arts and Science to conduct research involving strong components pertaining to equity, diversity, and social justice, full-time, during the summer.

“Since 2016, [Café Collab] has been creating alternative spaces for dialogue and connection around issues of equity, isolation, discrimination, and inclusivity. [...] Art, community meals, and the relaxed environment that define Café Collab workshops break normal patterns of interaction, creating spaces where these vital discussions can be both comfortable and productive.”

– Submission from the coordinators of Café Collab

However, SEDE lacks a centralized mandate and operates on a limited budget derived from various sources. This has resulted in it being understaffed. In addition, it lacks clear lines of reporting and accountability, and concerns were raised that programming inappropriately blurs the line between advocacy and providing information. While many of SEDE’s workshops were applauded for their aspirational goal of creating an inclusive and equitable living and working environment, they were also criticized for creating fault-lines and for undermining and limiting inclusion, academic freedom, and responsibility.

“The work that has been done by marginalized people to deconstruct the anatomy of oppression has paved the way for an office like SEDE to exist.”

– Azad Kalemkarian, Task Force Member

SEDE is perceived as an ally for marginalized student groups on campus, lending it credibility to be an effective interlocutor between University leadership and student groups and to facilitate constructive dialogues. Without creating avenues for dialogue, rifts will continue to widen between disenfranchised students and University leadership.

Consistent with the position of Universities Canada, we believe that universities are enriched by diversity and inclusion. The McGill Principles (academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness) contribute to the realization of our Mission. Renewed efforts are needed to reflect on the relationship between our Mission Statement and Principles,

and to anchor initiatives more strategically in the service of each.

Recommendation

The breadth and depth of services made available to the McGill community should be assessed to verify how well they map on to the University's Mission. This assessment will inevitably identify successful initiatives that can serve as a model, as well as identify missing services and programs.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Creating an inaugural "Realizing McGill's Mission" Day (a designated 'pedagogical day') in Fall 2018 where students, staff and faculty can participate in workshops, policy and program reviews and evaluations, and strategic planning. These would identify how initiatives further McGill's Mission and Principles and what commitment of financial resources is required to support them.
- b.....Building the capacity of Human Resources to respond to the needs of staff with disabilities.
- c.....Revising the format and content of Residence Life workshops and modules with an emphasis on experiential learning, and enhancing students' ability to navigate reasonable expectations of respectful behaviour when living together.
- d.....Clarifying the role of the University in providing health and social services and programs.
- e.....Encouraging and supporting the creation of fora to promote and facilitate a broad range of conversations around contentious issues.

THEME 2: TRUST

Background

The McGill University community is built around our sense of collective Mission and Principles, but the operationalization of our Mission and adherence to our Principles is impossible in the absence of trust and good faith. An atmosphere of mutual trust is a necessary precondition for respectful debate and inclusive participation. We need to give each other the benefit of the doubt, and believe that we will be afforded the benefit of the doubt, in order to build healthy and productive working relationships, and experiment intellectually. In short, trust must exist for the University community, collectively and individually, to learn and grow, academically, professionally, and personally.

Trust is both an essential element and an essential outcome of good governance. High trust is associated with cooperative behaviour and low trust with dissent and resistance. In the context of a global university such as McGill, in which members represent a plurality of perspectives, informed debates are critical both for advancing the Mission of the University as well for meaningful participatory governance. Unfortunately, there seems to be a demonstrable erosion in trust at all levels in the University.

In responses to the survey, students, staff, and faculty alike expressed the view that the senior administration is both physically isolated and out of touch with the needs of the University community. Such a perception can make trust precarious. A recent example highlights the fragility, and importance of, mutual trust in the University setting. The April 2018 SSMU Open Letter and media communication demonstrated that many feel that the only way to address issues of sexual misconduct and harassment is through external channels. In contrast, in the course of our consultations we met with members of the senior administration and several resource people who, in our view, demonstrated a strong, credible commitment to addressing the underlying issues. However, despite their commitment, and concrete efforts by the University, there is clear, and public, evidence of a trust deficit.

The Focus Group on Graduate Student Life raised serious concerns related to graduate student-supervisor relationships. The perceived absence or inaccessibility of clear-cut policies or mechanisms to respond to graduate student concerns places many students in situations of considerable vulnerability. A part of the solution may lie in Teaching and Learning Services, which organizes mandatory workshops for new graduate supervisors. These workshops could be better informed by the lived experience of graduate students and could sensitize new supervisors to the complex issues related graduate life on campus.

Many student survey respondents also indicated a loss of trust in student government, particularly the SSMU, reporting that they felt alienated, excluded, and unrepresented by their student association. The events of the October 2017 SSMU General Assembly have left many students feeling that student government is driven by personal agendas and internal dissent and motivated by factors completely unrelated to the mandate of student government itself.

Administrative and support staff in all sectors, many having borne the brunt of years of budget cuts, have lost faith that their managers will communicate expectations clearly and provide transparent and timely feedback on performance, and that the University will recognize or reward excellence. Survey responses indicated that managers and professionals do not freely express themselves to their superiors and in team meetings where their comments could be unpopular, fearing that this could potentially impact their performance rating and assessment of merit. Despite their experience and expertise, administrative and support staff frequently feel undervalued and excluded from meaningful decision-making.

And, as will be discussed in greater detail below, the leadership of the University evidenced little faith that the University community might be willing to extend to them the benefit of the doubt, leading to a lack of transparency and poor internal communication. Some administrators have also lost trust in student leaders, who they feel are unduly oppositional and unwilling to compromise. Some topics, such as Fall Reading Week, have become emblematic of dysfunctional conversations.

Dissent, protest, and the taking of adversarial positions are part of deliberative democratic process. It is important that McGill creates pathways for actively listening and engaging with these voices. Without this, as is the case now, the trust deficit will continue to grow. The growing perception that decision-makers are not open to input from the community discourages meaningful participation and empowers a small number of individuals who are vocal and often represent narrow agendas. This will inevitably lead to increased polarization and a further erosion of trust.

Questions on trust in institutional governance are not unique to McGill. Two principles which have been widely recognized to strengthen trust in governance are (a) demonstrably competent leadership and administration; and (b) decision-making grounded in collective values.

With respect to the former, the perception of fairness in the process of decision-making can be as important as the outcome. McGill must ensure that members of the community get a real sense of participation in deliberations and feel that they have a voice that is heard and respected. Signalling openness and transparency in institutional processes, and clear and well-publicized mechanisms of accountability, is fundamental to the legitimacy of leadership and for fostering higher levels of trust in the institution.

With respect to the latter, value-based decision-making can pose a challenge in diversified contexts, where individual members of a community may not always share values. However, given McGill's commitment to its Mission and Principles, these can, and should, form the basis for value-based decision-making. For example, some scholars have expressed uncertainty that the University will safeguard their academic freedom, one of the University's five core principles. Proactive reassurance on this front is necessary.

The McGill community is undergoing rapid diversification, which, while providing extraordinary opportunities for intellectual and cultural evolution, also presents a complex set of challenges for all levels of governance. In diverse communities, there are fewer common understandings of the social rules for formal and informal interactions. Misunderstandings inevitably result, mistakes are made, feelings are hurt, and trust is diminished.

Fostering a climate of trust requires credible and concerted efforts at all levels to demonstrate willingness to understand each other's perspectives. The process must be initiated from the top, but it is a responsibility that lies with all members of the McGill community. It is important to share and discuss within the community efforts made during the last 20 years to address issues of equity and inclusion. Such historical narratives should be shared with the community in informal settings, and include the forthright acknowledgement of mistakes made and lessons learned (what went right and what did not). The use of digital media could be effective here.

The leadership must also actively engage with the process of consensus-building around the core values of McGill, as expressed in the Mission Statement and Principles. In doing so, the leadership must demonstrate openness to engage in ongoing dialogue with members of the McGill community.

What became increasingly clear to the Task Force is that building trust is essential to building relationships, and building relationships is essential to building trust. To paraphrase a comment made by a student leader during the consultation process: we trust people, not organizations. Because institutional trust involves a web of relationships, it is our collective responsibility to try to overcome our own misgivings, express our needs and challenges, and work towards building what one of our resource interviewees called "a fund of trust" on which we can draw when times are tough. Enhanced trust should be our metric for assessing progress.

That being said, the most effective way to nudge the culture of the McGill community in the direction of increased trust is for the leadership to lead by example, by going out into the community and proactively building relationships.

Recommendation

Those in leadership positions across all sectors and in all spheres of the University (students, staff, and faculty) should strive to lead by example in promoting a culture of openness.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Using effective communication channels in order for those in leadership positions to share their experiences and how they approach the challenges of value-based decision-making in their roles.
- b.....Creating opportunities for members of senior administration to articulate their understanding of McGill's Mission and Principles to the broader community.
- c.....Due to the special nature of the role that University Advancement plays in the support of the Mission, the Vice-Principal of University Advancement should regularly create opportunities where the nature of Advancement's work can be discussed openly with members of the entire McGill community. This would serve to promote a greater understanding of the nature, challenges, and impact of fundraising on the realization of the University Mission.
- d.....Responding to feelings of exclusion among administrative and support staff by addressing the problematic "non-academic" designation and creating more inclusive naming practices.
- e.....Making accessible information about the evolution of policies and practices related to respect and inclusion at McGill (e.g., creating timelines and designing infographics to illustrate what, when, and how past changes have been implemented).

THEME 3: GOVERNANCE

Background

One of the great privileges of being part of the University is working in an environment of shared collegial governance, which allows us to participate in University decision-making processes at all levels. Participation in collegial decision-making is a right and also an important duty embedded in the core principle of responsibility as articulated in McGill's Mission Statement. Indeed, this is the primary way in which we express our shared responsibility to one another as members of the University community. Conversely, collegial governance is at risk and perhaps unattainable when participation is low.

We are acutely aware that, while this Report seeks to speak to a community of over 40,000 people, relatively few have directly engaged as individuals, either in the consultation process of this Task Force, or in mechanisms of University governance. Indeed, we have been advised that, among both students and staff, attracting volunteers to serve on University bodies and committees is difficult. This is particularly unfortunate because such service comes with considerable personal and collective benefits. As many members of this Task Force have personally

experienced, participating in governance provides a broader view and a deeper understanding of the diversity of the University community, University operations, and the challenges of leadership. It instills a sense of collective responsibility for decision-making and helps build interpersonal relationships across the community. In campus life, which can often feel like a highly decentralized organization of insular units, this helps to build trust and a sense of collective purpose. In addition, there is a wealth of evidence that diversified bodies make better decisions.

Given these benefits, concerted efforts should be undertaken to increase the pool of candidates in all sectors in order to avoid having the same individuals occupying governance positions repeatedly. As part of a proactive endeavour to enhance participation in shared governance, leadership throughout the University should make concerted efforts to better integrate new members of the community into the processes and culture of McGill governance, and incentivize participation by recognizing the value of service-oriented contributions. Allowing adequate time for meaningful participation and creating more avenues for recognizing excellence in service are two such incentive-based approaches.

In the governance bodies themselves, sufficient time should be invested to allow for meaningful discussions, even at the cost of efficiency. The honest expression of views, even critical ones, in deliberative settings should be promoted (and certainly not punished). Deliberative processes should be built around transparency, the free flow of information about processes and decisions, to allow for members of governance bodies to understand and monitor them. A balance must be struck between deferring to administrators with subject-matter expertise, and the oversight necessary to ensure collegial, collective governance. Although it will always be easier to delegate difficult decisions and tasks, this cannot come at the cost of meaningful oversight and the building of consensus. Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on appropriate policies and procedures.

Unfortunately, the perceived erosion of meaningful and inclusive participatory governance is prevalent in many sectors of McGill, including between students and student societies. Many students have no personal interest in student government because they do not view it as relevant to their daily lives and are not convinced that it could have a positive impact for them. While the Task Force recognizes that limited student participation in student government can be observed at many other universities, we do not believe this observation should serve as an excuse to not take steps towards ameliorating the situation in this community.

We heard that there is a breakdown in communication between student governance and the University leadership, causing student leaders and their constituents to feel alternately ignored or patronized. Student leaders lamented that an undue burden is being placed upon them in their attempt to engage with McGill leadership. They feel that they are forced to fight for the time to interact and speak with University officials and then to adapt their discourse to meet the expectations of those officials, without any reciprocal efforts. The Task Force found that there is a widespread perception among students that the University's governance lacked credibility because its priorities are misplaced on issues that do not necessarily concern students, and that the notions of respect and inclusion are perceived through the University's lens, rather than from the perspectives of student members. Similarly, University leadership is commonly perceived as being unwilling to cooperate with students, and

as rejecting popular student concerns, such as the repeated but unsuccessful calls for Fall Reading Week, without adequate explanation.

We also heard concerns from students about their role at University Senate, the highest academic governing body at McGill. Given the brevity of their one-year terms, student Senators are limited in their ability to participate meaningfully due to the sharp learning curve and time devoted at the beginning of the year to familiarize themselves with Senate procedures. We have observed that returning to the same issues year-by-year lessens the willingness of University leadership to engage with student leaders on these issues in meaningful ways. We learned that students sometimes make the same proposals or revisit the same issues unaware that these had already been raised and responded to in the past. While the University leadership has the institutional memory of proposals and decisions made in the past, there is an apparent information gap on the part of incoming student leaders, which is attributable to the transient nature of student leadership. Although these decisions are archived, navigating the archives can be a difficult and daunting task for new student leaders.

Some believe that the University leadership is not interested in building individual relationships with members of the community. A more effective interaction between the University leadership and the wider community, especially student leaders, is necessary. McGill leadership could be made more accessible by clearly communicating the process and rationale behind leadership decisions, particularly for issues raised by students. This information could be communicated in person, in print, and online via publications such as the McGill Reporter.

Recommendation

There needs to be a re-articulation of the value that participation in collegial and collective decision-making has in all sectors and at all levels of the University. The origins of accessibility and attitudinal barriers to University engagement should be identified and governance structures reformed accordingly.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Doing more to recognize the value of service-oriented contributions and incentivize participation in University life.
- b.....Providing institutionalized leadership training for students, modelled on the programming of the Academic Leadership Forum (ALF), to widen the participation pool for inclusive governance.
- c.....Establishing formal training for student Senators to equip them to engage meaningfully in the workings of Senate and University governance as a whole.
- d.....Communicating processes and outcomes of policy decisions related to proposals advanced by student associations to the community at large, in person, in print, and online.
- e.....Promoting regular exchanges and identifying key channels of communication between senior members of the McGill leadership and members of student government at faculty and departmental levels.

THEME 4: COMMUNICATIONS

Background

Underpinning a collective sense of purpose, trust, and good governance is communication. It is in talking and listening, communicating with those with whom we agree, and with those we don't, that we are able to learn and grow and work collaboratively. Good communications are a collective responsibility, one that operates at every level: interpersonal, within and between units, with and on behalf of constituencies. Communication is vital to respect and inclusion; poor communication, particularly the failure to listen to each other, is their enemy. Every communication, and every silence, has the potential to bring us together, or to alienate and polarize.

We make these observations in the context of a rapidly changing communications landscape, in which technology allows for, and creates expectations of, instantaneous information exchange. The volume and pace of information is overwhelming, and the quality of the information is wildly variable as content validation often becomes of secondary importance to speed. With the rise of social media has come a corresponding decline in interpersonal conversation, along with all of the context and nuance that comes from face-to-face communication.

In this context, it can be difficult, personally or institutionally, to control either the flow of information or how it is interpreted. It is particularly challenging to tailor messages for a specific audience when one must assume that it will reach other audiences. Indeed, sending different, and especially inconsistent, signals to different audiences diminishes trust.

Our consultation process revealed that there is a widely shared perception, whether correct or not, that University communications are reactive, selective, opaque, and often unduly influenced by external pressure. We repeatedly heard that, with respect to communications, the University leadership is either over-reactive or too slow to act. We also heard that it is often "tone deaf", with communications unduly framed by the fear of admitting responsibility or fault, and avoiding legal or reputational risk, however remote. The "safe" messaging that results lacks transparency and a sense of feeling. And choosing to remain silent is not necessarily safe. At times when the community could reasonably expect to hear from the University leadership, failing to communicate can, in itself, be damaging. In particular, we were asked why some issues seem to receive responses while other issues elicit no response. There is a widespread perception that the issues that receive an immediate, and perhaps disproportionate, response from the University are those that are the subject of pressure from donors and alumni, and responses to those selected issues are tailored to respond to external pressure.

A recent situation illustrates how communications can result in alienation rather than inclusion. The response of University leadership, and the Principal in particular, to the October 2017 SSMU General Assembly and the BDS debate was the source of significant alarm by many survey respondents. There was a perception that the Principal had taken sides on the controversy, notwithstanding a diversity of opinions on campus on these issues. While a number of respondents took issue with the particular position taken, many others were left to speculate as to why the University had spoken up on this issue, while it had remained silent on many others. Communicating on one issue that impacts a segment of the community creates an expectation that the University will comment in other similar situations, and the failure to do so has created a sense of exclusion. There were also a number of community members who felt that

the University speaking out on a SSMU matter inappropriately intruded on the independence of student government. And a failure to consult with the many leading academics who work in this area and have developed ways to traverse these controversies have left them feeling disrespected and even embarrassed by the University's approach.

"But I have also been dismayed by some of the emails that the Principal has sent to the whole McGill community, in particular the February 2016 email condemning the BDS movement. [...] Given that it came from the very top, I also found it to be bullying."

– Professor Laila Parsons, Faculty of Arts

Communications should be formatted and delivered with particular objectives (such as information sharing, reassurance, inspiration, consultation) in mind. The tone of a message should be matched to its purpose, and should in all cases, be more human. In this regard we heard that, while text-only "MRO" email might work in limited circumstances, the format of What's New seems to be more effective.

Communications can provide an opportunity to build community. For example, the promotion of achievements and events is powerful in making connections and developing relationships within a community as diverse as McGill. A curated community calendar would be a valuable device that enables all members of the University to access the richness of the University. But when done poorly, communications can unfortunately be alienating. For example, we heard from many students that institutional websites are hard to navigate making it frustrating and endlessly difficult to find information when it is needed. This is particularly problematic for graduate students who are off-campus and can't readily benefit from alternative word-of-mouth access to information.

Overall, these and the myriad other communication imperatives faced by the University on an ongoing basis highlight the need for a new communications strategy, grounded in the University's Mission and Principles and clearly communicated to the University community on an ongoing basis. The benefits of such a strategy and associated guidelines are many, not the least being that the nature of a particular communications response can be traced back to pre-existing guidelines. In the context of the development of a new strategy, the Task Force believes that there is considerable value in creating a position of University Spokesperson. There are many merits to this idea, including providing the McGill and external communities with a consistent and familiar face associated with University communications.

As a final note, the Task Force recommends that the communications strategy must be broadened to include "institutional listening" so that it becomes multi-dimensional, and not just a means to disseminate set statements. Active listening is much more than instrumentalized information gathering. Active listening emphasizes listening to understand and acknowledge what has been heard, rather than listening to respond. Although there often will not be agreement, different perspectives seek affirmation that their position has been respectfully heard and considered. Here, communications overlap with consultation and deliberation issues. There is a real opportunity through communications to change the University community's perception of University leadership, and to promote a culture where, despite differing points of view, the community feels heard and listened to.

Recommendation

University leadership must develop a communications strategy that is more personal and open, and this strategy must be anchored in the McGill Mission, with particular attention to the principles of inclusion and respect.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Making the objectives of the university communications strategy publicly available so that decisions about how issues are communicated, to whom they are directed, and on what basis they are formulated are clearly understood.
- b.....Creating the position of University Spokesperson, in the spirit of encouraging more consistent lines of communication from University leadership, expressed in a more human tone.
- c.....Using communications tools, including curated events calendars, to not only share information but to foster relationships and strengthen community across our campuses.
- d.....Redesigning and revamping institutional websites in order to prioritize improvement of the distribution and access to information.

THEME 5: SPACE

Background

Although the foundations of collective life at McGill are not in a critical state, we could better foster respect and inclusion if we dedicated more space, time, and resources to making room for dialogue and listening. Promoting inclusion means promoting diverse forums for us to engage on topics such as university-wide events and event spaces, as well as local facilities in faculty and departmental settings. Building community requires building communal spaces where people can talk, laugh, meet, and discuss. These places should be easily available to all members of the McGill community.

In general, we would observe that there is not a lot of active debate on campus outside of the governing bodies. McGill is a community of over 40,000 members, many if not most of whom identify with intellectual causes. Objectively, one would expect there to be more discussion on a diversity of topics outside of the formal confines of classrooms or faculty meetings than currently takes place. The McGill Reporter in the past would permit and even nurture a certain amount of debate, but there are currently few fora available in which to exchange with fellow campus members. Of those most are quite exclusive."

– Submission from MUNACA

Above all, we suggest that there is an acute need for a University-supported multi-purpose communal space. This centre would provide practical support for formal and informal social, cultural, and spiritual

activities and events. We believe that providing a multi-purpose communal space is critical to advancing the University's core principles of responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness. We also heard from the community about the urgent need for prayer space for Muslim members of our community. A prayer space could also allow for Muslim faculty, staff, and students to meet and interact with one another. We can be secular and inclusive. Providing a space for community members to express their religion and spirituality is not inconsistent with McGill's commitment to remaining a secular institution.

"In a time where Islamophobia and discrimination are becoming regular occurrences in our society, an appropriate prayer space provided by the university would go a long way in creating a sense of belonging and acceptance for the vulnerable Muslim population."

– Submission from Muslim Student Association

In our consultations, our community also expressed a desire for accessible facilities. We heard calls for more gender-neutral washrooms and for making the existing buildings and grounds more physically accessible. We also heard about steps to address these concerns. We endorse the collaboration of the Office for Students with Disabilities with the Campus Planning and Development Office. We hope that together they can improve access and communicate clearly the improvements to our community. Providing more gender-neutral washrooms and better accessibility across both campuses will signal McGill's commitment to promoting inclusion for everyone.

Student gathering spaces, both for collaborative academic work and more social uses such as simply having a place to eat lunch or have coffee, are currently missing from the graduate student experience. Our experience of these types of spaces in other departments suggests that this is a feasible endeavour. We also believe that these kinds of spaces, distinct from studios/offices, are integral to the exchange of ideas and acknowledge that the work we do goes beyond solitary study and creation.

– Submission from Graduate Architecture Student Association

We also heard that we could boost our shared social and cultural commons by adding informal gathering spaces, particularly on our downtown urban campus. We need only look at the widespread use of the Y-intersection, lower field, and Redpath terrace on the lower campus during clement weather to see that gathering spaces are both popular and necessary. Through our consultations, we learned about the loneliness that students can experience as a result of physical isolation. Communal spaces, discussion spaces, and quiet spaces allow personal relationships to develop outside of the classroom. Students enjoy the University's library and cafeterias, but these do not encourage meaningful interactions among administrators, staff, teachers, and alumni.

We should be looking to existing communal spaces for inspiration. The Atrium in the Faculty of Law was presented to us as a successful model for how informal communal places can be created. Located in New Chancellor Day Hall, the Atrium makes room for law students to work, to study, and to relax. In the Atrium, teachers meet students outside of class,

the Dean holds weekly office hours, student clubs host regular events and exhibitions, and it is home to a weekly Coffee House on Thursday evenings. The Atrium clearly adds to the vibrancy and vitality of the Faculty of Law community. We could boost the vibrancy of community life across the campuses by adding similar spaces in each faculty, and by including one open to the entire university in our master planning.

An example of resourceful use of space is the recent renovation of the ground floor of the McConnell Engineering building. Here the University converted hallways into welcoming work places. Similar renovations may be undertaken in other buildings. These are both practical solutions and symbolic gestures that signal inclusion. Thomson House provides a further example, as a beloved meeting place for graduate students. However, most undergraduates, and notably those from the two largest faculties, lack access to a welcoming multi-purpose gathering place.

We recognize the space constraints in campus settings and the resource implications of adding communal spaces, discussion spaces, and quiet space. However, to make the campus a positive, accessible, and welcoming environment for all, inclusion and respect must be reflected in our physical environment. This will require that inclusion and respect must be embedded as priority criteria in Campus Space and Development's practices of space design and allocation, management, and transformation. At the macro-planning level these criteria must also be embedded in decision-making in the development of the Campus Planning University's Master Plan.

Recommendation

The promotion of respect and inclusion must be designated as a strategic priority in the creation, allocation, and use of space on our campuses, and articulated clearly in the University's master planning initiatives.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Creating accessible and inclusive multipurpose communal spaces (both Faculty-specific and University-wide) for rest, leisure, spiritual needs, and community events; for example, in the short term, an urgent need for prayer space for Muslim members of thecommunity has been identified.
- b.....Prioritizing physical renovations on our campuses that increase accessibility, and consulting with the Office for Students with Disabilities in the process.
- c.....Improving the availability and accessibility of washroom facilities and coordinating with ongoing efforts to provide gender-neutral washrooms on the campuses.
- d.....Aligning, at all planning and implementation stages overseen by the Campus Space and Development Office, the design, allocation, and transformation of space with the principles of respect and inclusion.

PART III

MOVING FORWARD

The recommendations listed in the previous section are the starting point for re-establishing a foundation of trust within the McGill community. Creating a true culture of inclusion and respect will require a combination of sustained actions aimed at building and maintaining relationships in all spheres of campus life, and consistent, transparent communications within the University community.

The community's scepticism regarding past Task Force reports seems to be due to a perception that the resulting recommendations do not produce any real outcomes; there is widespread belief that reports remain on shelves collecting dust. This perception most likely persists due to a lack of concrete reporting processes regarding the progress of implementation. This reporting deficit came to our attention when respondents criticized the 2011 Report of the Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement, saying that it had not brought about any meaningful changes. However, we subsequently learned that a number of steps have in fact been taken to implement that report's recommendations. The fact that these steps have been taken and that changes have occurred has not been adequately communicated to the community.

Regular reporting back to the McGill community on progress made will be important to build trust and demonstrate accountability in this Task Force Report. We recognize that many of this Report's recommendations and suggested action items require both resources and time for effective implementation. For this reason, an implementation plan with goals, objectives, and timelines needs to be specified for each recommendation. In

parallel, accountability for each priority needs to be addressed beyond simply assigning a sponsor and a project lead. The establishment of a review and prioritization process with respect to the existing responsibilities of staff tasked with implementing recommendations is needed to ensure that they have the bandwidth to tackle these additional obligations. A communications plan, not limited to reporting to Senate, should show progress and the development of indicators to track outcomes and identify gaps. Such indicators could be monitored via a dashboard accessible by the entire McGill community.

ENSURING AN ONGOING CONVERSATION

Within the short time frame of the Task Force's work, it has been impossible to address all of the concerns and issues that have been raised by members of the community. The work of the Task Force must be seen as just one small part of an ongoing conversation as we continue to strive to make this a more inclusive and respectful environment for research, learning, and professional development.

This Report's recommendations should serve as the basis for future discussions, including focus groups organized around its recommendations and more formal University gatherings such as faculty meetings, the Academic Leadership Forum, Deans' retreats, and others.

CONCLUSION

LIVING OUR MISSION

We recognize our privilege of being entrusted with carrying out this important mandate of identifying issues around respect and inclusion in our community. Each one of us on the Task Force has gained rich insights and perspectives about McGill. We learned to appreciate diversity among our membership, we learned to trust one another, and most of all we learned the value of engaged listening. The five intersecting themes identified in this Report underscore the complex nature of the University community. The perceived erosion of trust in leadership, policies, and processes has to be reversed if we are to harness the rich diversity of our community towards the advancement of our Mission.

Although the ground underneath us is shifting, our foundations are solid. There are challenges as well as tremendous opportunities for McGill to renew our sense of collective purpose, our Mission, for the University to be an open and dynamic environment for all to learn and grow. We recognize a deep commitment among many members of the community to institution building processes. We invite the University leadership to actively engage in the process of consensus building around the McGill Mission and Principles. All efforts to advance inclusive diversity should be informed by the Mission and the Principles of the University. Efforts at all levels are important to reinforce the importance of collegiality, solidarity, and courage for governing a global university such as McGill.

AFTERWORD

We include this Afterword to offer our reflection on our Terms of Reference and the consultation methods that we used to conduct our work.

The Multipronged Approach to Consultation: We note that, like many universities, McGill conducts its institutional listening or consultative process via a multipronged approach: town halls, surveys, focus groups, document submissions, and interviews. Although we are not aware of a “manual” on how to create a wide-ranging consultation on a challenging problem in a collegial governance environment, there are obvious positive features of the multi-method approach: the capture of many types of voices in a heterogeneous community, the different pictures that emerge from narrative vs. survey data, and the benefits of gaining consensus viewpoints in a forum setting as opposed to the singularity of position papers. These benefits must be balanced against the fatigue that comes from frequent, and especially overlapping, consultative processes.

Task Forces: Task forces and other consultation processes should be used in those areas in which there is a genuine need to gather data and implement change. Serious thought must be given to the issue of capacity: whether the University is likely to have the resources (financial, physical, human, or otherwise) to implement recommendations, and to respond in a timely fashion. In order to restore faith in the work of task forces, it is crucial that their reports and recommendations not only be implemented to the extent possible, but be seen to be implemented, with outcomes traced back to the relevant process. We have in fact suggested use of such a process for all recommendations for this Report.

Clear mandates with realistic timelines must be formulated at the outset of the process. Timelines should be reflective of the scope of the mandate, and care should be taken to avoid timelines that clash with busy

periods. For example, having this Task Force deliver its Report at the end of April made it difficult to impossible for the three student members to engage with the writing process.

The creation of a task force should signal to the community that a problem is being taken seriously, analysed collectively, and addressed thoughtfully. A task force can be an effective mechanism for tackling difficult problems if established in good faith, equipped with the necessary independence and a clear mandate, and provided with the appropriate support. In order to achieve that level of seriousness, the use of task forces and working groups should be sparing.

Surveys: As noted in the body of the Report, the timing, extent, and completion of this Task Force's survey was challenging. It is problematic to use a survey early in the life of a task force, as issues are unlikely to have been defined at that stage. Surveys are not referenda nor are they very effective in facilitating institutional listening. When they are administered, there needs to be some form of transparency to report their broad findings back to the community, and, where appropriate, to share data between working groups. And there must be a mechanism put in place to coordinate the use of surveys within the University: survey confusion, and fatigue, will inevitably result when members of the community are asked to participate in several surveys in a short period, particular where subject-matter overlaps. This will tend to engender a perception that leadership is not listening to the community (particularly when the same questions are asked over and over again).

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION ITEMS

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this Report should serve as the basis for future discussions, including focus groups organized around its recommendations and more formal University gatherings such as faculty meetings, the Academic Leadership Forum, Deans' retreats, and others.

An implementation plan with goals, objectives, and timelines needs to be specified for each recommendation.

A review and prioritization process with respect to the existing responsibilities of staff tasked with implementing recommendations is needed to ensure that they have the bandwidth to tackle these additional obligations. Regular reporting back to the McGill community on progress made in accordance with the Report is necessary to build trust. For this purpose, a communications plan, not limited to reporting to Senate, should show progress and the development of indicators to track outcomes and identify gaps. Such indicators could be monitored via a dashboard accessible by the entire McGill community.

SUBSTANTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Mission

The breadth and depth of services made available to the McGill community should be assessed to verify how well they map on to the University's Mission. This assessment will inevitably identify successful initiatives that can serve as a model, as well as identify missing services and programs.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a.....Creating an inaugural "Realizing McGill's Mission" Day (a designated 'pedagogical day') in Fall 2018 where students, staff and faculty can participate in workshops, policy and program reviews and evaluations, and strategic planning. These would identify how initiatives further McGill's Mission and Principles and what commitment of financial resources is required to support them.
- b.....Building the capacity of Human Resources to respond to the needs of staff with disabilities.
- c.....Revising the format and content of Residence Life workshops and modules with an emphasis on experiential learning, and enhancing students' ability to navigate reasonable expectations of respectful behaviour when living together.
- d.....Clarifying the role of the University in providing health and social services and programs.
- e.....Encouraging and supporting the creation of fora to promote and facilitate a broad range of conversations around contentious issues.

2. Trust

Those in leadership positions across all sectors and in all spheres of the University (students, staff, and faculty) should strive to lead by example in promoting a culture of openness.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a. Using effective communication channels in order for those in leadership positions to share their experiences and how they approach the challenges of value-based decision-making in their roles.
- b. Creating opportunities for members of senior administration to articulate their understanding of McGill's Mission and Principles to the broader community.
- c. Due to the special nature of the role that University Advancement plays in the support of the University Mission, the Vice-Principal of Advancement should regularly create opportunities where the nature of Advancement's work can be discussed openly with members of the entire McGill community. This would serve to promote a greater understanding of the nature, challenges, and impact of fundraising on the realization of the University Mission.
- d. Responding to feelings of exclusion among administrative and support staff by addressing the problematic "non-academic" designation and creating more inclusive naming practices.
- e. Making accessible information about the evolution of policies and practices related to respect and inclusion at McGill (e.g., creating timelines and designing infographics to illustrate what, when, and how past changes have been implemented).

3. Governance

There needs to be a re-articulation of the value that participation in collegial and collective decision-making has in all sectors and at all levels of the University. The origins of accessibility and attitudinal barriers to University engagement should be identified and governance structures reformed accordingly.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a. Doing more to recognize the value of service-oriented contributions and incentivize participation in university life.
- b. Providing institutionalized leadership training for students, modelled on the programming of the Academic Leadership Forum (ALF), to widen the participation pool for inclusive governance.
- c. Establishing formal training for student Senators to equip them to engage meaningfully in the workings of Senate and University governance as a whole.
- d. Communicating processes and outcomes of policy decisions related to proposals advanced by student associations to the community at large, in person, in print, and online.

- e. Promoting regular exchanges and identifying key channels of communication between senior members of the McGill leadership and members of student government at faculty and departmental levels.

4. Communications

University leadership must develop a communications strategy that is more personal and open, and this strategy must be anchored in the McGill Mission, with particular attention to the principles of inclusion and respect.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a. Making the objectives of the university communications strategy publicly available so that decisions about how issues are communicated, to whom they are directed, and on what basis they are formulated are clearly understood.
- b. Creating the position of University Spokesperson, in the spirit of encouraging more consistent lines of communication from University leadership, expressed in a more human tone.
- c. Using communications tools, including curated events calendars, to not only share information but to foster relationships and strengthen community across our campuses.
- d. Redesigning and revamping institutional websites in order to prioritize improvement of the distribution and access to information.

5. Space

The promotion of respect and inclusion must be designated as a strategic priority in the creation, allocation, and use of space on our campuses, and articulated clearly in the University's master planning initiatives.

Specific action items include, but are not limited to:

- a. Creating accessible and inclusive multipurpose communal spaces (both Faculty specific and University-wide) for rest, leisure, spiritual needs, and community events.
- b. In the short term, an urgent need for prayer space for Muslim members of the community has been identified.
- c. Prioritizing physical renovations on our campuses that increase accessibility, and consulting with the Office for Students with Disabilities in the process.
- d. Improving the availability and accessibility of washroom facilities and coordinating with ongoing efforts to provide gender-neutral washrooms on the campuses.
- e. Aligning, at all planning and implementation stages overseen by the Campus Space and Development Office, the design, allocation, and transformation of space with the principles of respect and inclusion.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Bruce Lennox, Co-Chair
Nandini Ramanujam, Co-Chair
Fatima Anjum
Anne-Marie Huynh
Azad Kalemkarian
Suzanne Morton
John Poliquin
Christopher Stephens
David Theodore

APPENDIX C

TERMS OF REFERENCE & TIMELINE

The following terms of reference for the Task Force were posted on a designated website: <https://www.mcgill.ca/principal/initiatives/respect-and-inclusion-campus-life/task-force-respect-and-inclusion-campus-life>

"The Mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.

In fulfilling its mission, McGill University embraces the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity and inclusiveness."

"The University values the variety of opinions and experiences of members of the McGill community and encourages the open and respectful expression of that diversity."

It is imperative that we uphold these tenets upon which the McGill University community is built. The Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life is mandated to recommend a set of concrete measures by which the University may ensure the full and effective operationalization of its core principles across all University activities but with particular consideration paid to student life at McGill.

In taking up this mandate, the Task Force will:

- Design and implement a University-wide survey of students, faculty and staff to assess the extent to which our existing structures facilitate or inhibit free expression, respect and inclusion, with the survey to be completed by 7 December.

- Consult broadly with students across both campuses, through student organizations and via scheduled focus-group consultations, across the period November 2017 through January 2018, to identify areas of particular concern and/or strength.

- Identify and examine successful initiatives and best practices at peer institutions with respect to the protection and promulgation of core values.

- Hold an Open Forum on Campus Culture in January 2018, with a focus on community-building and mutual understanding, and drawing from the results of the Fall Term campus survey and consultation process.

- Identify areas of University life that are susceptible to being particular sources of tensions and where the operationalization of our core principles needs attention.

In addition to the foregoing, the Task Force adhered to the following mandated timeline for reporting to the community:

- The Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life will provide a progress report at the February 21, 2018 meeting of Senate, a status report for discussion at the March 28, 2018 meeting of Senate, and will submit its final report and recommendations to Principal Fortier by April 27, 2018. The report will be made public shortly thereafter and will be formally presented at the May 16, 2018 meeting of Senate. An update on actions taken and moving forward will be presented and discussed at the September 2018 meeting of Senate.

APPENDIX D

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this short and anonymous survey on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life. As a reminder, this survey is voluntary; you may leave it at any time by clicking on 'Exit and clear survey' in the top right hand corner of the page. You may also choose not to answer any question (other than the first one).

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. (a) [MANDATORY] Please indicate your main activity at McGill.

Student

Academic Staff

Non-Academic Staff

(b) Overall, how many years have you attended / been employed at McGill?

[Choices ranged from "Less than 1 year" to 50]

2. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

[6 choices for each, ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree, plus "Not applicable"]

| | |
|----|--|
| a. | The McGill community welcomes open and respectful expressions of a range of opinions and experiences. |
| b. | There is value in listening to and understanding views and opinions that are different from my own or with which I disagree. |
| c. | McGill should be doing more to promote policies that favour the diversity of opinions and ideas on campus. |
| d. | At McGill, course instructors welcome a diversity of opinions and ideas in the classroom. |
| e. | At McGill, students welcome a diversity of opinions and ideas in the classroom. |
| f. | At McGill, students welcome a diversity of opinions on campus. |

3. (a) In your experience, which aspects of McGill campus life facilitate free expression, and in which aspects have you encountered barriers to free expression? If applicable, you may select both 'facilitate free expression' and 'barrier to free expression' for a given aspect.

[For each of the following, the respondent could choose "Facilitate free expression", "Barrier to free expression" and/or "Not applicable"]

Interactions in the classroom

Involvement in student government or clubs

Social interactions in on-campus settings (such as cafés, athletic facilities, gathering spaces)

Living in residence

Interactions with university or departmental staff

Interactions with faculty in a research setting (including research supervision)

Interactions with course instructors (in-class or otherwise)

University media/communications

Student media

Campus events such as public lectures and debates

Online interactions (i.e., social media)

(b) Are there any other aspects of McGill campus life that, in your experience, either facilitate or act as a barrier to free expression?

[OPEN ANSWER]

4. (a) In your experience, which aspects of McGill campus life facilitate inclusion and/or respect, and in which aspects have you encountered barriers to inclusion and/or respect? If applicable, you may select both 'facilitate inclusion and/or respect' and 'barrier to inclusion and/or respect' for a given aspect.

[For each of the following, the respondent could choose "Facilitate inclusion and/or respect", "Barrier to inclusion and/or respect" and/or "Not applicable"]

- _____ Interactions in the classroom
- _____ Involvement in student government or clubs
- _____ Social interactions in on-campus settings (such as cafés, athletic facilities, gathering spaces)
- _____ Living in residence
- _____ Interactions with university or departmental staff
- _____ Interactions with faculty in a research setting (including research supervision)
- _____ Interactions with course instructors (in-class or otherwise)
- _____ University media/communications
- _____ Student media
- _____ Campus events such as public lectures and debates
- _____ Online interactions (i.e., social media)

(b) Are there any other aspects of McGill campus life that, in your experience, either facilitate or act as a barrier to inclusion and/or respect?

[OPEN ANSWER]

5. (a) If you wish, please provide an example of how an interaction made you perceive McGill as facilitating or limiting inclusion.

[OPEN ANSWER]

(b) If you wish, please provide an example of how a physical environment /other space made you perceive McGill as facilitating or limiting inclusion.

[OPEN ANSWER]

6. (a) To you, how important is the issue of respect and inclusion on campus?

- _____ Not at all important
- _____ Slightly important
- _____ Somewhat important
- _____ Very important
- _____ Extremely important
- _____ Not sure / No opinion

- (b) To you, how important is the issue of free expression on campus?

- _____ Not at all important
- _____ Slightly important
- _____ Somewhat important
- _____ Very important
- _____ Extremely important
- _____ Not sure / No opinion

- (c) In your opinion, what is the relationship between respect and inclusion, and free expression?

- _____ Mutually reinforcing
- _____ Complementary
- _____ Difficult to reconcile
- _____ Fundamentally at odds
- _____ Not sure / No opinion

7. At McGill, how confident are you in being able to express your views on issues that may be perceived by others as controversial?

- _____ Not at all confident
- _____ Somewhat confident
- _____ Moderately confident
- _____ Very confident
- _____ Not sure / No opinion

8. (a) At McGill, if you were to express your views on issues perceived by others to be controversial, how concerned would you be that the following might occur?

[6 CHOICES FOR EACH, RANGING FROM "NOT AT ALL CONCERNED" TO "EXTREMELY CONCERNED", PLUS "NOT APPLICABLE"]

- _____ (For classroom settings only)
The course instructor would dismiss or disrespect my views.
- _____ Other students / colleagues would denounce me or deny my right to express my views.
- _____ An inaccurate account of my views would be posted on social media or another online platform.
- _____ An official complaint would be filed against me by another member of the McGill community.

- (b) Is there anything else you would be concerned might occur?

[OPEN ANSWER]

9. (a) What existing practices at McGill do you believe contribute to the enhancement of respect and inclusion in campus life?

[OPEN ANSWER]

- (b) What should McGill do better or differently to enhance respect and inclusion in campus life?

[OPEN ANSWER]

10. (a) What existing practices at McGill do you believe contribute to the enhancement of free expression and respectful debate in campus life?

[OPEN ANSWER]

- (b) What should McGill do better or differently to enhance free expression and respectful debate in campus life?

[OPEN ANSWER]

END PAGE

Thank you for participating. We value your feedback and welcome further feedback throughout the process. Please send any additional comments you may have to principals.taskforce@mcgill.ca.

A reminder that if you would like to seek support following experiences of exclusion or discrimination on our campuses, you may call our dedicated support line from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 514-398-6199. This line is intended to facilitate connecting students and other members of our community with the resources appropriate to their concerns or needs. In addition, a list of campus support resources can be found [here](#).

For more information about the Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus life, please visit our [website](#).

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP ANNOUNCEMENT, 10 JANUARY 2018

On January 10, 2018, an email was sent to the McGill Community, announcing the various ways that the Task Force would be consulting with the community. The following is an excerpt of that email announcing the focus groups:

To create an opportunity for frank and meaningful conversation, we will also host five focus group consultations in accessible locations at the downtown and Macdonald campuses (see schedule on our website). These will be small, closed-door meetings, with questions proposed by the Task Force to guide the discussions. Each session will last about 90 minutes, and will include 20 participants. Fifteen spaces in each group will be reserved for students; the remainder will be allocated to faculty and staff. We welcome discussion in both English and French, and we hope these sessions will attract a broad cross-section of the University community. These small group meetings may be particularly appealing to people who may not be comfortable speaking in larger public gatherings.

We invite individuals from across the McGill community to sign up for one of these focus groups on a first-come, first-served basis, through this [link]. Registration will be open on Friday, January 12, 2018, at 9 a.m. In order to involve as many people as possible, potential participants will be able to sign up for one focus group only.

FOCUS GROUP ANNOUNCEMENT EMAIL, WHAT'S NEW, 11 JANUARY 2018

This winter, the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life invites you to participate in consultations about the way we interact with one another at McGill. Your insights will help us understand how existing structures, practices or policies help or hinder free expression, respect, and inclusion on our campuses, and what steps McGill should take to make improvements. The Task Force will host five focus group consultations in accessible locations at the downtown and Macdonald campuses later this month. You may sign up for one of these focus groups, on a first-come, first-served basis, through this link. Registration will be open on Friday, Jan. 12, at 9 a.m. Get more information at [website].

FOCUS GROUP REMINDER EMAIL, JANUARY 12, 2018

From the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life:

This is a reminder that registration opened at 9 a.m. today for the five focus group meetings we've organized to help you connect with the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life. Spaces, available on a first-come, first-served basis, are limited to 20 per group (with 15 spaces reserved in each for students) to ensure the groups can engage in frank, meaningful communication behind closed doors. Sessions have different themes and you can register for one only. To view the details and register for a session or have your name added to a session waitlist, please visit this [website] for the registration form. We welcome discussion in both English and French. We hope these sessions will attract a broad cross-section of the University community. For more information about the Task Force, please visit our [website].

The following table shows the dates, locations and themes of the focus groups we conducted with members of the McGill community.

| Date and time | Location | Theme |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Wednesday 17 January 15h30-17h00 | Macdonald Campus (Centennial 1-162) | Open |
| Friday 19 January 9h00-10h30 | Downtown Campus Ruttan Room (Otto Maass 321) | Teaching and Learning |
| Tuesday 23 January 15h00-16h30 | Downtown Campus Ruttan Room (Otto Maass 321) | Social Spaces |
| Thursday 25 January 15h00-16h30 | Thomson House Boardroom 406 | Graduate Student Life |
| Monday 29 January 19h00-21h00 | Carrefour Sherbrooke | Residence life |

APPENDIX F

OPEN FORUM ANNOUNCEMENT

The following announcement was circulated via broadcast email on 10 January and 17 January:

The Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life is hosting an Open Forum on Campus Culture on Wednesday, January 24 from 14h30-16h30 in Leacock 232.

All members of the McGill community are invited to attend the Open Forum to discuss how best to encourage the open and respectful expression of the variety of opinions and experiences on our campuses. The Open Forum is part of an ongoing consultation process, including the Fall Term survey on respect and inclusion on campus, and a series of focus groups scheduled throughout January.

We hope the Open Forum will attract participation from a cross-section of the University community to capture a broad range of points of view.

For those who can't attend, the session will be livestreamed. At any time, you can send comments by email to principals.taskforce@mcgill.ca.

100 copies of the following poster were posted throughout McGill's downtown and Macdonald campuses:



APPENDIX G

GROUP & INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

Throughout the process, we invited members of the community to share with us their ideas, concerns and suggestions on respect and inclusion in campus life both individually and as a group. We invited university groups to send us written submissions articulating their collective concerns and suggestions. Originally, we had asked for these letters to be sent by 31 January 2018 and we received submissions from nine groups by that deadline. However, in the interest of encouraging more participation, we extended the deadline indefinitely and we made a concerted effort to reach out to various groups on campus, which increased the number of groups that sent us letters to 18. In addition to the announcement on our website and emails, we also made sure to encourage these submissions in our focus groups, Open Forum and email exchanges with members of the McGill community. Members of the Task Force actively and directly solicited submissions from underrepresented groups.

The following announcement was circulated via broadcast email on 10 January:

The Task Force welcomes brief written submissions from on-campus groups (e.g., unions, student associations, clubs, media organizations), in which collective concerns and experiences can be shared, and recommendations can be proposed.

Submissions, which should not exceed two pages, should be a Word or PDF attachment to an email sent to principals.taskforce@mcgill.ca by January 31, 2018.¹² Please indicate clearly the constituency on behalf of which the submission is being made.

The Task Force received submissions from 15 individuals, both staff and students, as well as the following 19 self-identified campus groups:

-Chabad McGill
-Subcommittee for Racialized and Ethnic Persons of Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity
-Liberal McGill
-Muslim Student Association (MSA)
-Independent Women for Equality McGill
-Hillel McGill Executive Board
-Am McGill
-Women of Colour Collective McGill University
-Equity in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Medicine) Working Group
-Café Collab
-Subcommittee on Women, Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity
-McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association (MUNACA)
-Graduate Architecture Students Association (GASA)
-A group of graduate students in a lab
-Post Graduate Students' Society of McGill University (PGSS)
-MAUT (McGill Association of University Teachers)
-MCLIU (McGill Course Lecturers and Instructors Union)
-The Social Equity Undergraduate Research Awards (SEURA)

¹² This deadline was ultimately extended indefinitely, although the last group submission was received on 23 February 2018.

APPENDIX H

MEETINGS WITH RESOURCE PEOPLE

From February to April, members of the Task Force had consultations with the following members of the McGill community.

| Meeting Dates | Resource Person | Role |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 2 February 2018 | Pearl Eliadis | Adjunct Professor (Faculty of Law) in Civil Liberties and Member, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism |
| 9 February 2018 | Catherine Lu | Associate Professor (Department of Political Science) |
| 9 February 2018 | Veronica Amberg | Director, Social Equity and Diversity Education Office |
| 16 February 2018 | Allan Vicaire | Associate Director (First Peoples' House) |
| 16 February 2018 | Tanja Beck | Associate Director – Advising and Accommodations, Office for Students with Disabilities |
| 23 February 2018 10 April 2018 | Christopher Buddle | Dean of Students |
| 23 February 2018 | Marisa Albanese | Senior Director, Student Housing & Hospitality Services |
| 16 March 2018 | Angela Campbell | Associate Provost (Equity & Academic Policies) |
| 16 March 2018 | Victor Muñoz-Fraticelli | Associate Professor (Political Science & Law) |
| 19 March 2018 | Bianca Tétrault | Sexual Violence Education Advisor, Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education |
| 23 March 2018 | | Members of Residence Life Staff |
| 23 March 2018 | Tynan Jarrett | Employment Equity Advisor, Office of the Provost and Vice Principal (Academic) |
| 27 March 2018 | Daniel Weinstock | Professor (Law & Philosophy) |
| 27 March 2018 | Derek Ruths | Associate Professor (School of Computer Science) |
| 6 April 2018 | Alice Yue | VP External of Arts Undergraduate Society |
| 10 April 2018 | Tre Mansdoerfer | Incoming SSMU president (2018/2019) |
| 25 April 2018 | Tanya de Mello | Director, Human Rights Services, Ryerson University |

APPENDIX I

EXTERNAL RESEARCH - SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

In the course of our deliberations, we have immersed ourselves in the public and scholarly discussions of the issues raised in this report. We have, as mandated, gathered and considered policies and statements from a number of other universities. We have read a large volume of commentary, both scholarly and popular, watched videos of debates and listened to podcasts, attended talks, and been attentive to media discourse on these topics.

For those interested in further reading on these issues, we commend the following recent texts, some of which we have cited in this Report.

Erwin Cherminsky & Howard Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

John Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).

James Macnamara, "Toward a Theory and Practice of Organizational Listening", (2018) 32(1) *International Journal of Listening* 1-23.

James Macnamara, "Beyond voice: Audience-making and the Work and Architecture of Listening as New Media Literacies" (2013) 27:1 *Continuum* 160-175.

James L Turk (ed), *Academic Freedom in Conflict: the Struggle Over Free Speech Rights in the University* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, 2014).

Peter MacKinnon, *University Commons Divided: Exploring Debate & Dissent on Campus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

Frances Henry et al, *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017).

Sarah Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

Emma Cunliffe, "Freedom of Expression, Academic Freedom, and Equality: Seven Institutional Responsibilities" (2017), Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3083561>.