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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 26, 2016

TO: McGill Researchers, Academic Leadership, and Administrative Staff

CC: Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
Christopher Manfredi, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

FROM: Morty Yalovsky, Interim Vice-Principal, Administration and Finance *my*
Rosie Goldstein, Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation *RA*

RE: Tri-Agency Monitoring Site Visit 2016 Results

In February 2016 the Tri-Agency conducted a monitoring visit to assess the effectiveness of the administrative and financial control framework in place at McGill University for the administration of grants and awards.

The Tri-Agency report cited significant strengths, such as:

- University structure and governance
- Improved oversight and internal controls
- Document retention
- Well-defined and documented roles and responsibilities
- Training

The Tri-Agency also identified areas that require changes in order for McGill to ensure compliance. These are summarized in seven overarching themes:

1. Authorization of expenditures
 - McGill must ensure the consistent authorization of Principal Investigators or their authorized delegates for certain transactions (e.g., internal stores, feeds, internal expense allocations, core facilities).
2. Review of compliance and eligibility of expenses
 - The University needs to be better able to demonstrate that all transactions are reviewed for compliance and eligibility by an appointed institutional official other than the grantee or their delegate.

3. Adequate justification
 - Certain expense types (e.g., computer hardware and software, books, internet, hospitality) require additional justification in order to assess eligibility of such expenses.
4. Delegation of signing authorities
 - As grant holders, PIs can delegate signing authority on expenses when necessary to a co-investigator or a member of their research staff, such as a lab manager or research associate. Administrative staff should not be designated as signing delegates, as they are not sufficiently familiar and/or involved in the research to authorize expenses on the grant holder's behalf.
5. Ownership and disposal of assets
 - The institution requires a means of tracking the purchase and disposal of equipment acquired with the agencies' grant funds in order to ensure that the proceeds from the sale of equipment purchased with Tri-Agency funds are used for research-related purposes.
6. Eligibility status
 - McGill must promptly inform the Tri-Agency of changes in the academic status of PIs, such as leaves (of all types), resignations (even if adjunct appointment is granted), and retirements (inclusive of Emeritus and post-retirement appointments).
7. CIHR research allowances – ethics renewals
 - McGill has resolved this finding by adding a monitoring function to ensure applicable ethics requirements are obtained and maintained for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows holding CIHR student awards and performing research with human or animal subjects.

Findings from the 2016 Tri-Agency Monitoring Site Visit must be addressed by June 2018, at which time the Tri-Agency will formally review McGill's progress. Several working groups have therefore been convened with representation from numerous Departments and Faculties. A faculty member advisory group will also be formed to comment and advise on proposed solutions developed by these working groups.

Please contact Elvie Coletta, Director, Research Financial Management Services, at elvie.coletta@mcgill.ca if you wish to participate in this advisory group or if you have any other questions related to the results of the Tri-Agency Monitoring Site Visit.

We thank you for your ongoing collaboration and support. Your diligence in managing Tri-Agency grants significantly contributed to the success of the recent visit. We are confident that we can continue to rely on all faculty members and administrative staff to assist us during the next two years as we implement solutions to address these remaining findings.