

School of Biomedical Sciences Retreat 2023

Overview

The retreat was a one-day event that brought together SBMS Chairs, Directors, Faculty, staff, trainees, members of the FMHS Executive and the Dean of GPS. The objective of this retreat was to share challenges, opportunities and goals related to the pursuit of excellence in research and education within the context of the SBMS. The retreat promoted a sense of collegiality and common purpose helping to define the role of the SBMS and directions for the future. The planning of the retreat involved a working group comprised of Patricia Wade (Director, Accreditation and Education Quality Improvement, FMHS), two Faculty members at large (Drs. Lisa Münter and Peter Siegel), SBMS leadership (Dr. Johans Fakhoury, Associate Director and Dr. Terry Hébert, Assistant Dean Biomedical Education), SBMS administrative members (Dr. Susanne Kaitna, Manager of Operations and Leigh Dickson, Administrative Officer), and the Interim Director of the SBMS (Dr. Alvin Shrier).

In brief, the retreat was organized into two main sessions with the morning session focused on research while the afternoon session focused on education (Appendix 1). The morning session began with an opening address by the Dean of the FMHS, Dr. Lesley Fellows, followed by three twenty-minute presentations by Dr. Shari Baum (Vice-Dean Research FMHS), Dr. Eric Miska (Chair, Department of Biochemistry, Cambridge) and Dr. Alvin Shrier (Director, SBMS). This was followed by a breakout session where the attendees were divided into two main working groups, each with a separate list of questions to frame the discussion (Appendix 2). At the end of the breakout session there was a plenary session where each working group provided feedback. The afternoon session began with three presentations by Dr. Josephine Nalbantoglu (Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), Dr. Aimee Ryan (Associate Dean, Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, FMHS) and Dr. Terry Hebert (Assistant Dean, Biomedical Sciences). This was followed by a breakout session, as in the morning session, consisting of two main groups, each with a separate list of questions (Appendix 2) followed by a plenary session. At the end of the day the Interim Director of the SBMS provided a brief recap of the discussion and the highlights. The following report summarizes the key points of the plenary discussions and recommended action steps.

Scientific Session

Plenary Discussion

The following summarizes the highlights of the discussion from the morning scientific plenary session, with a full set of table notes of the discussion included in Appendix 3.

Definition of SBMS: One important aspect that was highlighted is the need for a self-assessment in order to clarify who we are, what we have and do not have, and what we need leading to a vision of where we plan to go. There was a desire expressed to better understand the demographics of the SBMS, identify and promote our successes, know our resources, particularly funding, and consider a strategic plan to develop our priorities. There was a clear sentiment that the role of the University as a partner in these initiatives be concretely defined. There was a concern about being outpaced by other institutions and the need to promote innovation and to develop new technologies. This was associated with the need to develop interdisciplinary programs and collaborations across the school, to translate our research to industry, move fundamental research discoveries to therapeutics, and to promote entrepreneurship.

Recruitment at SBMS: It was noted that it is critical to maintain the number of faculty in the SBMS and that recruitment must keep pace with retirements and departures. In this regard, it was felt that there could be better coordination of recruitment and promotion of clustered hires in strategic areas with more attractive recruitment packages. The process of recruitment could be improved by an open and transparent process and being proactive by anticipating retirements and preparing proposals for new licenses. We should leverage our excellence by showcasing our existing strengths. Importantly, there is a need to ensure sufficient resources and space for new faculty, a strategy for transition during the early years and suitable mentoring.

Staff to support research and science at SBMS: The SBMS is lacking in terms of support for research initiatives, advancement, and communications. In these regards it was noted that the Goodman Cancer Institute (GCI) provides a good model. There are no staff or office in the SBMS dedicated to research that would play an active role in helping PIs/units/centres to package and display projects to find funders. There is a need to better engage and build a better line to sustained engagement with university advancement with a view towards big projects and more avenues to fundraise. In this regard, we could do more to bring people together within the SBMS and the FMHS, with better connections to external Institutes. We also need to raise the profile of the SBMS, ensure that members of the SBMS are well informed of ongoing initiatives and build a community powered by effective communications. While there are existing interactions among departments and institutes within the SBMS, there is a need to better know our colleagues and build collaborations. The SBMS should advocate collegiality. There should be more opportunities for departments to meet up and discuss projects, so people know who is doing what and opportunities for collaboration. This can be extended to clinical colleagues at the RI-MUHC and LDI.

Support of core facilities: The importance of core research platforms was recognized and the need to consider these cores as a basic and essential investment to ensure research competitiveness. There should be more centrally available resources/equipment so that each department does not need to duplicate efforts. In light of potential changes at the CFI, with respect to future CFI competitions that re-invest in existing CFI-funded facilities to increase sustainability, it will be important for the University

to demonstrate a commitment to sustaining these cores. Indeed, criteria for the investment of these CFI funds could be tied to the level of demonstrated support provided to core facilities by the University. This is already happening at other Universities in Canada (University of Ottawa), and McGill risks losing a competitive edge if these issues are not addressed. There should be a career path for core research platform support staff that would ensure salaries to relieve the stress concerning job security that would stabilize the cores. This is already occurring at other Institutions within Quebec and across Canada and represents a clear vulnerability for McGill. Core facilities are an important tool for recruitment, at the level of faculty and trainees. Also, the budget to support cores should be increased. In the area of operational support there is a need to help with service contracts, manage infrastructure across the SBMS and support basic services. We should build on existing strengths and coordinate CFI initiatives to enhance core support and growth.

Action Strategies

Asset Map Develop SBMS database of demographics, research performance and academic contributions. *Action: Bring to SBMS Executive Committee, consult with FMHS accreditation.*

Strategic Plan for the SBMS. *Action: To be discussed with the SBMS Executive Committee.*

Faculty Recruitment Develop a recruitment strategy for the SBMS that reflects the priorities of the strategic plan. In the meantime, the new Director of the SBMS should work closely with the Chairs and Institute Directors to pursue cooperative recruitment and where possible cluster hires. Also, recruitment of Contract Academic Staff (CAS) should be pursued with a view to provide long term security and where possible opportunities to obtain Tenure Track (TT) positions. *Action: All new recruitments into departments in the SBMS should involve the Director of the SBMS and have the support of the Executive Committee. This includes proposals from Institutes whether from within the SBMS affiliated McGill Institutes. The Director of the SBMS (or their delegates) should be involved at all stages in the process and particularly when this involves recruitment of new Chairs. The Director and Chairs involved should work together to advance requests for recruitment to the Vice-Dean Academic for approval and ultimately a hiring license. In fact, it is recommended that the Director be a signatory on such offers and be fully aware of the terms outlined in the letter of offer. A mentoring plan should be established for new recruits. A strategy should be developed to launch new faculty during the initial period upon arrival at McGill, while CFI funding is forthcoming and lab space is being constructed/renovated. The possibility of offering access to services provided by scientific platforms in the letter of offer should be considered.*

Administrative Support for the SBMS As noted in the summary, a number of administrative positions were identified that would greatly benefit the new Director. *Action: Establish key administrative positions described below, with salary support provided by the FMHS.*

Communications Officer *Previously a communications officer had been hired for the SBMS; however, this individual has now left the position. The initial plan was to refill the position, but due to a pressing need elsewhere in the SBMS the position was temporarily put on hold. With the current financial constraints and a resultant hiring freeze, this position cannot be pursued at the current time. However, it should be reinstated as soon as the opportunity arises.*

Research Officer *The SBMS should establish a research office that is managed by a dedicated research officer, which could be modeled on the position that currently exists in the GCI. This would involve promoting strategic initiatives, coordinating large team grants, coordinating existing resources within the SBMS, interacting closely with platform managers, planning grant applications, and providing support to junior faculty.*

Advancement *While it may be challenging to create a position within the SBMS for advancement, there is a need for the SBMS to work more closely with the Office of Advancement of the FMHS.*

Collegiality, Outreach and Entrepreneurships This involves activities to promote interactions within the SBMS, with colleagues at partner institutes of the FMHS and with industry. *Action: Consider a common research day for the SBMS and a career fair for students. Connect with industry and develop capabilities as well as opportunities for entrepreneurships. Consider promoting more clinically integrated programs. Consider establishing a dedicated space for interaction between units.*

Core Scientific Programs Action: *In conjunction with the University, work to develop a stable career path for core scientific platform support staff. Push for a budget to support core facilities in the SBMS from the FMHS and the University. This would be critical in light of potential changes in the CFI funding models (discussed above). Create a technical position to work under the Manager of Operation of the SBMS to coordinate service contracts, support common equipment and provide basic services across the SBMS. Continue to coordinate the activities of the Scientific Platform Oversight Committee of the SBMS (SPOC) and the FMHS Committee for the Oversight of Shared Research Resource Facilities (COSRRF).*

Education Session

Plenary Discussion

As in the morning session the highlights of the discussion will be summarized below with a set of notes included in Appendix 3.

A common theme of many breakout groups was the lack of uniformity of graduate programs among the departments of the SBMS. This includes identified diversity in the admissions requirements, course loads to complete degree programs, examination standards, rigor, timing and requirements for qualifying and comprehensive exams. There was a sense that there should be a better balance of expectations among departments in the SBMS and that common forms could be shared. We need to have a better sense of the curricula, best practices, and common interests. It was also suggested that existing courses of a general nature (statistics, bioinformatics, coding, bioethics, writing, etc.) already present in different departments could be amalgamated and offered to students in all departments in the SBMS. Individual departments could accept these general courses, and perhaps courses in other departments, as part of their degree requirements.

There are gaps in administrative support for student affairs and in particular graduate support when a departmental Graduate Program Coordinator is on leave whether it be for maternity, health problems, career advancement or other issues, such as union rules. Similar activities are conducted redundantly across departments without a view for possible strategies to improve efficiency.

By building further connections between departments there would be cross pollination and the development of new courses. It was noted that the FRSQ offers a course in science entrepreneurship subscribed by many McGill graduate students. A McGill based course in the area is offered by BME that could be considered as a model for a course offered for the SBMS. Students could learn about real world applications and clinical translation for their projects and gain insight into career possibilities. In this regard, it was suggested that for areas outside the expertise of biomedical scientists' consultants or experts could be brought in to teach or coordinate graduate, perhaps accelerated, courses. Internships in industry could be facilitated. Students should also have the opportunity to learn about scientific tools and emerging technologies. The notion of one or zero credit short courses could be considered, as currently exists in some GPS graduate programs (Cancer). It was also suggested that students should be brought together across the SBMS. This could include common events such as research and career days. This was deemed particularly important for students working on multidisciplinary projects where any given department may not provide a suitable identify and the SBMS could fill the gap. Opportunities for interactions could be facilitated by creating shared spaces.

Recruitment of graduate students to departments within the SBMS could be strengthened. Currently, the McGill Biomedical Research Accelerator (MBRA) program is attracting students from outside McGill in their penultimate undergraduate year. In the Faculty of Science there is a large number of endowments for their SURA summer programs that could serve as a model for advancement to support the MBRA and recruitment studentships. We could do more by highlighting our graduate programs and the excellence of the investigators in the SBMS. Due to the nature of the funding model in Quebec, the university benefits by an increase in PhD students that should be promoted.

There is the matter of CAS teaching faculty who have no current opportunity for a TT appointment. The teaching load is generally large with little opportunity for well-rounded careers and a lack of long-term employment security. There is little opportunity to train for such a career path that could be enhanced by teaching and mentoring opportunities for interested graduate students and perhaps courses in pedagogy.

Finally, there is little attention paid to postdoctoral fellows for which there are no SBMS based programs available and opportunities to interact.

Action Strategies

Harmonization of SBMS Graduate Programs This will require a full evaluation of the graduate programs across the SBMS. *Action: A first step would be a strategy to acquire the necessary information, undertake an analysis and consider the way forward. This may also be an opportunity to follow up on initiative to undertake a curriculum mapping exercise initiated following the SBMS graduate student retreat held in 2023.*

Administrative Support Gaps in administrative support create daunting challenges for departments that could be addressed by changing how student affairs, particularly support for graduate studies is organized. As noted, this might be an opportunity to consider efficiencies in the administrative processes. *Action: We need to consider administrative approaches to address these issues. There have been ongoing discussions about creating a position for a coordinator of GPCs who would work with GPCs in SBMS departments to fill the gaps, initiate cross cutting events and work under the supervision of the Associate Director of the SBMS to develop more efficient administrative processes.*

Recruitment One aspect that would potentially benefit all departments within the SBMS would be a common recruitment strategy that would profile the strengths of the SBMS. This would also help address the desire for a larger cohort of PhD students. Other schools of biomedical sciences in the USA and elsewhere, have a common portal for admissions with distinct graduate streams or tracks. This approach was highlighted in the presentation of the Dean of GPS, which is a matter well worthy of further consideration. *Action: A first step could involve consideration of graduate student recruitment in consultation with the Associate Dean, Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (BBGP) and the Office of Communications. Currently, the SBMS runs the MBRA program that has been growing year by year. In the first several years the program was supported by the FMHS, while this year the Dean of GPS has generously offered to provide support. As noted, summer SURA programs in the Faculty of Science benefit from a large endowment that should be pursued for the MBRA.*

Connections, Collaborations and Multidisciplinarity There are many aspects where graduate students can be brought together to benefit from cross fertilization and interaction. *Action: It was suggested that common activities could be initiated among student societies across the SBMS. Towards that end, the Interim Director of the SBMS, has been working with the graduate and undergraduate student societies to form both SBMS graduate and undergraduate student councils. The putative SBMS Graduate Student Council that will involve the seven graduate student societies, which is now finalizing its constitution, is organizing a series of three GradTalks this semester supported by the SBMS. It is also planning a career fair for the fall of 2024. The SBMS Undergraduate Student Council, which involves the five SBMS undergraduate student societies, has already organized and managed the SBMS Open House this past fall. It is planning several events, including an orientation event session to aid incoming and prospective undergraduates in the selection of major/honour programs in the SBMS. The possibility of a research day(s) that could include graduate and undergraduate students could be considered by the student councils. This could also involve the evaluation of courses of a general nature or of broad interest that could be offered across the SBMS. The details as to the coordination and ownership of such courses would be up for discussion. Opportunities to connect with medical trainees and translational opportunities should be further considered with the Assistant Dean, Biomedical Science Education.*

Career Training The reality these days is that the majority of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows do not end up in academic jobs. So, it is useful to provide them with an opportunity to prepare and

explore alternatives. As noted above, the graduate student council is planning an employment fair that could provide connections to industry. There are other options. *Action: Consider the possibility of an SBMS based course in entrepreneurship that could be considered in consultation with the Department of Biomedical Engineering and the Associate Dean, BBG. Enhancing internships, perhaps with MITACs, should be considered. Courses (0/1 credit) in technologies ranging from bioimaging to genomics.*

Career Academic Staff - Teaching CAS teaching faculty in the SBMS find career opportunities difficult and lack security. By comparison, this has advanced significantly at other institutions that has led to the departure of highly valued and qualified personnel. *Action: A "Report on the Responsibilities and Contributions of CAS Members of McGill University" was commissioned by the previous Director of the SBMS and the Assistant Dean, Biomedical Science Education. The current Interim Director of the SBMS met with CAS Faculty members to review the report and discuss steps forward. The report highlighted the fact that there is a lack of consistency and transparency in job offers and expectations of CAS teaching faculty. Two main targets were identified where the SBMS could provide support: 1) Job description with a breakdown of responsibilities that would provide 20% of time for individual initiatives in education innovation and curriculum development, and 10% for service, 2) Job security with contracts longer than three years and ultimately something akin to tenure could be pursued. In order to address target 1, it was suggested by the Interim Director that the CAS faculty, with support of the SBMS and particularly the Assistant Dean of Biomedical Education, approach the FMHS (Vice-Dean of Academic Affairs and Vice-Dean Education). To address target 2, there needs to be an approach that is broader based since it would be applicable university wide and ultimately would need to be addressed by the Office of the Provost. A first step could be discussion with MAUT and perhaps Professor Angela Campbell, Associate Provost (Equity and Academic Policies).*

Postdoctoral Fellows Currently there is no forum in the SBMS for postdoctoral fellows to interact and pursue career opportunities. *Action: Since there is nothing in place a starting point could be a meeting with the postdoctoral fellows from across the SBMS with the next Director of the SBMS to consider the next steps.*



SBMS - Strategic Planning Retreat



Wednesday, Nov. 1st, 2023



9:00AM - 5:00 PM

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
8:30 - 9:00	<i>Registration and breakfast</i>	Meet & Greet
9:00-9:10	Opening address	Dean Fellows
9:10 - 9:30	FMHS research overview	Dr. Shari Baum
9:30-9:50	SBMS Overview	Dr. Alvin Shrier
9:50-10:05	<i>Breakfast and refreshments</i>	
10:05-10:35	SBMS Cambridge presentation	Dr. Eric Miska
10:35 - 11:20	Identify priorities in research & how to move forward	Break out groups
11:20 - 12:15	Plenary discussions - Priorities & Strategies	
12:15 - 1:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:00 - 1:20	Graduate education	Dr. J. Nalbantoglu
1:20 - 1:40	Graduate studies overview	Dr. Aimee Ryan
1:40 - 2:00	SBMS education overview	Dr. Terry Hébert
2:00 - 2:45	Identifying priorities in education & how to move forward	Break out groups
2:45 - 3:30	Plenary discussions - priorities and strategies	
3:30 - 3:45	<i>Break and refreshments</i>	
3:45 - 4:45	Recap, synthesis and next steps	

Appendix 2

SBMS Retreat Questions

Research

Group 1

Who are we and who do we want to be? What research strengths/expertise do we currently possess and what do we need to develop. What do you see as our strategic directions?

How can the SBMS best support new recruitments in partnership with the Departments, institutes and the FMHS. How do we strategically plan for support of recruits associated with large scale (CFREF) and high-profile (CERCs) grants.

How should the research infrastructure acquisition, maintenance and access be managed within FHMS and SBMS?

What additional roles can the school play to promote research and grant initiatives? How should we interact with other large units such as the Faculties of Science and Engineering, as well as research institutes in terms of research, but also education.

How do we enhance interactions and investment from industry. What other means are there for us to raise support for innovation and training.

Group 2

What role should the school play in the context of developing or coordinating the administration, research pillars and supporting new initiatives? Are there, or can we conceive of, administrative and organizational structures that promote lateral interactions among different units to help exchange information, introduce different perspectives, and promote cross-fertilization.

How can SBMS help with the attraction, training, career progression and retention of academic support staff?

How can we create and ensure the conditions that allow our platforms to perform at their full potential?

How best to increase the visibility of the school within the FMHS and the greater biomedical communities. What initiatives and directions can we take to enhance fund raising.

How could we reorganize or consolidate existing structures (Dept, Centres, Institutes) to enhance coordination and competitiveness.

Education

Group 1

Do we consider establishing a Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences with streams of specialization?

How do we navigate a university system where our undergraduate students are in the Faculty of Science while professors are in the FMHS? How can we develop educational opportunities with the Faculty of Science.

How can undergraduate and graduate training be aligned among departments, centers & institutes, avoiding fragmentation but ensuring a cutting-edge life-science curriculum?

How do we deal with an imbalance between recruitment and undergraduate teaching needs across departments in the SBMS. Department recruitment is driven by research and not all Departments have undergraduate programs.

What are our teaching missions for undergraduate and graduate students, and how are they integrated or reflected in our research mission?

Group 2

How do we balance shared needs across graduate programs while preserving departmental identities? What is the role of the SBMS in the current landscape of training programs being developed. What other options or opportunities could the SBMS consider?

How do we foster “translational” and interdisciplinary connections across schools in the FMHS?

How do we establish needs for new faculty and a culture where education is more highly valued? How do we establish pathways where CAS faculty are equally valued by the SMBS, FMHS and the university?

How might we rethink and harmonize our educational programs, change how we deliver our course material and whether we consider developing a core curriculum for the SBMS?

How do we adopt our undergraduate departmental programs to align with emerging areas of research with recruitment of faculty with divergent expertise.

Appendix 3

SBMS Retreat Plenary Session Notes

Research

Table 1

- Focused on question 1.
 - Translational Program – what interdisciplinary program would be useful across the school.
 - Translate our research to both industry and other arenas.
 - Opportunity to bring in and collaborate with industry.
 - Career development to connect with industry.
 - Seeing what skill(s) are needed by industry and train our students to have those skill(s)
 - Perhaps we consider a sliding overhead based on the size of the company, so that startups are also able to work with McGill and we can bring in these smaller companies and thus give our students more opportunities to get onto the ground level of an idea.
 - Building individual capabilities in entrepreneurship
 - Designated incubator space
 - Structure to lobby a better IP policy.
 - Enhancing connections with technology companies and hubs that are coming to Montreal.
 - By giving incentives to industry and eliminating barriers between these partnerships, it should enrich everyone involved. Perhaps it be considered more with items like promotion.
 - Clinically integrated programs where medical interns come into our lab and our students go into their arenas and the two groups work together.
 - Grad students being able to work with medical professionals and a scientist.
 - Perhaps we know ourselves as well as we know others.
 - More opportunities for departments to meet up and discuss projects so people know who they are already working with when it comes to collaboration.
 - There are talks about a tech hub downtown, but McGill is not at that table. We should be, especially given what advantages it should give our trainees.
 - We need to build a structure that allows us to be aware of, and thus be able to participate in these sorts of discussions.

Table 2

- Focused on question 2.
- We need to know what we have and don't have – and we need to get what we don't have.
 - We need 40+ tenure track positions.

- We need to support recruitment.
- We need to know how much money we have available to us, although we do not always have the most control over these funds.
- We need a research office (similar to GCI) that looks at strategic initiatives, planning etc. and having something similar for us could be immensely helpful.
- How do we make McGill attractive to these parties?
 - We need an attractive employment package to not only get these people, but also get them to stay.
 - Look to UofT and UBC and see what they offer.
 - Pay
 - Housing
 - Education for children
 - Facilities/Resources for research
 - We need to address these gaps before we are completely outpaced by other universities.
 - McGill has really excellent people, and we should start by leveraging that.
 - We need to be selling ourselves better, even with what we already have. We need to promote and showcase our existing strengths. (Both research and academia)
 - We either say little to nothing or go all out with “McGill is the best” but we have no strong consistent message.
 - We need a well-organized and coordinated fundraising campaign.
 - We need to engage and convince University Advancement; we are a worthy avenue to allocate funds.
- Q4: We need an entity that does communication and dedicated to advancement. This team works with UA, to get us what we need/want.
 - Two positions - \$160k-180k to potentially get millions.

Table 3

- Being part of the school should make things easier.
 - Career fair for students to find out what is out there.
 - Research day
 - Biomedical School conference to increase visibility of the school.
- Research of the school could be organized.
 - Concern there is already too many schools and PIs may be spread too thin. While there should be some centres, there need to not be too many, and they can be a central focus
- More tenure tracks positions to allow for job security.
- Central fundraising bank – that can be equitably spread between departments and/or be used to purchase resources that can be shared within the school.
- Perhaps we consider clustered hires, that are one group that can learn and grow and connect together. Have an experienced person lead the group, but this could be an excellent way to bring in new and inexperienced hires.
- Before we hire senior people, we need dedicated spaces for them/their teams.

Table 4

- Q2: Priority: Establish autonomy within the school with regards to hiring and strategic planning.
 - Strategic planning hiring should not clash with the wider faculty.
 - Open and transparent process
 - Should be built from within the school.
 - We have major undergraduate teaching roles, and we need people to fill those roles.
 - We should not be declining in faculty, if someone retires a department should have an immediate open space. If anything, ideally, we should be able to grow to make sure we are able to grow as our field(s) grow.
- Q3: Resources – two key pieces of admin support
 - A person at the school level – that can act as a backup administration for the departments. Admin are leaving on mass and so there are so many gaps, so we need resources that would allow for relief until a permanent person can be found – instead of making the existing team take on even more work.
 - A technical person to help with service contracts.
 - Bundling between departments to save money.
 - Dr. Shrier noted that something like this is already in the works, and he hopes to get it off the ground early next year.

Table 5

- Q1: Build off our existing success – CFIs that have been successful or that are already on the docket.
 - Try to be best in areas broadly applicable to much of SBMS.
 - Generation of large data that is being accumulated in various diseases and we need to look at how to manage and integrate these large data sets.
 - More cluster recruitments in these groups
 - Recruiting PIs with the right expertise but being sure they are not being spread too thin.
 - Recruiting people who have their own strong research projects.
 - How do we move discoveries from the lab down the pipeline?
 - It seems to be an area we have largely struggled with.
 - Consolidate existing expertise and bring in people who are knowledgeable in the various steps needed to get a project from lab to industry/public.
 - Make sure people are aware of what resources already exist, and then from there we can find (and fill) gaps.
- Q3: How can we attract (and keep) staff.
 - Principles:
 - We should be considering so called “shortfalls” as investments.
 - Bringing in great young faculty
 - Keeping existing great faculty
 - Support for managers

- When grants come up, people become anxious as to whether their position will still be there and so they move out of academia due to the uncertainty involved.
 - We need to find more stable funding – so that people are not worried about their salaries.
 - We have too many people, who are contract-to-contract and so have to worry regularly as to whether they will need to find a new job.
 - Many universities are making sure salaries are coming from stable funds, rather than grant-dependent.
 - More centrally available resources/equipment – so that each department does not need their own but rather there are several that everyone in the school can get access to.
- Q4:
 - Cross-disciplinary training programs – could these programs be a stimulus to allow for interaction across units at the faculty level – not just for students.
 - Could there be a model where there is a dedicated space for interaction between units.

Table 6

- Q3:
 - Improve conditions for academic support staff – and better resources to both attract and retain them. Perhaps something similar to tenure and hire them as scientists. Allow more opportunities for them to become integrated into their departments (give them a home)
 - More funds/opportunities for professional developments
 - More opportunities for career advancement and general recognition of the work they do.
 - We need the AEC to exist outside of departments, we need to commit to them, and they need to commit to us.
- Q1:
 - School should find funding for collaborative interests.
 - School should have an active role in helping PIs/units/centres to package and display projects to find funders.
 - School needs to take on a more activist role for their projects and build a more direct (and louder) line to Advancement.
 - Cluster hires – bring in people and they have an in-built community, so they are less likely to leave.
 - Balance hires so they are filling gaps and/or are building areas of interests.
 - We close job postings before we find the best person, we should be willing to keep an opening for several months to be sure we have the right person.

Table 7

- Provide a career path for hires.
- Build conversations on how McGill is working – and how to bring in and work with other entities.
- Cluster hires – very important to strategically hire (and strategically plan)

- Our strategic plan should outline where our priorities are with hires.
- We need to already have the licenses on the table and get all the ones we need in one group. And thus, allowing us more flexibility in how/when we hire.
 - Know who is going to retire – when and plan for that vacancy and grab the hiring license ASAP.
 - Perhaps get these soon-to-rotate to mentor new hires. It may bring people as we are able to support and help new hires build connections immediately and understand how academia (and McGill) really works on the ground.
 - It will also allow us to see, what knowledge we are going to lose in the next 5 years and begin the hiring process to fill those gaps before they open. Or even see what areas we can sunset, and which areas are in demand.
- We lack the bells and whistles that other universities have, but if we move faster than we have a chance to get people.
- Stronger administration support – a professional team who perhaps focus purely on grants.
- Should we be linking ourselves to big questions – which may allow us more avenues to fundraise.
 - Ex. AI, big data, metabolic sciences, extending lifespans etc.
- We need to bring people together – we need to work with other institutions within McGill, within Quebec and within Canada.
 - Ex. The mapping of the COVID genome was the work of McGill people and institutions around the world and this was built off series of open data.

Education

Table 7

- Q1+4 –
 - Common core elements
 - Core courses in items like ethics and Science communication across all the departments
 - Allows for students to be more well-rounded and gives them more chances to develop soft skills.
 - Opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship – Quebec runs a program for all university students – do we want to build a program specific to McGill.
 - The course that does exist in this arena is always full – so clearly there is always a demand.
 - Harmonization of expectations.
 - Harmonization of admission practices.
 - Transparent expectations of graduate students.
 - What are we expecting from them and are they fair across the departments?
 - Allow students more opportunities to take courses and participate in labs in other departments.
 - Do we allow more opportunities for teaching?
 - Integration of student clubs
 - Building career trajectories across the school
 - Transitional programs that put students on the pathway from PhDs to PIs OR Postdocs OR CAS OR TT
 - Is the process by which CAS are hired transparent so that CAS know what they are doing.
 - An SBMS-wide research day to share what is going on in different departments, and possibly an event to bring in medicine as well.
 - Career days so students can see possible pathways outside of academia.
 - This is also something students want.

Table 6

- How do we balance needs for programs across the departments
 - Departments provide identities to undergrads – but this seems to be increasingly less the case in graduate students (and faculties)
 - Rotational programs seem to only work in small programs where everyone can participate.
- There is a lack of communication between departments in terms of who is offering what in terms of programs and courses.
 - Curriculum mapping is going on at the undergraduate level, but we need to do it across the school.
 - This will allow us to reduce redundancies and provide opportunities for departments to work together and create interdisciplinarity.

- There are so many good things coming out of the SBMS, but for the most part, we are not selling ourselves to potential students/donors and we need to be better at that.
- CAS needs greater recognition and more resources/support.
 - We need more academic TT positions that are purposely hired to innovate education, not to research.
 - The vice-provost office is considering this option.
 - CAS needs to have the same job security as tenure track – if there is a need for teaching staff, they need the same job security.

Table 5

- Streamline certain duties that are across platforms (ex. administration)
- Internships coordinated across departments.
- Mentorship and wellness
- Graduate programs are already cross-cutting, so why not expand it more? And allow more opportunities for students (and faculty) to work together.
- Teach students about finding and knowing the real-world applications of their projects.
- Courses/Workshops on this – but perhaps more on how to use equipment and how to interpret/use the data they gather from that equipment.
 - It is also evidence that students can use to prove they have taken time to learn about x.
 - It can easily be a pass/fail type of course.
 - We also have the option of a zero-credit (as opposed to a no credit course) that can be a short course, but still be mandatory for students to take. It also will not mess with graduate level programs (PhDs are already 0 credits – so they will not be impacted)
 - The issue with an optional one-credit course would be students having to pay more for it, if it is outside of their program.

Table 4

- Physiology does have a very strong department identity at the graduate level due to the low student to faculty ratio. (close to 1:1)
- We need to share best practices and implement them where possible.
- High altitude views of programs and find duplications and gaps.
- We also need TT teaching positions.
- CAS hiring forms do not have boxes that fit the reality of the position – so we need to fix that.
- The school is perhaps too diverse to have courses that apply well to everyone.
 - But areas outside of the school (ethics, communication etc.) would be excellent venues to consider that universally available course.
- Get funding available for translational projects – from bench → clinician.
 - Medical students want more research opportunities, but SBMS is not getting the funds from FMHS to support these additional students, so they are not taking them.

Table 3

- Q2:
 - Create a program to increase inefficiency.

- Open more courses to more students.
- Recruiting students who know that they want a PhD and allow them more flexibility in their first couple of years of their degrees so they can find where they best fit and where their interests lie, instead of choosing their specialty in their first year and being stuck.
- A shared space for all the graduate students, that can be both a hangout spot and a place to work on projects (ex. With a 3D printer)
- More informal opportunities for people across departments to get together and discuss what they are working on and learn what else is going on.
- An expert who helps students get through the ethics and/or other similar processes.
- A pedagogical course for students who are interested in teaching.

Table 2

- Q2:
 - How do we make a cross-cutting program? It takes a while and where do we even start?
 - Perhaps we start with some universal courses that can be taken by any department.
 - While this is going on we can build the framework and supports for a bigger program
 - Harmonize stipends, exam standards, course loads etc.
 - How do we support an identity? What is an identity.
- School-wide career fair but allow departments to hold their own 3-minute thesis.

Q4:

- Give opportunities for students to get the skills they need regardless of where they want to work.
 - Including more internships
- Do better with exposing/advertising to undergraduates to experiential opportunities.

Table 1

- Q4:
 - Graduate students want to learn skills outside of our teachers' expertise, so maybe we look at hiring consultants or experts and be okay with not being able to teach everything. (ex. Business skills,)
 - Departments want to focus more on student experience, rather than student administration.
 - There are some PIs that are not visible – and that creates an inequity and means students may not find someone who fits their interests well.
 - There is also high inequity in how much certain departments are teaching undergraduates that may limit what graduate students may be interested in your program, as they may think they'll get less time with their PI/supervisor.
- Accelerated courses – expensive but seems to get great results, however it is difficult to get that funding, but Dr. Shrier will do what he can to keep as much funding as possible.