



Question

TO: Senate

QUESTION FROM: Senators Adrienne Tessier and Henrique Mecabô

RESPONSE FROM: Senator Christopher Manfredi, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

SUBJECT: Question Regarding the Delivery of the Fall 2020 Term

MEETING DATE: May 13, 2020

PREAMBLE: The COVID-19 pandemic and associated provincial guidelines have forced academic institutions to rethink and restructure the delivery of education. In March, the decision was made to move the remainder of the Winter 2020 semester online, and more recently, McGill University announced that the Summer 2020 semester would be conducted remotely as well.

Students, staff, and faculty are all anxiously waiting to hear how the Fall 2020 semester will be delivered. Students who do not live in Montreal are currently in the process of renewing lease contracts for August and September. Prospective students entering post-secondary education are attempting to make major decisions regarding their futures at McGill among other academic institutions. For these reasons, this question is urgent in nature.

QUESTION:

1. Is the University currently considering cancelling the Fall 2020 semester?
2. Is the University currently considering distance education for the Fall 2020 semester?
3. If distance education were pursued for the Fall semester, how would it affect tuition costs? The current public budget proposal is premised on smaller enrollment for the 2020-2021 next academic year. Would tuition fees be lowered for a semester pursued fully through distance education?
4. By when will students, staff, and faculty be notified of the University's decision regarding the delivery of the Fall semester?
5. Who in the McGill administration currently is or will be involved in the decision as to how the Fall semester will be delivered?
6. Where can returning and prospective students direct their concerns regarding the delivery of the Fall semester?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for these questions. I will take them in turn.

1. McGill will continue to deliver its academic programs and courses throughout the Fall 2020 term. There is no risk that this term will be canceled.
2. Courses in Fall 2020 will be primarily delivered through remote platforms. At the same time, we will be actively exploring opportunities for rich and robust on-campus experiences for students who will be in Montreal in this Fall, which can be replicated for students who will be abroad.
3. Tuition is not affected by the decision to offer courses in the Fall term through remote delivery.
4. I announced McGill's approach to teaching delivery for Fall 2020 in my communication of 11 May 2020 to the University community.
5. As Provost and chief academic officer of the University, I am charged with the responsibility of ensuring the delivery of high-quality academic programs and courses in a manner that accords with McGill's regulations and policies. My leadership team is principally charged with planning for the Fall term to maintain delivery of programs and courses regardless of the situation related to COVID-19 this coming September. This group has worked collaboratively with Faculties and other campus units, and has been consulting and receiving feedback from the McGill community, since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. There will be continuous and ongoing opportunities for feedback and consultation in the weeks and months ahead.

Moreover, APC will be the main vehicle by which Senate will be informed about Fall 2020 academic planning. Any academic planning decisions that have policy implications will be brought to Senate via APC.

6. Students may direct any comments, questions, feedback, or concerns to me or any member of my senior leadership team, or to their Faculty Dean who will in turn relay this back to me. I am always grateful for engagement by members of our community, especially from students.
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