



# Memorandum

**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Dr. Lucyna Lach, Co-Chair of the Committee on Student Services

**SUBJECT:** Committee on Student Services Annual Report

**DATE:** October 21, 2020

**DOCUMENT #:** D20-10

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION     APPROVAL/DECISION

<b>ISSUE</b>	The activities of the Committee on Student Services (CSS) are summarized and presented in the Annual Report.
<b>BACKGROUND &amp; RATIONALE</b>	<p>The work of the Committee in 2019-20 centered on a Myth-Busting Campaign, the Strategic Plan, the Suicide Prevention Framework, reviewing progress and providing input during the development of the Student Wellness Hub and the associated processes and internet-based resources. The new Wellness Hub is progressing at a remarkable rate. The progress of new initiatives to increase access and effectiveness of services has been impressive.</p> <p>On many occasions the Committee returned to the issue of academic stress as a driver of the need for services. The University itself is responsible for generating academic stress and new initiatives are required to ensure that academic stress levels are appropriate.</p>
<b>PRIOR CONSULTATION</b>	N/A
<b>SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	N/A
<b>IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS</b>	For information of Senate
<b>MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL</b>	N/A
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A: Annual Report of the Committee on Student Services



## **Annual Report of the Committee on Student Services for 2019-20**

### **Highlights**

The work of the Committee in 2019-20 centered on receiving updates on the Student Wellness Hubs, Strategic Planning in Student Services, Myth Busting campaign, and the Co-Creation of the Suicide Framework.

### **Mandate of the Committee**

The Committee on Student Services (CSS) advises the Executive Director on the objectives and priorities relating to Student Services. CSS has a mandate to meet regularly to review Student Services initiatives based on reports from the Service Directors and Advisory Boards, formulate and promote policies in support of planning, and provide advice on budgetary matters.

### **Membership in 2019-20**

Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning): Professor Fabrice Labeau (Interim)

Executive Director of Services for Students: Ms. Martine Gauthier

Associate Dean (Student Affairs), Macdonald Campus: Professor Jim Fyles (Co-Chair , September – December 2019); Professor Valerie Orsat (as of January 1, 2020)

Two Associate Deans (Student Affairs and/or Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or equivalent:

Dr. Lucyna Lach (Associate Dean (Student Affairs), Faculty of Arts) – Co-Chair (Jan.-Aug. 2020)

Dr. Aimee Ryan (Associate Dean, Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, Faculty of Medicine)

Two Directors of Student Services:

Richard Hink, Director of Communications

Darlene Hnatchuk, Director of Career Planning Services

Two Associate Deans (Student Affairs and/or Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or equivalent:

Lucyna Lach (Associate Dean Student Affairs, Faculty of Arts) – September – December 2019

Three Representatives appointed by Senate:

Bassam Khoury

Jonathan Britt

Nancy Czemmell

Three Graduate Students:

Deborah Chan

Kira Smith

Macdonald Campus Student:

Ann Bui

Six representatives of undergraduate Student Societies (three of whom shall be from Arts, Science, Engineering, Management, or Education):

Billy Kawasaki (ARTS)  
Madeline Wilson (ARTS)  
Mr. Andre Lametti (MEDICINE)  
Henri Schoucair (MANAGEMENT)  
Mu Rong Yang (EDUCATION)  
Ffion Hughes (ARTS) - Co-Chair

Resource persons with voice, but no vote:

Manager, Finance and Systems, Office of the Executive Director, Services for Students: Rosella De Stefano  
Manager - Student Assessment, Student Services: Lina Di Genova

Secretary: Ms. Tatyana Roméus-Kébé

### **Dates of Committee Meetings:**

In 2019-20 the Committee met on:

October 4, 2019  
November 18, 2019  
February 26, 2020

### **Reports and Presentations**

*Reports of the Executive Director:* The Executive Director reported on specific projects:

Myth Busting Campaign  
Co-creation of Suicide Framework  
Strategic Planning for Student Services  
Progress of Wellness Hubs

In addition highlights from the National College Health Assessment were presented by Lina DiGenova.

Due to COVID, no further meetings were held and no reports were received from Advisory Boards associated with the various departments in Student Services. Given this, we have asked for a summary of key accomplishments and challenges from each department for the last year.

#### **Career planning Services**

- Developed BNS for replacement cloud solution for myFuture (Campus wide consultations) – in partnership with IT.
- Expanding adoption of myInvolvement and use of Co-Curricular Records for students.
- Prototyped Design Your Life career design workshops.

#### **Accomplishments**

- Launch of Student Employee Onboarding website and training / programming resources (<https://www.mcgill.ca/onboardingcentral/>) to support students in maximizing their McGill employment experiences
- Collaborated and launched « Français au travail » workshop series – in partnership with McGill's French Language Centre (<https://www.mcgill.ca/flc/activities-and-events/students-activities/francais-au-travail-series>)
- Significantly expanded Job Shadowing Program – in partnership with UA

- Secured approx. 600K in subsidy funding for TLS Remote Learning Assistants and created Work Integrated Learning program outline
- In response to COVID:
  - Within one day, flipped all appointments to virtual
  - Within one month, redesigned and flipped and doubled numbers of workshops to virtual delivery

### Challenges

- Recruitment of qualified personnel, and time-to-hire.
- COVID related: decrease in job and internship opportunities for our students

### Campus Life & Engagement

- Awarded \$20k grant from Sustainability Project Fund to make our programs and events more sustainable and aligned with University's sustainability goals.
- Recruited over 1,000 student volunteers as part of the Students Helping Students Campaign.
- Our annual event to support our new students from CEGEPs was attended by about 1,000 students this past year.
- Our largest event of the year, Discover McGill, celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and was attended by over 5,000 new students.
- Our new graduate student orientation events provided an opportunity for students to feel welcomed and part of our community.
- Introduced new orientation events and peer program for first-generation students.
- The event, Life Beyond McGill Residences, had over 500 students attend this past year.

### Accomplishments

- Discover McGill turned 20<sup>th</sup> in 2019! For the past 20 years. Campus Life & Engagement (previously known as the First-Year Office) worked with campus partners to welcome thousands of each students every year!
- Increased sustainability in our programming. For the first time ever, the largest orientation event with more than 5000+ in attendance was awarded a GOLD certification for sustainability. (saved more than 6000+ single-use water bottles)
- Implementation of specific-population orientation and programming. Introduced First Generation Student Orientation as well as created a peer support group, 1<sup>st</sup> Up, funded by the Mary H Brown Fund and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic).
- Life Beyond McGill Residences program that had over 500 students attend last year received the Student Life & Learning employee recognition award for outstanding team because of its collaborative approach to student life programming.

### Challenges

- Securing rooms and space for our large events due to campus construction and the limited number of large event spaces.
- The necessary resources to provide high quality programming and reach as many students as possible.

### Evaluation and Assessment Team

- **Undergraduate Orientation Review**
  - The Strategy, Assessment and Evaluation (SAE) team used a mixed methods approach to develop a comprehensive framework for future undergraduate orientation week programming. The review was informed by past student survey feedback, consultations with Orientation Week stakeholders in the McGill community, benchmarking comparison with peer universities, and research into the best practices literature.

- **Student Suicide Prevention Framework:**
  - In fall 2019, the Office of the Provost mandated the creation of a student suicide prevention and postvention framework. The purpose of the framework is to develop a systemic approach to *effectively* and *sensitively* respond to student suicide deaths on and off campus, and to improve postvention efforts.
  - **Main challenges:** adapting to the pandemic shutdown in March, 2020 affected the timeline and committee availability due to COVID. Also suicide prevention work to be informed by COVID conditions to appropriately address this sensitive issue

### First Peoples House

- Provided students with knowledge of resources (internal and external) and support in adapting to University/urban context through organized activities and partnerships with units in S2
- Regular attendance and participation from students in social, cultural and ceremonial activities
- Academic success/supports- ongoing tutoring and orientation through collaboration with existing student services/units
- Graduate application support through collaborations with Law and Medicine
- Community building with internal and external partners through guest speaker series (School of Social Work, Native Women Shelter, advocacy bodies)
- Community engagement and outreach through annual Pow Wow in September
- Indigenous students and staff retreat (February 2020)
- Providing students with networking opportunities

### Accomplishments

- First Peoples House spearheading collection of information to create a payment reference document/guide with procurement, financial services, and human resources related to payment of community partners and elders, indigenous vendors.
- Updating of the status of the Calls to Action pertaining to student support
- Collaborator/contributor on the Indigenous Initiatives central website (launching October)

### Challenges

- Winter- Constrained programming due to unforeseen events
- Limited administrative support due to administrative staffing shift in February
- Difficulty in further developing Indigenous Alumni Association alumni capacity due to low participation and COVID (alumni being out of province)
- May-August vacancy in FPH director position and indigenous student advisor position- impacting operations of First Peoples House
- Vacancy in summer student position due to COVID
- Student departures in April due to COVID pandemic- however continued to host biweekly sessions and informal check ins with students.

### International Student Services

ISS worked on a comprehensive needs assessment to develop a business needs so that we can improve our appointment services to international students. The needs are focused on the creation of a scheduler that will be available to students, Advisors and Service Representatives, and a robust electronic record system to replace current paper files. Like many other plans, this project was interrupted with the arrival of the pandemic but we are confident that we will resume working on this with IT services next month.

### Accomplishments

- Successful onboarding of ISS' Local Wellness Advisor
- Created a more sustainable environment for the ISS team and service delivery: 3 Managerial and 1 Clerical position (from a total of 8 positions in ISS) were converted from contractual to permanent positions. Based on a benchmark exercise, we also demonstrated that an additional resource

(Advisor position) was needed to meet the needs of the international student population. A new position was duly approved but not filled due to the hiring freeze situation at McGill

- The ISS team managed to be operational, remotely, within a few hours at the start of the pandemic and continued delivering our services online to international students.

## MORSL

### Accomplishments

- Raised our profile year-round by opening for the summer (2019) for the first time known
- Increased presence at Fall and Winter orientation events
- Partnering with diverse groups (faith groups as well as mental health & equity groups) to co-host 19 events (out of 100 activities total)
- Hosted 50 workshops on wellness (half of our total activities offered)
- Hosted trainings for peer and clinical mental health supporters, providing workshops
- Linked equity in the sphere of religious diversity to enhanced student well-being
- Built a stronger digital presence by revamping our [website](#) in summer 2019 and created content for our [YouTube channel](#) and [Instagram](#) account (new), in addition to our flagship Facebook page

### Challenges

- Office location and size at the Presbyterian College were at odds with the mission and nature of a campus multi-faith drop-in centre
- Chronic understaffing that hinders advancement and innovation in programming & strategy
- Lack of a campus-wide equity structure encompassing religious identities (e.g. a JBSCE on faith and religion) to house the growing need for stronger EDI initiatives in this area
- End-of-year lockdown due to global COVID-19 pandemic

## Office for Students with Disabilities

### Accomplishments

- **The Learning Resource Team** reorganized their suite of services so that we could offer a variety of modalities of support including self-directed learning, webinars, peer support, and professional support to increase student academic readiness. We were tasked with developing new materials that were visually appealing, low cost, and informative to students. As a result, we have seen a surge in uptake, with services like our webinars having many fold increases in registration.
- Across our entire team, we moved virtually, with **no downtime** in services to students, adapting our student appointments to use MS Teams, booking system (now online with MS Bookings), and exam processes – creating efficiencies for students and instructors. We created a variety of new resources to help students and faculty navigate these changes and offered several webinars throughout the summer to orient everyone to these changes.

### Challenges

- Our biggest challenge throughout our process improvement activities is managing expectations throughout change. We understand that it is difficult for some to adjust to new ways of doing things, or new expectations, however to continue to serve a growing population, it is important that we continue to improve what we do and how we do it.

## Scholarships & Student Aid Office

- Developed a new Work Study Subsidy Management system, out of necessity as our current system would no longer be functional with the launch of HR's new Workday. We took advantage of the opportunity to improve processes/services for eligible students and participating employers.
- Advocacy efforts across multiple government aid jurisdictions to address COVID-related hardship and exceptions to regulatory paperwork made difficult due to remote operations

## Accomplishments

- As of mid-March, thanks to the Provost and Dean GPS contribution as well as a fundraising effort, we launched the COVID-related Student Emergency Bursary Program the Tuesday following the March 13<sup>th</sup> campus closure. For the balance of the Winter semester and throughout the Summer terms, we dispensed urgent aid in support of remote learning, emergency travel and basic rent/food subsistence.
- Completed our 2-year pilot partnership with Indspire to increase Indigenous student funding, increasing the number of students supported by 31% and aid/award dollars by 250%. Quebec recipients are affiliated to Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke, Listuguj, Timiskamin and Nation Huronne Wendat. First Nations, Métis and Inuit are all represented within McGill's recipients, with other Band provinces including British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and the Northwest Territories.
- Improved student involvement in donor stewardship, to grow philanthropic support of need-based student aid. 55% increase in recipients writing thank you letters.
- Successfully recertified our participating in the U.S. Direct Loan program, allowing 650+ American students to acquire \$8M+ annually in Title IV federal aid.
- Enhanced the need-based bursary program for students going on Exchanges to \$1.2M (from \$250K in the previous year)

## Challenges

- The combination of heightened demand on our services and aid, coupled with some vacancies on the team (note to Martine/Caroline: refers to pre-hiring-freeze within the 19/20 year)
- Only a small subset of our IT/systems priorities addressed

## Student Wellness Hub

A year after opening its doors in July 2019, the McGill University Student Wellness Hub (“the Hub”) has begun to transform mental and physical health services on campus. Before the Hub was created, separate units offered physical and mental health services, creating redundancies across services, inefficient use of resources and expertise, and, most importantly, a fragmented experience for students.

1. Simplifying and providing timely access to physical and mental health care;
2. simplifying access to information and resources on and off campus;
3. decreasing stigma through awareness and prevention mental health programming;
4. increasing community capacity to respond to student wellness; and,
5. Improving the student experience and care outcomes.

## Accomplishments

- Today, the Hub offers a holistic, integrated approach to student health and wellness. It is based on a collaborative care model with an **interprofessional team of more than 120 staff** working to improve access to care and the experience for students seeking mental and physical support.
- During the 2019-20 academic year, the **Hub served 9,208 unique students**, representing nearly a quarter of the student body, **through 30,395 appointments**. The Hub offers one-on-one appointments, support groups, psychotherapy groups, workshops and more.
- The 2019-20 academic year saw **the completion of the new Healthy Living Annex (HLA)**, the Hub's health and wellness promotion space. This student-facing area improves mental health literacy, awareness, and prevention across the campus, and functions as a physical space where students come to learn, connect, and create.
- **The McGill Art Hive (MAHI)**, formerly housed in the Faculty of Education, moved to the Hub where it continued to build community, collaboration, and creativity. With the suspension of on-campus activities, MAHI was relaunched on a virtual platform. Since then the videos collectively have over 3000 views, demonstrating that the Art Hive is reaching an even broader audience.
- **The Zen in 10** was originally prototyped at our annual *Well Week* with the intention of being a mental health break during the day.

- The Hub has also **continued to develop the “hub-and-spoke model”** at the heart of the Student Wellness Hub project, so that we can better reach students where they live, learn and study. The Hub’s team of Local Wellness Advisors, or LWAs, deliver awareness, prevention and early intervention programming in the faculties, services and other strategically located areas of the university community.
- The HLA consolidated existing programming, **optimized outreach requests**, and encouraged communication and collaboration among counsellors, LWAs, nurses, and our Peer Health Ambassadors. Increased interprofessional collaboration helped ensure that health promotion activities and content were reviewed and vetted by nurses and dietitians.
- In the 2019-20 academic year, our subject-matter experts and the Training Developer reviewed and **revised our health and wellness workshops**, often in consultation with students, to ensure that our offerings were evidence-based, pedagogically sound, multi-modal, and modern.

#### Challenges:

- The on-going experience of living with **COVID-19** has clearly demonstrated that the Hub was built on a solid foundation that has enabled us to adapt quickly to emerging student needs. When it became necessary to move all health and wellness services to remote platforms, we were able to offer students support for both physical and mental health care via telephone, virtual appointments, and daily online programming—all in just under two weeks.

The overall plan for this next academic year is to return to reviewing the Terms of Reference and to receive reports from Advisory Committees on how they have pivoted to deliver their services given COVID related restrictions that have been imposed by public health in Montreal.