

Question

TO: Senate

FROM: Senator Stewart-Kanigan, Senator Ayukawa, Senator Rourke, and Senator Greenspon

SUBJECT: Question Regarding Student Services Funding Sustainability

MEETING DATE: April 22, 2015

PREAMBLE: Whereas, Student Services are integral to students' ability to succeed and thrive academically and personally, and student demand for services such as those offered by Mental Health and the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) is growing, leading to an inability to sufficiently reduce wait times (Mental Health states that their wait time is 2-3 months, but student testimony reports wait times up to 5 months¹) and a reduction in OSD's services,

Whereas, several services under Student Services are legally mandated to be offered to students (such as certain accommodation services of the OSD and the disbursement of financial aid),

Whereas, funding from the central administration has decreased to approximately 3% of the total Student Services budget, with 80% funded by student fees; central funding has historically decreased over time while overhead continues to rise,

Whereas, it was reported at the Committee on Student Services that in 2015-16 the central administration will cease its funding of \$112,000 to Campus Life and Engagement for orientation, reducing its funding to only two staff positions within Scholarships and Student Aid,

Whereas, the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) stated that in the event that the most recent budget cut by the Quebec government was above the \$5-6 million projected by McGill, government grants designated as for "services for students" that previously were distributed exclusively to Student Services may begin to be distributed to other student-serving units to protect the "core mission" of the University; the announced cut was \$11 million,

Whereas, in summarizing the 2013 Joint Board-Senate Meeting on Mental Health, the Provost "pointed out that improving the mental health of all members of the McGill community is key to promoting a healthy University environment,"²

1. <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2015/03/student-services-budget-faces-threat-of-depletion/>
2. https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d13-26_joint_board-senate_report.pdf

QUESTION:

Will government grants designated as for “services for students” be disbursed to units beyond Student Services in 2015-16 given the most recent cut?

Why are Student Services such as Mental Health and Office for Students with Disabilities not considered essential to supporting the core teaching mission of the University in the same way that services such as advising are?
