

# Question

---

**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Chloe Rourke, SSMU Senator  
Jacob Greenspon, SSMU Senator  
Claire Stewart-Kanigan, SSMU Senator

**SUBJECT:** Question Regarding University Support for Out-of-the-Classroom Learning and Increasing Campus Accessibility through Student-Run Campus Businesses

**MEETING DATE:** January 21, 2015

---

**PREAMBLE:** Whereas, an Open Discussion was held in the November 19, 2014 session of Senate on “Non-Traditional/Out-of-the-Classroom Learning: Integrating Research Opportunities in Undergraduate Studies,”

Whereas, Applied Student Research (ASR) projects are an ongoing site of out-of-the-classroom learning at McGill,

Whereas, ASR projects in Statistics, Environment, and Operations Management courses have used student-run campus businesses, such as Gerts and Snax, as their research focus,

Whereas, student management and development of student-run campus business provide opportunities for building applicable management and entrepreneurship skills,

Whereas, the recommendations to “enhance diversity and broad access to McGill” and “increase the number of individuals from groups now underrepresented in various segments of the McGill community, [including] ... disadvantaged socioeconomic groups”<sup>2</sup> were made by the Principal’s Task Force on Diversity, Excellence, and Community Engagement,

Whereas, access to employment is a major factor in campus accessibility for promoting the inclusion of a range of socioeconomic groups; student-run campus businesses—including Snax, Gerts, Frostbite, Copi-EUS, G-Store, and Dave’s General Store—employ approximately seventy-five students across campus, expanding employment opportunities for those who do not qualify for Work Study or are otherwise unable to access employment,

Whereas, food that accommodates both a variety of dietary and financial needs is an important factor in creating an accessible, diverse community,

---

Whereas, student-run campus food businesses provide dietary and financial needs-sensitive services that are otherwise unavailable or mutually exclusive on campus,

Whereas, concerns' regarding the University's support of student-run campus businesses have recently been raised in response to the banning of sandwich sales by Snax, including the creation of a student petition to express discontent at this decision,

Whereas, other student-run campus food businesses, such as Architecture Cafe, Bookstore Cafe, the student-run cafeterias in Redpath, the Arts Building, the Strathcona Building, and the Education Building Chancellor Day Hall, and the Bronfman Building were previously closed by the University,

1: Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement, <http://www.mcgill.ca/principal/files/principal/ptfdece-reportfinal.pdf>, 3.

2: Ibid, 9.

---

**QUESTION:**

What role will student-run campus businesses serve in the University's pursuit of expanding out-of-the-classroom research and experiential learning opportunities?

What measures is McGill taking to encourage and maintain student-run campus businesses?

---

Response from the Senator Dyens, Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning):

Thank you Senators Rourke, Greenspon, and Stewart-Kanigan for your questions.

Some clarification is needed. Encouraging Non-Traditional/Out-of-the-Classroom Learning: Integrating Research Opportunities in Undergraduate Studies means encouraging learning and research opportunities within the framework of the curriculum. One of the goals of the university is to enhance and broaden the educational and scholarly experiences of its students through the use of out of the classroom initiatives. Part of this enhanced educational experience is to educate and train students to become entrepreneurs.

Once a student becomes an entrepreneur and operates a business, he or she then enters into a business relationship with his or her many partners and providers. This business relationship is built on signed and agreed to contracts.

The University maintains an educational as well as a business relationship with SSMU and other student run associations, such as AUS, which are independent corporations. These independent student-run corporations negotiate and sign agreements with McGill to clearly establish what is in the best interests of both parties. As in any other type of business relationship, questions of liability, responsibility and risks are discussed and negotiated.

SSMU runs many business operations in the University Centre. SSMU and other independent student run corporations are free to run business operations within the framework of the MOA each of them has agreed to and signed. The University expects all MOAs to be honoured as it expects contracts with any other providers or business operations on campus to be.