



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Professor Josephine Nalbantoglu, Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

SUBJECT: Annual Report from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (2015-16)

DATE: March 22, 2017

DOCUMENT #: D16-49

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Annual report from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE The annual report from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) provides Senate with information on strategic priorities and the role of GPS as they relate to graduate admissions and enrolment, graduate student support, supervision, graduate programs and outreach.

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS GPS provides oversight for graduate admissions and enrolment, monitors graduation rates and manages graduate student funding to ensure academic and financial sustainability of graduate education at McGill.

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS The next annual report will be presented to Senate in winter 2018.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL This item is presented for information.

APPENDICES Appendix A: Annual Report from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Annual Report to Senate – March 22, 2017

Mission

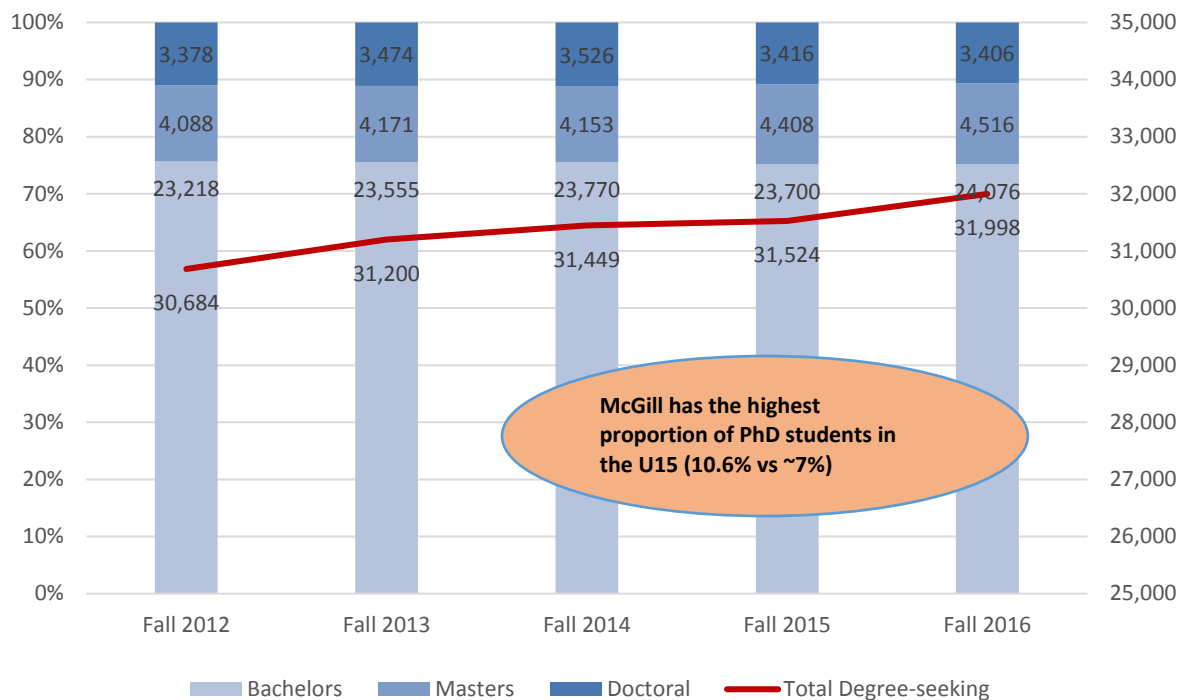
The mission of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is to promote university-wide academic excellence for graduate and postdoctoral education at McGill. GPS works in collaboration and consultation with Faculties, graduate programs, graduate student and postdoctoral associations and other administrative and academic units to oversee graduate policies and regulations, advocate broadly for the cause of graduate education and to foster an environment that actively promotes each student's or postdoctoral scholar's realization of his or her full academic and research potential.

Role of GPS

Graduate admissions and enrolment

McGill strives to recruit and retain the best and the brightest graduate students to pursue the university's tradition of excellence. GPS provides oversight for graduate admissions and enrolment, meeting with all Deans on an annual basis to review their respective Faculty's capacity to take on additional graduate students and determine graduate enrolment objectives. In Fall 2016, McGill had 7,922 degree-seeking graduate students, with the highest proportion of doctoral students among Canada's top research universities (U15) (Figure 1).

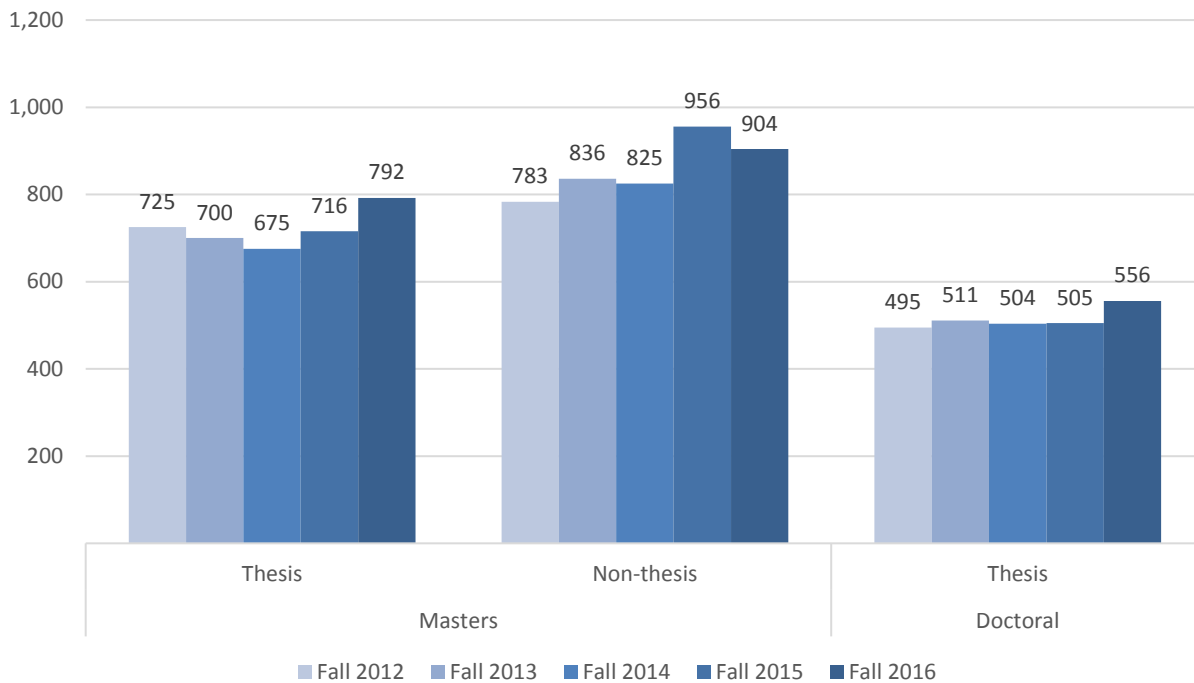
FIG 1. Degree-seeking Enrolment, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Students, 2012 to 2016



Note: Enrolment counts taken as of October 15th.

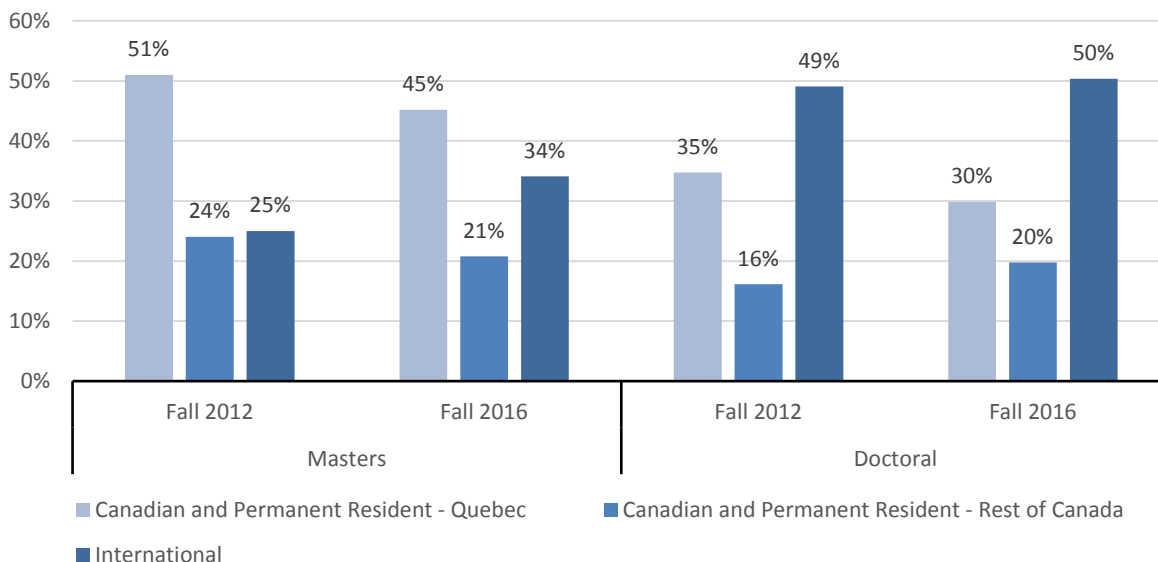
Over the past five years, new enrolment in thesis programs has increased by approximately 10%, while new registrations in non-thesis programs have increased by 15% (Figure 2a).

FIG 2a. New Fall Enrolment - Masters and Doctoral, 2012 to 2016



Enrolment of international students in doctoral programs has increased since Fall 2012, with international students comprising 50% of the entering doctoral cohort in Fall 2016. At the same time, the proportion of Quebec students has decreased (Figure 2b).

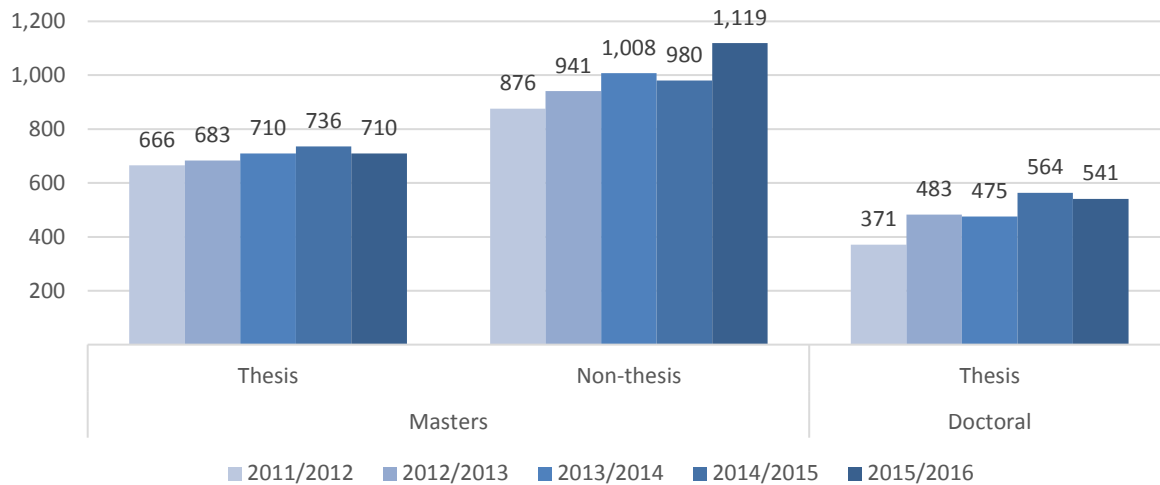
FIG. 2b. New Enrolment - Masters and Doctoral, 2016 compared to 2012, Canadian and International students



Note: Enrolment counts were taken as of October 15th therefore citizenship and residence numbers may change as documents are assessed.

Over the past 5 years, there has been a steady increase in graduate student degrees awarded (Figure 3).

FIG. 3. Master's and Doctoral Degrees Awarded by Academic year, 2012 to 2016



Oversight for the quality of graduate education at McGill

GPS is responsible for ensuring university-wide quality assurance through the following:

- Program approvals
 - GPS works with academic units to design and/or revise graduate programs to meet the demands of new student populations.
- Graduate policies and regulations
 - GPS ensures adherence to graduate policies and regulations by providing regulatory understanding and guidance to graduate units.
 - GPS is responsible for developing and revising policies, and for coordinating the implementation of policy changes.
- Supervision
 - The supervisory relationship is at the core of graduate education and postdoctoral training. In collaboration with Teaching and Learning Services (TLS), GPS provides ongoing support and training for both supervisors and supervisees.
- Thesis examination
 - GPS establishes the general requirements for Master's and Doctoral theses at McGill and ensures the objectivity and confidentiality of the thesis examination process.

Supporting graduate students

McGill has recognized the need to provide competitive graduate student financial support in order to attract top students. GPS allocates to each Faculty, on a formula-driven basis, funds to support the recruitment and retention of graduate students in line with the university's strategic priorities. This central funding allocation (\$18.5 million per year) forms the basis of all graduate student support and is complemented by external funds. GPS works with the graduate units to optimize the use of the internal allocation to keep McGill's graduate financial support competitive. When tuition fees are taken into account, McGill's overall funding levels are competitive with our G3 peers¹ (Figures 4a-b and 5a-b-c).

FIG. 4a. Doctoral average financial support in years 1-3 for Quebec, Canadian, and International fee exempt students

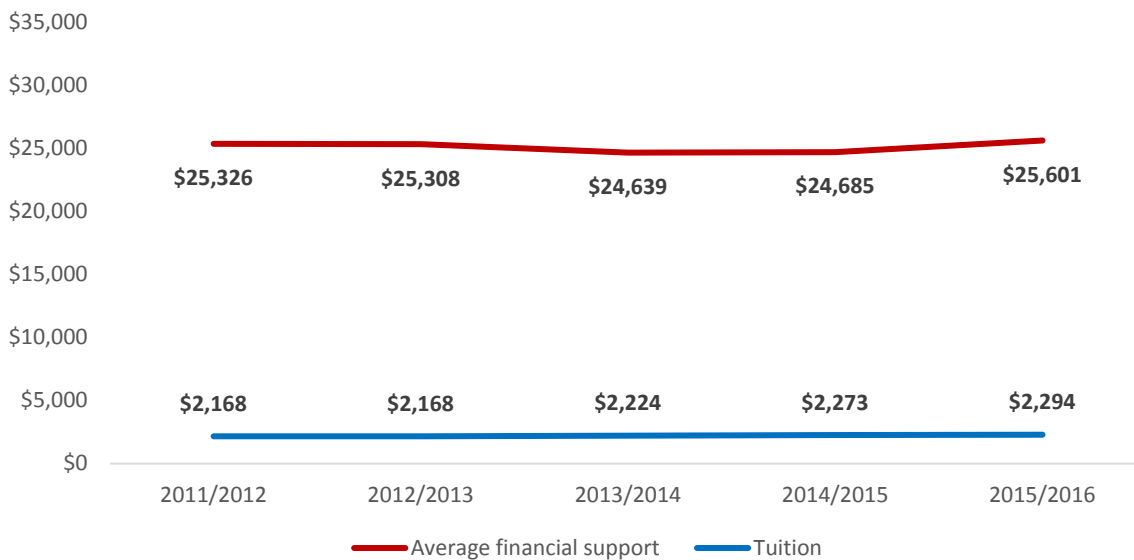
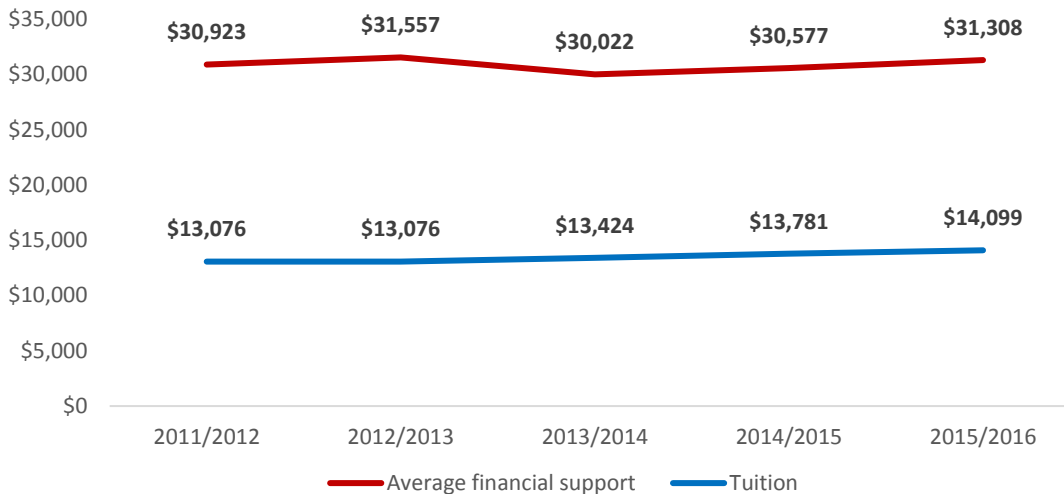
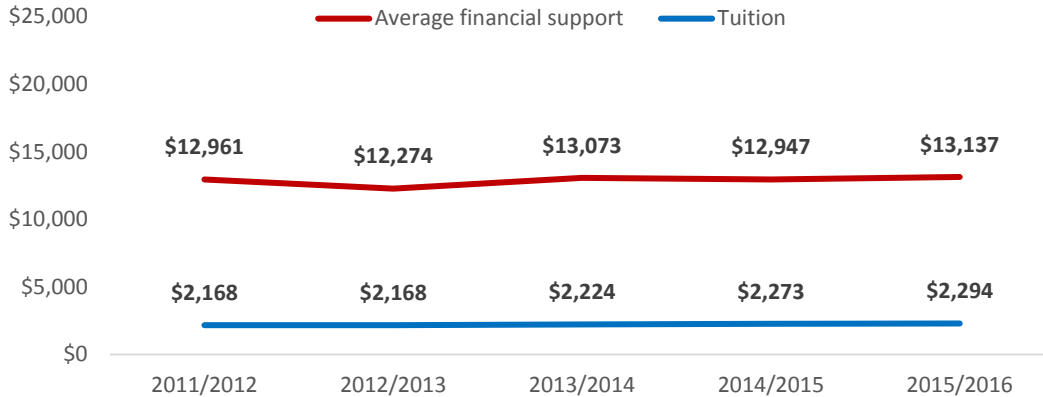
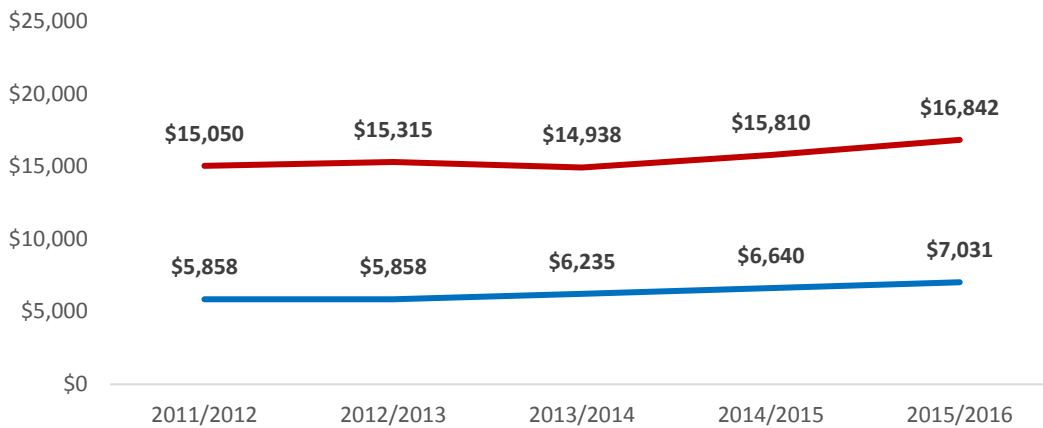
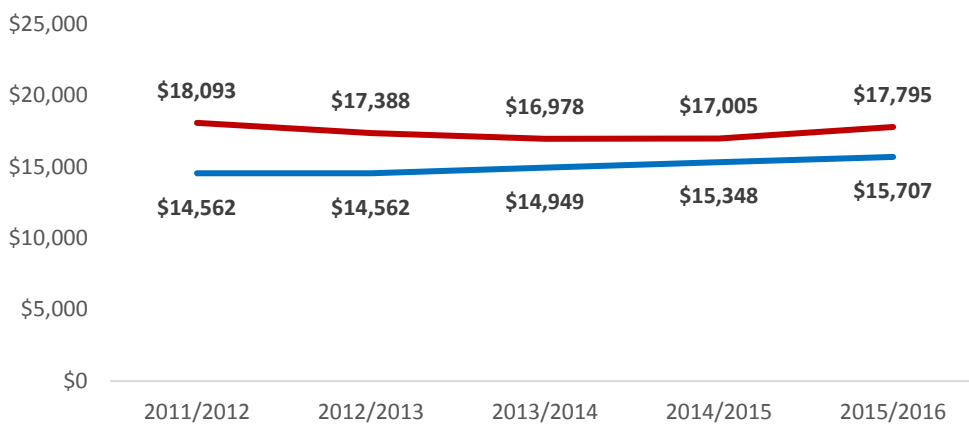


FIG. 4b. Doctoral average financial support in years 1-3 for International non-fee exempt students



¹ University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, University of Alberta

FIG. 5a. Masters average financial support in years 1-2 for Quebec and International fee exempt students

FIG. 5b. Masters average financial support in years 1-2 for Non-Quebec Canadian students

FIG. 5c. Masters average financial support in years 1-2 for International non-fee exempt students

Note:

Only students registered full-time in both the fall and winter terms of an academic year are included.

Year of study is a derived field based on the admit term of the student.

Includes all financial support captured in McGill systems and Provincial agency (FRQNT, FRQSC, FRQS) awards paid directly to the student.

Excludes funding from sources where students are paid directly (other than the Provincial agencies) and financial support received from affiliated hospitals/research institutes.

Average PhD financial support consists of a combination of internal awards, external awards, research stipends and employment earnings (e.g. teaching assistantships, research assistantships). Through a strategic use of the funding allocation, McGill is in a position to target and package funding in a way that best meets the needs of our students (Figure 6a-b).

Fall 2015 Full-time PhD enrolment: 3,327

FIG. 6a. 2015/16 Average PhD Financial Support for Quebec, Canadian and International Fee Exempt Students

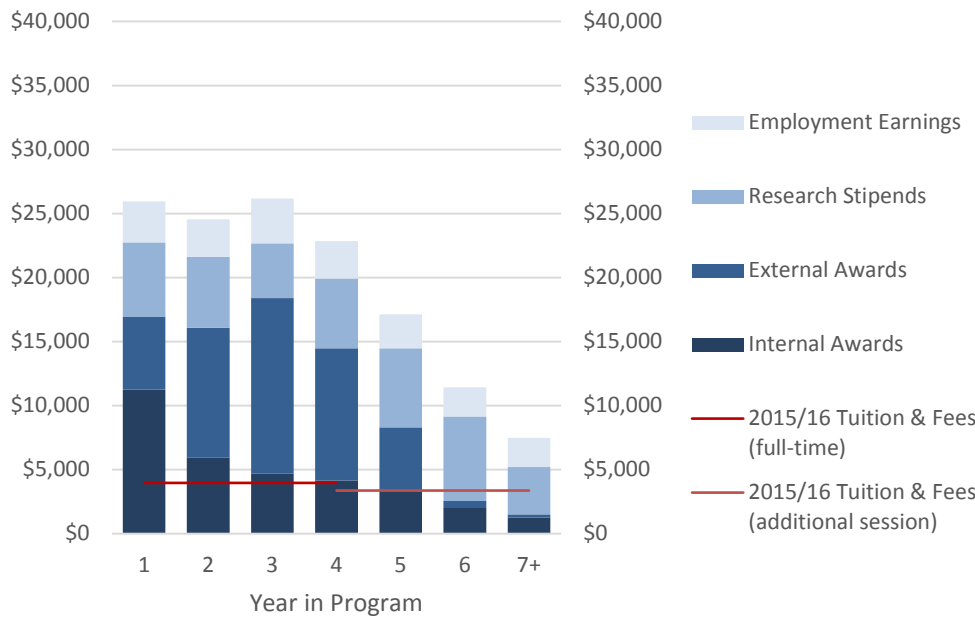
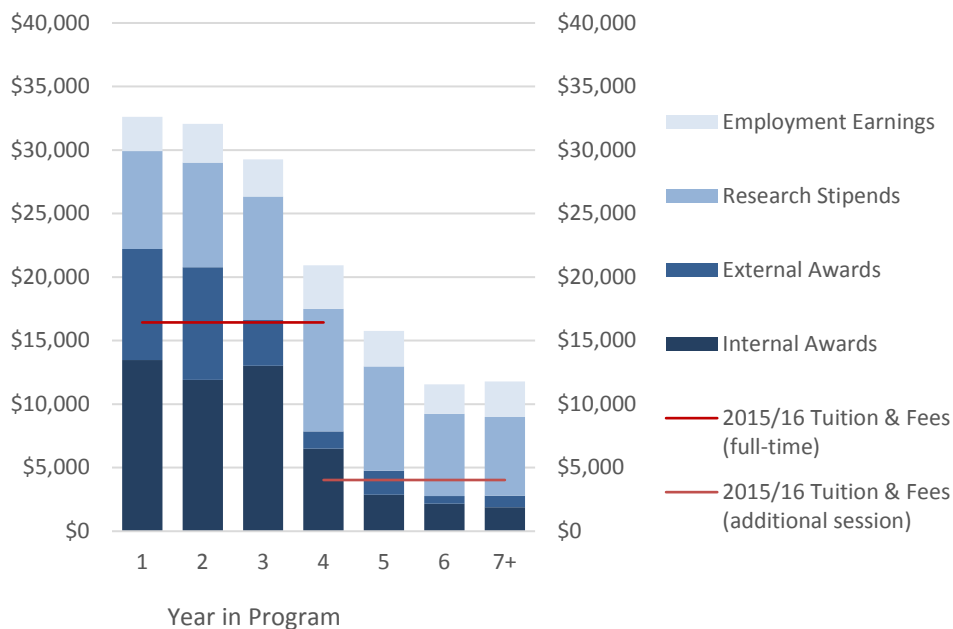


FIG. 6b. 2015/16 Average PhD Financial Support for International Students



Note:

Funding information prepared by PIA. Includes all financial support captured in McGill systems and Provincial agency (FRQNT, FRQSC, FRQS) awards paid directly to the student. Excludes funding from sources where students are paid directly (other than the Provincial agencies) and financial support received from affiliated hospitals/research institutes.

GPS also works with Faculties and graduate units to increase McGill's success rates in external funding competitions. The best graduate students recruited to McGill go on to win external awards in provincial, national and international competitions, which in turn increases the overall funding available to support our graduate students. McGill's share of federal Tri-Agency² awards is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of all CGS-M, CSG-D and Vanier awards received by McGill students

McGill share of CGS-M awards per fiscal year Value & Duration: \$17,500 (one year non-renewable)		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
CIHR	Master's Award: Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarships	10.6%	8.5%	10.0%	10.2%
NSERC	Canada Graduate Scholarships - Master's	6.4%	7.3%	7.1%	7.1%
SSHRC	Canada Graduate Scholarships Program - Masters Scholarships	3.9%	3.6%	4.3%	4.3%
McGill share of CGS-D awards per fiscal year Value & Duration: \$35,000/year (up to 3 years)		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
CIHR	Doctoral Award - Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarships	11.9%	12.2%	11.0%	7.3%
NSERC	Canada Graduate Scholarships - Doctoral	5.7%	6.5%	7.6%	6.7%
SSHRC	Canada Graduate Scholarship - Doctoral	8.2%	7.8%	7.6%	7.0%
McGill share of Vanier awards per fiscal year Value & Duration: \$50,000/year for 3 years		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
CIHR	Doctoral: Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships	10.8%	11.4%	9.6%	14.6%
NSERC	Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships - Doctoral	9.0%	9.6%	6.1%	8.0%
SSHRC	Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships	13.7%	12.5%	10.6%	7.9%

Note:

Shares are based on tri-agency award **payments** per fiscal year.

A student receiving a multi-year award will be represented in multiple fiscal years (e.g. a Doctoral student awarded a 3-year CGS-D in 2012-13 will receive award payments in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15).

Prepared by D. Bargenda, PIA

McGill requires annual tracking of doctoral students' progress toward the degree. GPS has developed a single streamlined Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking form to be used during face-to-face meetings between the doctoral student, supervisor, and at least one other departmental representative. Having written agreed-upon expectations and clearly defined requirements aids in reduced times to completion and leads to fewer supervisor-supervisee misunderstandings.

The Dean of GPS maintains close relationships and an open dialogue with both the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) and the Association of Postdoctoral Fellows (APF) through regular meetings with the executives of both associations.

² Federal Tri-Agencies include CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC

Advising graduate units

GPS helps with conflict resolution through consultations with the Associate Deans of GPS. The Associate Deans are responsible for helping graduate students, postdocs, and their supervisors resolve problematic situations and are also the disciplinary officers for all graduate students.

GPS provides training for both academic (Graduate Program Directors) and administrative (Graduate Program Coordinators) staff throughout the year. In 2016, GPS started holding GPD Primers for newly appointed GPDs. GPD Tips and Tricks are bimonthly Q&A sessions with GPS Associate Deans addressing any questions and concerns the GPDs may have. A day-long workshop is offered to GPCs once a year, with shorter thematic information and training sessions provided at various points during the academic year.

Promoting the achievements of McGill's graduate students

GPS outreach activities include:

- Three Minute Thesis (3MT), an annual event featuring McGill graduate students speaking in 3 minutes or less about the importance of their thesis work to the community at large. Winners go on to represent McGill in national and international 3MT competitions, in English and in French.
- Celebratory events to recognize outstanding graduate students and postdoctoral scholars having obtained prestigious awards (e.g. Vanier, Banting, Tomlinson).

McGill graduate student accomplishments featured in the media are also profiled on the GPS website, Facebook page and Twitter account.

Advocating for the cause of graduate education

GPS advocates for the cause of graduate education at McGill and the society at large and strives to ensure McGill has a voice in national and international networks dedicated to the advancement of graduate education (ADESAQ – Association des doyens des études supérieures du Québec, CAGS – Canadian Association for Graduate Studies, NAGS – Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools, CGS – Council of Graduate Schools).

In November 2016, a Senate open discussion was held on what McGill does to prepare doctoral students for jobs after their degrees. GPS prepared a detailed report, “Preparing Doctoral Students for Careers: McGill Programming and Initiatives.” The report provides an overview of the shifting landscape of doctoral education across North America with respect to enrolment and employment outcomes. Building on the 2015 Graduate Outcomes Survey Report, which draws on two years (2013 and 2014) of graduation outcomes data from McGill PhD graduates, the Senate report includes additional data from 2015 and 2016 in its analysis of graduation outcomes. The report provides an overview of the extensive graduate education initiatives at McGill related to skills training, professional development, and career planning, as well as academic programming. The report was positively received and has been widely distributed among the graduate community at McGill.

Update on GPS Initiatives

Supervision

Building on the supervision regulations passed in Senate in October 2014, GPS has moved into the implementation stage and has launched two important initiatives: mandatory supervision orientations and the addition of a mandatory supervisory committee member for all PhD students. The university-wide Mandatory Orientation for New Supervisors is held three times a year with approximately 50 supervisors in attendance each time. In addition, an online orientation module, called GradLife Orientation, has been created for incoming graduate students. This includes a mandatory video on graduate supervision housed on MyCourses.

In addition, centrally offered TLS-GPS supervision workshops continue to be tailored for specific Faculties. Topics include: Supervisory Alliance, Clarifying Expectations, Conflict Resolution, and Supporting Students at Risk. The Faculty of Engineering has completed the first three workshops; the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences are starting their cycle in Spring 2017.

During Fall 2016 Graduate Orientation, GPS presented supervision workshops on Supervision Basics and Managing Your Supervisor.

Interdisciplinary (interfaculty) programs

One of key objectives for GPS is to streamline administrative processes in order to better accompany members of the academic community wishing to push new graduate programs forward in a timely fashion. Over the past year, GPS has designed internal approval pathways specific for interfaculty graduate programs.

After having taken on administrative oversight of the Integrated Program in Neuroscience (IPN), GPS has made a significant move forward in the creation of new interfaculty graduate programs. A new organizational structure was passed in Senate in the spring of 2015, paving the way for the development of interdisciplinary graduate programs at McGill. These programs offer attractive destinations for new populations of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, thus generating a net increase in enrolment and quality applicants.

The most recent interfaculty graduate program, Biological and Biomedical Engineering (BBME), has started admitting students as of January 2016. The newest interfaculty program, Quantitative Life Sciences, will be presented to Senate in Spring 2017.

International partnerships

Together with select partner universities, McGill offers individualized collaborative programs of study, also known as cotutelles, leading to a single PhD awarded jointly by the two universities. The majority of McGill's cotutelle partners are in France. Partnership proposals from other universities interested in joint PhDs with McGill are currently under consideration. The goal of these partnerships is to enhance student training and experience, and to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between the partner universities.

Cotutelle agreements give students the benefit of carrying out doctoral research at two different universities under the guidance of two supervisors with a pre-existing or emerging collaboration. Students are expected to spend roughly half their time at each university. Students are awarded a single degree but two diplomas, one from each institution, indicating the collaboration of the partner institution. McGill currently has thirteen students registered in a cotutelle.

In order to facilitate the establishment of new cotutelles, a template agreement was developed in 2016 and has since been shared with potential partners.

McGill is a sought-after partner for international government agencies looking for academic partnerships with top institutions. Targeting these niche markets provides McGill with a steady flow of sponsored students able to meet the McGill admissions criteria. McGill already has agreements with agencies such as the China Scholarship Council (CSC) and is in the process of negotiating others that would provide partial or full funding for top graduate students from key markets. In June 2016, a co-sponsorship agreement was signed with CONACYT whereby Mexican doctoral students are provided 4-year funding by the national agency. Other such agreements are actively pursued.

Enhancing the graduate student experience

GPS has launched several initiatives to enhance the graduate student experience. Among these are the Graduate Mobility Awards to encourage graduate students to study and conduct research abroad as part of their McGill degree program. Approximately 200 graduate students are expected to benefit from these awards on an annual basis.

In line with the McGill Commitment to expand current offerings for developing career-enhancing professional skills of graduate students, GPS has launched a project to design and implement an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to provide graduate students and postdocs with institutional support in managing their academic, skill-building, and career goals.

In collaboration with McGill ITS and Enrolment Services, GPS is working on the Graduate Milestones project that will provide the McGill graduate community with a comprehensive set of tools for managing and reporting students' progress to degree.

McGill's new 5-part graduate orientation model was presented to a national audience at the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), with very positive reception. The model creates multiple touchpoints for access to consistent information for incoming graduate students. The 5 parts of the model are: Academic Expectations (9 workshops and information sessions, and 27 offerings in 1 week before the beginning of Fall term); Discover McGill and Welcome Event (a services fair and PGSS welcome social event); trained graduate ambassadors who visit departmental orientations (ensures consistent messaging about resources and services); a single website that include links to all resources and services for graduate students; and GradLife Online Orientation (online module with 7 videos on topics essential to new graduate students).

Conclusion: way forward

GPS is both an administrative unit that facilitates and provides service for research and teaching and an academic unit responsible for university-wide quality assurance, academic oversight, and equity. GPS provides leadership and strategic direction across the university in close collaboration with the academic and administrative units, and the graduate and postdoctoral community.

GPS priorities focus on recruiting top graduate students by maximizing graduate student support. In order to support the recruitment objective, emphasis will continue to be put on the strategic use of internal funds at the Faculty level and increasing McGill's success rates in external funding competitions. In addition, GPS will pursue its work on graduate supervision, clarifying policies and procedures to help students graduate in a timely fashion. GPS will also continue advising graduate units on their program revisions and provide support throughout the process leading to the creation of new graduate programs. Finally, through its partnerships with TLS, SKILLSETS and CaPS, GPS will put emphasis on supporting the academic and professional development of McGill's graduate students in order to better prepare them for their future careers. McGill's ability to provide graduate students with the skillsets needed to succeed in jobs that are increasingly found outside academia will position the university as a leader in graduate education.

McGill has an excellent reputation that attracts quality applicants for graduate studies, providing a prime opportunity to optimize enrolment. Critical for McGill's success will be the availability of generous and competitive funding packages which will support the recruitment of excellent graduate students from among the best and the brightest in the world. GPS will work towards increasing the number of national and international awards secured by our graduate students in an effort to contribute to maintaining and reinforcing McGill's global profile as a top educational research institution.