

Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: Robert Sladek, Chair of the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights

SUBJECT: Report of the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights (2017-18)

DATE: January 16, 2019

DOCUMENT #: D18-39

ACTION REQUIRED: ☒ INFORMATION ☐ APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE	The annual report of the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights is presented to Senate for information.
BACKGROUND & RATIONALE	<p>The Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights considers allegations that regulations or policies of the University are in breach of, or incompatible with the provisions of the <i>Charter of Students' Rights</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Charter of Students' Rights</i> states that an annual report of the activities of the Advisory Council shall be prepared by the Chair of the Advisory Council and presented to Senate. The report shall include a summary of each investigation and its final outcome. No mention shall be made of the names of the individual parties nor of any information that might lead to their identification. The report shall also include a summary of requests for which a investigation was denied.</p> <p>The Council received one request for review in August 2017. A summary of the review and final outcome is contained in Appendix A.</p>
PRIOR CONSULTATION	None.
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	The Council has a sustainable framework in place in order to fulfill its mandate.
IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS	N/A
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL	This item is presented for information.
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Report of activities.

Report of Activities, Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights

The Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights received a request for review in August 2017, concerning the current application of McGill's "Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities" and the interpretation of students' rights with respect to assessment and academic accommodation. Currently, all faculties at McGill have a centralized system to request deferral of final examinations; however, the process to request accommodations for in-course tests and other assessments in these programs is not centralized. In some cases, the absence of clear guidelines could lead to individual course instructors having significant or sole discretionary authority over this process. The Complainant felt that the different approaches used by individual instructors could lead to unequal treatment of students requesting academic accommodations for illness or disability. They identified additional factors that made the concern more acute for students who had identified mental illness as a grounds for accommodation.

The Advisory Council met in September 2017 and requested a formal submission from the Complainant. As the request for review involved accommodation processes in several faculties, the Advisory Council requested a response from the University. The Response emphasized that the issues raised in the Complaint were of common concern and pointed to a number of initiatives already underway. In particular, the issue of centralizing academic accommodations had been recently taken up by the Enrolment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC). The Response also stated that training on student mental health and wellness has been provided during the orientation sessions provided by the Academic Personnel Office since Fall 2017.

The Advisory Council met in March 2018 to consider both documents and concluded that the University's policies and protocols in their current forms, *properly understood and applied*, should not lead to violations of the Charter of Students' Rights. This decision was communicated to the Complainant and the University.

No other requests for review have been made since the last report to Senate (February 2018).