



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Professor Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

SUBJECT: Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting: How could McGill transform itself for a world of lifelong learning?

DATE: November 21, 2018

DOCUMENT #: D18-21

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE The report of the joint Board-Senate meeting held on November 14, 2018, is presented for information.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE Section 6.3.9.1 of the Statutes of McGill University states:

The Senate and Board of Governors shall hold an annual joint meeting in the fall term. At this meeting, the Principal, the Provost, the Deputy Provost, and the vice-principals, as appropriate, shall present for discussion matters they consider relevant to the University’s mission for the ensuing year.

At the joint Executive Committee/Senate Steering Committee meeting of March 30, 2017, the following topic was proposed and agreed upon for the 2017 joint Board-Senate meeting: “Building stronger communities and citizenship through mentorship.” The joint Board-Senate meeting was held on November 15, 2017. The report arising from the joint meeting is attached as Appendix A.

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS The joint Board-Senate meeting is an annual meeting that provides a sustainable framework for the University governing bodies to discuss topics relevant to the University’s mission.

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS The report will be presented to the Board of Governors at the December 13, 2018 meeting.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL This item is presented for information

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 14, 2018

Appendix B: Evaluation

Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 14, 2018

Prior to the meeting, Senators, members of the Board of Governors and guests had an opportunity to view displays demonstrating initiatives at McGill related to the theme of lifelong learning. The following units/faculties organized displays for the meeting:

- School of Continuing Studies & McGill Community for Lifelong Learning
- Desautels Faculty of Management
- Schulich School of Music
- Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Studies
- Faculty of Engineering
- McGill Library
- Teaching and Learning Services
- McGill Human Resources
- Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office
- McGill University Retiree Association (MURA)
- Intergenerational McGill

The Chair of the Board of Governors welcomed the 74 Senators, members of the Board of Governors and guests attending the joint meeting. He reminded participants that the annual joint meeting provides an opportunity for Senators and members of the Board of Governors to explore important matters affecting the University's mission. He then presented a brief progress report on the 2017 joint Board-Senate meeting on "Building stronger communities and citizenship through mentorship."

The Principal introduced the meeting's topic, "How could McGill transform itself for a world of lifelong learning?" She mentioned that technological advances such as automation, machine learning and artificial intelligence will profoundly change the nature of many jobs and the nature of the world of work, as computers gain the ability to do routine tasks currently performed by humans. She explained that, in order to adapt, workers will be required to be lifelong learners and acquire new skills, or enhance their established skills to remain competitive in the job market. The Principal noted that universities must be ready to meet these new demands.

The meeting included presentations touching on the meeting topic from Dr. Alenoush Saroyan, Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education; Mr. Eric Saine, Executive Director of the McGill Executive Institute and Dr. Carola Weil, Dean of Continuing Studies.

Following the presentations, Senators and Governors engaged in roundtable discussions on the following question, which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

In the context of its mission and principles, what actions should McGill take to prepare for a future of lifelong learning and education:

- a. immediately?*
- b. in the medium term (within 5-10 years)?*
- c. in the long term? (within 10-20 years)?*

Groups were assigned specific elements of the question (a, b, c) to address during their discussions. Each group had a discussion leader to facilitate the exercise, as well as a rapporteur who was responsible on reporting back the group's findings to the meeting participants

The questions generated lively discussion and a number of ideas. The main ideas that emerged from the discussions are:

- Establishing a work group to continue the conversation on lifelong learning. A part of the work group's mandate would be to identify how particular University communities (i.e. academic staff, administrative staff, students) could benefit from life-long learning in the context of their respective roles at the University. The work group could also dedicate time to conduct an audit and environmental scan of existing lifelong learning initiatives at McGill. The audit should also include any obstacles to lifelong learning opportunities that may exist. The McGill Bicentennial, being celebrated in 2021, was identified as an ideal target to set as a deadline for deliverables.
- Exploring partnerships with industries and external stakeholders. Employers, students, staff, and alumni all need to be involved in the lifelong learning process. Alumni were identified as a priority stakeholder group to engage with to better understand successes and challenges.
- Participants identified a need to clarify the University's mandate with respect to lifelong learning. In this regard, questions were raised with respect to whether McGill should focus on ensuring current students develop the necessary skills and motivation to become lifelong learners, or whether the University should act as a provider of opportunities to lifelong learners.

For example, "soft skills" such as emotional intelligence and critical thinking are increasingly valuable and in demand and could be cultivated through experiential and situation-based learning. It was noted that this would require a culture shift in the University as increased emphasis would need to be placed on the learning experience as opposed to research and performance. Further reflection on the criteria for tenure was identified as an avenue to achieve this, placing more an emphasis on teaching excellence.

Regarding lifelong learning opportunities, discussion groups identified the need to develop programs that can be customized and scaled for workers looking to develop specific skills. Another idea presented was offering learners the possibility of auditing courses, or registering in for-credit courses after they graduate. It was suggested that

Faculties increase their collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies to ensure such opportunities are provided.

- In light of our increased lifespan, and the clear link between learning and wellness, it was mentioned that McGill address the needs of mature learners at different stages of life. One way identified to do this is to adopt the principles of The Age-Friendly University network.

Feedback provided from Senators and members of the Board of Governors was generally positive (see Appendix B) and will be taken into account in planning future joint Board-Senate meetings.



**McGill Joint Board-Senate Meeting - November 14, 2018
Evaluation**

Total number of attendees = 78
Number of surveys completed = 43
Response rate = 55%

1. Level of satisfaction with:

Displays: 27.9% were satisfied
58.14% were very satisfied
(13.96% indicated "N/A")

Guest Speakers: 72.09% were very satisfied

**Roundtable Discussion
Format** 20.93% were satisfied
76.74% were very satisfied
(2.32% indicated N/A)

Meeting Materials: 32.55% were satisfied
62.79% were very satisfied
(4.65% indicated "N/A")

Location: 2.32% were dissatisfied
4.65% were satisfied
93.02% were very satisfied

Time allotted: 13.95% were satisfied
86.04% were very satisfied

2. I found the meeting topic interesting and stimulating:

2.32% indicated their disagreement
16.27% indicated their agreement
81.39% indicated their strong agreement

3. I found the discussion informative and engaging:

16.29% indicated their agreement
83.71% indicated their strong agreement