

Question

TO: Senate

FROM: Jacob Greenspon, SSMU Senator
Kareem Ibrahim, SSMU Senator
Claire Stewart-Kanigan, SSMU Senator
Courtney Ayukawa, SSMU Senator

SUBJECT: Question Regarding McGill's Stance on the Deregulation of International Tuition Fees

MEETING DATE: January 21, 2015

PREAMBLE: Whereas, in every Faculty, international students pay the highest tuition rates,

Whereas, financial accessibility is essential to allowing students from a diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds the opportunity to attend McGill University,

Whereas, McGill prides itself on its cosmopolitan character and internationally diverse student body,

Whereas, tuition fees for international students in the Faculties of Management, Engineering, Science, and Law have already been deregulated, resulting in significant fee increases compared to their previous regulated rates,

Whereas, the Robilliard Commission report released in December 2014 recommends the total deregulation of international and out-of-province tuition fees,

QUESTION: What is McGill's stance on the deregulation of student fees for international students in Faculties where tuition fees are still currently regulated?

Does McGill plan to consult students and the broader McGill community in shaping its stance on the deregulation of international tuition fees?

Response from Professor Anthony C. Masi, Provost

Tuition for international students in undergraduate programs is "regulated" by the Government of Quebec. Through a complex set of financial transactions, universities keep only the equivalent of Quebec tuition, less a mandatory contribution to Quebec's financial aid system (for which international students are ineligible).

Six years ago, the Ministry introduced a five-year plan to deregulate international tuition for programs in management, pure science, computer science, math, engineering, and law.

Universities now keep the entire tuition charged of international students in these programs, but receive no teaching grant from the government for these individuals.

Both the Robillard Commission and the Tremblay-Roy Report have recently come out in favour of some form of further deregulation for international students, in part as a response to economic pressures, but also in the interest of fairness to Quebec taxpayers.

The Rectors, Principals, and Presidents of the Quebec university network are now discussing details with Government officials. Various workgroups are likely to be established soon.

In our brief to the Tremblay-Roy chantier, McGill has argued that international tuition should be deregulated for all programs, in the same manner as it has been for the first six. This would create additional incentive to expand the international student population, with increased revenues and diversity benefitting both the students and the university.

McGill is committed to providing a first-rate education, and to ensuring that no qualified student be denied access to the University due to financial need. Our bursary and financial aid programs are the most comprehensive in the province. We continue to allocate 30% of net new tuition revenues to student aid programs, and we provide aid to international students. We will continue this assistance to the best of our ability in the bad as well as the good economic times.

Whenever the University can set tuition fees, it is done and will continue to be done with McGill's academic mission, priorities, reputation, and global reach as the clear and decisive drivers. Furthermore, deregulation does not automatically lead to immediate and significant increases in tuition insofar as the latter requires careful assessment of market conditions and implications for the McGill experience as Canada's most national and international university.