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**TO:** Senate

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

**SUBJECT:** Question Regarding Follow-up to the Joint Board-Senate Meeting on Mental Health

**MEETING DATE:** September 17th, 2014

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**PREAMBLE:** Whereas, in March 2014, a Follow-up to the Joint Board-Senate Meeting on Mental Health was presented to Senate by the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning),

Whereas, a project entitled “Survey / Consultation on services and support for students” tasked to the Mental Health Working Group (MHWG) chaired by Prof. Fitzpatrick and Student Services was included in the list of ongoing initiatives,

Whereas, the “pre-arrival advising (course simulator)” initiative described as “[consisting] of a series of tools that will address key, stressful transitions in a student's life (from high school/CEGEP to university, and from 1st to 2nd and 3rd cycles)” was stated to be “currently under development at Teaching and Learning Services”

Whereas the promotion of the well-being of McGill community members is an ongoing focus of students,

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**QUESTION:**

**What is the status of the release of the report of the Mental Health Working Group?**

Response from the Deputy-Provost (Student Life & Learning):

The report of the Mental Health Working Group has been completed and will soon (by the end of the September) be posted to the Student Services website as a public document. Implementation of the recommendations are well underway; specifically, the following: harmonization of administrative policies between Counselling and Mental Health Units, which began in 2013; wait list referrals between the two services; mental health first aid training for staff; Mental Health unit review in January 2015.

**What is the status of the development of the pre-arrival advising tools, such as the course simulator?**

Response from the Deputy-Provost (Student Life & Learning):

The University has developed a number of pre-arrival advising tools in previous years. These include:

- The Advising Checklist, which has hopefully helped to clarify some of the advising-related steps that new students should be taking and when.
- Two McGill 101 videos were produced, explaining the importance of academic advising and the different types of advising resources to which students have access.
- Advising and registration information targeted at newly-admitted students was updated and improved on the courses and programs website.
- Increasing the visibility of “Ask an Advisor” as a resource for new students through:
  - inclusion in the Advising Checklist
  - inclusion in the McGill 101 videos
  - making Recruitment and Welcome Centre staff aware that it is available to newly-admitted students
  - inclusion in the new McGill App
  - holding in-person drop-in hours at Service Point from August 22 – September 5 (including residence move-in weekend). In total, 224 of the 267 students seen during this time were new students.

- Advising-related information directed at new students is included in both phases of the Ask McGill project.

One could argue that the Early Alert System addresses and/or potentially avoids or contains stress and certain mental health issues.

**Are steps being taken towards developing a University-wide strategy for the promotion of student mental health following the Joint Board-Senate Meeting on Mental Health, including implementing the recommendations of the report of the Mental Health Working Group?**

Response from the Deputy-Provost (Student Life & Learning):

The terms of reference for such an endeavour are currently being drafted, and we anticipate awarding a two-year contract to a consultant commencing in January 2015 to work with stakeholders across the University.

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