



Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: Senator Keita

SUBJECT: Motion Regarding the Annual Celebration of Black History Month

DATE: February 15, 2017

DOCUMENT #: D16-36

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE The annual recognition and celebration of Black History Month is not yet officially institutionalized at McGill University.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE Student Life and Learning’s Final Report on Understanding Diversity and Discrimination (2015) identifies that black students report some of the highest rates of discrimination on campus. Furthermore, employment equity data indicate clear underrepresentation of visible and ethnic minority academic staff on campus. The Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Systemic Discrimination (2016) specifies that black and racialized minority academic staff in particular experience discrimination and negative treatment that affects their ability to succeed.

McGill University is host to a limited interdisciplinary African Studies program and no formal Black Studies program. Formal commemoration of Black History Month, the form of recognizing and celebrating black community experiences, challenges, and achievements, would help to foster a more inclusive and accessible university community.

Initiatives that would promote the institutional recognition and celebration of Black history and Black presence at McGill would go to lengths in enhancing the University’s explicit commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and would lend itself to community building across campus.

PRIOR CONSULTATION Black Students’ Network, Students’ Society of McGill University, Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity), Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS Financial sustainability of programming, social sustainability (e.g. access and support services) for black community members at McGill and beyond.

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS Identify resources and coordinated approach for future annual recognition and celebration of Black History Month.

Identify strategic priorities for expanding black community outreach, access, support, and educational programming across the university.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL Whereas, 2017 is the tenth year in which the Province of Quebec has formally recognized February as Black History Month;

Whereas, 2017 is the first year in which McGill University has celebrated Black History Month in an official capacity;

Whereas, in the past Black History Month has been celebrated in an unofficial capacity at McGill University by students, staff, faculty, units, associations, and other groups;

Whereas, black community experiences and accomplishments in Montreal and Canada are often overlooked and neglected in terms of historical, cultural, social, and economic importance;

Whereas, the official celebration of Black History Month in 2017 has garnered overwhelming interest and response, including over-capacity attendance for the opening ceremony;

Whereas, Black History Month 2017 programming has engaged staff, students, faculty, and community members and organizations in Montreal;

Be it resolved that Senate endorse the formal recognition and promotion of February as Black History Month by McGill University and support the University's plans to provide resources for the annual celebration of Black History Month;

Be it further resolved that Senate endorse McGill University in exploring additional opportunities to support: (a) academic initiatives that highlight the contributions and scholarship of the Black community; and (b) facilitate the enhanced representation of Black community members on campus.

APPENDICES

N/A
