



Memorandum

Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)
James Administration Building, Room 504
Tel: 514-398-4177 | Fax: 514-398-4768

TO: Senate

FROM: Professor Christopher Manfredi, Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)

SUBJECT: Open Discussion on the McGill University Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022

DATE: February 15, 2017

DOCUMENT #: D16-37

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Background documents in support of the open discussion on the McGill University Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE Since 2006 academic planning and resource allocation at McGill University have been guided by two key documents: *Strengths and Aspirations* and its successor document, *Achieving Strategic Academic Priorities, 2012-17 (ASAP 2012)*. In 2016, with *ASAP 2012* nearing the end of its operational life, the Principal charged the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) with reviewing the University’s achievement of the objectives articulated in *ASAP 2012*, and establishing the framework for the next academic strategic plan, guided by the Principal’s priorities. The summary of the University’s achievements with respect to *ASAP 2012* can be found [here](#). This summary provides comprehensive information about actions implementing *ASAP 2012* at both the institutional and Faculty level.

The mandate to renew the strategic academic plan comes at a time when the University is about to undertake a comprehensive fundraising campaign, and is exploring the potential redevelopment of the Royal Victoria Hospital site as a major extension of the downtown campus. The Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education will also make its recommendations in 2017. Each of these is, of itself, a major strategic planning exercise, developing in parallel to planning for McGill’s bicentennial in 2021.

A Working Group met on February 7th to frame the Senate open discussion. Based on the discussion of the Working Group, the following questions are proposed to guide the open discussion:

1. How can we lead innovative change in academic program design and delivery to foster further outreach, expand diversity and facilitate connections internally and externally?
 2. What can we do to facilitate the transition from a risk-averse culture to a “culture of calculated risk-taking” at McGill in order to drive the sustainable development and implementation of the Plan objectives at the local level?
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3. What opportunities do you see between and across disciplines and sectors that would support the development of McGill as an open, connected and purposeful 21st century global university?

PRIOR CONSULTATION	Members of Senior Administration, and a working group comprised of Senate Steering members
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	The Plan includes a commitment to include consideration of sustainability in teaching, research, and other university decision-making.
IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS	<p>The Plan will be presented for Senate's endorsement in April 2017.</p> <p>The Plan in its final form will be formally implemented in September 2017, following a soft launch in Spring 2017 as ASAP's term of implementation winds down.</p>
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL	N/A
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Draft McGill University Strategic Plan 2017-2022

McGill University Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022

Guided by our Mission

The Mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.

In fulfilling its mission, McGill University embraces the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness.

A Set of Core Ideas

The key ideas underlying the development of McGill University's Strategic Academic Plan are found in Principal and Vice-Chancellor Suzanne Fortier's vision of a university that is **open, connected, and purposeful**. Such a university is:

- open to new ideas, other ways of looking at the world; open to cultural and human diversity; open to new ways of doing things;
- connected to its local and global community; connected across disciplines, boundaries of geography and sectors; and
- imbued with a clear sense of purpose, because what we do – learning, using and advancing knowledge, exploring new paths in knowledge – has never mattered more to our community and our world.

Principal Fortier translated her vision into five priority areas organized around three academic mission themes (student life and learning, research, community engagement) and three mission support themes (work culture, physical and virtual campus). Consistent with the Principal's mandate to situate the next strategic academic plan within the framework defined by this vision and guided by these priorities, this five-year strategic academic plan parallels and complements her five priorities.

The Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) (PVPA), as the senior member of the Principal's core executive team, is both chief academic officer and chief budget officer for the University. These two responsibilities are vested in the same office to ensure that strategic decisions concerning allocation of the University's resources are in line with the core academic priorities of the institution. Through the Deans, the Deputy Provost, Associate Provosts, and other members of senior leadership, the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) has oversight of the Faculties, graduate and postdoctoral studies, student life, academic and institutional policies, the University's international strategy, institutional analysis and resource allocation.

This plan is meant to serve as a guide for strategic planning and implementation across the full scope of the Office of the PVPA, with opportunity for expression and implementation at the local level. It is intended to further the Principal's vision and serve as a driver and complement to strategic planning

exercises undertaken by other areas of University leadership. It will likewise serve as the basis for budgetary decisions with respect to academic planning for the period of implementation.

A 21st Century Global University

McGill will strive to be a leading example of the global university by expanding our reach, by facilitating the mobility of our faculty and students, by welcoming new faculty and students from across the world, by ensuring the world is reflected in our research and in our curriculum and pedagogy, and through a commitment to preparing our graduates to be global citizens.

McGill will invest in building and maintaining a smart campus organized around data and a robust physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate collaboration, creativity, knowledge dissemination and innovation for the full spectrum of University activity, from foundational research to applied technologies, and from support services to senior levels of University management.

McGill will encourage and support a culture of calculated risk-taking, with a commitment to ensuring agility, efficiency, creativity, and organizational learning across all our functions by eliminating barriers to change and through institutional support of the pursuit of new challenges. We will be a university whose teaching and research has direct impact by embracing innovation and responding to the needs of its students and the challenges of the communities to which it is connected.

No university can lead globally in the 21st century without putting sustainability at the centre of its operations, research, and teaching. To this end, McGill will leverage the Advisory Council on Sustainability to promote carbon neutrality, climate literacy, climate resilience, and the development of sustainability-focused research and teaching. We will work with various sectors of the University to implement additional institution-level programs to facilitate individual and collective action to reduce the University's carbon footprint, including reducing and/or offsetting carbon-intensive university travel.

This commitment to sustainability also applies to the well-being of all of our community members. McGill will continue to develop more robust support services, including mental health services, for students, faculty and staff across the institution.

Five Key Objectives

Be open to the world McGill will strive to remain an institution of choice for international students and faculty. Our objective is to maintain international undergraduate student enrolment at 25-30% and continue to be a leader in attracting top graduate students from around the world, while developing an academic complement that places us among the top ten North American research universities for proportion of faculty of international origin.¹

We will also make a commitment to providing undergraduate and graduate students with a 21st century education by increasing the number of enriched educational opportunities that offer opportunity for

¹ International undergraduate enrolment is currently 27%; combined Masters and Doctoral international enrolment is currently 34.4%; and McGill ranks 11th among American Association of University institutions with respect to international faculty.

global engagement through internships, field courses and field semesters, research internships, international competitions, and international exchanges. In particular, we will double the proportion of undergraduate students undertaking these global engagements. To facilitate this, over the next five years we will establish a special enriched annual educational opportunities and student mobility fund of \$5M,² reduce administrative barriers to achieving transfer credit, and expand the number of co-tutelle programs with partner Universities.

We will further enhance McGill's presence abroad by developing key partnerships to support research activity and delivery of academic programs outside of Canada and online, and by facilitating the international engagement of our faculty members.

Expand diversity McGill University believes that social, economic, and intellectual diversity among our student body and workforce is a matter both of fairness and of enriching the advancement of our academic mission. Opportunities for intellectual, academic, and professional growth flourish in communities that reflect a diverse set of social identities and experiences.

We will deepen our commitment to excellence and diversity in faculty recruitment and career progression. To this end, McGill aims to increase the proportion of women at the rank of full professor to 25% in five years,³ and to increase the proportion of all tenured and tenure-track staff self-identifying as members of all other equity groups to 20%.⁴

We will also enhance accessibility for students from underrepresented groups, especially Indigenous students, with the goal of increasing Indigenous student enrolment to 1000 University-wide by developing pathway programs in partnership with Indigenous communities.⁵ In pursuit of accessibility, we will aim to increase student aid from all sources to 30% of total net tuition revenues.⁶ Beyond financial assistance, we will also take measures that enhance physical accessibility and cultural inclusivity in support of student success.

McGill will likewise support policies and take actions that strongly protect freedom and diversity of inquiry and intellectual exchange, respecting openness to the broad range of intellectual points of view that is a crucial element of diversity.

Lead innovation We commit to supporting pedagogical and curricular innovation, including increased numbers and availability of active learning classrooms, and the implementation of robust programs to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for the full range of careers available to them, as well as to contribute to the innovation ecosystem of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada. In the spirit of institutional risk-taking McGill will diversify on-campus academic programming and modes of delivery, explore alternatives to traditional degree organization and academic timetabling. We will likewise accelerate the development and delivery of online degree programs and professional Masters programs, with the goal of implementing five online programs in five years.

² Current student mobility funding is approximately \$1.5M annually.

³ The proportion is currently 20.5%.

⁴ For the three federally-designated equity groups other than women, the current proportion is 12%.

⁵ Current self-identified Indigenous student enrolment is approximately 300.

⁶ Current proportion of net tuition revenues directed to student aid is 25%.

The University is also committed to exploring and implementing new modes of organizing intellectual activity, including alternatives to traditional single-discipline departments and investment in new information technologies with a view to connecting our academic history and traditions with emerging fields, modes of inquiry and fora for knowledge transfer and dissemination.

Connect across disciplines and sectors We will reduce administrative barriers to academic appointments across academic units and facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and research. In support of interdisciplinary efforts, the University will invest resources (human and financial) in large interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral projects, including interdisciplinary degree programs. It will refine policies and practices to ensure faculty members have meaningful incentives to connect across disciplines and beyond the scholarly community, and review academic performance criteria to better assess and credit interdisciplinary work.

Connect with our communities We will embrace our cultural milieu and physical location to build collaborative relationships with educational, commercial and policy sectors in Montreal and Quebec and across Canada. We will aim to increase application and yield rates from Quebec CEGEPs to ensure that we are the institution of choice for Quebec's best students. Because McGill is anchored in Quebec, we will focus in particular on the French language CEGEP system, with a target of increasing new registrations from that system by 15% over five years. The University will also enhance internship and entrepreneurship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, thus linking on-campus learning with first-hand experience in a variety of related employment sectors.

We will encourage and facilitate activities that allow all our members to engage in activities that serve their local communities, as well as the broader world.

A Clear Mission for the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

To facilitate implementation of the strategic academic plan, the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) (OPVPA) will be guided by a clear mission statement.

The OPVPA will ensure that university policies and practices, in both design and implementation, maximize institutional efficiency and local empowerment. While ensuring adherence to University standards, the OPVPA will strive to facilitate local expression and implementation of McGill's academic mission. The OPVPA will also provide administrative assistance, encouragement, support, and strategic guidance to academic units. The OPVPA will be further guided by principles of collaboration and integration, both across its own functions and in relation to other University units and offices.

In executing this mission, the OPVPA will provide the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) (PVPA) with high-level, professional support in fulfilling the office's key mandate to plan, develop, and implement McGill's strategic academic plan; to develop and execute the University's budget framework and process; and to ensure alignment of the University's resources with academic priorities.