

**PRINCIPAL'S TASK FORCE ON DIVERSITY, EXCELLENCE
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
VISION**

The Mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society: by offering to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the best education available; by carrying out scholarly activities judged to be excellent when measured against the highest international standards; and by providing service to society in those ways for which we are well-suited by virtue of our academic strengths.

Founded by an immigrant pioneer, and situated at the crossroads of Canada's linguistic and cultural communities in a great metropolitan city, McGill is a research-intensive, student-centred, publicly purposed University, with broad international reach and impact. Our University is defined by the ideals of academic freedom, the open and free exchange of ideas, and by openness to the world. We welcome students from 160 countries to our campuses in any given year, and we count alumni in 180. Over the last nine years, we have recruited 900 new faculty members, of whom about 500 were recruited from leading institutions outside of Canada.

As repositories of learning and educators of new generations, universities link our past to our future. They support investigators and scholars who bring to bear a wide range of perspectives – intellectual, social and cultural – to build on and challenge the accomplishments of the past, and thus to deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Universities educate students to assume the working roles they will take on after graduation, and, equally importantly, to assume their roles as members of civil society.

Canada's pre-eminent research-intensive university, and the only Canadian institution ranked in the top 25 universities by the Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings for five years running, McGill attracts some of the brightest students and professors from around the world. Our faculty members garner more than their share of national and international prizes, and our students win many major national and international scholarships and awards. Our dedicated staff serves for an average of 13 years, and there are over 2,400 current and retired employees who have been with us for more than a 'Quarter Century'. Certainly, we have much to be proud of when looking at the quality of our university.

At McGill, we aspire to offer students the best education available, to advance knowledge at the highest levels of human achievement, and to provide exemplary service to society. Both the pursuit of excellence, guided by rigorous inquiry and evaluation of our performance, and our openness to a broad range of perspectives, flow from our fundamental values. Both are essential to ensuring the link between past and future, as well as McGill's continuing service to its academic mission at the highest level. As successful as McGill has been over the nearly 190 years of our history, we can do better, by examining more carefully our progress against the highest standards of excellence, by realigning our activities where quality and impact can be enhanced, and by growing our engagement with diversity, those we serve, and other partners in the pursuit of excellence.

We have set out ambitious objectives in our academic planning exercise and in the recommendations of and administrative response to the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning. Our progress toward these objectives is promising, but incomplete, in part because things take time, in part because we have lacked a continuous focus on performance, both on assessing our own, year over year, and in comparing it to that of our peers. Valuing, supporting and developing individual members of the McGill community strengthens our collective capacity to play the formative role we do, and to achieve excellence in the pursuit of our academic mission of teaching, research and service to the community. At McGill we aim for an inclusive university community and we aim to support all members of the community in the achievement of excellence as they pursue their ambitions, including our enhanced culture of support for equity and diversity.

As the world globalizes and shrinks, integrating a broader spectrum of voices will be an increasingly indispensable part of providing a stimulating and high performing academic environment. Different ideas and approaches within a discipline, and indeed across traditional disciplinary boundaries, play a vital role in equipping us to challenge assumptions and deepen our understanding of and contributions to the world around us. Moreover, in working to address a range of complex scientific, scholarly, professional practice and social issues, we benefit greatly from exposure to the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds and circumstances, and who identify with different segments of the broader community. Engagement with diversity in the context of academic excellence moulds our friendships, expands our choice of role models and facilitates more effective community engagement and partnerships at the local, national and international levels.

As is its academic record, McGill's track record in community service is strong, some examples include:

- the Alumnae Society's establishment of a low-cost meal program for Montreal workers in 1891;
- law professor John Humphrey's authoring the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1946;
- students, faculty and staff are working on initiatives ranging from the development of green technologies and green, affordable housing, to building peace in the Middle East, or providing top-tier health care to communities in Northern Quebec; from offering dental care to Montrealers in need;
- the Faculty of Arts' post-secondary educational capacity work in Indonesia for over 25 years, and particularly in Aceh for the past 3 years;
- the Faculty of Music stages approximately 700 concerts and special events annually that reach an estimated 100,000 people in the university, regional, and global communities.
- the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences' work with Northern communities on diet and nutrition, as well as mapping wildlife species for food and dietary needs.
- Science's Redpath Museum program including "Freaky Fridays" with public outreach lectures where McGill scientists examine the myths and realities of everything from aliens to global warming.

As a publicly purposed university, McGill ultimately exists to benefit society – by educating students, creating and disseminating knowledge, design, services and technologies, and, by engaging with the world around us. In order to remain a powerful contributor to the strengths of Montreal, Quebec and Canada, we at McGill can cast our net more widely, locally, nationally and globally, to attract a diverse group of outstanding students, faculty members, and administrative and support staff. We have much to offer, and equally, if not more importantly, can derive greater insight, strength and impact from a broader range of community and organizational partnerships. We can reach out to include and foster those who have the potential to succeed as members of our learning community, but who lack the means to participate. We can provide opportunities to give back, to put to work the tremendous talents, knowledge and drive of members of the McGill community in the service of our fellow citizens here at home, and well beyond, in countries and cultures around the world. We can be strengthened by the talent, ideas, activities, work and learning opportunities of a broad array of partners in Canada and elsewhere.

These three broad themes of diversity, excellence and community engagement, stemming as they do from McGill's history, essential character and distinctive mission, are complementary. Increasing access and enhancing engagement with diversity within our McGill community will enable us to serve our broader community more effectively. Community and other partnerships will allow different voices to be heard and provide new insights and opportunities to solve intractable social problems, thus extending our understanding and engagement, and contributing to research, teaching and service excellence. In order to maintain our tradition of excellence in the global knowledge society of the XXIst century, we must effectively tap a broader pool of qualified students, faculty members and administrative and support staff and partners, and support our people effectively realizing fully their talents and ambitions.

Over the next 18 months, we will solicit your input as we reflect on a broad range of practices to extend the quality and impact of our academic, research and teaching programs, and to build the diversity of our community in service of the excellence that has been McGill's hallmark. As good as we have been, indeed, as good as we are, McGill can be better. We are positioning for McGill to be an even more effective world leader going forward, and we will get there through an active appraisal of our distinctive strengths and weaknesses, and by ensuring that we are open and active, not complacent. This Task Force will allow on opportunity to appraise, reflect on, and discuss how best to strengthen McGill through enhanced engagement with diversity, excellence and community engagement. We aim to understand how these can best serve our mission when advanced to the highest international standards.