



**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Mr. Joshua Abaki, Student Senator

**SUBJECT:** Question Regarding Subsidized French Courses for International Students

**MEETING DATE:** 27 April 2011

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**PREAMBLE:** In the Principal's Taskforce on Student Life and Learning (PTFSLL), McGill makes a commitment to provide opportunities for international students to learn French. Further, the Administrative Response to the Task Force recommended that "an informal group of administrators and faculty members be formed to discuss ways of advancing opportunities for students to learn or improve their French, including the possibility of tuition waivers"<sup>[1]</sup>.

The draft Principal's Taskforce on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement (PTFDECE) further affirms a "commitment to engagement with communities, locally.." while recognizing that McGill—where English is the primary language of instruction—is located in a vibrant, cosmopolitan city where French is the dominant language.

In spite of these recommendations to the administration to take steps to enhance French learning, last summer the University stopped offering subsidies for FRSL for international students in deregulated programs. This happened without any consultation with students nor any prior warning. Students who registered for the courses expecting to pay the Quebec rate for the courses were surprised to learn that they would instead be paying the international tuition rate.

As International tuition continues to rise, many students opt not to take French courses. This limits the extent to which they can integrate and engage with the Quebec community. As noted by the administration during their presentation to the Parliamentary Commission on Education, 44% of McGill students leave Quebec once they graduate<sup>[2]</sup>. While this proportion represents a mix of the different populations at McGill (from Quebec, Out of Province, and International), international students who do not have the requisite French skills find it harder to get jobs upon graduation and most often consider moving elsewhere for work.

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<sup>[1]</sup> [https://secureweb.mcgill.ca/provost/sites/mcgill.ca/provost/files/PTF\\_SLL\\_Final\\_Administrative\\_Response\\_27NOV\\_07.pdf](https://secureweb.mcgill.ca/provost/sites/mcgill.ca/provost/files/PTF_SLL_Final_Administrative_Response_27NOV_07.pdf)

<sup>[2]</sup> <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/cce-39-1/journal-debats/CCE-100907.html>

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**QUESTION:**

Does the decision to stop providing subsidies for international students to take FRSL courses go against University policy as enunciated in the PTFSLL as well as the PTFDECE?

Does this decision support the goal of “increasing and engaging international students” as outlined in the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan (2011-2016)<sup>1</sup>?

Will the University actively seek funds in order to reinstate subsidized FRSL courses for international students in deregulated programs?

When the administration made a presentation to the Commission de la culture et de l'éducation, they mentioned that given new funding, one of their top priorities would be ‘greater support for international students so as to enable the students integrate better into the Quebec community’<sup>2</sup>? How is this priority reflected in the current budget? If it is not, will it be in subsequent budgets?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/senate/D10-50StrategicEnrolmentManagementPlan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/cce-39-1/journal-debats/CCE-100907.html#\\_Toc286825053](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/cce-39-1/journal-debats/CCE-100907.html#_Toc286825053)