



McGill

MCGILL UNIVERSITY SENATE

Question

TO:

Senate

DATE SUBMITTED:

April 25, 2008

FROM:

Mr. Daniel Oong

SENATE MEETING DATE:

May 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Senate committees and university governance

PREAMBLE:

Senate committees and subcommittees play an important role in McGill's governance, as they are created

- “1. To study the problems of their particular field and the relation of these to the problems of other parts of the University;
2. To formulate policies in the light of such studies and to submit these either to Senate or to the appropriate administrative official; and
3. To secure the necessary liaison with other bodies studying related problems”. (<https://home.mcgill.ca/senate-handbook/standing-committees/>, last accessed April 25, 2008)

However, for some committees and subcommittees, their effectiveness is limited in several ways.

- A committee's ability to study a problem often depends on each committee member's capacity to consult constituents and to obtain the needed facts and data.
- While committees endeavour to forward useful policy recommendations to Senate and/or the administration, they often do not receive feedback on the progress and effectiveness past policy recommendations.
- In the absence of members who are Senators, a committee often becomes more distanced from Senate and the administration. Subcommittees face an even greater challenge to engage Senate and the administration because their linkage is only through the parent committee.

QUESTION:

1. What are the channels for committee and subcommittees to ask Senate and/or the administration for feedback on policy proposals or to obtain information necessary for policy revision?
2. For a committee or subcommittee which does not have any Senators as members, is there any way for it to ask a question in Senate?
3. Under the current Senate review process, are there any strategies to bridge the structural gap between subcommittees and committees; and Senate and the administration?