McGill

TO:

Senate

DATE SUBMITTED:

March 17, 2008

FROM:

Mr. Jake Itzkowitz

SENATE MEETING DATE:

March 26, 2008

SUBJECT: Safe space program

PREAMBLE:

The Joint Senate-Board Committee on Equity Sub-Committee on Queer People has been working on a program for Safe Space promotion efforts at McGill for the past several months.

According to the website, www.mcgill.ca/queerequity/safespace/, "the Safe Space program was developed by two graduate student members of the Queer Equity Subcommittee, during the 2004-2005 school year with a start up grant from the Mary H. Brown fund for student life, [which] was renewed for a second year in 2005. [The program] began offering workshops in September 2005 and established a working group with two more staff volunteers from the committee. In 2006, [The program] secured on-going funding from Queer McGill" a student group, "and a one-time donation from the Faculty of Education" in addition to in-kind support from the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, The McGill Center for Research and Teaching on Women, and the McGill University Career and Placement Service." Moreover, "the Safe Space Program is run by student and staff volunteers with the assistance of one work-study student."

The Safe Space program promotes an environment that is inclusive of gay, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender associates whether they choose to disclose or not. However, the Committee does not have the appropriate resources or administrative structures to continue to oversee the program, which seems to have no "home" in the administrative organs of the University. Further, the Social Equity and Diversity Education office (SEDE) does not have a relationship with the program.

As the Safe Space program is an important part of making McGill an equitable and accessible environment for students, faculty, and staff, it would seem necessary to find appropriate administrative support for continuing the program.

QUESTION:

1 – Does the Administration have a commitment to making McGill a "Safe Space?"

2 – What constraints currently exist on the SEDE office to prevent it from taking on the Safe Space program?

3 – What can the Administration do to ensure that this program can continue to exist at McGill University?

4- Finally, where does the Administration see the appropriate "home" of the Safe Space program, if not in the above mentioned committee and/or office?