



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Dr. Rose Goldstein, Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations)

SUBJECT: Strategic Research Plan Update

DATE: September 22, 2011

DOCUMENT #: D11-02

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE: Consultations are underway to refresh McGill's Strategic Research Plan (SRP). The Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) will discuss the purpose of the SRP, identify its goals and review the consultation plan.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE:

The overall goal of the SRP is to increase and enhance McGill's transformative research initiatives and to support the excellent research talent at the University in service to the various sectors of society. The SRP will foster an environment that maximizes research potential and training opportunities, which means it will necessarily be a results-oriented document that takes into account key performance indicators. A well-constructed SRP also enhances the University's reputation for excellence, nationally and internationally.

The final plan must reflect the strategic direction of the University as well as the needs and goals of its faculties, departments, staff and students. It must guide the University toward achieving its academic and societal goals while ensuring that McGill remains a world leader in research and an institution that supports, recognizes and rewards the work of our world-class researchers. To this end, the SRP will explain how McGill's strategic priorities are identified, how research needs can be met, how success is measured, and how new or revised priorities will be developed.

Due to the importance of this initiative, and in order to properly develop the plan in support of achieving its goals, the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International Relations) [OVPRIR], led by Dr. Rose Goldstein, will continue widespread consultation regarding the SRP with McGill stakeholders, as well as external partners from government, industry and academia.

We need the engagement of the McGill community so that the SRP is representative of our collective strategic research goals. A dialogue with the community will allow us to tap into a range of expertise and experience to shape a complete and ambitious plan. As well, stakeholders will be more receptive to a plan that incorporates their input and addresses their concerns. The OVPRIR, with the assistance of Public Affairs, has identified key groups that will need to be engaged in the creation of the SRP, as well as some methods that can be used to engage them.

The consultation process serves two important purposes. First, it offers valuable insight and information that will help shape and prioritize SRP content. Second, it engages the community in multi-directional communication early in the planning process, giving them a voice and a sense of empowerment and ownership over the content in the final SRP.

Faculties provided updated research priorities in spring/summer 2010. These priorities were reviewed in May 2011 and updated by the OVPRIR where necessary. Draft interdisciplinary and transformative research areas have been identified as a starting point in consultation with the Faculty-based priorities, the current SRP, the update for the Provost's academic plan, and interdisciplinary clusters data that was also generated by the Provost's Office. OVPRIR also reviewed sponsored research captured in the OVPRIR database, research centres data, and recent Letters of Intent to the Canada Foundation for Innovation Round 7 Competition to further identify research strengths.

**MOTION OR
RESOLUTION
FOR APPROVAL:**

N/A

**PRIOR
CONSULTATION:**

- Principal, Provost, Vice-Principals and Deans
- Research Advisory Council
- Several faculty members

NEXT STEPS:

Consultations will continue through fall and winter 2011/12. Senate will be updated on SRP progress and will be approached for consultation on the SRP document. It is anticipated that the SRP document will be finalized in winter 2012 for immediate implementation.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: SRP Consultation Plan
Appendix B: SRP Objectives

McGill University's Strategic Research Plan (SRP) Consultation Plan

Goals of the consultation process

The stated goals of the SRP consultation are to:

- Solicit the opinions and expertise of the McGill community and external stakeholders, and use the feedback gathered to inform the development of an excellent SRP;
- Create awareness of the SRP project and its purpose, and encourage engagement in its creation and eventual implementation;
- Continue to build a foundation for an ongoing, inclusive, multidisciplinary and innovative research environment at McGill, where stakeholders know their participation is valued and essential.

Preliminary work

The SRP will build on the foundation provided by the 2006 "Strengths and Aspirations" white paper and the outline of progress report provided by the Provost in 2010. Consultations began with faculties submitting their strategic research priorities to the OVPRIR in spring/summer 2010. The faculties were consulted again and given the opportunity to revise their strategic priorities in spring 2011. Feedback and information collected from the series of Town Hall meetings led by Dr. Goldstein early in her tenure, as well as the SRI process, have provided direction as to potential objectives and actions. The Research Advisory Council and faculties have also provided their own research priorities to the OVPRIR to serve as building blocks for the SRP.

There will be considerable overlap in the strategies, priorities and actions contained in the University's new academic plan Achieving Strategic Academic Priorities (ASAP 2012), which is entering its consultation phase, and the SRP. The Provost and VPRIR have discussed coordination of the consultation processes, and their offices and Public Affairs are working to ensure the processes are aligned through complementary processes and that information collected in each consultation process feeds into both the ASAP and the SRP. Research priorities identified in the SRP will particularly inform the research section in ASAP 2012.

Draft consultation process and vehicles (high level)

Initial Planning - Ongoing communication and consultation will occur via advisers from the McGill administration, faculty advisers, leading researchers, and student representatives. Feedback received from this group, and from the P7 retreat, will inform a consultation document to be made available to stakeholders who are involved early in the process, prior to the first official draft of the SRP, which will be ready in September.

Leadership Consultation - A brief presentation, approximately 15 to 20 minutes, will outline the SRP project and provide a focus for discussion. Suggestions will be recorded at each meeting. In addition, the draft SRP will be available by Sharepoint, or a similar technology, and will only be updated on a predetermined schedule, ensuring that different leadership groups are all viewing the same document at each phase of the process.

Audiences:

- Senior executive, in particular the Provost, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), Associate Provost (Graduate Education), and VPDAR.
- Deans. Deans will be consulted in one-on-one meetings and during Deans Working Lunches as well as in other venues.
- Departmental chairs. This group's important feedback can be collected in a few ways. The OVPRIR will seek time on the agenda at *Faculty Matters* (recently renamed *Academic Leadership Forum*), the regular meeting of all departmental chairs. We will also facilitate deans to call a special meeting of their departmental chairs to discuss, with an RIR staff member present to capture feedback. The VPRIR will request the presence of chairs at other Open Forum events.

SRP Advisory Committee – VP Goldstein will chair a committee of eight faculty members, three students (two graduate and one undergraduate representative) and one postdoctoral fellow to act as a sounding board throughout the consultation process. Professor Jan Jorgensen, Associate Provost (Faculty Affairs and Resource Allocation), will also sit on the committee to aid in coordinating the SRP with ASAP 2012. Faculty representatives for the SRP Advisory Committee have been approached based on recommendations by deans, associate deans (research) and other members of the senior administration at the discretion of VPRIR Goldstein. Committee members may be approached to take a leadership role on individual elements of the SRP. Committee members are also encouraged to participate in public consultation sessions such as Town Halls and provide feedback as requested by the VP.

Timeline:

- SRP Advisory Committee will convene once per month beginning in October until the SRP document is finalized.

Open Forum – Open Forums are being organized in collaboration with the Provost's academic plan ASAP 2012. There will be at least four sessions at various times during the day to accommodate stakeholder schedules. One Open Forum will be held at the Macdonald Campus. One Open Forum will be geared toward soliciting student participation and input. Additional feedback from participants will be requested through the SRP website.

Audiences:

- Researchers
- Undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows
- Research staff and other university administrators

Timeline:

- October and November 2011

Focus Groups / Individuals – VPRIR will convene small focus groups and will approach high-profile researchers who have had success obtaining funding, especially multidisciplinary/multi-institutional grants, creating international or business partnerships, and/or leading thriving research centres. These meetings will take place in person when possible or through individual phone interviews to ensure participation from these specially selected members of the McGill research community.

Audiences:

- Approximately 50 researchers have been approached to participate.

Timeline:

- Sessions will take place in September and October 2011

External Advisory Committee – VP Goldstein is convening a committee of industry and community leaders in fall 2011 to consult on strategic directions for research at McGill. This group will be asked to review the document and otherwise provide guidance as issues arise during the SRP consultation.

Online Consultation – A draft of the SRP will be posted online, and members of the McGill community, including students, alumni, and external stakeholders, will be welcome to provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback on elements of the plan. These elements may include those that affect society and the community more generally, as well as those that were identified as particularly contentious. Specific input will not be sought for sections that have already been finalized, although ample opportunity will be given for comments on whatever topic the respondent wishes to address.

Audiences:

- McGill community, alumni, general public

Timeline:

- Fall/Winter 2011-12

Satisfaction Survey – In order to evaluate our consultation and communications strategy and methods, we will seek to gain a sense of how our processes were received by the McGill community.

Audiences:

- All participants in the process

Timeline:

- TBD – Brief input on the process can be sought either as part of Open Forums and online surveys, or as a separate survey at the conclusion of the entire SRP process to gauge the reception of the SRP in general.

Potential communications approaches in support of consultation

- Online updates via OVPRIR section of McGill website, explaining the process, objectives, timeline and ways to participate. (The website will be live in early to mid September.)
- Dissemination of information through departmental and faculty sites as needed
- Inclusion in McGill “What’s New” email newsletter
- Consultation-specific emails to all staff and/or students (AllNotes)
- Article(s) in *Reporter* newspaper and website
- Posters on campus (during broader consultation)
- Shared drafts of the SRP posted online to ensure the McGill community is kept up to date
- Direct communication between OVPRIR and internal and external committees
- Regular business communication from between deans, ADRs, faculty, chairs, staff, etc.

Timeline for creation of the final draft

We will identify research priorities for ASAP 2012 in **fall/winter 2011**, with the research portion to be drafted in early **winter 2011**.

The SRP document will be circulated for revisions and fine-tuning to the SRP Advisory Committee and senior administration (P7, deans and ADRs, as well as other academic and research planning advisers) in **winter 2011-12**.

The goal is to have the Strategic Research Plan and ASAP 2012 ready for approval in **winter 2011-12**, and presentation to the principal, P7, Senate, and the Board of Governors.

Institutional implementation of the SRP and the broad communication of its objectives will commence in **spring 2012**.

Objectives for Strategic Research Plan

The overall goal of the SRP is to support and increase transformative research initiatives at McGill to advance McGill's research excellence and profile, visibility and reputation nationally and internationally. McGill's research will have maximum impact.

The SRP will focus on institutional research objectives that express the following themes:

1. Communicate Clear Framework

- Develop and explain method for identifying Strategic Research Areas (established, developing, and nascent).
- Acknowledge faculty SRAs while assisting McGill to prioritize strategic research areas that support the institutional goal of managing our organizational resources for maximum impact.
- Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for SRAs.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for revisiting and revising SRAs.

2. Support and Recognize Excellence in Research, Innovation, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

- Develop a culture of "best practices" within the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), Office of Sponsored Research (pre- and post-award management), Financial Services, and other institutional resource facilities to provide high-quality support and minimize the administrative burden on researchers.
- Dedicate knowledge-based application support to assist and support large cross-faculty and multi-PI initiatives.
- In particular, the SRP will develop and support research leaders.
- Reward mentorship and role modeling, especially for early-career researchers.

3. Encourage Interdisciplinarity

- Identify interdisciplinary areas for increased support by the central administration.
- Balance interdisciplinary and unit-based disciplinary priorities.
- Facilitate, recognize and reward interdisciplinary program development.
- Inform decisions regarding strategic faculty hiring, development and retention, including cluster hires.

4. Support and Build on the Excellence of Research Centres and Research Clusters

- Reposition and use centres and emerging research clusters as a springboard for strategic initiatives.

5. Strategic Internationalization

- Identify countries and/or regions for pursuing research partnership-building activities, recruitment, fundraising, etc.
- Identify regions for priority recruitment and retention of top international students.
- Increase focused and strategic faculty collaborations on international research and training programs linked to institutional goals and priorities.
- Increase focused and strategic institutional partnerships with leading international universities linked to institutional goals and priorities.

6. Increase Commercialization and Innovation Opportunities

- Create a business-friendly interface at McGill.
- Incentivize the building of corporate relationships at McGill.
- Bring business and community into planning and strategy for innovation.
- Develop the Quartier d'Innovation project as a tool for engaging business in research and cultivating the "entrepreneurial academic."
- Reward faculty innovation.

7. Improve Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research and International Experience

- Increase international exposure for all students, both on campus and with off-campus, including international, experiences.
- Increase local and international research and professional development opportunities for all students.

8. Return to Society: Quebec, Canada and Global Community

- Position the University as a key institution in an increasingly international "knowledge economy."
- Situate McGill as a key instrument of economic development within the global economy.
- Contribute to public policy that addresses the most pressing social issues of our time.
- Enable stewardship and provide service to the community.
- Maximize opportunities to share research excellence through various media, particularly employing new social media tools, and promote McGill to different audiences globally.