



Memorandum

Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
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TO: Senate

FROM: Mr. Drew Love, Director, Athletics and Recreation
Morton J. Mendelson, Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning)

SUBJECT: Report from Athletics and Recreation

DATE: 15 February 2012

DOCUMENT #: D11-44

ACTION REQUIRED: ☒ INFORMATION ☐ APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE: Presentation from Athletics and Recreation regarding the unit and its role in the support of student life and learning at McGill University.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE: Athletics and Recreation (A&R) is a self-financed unit of Student Life and Learning that provides athletics (varsity sports and competitive clubs) and campus recreation opportunities to the McGill community and the greater community at the Downtown and Macdonald Campuses. A&R is proud to boast 29 different intercollegiate teams, numerous competitive clubs, 700 intramural teams plus an extensive fitness and recreation program that encompasses over 100 non-credit courses. A & R also offers significant community programming and services, such as summer sports camps, memberships, seminars and hosting opportunities, to McGill alumni and to residents of Greater Montreal.

The purpose of this report is to inform Senate of the programs in A&R, which make an important contribution to student life at McGill and to students' health and well-being.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL: N/A

PRIOR CONSULTATION: None

NEXT STEPS: N/A

APPENDICES: Appendix A: Report from Athletics and Recreation.

Report from Athletics and Recreation

February 2012

Physical activity is an important part of student life at university and has been directly associated with better health and psychological well-being during the transition to university life.¹ Sadly, the study also showed that first-year university students spend less time on physical activity compared to high-school students. Thus, the chronic stress of transition, coupled with a general decline in physical activity, may have important negative health implications for students.

On a social level, the opportunity to interact with other students and faculty, sometimes making lifelong friendships, is important to student well-being. Recreation and athletics can play a role in stimulating and facilitating such interpersonal connections and friendships.

Mission Statement

A&R has adopted the following mission, which stresses values of academic and sporting excellence, inclusiveness, well-being, and fair play:

In keeping with McGill University's commitment to education and innovation, Athletics and Recreation vows to provide students and staff opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity within an inclusive environment that values health, well-being, and fair play. We strive to instill within our community the values of academic and sporting excellence along with the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle.

A&R attracts over 3,000 daily visitors during the academic year. Even more people stream into the sport facilities at game time to support the McGill Redmen and Martlets varsity teams. In addition, McGill's Summer Sports Camp welcomes over 1,000 children to the facilities during the summer months.

Over seventy percent of McGill's student population and about forty percent of staff regularly use the athletic facilities at McGill's downtown Montreal campus, which include the historic Percival Molson Stadium, the Sports Complex, McConnell Arena, and the McGill Sport Medicine Clinic.

Web exposure on our official A&R site² boasts an impressive three million hits annually, offering another strong source of exposure for McGill University. The web has also proven to be an excellent way to maintain links with our varsity alumni, 9,000 of whom connect with A&R through social media, watching webcasts of varsity sports, and contributing as volunteers – e.g., on the Athletics and Recreation Advisory Board, the Hall of Fame Committee and the many Friends of McGill Sport alumni groups. Ever increasing demands of social media and the expectations of our fans and patrons for instantaneous information 24/7 are just another element of an increasingly complex portfolio.

¹ Bray, Steven R. and Matthew YW Kwan, "Physical Activity is Associated with Better Health and Psychological Well-Being During Transition to University Life," in *Journal of American College Health*, Vol 55, No 2 (September/October 2006), 77-82.

² <http://www.mcgill.ca/athletics/>

McGill is proud of its varsity alumni, which boast over 50 Olympians and many more professionals working in sports administration, sports medicine, and coaching. Varsity alumni have an outstanding record of providing energy, advice, and financial support to assist in providing high quality programming that enhances the student experience. Their annual gifts exceed \$400,000, and some of our donors have made significant leadership gifts, including recent donations of \$1.5 million from Bob and Sue Winsor, \$1 million from Stephen and Nancy Molson, and \$1 million from David and Sheryl Kerr.

A&R manages and maintains the sport facilities and programming on both campuses as well as numerous agreements, including the Alouettes Football Club Agreement. A&R also cooperates with the City of Montreal and several nearby community associations and districts on matters of interest, including the entente for access to the campus from Parc Avenue, the Rutherford Park Development Proposal, and the agreement for public access and use of the Percival Molson Stadium and the Sports complex.

McGill's sports facilities are rented or booked for numerous corporate and community events when they are not in use by our students. Revenues from such rentals and from other sources – i.e., instructional programming, summer camps, memberships, gate receipts, concessions, sponsorship, etc. – are important additions to our \$10 million annual budget.

However, students are our greatest resource. Students provide over half of the annual operating funds through the Athletics and Recreation Fee. They have also supported A&R through their annual contribution to the Facility Improvement Fee, voted by referendum and supported by undergraduates for 5 year periods since 1982. Finally, they volunteer and work part-time in the facilities, which ensures that A&R programs are a success.

McGill is fortunate that students actively contribute on the many committees that give direction to A&R, including the Varsity Council, the Student Athletics Council, the McGill Athletics and Recreation Advisory Board, the Finance Committee, the Facilities Committee, the Hall of Fame Committee, and the Communications Committee. In addition, students are integral to the success of the many project based committees and teams delivering special events. As an important public face for the University, student athletes perform admirably, serving as ambassadors to the larger community. They represent McGill at many functions, make numerous school visits, give clinics, coach, and attend numerous youth club teams' activities and tournaments. It is a testament to the quality of our students that they represent McGill in these ways while reaching lofty expectations of excellence in sport and in the classroom.

Challenges

The greatest challenge that A&R faces, which is a common issue at McGill, is lack of space. Situated between a mountain and city streets, A&R's facilities have little, if any, room for expansion on the downtown campus. Although there is room for growth on the Macdonald campus, it does not host a large enough student population, nor the synergies necessary, to make a large sports venues viable without seeking partnerships. As a result of space limitations, A&R operates McGill's sports facilities beyond capacity, leading to accelerated deterioration and an inability to offer programming as efficiently as would otherwise be possible.

Operating beyond capacity means that McGill's recreational facilities are challenged to meet the demand for programmable activity space, even though they remain open for extended hours, seven days

a week, 362 days a year. A&R serves the academic community by day, then struggles at night and on weekends to provide space for recreational and varsity sports, in addition to providing space for non-sports activities such as exams, Discover McGill, plenary sessions, and town hall meetings.

The deterioration of McGill's sports facilities represents a significant threat to service excellence. Maintaining state-of-the-art facilities is a priority not only as a prerequisite to hosting elite and recreational sport, but also because students and staff deserve safe and clean spaces. Furthermore, A&R seeks to improve our client experience through updates to public spaces to facilitate current needs, such as a service point, food services, sports store, shower and locker rooms, and office space.

Our Future

With the support of students, alumni, sponsors and partners, McGill will continue to offer a high quality sport and recreation program. To maintain and grow this support, we must improve our communication and consultation with user groups and the McGill community at large to help reshape our program offerings as well as our facilities and equipment to remain current and exciting. With that objective in mind, A&R launched a comprehensive survey project, which will provide unprecedented feedback from students to help us better respond to their needs and help shape the direction in terms of new programming and services.

In an effort to address the demand for better internet capabilities, A&R continues to upgrade its recreation management processes, including recently implemented online registration services and enhanced social media. These improvements have created efficiencies, allowing us to begin a complete review of the organization, programming and business processes of A&R services at Macdonald campus, which will benefit from joint programming opportunities with the Downtown Campus and expertise that currently exists in two separate structures and locations.

Ongoing reviews related to varsity programming continue on annual and five-year cycles to ensure that our sports are relevant to our students and the McGill community. A&R supports McGill's commitment to excellence and welcomes the expectations of the McGill community, many of our alumni, and our fans for us to field competitive teams in high profile sports such as football, basketball, hockey, soccer, and volleyball.

A&R is committed to aligning McGill's sport facilities with energy-conservation and waste-efficiency initiatives outlined in the 2008 Physical Master Plan. A&R has undertaken a facilities energy audit and has begun to upgrade or replace outdated heating, lighting and other major equipment that consumes high levels of energy. Through this work, we have also been able to improve air and lighting quality as a welcome. In addition, the fitness centre will be expanded by another 30% this summer, to help ease the demand from our students and members for aerobic and weight training exercise.

We are happy and excited to announce that McGill has signed a long-term agreement with the Montreal Alouettes that will provide an essential revenue stream to defray operating costs of Percival Molson Stadium and to bring valuable branding recognition to McGill from national television exposure. A&R is also with the Ville Marie Community Association and local councilors to construct a quality playing surface with lights on the Rutherford Park Reservoir, which will help meet our fall and spring demands for outdoor space, while building better relationships and enhancing recreational opportunities with our neighbours during the summer and weekends.