



Memorandum

Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
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TO: Senate

FROM: Professor Morton J. Mendelson, Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning)

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Student Life and Learning (SLL)

DATE: 15 February 2012

DOCUMENT #: D11-45

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE: 2012 Annual Report on Student Life and Learning.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE: The Annual Report on Student Life and Learning is meant to provide Senate with a broad update on the activities of this important area of the University. The report documents a number of initiatives recently undertaken to improve the student experience at McGill. Considering the challenges that the McGill community faced in the Fall of 2011, the output and dedication of SLL units are particularly impressive and noteworthy.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL: N/A

PRIOR CONSULTATION: None

NEXT STEPS: N/A

APPENDICES: Appendix A: 2012 Annual Report on Student Life and Learning.

Student Life and Learning Progress Report February 2012

This report highlights initiatives recently completed or underway in areas of Student Life and Learning.

Office of the Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning)

- Held on 26 October 2011 and 24 January 2012, the **Consultation Fairs** were hosted by the Office of the Deputy Provost and Student Services, and the undergraduate, graduate and continuing education student government bodies. The idea for the fairs stemmed from the recommendations of the Student Consultation and Communication Work Group (SCC) that was struck in October 2010 to assess communication and consultation with students and to report related recommendations to the Provost and Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning).

The fairs brought McGill students, faculty, administration and staff together to exchange thoughts and ideas on areas of concern. In October 2011, topics under discussion at the Fair ranged from advising with the Dean of Students, to Food Services to the Provost strategic plan. In January 2012, under an overarching theme of “campus safety and security”, the topics at the fair included campus security, classrooms as safe spaces, and personal safety, one table was dedicated to “proactive vs. reactive consultation methods”.

Office of the Dean of Students

- **Census for Academic Advisers and Follow-up Survey with Students:** A two-part assessment of academic advising at McGill will help provide a clear picture of the reality of academic advising. The first phase involves a census of all academic advisers to determine, unit by unit, the tasks being performed and the percentage of time spent on one-on-one advising. The second phase involves a survey of students to identify their expectations about academic advising. Together, the results will help determine where gaps exist between students’ expectations and the existing structure, resources and other realities of academic advising at McGill. This initiative was unfortunately delayed by the strike last term, but the survey of academic advisors will now be conducted in the summer of 2012 with the results expected that fall, then the student survey will be conducted during the winter 2013 term.
- **Communication and discussion about academic advising:** A listserv of academic advisers facilitates communication among academic advisers as well as the distribution of announcements of interest to the academic advising community. The Academic Advisers’ Forum Steering Group (AAFSG) and the Subcommittee on Undergraduate Student Advising (SUSA) provide opportunities for regular face-to-face discussion and feedback among academic advisers and, in the case of SUSA, students and Student Services personnel as well. In addition, this year, SUSA struck two working groups to explore e-advising and recognition programs for academic advisors.
- **Advising in Residences:** Advising sessions offered in McGill residences have always been well-attended and well received by students and academic advisers alike. Sessions will be held in mid- to late March 2012, which could be used as a template for a permanent program of in-residence academic advising.

- Reporting to the Dean of Students, the **Aboriginal Community Outreach Coordinator** promotes higher education in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities by organizing and participating in outreach events, activities and workshops. The Coordinator is also a resource person with whom Aboriginal students can discuss a range of issues, including program selection, admission requirements, career options and Montreal life.
- **Aboriginal Pathways Program:** McGill's Aboriginal Affairs Work Group, the School of Continuing Studies and First Peoples' House collaborated to design a summer course for members of the Aboriginal community who wish to improve their writing skills and gain insight into life at McGill. The course offers a supportive environment and an engaging curriculum that embraces both Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions. The course is the first component of an Aboriginal Pathways Program.

Athletics and Recreation

- The **Fitness Centre** will be expanded by another 30% this summer to help ease the demand from students and members for aerobic and weight training exercise.
- The signing of a long-term agreement with the Montreal Allouettes allows students to benefit from the use of a facility (Percival Molson Stadium) that conforms to the standards of the Canadian Football League.

McGill Food and Dining Services

- **Student space:** Food and Dining Services (MFDS) is continuing to improve locations to enhance student space, with the establishment of rue McGill Deli in the Trottier building being the most recent improvement.
- MFDS has introduced **student internships** in their locations.
- MFDS expanded purchases of **food from the Macdonald Campus Farm**, providing locally sourced food, which students have requested, and supporting the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

International Education

- **Improvements in service:** The website continues to be upgraded to connect students, partners, researchers and alumni to relevant international initiatives at McGill. The site will point both students and partners to the appropriate pages on the study abroad website. Exchange opportunities have been expanded at popular destination schools, allowing more students to get their first choice for an exchange.
- Services for students planning to study abroad are under review this cycle. Improvements were made to the application form and other improvements are anticipated following the completion of the review this spring.

Residences and Student Housing

- The **Faculty in Residences** Series offers University faculty and first-year students living in McGill Undergraduate Residences various opportunities to interact—giving students contact with professors in a comfortable, familiar setting (e.g., over meals in Residence dining halls or in common rooms) and opportunities to learn in different ways.

Professors from across the University join students in Residences to give short and casual lectures on a topic of interest—e.g., recent developments in their field or a particularly quirky or little-discussed aspect of their discipline. They might also discuss their own personal academic training and how they found themselves at McGill. By the end of 2011-2012, over 24 sessions will have occurred.

- In its second year, the **Off Campus Fellows Program** continues to grow in size and quality. Nearly 30% more students have participated over last year, and further growth is planned, so that McGill's off-campus first-year students, both local and new to Montreal, can experience some of the same benefits that students in Residences receive.

Students who join the program participate in a unique community, led by Off Campus Fellows and the Off Campus Council centered around:

- Learning and sharing: Getting through the first week at McGill and in Montreal as a University student, orientating to a new environment, and sharing along the way.
 - Exploring the city: Finding new cafes, libraries, museums and many other hidden gems that the city offers.
 - Engaging with the community: Building strong relationships with the city of Montreal, the larger McGill Community and each other.
 - Suiting student interests: customized activities ranging from rock-climbing to camping to potluck dinners.
- **Target McGill** is a Residence preview and leadership development weekend that aims to give a taste of the upcoming residence experience and is intended to familiarize students with McGill, life in Residences and the city of Montreal. The program is meant to help students acclimate to McGill and Residences. It also models student leadership, given that the majority of facilitators are current student leaders who have the opportunity to serve as teachers and mentors for this incoming group.
 - **Rez Project**, a workshop program coordinated out of Residences with other partners on campus, is part of a major effort to promote inclusivity, respect and appreciation for diversity within Residences. The workshops are led by senior students and are offered in September to the 3,200 students in Residences, with 85% of students taking part.

Enrolment Services

- A number of **improvements in service** have been implemented:
 - Service Point has established evening hours to offer services when most convenient to students.
 - An enhanced admissions process now enables applicants to upload documents to their files.
 - Phase II of Service Point is now being planned. As in Phase I, the goal is to reduce student run around by consolidating services in one location, delivered by cross-trained front-line staff who are empowered to make decisions on a broad range of services.
- An **outreach program** has been developed through a partnership between the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, Enrolment Services, and the Lester B. Pearson Board of Education. The goals of the program are:
 - To create opportunities for students from underrepresented groups to engage with McGill, in the hope that it will inspire them to pursue learning opportunities and perhaps admission to McGill.
 - Introduce current McGill students to the diverse communities that are served by the Lester B. Pearson School Board, providing them with an opportunity to engage in community-based learning to enrich their McGill experience.

Student Services

- **Consolidated service:** The GPS Fellowships Office has merged with the Scholarships and Student Aid Office to streamline processes and reduce the number of offices that graduate students need to visit regarding financial matters.
- Phase one of the **Co-curricular Record (CCR)** is scheduled to be launched in time for the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year. A student's CCR is an official summary or attestation of participation in University activities outside courses. Students can use their personalized official CCR to highlight their complete University experience. Student Services has planned the implementation of CCRs at McGill since 2010, consulting with student groups, internal units, and other universities. The project is now in the first of three phases, which includes setting up the criteria committee and testing the tool (Collegiate Link) to ensure seamless integration with other University systems.
- The position of Manager, Student Leadership Initiatives, was created in August 2011. The Director is responsible for creating a comprehensive leadership program, with the ultimate goal of helping students develop as citizen leaders, prepared for professional and community responsibilities in a global context regardless of differences in academic discipline. The leadership program will provide opportunities for students to develop the competencies required for effective leadership and will involve a diverse range of community partners in its planning, delivery, and assessment.

- Initiated last year in Mental Health Services, the **Eating Disorder Clinic** is having an important positive impact on campus. Students can access the Clinic to receive the following services:
 - Multidisciplinary assessments by a psychiatrist, nurse and dietician
 - Treatment plans tailored to meet the needs of the individual.
 - Individual psychotherapy offered by both Mental Health and Counselling Services
 - Nutritional Counselling offered by a dietician
 - Nursing/Medical follow-up provided by the Eating Disorder Program nurse and, as needed, the family physicians at McGill Health Services

In addition, the Eating Disorder Program offers group support, including:

- Psychoeducational Groups offered for 8 weeks each semester.
- Meal support available on a weekly basis to students being seen at the EDP. Open support groups available for students participating in the Eating Disorder Program to get together at weekly meetings
- Nutrition groups offered weekly to provide nutritional education
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Group offered each semester for 10 weeks

Teaching and Learning Services (TLS)

- A number of **improvements in course evaluations** have been implemented, including:
 - Teaching Assistants are now included in course evaluations.
 - Evaluations can run the exam period, at the choice of the academic unit.
 - Improved response rates on course evaluations are being sustained, and TLS continues to work closely with student associations to maintain this trend.
- TLS has continued to run **SKILLSETS**, an initiative designed by Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and TLS to complement the research training provided by the academic experience at McGill. **SKILLSETS** program is building on its strong start – measured in terms of attendance, satisfaction, partnerships and comprehensiveness – and continues to improve. The program now more fully addresses the nine themes identified by the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies as important to training High Quality Personnel.
- TLS is expanding the **Project on the Nexus between Teaching and Research/Scholarship**, which addresses a University-wide priority – as evidenced at the Joint Board Senate meeting on Nov 1, 2011 – to promote the links between undergraduate teaching, learning and research/scholarship. The Program has four objectives:
 - Provide instructors support to promote the links between teaching and research/scholarship to enhance student learning.
 - Focus efforts at the departmental and faculty levels to promote students’ engagement with research/scholarship using curricular and co-curricular strategies.
 - Institutionalize undergraduate research by creating University-wide, interdisciplinary structures that support the integration of research into the undergraduate experience.
 - Provide leadership at the local, national and international levels in the integration of research into the undergraduate experience.

- The **Law Teaching Network (LTN)** project is a three-year partnership between the Faculty of Law and TLS. The project aims to generate a shared commitment to excellent, innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices. Over the past three semesters, the vast majority of faculty members have participated in one or more of the program initiatives including Faculty Learning Communities, Experiential/Active Learning Fund, curriculum inventory and mapping exercises, as well as the development of undergraduate program outcomes that are intended to ensure a more coherent student experience. As well, the LTN website was launched <http://www.mcgill.ca/law-teaching/talking-teaching>
- The **Teaching and Learning Spaces Working Group**, chaired by the Director of TLS and vice-chaired by the director of Campus and Space Planning, continues to identify teaching and learning space needs, set priorities and recommend funding for improvements to teaching and learning spaces at McGill. In 2011, a total of 206 projects were undertaken (47 renovations with IT, 10 renovations without IT, and 149 IT-only projects). Many more rooms now have flexible collaborative learning and teaching functionalities, writeable walls, moveable podiums, new furniture and AV installations where there were none before. In addition, ICS is now able to provide support remotely, greatly improving direct support to classrooms.