



Memorandum

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TO: Senate
FROM: Stephen Strople, Secretary-General
SUBJECT: Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting
DATE: December 5, 2012
DOCUMENT #: D12-35

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE: Presentation of the report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting 2012-2013.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE: The Statutes of McGill University state:
6.3.9.1 The Senate and Board of Governors shall hold an annual joint meeting in the fall term. At this meeting, the Principal, the Provost, the Deputy Provost, and the vice-principals, as appropriate, shall present for discussion matters they consider relevant to the University’s mission for the ensuing year.

At the Joint Executive Committee/Senate Steering meeting of March 27, 2012, the topic of *Universal Design* was proposed and agreed upon for the next Joint Board/Senate meeting. At the Joint Board-Senate meeting of November 27, 2012, the Office of Students with Disabilities delivered a presentation and facilitated the exchange that followed.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL: N/A

PRIOR CONSULTATION: N/A

NEXT STEPS: N/A

APPENDICES: Appendix A - Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 27, 2012

Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 27, 2012

The Chancellor welcomed Senators, members of the Board of Governors and guests to the joint meeting, and introduced the meeting's topic, *Universal Design*.

Attendees were then invited to visit the following stations:

Station 1 – *Students discussing the impact Universal Design has had on them*

Station 2 (Skype) – Prof Jeanne Higbee, Director of Graduate Studies, Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, University of Minnesota – *Impact of Universal Design on students from multicultural and diverse backgrounds*

Station 3 (Skype) – Dr. Emiliano C. Ayala, Associate Dean, Humboldt State University - *Implementing Universal Design for Learning in California State*

Station 4 – Roberta Thomson and Tara Flanagan – *Faculty members present Universal Design for Learning*

Station 5 (Skype) – Gladys Loewen – AHEAD board member, past President of CADSPPE, UD consultant - *The Impact of Universal Design on Services on Campus*

Station 6 – Librarian Andrea Miller-Nesbitt and Advisor Paul Oloff – *Universal Design Services for Students*

Following a video presentation on the topic “What is Universal Design,” Senators and members of the Board of Governors engaged in roundtable discussions on the following questions:

1. Universal Design is a common language and framework echoing familiar practices of inclusion, access, differentiated learning and multiple intelligences. What are the benefits to campus of using the language of Universal Design in policy and planning? What steps should be taken to extend the UD framework at McGill?
2. What additional benefits might its implementation at McGill have for all students? How can we measure the impact?
3. Current constraints on resources and governmental imperatives place increasing pressure on faculty members to perform more efficiently with less. In what ways might the notion of sustainable change in teaching practices, which is central to Universal Design, assist professors in outperforming despite the status quo on growth in resources? How can we communicate this and measure the impact?

The main themes that emerged from the discussions were:

1. McGill should increase the use of technology in the classroom, as this would provide many Universal Design solutions;
2. Universal Design for Learning is really about the application of good teaching principles;
3. McGill's physical infrastructure and budget limitations present challenges to the complete application of Universal Design;
4. Having widely shared notes or lecture recordings would make classes more accessible, but issues arise about intellectual property;
5. Universal design for learning would lower stress of some students, but might raise stress placed on instructors;
6. It is difficult to implement Universal Design in large classes.

The Provost synthesized the discussion and tied it back to McGill University's mission. He pointed out that both the challenges and the benefits of Universal Design were intimately connected to McGill's research, teaching and service to society.

Feedback provided from Senators and members of the Board of Governors was generally positive and will be taken into account in planning future Joint Board-Senate Meetings.