



# Memorandum

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**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Mr. Michael Di Grappa, Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance)  
Professor Anthony C. Masi, Provost

**SUBJECT:** Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

**DATE:** 20 March 2013

**DOCUMENT #:** D12-51

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

**ISSUE:** The Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly is presented to Senate for approval.

**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE:** In February 2012, the University issued a Provisional Protocol Regarding Demonstrations, Protests, and Occupations on McGill University Campuses. Following a consultation process and a review of best practices in this realm, we came to understand that that the McGill community will be best served by an agreed-upon Statement of Principles, which would protect the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.

This Statement will contain the overarching principles that guide decisions concerning the rights of members of the McGill community as they relate to these freedoms.

**MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL:** *Be it resolved that the McGill Senate approve, and recommend to the Board of Governors, the adoption of the Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly.*

**PRIOR CONSULTATION:** Broad community-wide consultation, including consultation fairs, email feedback, website comments, and discussions with specific campus groups.

**NEXT STEPS:** Approval by the Board of Governors

**APPENDICES:** Appendix A: Statement of Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly



## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES CONCERNING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

<b>Approved:</b>		
Senate	XXXXXX, 2013	Minute XXX
Board of Governors	XXXXXX, 2013	Minute XXX
<b>Effective Date:</b>		

*“The Mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society: by offering to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the best education available; by carrying out scholarly activities judged to be excellent when measured against the highest international standards; and by providing service to society in those ways for which we are well-suited by virtue of our academic strengths”*

McGill University brings together people from across the world in a community of learning. McGill is a place for open and frank dialogue, both inside and outside the classroom. The University values the variety of opinions and experiences of members of the McGill community and encourages the open and respectful expression of that diversity. Respect for the meaningful expression of dissent requires tolerance for a certain degree of inconvenience, including inconvenience that may arise from the means by which opinions may be expressed.

Members of the University community have the right of freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly, which are defined as follows:

**Freedom of expression** means the right to communicate one’s thoughts, beliefs and opinions, and to comment on any issue, including the right to criticize society at large, and the University itself.

**Freedom of association and Freedom of peaceful assembly** mean the right to form groups and participate in their activities, and to engage in meetings and demonstrations free from violence and intimidation.

At the same time, these rights are subject to limits established by law and by the rights of others. In particular, there is a need to safeguard other core institutional objectives, including the right of members of the University community to carry out their activities without undue interference, and in a safe environment.

McGill University is committed to upholding these values and these rights.