



Memorandum

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TO: Senate
FROM: Professor Fabrice Labeau, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
SUBJECT: Annual Report of Student Life and Learning
DATE: February 15, 2023
DOCUMENT #: D22-41
ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE The Annual Report on Student Life and Learning (2021-2022) is presented for information.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE The Annual Report on Student Life and Learning provides Senate with a high-level overview of the mandates of the units under the portfolio of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) and highlights the activities that took place in the previous academic year.

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS N/A

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS N/A

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL This item is presented for information.

APPENDICES Appendix A: Annual Report on Student Life and Learning (2021-2022)

ANNUAL REPORT ON STUDENT LIFE & LEARNING (2021-2022)

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ANNUAL REPORT ON STUDENT LIFE & LEARNING (2021-2022)

Introduction

In accordance with the annual reporting cycle, this report provides an overview of the mandates and core activities of the units under the portfolio of the Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning [SLL]) during the 2021-2022 academic year. The units are as follows:

1. Office of Student Life and Learning
2. Athletics & Recreation
3. Enrolment Services
4. Office of the Dean of Students
5. Student Housing & Hospitality Services
6. Student Services

The organizational structure of these units and their respective teams is presented in [Appendix 1](#). Supplementary to this report are the most recent annual reports to Senate of Student Life and Learning sub-units and committees that have a reporting obligation; these are in [Appendix 2](#).

Unit Mandates

The Deputy Provost (SLL) is responsible for advocating for students' rights and responsibilities; ensuring the integration of McGill values, standards, and goals with respect to SLL into University policies, operations, and procedures; providing administrative and strategic support and oversight to its units and to student groups; and overseeing international education (*McGill Abroad*).

Office of the Deputy Provost (SLL). This administrative team is led by the Deputy Provost (SLL) and provides strategic oversight and support to the SLL units, acts as a liaison with McGill's student associations, and oversees international education.

Headcount of staff: **12**

Athletics and Recreation. This self-financed unit develops and delivers programs and services designed to meet the athletic and physical fitness needs of the McGill University community. It manages and supports varsity teams, coaches, and administrative and support staff to ensure student athletes strive for and realize excellence in the classroom and on the field of play. The unit provides competitive and recreational sport opportunities with intramural teams, a calendar of non-credit instructional and fitness courses. Athletics and Recreation is comprised of sub-units which support the following activities: Recreation, Varsity, the Sports Medicine Clinic, and Facilities.

Headcount of staff: **72**

Enrolment Services. This strategic and operational team provides expert registrarial student and enrolment services to the McGill University community. Enrolment Services oversees strategic enrolment planning (a shared responsibility with Analysis, Planning, & Budget); undergraduate student

recruitment; graduate and undergraduate admissions and registration; government enrolment reporting; classroom and examination scheduling; exam invigilation; support for incoming and outbound exchange term abroad; the official student record; e-calendar; convocation; and management of the student data warehouse. Enrolment Services is comprised of the following teams under the University Registrar and Executive Director: Admissions & Recruitment; Academic Records, Convocations & Exams; Academic Programs & Government Reporting; Systems, Project & Change Management; and Service Point.

Headcount of staff: **121**

Office of the Dean of Students. This unit aims to enhance, improve, and promote students' academic and personal success; uphold student rights and responsibilities; develop student-related policy; and facilitate applications to certain external awards. The ODoS also oversees the Office of Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, which is mandated to establish and coordinate processes for supporting survivors who makes disclosures, as well as education initiatives that seek to raise awareness about and prevent sexual violence on McGill campuses.

Headcount of staff: **8**

Student Services. This partially self-financed unit promotes and supports student success and well-being and is comprised of the following departments: Campus Life and Engagement, Career Planning Services, Student Accessibility and Achievement (formerly the Office for Students with Disabilities), International Student Services, Office of Religious and Spiritual Health, Scholarships and Student Aid Office, and the Student Wellness Hub.

Headcount of staff: **211**

Student Housing and Hospitality Services. SHHS is a self-financing, mixed business model, comprised of self-operated locations and services managed by third parties. It is responsible for all aspects of student housing and dining services at the Downtown and Macdonald campuses and is comprised of the following departments: Food and Dining Services, Student Housing, Summer Accommodations and Conferences, and the oneCard Office.

Headcount of staff: **207**

Activities and Highlights

COVID-19 Challenges and Adaptations

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, SLL units worked to remain responsive and aligned with both student needs and University policy, which was based on evolving public health guidelines.

The Deputy Provost (SLL) formed the Student Engagement Collective (SEC) in Spring 2020 with a mandate to create a remote McGill experience for students that would contribute to their success both inside and outside the virtual classroom. The elaboration and evolution of initiatives supporting student

success carried on into 2021-2022 as the new reality came to include hybrid and in-person learning, services, and supports. Led by Martine Gauthier, Senior Director of Student Services, and Gillian Nycum, University Registrar and Executive Director of Enrolment Services, the SEC included partners across SLL, in Teaching and Learning Services, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Libraries, Communications, Analysis, Planning & Budget, and other units; a Student Advisory Committee, with representation from various student societies to guide and embed a student voice throughout all parts of the SEC; a planning group to determine the framework(s) informing the implementation of plans; a Faculty Coordination Groups to address faculty-specific needs and carry forth initiatives throughout the academic environment; and working groups to address specific areas of focus (e.g., peer supports, experiential learning and employment, etc.).

Simultaneously, McGill's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) began to transition from emergency response to recovery and resumption. In Fall 2021, a new Recovery Operations Resumption (ROR) committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Provost (SLL) and the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs) took over for the EOC, working to bring McGill closer to its pre-pandemic state.

COVID-19 impacted all SLL units, with some impacts carrying into the recovery phase of the pandemic.

- COVID restrictions and uncertainty in the first year of the pandemic necessitated a high degree of flexibility with the University's student housing policies. By 2021-2022, however, regular housing policies were being reinstated, which required some change management to realign expectations and policies (e.g., changes being permitted after set deadlines).
- Social distancing measures coupled with increased demand for accommodation required Student Housing to find capacity outside McGill. Student Housing secured ~500 additional beds (250 double rooms) from Campus1 for McGill students, and eighty additional beds at Campus1 for an influx of transfer and work study students. SHHS also maintained a focus on ensuring student safety via sanitization measures in residences and dining halls.
- Breaches of academic and conduct regulations resulted in several disciplinary measures compared to previous years. The ODoS worked with the Faculties on matters of academic integrity and with SHHS on behavioural case management. The implementation of *Advocate* software enhanced communication between the Residence Life team and the ODoS on discipline cases.
- The ODoS with Student Accessibility and Achievement (Student Services) developed an infographic for students illustrating how academic accommodations were coordinated between the units with a priority focus on COVID-related issues, and formed a joint committee to review cases that fell between mandates to clarify accommodations support for affected students. This initiative is ongoing and being expanded to beyond issues related to COVID.
- Enrolment Services continued to experience challenges in recruitment, admissions, and enrolment. The continuation of policy changes and accommodations that began in 2020-2021 (e.g., ACT/SAT Test Opt-out, online language proficiency testing, academic accommodations on CEGEP and high school transcripts, etc.) led to a significant increase in manual file review in a year that saw the volume of applications increase by 22% (or 12,000 files).
- While travel was suspended due to pandemic restriction, McGill Abroad (ODPSLL) redesigned its pre-departure orientation session. Working with the Equity Team and other internal stakeholders, the orientation content was revised to ensure language was inclusive and sensitive to the realities faced by equity-seeking groups on international University-related activities. To

ensure easier access to the orientations, McGill Abroad also replaced its bi-annual sessions with monthly online sessions delivered via myCourses.

As more in-person activities became possible, McGill celebrated the return of pre-pandemic traditions and practices. Enrolment Services held its first in-person Convocation since the pandemic in Fall 2021, and in Spring 2022, 14 regular ceremonies were held along with 12 previously postponed ceremonies and an event for the new Chancellor's installation. Final exams returned to in-person in December 2021, during which some of the pandemic adaptations proved challenging. International research resumed on a case-by-case basis in Fall 2021 and international travel and activities, including exchanges, resumed fully in Winter 2022.

Each academic year, the University provides \$30,000 to fund student-led pursuits that provide experiential opportunities to students to student teams. This funding was not accessed by any students during 2021-2022 due to very limited opportunities for in-person experiential activities.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

SLL units are working to implement and actualize the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan (2020-2025), and the McGill University Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism.

McGill is better able to anticipate and meet the needs of its students when it understands its student composition. To that end, Enrolment Services continued its collection, analysis, and reporting of student demographic data in collaboration with Analysis, Planning & Budget. The response rate to the Student Census, which is completed voluntarily by enrolled students, increased from 32.8% in Fall 2020 to 53.6% in Winter 2022. A similar instrument, the Applicant Demographic Data Survey, was developed to launch in Fall 2022. Enrolment Services also created a data governance framework and data access request process to enable the University to leverage these data while protecting student confidentiality.

Gender X and Personal Pronouns options were developed for the application process and to be implemented in the Fall 2022 admission cycle. This change aimed to empower McGill students and applicants who list their legal gender marker as "X" on McGill records to match their legal documents.

Similarly, to ensure gender representation for students applying to residence, Student Housing worked with IT to create a non-gendered accommodation option in the room selection process. This will be rolled out starting in the Fall 2023 admissions cycle.

To recruit students from equity-seeking groups, Enrolment Services strengthened its outreach programs:

- Pick Your Path (PYP) for Black Youth, which encourages Black high schools and CEGEP students in the pursuit of post-secondary education through mentorship and exposure to certain areas of study. The 2021-2022 cohort had 14 students paired with 14 mentors.
- PYP for Low Income Youth, which provides youth with the knowledge and morale needed to create a map of their educational and career goals. The 2021-2022 cohort had 12 youth.
- Indigenous PYP, a four-module paid learning experience for Indigenous undergraduate students enrolled at McGill that supports academic and career pathways. The cohort had 6 students.
- High School Tutoring, an after-school mentoring program that connects McGill University student volunteers with elementary and secondary school students in the Montreal area. The 2021-2022 cohort had 61 students and 37 McGill mentors.

- IMPRESS, a program designed to increase access to graduate studies and to boost career-readiness for Indigenous undergraduate students through 8-week, paid research and professional internship with a McGill faculty or unit.

McGill Abroad (ODPSLL) collaborated with the Faculty of Arts on a project funded by Universities Canada to review accessibility to international exchange programs within that Faculty. Specifically, the project set out to identify barriers and facilitators to study abroad opportunities as experienced by students with disabilities, Indigenous students, low-income students, visible minorities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ students. Findings of the project confirmed that efforts must be placed on enhancing accessibility and expanding promotion and outreach. As a result, the McGill Abroad website was changed significantly; modifications included increased visibility of available funding, clearer communication about support services available to students, a safety section aimed to better equip students with information needed before traveling, and the redesign of ~160 exchange partner webpages.

Student Services focused considerable effort on building the capacity of its employees to design and deliver an inclusive and equitable experience to every student through a range of training, including:

- Half-day sessions on EDI training plan and the Student Services Anti-Black Racism Plan; building awareness of Canadian history from Black and Indigenous perspectives; an anti-racism workshop; and positionality, intersectionality and allyship, facilitated by Dr. Joseph Smith.
- An EDI Coaching program for 30 staff members to build upon and put into practice their anti-racism skills and journey towards inclusive living
- EDI Lunch & Learning small group sessions dedicated to enhancing psychological safety, promoting engagement in difficult conversations, and exploring gender, sexuality, race, etc.
- Black Student Needs Assessment, where the McGill's Black student population was surveyed to identify support resources and programs to be added to existing offerings.

Mental Health

Supporting student mental health remains a top priority for SLL. The Student Wellness Hub is using a stepped care model in its approach, to combine prevention and progressive interventions, in an effort to respond to increasing needs from our population with limited resources. Matching student needs remains a major challenge.

Several SLL units collaborated on McGill's *Suicide Framework*, which provides guidance on issues around suicidality and ensure coordinated training, intervention, and support by clarifying and strengthening partnerships across the University. This important work began with an extensive community engagement exercise in 2019 after which a consultant was hired from Suicide Action Montreal to work with the University. The *Suicide Framework* contains Pre-, Inter-, and Post- aspects; the Residence Life Suicide Post-vention Task is the first completed section, and is a protocol modelled around the l'Association québécoise de prévention du suicide document "*Postvention Program: Being Prepared to Act in the Event of Suicide*" to ensure affected parties have access to the appropriate resources and support should a student living in residence die by suicide. The Residence Life Suicide Post-vention Task working group included representation from Residence Life, the ODoS, the Integrated Student Support Team, Communications, and Protection Services/McGill Security. The Pre- and Inter-vention aspects are currently being expanded.

Local Wellness Advisors (LWAs) across McGill help connect our students with mental health resources. Noting a gap in service, the Student Wellness Hub (Student Services) created two new LWA positions specifically to meet the needs of Black, Indigenous, and Person of Colour (BIPOC) and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual+ (2SLGBTQIA+) students at McGill.

Strategy, Assessment & Evaluation (Student Services) was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Bell Let's Talk Postsecondary Fund to assess campus readiness for further supporting student mental health at McGill. The assessment began in Fall 2021 and preliminary results showed that changes to practices and policies related to student mental health, as implemented by the Student Wellness Hub, were having a positive impact. The full findings as well as next steps will be shared with the community in 2023.

Changes in Resources

Human Resources

Staffing issues were reported across units and resulted from number of factors including staff turnover and difficulty attracting new talent. Several units were operating without a full complement of staff. The pandemic sparked major changes in all our lives, including the need to adapt quickly to new ways of working, which was challenging for some staff. Nevertheless, through the resource shortage and to their best efforts, SLL staff pulled together to ensure the continuation of business and services within their respective units, and cross units. In some instances, staff from the respective SLL units, including the ODPsLL, provided coverage for vacant positions to ensure the continuation of activities and services until the vacant position could be filled.

During this time, some SLL units explored ways to work smarter. SHHS piloted the *Confluence* database in Residence Life to centralize documents and materials for yearly recurring projects. Immediate benefits have included increased visibility of procedures to other departments, strengthened partnerships, more efficient onboarding, clarification of staff roles and responsibilities, and retention of departmental knowledge when staff turns over. And Student Services management staff participated in project management training provided by McGill Executive Institute Lloyd Bartlett and implemented the approach, using a common set of tools and vocabulary, across all major projects. Additionally, team directors attended a “boot camp” in Design Thinking, where workshops examined at the challenges students face from their point of view and to prototype and improve solutions based on user feedback.

Infrastructure

In conjunction with Facilities Management and Ancillary Services, Athletics and Recreation applied for a Federal and Provincial grant to upgrade the Downtown and Macdonald campus arenas and Macdonald campus tennis courts. Funding was received for the Downtown arena and the tennis courts, which was matched by the University (total of \$12.3M towards the Downtown arena and \$493K to the Macdonald tennis courts). The investment of this funding ensures these facilities remain functional for varsity and recreational use.

The Athletics and Recreation's Redbird Sport Shop partnered with the Couche-Tard to create an outpost on lower campus to sell McGill branded merchandise to McGill students and the broader community.

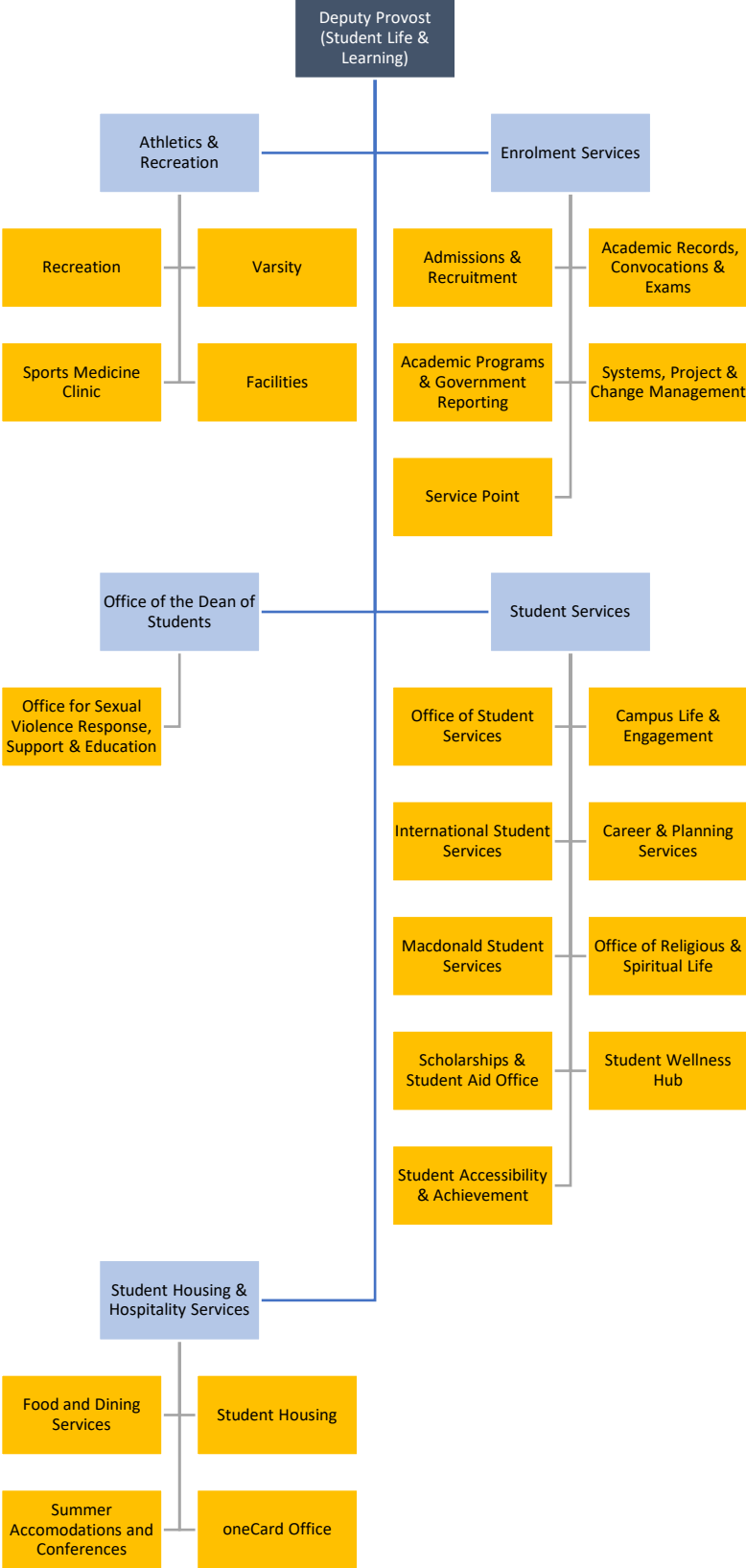
Several units leveraged IT advances to enhance services or provide additional services and supports to students.

- SHHS procured *SimpleK*, a key management software, allowing Protection Services to maintain a database of all unit keys to promote the better management of residence keys.
- Enrolment Services implemented:
 - JIRA Service Desk, an email-management ticketing solution for Service Point, to improve the efficiency with which student requests are handled.
 - Shopify to replace Service Point check out, which was at the end of its life.
 - Photo-upload functionality for Lenel ID card provisioning to expedite the processing of McGill student IDs.
 - Class Scheduling API to allow for real time integration between scheduling information in Banner and the scheduling software to improve the student experience when registering for courses.
- International Student Services (Student Services) launched the *myISS platform* to facilitate and streamline the way students interact with International Student Services for immigration documents and advice, scheduling appointments, and uploading documentation securely.
- McGill Abroad (ODPSLL) implemented the *McGill Student Travel Registry* for McGill students travelling outside of the Greater Montreal area on University-related travel activities. The app allows McGill to reach students should the situation change in the location they are visiting changes. The app sends students important safety alerts, check-in requests, and provides access to safety resources. Every McGill student participating in a University-related travel activity outside of the Greater Montreal area is required to register their trips in this app.

Conclusion

The circumstances of the last few years introduced new challenges for SLL, but with those challenges came new opportunities to problem-solve, to innovate, and to learn. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, SLL units worked tirelessly – individually, together, and with students, faculty, and staff across the University – to preserve and deliver the McGill student life and learning experience in a context that vastly differed from the norm. We are exceedingly proud and grateful to everyone for their generosity of time and spirit, compassion, and fortitude, and we look to the year ahead with hope and ambition.

Appendix 1: Organizational Structure of Student Life and Learning Units



Appendix 2: Supplementary Annual Reports to Senate

Presented in alphabetical order

APPENDIX	TITLE
APPENDIX 2A	Annual Report of the Committee on Student Services 2021-2022 Link to report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/06_d22-04_annual_report_of_the_committee_on_student_services_cover.pdf
APPENDIX 2B	Annual Report of the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs 2021-2022 Link to report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d22-25_annual_report_of_the_cesa_updated.pdf
APPENDIX 2C	Annual Report on the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures 2021-2022 Link to report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/06_d22-04_annual_report_of_the_committee_on_student_services_cover.pdf
APPENDIX 2D	Annual Report on Enrolment and Strategic Enrolment Management 2021-2022 will be presented to Senate on March 23, 2023 Link to the 2020-2021 report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d21-40_annual_report_on_strategic_enrolment_management.pdf
APPENDIX 2E	Annual Report on Scholarships and Student Aid 2021-2022 will be presented to Senate on May 10, 2023 Link to the 2020-2021 report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/10_d21-65_annual_report_on_scholarships_student_aid.pdf
APPENDIX 2F	Annual Report on the Policy Against Sexual Violence will be presented to Senate on March 22, 2023 Link to the 2021 report: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d21-33_annual_report_on_the_policy_against_sexual_violence.pdf