

Memorandum

Office of Student for Services

3600 McTavish Street, room 4100

Montreal Quebec, H3A 0G3

TO: Senate

FROM: Ms. Martine Gauthier, Co-Chair of the Committee on Student Services

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Committee on Student Services

DATE: September 15, 2023

DOCUMENT #: D23-06

ACTION REQUIRED: ☒ INFORMATION ☐ APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE	The Committee on Student Services (CSS) Annual Report to Senate 2022-2023 is presented for information.
BACKGROUND & RATIONALE	This Annual Report is presented in keeping with the CSS' reporting responsibilities.
PRIOR CONSULTATION	Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	The CSS has a sustainable framework in place in order to fulfill its mandate.
IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS	Not applicable.
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL	This item is presented for information.
APPENDICES	Optional reading items: Appendix A: CSS Annual Report Appendix B: Student Services Update to Senate



Annual Report of the Committee on Student Services (CSS) 2022-2023

The Committee on Student Services (CSS) is a parity Senate Standing Committee with equal representation from staff/faculty and students that advises on the objectives and priorities relating to Student Services and receives and reviews reports regarding Student Services. Read the [terms of reference on the Senate website](#).

The format of the CSS proceedings for the 2022-2023 academic year has evolved from previous years. The committee composition brings valuable insight and cross-university perspective through open discussion to gain a collective understanding of issues. It also facilitates collaborating towards solutions to improving the student experience at McGill.

As per its mandate, the committee met on four occasions during the 2022-2023 academic year. The CSS focused on identifying and discussing post-pandemic trends impacting students and student services across different stakeholders within the university. These were observational rather than data driven.

Post-Pandemic Trends Discussed

1. In-Person vs Virtual Services

Since the start of the pandemic, S2 has offered students the choice of in-person or virtual one-on-one appointments (when permitted by Ministry/University COVID mandates). Some exceptions apply; for example, in most cases General Practitioner appointments must be (and have been throughout the pandemic) in-person. Nurses can offer students the option.

During the height of the pandemic, very few students chose in-person appointments, however they have continued to increase over the last two years. As of the end of winter 2023, the demand for in-person appointments is 42% versus 58% virtual across S2 services (excluding outliers Hub physical health appointments, CL&E virtual interactions). S2 will continue to track appointments to verify these trends.

In-person vs virtual one-on-one appointments: End of Winter 2023 Semester Over 31,000 appointments per year

Unit	In-Person	Virtual
Career Planning Services	39%	61%
Campus Life & Engagement*	10%	90%
Hub Mental Health	52%	48%
Hub Physical health**	71%	29%
International Student Services	37%	62%
MO Religious and Spiritual Life	58%	42%
Student Accessibility & Achievement	35%	65%
Scholarships and Student Aid	27%	73%
Jewish and Muslim Liaisons	48%	52%

* Few appointments, mostly events ** Includes both GPs (mandatory in-person) and nurses (optional in-person)

Observations

- Fewer student “no-shows” for virtual appointments.
- Virtual appointments allow for more S2 staff to work from home.
- Virtual appointments serve to facilitate flexible and extended appointment hours.
 - Reduces need for frontline staff to greet students in-person.
 - Allows staff to offer virtual appointments at various times of day that correspond to their working hours (e.g., 8am-4pm, 9am-5pm, 10am-6pm).
- Virtual appointments maximize efficiency for S2 staff and students, allowing both to fit more appointments into their schedules.

Outcomes

- S2 will continue to track student preference (virtual vs in-person).
- Service model based on this data to be explored further in 2023-2024.

2. Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Challenges

Despite the increased importance of career skillsets, interpersonal skills, and wellness skills, students are less engaged in co-curricular/extra-curricular activities post-pandemic. This has been observed at McGill and at universities across North America.

Observations

- Decreased participation may be due to a perceived lack of time, lack of interest, competing priorities, and/or a lack of awareness/disengagement from the institution’s official communication channels.
- Students are more likely to attend:
 - Personalized and identity-based programming, such as Wellness Skills for Students living with a Disability versus a general Wellness Skills for Students
 - Programming/activities that are promoted/recommended to students by their peers
 - Co-curricular activities with applied and experiential learning components, and those which add value to future career and/or current studies
 - Micro experiences
- Service modality (i.e., virtual vs in-person) affects the attendance, the outcome, and the overall success of the offering and all must be considered. For instance, it may be convenient and easier to offer many co-curricular workshops virtually, however a virtual delivery may not be the most effective for the content (e.g., learning interpersonal skillsets requires face-to-face interaction).

Outcomes

- S2 will continue to monitor trends in programming to ensure added value of the 800 co-curricular and extra-curricular activities each year.
- S2 will engage with other areas of the university which provide activities, such as Teaching and Learning Services, the faculties, and other McGill service providers to better understand the landscape of activities and reduce redundancy and schedule overlap.
- S2 is collaborating with the Assessment and Evaluation team in the Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) to create a dashboard using data from the myInvolvement platform to enable S2 and other units to review and analyze student uptake on programming and make decisions about future programming.

3. Increased student isolation and challenges with navigating post-secondary institutions post-pandemic

Observation

- Student disengagement is increasing across North American universities.
- Students increasingly seek help from S2 to find opportunities to connect with their peers across interests and identities throughout the student lifecycle.
- In-person activities may reduce post-pandemic isolation.
- S2 is experiencing increased demand to help students navigate McGill the administrative landscape and systems. For example, students express confusion regarding the roles of “advisors” across the university, such as the distinction between academic, student, program, faculty, access, departmental, and local wellness advisors.

Outcomes

In response, Student Life and Learning units, including S2, are working on:

- Increasing the number of peer-supports and peer-supporter positions, including AskMcGill kiosks stationed across the university.
- Collaborating with IT and faculties on implementing student engagement IT platforms that help students connect with each other.
- Evolving the philosophy around the use of student engagement platforms to meet student needs:
 - Purposefully coupling student engagement platforms with responsive warm bodies to answer questions, help with navigation, and drive engagement; example: embedding the use of some student engagement platforms within the roles and responsibilities of Campus Life and Engagement staff.
 - Establishing the idea of student engagement platforms as being valuable tools for all staff to support students to find opportunities to engage with each other and empowering students in their quest to successfully navigate university life.

2022-2023 CSS Membership

Co-Chairs:

Martine Gauthier Senior Director, Student Services

Ghali Touimi Benjelloun Undergraduate Student, Management (student elected co-Chair)

Representative from Macdonald Campus:

Prof. Valerie Orsat Associate Dean, Student Affairs (AES)

Two Directors of Student Services:

Darlene Hnatchuk Director, Career Planning Services

Cara Piperni Director, Scholarships and Student Aid Office

Two Associate Deans (Student Affairs) or equivalent:

Dr. Aimee Ryan Associate Dean, Biomedical BSc., Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (MEDICINE)

Prof. Manuel Balan Associate Dean, Student Affairs (ARTS)

Three representatives (staff/academics) of Senate (appointed by Senate on the recommendation of Senate Nominating Committee):

Prof. Eric Galbraith	Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (SCIENCES)
Chantal Grignon	Student Affairs Office, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics (MEDICINE)
Caroline Riches	Director, Undergraduate and Graduate Programs (EDUCATION)

Senior Representative from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:

Prof. Nathan Hall	Associate Dean (GPS)
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Five Undergraduate Students of the Downtown Campus (three of which shall be from the Faculties of Arts, Science, Engineering, Management or Education):

Risann Wright	(ARTS)
Kerry Yang	(SCIENCE)
David Vaillancourt	(ENGINEERING)
Ghali Touimi Benjelloun	(MANAGEMENT)
Samuel Baron	(ARTS)

Three Graduate Students of the Downtown Campus:

Yasmine Elmi Ali Taqvi
Vacant

One Graduate or Undergraduate Student of the Macdonald Campus:

Sara Kosumi

Committee Secretary:

Caroline Arpin	Administrative Manager, Student Services
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Annual Report on Student Services 2022-2023

Martine Gauthier
Senior Director, Student Services

Student Services (S2) is one of five units under the umbrella of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), and consists of:

- Ask McGill
- Campus Life and Engagement (CL&E)
- Career Planning Services (CaPS)
- International Student Services (ISS)
- McGill Office of Religious & Spiritual Life (MORSL)
- Scholarships and Student Aid (SSAO)
- Student Accessibility and Achievement (SAA)
- Student Wellness Hub
- Service supports (HR, EDI, Finance, Communications, IT systems, Project Management)

The S2 approach to service delivery and levels of support provided to students include:

Awareness	Self-service information
Prevention	Assisted navigation of information and resources
Early Intervention	General guidance with advisors; direct connection with supports
Specialized Support	Expert/professional intervention and personalized service
Crisis Management	Supports the leading role of Dean of Students to aide students in crisis

The S2 approach to student developmental considers:

Student lifecycle	Meeting students where they are
Holistic wellness	Recognizing interaction of all components of student wellness
Self-determination	Empowering students to self-advocate

Service Highlights

This report presents the exceptional work of our teams as identified by the service leaders. While not an exhaustive list, it provides a sense of the wide range of S2's offerings to students.

AskMcGill

We developed a robust training program for the 20 AskMcGill student navigators stationed year-round in main buildings across the Downtown and Macdonald Campuses. The objective of the training was to familiarize the student navigators with S2 services and activities so they could guide and respond to questions from peers. Student navigators assisted approximately 11,000 students during 2022 orientation, and an additional 20,000+ students throughout the academic year.

Campus Life & Engagement (CL&E)

CL&E supports students to transition to and connection with McGill campus life. Highlights from the last year include:

- A collaboration with other campus stakeholders to launch peer-led French and English conversational workshops with support from the Ministry of Education (PARES). A total of 227 students participated over the fall and winter semesters.
- A collaboration with SSMU (Students Society of McGill University) to launch *Days of Service*, which provided opportunities for students to get involved in the Montreal community through a group placement at one of 20 different organizations, including the Centre d'action Bénévole de Montréal to promote the benefits of volunteering.
- In collaboration with the MCSS (Macdonald Campus Students Society), the McGill Office of Sustainability, and Eco-quartier de Ville-Marie, the CL&E student involvement and community connections team piloted various events focussing on environmental awareness.

Career Planning Service (CaPS)

The CaPS supports undergraduate and graduate student career and leadership development through career counselling and advising, skills development workshops, experiential learning and career exploration programs, mentoring, and career and networking events. As the University's central career service, CaPS provides a variety of resources and tools to help students search for part-time and summer jobs, internships, and post-graduation opportunities. Highlights from the last year include:

- In partnership with International Student Services (ISS), the Desautels Faculty of Management Career Service, and Alumni Relations, CaPS led the *Building Employment Strategies for Tomorrow (BEST)* one-day conference in October 2022 for international and newcomer students. A total of 49 students attended. Topics included transition to the workforce, resumé and LinkedIn optimization and post-graduate work permit information. McGill alumni were among featured speakers and participated in a networking event.
- For a second year, CaPS offered micro work-integrated-learning opportunities with 163 students and 46 employers participating.

International Student Services (ISS)

ISS provides a range of services and resources for international students including orientation webinars, immigration advising, health insurance guidance, and social and cultural programming and events. Highlights from the last year include:

- S2 introduced "Maple," a telemedicine service that provides international students with care that is 100% covered by and directly billed to Medavie Blue Cross, our insurance provider.
 - In its first year, 3,397 students completed a virtual consultation with a GP with an average wait time of 7 minutes, 483 medical notes were issued; and 3,026 prescriptions were ordered.
 - New benefits and enhancement were added to the insurance plan, including Gender Affirmation Care and increased coverage limits for pre-existing conditions and for mental health services. In addition, S2 signed an agreement with Laboratoires Biron for direct billing of lab tests.
 - Starting in September 2023, direct billing for prescription drugs will also be available from pharmacies to Medavie Blue Cross.

McGill Office of Religious & Spiritual Life (MORSL)

MORSL provides a wide range of programs, resources, and opportunities for students to explore religious and spiritual life. Highlights from the last year include:

- The launch of the *Practical Skills for Interfaith Dialogue Program*, which teaches skills for interfaith dialogue to help McGill students get to know each other's faith traditions and orientations. The first cohort completed the program in March 2023 and published their capstone projects on MORSL's website.
- The launch of the *Peer Faith Volunteer Program*, which is designed to engage empathetic and thoughtful students who are passionate about faith and spirituality on campus. The program opened for appointments in January 2023 with a cohort of five, trained student volunteers.
- After more than two years on hiatus due to COVID restrictions, MORSL relaunched the popular experiential interfaith learning series *My Neighbour's Faith*. This year's focus was on connecting with student members of faith communities who served as guides during visits to places of worship: a Sunni Mosque, a Bahá'í shrine, a modern orthodox synagogue, a gurudwara, a Hindu temple and a Presbyterian church.

Scholarships & Student Aid Office (SSAO)

The SSAO provides resources and advice to help students cover the cost of their studies, administers all provincial, federal and U.S. government student financial assistance programs, as well as offers financial wellness education with a focus on budgeting, and debt management. It offers Entrance Scholarships to first-time, first-degree students, in addition to bursaries, interest-free loans and a Work Study Program based on financial need. This year's highlights include:

- \$21.M in bursaries were disbursed to eligible students in financial need, a 3% increase in dollars for undergraduate students.
 - For Fall 2022 new admits, the Entrance Scholarship offers reached \$9M for the first time in the history of the program, an increase of 12% over 2021.
 - Furthermore, 9% more students received Entrance Bursary offers as compared to the prior year.
- SSAO redefined and reinvested in our partnership with Indspire, an Indigenous-run national charity, to guarantee \$5,000 to each on-campus, undergraduate, Indigenous, Canadian student in each year of study up to \$20,000 per degree. The Okòn:ra Award named after the Mohawk word for Red Oak - a symbol of strength, morale, resistance, and knowledge - was launched in Fall 2022. The inaugural recipients hailed from 37 different bands across six provinces.
- The Youth in/from Care Bursary Guarantee was increased to \$5,000 or the cost of the student's tuition, whichever is higher, with documentation demonstrating involvement in the child welfare/protection system in Canada.
- In support of the Pick Your Path outreach program for Black Youth, we guaranteed an entrance award to all Pick Your Path completers who received an offer of admission to McGill.

Student Accessibility & Achievement (SAA)

SAA provides accommodations to students with documented disabilities (temporary, permanent, or episodic), as well as providing additional learner support for students facing barriers in university, with or without documented disability. Resources include peer programming initiatives, a tutor-matching program, academic strategies programming, and more.

Highlights from the last year include:

- The implementations of a new Data Management System called *Clockwork* at the start of Fall 2022. Clockwork provides a secure way to store and track student data, including medical documentation, appointment case notes, and more. Students can also use Clockwork to book appointments online and instructors can interact with our exam team regarding accommodations.
- A new Support for Students from Care program was developed through donor funding to facilitate access to resources both on- and off- campus for students with experience in youth protection.
- A new Learner Support Specialist was hired using funding from the Plan d'action grant.
- Three programs were developed for students needing targeted academic support to overcome academic barriers, regardless of any documented disability, as well as one-on-one appointments for academic support.
- SAA also:
 - provided nearly 2,850 student appointments during the academic year: a 48% increase over 2020-2021. The demand has had a direct impact on exam centre operations, as 89% of students registered for disability related barriers receive exam-related accommodations.
 - provided over 6,000 accommodated exams between Fall 2022 and Winter 2023, plus an additional 7,670 exams across the two final exam periods.
 - responded to 1,663 requests for tutoring across both campuses.

Student Wellness Hub

The Student Wellness Hub provides a range of services to support the well-being of McGill students.

Highlights from the last year include:

- Continuing the work of being responsive and agile to students' needs through a flexible service delivery approach which allows students to select the delivery mode of the appointment, with some exceptions for appointment types that require in-person presence.
- Increasing the full-time equivalent (FTE) of doctors from 1.68 in May 2022 to 3.21 in May 2023.
- Fulfilling 22,000 appointments with 6,481 unique students served between September 2022 and April 2023.
- Expanded support specifically for Black and BI&POC students by creating an additional Wellness Advisor position to support the needs of Black students at McGill. The advisor joined the LWA/AA team in February 2023 and has already been engaging with students and key community partners to create a network of support for this community. We also expanded the team to provide additional one on one support to our BI&POC students.
- The Healthy Living Annex (HLA) increased its number of Animal Therapy sessions. The Student Wellness Hub Animal Therapy initiative seeks to give students a sense of stress relief, joy, and companionship with our trained dogs and their handlers. Animal Therapy is among our most well-attended initiatives and continues to grow. We now host sessions twice a week in the HLA in addition to weekly campus sessions in faculties, clubs, and residences both downtown and at the MacDonald campus. At the HLA, a total of 1,280 students attended one of 62 sessions offered.

Macdonald Campus

In August 2022, a new Service Manager joined the Macdonald Campus S2 team, and is responsible for developing and implementing a vision, processes, and procedures for the integrated functioning of customer service and programming. This staff will also help coordinate offerings from all by S2 sub-units, so they fit the unique needs of students and enhance students' sense of belonging on campus and within the larger McGill community.

Jewish and Muslim Student Affairs Liaisons

As part of the [Initiative against Islamophobia and Antisemitism](#), S2 hired one Muslim Student Liaison and one Jewish Student Liaison to support students, provide a confidential resource for discussing and addressing student ideas and concerns, and act as a formal channel to bring these matters to the administration.