



Memorandum

Secretariat

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TO: Senate
FROM: Ms. Edyta Rogowska, Secretary-General
SUBJECT: Open Discussion
DATE: November 13, 2024
DOCUMENT #: D24-25

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Reference materials are provided in support of the Open Discussion.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The agenda for the November 13, 2024, meeting of Senate includes six questions which were accepted for a response by the Senate Steering Committee at its meeting of October 29, 2024. The questions concern security on campus, freedom of expression, and student discipline, among other topics. Based on a review of the questions, the Steering Committee agreed to hold an Open Discussion on matters that are related to the questions.

To facilitate the Open Discussion, Senators were invited to complete a Survey circulated by the Secretariat on November 6, 2024. The responses to said Survey are provided in Appendix A, along with a summary on the key points.

The Open Discussion will be prefaced by brief statements from the Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic), the Interim Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), and the Vice-President (Administration and Finance). Senators will then explore and discuss the case study and related questions presented in Appendix C. The Open Discussion will be followed by a summary of key takeaways presented by the Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic).

PRIOR CONSULTATION

Senate Steering Committee

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

n/a

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS

Follow-up action may result from the Open Discussion.

**MOTION OR
RESOLUTION
FOR APPROVAL**

n/a

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Responses (Summary of Key Points and Detailed List)

Appendix B: Link to the [Report of the Open Forum on Free Expression and Peaceful Assembly](#) (2012)

Appendix C: Case Study for Discussion and related Questions

OPEN DISCUSSION SURVEY RESULTS

The survey responses reflect a diverse range of opinions from 37 Senators on how the University should handle events featuring invited speakers. The main points of agreement include the need to restrict speakers who engage in hate speech or violence, the importance of academic freedom, and the necessity of clear guidelines and definitions for University support and partnership. Ensuring the safety and security of the campus community is also a key concern, with suggestions for thorough vetting and risk assessments for events. A detailed list of all responses follows the summarized points.

Summary of Responses:

Question 1: Are there any conditions, limits, standards, or parameters that would justify restricting or barring access to McGill resources (e.g., space, technology) by invited speakers and if so, what would these be?

❖ General Consensus:

- Most Senators agreed that restricting access should be a rare and extreme measure.
- Hate speech is frequently mentioned as a primary reason for restriction.
- The importance of maintaining academic freedom and open debate is emphasized.

❖ Specific Conditions for Restriction:

- **Incitement and Promotion of Hatred:** As described in the Criminal Code of Canada.
- **Security Concerns:** If the presence of a speaker poses a high risk of physical violence or danger to the community.
- **Criminal Background:** Speakers with a history of violent crime or association with terrorist organizations.
- **Impact on Academic Mission:** Events that disrupt the regular delivery of courses and programs.

❖ Diverse Opinions:

- Some Senators expressed that controversial speakers should be allowed to promote debate and critical thinking.
- Other Senators stress the need for discretion and case-by-case evaluation by academic leaders.
- A few Senators highlight the potential for abuse in policies that restrict speakers based on controversial views.

Question 2: Under what conditions should the university partner with or support events that feature speakers invited by faculty members, administrative units, research groups, and/or student clubs?

❖ **General Conditions for Partnership:**

- **Vetting and Compliance:** Events should meet all rules and regulations governing the conduct of McGill staff and students.
- **Educational Purpose:** Events should aim to inform, educate, and encourage reflection and debate.
- **Alignment with University Values:** Partnerships should align with the University's mission, values, and strategic plans, including equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) goals.

❖ **Definitions and Clarifications:**

- **Partnering vs. Supporting:** Senators noted the distinction between providing logistical support (e.g., space, security) and officially partnering, which could imply endorsement. There is a feeling that definitions and guidelines should be established to differentiate between various levels of support and partnership.
- **Neutrality:** The University should remain neutral on controversial subjects, supporting events logistically without taking a stand.

❖ **Specific Conditions for Support:**

- **Academic Rigor:** Events should be academically rigorous and contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus.
- **Security and Safety:** Events should not incite hatred, violence, or pose security risks. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure safety.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Partnerships should avoid conflicts of interest and align with the university's academic and research missions.

❖ **Diverse Opinions:**

- Some Senators indicated that the university should always support its members' events, while others stress the need for careful vetting and discretion.

❖ **Additional Considerations:**

- **Financial and Logistical Support:** The university should provide logistical and, to some extent, financial support for events that align with its mission.
- **Student Clubs:** Events organized by student clubs should clearly communicate that the sponsor is the student group, not the university itself.

Detailed List of all Responses:

Question 1: Are there any conditions, limits, standards, or parameters that would justify restricting or barring access to McGill resources (e.g., space, technology) by invited speakers and if so, what would these be?

1.	Yes, but this would be a very extreme measure that should not be used lightly at all, and that should be VERY rare. Hate speech. Not much else.
2.	if it affects the regular delivery of our courses and programs
3.	Speaker should not be associated with a known terrorist organisation / on terror watchlist; not have a criminal record for violent crime; not be excluded from McGill due to violation of code of conduct; etc. Topic should not be promoting terror / promoting harassment and discrimination prohibited by law. Event should not prevent others from engaging in university's usual academic mission (labs, classes, research, etc.)
4.	Only if it is hate speech as defined by the Criminal Code.
5.	Will the speaker advance the education of students or faculty? That should be the main consideration. Are they espousing true hate speech or just uncomfortable positions? Too many gatekeeper spoil the education. Controversy is not always bad.
6.	No. Universities are places to hear, debate and agree to disagree on any issue, in particular controversial issues. This has to happen in a civilized manner, so appropriate security measures and enforcement of might be needed. Such measures should not be a reason not to have a controversial speaker.
7.	No.
8.	Speakers that explicitly incite hatred or violence would seem to have no place here.
9.	Much speech today approaches "hate speech" if it doesn't actually check every box to clearly officially qualify as hate speech. Given this, there should be some discretion given regarding limiting or barring events with speakers who are approaching "the line" even if they cannot unequivocally be shown to have crossed the "hate speech" line. In addition, if an event is likely to result in campus violence, it should not be held on the campus.
10.	Absolutely. But the role of academic leaders is to make these decisions on a case by case basis. If they have trouble doing this, they should not be in their role. Differentiating between speakers who are harmful and hateful to members of the

	McGill community and those presenting different and controversial views is not a science the same way parenting is not a science. But one can still do it.
11.	Anyone advocating hate speech or the endorsement of violence against a specific group should not be permitted on campus. Anyone advocating the limitation of expression or academic freedom (ie engagement in activities with another university) by another group should also not be permitted on campus.
12.	I don't see a reason to change the current policy. That some ideas / speakers will be controversial to some people is not surprising. But how should the university get into the business of deciding who is too controversial to speak? This is not something that the university can really do. Plenty of potential for abuse in such a policy.
13.	2 conditions should apply: (i) a speaker who has a HISTORY of hate speech should be barred. Promises to not engage in hate speech while on the McGill campus are not good enough. (ii) a presentation site that meets Security's conditions of a safety-ensurable site such as exits, safe haven, etc. If neither condition can be assured then an invitation will not be endorsed.
14.	This is a difficult question to answer in our current times. In the past, I would have said that we should draw the line hate speech. However, this line no longer makes sense since criticism of Israel (a state that is plausibly committing genocide) is now considered antisemitic by the Federal government's definitions and is therefore considered hate speech, while at the same time, Zionist vigilante groups like Magen Herut Canada have been given charitable organization status by the same federal government. Given that the hate speech line has moved to a non-neutral position, I can only go back to the quotation variously attributed to Voltaire, Evelyn Hall, and others: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." In other words, McGill should stop trying to restrict invited speakers. It is better to know what people are saying out in the open that to repress freedom of speech and push people underground. Also, McGill is a school. Just a school. It is not McGill's job or purview to repress freedom of speech. There are bodies (the police, CSIS, and probably others that we are unaware of) whose job it is. Leave it to them.
15.	I agree with the above sentiment that members of the university community can invite controversial speakers to campus on the condition that 'hate speech' does not occur. I think they should always be accompanied by a member of staff and not permitted to roam freely throughout the campus unsupervised - only for the purpose of the event to which they are invited.
16.	Conflict of interest

<p>17.</p>	<p>Political and religious forums should not be allowed. I would rather the space is rented for weddings than students conducting religious or political forums within the University space</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>If there is a very high risk of physical violence or danger to the community. This would be dependent on context - eg. if the University is already in a state of turmoil, one small spark - such as an inflammatory speaker- could unleash a larger wave of violence. Otherwise, I believe it is difficult to impose limits. If we cannot present a wide range of views - even if controversial- at an University, where else? On the other hand we have to recognize that an invitation is by definition an official recognition of an individual point of view. If we do not have in place strong parameters for ensuring fact checking and/or opportunities to present another side of an issue, and a set of "ground rules" for respectful dialogue and limitations on hate speech or acts, for example, this intellectual tolerance is difficult to maintain. Maybe it could help to impose "Chatham house" rules on some speakers - ie. no social media/off-the-record- to allow for difficult conversations to occur but not be taken out of context through social media.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>Since the notion of "controversial" is subjective, I do not believe that invited speakers should be prevented from giving talks at McGill, unless 1) their actions or speech contravene the criminal code, and/or 2) their announced visit to McGill creates safety or security concerns that require significant logistical and financial resources to manage. In the case of the latter, the University should engage with the employees or students who are organizing the event, to devise mitigation strategies and discuss the logistical and financial responsibilities of each party.</p>
<p>20.</p>	<p>If an event would require disproportionate resources (e.g., security, crowd control, or facilities management) that would divert funds or attention away from other essential academic activities.</p> <p>If a speaker’s views or behaviors conflict with the university's code of conduct. For example, if an invited speaker is known for engaging in harassment or hate speech, that could conflict with the campus's policies on respect and inclusion.</p> <p>If the event is sponsored by an external organization or corporation, the university might want to ensure that the speaker does not represent interests that conflict with the university’s own goals or mission.</p> <p>While we have to support free speech, limiting the invitation of speakers to prevent any one political ideology from dominating campus discourse or giving the impression of institutional endorsement of particular political views might be needed.</p>

21.	If they are racist, homophobic, transphobic (example: Wintemute), yes, go head restrict them. Let's address the elephant in the room: It was shameful of the Faculty of Law administration to create obstacles to the hosting in that faculty recent talk of acclaimed lawyer Francesca Albanese, who is the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories. She is speaking to world leaders, ambassadors, on TV all the time. And she cannot speak at the Faculty of Law because it is going to hurt the feelings of some racist external individual who is paid by a foreign state? (Yes, we have to speculate what happened based on hearsay because there is no transparency.)
22.	Discourse that reflects hatred of a particular group or identity, or encourages retaliation or violence is not free speech and has no place on a university campus, where our primary mission is to learn and practice critical evaluation. Hate speech is, by definition, uncritical.
23.	We should be as open as possible.
24.	The fire code.
25.	Certainly in these fiscally restrained times, events requiring significantly additional security may need to consider virtual vs in-person events. I hesitate to suggest relying on external sponsorship for events, as this would potentially cause undue burden to some groups, and create new headaches with regards to "sponsors". Anyone with history of hate speech should not have access to our resources. Perhaps requirement for Faculty or unit to be sponsor - fiscal and otherwise.
26.	Free speech is essential on a university campus, and the only situations that would justify exclusion of a speaker are when the individual is known to be promoting 1) hate speech or deception intended to provoke serious harm to specific individuals or groups 2) threats of violence.
27.	<p>Features of a speaker that should lead to restricting or barring access to McGill resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The speaker is affiliated with or has openly supported (e.g., in their scholarly work, via social media, or in prior talks or sermons) a terrorist organization as designated by Canada -A potential speaker has previously called for violence (e.g., in their scholarly work, via social medial, in prior talks or sermons) against a group based on aspects of the group's identity including religion, place of origin/dwelling, race, ethnicity, sex, or gender. -A potential speaker has been convicted of criminal act against a person or group based on that person or group's identity. For example, a potential speaker has been convicted of a hate crime. -The potential speaker has previously engaged in hate speech against a group based on identity, place of origin, ethnicity, gender, religion, sex.

<p>28.</p>	<p>The University should not enable events that will break, or can be predicted to lead to the breaking of the law -- whether it is incitement to violence or to hate. The University is interested in supporting a robust and respectful exchange of ideas, even if there may be substantive disagreement. Putting forward a point of view that is controversial does not in and of itself constitute disrespect. The manner in which those ideas are put forward is important, and so an attitude of respect for difference of opinion is important for events that may spark controversy.</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>Cogent evidence that the invited speaker would propagate discourse characterizable as hate speech contrary to the Criminal Code.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>The University will benefit from the development of a code of conduct and can look towards the Code of Conduct of FMHS as a model: "In accordance with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences values, this Code of Conduct (the "Code") intends to inform, guide and enhance the conduct of all members...in their interactions with each other and with persons external to the Faculty with whom they come into contact...In particular, the Faculty is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of behaviour of all of its members in order to provide a healthy and safe learning environment and to better serve society. The Faculty values integrity, honesty, fairness and respect for the rights of others and strives to integrate these into its teaching, research, clinical and other activities."</p> <p>Members of the University community and invited guests should uphold values integrity, honesty, fairness and respect for the rights of others while contributing to the University's mission. This also means that inciting hate or violence should not be tolerated. Speakers with intention to spread hate should not be invited by members of the University community.</p>
<p>31.</p>	<p>Safety issues.</p>
<p>32.</p>	<p>We should err on the side of free speech. Only hate speech or serious risk of triggering violence seem like reasons to bar a speaker. Efforts should be made, however, to provide a platform for dialogue, exchange, debate, counterpoint where views are polarized or based on doubtful scholarship/evidence.</p>

<p>33.</p>	<p>Speakers should not explicitly incite violence, encourage actions that induce intentional harm to another, disturb University activities (according to predefined and transparent parameters), or encourage severe and pervasive harassment--at which point they should be barred from accessing McGill resources.</p> <p>Some controversial speakers may require higher security presence than others; above a certain financial threshold (spent on security), speakers should not be granted physical space and should be redirected to hold virtual talks.</p> <p>Events and speakers should be subject to a risk assessment process based on past incidents or affiliations, and whether they suggest heightened risk of violence, endangerment to the community, etc. Events that have led to endangerment of public safety should have *reduced* access to McGill resources.</p> <p>Speakers wishing to campaign (politically, etc.) or indoctrinate community members should have limited access to McGill resources. Speakers should focus on providing educational dialogue. This prioritizes the university's role as a platform for learning, intellectual exploration, and the advancement of knowledge.</p>
<p>34.</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>35.</p>	<p>The space should only be restricted if the speaker has engaged with hate speech / incitement to violence. Please note that in relation to antisemitic speech, antisemitism should not be defined according to the IHRA definition which is too broad and erroneously captures a range of legitimate critique of Israel.</p>
<p>36.</p>	<p>Restrictions on controversial speakers should be extremely limited. Anything endangering the physical security of campus or our national security must not be tolerated - these should be the only conditions for justifying restricting or barring access to our spaces. We live in highly divisive and rapidly changing times and we must face them head-on with intellectual rigour, curiosity, open minds, and high moral standards. When it comes to dangerous ideas, sunlight is the best disinfectant, making it morally correct to allow rather than disallow such expressions on our campus. We must remind ourselves that any tactics we use to shut down ideas we disagree with can very easily be used in the opposite direction should the tides turn. Universities must fundamentally remain sites of free and open exchange of ideas for this reason.</p> <p>Yes, the vulnerable should be protected and uplifted in our society. McGill should contribute to efforts to do so as a very important but ultimately secondary function of our university.</p>
<p>37.</p>	<p>Hate speech. Risk of disruption (based on public knowledge or knowledge that the university has that isn't public)</p>

Question 2: Under what conditions should the university partner with or support events that feature speakers invited by faculty members, administrative units, research groups, and/or student clubs?

1.	Very limited, and at arms length. As in, support series of speakers, not a specific speaker.
2.	That the event is vetted to meet all the rules and regulations that govern the conduct of McGill Staff and Students.
3.	Unfortunately I think the university is always viewed as 'partner' and as 'supporting events' once they are on McGill property or advertised by an organization with McGill in its name even if a separate legal entity.
4.	The University should just provide the space.
5.	Partner? Fund? Two different things. I'm not sure what this means.
6.	Always. The university is here to support its members. A reasonable head's up is needed from the organizers to enable the university to provide the framework (e.g. security, enforcement) to allow the event to unroll in a civilized manner.
7.	Not sure what “partner with” or “support” mean but the university should not disallow events.
8.	Does the university ever need to partner? What does partnering mean, concretely?
9.	I am not convinced that the university (a collective / representative of the entire McGill community) should be partnering with any event featuring controversial speakers, regardless of who invited them.
10.	Same answer as above.
11.	Given that these groups seek the use of McGill Facilities (ie space), all such invitations should be vetted by the Provost's Office. Any concerns expressed by the Provost's Office should be vetted prior to finalization any invitation.
12.	<i>No response.</i>
13.	I do not think that there should be partnership as it becomes a "McGill University held..." narrative. I DO believe that the conditions of #1 be University policy. The differences between terms and perceptions between "approval", "endorsement", and "approval" by the University need to explicit as a glossary of definitions, and not subject to interpretation by 3rd parties.

14.	This question is too vague to answer. To answer it, I would need more information by what is meant by 'partner with or support' events. It also depends on what is meant by 'university'. It would also depend on whether the university (whatever that might mean in this context) has been requested to partner with or support events.
15.	I think it should only be for the purpose of education. To inform, educate, encourage reflection and debate. If it falls outside of this invited speakers should not be supported. (This opinion excludes alumni, awardees, or academics from other universities in Quebec who should be permitted and partnered with).
16.	Partnering with external partners would need to be done with those that do not place McGill in a situation of conflict of interest. Additionally, we should partner with those who align with the university's EDI strategic plan and academic and research missions.
17.	Simply educational activities, educational debates and nothing else should be allowed
18.	Ideally, McGill would have an ongoing official lecture, dialogue or public speaking series or forum that would allow for such partnerships. For example: The Kennedy Political Union lecture series at American University - https://www.americanusac.org/kpu which is a partnership between a student led organization and the University.
19.	Not sure I fully understand the phrasing of this question, but will try to provide an answer corresponding to the way I understand it. I like the idea of the University, as an institution, remaining as neutral as possible on "touchy" or controversial subjects. I do not know what the exact legal standing is, here, but I believe that freedom of expression is an individual right, not a collective one. While I believe any McGill student or employee is entitled to their opinion, McGill as an institution should not take a general stand on specific issues or views, as such a stand could be perceived as a consensus when it may not be. I do not believe the university, as an institution, should "partner with" events that feature specific invited speakers. Supporting events, logistically and to a certain extent financially, is fine because this is akin to the institution supporting the freedom of speech and opinion of individual employees or students. To me, partnering up means sponsoring or taking a stand, which I believe could be inappropriate if taking such a stand may alienate a portion of the University community. Maybe this means I am fine with the current content-neutral approach.
20.	The university should partner with or support events only if the presentations are academically rigorous, relevant, and contribute to the intellectual climate of the campus. The alignment with the university mission and values is an essential criterion.

21.	What is the "university" here? Does this refer to the administration? Because all those named, "faculty members, administrative units, research groups, and/or student clubs" are the university collectively. The administration can support the university initiatives involving speakers by making booking rooms and technical help easy and cheaper to book; the administration can help streamline compensation and expense reimbursement processes; there can be a common calendar to consult various events with guest speakers on campus to avoid overlap and to help amplify.
22.	If the proposed speaker(s) do not incite hatred, violence, or purely reactive ideology, then the university should support them. By "university should support them" I mean the various bodies that help bring speakers to campus - faculties, depts, research groups, clubs. All of these are "the university." When student groups or unions make a public statement/invite a speaker to campus and, in so doing, dissociate themselves from the "university," they are exploiting their complicit interests in the university - which may include a salary, a degree program, etc.
23.	This should be up to the person being approached. For example, if a chair is asked to support/partner, it should be up to them. If a club, it should be up to the leadership of the club, etc.
24.	The university as a whole should have no position on anything, period. The University does not hold positions as a unified whole. Partnering with units as if the whole university is an academic partner stabs a big hole into the idea of the university not taking positions on things. Resist this. Resist it strongly.
25.	Student clubs are separate legal entities - they should be required to pay a caution or have insurance for additional unexpected security or IT fees.
26.	Most of these events are for a targeted audience in a specialized academic field or for a specific student interest and as such they are not appropriate candidates for generalized university support. They are supported by departmental resources and student club fees. McGill has limited resources and should only be expected to provide financial support and/or publicity for the few events that are of interest, relevance and benefit for the entire university population and for the general public.
27.	Features of a speaker that should NOT lead to their restriction or barring: -Immutable aspects of their identity including their religion, ethnicity, race, sex, gender, country of origin or place of residence -A need for heightened security to protect attendees at a visiting lecture is not sufficient to prevent the lecture from happening. Rather strategies to ensure safety should be implemented.

28.	For the University to Partner with faculty, groups, etc, the University must either be involved in the planning (ie selection of speakers) or the support must be requested through a process which ensures fairness in the distribution of resources to stakeholders across the University.
29.	Higher standard of quality (reputation in field) than for speakers invited by faculty members, administrative units, research groups, and/or student clubs.
30.	<p>Students clubs are associated with the University through MOUs and are not operated by the University. When student clubs invite a guest or hold an event, it should be clearly communicated that the sponsor is the student group and its parent associated group (SSMU, etc) and not McGill.</p> <p>The clubs, however, should be held to the Code of Conduct (see response above) through their MOUs with McGill.</p>
31.	Events that are in line with University vision and mission.
32.	We need to be clearer about the different levels of 'sponsorship' for such events: who takes responsibility for the event/speaker? Surely there is a difference in the University's responsibility between just providing space (especially if we charge rent) and a unit inviting a speaker for a named lecture, for example, where they may pay travel or an honorarium to the speaker and link the reputation of the unit to the quality of the talk. Assuring a high standard of scholarship and commitment to constructively using the platform provided to work towards a critical understanding of challenging topics would seem generally important goals, but especially for more substantially University "sponsored" events.
33.	Events and speakers should be supported if they directly align with the University's mission.
34.	At the discretion of the administration
35.	I don't understand the separation between "university" and faculty/ admin/ students. Do you mean events off campus?
36.	Please see the previous answer.
37.	Permitting free speech doesn't mean endorsing what is being said, but partnering does. This should only happen when the event and/or speaker align with the University's mission and values and advance the University's priorities. We need to be clear about what partnering means: e.g. it doesn't include providing space for invited speakers when they don't necessarily reflect the University's mission/values but don't promote hatred, etc.

**LINK TO THE REPORT OF THE OPEN FORUM ON FREE EXPRESSION AND
PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY (2012)**

The Report is available here: https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d12-11_open_forum_web.pdf

OPEN DISCUSSION CASE STUDY AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

Open Discussion Case Study:

A student group has invited a speaker to campus who is a well-known pro-life activist. The speaker has a broad social media presence, which she uses to share the following views:

- Abortion, which she claims includes “Plan B” (emergency contraception), is a denial of personhood and tantamount to child abuse.
- Abortion procedures that take place without paternal knowledge and consent is a denial of men’s dignity and parenthood rights.
- Campus clinics should not offer abortion procedures or Plan B, as this is a misuse of public funds.
- As in the US, Canadian courts should revisit the law on abortion procedures (in which she includes Plan B).

The speaker, both online and at their in-person talks (including those delivered at other university campuses), uses graphic language and imagery that depict and contrast physically abused children and fetuses from terminated pregnancies. The McGill student group that has invited the speaker wants to organize both a talk by the speaker that would be accompanied by a one-day “vernissage” of related photos and artwork in a campus building.

An email and social media campaign has begun to pressure McGill’s administration to revoke permission from the student group to host this speaker. This pressure comes from faculty, students, staff, alumni, parents, and members of the wider community. It takes the form of a call to “deplatform” the speaker because she holds “harmful, anti-science, Medieval, and misogynist views,” which are antithetical to McGill’s mission and principles.

On social media, two groups state their intention to attend the speaker’s talk to “shut it down”. Several members of the McGill community have reposted and “liked” these messages, and some have called for others to join them in protesting this event.

Two weeks ago, the speaker visited another Canadian campus but was prevented from delivering her talk when about 50 people in the lecture hall drowned her out by shouting, singing, drumming, and use of a bullhorn. As the speaker attempted to leave the lecture hall, two individuals accosted her and shouted close to her face. The speaker responded by allegedly shoving both individuals, one of whom has since filed criminal assault charges against her. The speaker denies the assault; she claims the confrontation occurred as she was trying to exit a crowded lecture hall through a “threatening mob”. The speaker has blamed security services at the university where this incident occurred for failing to protect her and others at the event.

Open Discussion Questions:

1. What factors are relevant to the University's consideration in determining whether and how to intervene?
2. If the student group had asked an academic department or Faculty to co-sponsor the event, what factors would be relevant to determining how to respond?

Reference Resources:

- [McGill University Mission and Principles](#)
 - Mission: The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.
 - Principles: In fulfilling its mission, McGill University embraces the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness.