

To: Senate

From: Dominic Ryan

Subject: Custodial services during long breaks

Date Submitted: 2006-12-20

Senate Meeting Date: January 17, 2007

Background:

The "Holiday Newsletter" from Institutional Planning & Analysis that was circulated on Mon, 4 Dec 2006, contained the following statement:

"BUILDING SERVICES (Cleaning Staff)

Holiday Break: Closed from Thursday, December 21, 2006 (11:00 p.m.) to Wednesday, January 3, 2007 (7:00 a.m.) inclusively.

Any requests for special (billable) services during the holiday period should be communicated to the District Supervisor in your area or to special.events@mcgill.ca. Requests should detail the building, dates, hours, as well as a FOAPAL to be charged. Building Directors are to communicate to Building Services no later than December 8, 2006 for any request for services during the holiday period. This service is highly recommended for buildings with open access during the holidays."

As is clear from

<http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/policies/holidays/2006/>

and Article 29.04 of the MUNACA collective agreement, we were all expected to work on Friday December 22, and about fourteen exams were scheduled, yet there was no proper custodial coverage for the entire McGill campus.

This appears to have become standard practice for long holidays, but it makes no sense to cut custodial coverage the day BEFORE everyone else stops working and then not restore it until the evening AFTER everyone comes back, works a full day and teaches a full schedule of classes.

The effect of the current policy is that students and staff return to, and are expected to work in, a building that has not been cleaned or even seen a basic garbage pick up for twelve days.

In the teaching-only or purely administrative buildings, this might be an acceptable situation, and doubtless the decision to introduce this policy was made by an occupant of the latter group of buildings. However, for those of us working in one of the many research-purposed buildings on campus, the conditions we are subjected to are deplorable. Dirt and garbage accumulate, while the washrooms are depleted of supplies and ripen to a state rarely achieved even by the classic British pub.

We tout McGill as a research-intensive university, but fail to provide one of the most basic necessities: a clean workplace.

Research is a 24/7 activity and many of our best people choose to continue their efforts through the long breaks. They should be provided with a proper environment in which to work, by the institution whose standing they enhance.

Under the current policy, a clean building constitutes a "special service" and we are expected to pay for the privilege.

Question:

Would it be possible to for this institution to accept its responsibility to provide a proper working environment for the people who work to make McGill (one of?) the best research-intensive university in Canada, and establish a revised policy for providing adequate custodial coverage of the research-purposed buildings on campus, during long holiday breaks?