

# Question

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**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Jacob Greenspon, SSMU Senator  
Chloe Rourke, SSMU Senator  
Kareem Ibrahim, SSMU Senator  
Claire Stewart-Kanigan, SSMU Senator

**SUBJECT:** Question Regarding McGill's Strategy for Building an Interdisciplinary Learning Community

**MEETING DATE:** December 3, 2014

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**PREAMBLE:** Whereas, creating a campus community “connected across disciplines” is included in the Principal’s Plans,<sup>1</sup>

Whereas, an Open Discussion on “Breaking Down Silos: Interdisciplinary Collaborations”<sup>2</sup> was held in Senate in February 2014 at which interdisciplinarity was identified as a priority for students and faculty, and strategies were suggested for facilitating progress in this area,

Whereas, barriers to interdisciplinarity identified at the Open discussion included “absence of institutional infrastructure to encourage, enable and foster interdisciplinarity” and lack of “recognition and reward mechanisms for tenure-track faculty members” for promoting interdisciplinary work,

Whereas, at the annual Joint Board-Senate meeting in November 2014, Senators and Board members jointly agreed that interdisciplinary opportunities are essential to innovation,

Whereas, interdisciplinary programs are often found by students to be less supportive given the division of the responsibility of supporting students between multiple faculties or departments,

1: <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2014/03/principal-to-mcgill-community-openness-to-change-will-determine-our-future-success/>

2: [http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d13-45\\_open\\_discussion\\_memo\\_-\\_breaking\\_down\\_silos.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d13-45_open_discussion_memo_-_breaking_down_silos.pdf)

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**QUESTION:** What concrete measures are currently being undertaken to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and to break down barriers faced by students seeking to pursue interdisciplinary studies?

Has the “absence of institutional infrastructure to encourage, enable and foster interdisciplinarity” been addressed?

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Has the lack of “recognition and reward mechanisms for tenure-track faculty members” for promoting interdisciplinary work been addressed?

What resources is the university planning to dedicate to achieve these stated goals of better supporting interdisciplinary programs and opportunities, and will the University develop a University-wide strategy for supporting interdisciplinary learning?

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