



TO: Senate
FROM: Matthew Crawford-Appignanesi
SUBJECT: Question Regarding the McGill Writing Centre
MEETING DATE: May 16, 2012

PREAMBLE: McGill's 2012-16 Strategic Enrolment Management Plan states its goals will include higher numbers of undergraduates in research, teaching and learning excellence, and increasing international student retention. The report also claims that complacency and underfunding could threaten McGill's good record in undergraduate retention.

The final report of the Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement establishes the retention of students as a major community concern, and claims that an increasingly diverse pool of students will require adequate support services in order to adjust to McGill's unique environment.

McGill's Writing Centre is integral to achieving the goals of the SEM plan and avoid ingcomplacency in retention and excellence. This holds doubly true if McGill wishes to increase undergraduate participation in research and broaden the diversity of the student body.

The Centre's main challenge in helping the University attain its goals lies in its limited capacity. A total of 1,106 students have enroled in the Centre's for-credit courses. Approximately 850 students have used the Centre's tutorial service since last October. Both these services are inundated with requests and applications, and the Centre severely lacks the resources to fill them. Many of these problems stem from a lack of tenure track professors who can offer the professional support students need from the University.

QUESTION: As the University is committed to both improving the diversity of the undergraduate student population and keeping retention high, what is the commitment to ensuring that students have adequate access to ESL services, writing skills for-credit classes and non-credit workshops through the McGill Writing Centre?
