

Committee on Student Services
Monday, September 27, 2021 – 2:00-4:00 PM
Venue: Zoom

Attendees: Farah Abdalbari, Caroline Arpin, Manuel Balan, Sean Clarke, Karla Heisele Cubilla, Nancy Czemmel, Claire Downie, Martine Gauthier, Nathan Hall, Richard Hink, Darlene Hnatchuk, Cynthia Nkamicianiye, Valerie Orsat, Cara Piperni, Aimee Ryan, Christian Tonnesen

Regrets : Zeke Bertrand, Emmanuel Boateng, Darshan Daryanani, Bassam Khoury.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Land acknowledgement

Executive Director, Services for Students (co-Chair) - Ms. Martine Gauthier

2. Approval of Agenda

Approved: Nancy, Darlene

3. Approval of Minutes

Notes from the last meeting: no

Approved: Aimee Darlene

4. Brief Introductions

Round table: Members introduce themselves, their organization/unit, and their involvement in student services.

Associate Dean (Student Affairs) Macdonald Campus - Professor Valerie Orsat.

Liaise students in difficulty to student services – in the classroom professors can detect need and it is important to make the link

Two Directors of Student Services

- Darlene Hnatchuk, Director, Career Planning Service - advising and workshops, oversee MyFuture and MyInvolvement
- Cara Piperni, Director Scholarships and Student Aid - 14 government aid and intervention based on needs in support of financial wellness.

Two Associate Deans (Student Affairs) or equivalent

- Dr. Aimee Ryan (Biomedical BSc., Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, FMHS, overseeing student programs advocacy for wellness.

- Professor Manuel Balan, Incoming Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Faculty of Arts, managing Arts OASIS.

Three representatives of Senate:

- Professor Bassam Khoury (Educational and Counselling Psychology, EDUCATION) – 2022
- Ms. Nancy Czermel, Manager of Student Services, Music
- TBD

Senior Representative from GPS:

- Professor Nathan Hall (Associate Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) – Research on motivation and well being advocacy and research interest in the area.

Three graduate students of the Downtown Campus:

- Farah Abdalbari (FMHS)
- Emmanuel Boateng (EDUCATION)
- TBD

One graduate or undergraduate student of the Macdonald Campus:

- Sean Clarke (AES) 3rd year in bio resource. MCSS VP finance.

Five undergraduate students of the Downtown Campus:

- Claire Downie (ARTS) VP UA SSMU , advocacy efforts with the university.
- Karla Heisele Cubilla (ARTS) studentlife@ssmu.ca, club services, family care and mental health.
- Darshan Daryanani (ARTS) president@ssmu.ca
- Christian Tonnesen (SCIENCE) undergrad rep, floor fellow in SHHS
- Zeke Bertrand (ARTS) zeke.bertrand@mail.mcgill.ca

Resource people.

Cynthia Nkamicaniye, Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) advisor student services, practices procedures and policy development for all Student Services.

Rick, Communications director in support of Student Service units and AskMcGill

5. Overview of Student Services

- 200 staff (some casual), present on 2 campuses at 6 locations primarily in Brown (downtown) and Centennial (Mac) also located in 3610, 1010 and libraries building.
- Self funded unit –formerly 75% by student fees 25% to ministry
Shifting – with funding from donors McGill now contributing closer to 50% Allowing us to provide more services particularly in the area of mental health.

- Annual budget of approximately 15million
- Seven services offering 1/1 and group engagement
 - CaPS
 - SSAO
 - ISS
 - MORSL
 - Student Wellness
 - OSD and Tutorial services
 - CL&E – orientation, new student support
- Four functional departments supporting the services
 - Operations (HR finance it
 - Assessment and Evaluation – Student surveys and
 - Communications
 - Equity Diversity and Inclusion
- Martine Executive director since 2017
- All services have advisory boards composed of staff, faculty, students. The first time this year we have an annual report.

6. Annual Report to Senate (Attached)

A quick overview of the presentation was given.

7. CSS Mandate update (Darlene Hnatchuk)

During 2020-2021 academic year CSS Members Darlene Hnatchuk, Lucy Larch and Brooklyn Frizzle formed a committee to revise the terms of Reference (TOR) with a mandate of ensuring information brought to the table represent the TOR.

- What exactly was the mandate of CSS – previous TOR referenced policy making but there is no authority under senate for that.
- In consultation and with support of other community members we proposed how to focus on the value added.
- CSS spoke at senate providing information on the student experience it was received as helpful to the way senate conducts business.
- The changes (in the attached updated TOR) reflect the more valuable use of time of the committee members to senate
- A member from GPS was added and the resource persons list was expanded to include on an as needed basis University Advancement, Teaching and Learning services Student Services Communications EDI

Martine Gauthier -

What do you understand the purpose of student services to be?

Sean Clarke –

Provide help in all areas that students don't know how to access, how to get the resources students need, vehicle to access resources.

Martine-

I hear information and triage.

Karla Cubilla –

Provide the resources to succeed academically, socially on their journey through McGill

Martine Gauthier –

Agreed that is a big mandate.

Manuel Balan –

Deal with the non-academic challenges that go along with the student life cycle - much broader than academic. Navigate.

Aimee K Ryan –

Support to achieve potential socially and academically – the in between the courses. How can we do better, the understanding of the nonstudent facing staff, understanding their contribution and how we can make those members of the community aware.

Martine Gauthier–

It's about partnering, not sending them over, collaboration with the faculties – that is why we have the Local Wellness Advisors (LWA) together we support students not as an island.

Nancy Czemmel –

Partnership, Student Services gets that community feeling for students, they are not alone S2 takes a leadership role into the faculties and provide a trickle down of the kind of support resources we can offer with in our faculties

Martine Gauthier

We do have expertise as student affairs professionals to share with faculties. So important and always open to new ways to collaborate.

As Co-Chairs I can solicit your input and with more data our dialogue will be stimulated around the pain points of our students.

8. Election of co-chair (10 minutes)

Breakout room for student members to select the co-chair.

Christian Tonnesen nominated as student co-chair.

9. Student services objectives for 2021-2022 academic year

Framework of what we wish to move forward: Projects and direction

- **Finalize our strategic plan/direction.** COVID brought in a lot of unknowns and student needs, behaviours and how to deliver services is unclear. What is our service model going to be?
Making a structured strategic plan for 2025 is unrealistic at this time- we will establish a direction.
- **Focus on Equity Diversity and Inclusion** – Cynthia position is the first EDI role in S2. Inward facing – processes, procedures, building capacity in our staff in terms of serving students.
- **New data driven service model** – collecting data to understand student needs. We expect a shift this year and post 2022 (COVID related). Workshops and student trainings, career fairs.... What is the best provision for the best outcomes?
- **Predictable integrated planning cycles** – e.g. Strategic use of surplus, used on projects. Surplus use needs to be aligned with our strategic plan and budget cycles.
- **Project-based approach** – training for senior leadership and rolled out to managers. Integrating our work in a complementary way, not duplicating.
- **Understanding of Student Services programming** – what skillsets are we trying to build, what is the focus of our development programming? Create a model that has a clear outcome.
- **Building a model around information, navigation, and student connections, peer to peer, communities, faculties around us.**

Any questions and comments?

Aimee Ryan –

We need to build connections with academic side of student life so that it's involvement with Student Services is viewed as a partnership to build a holistic network for student success at McGill.

Martine Gauthier -

Completely agree – it is a huge focus.

10. CSS Objectives for 2021-2022 academic year

What rich information can we bring back to Sente?

Data from 2020 national survey of student engagement (NSSE):

Quality of engagement is significantly lower at McGill than at other U15 in the following areas:

For first year students:

- Institutional Emphasis on providing Learning support services.
- Institutional Emphasis on providing support to help students succeed academically.
- Institutional Emphasis on providing support for your overall wellbeing.
- Institutional Emphasis on helping you manage your non-academic responsibility.

For Graduate students

- Institutional emphasis on participating in campuses events
- Support on overall well being
- On learning support services
- How many courses included a community based project
- Providing support on helping student succeed academically.

We are highest performing

- Institutional emphasis on Studying and academic work

This is telling – it identifies the areas we can be working on

- EDI is an area we need to grow and improve on.
- Student development piece what should we focus on when we are delivering workshops what skillsets should we be developing?
- We have research informed approach but what is the big picture that we are trying to provide, what is our niche (TSL has a niche/expertise in pedagogies) not being everything for everyone.
- What do we need to be talking about?

Karla Cubilla –

Such a large question, working with the structure – how can we give a service if the structure does not allow it? Get rid of things that are not working.

Martine Gauthier

You are taking about barriers to success.

Karla Cubilla –

You can't complete a course you must drop out – there is no support.

Martine Gauthier –

Sense of being in a supportive environment –and are where McGill preforms lowest in NSSE.

Karla Cubilla –

OSD - Rethinking the term Disability, it is stigmatizing.

Martine Gauthier – We will be changing that.

Christian Tonnesen –

When Paying note takers stopped the quality of the notes decreased. Students with accommodations feel like they are second hand in the eyes of the professors, room assignment access to a professor or a TA not provided. OSD could be an area of focus.

Martine Gauthier

CSS is avoiding focusing one specific service, we have the advisories for that. Those examples need to go to the advisory committee.

CSS focuses on holistic student support and success and supporting the faculties. The best use of CSS time is advocating and bringing forward issues to Senate and the rest of the University and discuss services in terms of how to improve overall. I will forward your point to the Director and their advisory.

Claire Downie –

Area that students are not feeling supported, lengthy wait times, specifically with psychiatrists. If I were in distress I would feel let down by the university. You hear that it adds up and chips away at student services in general. The professionals are fabulous but there aren't enough positions, and it contributes to the lack of trust and support.

Martine Gauthier –

I hear this a lot and I feel badly for our students. I look at the data. A councillor is a 2 day wait time. Most universities don't have psychiatrists, most refer out. We have a number of psychiatrists by contract, we try to increase the numbers, they are not our staff neither are the Dr's. I get frustrated by talk. The wait for a Dr is now 2-3 days even with most of the Dr pulled away by COVID. In the past 35 Drs made up 4-5 full time Drs. The hours they do here are not part of the health care system. They are basically adding extra hours to their already full-time workload in the public healthcare system.

We are now at 2 full time equivalent (FTE) with the DR. we are down from 7 nurses to 3 nurses.

We have a 2 month wait but in the public system it is a 6 month to 1 year wait time for psychiatry.

Karla Cubilla –

Important to explain the scope and explain what we provide and we don't.

Martine Gauthier

We can do much better defining our scope. I would be happy to work with the student associations on the messaging to students. I feel we do a good job, but the expectations are much higher.

Nathan Hall –

I am impressed by the quality of the support and the interactions. With OSD many are registered and many don't take advantage.

ISS students are often disappointed to the point that they are creating their own networks. I don't think the services need to be called out on doing their job. McGill students are competing with individual success, ingenuity, creativity, excellence they don't think about support they don't come here for success they come here to be exceptional. That is the brand, the brand makes it look like it (Student supports) is not prominent. That makes it difficult to compete – push forward no matter what attitude. We don't change course; you get on board or you get behind. Can we complement it with a message of support of services? You don't see it on the McGill twitter accounts, how do you compete with that?

Those who do work within the support systems are excellent.

Martine Gauthier –

S2 deals with the fall out from that, our students are the best of the best competing with each other feeling alone and it is hard for them to ask for help. There are ways to help them know that we are here.

Karla Cubilla –

Nathan you are so right, working with the people we are sending that messaging. How can you succeed in an environment that is not helping you? We need to work on the messaging.

Martine Gauthier –

that is the McGill branding. How can we be clear of what students can expect from us, the scope of our work.

There is a lot of messaging we can work on and it is a great opportunity. How do faculty, staff, student have clear messaging about S2. How can S2 be really great at information, navigation and connections – so students can get the support they need if they can't get it from us..

Given McGill's focus on metrics (e.g., rankings), having numeric targets for U15 and NSSE data about services could be added to the list of things we can be "excellent" at.

11. Other Business

Ext meeting – preliminary information on anti black racism – to share and have a discussion around next steps.

12. Adjournment

Next meeting: November 22, 2021, 2:00 -4:00. Location TBA.