Committee on Student Services
First annual meeting minutes
Monday, December 5, 2022 – 2:00-3:30 PM
Brown Student Services building – room 5001
ZOOM meeting

Attendees: Aimee Ryan, Cara Piperni, Caroline Arpin, Chantal Grignon, Darlene Hnatchuk, David Vaillancourt, Ghali Touimi Benjelloun, Kerry Yang, Manuel Balan, Martine Gauthier, Nathan Hall, Samuel Baron, Sara Kosumi, Valerie Orsat.

Resource Persons: Alex Liepins (TLS), Ali Martin Mayer (ES), Carlene Gardner, Catherine Loiselle, Christine Ebrahim, Evelina Ene, Gillian Nycum (ES), Lina Di Genova, Melanie Element (ES), Megan Kuo, Nadine Lessard (ES), Marina-Lys Wachs-Lauret, Orphée Pierre, Pauline L'Écuyer, Richard Hink, Romesh Vadivel, Sajneet Manga, Stéphane Cardinal, Tabina Xavier, Vera Romano, Xiyuan Shang.

Regrets: Caroline Riches, Eric Galbraith, Risann Wright

1. **Welcome and Land acknowledgement**

2. **Approval of Agenda**

3. **Approval of Minutes**
   Notes from the last meeting, October 17, 2022 (attached)

4. **Student Support Services Delivery Model Reimagined**
   See annex 1 for discussion prompts provided in advance of the meeting.

Martine Gauthier:
Many modalities for service delivery. Think broadly in terms of flexible support. Think beyond one-on-one – start an exploration about what service delivery could/should look like and what to think about in the coming semesters.
Lina and her team are collecting data in terms of what students are looking for post-pandemic, offering in person and virtual. We are seeing slow increase to in person but not beyond 30% in person in any of our services (specifically, one-on-one).
Also, interest in workshops/trainings/support groups is in decline, not across all services. Skills 21, run by TLS has had a decline in terms of uptake.

Samuel Baron:
Decrease is correlated with online offering. They may say they don't get as much out of it, but they prefer (for ease) to do it online. The issue is their preference for online is a perception of more availability of online than in person. AA in arts – there is better chance of getting in even

if they know they will get less out of it. They chose it because it is easier to get (an appointment).

Nathan Hall – How the Nature of Services Changed
More requests for students wanting to meet online on extreme short notice. Students expect faster given an assumption of availability. There is an expectation. Staff still try to treat it as an in-person appointment. We still need to eat; the expectation has changed.

Martine Gauthier
In S2 – students can see what is available and book. Moving in that direction can help with the perception – they see what is available. Expectation for quick turnarounds is also noted.

In what ways has the pandemic experience changed student *expectations* of support services and programming (i.e., workshops, activities, subjects, modalities, timing/availability, access, experiences)?

What else has changed?

David Vaillancourt
At a caucus member discussion regarding perception of administrative barriers, restrictions and regulations on what one can do and what is available. Student frustration can be explained by the fact that during the pandemic, exceptions were made, the rule book was thrown out. It is frustrating to see it did not translate into services. We just changed how we do university, why can't we change the services.
If there are changes to make and à the problem is I.T. related, it is frustrating.

Martine Gauthier
Samuel mentioned last meeting, being sent around to different services to get questions answered.
In addition, it is challenging as David said, because during the pandemic there was a lot of flexibility. Now they are coming back to bureaucracy. It is very frustrating to our students.

Vera Romano
I want to add to David's comment – Service providers are also feeling the frustration – things that were never possible, became possible and midway through, the regulatory bodies or the government reinstated the rules – GP 1y ½ telemedicine was OK then not anymore.
Having the flexibility to design as you like and then going back – after experiencing what it can be, is very frustrating for students and service providers alike.

Sarah Kosumi
Speaking for Mac, access to more (offerings online) during the pandemic and now, with a return to in-person, it is difficult to assess things on the weekends. From Mac, by public transit, early morning it takes 1h30. It is an accessibility problem.

Martine Gauthier
Mac and all students need to have the option to choose online options.

Melanie Element (ES)
For students who aren't here yet – transitioning to a lot more in-person services may be more appealing to the newer cohort. Different lived experiences creates different expectations and ways of interacting.

Ghali Touimi Benjelloun and David Vaillancourt concur.

Samuel Baron
The expectation was in person delivery when I enrolled, and it was what was expected of me. New cohorts will have those expectations. Having the option of online but legitimizing the student experience, they will want to do things in person.
If you came while it was online, your expectation is different.
I think in person will continue to rise.
The value of speaking with someone face to face – especially during the key years of social connections has made that a priority for many people.

Martine Gauthier
It is very important we do not remove the in-person option for students and incoming cohorts. We are seeing that in S2. Students want personal connection.

Catherine Loiselle
Add the importance of thinking where students are coming from. It is a shift more widely speaking.

Orphée Pierre
Dawson experience: three periods of chat for a quick answer. Then, more in-depth follow-ups in person. It was a popular model. It helped eliminate lineups.

    Martine Gauthier:
    Did they have the option for the first meeting?

    Orphée Pierre
    Yes – the preference was for online first and then personalized in person.

Nathan Hall (from the chat)
It may also be age related. Graduate students are more likely to have families and completing remotely (e.g., from outside the country) which may account for the general preference I have seen for online meetings.

Aimee Ryan (from chat)
Similarly, to Nathan, I am finding that many graduate students have a preference for meeting online. I think that because many of our Faculty of Medicine and Health Science students are working at different locations around the city and online it offers convenience of not having to commute.

Samuel Baron
Having an expectation that students will show up in person is good for their development. Accountability mechanism for students, and good for their career and future, professor's notice. Mandating certain types of meetings in person is important. Given the pandemic – we need to respect that, but there should be in person expectations. It should not be presented as of equivalent value.
ISS does not do anything in person – e.g., doing taxes in Quebec – 2h online Infront of a computer is a killer – I don't learn anything.

Martine Gauthier
How do we know which are better in person, which are better online? What benefits most?

Samuel Baron
I can draw a distinction. Anything that is mandatory or necessary for students, they should have an option for both.
Anything outside of the norm of things students must do (advising), server training, should be in person. You actually get the learnings, HLA, ISS stuff… Things that could be done online: one-on-one meetings or availability-wise, the way that best works.
Meetings for graduation approval can be both (any administrative box checking could be both) so could Wellness hub, telehealth, that was a game changer. Getting prescriptions was 100 times easier and lightning fast – Quebec mandating it has made it so much more difficult.

Vera Romano
Sam's point brings a nuance between preference and effectiveness. If we use only preference, it is a limited indicator to optimize. Convenience is important for access, but it does not guarantee effectiveness.
Measuring effectiveness requires data. We have some indications that the remote one-on-one for health and wellbeing is effective. Providers and students feel it is effective – so we need to include that as an option – group programming, community, peer support, the convenience is good, but the effectiveness is a question mark. A gathering of people to learn from each other is not as transferable to a remote/hybrid opportunity.

Samuel Baron
Agreed, it even shows in CSS. Will the technology work, the muting of microphones, the more people in a Zoom call the greater decrease of the effectiveness and efficiency of the meeting. This has been abundantly clear to me. The more people online the more it affects. The longer a meeting takes for reasons not related to the meeting. It is part of the calculations.

Martine Gauthier
Any student comments on how to balance it out?

Ghali Touimi Benjelloun
Any type of event teaching content to students. I agree that the effectiveness is decreased if there is an expectation of discussion. We should lean towards in person for that.
If students can learn it elsewhere, like opening up YouTube, the increased convenience for them.

Sajneet Mangat (Server training facilitator)
Peer support has a lot of value for in-person. There is a better transfer of knowledge, and for the social context, not alone in your room.
Online, a lot of attrition in peer support (from session to session). More likely to attend if there is a promise of coffee. Maintaining a virtual offering for speaking to a clinician. For group learning, in person ensures the same training for all. The impact of an online training looks very different, it is stark. Technical difficulty, inability to look for pauses in room a different way of "sharing a space". Group trainings should be in-person as much as possible. Already a lot of accessible recorded content students can access later. We have enough library of content for that.

Darlene Hnatchuk
Different needs for different populations (grad, more remote), topic dependent. For example, in CaPS it is also related to the topic, types of programming being offered, informational topics are better suited to online. The group work is more difficult to access if it is impactful.

Kerry Yang
If it is information, then online delivery is beneficial if it is not information that you can just find with a Google search. We need to tap the benefits of online – experts who are at the forefront but are in different cities. Tapping into the benefits that online bring instead of repeating information that is already easily available. Use that potential, focus on the innovations.

Orphée Pierre
There was a pilot project of combined delivery mode in CEGEP (70/30) to offer the full experience in courses with high registration. We don't have to go either/or we can combine the offering and they acquire competencies.

Lina Di Genova (from chat)
Student Services has been running surveys with students about their 1-on-1 appointment experience. To date, there is no difference in online vs. in-person appointment feedback about effectiveness.
Lina Di Genova
If they have an appointment with a service, a survey is sent out every month.

We have been running surveys since September 2020 and not seeing difference but we want to look at the data by student characteristics and see if we need a deeper dive. Convenience and online availability is leading in what student are saying.

David Vaillancourt
Reassuring data to have, knowing that what we are offering is working and it is good.

Samuel Baron
One-on-one is productive almost no matter what format. Glad to hear that that is the case.

Martine Gauthier
For one-on-one appointments, students are offered the choice and flexibility is effective. Appointments can be flipped from in person to virtual.

Megan Kuo (from chat)
Hello everyone! I'm a 3rd year undergrad student & one of the Hub Peer Supporters. I've helped facilitate server training with Sajneet, as well as facilitated both in-person & online outreach events. I agree that certain things that are peer-led are more efficient, effective & enjoyable for both the participants & facilitators in person. The connection that flows is unbeatable. From a personal standpoint, a lot of my peers & myself have had trouble adjusting to in person life because all we know about McGill has been virtual. Like the undergrad students that joined McGill this fall, people in my year are also lost on campus & don't know much about McGill, but as we didn't get an orientation & the full experience, a lot of the time I think students are more comfortable accessing services online because we simply don't know where a certain room is or that services are offered in-person now. I hope this helps!

Romesh Vadivel (from chat)
With future growth of online/remote programs, and also with regard to New Models of Academic Delivery, the expectation for online service delivery is certainly not going to diminish. So it will come down to resource allocation and being able to adequately respond to demand for both in-person and online service delivery. And for offices to deliver both - and do so well - will be the challenge, as we've already seen with regard to hybrid delivery in general.

Martine Gauthier
Students get information in many ways.

Ghali Touimi Benjelloun
Based on discussions with other senators about why there is a lack of some information getting to us. If you don't open up the newsletters. Flyers strategically placed is effective.

Martine Gauthier
How many of the services send news letters?
     CaPS, ISS

Nadine Lessard (Enrolment Services)
If I send to Instagram, the sessions fill up.

Martine Gauthier
Rick's team is mapping communications for SLL across the student lifecycle to see how many e-mails/newsletters/social media students receive to better understand what we are doing in terms of communications.

Rick Hink
Tracking each bit of information within the communication; one e-mail at a time, a newsletter with many pieces of information. It is going into a database to try to extrapolate the information.

Christine Ebrahim
Accessibility, we hear it from Mac campus, the commute takes a long time. If we don't offer online, are we willing to go around campuses to offer the things? Not everything is in the core. We need to think about our services from that point of view.

Samuel Baron
My expectation of coming to McGill, no matter the campus, is you get the service where you are. If there are concerns about McGill being able to offer to everyone, it is not a case to put the burden on the students. It is for the university to standardize or equalize across the university. Students should not have to go far out of their way to access services (HUB specifically). McGill needs to tackle it.

David Vaillancourt:
Make the model comprehensive no matter where you are. It needs to be a cohesive system. If students are pursuing it at Mac or Outaouais.

Orphée Pierre
Since my arrival at Mac in August– we have a physician weekly, a nurse every other week, counselors. Students at Mac are starting to realize that the services are coming back. In 6 months we can talk more about it but at this time, things are coming back, we are transforming it and we will have a portrait of the changes. For services that are still online only we are working hard to get them back in-person.

Martine Gauthier
The main concern is decrees in participation in our group activities. A lot of the basic information gets to students where we engage with students as groups.
Can we brainstorm around this? Why, what is the theory?

Darlene Hnatchuk

We saw a boom at the beginning of the pandemic. Not much else was offered, now as things have opened, especially in Quebec, where we were most restricted it is quieter. How are we doing compared to pre-pandemic? Is it lower than even then?

Martine Gauthier
Alex mentioned that when general workshops titles are used attendance was lower than when aiming it something more precise (time management vs. time management for engineers). Specific to their concerns, needs, area of study impacts attendance.

David Vaillancourt
There is only so much time as a student. Things that are seen as peripheral to a student's life will not be attended. MESC in Eng. is integrated into the student experience it is not surprising that when directly relevant to their core experience is better attended. Making the shortlist of things that you benefit from will help make it seem part of the core experience and will reach students more.

Samuel Baron
There are certain buckets where events get put: career; profs, industry, social: (students meeting students in non-academic or professional), services; students need to do things at the university, faculty related. Those buckets change but things you need to do to move forward at the university and social things must be in person.
Problems with this: mandatory things at the university (it takes all of us) don't work both technically and in terms of communicating it. If you want to know more about McGill's approach, it was lacking. If you must complete it to take part, and you want students to get what they need out of it, the delivery model needs to be changed.

Alex Liepins (From chat)
It takes all of us is getting fixed as we speak.
More info is coming and a lot of feedback is being integrated.

Ghali Touimi Benjelloun
Time is a factor, less time switching back and forth in-person. This is impacting. Some students have less time, and they fear missing out so they prioritize, and I think there is an increased focus on survival. In areas like getting good grades, finding a job, I would guess there is less of a drop. Secondly, they want to make bonds with people, they want to catch up from after the lock down that happened when they were 17. They have social needs that are prioritized – bonding above self-actualization.

Kerry Yang
One size fit's all will make you miss a lot of people. A more tailored approach, choosing paths, the topics and understanding the trends. Tapping in and seeing what is top of mind makes a difference. How to study more effectively is too broad, something unique to the McGill experience would make attendance better.

Ali Martin Mayer
I wonder about cost (not just $) but it is a factor, ecological and to health. Is there data that we can look at? All the online options meetings, and our efforts to diminish pollution. All the time in front of a computer, eyesight, risk of stroke, back pain.
Incorporate that as a principal in deciding.

Sajneet Mangat
Student Services programming and student led programming. If they have a good S2 experience then they come back. Using vocabulary and language that resonates worked, informal wording. There are often similar offerings, the silo of S2 and student-led activities. The potential of collaboration should be looked into. It is easier to speak to a peer, why duplicate (ecological impact). SSMU is inviting the HUB and S2 to send representatives, using targeted communications – Do you want a job?

Maybe they don't resonate because they are not reaching student through student and where students are. CaPS uses Instagram but I am less likely to join if it is not reposted by a student group that says you should go. Students trust each other's opinions. Student residents messages gets to them CL&E, why not use the existing trusted channels?

Samuel Baron
Floor fellows have a group chat – I get information from them, I go to that event. Receptiveness is far better.
You are on your phone and you get a message from your floor fellow you will increase information 10 to 100 fold.

5. **Adjournment**

Annex 1

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Committee on Student Services
Second Annual Meeting
Monday, December 5, 2022 – 2:00-3:30 PM

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Student Support Services Delivery Model Reimagined Discussion prompts

Discussion on lessons learned from the pandemic that lead (or could lead) to innovation in student support services. Please come prepared to share your perspectives and experiences.

- In what ways has the pandemic experience changed student *expectations* of support services and programming (i.e., workshops, activities, subjects, modalities, timing/availability, access, experiences)?
- In what ways has the pandemic changed student *needs* in terms of support services and programming (i.e. workshops, etc.)?
- What worked during the pandemic in terms of support services/programming and what do we need to keep on doing?
- What supports/programming did the pandemic experience highlight as ineffective and/or obsolete?
- What do students consider to be a "successful" service experience?
- What are some possible innovative alternatives to traditional (1 to 1, workshops) services that we could test?