



Committee on Student Services
Wednesday, November 29th – 1:30-3:30 PM
James Admin, 302

Present: Jim Fyles (Co-Chair), Isabella Anderson (Co-Chair), Martine Gauthier, Axel Hundemer, Vera Romano, Lina Di Genova, John Mac Master, Maryam Tabrizian, Césarée Morier-Gxoyiya, Dusica Maysinger, Ian Simmie, Isabelle Oke, Jemark Earle, Jenny Ann Pura, Alyssa Wooster, Tre Mansdoerfer, Ahmer (Muhammad) Wali, Freddy Lee, Kyla Hosie (Secretary)

Regrets: Tamara Western, Saumeh Saeedi-Tabar

Guests: Evelina Balut, Caroline Guay

Meeting called to order 1:36

1. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda. An item was added for introductions for new committee member.

2. Approval of Minutes from October 24, 2017 meeting

Minutes should be amended to reflect that Freddy Lee wasn't present at the Oct. 24 meeting.

3. Business Arising

a. Student Services Actuals/Budget

E. Balut presented the S2 budget over the last 3 years noting that the trends have remained the same and that percentages of budget allocated to different functions have not changed much. Counselling and Health have a small percentage increase from FY16-17. Adding more staff and salary policy contributes to growth.

M. Gauthier noted that there are areas where we would like to increase staff but the challenge is currently space (we rented extra space for OSD, moved MORSL). Need space to increase physicians (currently 4 FTEs). Want to add access wellness advisors (social workers that do outreach to students); embed them in housing and the faculties to have direct contact with students.

Discussion concerning where the budget is coming from for the new access wellness advisors. M. Gauthier confirmed that the embedded wellness access advisors are contingent on external funding. S2 will need to go to students for a fee increase as well. Last time S2 went was 2013. Currently running operational deficit, want to address certain issues (ie. overhead) before S2 goes to students for fee increase.

b. Tour de table - new member Maryam Tabrizian has been appointed to the committee.

c. Audit

A summary of the Student Services audit was circulated to members (attached to the final version of the minutes).

Discussion ensued regarding the audit. M. Gauthier explained that the scope was limited due to time constraints. Also, some units had previously gone through audits and there were no major concerns so those units were omitted. The four moderate risks that the auditor identified are related to reconciliation of funds, not a high risk but the processes need to be strengthened. There are concerns with financial checks and balances, moving towards centralizing all of our financial processes under S2 Director of Operations. Also, concerns with segregation of duties (ie. same person who is buying and reconciling the fund). Another example for human resource processes is to make sure all GPs have in their file a copy of their GP certificate. S2 practices and procedures are not in writing; working on documenting process and procedures. Need to be consistent across units. Audit was done by the Internal Audit team who report to the Board of Governors. S2 did ask for this audit; only unit to ever ask for an audit. There are different timelines for dealing different aspects of the response to the audit.

M. Gauthier noted that the results of audit are normally confidential but she felt it was important to release the recommendations to the committee. Transparency is also important for S2 staff - they see things being done differently across the units. S2 is working on increasing transparency for staff and students. M. Gauthier noted that the report went to Deputy Provost, Provost and Principal who is accountable to the Board of Governors for ensuring that recommendations are followed, reporting structure, need to provide proof.

d. Effectiveness of delivery discussion

In theory, effectiveness should be measurable but in the context we work in, very difficult to do.

What are people's expectations are for monitoring effectiveness? Much easier to measure transactional service.

I. Anderson noted that many students don't have the time to seek services from S2. For things like ISS, OSD or PS, when students come in are they receiving an outgoing survey? (ie. did you find what you are looking for?). Do services have an outreach measure to measure the effectiveness of delivery of services?

L. Di Genova: Information is being collected about how students are doing and how services are doing. We do have end of year surveys for students who have used the services but the challenge is survey fatigue. Try to have end of year survey and stagger them so we give units an opportunity to collect information from users. This past year Counselling, Mental Health, Health, and OSD. Last year: also a lot of needs assessment. Happy to come back and share this information.

Discussion regarding the questions that we should be asking students and the complexity of those questions.

M. Gauthier noted that access is an issue for students. The number of students coming to counselling increased 57% over 3 years and S2 increased counsellors by 43% but there are still waiting times. S2 is exploring early intervention (embedding social workers in dorms, faculties, etc.) so students can get information about all the resources related to them (group therapy, financial resources, etc.). A lot of student anxiety comes from academic structure. Needs to be addressed on a systemic level.

V. Romano added that effectiveness is multifaceted, look at incorporating scientist-practitioner model in benchmarking and developing programs based on assessment and measuring our effectiveness in a



variety of ways (ie. user survey). Ask students to describe their actual experience which is linked to real outcomes (degree of collaboration, etc.). Responses may be very nuanced. 30 percent of our interactive sessions are followed up by session level effectiveness. Need infrastructure, tools, etc. However, we need to be careful not to burden students nor the service delivery people.

L. Di Genova: in terms of our programming, we offer 1 on 1 sessions, also have workshops and group intervention. S2 looks at uptake in participation and changes over time. S2 takes a lot of time to develop these interventions, so wants to make sure they are effective.

SSAO does have a satisfaction survey. CL&E does survey programs/orientation.

I. Simmie mentioned that with orientation programming, they are looking to partner with various campus partners regarding different issues. With our numbers, we can see the interventions are improving our desired outcomes. Constantly tinkering curriculums for workshops based on evaluation/assessment.

J. Mac Master noted that we should see measurable data that validate the work that is being done. Hope we could use measurables that are used in other universities so we can compare how we are doing and we can report to our constituencies that we are doing a good job. Importance of benchmarking.

L. Di Genova reported that we have moved towards benchmarking although it is a challenge in S2 as not a lot of benchmarking that happens (maybe 5-6 institutions participate).

M. Gauthier noted that internally, we would love to be able to do more assessment and evaluation but we are struggling with our IT systems.

J. Fyles: part of mandate/role of this committee: pool of expertise around the table. Bringing information in and disseminating information out to their constituents. One of our objectives this year is to consider the mandate of the committee. Overall mandate is to advise ED on how S2 can be improved. In order to do that, we need to be informed about what S2 is doing.

A. Wali suggested that we review reports from each unit.

e. Communications discussion

Last meeting, members identified their communications milieu - whether we are sufficiently connected to our target audiences and whether we are drawing information in and how.

Caroline Guay, the new Director of Communication in Student Services, introduced herself and stated that her role is to figure out how to improve the flow of communications (dealing with media, channels for people seeking information about S2, etc.) and the other side is disseminating information about S2 so students are getting updates and information. Need to strengthen communications infrastructure and build something sustainable. Building processes to ensure that the flow of information is consistent.



M. Gauthier noted that in S2 we have a huge number of websites. Need to present ourselves as one S2. How do we develop our websites to show that we are one unit and not 11? Direction that we are taking is around the wellness wheel. Part of Caroline's role is to re-brand us and also improve communications to students as they are always telling us that they don't know what is going on in S2.

A. Hundemer pointed out that most faculty also don't know what is going on in S2 and what services S2 offers.

CSS can help the university learn about S2 and vice versa.

M. Gauthier mentioned that S2 is working with students on a mapping project and categorizing supports so students/staff/faculty can access them easily. How do we communicate better with students and internally within S2? Want to be information hubs. An idea is to have a short video that faculty members can show students, or even at orientation. We need to develop these tools.

M. Tabrizian suggested that when faculty meet with students, they can talk about S2 or give them a pamphlet, etc. S2 can also lobby in faculties/units. Can select a couple of faculty each year who will inform themselves about S2 and act as representatives.

M. Gauthier mentioned the challenge of limited resources and that every time staff are going to faculties, doing orientation activities, they are taking time away from seeing students. But there are ways of addressing the limited resources (ie. webinars).

I. Anderson suggested that this committee should focus on improving communication between the administration and students. Although tools like video orientation/webinars work well for educating faculty and staff, the focus should also be on educating professors and staff so if a student comes and asks them about S2, they have the correct information.

J. Fyles suggests that CSS can use ESAAC to connect with faculty/departments

4. New Business

a. Tutorial Services announcement

Effective Monday, November 6th, Tutorial Services has migrated from Counselling Service to the Office of Services for Students. The interim Director is Dr. Lina Di Genova.

L. Di Genova noted that the priority for the next six weeks is to ensure that all students who requested a tutor received one. Currently connecting with various stakeholders across the university. Looking forward to potentially expanding service offerings.

Discussion regarding the timeline of having a permanent director in place and where Tutorial Service should be housed. M. Gauthier made the decision to pull Tutorial from Counselling so Counselling can focus on student mental health. Looking into how how Tutorial can collaborate with the Writing Centre. Not sure if Tutorial will eventually be housed outside of S2; there needs to be a very strong link between various tutorial services and the writing centre. In the process of looking at what this would look like.

b. Members' updates



M. Tabrizian: McGill's bicentennial is coming in 2021; fundraising campaign. More information: www.mcgill.ca/giving/road-to-200

A. Hundemer raised the point that McGill students are under stress and this causes problems for S2. Doesn't understand what McGill does that causes students stress (more than other universities)? What does McGill do wrong that other universities are going better?

JA Pura mentioned that graduate students have a different curriculum than undergraduates and the issue of a fall break. Other universities have structured their terms to include a fall break. Debate concerning fall break (faculties not waiting to start before labour day weekend, rental issues for students having to come in earlier).

I. Oke stated that McGill puts a lot of pressure on students. Midterms start 3 weeks after the semester starts. Unending midterms until finals. Other issues that are embedded in policies and practices, such as accommodation (decentralized and rely on professors to grant it and sometimes professors don't understand mental health issues and may not be as sympathetic). Also, the idea of bureaucracy and students being bounced around to different services. Students don't know the Dean of Students can help navigate the system. Students are stressed trying to figure out where to go.

Discussion ensued regarding the complexity of these issues. Students mentioned that professors should time assignments better and there should be strict policies regarding this (ie. no midterms day before finals start).

V. Romano mentioned an initiative with TLS regarding prevention and understanding mental health. Another interesting collaboration with engineering: combined mental health 101 training with another piece called healthy pedagogy - workshop with 30 professors. Areas that came up: practices around grading (ie. do they need to curve), empowering faculty to think about what ways they can incorporate healthy pedagogical practices (grading, scheduling, etc).

J. Fyles pointed out that demand on S2 is related to academic programs. No structures that will make this happen, our job to move this to ESAAC.

M. Gauthier noted one area where McGill is different from other institutions: students reported levels of feeling supported. Students sense of belonging, inclusion, feeling supported by faculty, staff, administration is statistically lower at McGill. Student also compete against each other, very isolating;

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) - www.mcgill.ca/pia/analysis/surveys/survey-results/nsse

J.A. Pura: as of Dec. 1, PGSS will begin implementation of Empower Me. SSMU has already implemented it as of Sept. 1. Empower Me is a supplementary service that has 24/7 accessible counselling service in 14 different languages.

5. Executive Director's Report

- a. Student Health/Wellness Hub. Received 1 M from Rossy Family Foundation to renovate Health Services; provide 1 stop shopping for Counselling, Health and Psychiatric Services. Met with



students twice and based on their feedback, the architects are developing designs that we will bring back to the students to vet. Ultimate goal: students who have appointments can go straight there but for students who aren't sure of what they need - will get triaged appropriately. In addition, started working with ACCESS Open Minds. Main goal is to develop access hubs across Canada; main focus is youth mental health. Have developed 12 hubs across Canada, goal is for youth to be able to access support in 72 hours. Already have the processes and procedures for triaging, front line, etc. Tied to youth mental health and tied to faculty. Barrier to implementing model: physical location of all the services in one place. Will also do training for staff. Vera Romano has been moving forward collaborative care model, she will have the support to keep moving this forward. Goal is to do this over summer 2018.

Meeting adjourned 3:30

Action Items

- A. What members can do as individuals to promote S2 and how members can receive feedback from constituents?

NEXT MEETINGS:

Wednesday, January 31	1:30-3:30	James Admin, 301
Wednesday, February 28	1:30-3:30	James Admin, 301
Thursday, March 29	10:00-12:00	TBC