



McGill

Student Services  
Services aux étudiants



Student Services  
**Annual Report**  
2021

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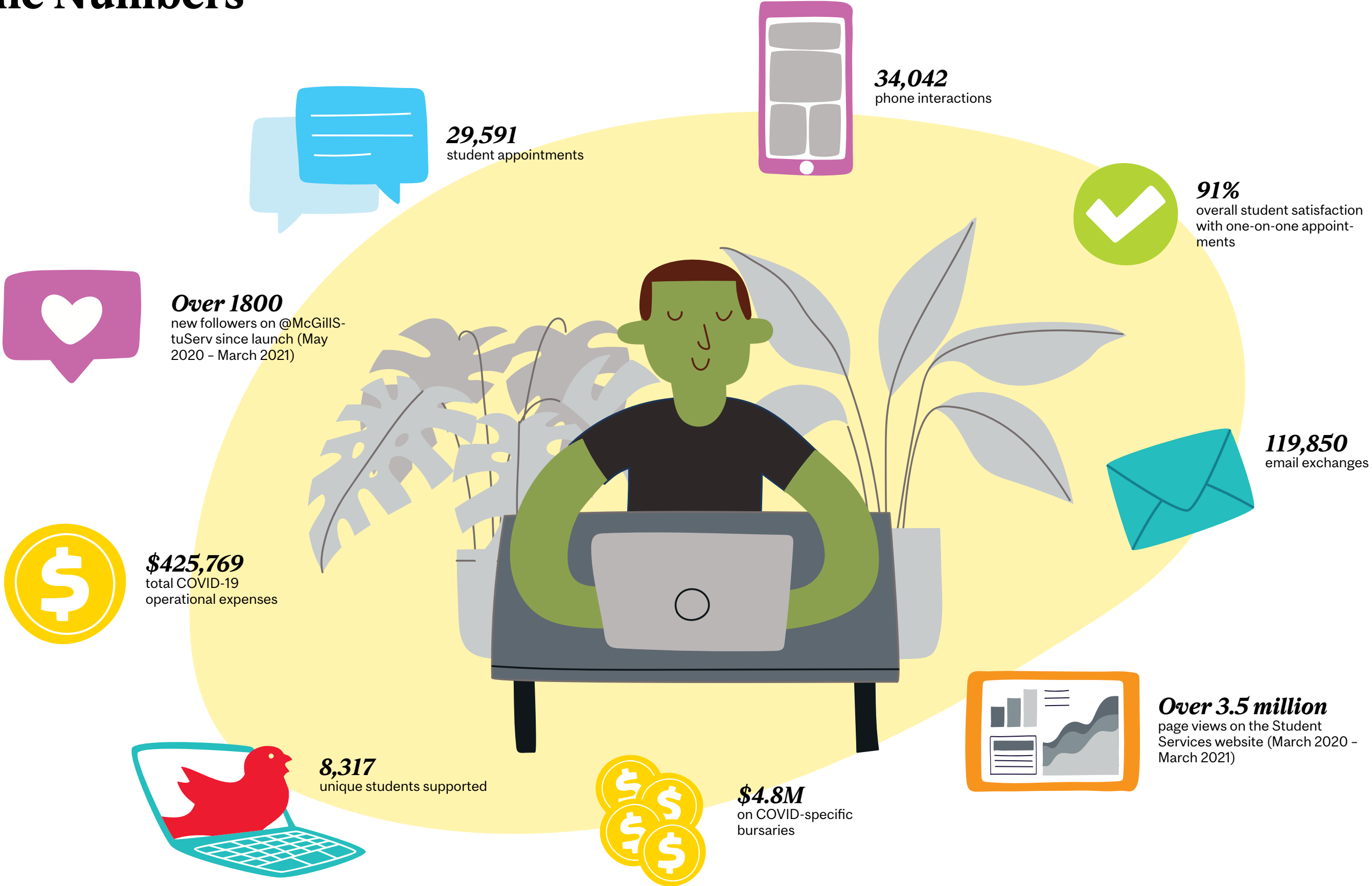
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McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.





# By the Numbers



**34,042**  
phone interactions

**29,591**  
student appointments

**91%**  
overall student satisfaction  
with one-on-one appointments

**Over 1800**  
new followers on @McGills-  
tuServ since launch (May  
2020 - March 2021)

**119,850**  
email exchanges

**\$425,769**  
total COVID-19  
operational expenses

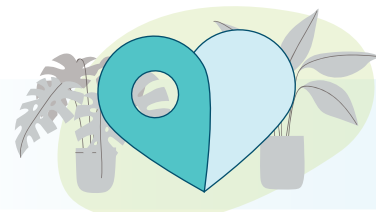
**Over 3.5 million**  
page views on the Student  
Services website (March 2020 -  
March 2021)

**8,317**  
unique students supported

**\$4.8M**  
on COVID-specific  
bursaries



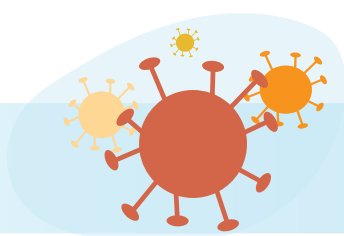
# Timeline



**November 2019:**  
Official launch of the Student Wellness Hub



**January 2020:**  
The Healthy Living Annex coordinates Well Week, a week-long activity promoting health and wellness.



**March 2020:**  
On-campus activities are suspended due to COVID-19. Transition to remote services.



**March 2020:**  
Scholarships and Student Aid begins offering emergency COVID-related aid.



**March 2020:**  
As many international students return to their home countries, International Student Services begins providing advice and information on how to continue their studies, research and work from abroad.



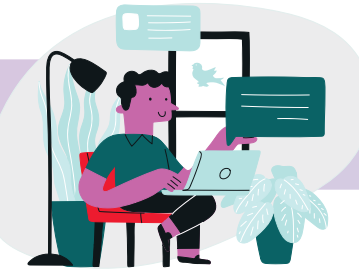
**April 2020:**  
Student Engagement Collective forms



**October 2020:**  
Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is released



**September 2020:**  
McGill's first-ever Virtual Pow-Wow



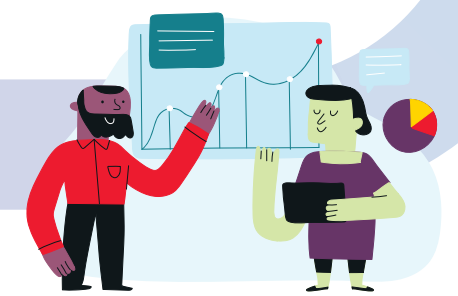
**August 2020:**  
Orientation is held online for the first time.



**May 2020:**  
Formed Anti-Black Racism Working Group



**May 2020:**  
Pre-Registration Orientation (PRO) begins, our first virtual orientation event



**May 2020:**  
The first of four student surveys on the remote experience is launched.



**October 2020:**  
More than 250 remote learning assistants hired as part of Work Integrated Learning, a federally funded partnership between CaPS, TLS, Scholarships and Student Aid, and the faculties to provide student employment during the pandemic.



**December 2020:**  
EDI Advisor is hired



**January 2021:**  
Student Wellness Hub launches Quarantine Support Group.



**February 2021:**  
OSD launches accessible materials pilot project



**March 2021:**  
Scholarships and Student Aid launch Quarantine Bursary Program.



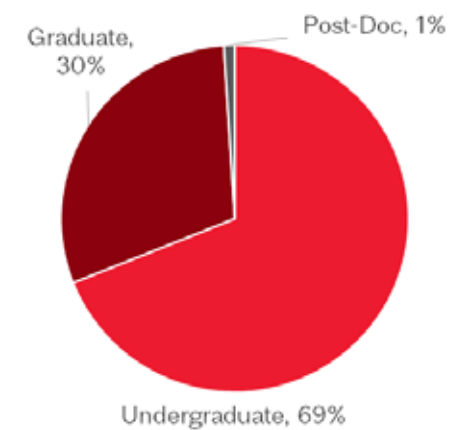
**March/April 2021:**  
2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC Local Wellness Advisors join the Student Wellness Hub team.



# Student Experience: 1-on-1 Appointment Surveys

Students who met with a Student Services professional were invited to complete an online survey about their experience with the specific service they consulted. The surveys were released monthly. The following is a summary of the student demographics from the Banner student information system for one-on-one appointments based on all students who were invited to complete the survey. Green and red arrows indicate instances where the appointment demographics are 5% above or below the official McGill fall enrollment percentages, respectively.

## Demographics



Undergraduate		Graduate	
Year of Study	Percentage	Year of Study	Percentage
U0	8%	Qualifying	1%
U1	22%	1	26%
U2	25%	2	31%
U3	42%	3	16%
U4	3%	4	11%
		5	21%
		6+	1%

# Student Experience: 1-on-1 Appointment Surveys

Fee Residence	Undergraduate	Graduate
Canadian or permanent resident	29% ▲	25% ▲
International	36% ▲	52% ▲
Quebec resident	35% ▼	23% ▼
Sex		
Female	69% ▲	64% ▲
Male	31% ▼	36% ▼
In residence		
	7%	2%
Faculty		
Agricultural & Environmental Science Sciences	6%	8%
Arts	30%	13%
Dentistry	1%	1%
Education	4%	9%
Engineering	9%	13%
Law	4%	2%
Faculty Management	6%	2%
Medicine & Health Sciences	14% ▲	23% ▼
Science	23%	15%
Interfaculty BA & Sc	1%	n/a
Interfaculty Studies	n/a	10%
School of Continuing Studies	0% ▼	1% ▼
Schulich School of Music	3%	5%

- The survey response rate was 17%, with 1797 students responding.
- The overall student satisfaction with 1-on-1 appointments was 91%.
- Over 85% satisfaction was reported for experience with professionals, customer service and online experience.
- Appointment time slots ranged from 6am to 7pm, in order to accommodate international time-zones.
- Pain points: Lower ratings were reported for indoor signage (63%) and wait times (75%).



## Summary of Student Survey Feedback:

Service Dimensions	Average % Agree/Strongly Agree	Interpreting the results
Overall experience with professionals	91%	Very good / Excellent
Overall online experience	89%	
Customer service experience	88%	
Clarity of information	86%	Good
Receiving information prior to appointment	85%	
Receiving ways to find additional information	87%	
Overall in-person experience	80%	Still good, with a few challenges to attend to
Appointment booking experience	82%	
Wait time	75%	Fair - Challenges to address
Indoor signage	63%	

Students were also asked to comment on what went well and can be improved, with the main themes found summarized in the table below:

What's Going Well	Pain Points
Found staff helpful, kind, understanding, professional	Shorter wait times for an appointment
Found appointment booking easy and fast	Better building signage

Felt safe and heard  
 From the student surveys, 86% of respondents attended an online appointment. The booking methods used to schedule appointments varied across services from using phone (43%), online (24%), with a professional (14%), and email (18%).





## A Holistic Approach

In Student Services, we understand that wellness is not a specific endpoint but rather a holistic journey that encompasses the whole person's well-being. Our services support students around the Wellness Wheel, comprised of eight key components of student life and inspired by a traditional Indigenous medicine wheel that recognizes the interconnectedness and continuous alignment of all aspects of life.

## Academic Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**More than 4000 students tutored**

Services implicated:



Academic wellness means finding enrichment and fulfillment through your studies, with a relative sense of comfort and control over academics. It involves active learning and skills development to foster improvement and growth. For some students, that might mean maintaining a manageable course load, feeling you have a strong grasp of materials, or sensing you have sufficient time to prepare for and complete exams and assignments. Academic wellness may also consist of finding a sense of balance between academic expectations (either external or internal) and a student's ability to meet those expectations.

Supports that complement our students' academic wellness are offered by the Office for Students with Disabilities, Career Planning Service, Tutorial Services, and the Student Wellness Hub.

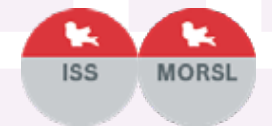
Members of the McGill community come from around the world, and our students' identities intersect multiple categories like race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, just to name a few. Cultural wellness is fostered when an individual is aware of their own background and identity; feels seen, supported, and connected within their own cultural identity (or identities); and has knowledge, acceptance, and understanding of other cultural identities. The University context can be especially powerful in helping students to expand their cultural understanding and well-being, as the experience of meeting so many diverse people creates a climate of exploration and discovery of these identities within ourselves at a deeper level.

## Cultural Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**Over 5500 students took part in online cultural events**

Services implicated:



## Career Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**10,582 participants in our online career development workshops and events, representing a 250% increase in student participation over the previous year.**

Services implicated:



Career wellness is achieved when someone feels their employment and career choices align with their values, interests, and beliefs, and when those choices lead to personal satisfaction. "Career" in this context doesn't have to mean your long-term field of employment; it could also mean a summer job, a part-time position while in school, or even studies or internship work in your field of interest. The key is feeling accomplished in your work, feeling able to set and achieve career goals, and feeling empowered to learn and improve your skills.

Most of Student Services' career-related activities are offered by the Career Planning Service. We also employ a wide range of student employees who contribute to almost every area of our operations, gaining valuable employment experience and helping us stay connected to our students' point of view.

The term "mental health" means different things to different people. Here at Student Services we consider mental health as a state that all people have at all times - much like physical health - but which fluctuates over time. You may have periods of excellent mental health and wellness, or you may have times during which your mental health is poor. Mental health is not a destination to be reached, but rather a lifelong journey of understanding, recognizing, and managing emotions, using coping mechanisms, responding to stress, etc. "Good" mental health looks different for everyone. University life brings many new challenges and experiences for students, often without the same support systems they had before arriving at McGill, so it's common for mental health to change during a student's time here. The key is to monitor those changes, find ways to maintain a sense of wellness throughout, and know when it might be time to reach out for help.

## Mental Health & Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**Over 13,000 mental health appointments were given to students seeking support**

Services implicated:



## Financial Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**More than 3600 financial aid advising appointments were provided to students in need**

Services implicated:



Financial wellness is the ability to optimize your financial resources and manage them successfully – regardless of your income. It means developing the skills to live within your means, budget effectively, and set financial goals that align with your academic and future plans. While in University, it can feel particularly challenging to be on top of your budget, especially with expenses like tuition and housing, when work-related income is limited during studies. Financial wellness can also strongly impact other components of the Wellness Wheel, as one’s budget can affect access to social activities, physical health (through access to exercise or even food), or mental health resources. It’s important to learn about budgeting and funding options available to you early in your time at McGill, to help you make the most of your time and money while here.

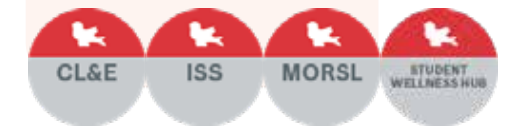
Social wellness means the development and maintenance of healthy, positive relationships with friends, family, chosen family, peers, professors, and the self. It can mean establishing support networks, setting boundaries with loved ones, engaging with your community, feeling comfortable being your true self with others, or even just being able to have fun. Students arriving at McGill often find this is an area of their lives that changes significantly – they may be socializing more than ever before as they meet new people during Frosh and in classes, or they may feel isolated and struggle to connect with others in this new, unfamiliar place. Finding your people through clubs, events, and other groups during your time at McGill can significantly contribute to overall social well-being.

## Social Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**More than 20,000 students participated in online events throughout the year**

Services implicated:



## Physical Health & Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**More than 15,000 physical health appointments were offered by doctors, nurses, and dietitians.**

Services implicated:



Physical health is a state that is forever in flux, and encompasses all aspects of maintaining one’s physical self, from sleep to nourishment to just to name a few. Finding balance in your physical well-being can vary not only from person to person, but also over time for each individual. Physical health is also about self-awareness, keeping an eye on how we feel when we move certain ways, eat and drink certain things, get a particular amount of sleep, and adapting our behaviours accordingly or consulting a professional when something feels off. Physical wellness can impact many other components of wellness, including mental health and stress levels, academic wellness and focus or memory retention, even social wellness and our ability or interest to engage in social activities.

Finding spiritual wellness involves exploring the greater meaning and purpose of life, deepening your understanding of your personal beliefs and values, and choosing actions and behaviours in line with them. For some students, that spirituality might be found in your religious practice, for others through community, and for some it might be something they seek on their own in a personal, individual way. Coming to University can challenge students’ spiritual wellness if they find themselves removed from their spiritual community, or as they encounter spiritual ideas that differ from their own. Maintaining spiritual well-being and a sense of purpose can help students find balance in their studies and daily life.

## Spiritual Wellness

Wellness Wheel Components

**Over 2200 students took part in online spiritual programming**

Services implicated:





# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Beyond our holistic approach addressing all aspects of student well-being, we have also made a firm commitment to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into everything we do. This commitment follows the university's EDI Strategic Plan 2020-2025, which articulates McGill's approach around five main themes: student experience, research and knowledge, outreach, workforce and physical space.

The first theme, focusing on improving the Student Experience, is at the heart of what we do in Student Services. This year, we implemented several changes to advance our progress on meeting the goals of the EDI Strategic Plan.

## New Advisor Position

Student Services created a new EDI Advisor position to advance EDI in our unit. The EDI Advisor will review processes, procedures, and policies to embed EDI principles in everything we do.

## Robust Training Plan for the Student Wellness Hub

We've developed a robust training plan that spans several EDI issues, ranging from systemic racism to gender equity for Student Affairs professionals. In deploying this training, we're aiming to improve our capacity to deliver inclusive health and wellness services. In addition, the Student Wellness Hub provided several training and coaching offerings to the Hub's professionals focusing on specialized trans-inclusive care and multi-cultural skills.

## Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

Student Services launched a working group to map out our approach for implementing the university's Anti-Black Racism Plan. The group met over a period of four months to develop short, medium, and long-term objectives:

- **Assessing** the needs of Black students;
- **Promoting** Black student wellness, success and support in sustainable ways;
- **Raising** student awareness about anti-Black discrimination, oppression and their effects on an on-going basis;
- **Enhancing** the capacity of Student Services staff to create and maintain respectful, accessible, and inclusive student life and learning spaces for Black students.

## Major Milestones

### 1. Assess the Needs of Black Students

(Multiple modes of student participation; co-creation of the framework; collective interpretation of the information; ability to hold safe spaces were key points to highlight in this process)

- We designed the Black Students Needs Assessment to integrate anti-oppressive frameworks that allowed our team to approach the work from a healing and reparative lens.
- We held 5 focus groups, facilitated by Black alumni, in March 2021 with 35 students. Other students who could not attend the focus group will be able to fill out an online form addressing the questions covered during the focus groups.
- Themes will be shared with student participants over the summer, and a survey will be developed and shared with the broader community of Black students at McGill.

### 2. Promote Black Student Wellness, Success and Support in Sustainable Ways

- In collaboration with Teaching and Learning Services, Student Services delivered Being Black at McGill, a five-part workshop series designed to create a safe environment where Black students could come together to discuss their experience of race at McGill and beyond.
- A new Local Wellness Advisor position was created in the Student Wellness Hub and filled this spring to address the specific needs of BIPOC students.

### 3. Raise Student Awareness about Anti-Black Discrimination, Oppression and their Effects on an On-Going Basis

- Our Shared Spaces, a platform using a peer-based educational programming model for anti-oppression and anti-racism initiatives, presented workshops for our student Peer Health Ambassadors. The PHAs, in turn, were given an opportunity to train other students.

### 4. Enhance the Capacity of Student Services Staff to Create and Maintain Respectful, Accessible, and Inclusive Student Life and Learning Spaces for Black Students

- Student Services leaders and staff members participated in anti-racism training sessions facilitated by the Equity Office and other partners throughout the year. In Spring 2021, a physical space for Black students was also identified on campus where students will be able to access specific services and to gather as a community.







## Building Partnerships

**The success of Student Services has always been thanks, in large part, to our partners. Whether internal or external to McGill, through funding or project collaboration, our partnerships are essential to our ability to reach so many students in so many ways.**

Many of our most fruitful partnerships throughout the last year were the direct result of moving to a remote learning model, even if some of those relationships existed before the pandemic. One such example is [keep.meSAFE](#), a resource providing access to mental healthcare worldwide by phone, chat, video, or even in-person. This resource was launched in March 2020 in collaboration with student associations - namely the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) and the Post-Graduates' Student Society (PGSS) - as well as Morneau Shepell who operates the keep.meSAFE platform. After months of work, keep.meSAFE - initially proposed by our student associations - was launched at the beginning of the pandemic. Students

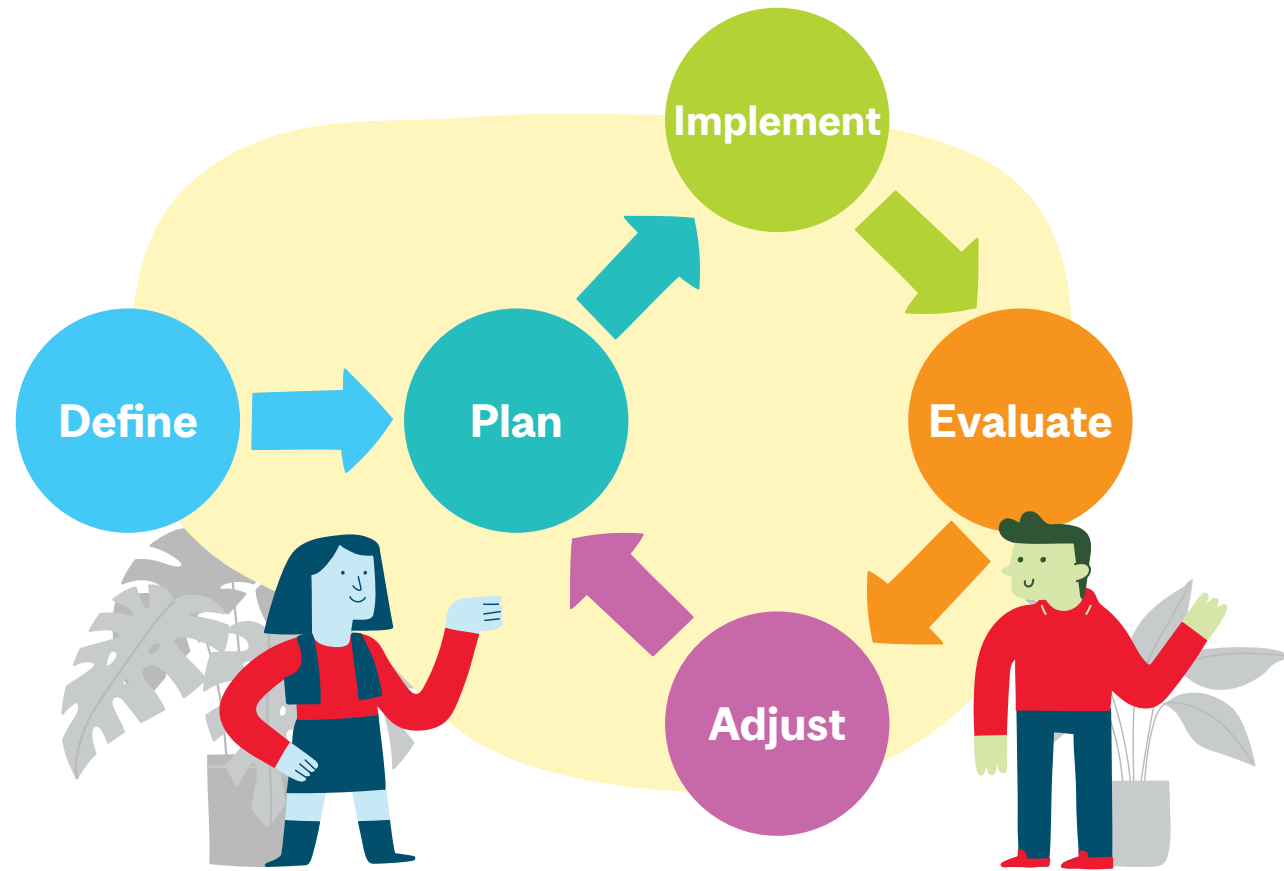
around the world embraced the solution to provide mental health support when they could not access services in person. As true co-leads on the project, student representatives have been actively engaged in dialogues with all partners and leading awareness-building initiatives, as well as an active Campus Ambassadors program with student ambassadors promoting the service to their peers. The partnership has been active and beneficial on all sides.

The Student Engagement Collective and its working groups are an ideal example of intra-university collaboration, with group members from across McGill coming together to streamline and simplify planning efforts for the 2020-21 academic year. From the faculties and Residences to Enrolment Services and Central Communications, Student Services worked with partners from across the entire University to plan communications,

engagement activities (including orientation), peer support training, assessment frameworks, academic skillsets, and more. Though these are partners we've worked with many times before, the lesson learned from these working groups is that having all players around the table preparing for the academic year ensures that all parties are involved throughout the process, builds trust and a collaborative spirit, and leads to deliverables that consider all perspectives and needs. We anticipate carrying this experience forward to prepare for future incoming classes.

In the words of Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." Student Services is successful thanks to the incredible working relationships we've benefited from over the years, and we are looking forward to continuing to build those partnerships into the next academic year.





# Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is an assessment-based cyclical approach to improving and adapting our offerings. The five-step cycle is:

1. Define goal or intended outcome
2. Develop an action plan
3. Implement plan
4. Evaluate and interpret results
5. Adjust or act for continuous improvement\*

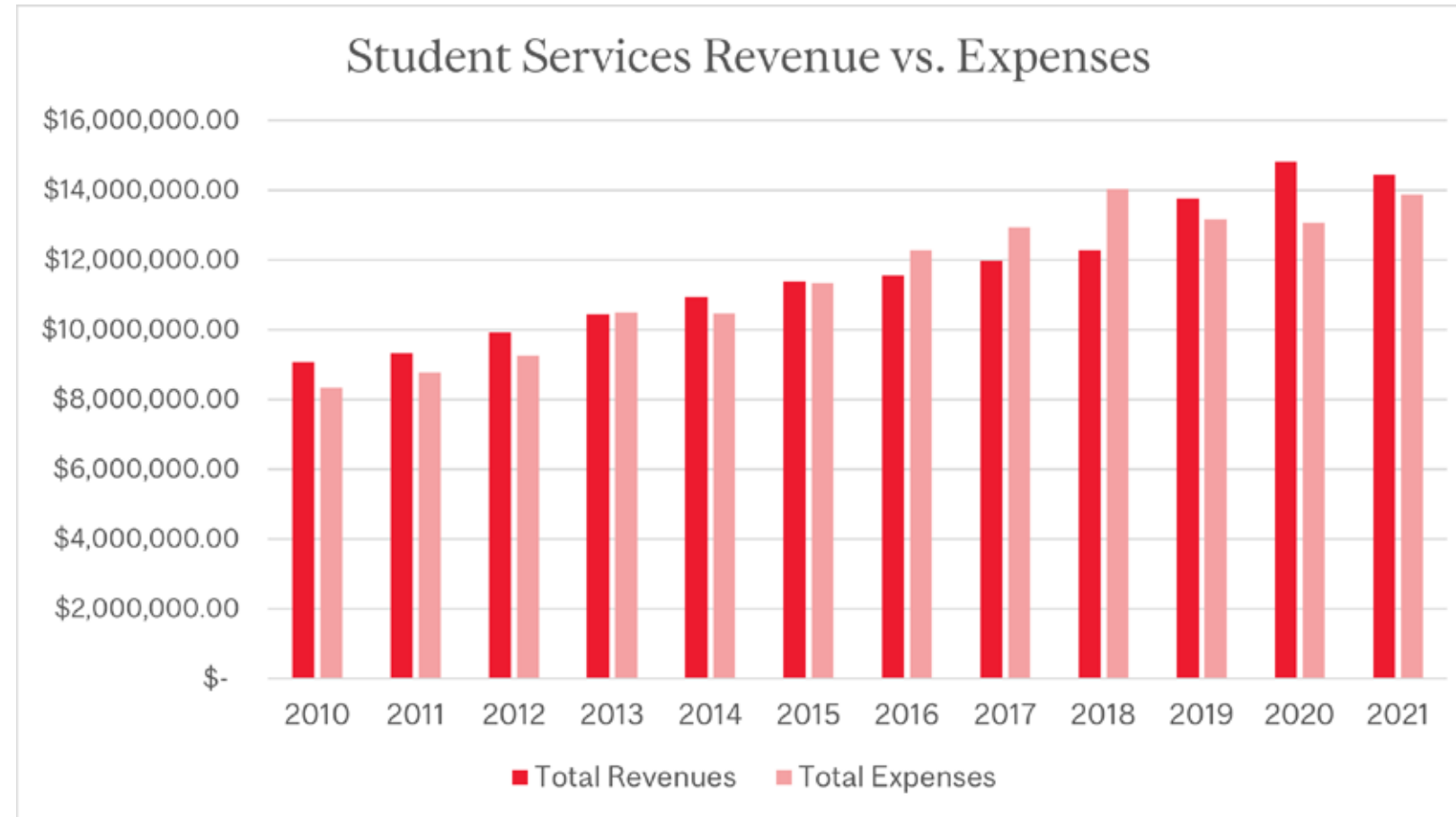
Student Services' Strategy, Assessment, and Evaluation (SAE) team expanded their use of this approach throughout the pandemic in response to our services moving their work online for the first time. SAE worked with each service to determine what they wanted to assess, as well as what students want and which issues are relevant to them. Assessments focused on service delivery, programming, or future-planning, and SAE staff was able to harmonize surveys related to both appointments and online programming across S2 units.

Some key service adjustments were implemented thanks to the continuous improvement model:

- Appointment times were extended, with time slots ranging from 6am to 7pm Eastern time in order to accommodate international time zones
- Creation of new programming, such as the Quarantine Support Group and the Black Student Well-Being and Success Focus Group series, to better support students facing particularly difficult or challenging circumstances
- New resource offerings, such as the Accessible Materials Conversion project through the Office for Students with Disabilities

SAE will continue to use the continuous improvement approach supported by both quantitative and qualitative data collection, including additional University-wide needs assessments. In an ever-changing service delivery climate, the ability to adapt accordingly using accurate and recent data is essential to continuing to offer our student users the programming and services they want in the format that best fits their needs.

\*Source: [nl.edu/assessmentandaccreditation/assessment/assessmentapproach/](https://nl.edu/assessmentandaccreditation/assessment/assessmentapproach/)



# Financial Snapshot

Our operating budget is composed of three primary sources: university funding, student fees, and temporary, soft funding. Both salaries and non-salaried items increase by approximately 3% every year due to inflation, requiring us to explore increases in funding over time.

A large portion of our funding comes from the University, which allocates a portion of its operating fund to Student Services. This portion includes certain grants from the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur (MES), a dedicated allotment for the Student Wellness Hub, and covers some staff members' salaries.

Student Fees make up the other half (62%) of our funding. Students approve any increases to this amount in regular referenda.

Finally, a third portion of our funding is made up of soft funding—temporary funding that is given to us for a specific use. These include grants for the Office for Students with Disabilities, other grants from MES, and gifts from donors, such as the Rossey Family Foundation's gift for the Student Wellness Hub.

FY19 and FY20 both saw surpluses after deficits in the previous three years led us to realign our finances. These surpluses were the result of increased government grants, higher McGill contributions than forecasted, unexpected departures, higher than anticipated revenues, additional donations, and reduced total expenses versus previous years. The surplus will be used to support our strategic planning process, including implementing systems to streamline our services and boost efficiency.

These surpluses also proved essential to help us respond to unexpected COVID-19 related expenses, including increased staffing costs (>\$200K), new technology, computers and systems (>\$200K), personal protective equipment and sanitation (>\$65K), signage, and training. A University hiring freeze also meant that departing staff could not be replaced, freeing up additional salary funds. As of mid-March 2021, there were 37 leaves with only 11 positions replaced.

Beyond our operating budget, Student Services also administers funding directly to students through the Scholarships and Student Aid Office. In 2020-2021, \$3 million in scholarships and \$19 million in bursaries flowed directly into the pockets of our students, thanks not only to University contributions but also to the one-time and endowed gifts of hundreds of generous donors.



## Planning for the Future

As we return to campus and to a university experience that is beginning to return to normal, strong services for our students have never been more important. In 2021-2022, we will be welcoming 16,000 students to campus for the first time—that’s half of our undergraduate population. All the usual challenges in navigating university life will be present, but this year they will coexist with the consequences of lengthy lockdowns and serious limitations on social life and personal liberties. Getting back to “normal” will take time and effort, and we will be here to help our students navigate the path forward.

As we deal with the day-to-day realities of coming back to campus, we will also be planning for our future. Our strategic planning process is nearly complete, and by the end of 2021 we expect to have completed our three-year plan to continue enhancing our services and thereby improve our students’ experience at McGill. Our 2022 budget requests will reflect the priorities identified in our strategic plan and all of our activity over the next three years will be in support of that vision.

Our adaptability, resilience and commitment to our students’ well-being form the foundation of Student Services. The challenges we have overcome this year give us a great deal of hope for those that remain ahead of us, as we work together to help our students succeed and make the most of their time at McGill.

