

Statement Regarding the Appointment of a New Interim Senior Director of Student Services

On Friday, September 25, 2015 the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), Ollivier Dyens, announced the appointment of a new Interim Senior Director of Student Services for the coming academic year.¹ We, as the associations representing those McGill students who pay fees to Student Services, would like to voice our strong disapproval for the lack of consultation that occurred in making this decision.

Student Services encompasses eleven units on two campuses, including Mental Health Services, the Office for Students with Disabilities, the First People's House, and International Student Services. As students, we have repeatedly expressed how critical these units are to our success and well-being. The Senior Director sets the vision and direction of Student Services and thus greatly shapes the quality of resources available to students—resources that are funded primarily through student fees.

It was for these reasons that, following the departure of the previous Senior Director in May 2015, we successfully pushed for greater student representation on the Advisory Committee for the Selection of the Senior Director of Student Services. While active over the summer, the committee's work was postponed as of September 15, 2015, when members were informed that the search for a new Senior Director was being placed on hold while Student Services underwent substantial changes over the coming year. Neither the committee, students, faculty, nor staff were consulted or previously informed of the appointment of a new Interim Senior Director.

We view this decision as part of a greater, historical trend of the University failing to consult and value the student voice when making changes that greatly impact our experience at McGill. We have repeatedly expressed our desire to be equal partners in creating an innovative, progressive, and effective service provision model. In response we are asked to trust our administration and assured that students will be actively involved in major decisions, a promise that is becoming increasingly difficult to take seriously.

With the first unit review of Student Services upcoming this fall we want to impress the absolute necessity of this process being driven by and for students. In order for the University to better support our community it is critical that student input form an integral part of every level of the planning process, particularly in selecting strong leadership for Student Services into the future.

We call on the University to recognize and value the student voice, especially when students are the primary stakeholders, beneficiaries, and financial contributors of Student Services.

Student's Society of McGill University (SSMU) Executives
Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) Executives
Macdonald Campus Students' Society (MCSS) Executives
Macdonald Campus Graduate Students' Society (MCGSS) Executives

¹ <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2015/09/robyn-wiltshire-to-lead-student-services-during-renewal-period/>