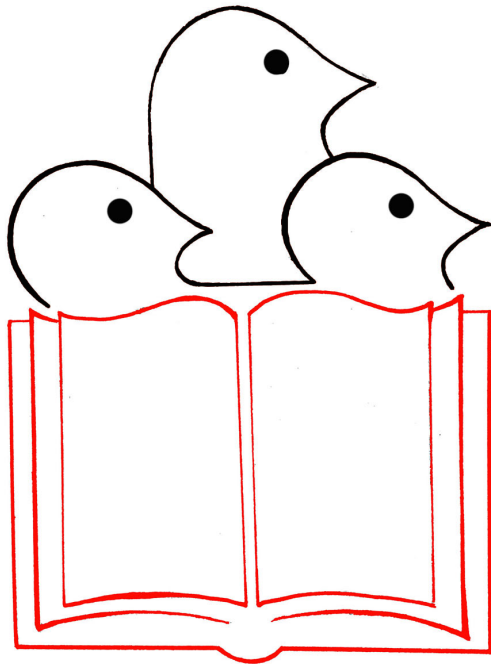


# 2014-2015 Report of the SSMU Library Improvement Fund



Submitted:  
7-April-2015

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## Preface

For almost two decades, the Library Improvement Fund (LIF) has been tasked with ensuring that McGill undergraduate students have access to the highest quality library facilities and resources. The fund, overseen by the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), works to ensure that students' most important needs are communicated to Library staff. It is comprised of over a quarter of a million dollars contributed through student fees and an equal amount matched by alumni donors each year.

In the past, with the support of students and alumni, the LIF has gone towards capital improvements and technology additions to enhance our study spaces, student contract positions across the Library system, and various special projects. The LIF attempts to allocate funding according to need and, as much as possible, to distribute student funding across the Library's branches. For the 2014–2015 allocations, students and the Library Improvement Fund Committee have identified several smaller-scale but high-impact capital projects throughout the Islamic Studies, McLennan, Music and Schulich Library branches. These projects will add electrical outlets, lighting, seating, or otherwise improve student comfort in these spaces. In addition, we continue to highlight the role of technology in learning by identifying spaces to add media collaboration screens, this year in a group study room located in the Schulich Library.

As in past years, the LIF Committee has made a sizable allocation towards student employment opportunities, both for the current academic year and for projects beginning in Summer 2015. Finally, after much debate and consultation, funding has been provided for extended hours in several Library branches for both the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 academic years. This contribution represents a decision based on identified student priorities for improving access to their Library spaces. However, the LIF Committee would like to note that we continue to view such operational costs as within the responsibility of the university budget, and hope to see this recognized in future decisions.

The allocations this year continue to support the priority areas identified by students as well as the existing work that the Library does to improve service delivery and student experience in its branches. We are very excited to see the results of these projects!

The 2014-2015 Library Improvement Fund Committee consisted of:

Erin Sobat, Library Improvement Fund Coordinator

Evan Vassallo, Member-at-Large

Yahong Chi, Member-at-Large

Sue Jeong, Member-at-Large

Sandrine Jaumard, Member-at-Large

Lawrence Angel, Undergraduate Member of the Senate Committee on Libraries

Patrick Dunbar-Lavoie, SSMU Council Representative

Claire Stewart-Kanigan, Vice-President (University Affairs)

## Executive Summary

This year the combined available funds of the SSMU students and matched contributions totalled **\$655,384**. With these funds, the SSMU Library Improvement Fund Committee asks the McGill Library to undertake the following projects:

<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	<b><u>Cost (\$)</u></b>
<b>I. Capital Projects</b>	
a) Octagon Room Electrification	10,000
b) McLennan Seating Additions	8,950
c) Music Library Chairs	5,776
d) Schulich Bench Cushions	1,000
	<hr/>
	<b>25,726</b>
<b>II. Technology Enhancements</b>	
d) Schulich Group Study Room Screen	4,500
	<hr/>
	<b>4,500</b>
<b>III. Student Contract Staff</b>	
a) Fall 2014–Winter 2015	61,442
b) Summer 2015–Winter 2016	75,000
	<hr/>
	<b>136,442</b>
<b>III. Special Projects</b>	
a) Extended Branch Hours 2014–2015	252,500
b) Extended Branch Hours 2015–2016	235,410
	<hr/>
	<b>487,910</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>654,578</b>

## I. Capital Projects

For many years, students and staff have identified Library spaces as a key area for improvement at McGill, particularly in regards to student study space. As both McGill and the Library face significant space shortages, it has been a goal of the LIF Committee to identify existing sites that are lacking or underused and develop proposals for their modification. As such, several capital projects this year relate to improving these resources.

### **I.a) Octagon Room Electrification (\$10,000)**

The Octagon Room of the Islamic Studies Library is a popular and iconic study space on-campus, however it currently lacks adequate electrical outlets and carrel lighting. Based on a proposal from the Middle Eastern Studies Students' Association (MESSA), the LIF Committee worked with the Library to finalize a solution. This project will add unobtrusive electrical outlets and desk lamps to approximately 22 study carrels located in the Octagon Room, fitting with the historic character of the space. In the course of the Library's investigation, several other study areas in the ISL were determined to be suitable for similar upgrades, which will be passed on as suggestions to next year's LIF Committee.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Proceed promptly with the electrical upgrades, outlets and lighting installations in the Octagon Room
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

### **I.b) McLennan Library Seating Additions (\$8,950)**

In past years, seating has been added surrounding the stairwell shafts on several floors of the McLennan Library. Currently, the third floor remains the only suitable space without such carrels. This project will add 6 electrified desk seats matching the style found on other floors, including USB charging outlets.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Proceed promptly with the purchase and installation of six electrified desks for the third floor of McLennan Library
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

### **I.c) Music Library Chairs (\$5,776)**

The task chairs found in the Marvin Duchow Music Library are specially adjustable in order to fit with the wheelchair-optimized tables in the space. Most of these chairs are old and breaking, and students have commented repeatedly to this effect. The Music Library has found funding to replace the chairs on the third floor, however 69 remain to be replaced on the fourth and fifth floors. Towards this goal, this project will provide 20 new chairs for the fourth and fifth floor spaces.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Proceed promptly with the purchase of 20 new chairs for the Music Library space
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

#### **I.d) Schulich Library Bench Cushions (\$1,000)**

The Schulich Library of Science and Engineering is a high-demand space for students. The fourth floor includes a long wooden bench seat below the windows that is often used by students who cannot find other study spots. By suggestion, a custom-made seat cushion(s) would greatly increase the comfort of students using the bench, also making it more of a “reading nook.”

**The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Proceed promptly with the design and order of a custom bench cushion
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

## **II. Technology Enhancements**

The LIF recognizes that technology and new media play an increasingly significant role in student learning on-campus, and this logically extends to our Library spaces. Technology enhancements include new ways of viewing, processing and sharing information, whether for learning, research, or study, and are particularly reflected in our group study areas.

### **II.a) Schulich Library Group Study Room Screen (\$4,500)**

In past years, projectors and media collaboration screens have been added to group study rooms in various Library branches. Currently, the only bookable study room in the Schulich Library, located on the fourth floor, is without a screen. This project will add a wall-mounted screen with wireless, app-based connectivity across multiple devices, for use by students and student groups.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Proceed promptly with the purchase and installation of the group study room screen
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

### III. Student Contract Staff

Providing employment for students benefits everyone. Students have the opportunity to support themselves, build their job experience, and participate in the functioning of the libraries—facilities in which they spend so much of their time. Libraries are provided with assistance in key areas, and these contributions improve the service offerings for all Library users. In addition, the Library has faced major reductions in staffing in recent years, including funding for student staff.

These projects do not interfere with existing labour or union regulations around staff or student employees, and applications are open to all undergraduate students eligible for the McGill Work Study Program.

#### **III.a) Fall 2014–Winter 2015 (\$61,442)**

After receiving \$110,000 towards student employment from the LIF last year, the Library had a higher-than-average volume of students employed for projects in Summer 2014. An additional allocation was requested and approved in Fall 2014 to continue or build on these projects by renewing many student contracts on a part-time basis. This included positions with the Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Osler Library, Islamic Studies Library, Schulich Library, Music Library, Digitization Unit, Inter-Library Loans, Marketing and McGill Rare Books and Archives. Projects included shifting and relocation of library materials, inventory tasks, microfilm transfer, thesis digitization, marketing support and archival research.

##### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Direct the allocated funds towards hiring undergraduate students for part-time employment projects, as agreed upon by the LIF and the Library administration
- Inform students of the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund in their letters of hire

#### **III.b) Summer 2015–Winter 2016 (\$75,000)**

Students continue to demonstrate a need for employment on-campus, while the Library continues to have many projects suitable for student hires. Thus, the LIF has approved funding for approximately six full-time positions in Summer 2015 and 12 part-time positions for Fall 2015–Winter 2016. The LIF Committee has recommended prioritizing projects in Rare Books and Archives, marketing support, copyright, and digitization, in addition to the Library's other identified needs across its branch locations. These projects are expected to provide more worthwhile work experience for undergraduate students.

##### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Direct the allocated funds towards hiring undergraduate students for full- and part-time employment projects, as agreed upon by the LIF and the Library administration
- Prioritize positions in Rare Books and Archives, marketing support, copyright, and digitization while still directing funds towards other areas of need as identified by the Library
- Inform students of the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund in their letters of hire



## IV. Special Projects

Special projects proposed to the LIF represent initiatives that students have identified as needing improvement, addition or change, but that might not normally be considered central to the LIF mandate.

### **IV.a) Extended Branch Hours 2014–2015 (\$252,500)**

Due to the allocation of the 2013–2014 LIF towards several major projects, the current LIF Committee was approached to cover the cost of extended branch hours during the 2014–2015 school year. After extensive discussion and consultation with students, an allocation of \$250,000 was approved for extended hours in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Schulich and Nahum Gelber Law Libraries. This consisted of 24/5-hour access beginning in mid-October and mid-February in all three branches, as well as 24/7-access during the months of December and April.

Based on a proposal from the Middle Eastern Studies Students' Association (MESSA), an additional \$2,500 was approved to allow for Saturday hours at the Islamic Studies Library (Noon–6:00pm). Moving forward, the LIF Committee has requested that all proposals for extended hours funding be submitted during the academic year preceding their implementation.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Make arrangements for extended opening hours at the designated branch libraries, including security, signage and other communications
- Evaluate future budgets for funds to cover the cost of extended Library hours, recognizing that this represents an ongoing operational expense rather than a one-time improvement project
- Submit any proposals for extended hours during the academic year preceding their implementation
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

### **IV.b) Extended Branch Hours 2015–2016 (\$235,410)**

In line with the LIF Committee's request, a proposal for extended hours during the 2015–2016 academic year was considered under the mandate of the 2014–2015 LIF Committee. Following negotiations with the Library, and taking into account the current budgetary situation of the university, an allocation of \$223,098 was approved for extended hours in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Schulich and Nahum Gelber Law Libraries. This consists of 24/5-access to HSSL beginning at the start of October and February, 24/5-access to Schulich and Law beginning in mid-October and mid-February, and 24/7-access in all three branches during the months of December and April. The reduction in total cost is due to the streamlining and reallocation of security resources in the Library during these hours.

Based on a proposal from the Middle Eastern Studies Students' Association (MESSA), an additional allocation of \$12,312 was approved to allow for weeknight (5:00–9:00pm) and Saturday (Noon–6:00pm) hours at the Islamic Studies Library.

#### **The LIF requests that the McGill Library:**

- Make arrangements for extended opening hours at the designated branch libraries, including security, signage and other communications

- Evaluate future budgets for funds to cover the cost of extended Library hours, recognizing that this represents an ongoing operational expense rather than a one-time improvement project
- Submit any proposals for extended hours during the academic year preceding their implementation
- Ensure appropriate recognition indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

## Conclusion

This year, the LIF has undertaken some exciting and substantial projects, particularly with the goal of improving the quality and access of our Library spaces. In particular, the LIF Committee has given close attention to its mandate to distribute funding across multiple Library branches, undertake projects of varying sizes, and develop projects based off of direct student input and proposals. However, the Committee recommends that next year, broad student consultation form the basis of project development from the earliest stages, and that more student groups and associations outside of SSMU be involved in this process.

Any changes that the McGill Library would like to make to the allocations detailed in this report should be requested of the SSMU Vice-President (University Affairs), who will bring these suggestions to the attention of the SSMU Executive Committee for consideration.

The Committee would like to express our gratitude to Diane Koen, who has continued to work extensively with the LIF to improve the Library's branches and the quality of student life on campus. We appreciate that the Library, under the leadership of Dean Colleen Cook, has prioritized student consultation in their activities, and hope that they continue to involve students in their projects in the future.

I would also like to thank the entire LIF Committee for their enthusiastic work and dedication this year. Your efforts have resulted in significant improvements to our library system, and I hope to have the opportunity to continue working with you all in future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Sobat  
Library Improvement Fund Coordinator