

2013-2014 Report of the Library Improvement Fund



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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, run by the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), works to ensure that students' most important needs are communicated to the 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.

In the past, with the support of students and alumni, the LIF has supported facilities improvements to support student learning, student employment, extended study hours, and 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. As one of our major projects, the 2013-2014 Library Improvement Fund Committee has decided to fund an expansion of the group study area on the 1st floor of the Redpath Library building in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (HSSL). This will extend the existing, hugely popular group study area into new space made available in the wake of completed space renovations and reorganization. In addition to this exciting project, seating additions in the McLennan Library and the Schulich Library of Science & Engineering will also receive funding.

The LIF Committee has also decided to provide a one-time contribution as seed money towards the renovation and expansion of the washrooms located on the 1st floor of the Redpath Library building. This is an urgent project and a commonly-voiced area of concern for students using library spaces. This conditional funding should provide the necessary basis for the Library to obtain additional financial support for the project. Finally, the LIF has decided to increase its allocation for student employment projects from that of the last few years, and will be funding the purchase of several new "Spirit Scanner" units for the McLennan, Nahum Gelber Law and Marvin Duchow Music Libraries, respectively.

The allocations this year continue to support the priority areas identified by students as well as the great 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 2013-2014 Library Improvement Fund Committee consisted of:

Erin Sobat, Library Improvement Fund Coordinator
Lawrence Angel, Member-at-Large
Sarah Huzarski, Member-at-Large
Lise Cartier, Member-at-Large
Keegan Huang, Member-at-Large
Anikke Rioux, SSMU Council Representative
Joey Shea, Vice President (University Affairs)
Diane Koen, Associate Director (Libraries), Planning and Resources

Executive Summary

This year the combined available funds of the SSMU students, matched contributions and rollover funds totalled **\$756 000**. With these funds, the SSMU Library Improvement Fund Committee asks the McGill Library to undertake the following projects:

| <u>Project Description</u> | <u>Cost (\$)</u> |
|--|-------------------------|
| I. Facilities Improvements | |
| a) Redpath Group Study Zone Expansion | 277,145 |
| b) Schulich Seating Additions | 35,480 |
| c) McLennan Seating & Technology Additions | 16,352 |
| d) Redpath Washroom Renovation | 287,773 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 616,750 |
| | |
| II. Student Employment | |
| a) Student Navigators & Project Assistants | 110,000 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 110,000 |
| | |
| III. Special Projects | |
| a) Spirit Scanners | 29,250 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 29,250 |
| | |
| <hr/> | |
| Total: | 756,000 |

I. Facilities Improvements

For several years, students and library staff have identified facilities as a key area for improvement within the library system, particularly in regards to student study space. As both McGill and its Libraries face space shortages, it has been the goal of the Library and the LIF Committee to identify existing spaces that are underused or not used to their full potential and develop proposals for their modification. As such, several of the major projects this year relate to improving facilities and student spaces within the Library's branches.

I.a) Redpath Group Study Zone Expansion (\$277,145)

A major undertaking of the LIF this year is an expansion of the group study area on the 1st floor of the Redpath Library Building. The existing group study has been extremely popular with students as an accessible space that allows for collaboration and group work while providing diverse seating options. Recent renovations and reorganization in the Redpath Library have created space to extend the study area into the Northern wing of the building.

This project will add 105 new electrified desk seats with power outlets and USB charging outlets, as well as a variety of comfortable, lounge-style seating options. The new furniture, design and Terrazzo flooring will match that of the existing study area in order to create a single, unified group study space. In addition, 24 new computers will be purchased to replace the existing, out-dated units currently in the space, and four group collaboration screens with HDMI and VGA connectivity will be added to the larger group study rooms.

The USB port charging outlets and additional group collaboration screens were added to the original proposal on the suggestion of LIF Committee members.

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Proceed promptly with the group study zone expansion agreed upon by the LIF and the Library administration, with a planned completion date of August 2014
- Ensure appropriate signage indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

I.b) Schulich Seating Additions (\$35,480)

The Schulich Library of Science & Engineering is an oft-cited area of concern when it comes to increasing student space shortages. This infill project will add 26 electrified desk seats throughout the Library building, mainly through reorganization of existing spaces on the third and fifth floor. Specifically, the third floor e-classrooms and fifth floor group study area will see an increase in seating capacity. This will be accompanied by the necessary electrical upgrades and aesthetic updates.

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Proceed promptly with the Schulich seating additions agreed upon by the LIF and the Library administration
- Ensure appropriate signage indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

I.c) McLennan Seating & Technology Additions (\$16,352)

The Arts Undergraduate Society-Library Partnership Committee submitted a proposal for the LIF to contribute to a project for the McLennan Library Building. \$25,448 of the original \$41,800 proposal was approved for funding by the Arts Undergraduate Improvement Fund (AUIF) in February 2014. While the AUIF regularly funds projects for the HSSL complex and supported the entire project in principle, it was limited in its allocations by budget constraints, so the LIF has agreed to cover the outstanding balance of the project.

The project consists of two parts. Firstly, presentation technology (projectors, screens and podiums) will be added in two group study rooms on the 3rd floor of the McLennan Library. These bookable rooms already have updated, functional furniture but are lacking these technology options. Secondly, 24 electrified desk seats will be added to the 5th and 6th floors around the outside of the stairwell shafts. These will be split between the two floors (12 on each) and will replicate a seating style found on other floors.

The LIF contribution will cover one study room (\$9500) and approximately eight seats in the stairwell project (\$6852).

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Coordinate with the AUS and the Faculty of Arts to collect the necessary AUIF contribution for the project
- Proceed promptly with the purchase and installation of the presentation technology and seating additions as agreed upon by the AUS, LIF and the Library administration
- Ensure appropriate signage indicating the support from the Arts Undergraduate Society and SSMU Library Improvement Fund

I.d) Redpath Washroom Renovation (\$287,773)

Some of the most common student complaints to the Library are regarding the washrooms located on the 1st floor of the Redpath Library Building. These facilities are heavily out-dated, do not meet the demand of an increasing number of users, and generally are in very poor condition. While the Library has recognized students' concerns, proposals to renovate and expand the washrooms have been stalled for some time due to budgetary issues.

The LIF has decided to provide a one-time contribution as seed money towards this renovation, amounting to approximately 40% of the total project cost. This contribution has been made on the specific condition of including a prominent and sizable gender-neutral bathroom as part of the redesign, as well as the understanding of an additional contribution from the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) and buy-in from the university's administration. This funding should provide the necessary basis for the Library to obtain additional financial support and move ahead with the project.

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Prioritize the inclusion of a significant gender-neutral bathroom in the renovation plans, and update the SSMU regularly on the status of these plans
- Pursue additional sources of funding for the project, including but not limited to central university funding, grants and alumni donors
- Ensure appropriate signage indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

II. Student Employment

Providing employment for students benefits everyone. Students have the opportunity to 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 for this year, including funding for student staff. With the recent changes to several Library branches and collections, collection merges and reorganization have also been major projects that will continue into Summer 2014.

The LIF contributed \$85,000 towards 40 student jobs last year, and has decided to confirm SSMU's commitment to student employment by increasing its contribution this year. This will fund over 10,000 work hours for students through the McGill Work Study Program.

II.a) Student Navigators & Project Assistants (\$110,000)

Funding from the LIF was approved in Fall 2013 for a number of part-time student positions in Winter 2014, as well as multiple full and part-time opportunities in Summer 2014. This includes both Student Navigator and Student Project Assistant positions, areas that have received LIF support in past years.

Various Library units have developed projects for student employees, including the Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Osler Library, Islamic Studies Library, Schulich Library, Music Library, Digitization Unit, Inter-Library Loans, Marketing and McGill Archives. This affirms the LIF commitment to distributing funds across the Library's branches. Projects will include shifting and relocation of library materials, inventory tasks, microfilm transfer, thesis digitization, marketing support and archival research.

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.

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Direct the allocated funds towards hiring undergraduate students for these employment projects, as agreed upon by the LIF and the Library administration

III. Special Projects

Special projects proposed to the LIF represent facets of the Library or Library technologies that the student body has identified as needing improvement, addition or change.

III.a) Sprit Scanners (\$29,250)

These units provide students with an easy way to quickly preview and scan library materials directly to a USB drive as a PDF file. While they are available free of charge at most library branches, both students and staff have noted that the current demand exceeds capacity. It has also been suggested that installing a scanner in the HSSL Reserve Room would be especially useful. The LIF will be funding the purchase of three new scanners, to be installed in the McLennan, Nahum Gelber Law and Marvin Duchow Music Libraries, respectively. The Post Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) has also agreed to match the LIF contribution for another three units.

While the possibility of scanning directly to email was investigated by the Committee, this poses various copyright issues. However, it is possible that additional features on these devices can be configured to provide increased options for users to scan and save files.

The LIF requests that McGill Libraries:

- Proceed promptly with the purchase and installation of three Spirit Scanner units, including one for the HSSL Reserve Room
- Investigate the possibility of setting up additional features for these units that would allow for increased user options

Conclusion

This year, the LIF has undertaken some exciting and substantial projects, particularly with the goal of improving Library spaces for students. However, while large-scale projects are commendable, the Committee recommends that next year an emphasis be placed on a greater number and diversity of projects across the Library's branches, and that the SSMU continue to reach out to students to determine their priorities and concerns for Library services.

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 sincere gratitude to Diane Koen, who has worked 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 tireless work and dedication this year. Your efforts have resulted in incredible improvements to our library system, and I hope to have the opportunity to continue working with you all in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Sobat
Library Improvement Fund Coordinator 2013-2014