



Innovation Steering Committee

2015-16 Activity Review and Forward Planning

May 2016

The Innovation Steering Committee completed its final scheduled meeting of the 2015-16 academic year on 30 March 2016. The purpose of the discussion was to review progress in implementing ISC recommendations, as well as to review the structure, functioning and role of the Committee in preparation for the coming academic year, and in view of (a) the formation of the Principal's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Working Group, and (b) the recruitment of an Associate Vice-Principal, Innovation and Partnerships. As when the Committee was first constituted, the group took the opportunity to explore what are the most significant remaining challenges and barriers to innovative activity at the University. The following recommendations address this latter point and offer further actions in support of fully implementing recommendations already put forward.

Recommendations

1. **Convene summer discussion groups animated by the new Associate Vice-Principal (Innovation and Partnerships) to systematically surface challenges, opportunities and best practices in advancing McGill innovation:** To give future direction to the ISC, as well as to develop compelling case studies to be leveraged in McGill's innovation and entrepreneurship communications strategy, the ISC to convene a sub-group together with other McGill resources (including the AVP Innovation and Partnerships) to conduct summer discussions with McGill innovators, enablers, and partners who have either successfully developed a McGill innovation and launched it in the outside world, or have failed to do so—what worked well and what inhibited progress (e.g. access to lab facilities, insurance complications, IT services constraints, paperwork, gender bias, lack of internal funding, lack of academic leadership, lack of visibility or sustainability of supporting services and programs, etc.). All disciplines and segments (social, commercial) of innovation should be included, and discussion group sessions should target:
 - a. Faculty, especially academic entrepreneurs
 - b. Graduate and postdoctoral students
 - c. Undergraduate students, especially student entrepreneurs
 - d. McGill support personnel (Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship, IDEA, OSR, ICE)
 - e. Affiliated hospitals, especially inventors
 - f. Founders of McGill start-up and spin-off companies
 - g. Funders of McGill start-up and spin-off companies (angel and venture investors)
 - h. Licensees
 - i. Mentors
2. **Cultivating a culture of innovation at the University (further to the recommendations of January 2016):**
 - a. ISC to collaborate with the Principal's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Working Group, advising on the structure, venue and role of existing units and initiatives (e.g. Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship, EngInE, Innovation Constellation, etc.) in delivering support services to innovators and entrepreneurs centrally, inside individual faculties, and/or according to thematic groupings.

- b. Revisit the January 2016 ISC recommendations on Cultivating a Culture of Innovation at McGill in the new academic year, in light of the findings from the summer discussion groups (see #1 above), with a view to “unpacking” the essential themes (e.g. communications, being more innovative in the way we do things at McGill, etc.), and addressing these with concrete action items via deliberation in dedicated ISC sub-groups.
- 3. **Entrepreneurship training for graduate and postdoctoral students:**
 - a. ***Non-credit courses:*** ISC Project Lead to engage with MITACS and NSERC CREATE program liaisons to define opportunities, and work with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, TLS, the Desautels Faculty of Management, and the School of Continuing Studies as required to design an appropriate teaching model and curricula within an overall project plan for implementation.
 - b. ***For-credit courses:*** ISC Project Lead to review, together with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the supporting documents that outline the curricular pathways for graduate and postdoctoral students (e.g. individualized learning plans, Milestone document, responsive PhD documentation, etc.), with a view to enhancing openness to innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 4. **Industry-sponsored research:** ISC Project Lead to gather data on industry sponsored research at the Faculty level as well as feedback from researchers, MUBEC, OSR and industry partners to identify current hurdles, develop case studies, surface best practices and help inform decision-making and the process of opportunity discovery and business development.
- 5. **Indirect costs:** The Innovation Steering Committee to lead a review of the newly revised Policy in Indirect Costs and perform, with the help of an additional resource, a sensitivity analysis on indirect cost percentages, and the degree to which higher percentages divert research funding from McGill (particularly from US sources, or to foundations to the exclusion of McGill participation).
- 6. **ISC functioning and representation:**
 - a. ISC to meet with the individual appointed to the role of Associate Vice-Principal, Innovation and Partnerships as part of the on-boarding process, to discuss ISC functioning and representation in light of this new position.
 - b. ISC to invite student representatives to the Committee for the 2016-17 academic year.