
Post-Event Summary Report for SEEF

Project Name : MENU 2018 trip – McGill with DHNUS
Location: University Of Ottawa - Ottawa
Coordinator: Joannie Richer Contact: joannie.richer@mail.mcgill.ca

As previously mentioned in the application, MENU is an annual event organized by nutrition students from various universities (Laval, Moncton, Montreal, Ottawa, and McGill). This “Meeting des Étudiants en Nutrition à l’Université” gathers Nutrition and Dietetics students for annual conferences, activities, dinners, and networking opportunities. Hosted by the University of Ottawa from March 23rd to March 25th 2018, 22 McGill students were fortunate to participate in MENU 2018, which was a striking increase from the 4 students in 2017. We recognize our funding and fundraising opportunities as a major contributor to the increase in participation this year.

We are happy to announce that many of our objectives were met. Firstly, the 22 participants greatly exceeded our expectations and was largely increased in comparison to last year’s attendance of 4 students from McGill. Secondly, the event successfully provided a professional and social outing for Francophone students at McGill (a rare occurrence), while also allowing Anglophone participants to improve their French-speaking abilities with the help of their peers. Thirdly, McGill participants were fortunate to participate in three enriching and diverse conferences over the course of the weekend. Themes such as intuitive eating (presented by Karine Gravel), nutrition management in penitentiaries (presented by Claire Johnson), as well as nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics (presented by Bénédicte Fontaine-Bisson) reinforced our nutrition knowledge away from the academic setting, allowing us to visualize our futures as healthcare professionals. These conferences were greatly appreciated and allowed students to have a feel of the nutrition community outside of their program, their university, and their studies. Lastly, the presence of students from the universities of Ottawa, Laval, Montreal and Moncton allowed for substantial networking between future dietitians and nutritionists. The social, professional and dining events allowed students from different cities and backgrounds to connect.

MENU was an integrative event that incorporated social, professional, and genuinely fun activities for participants from different backgrounds. While unconventional, the themes discussed during the conferences were extremely interesting, and allowed us to utilize knowledge acquired from various nutrition courses over the course of our degree. Moreover, the Registered Dietitians that presented during the conferences incorporated their personal experiences with ease, allowing students to acquire a taste of their lives as healthcare professionals. These events were vastly different than the academic setting, which largely directs its focus on the academic and research-related experiences of our professors. MENU not only allowed participants to socialize with students from other universities, but also provided students with an opportunity to genuinely have fun in a safe and inclusive environment. After our conferences, we were brought to an elementary school where MENU participants were encouraged to bring out their “inner-90’s kid” by playing competitive games of dodgeball and charades. We also had the opportunity to enjoy a nutritious and delicious dinner by the Rideau Canal in Ottawa on Saturday. Lastly, we believe that the greatest success of our project was allowing our students to develop a sense of belonging, not only between fellow McGill students, but with nutrition students from various

corners of the country. As university students, it is easy to feel distanced from other individuals, particularly the Francophone community at McGill, given the substantial proportion of Anglophone and international students. While giving an opportunity to represent McGill in the event, MENU has created friendships among our participant students, which we certainly believe will last throughout the course of our degree, if not our lifetime.

As a relatively new event, we must divulge that there are many aspects that could have been conducted differently, and that there is room for improvement. While the SEEF significantly the initial price of the ticket for MENU (250\$ per student), we expected additional funding from our Samosa Sales held in February. However, the sale turned to be more or less effective and other fundraising options may be more lucrative for future years, such as a Gratt-o-Thon, online fundraisers, or a fundraising event (e.g. spaghetti dinner). Nonetheless, in comparison to last year, the support of DHNUS and the designation of a coordinator and leader for the overall project showed a significant increase in participation and attendance to both the information session and MENU itself. However, we now know more about the event, the organization of a fundraiser, and the potential price (and value) of the weekend. In my opinion, advertising and fundraising for MENU should be conducted near the beginning of the Fall semester to maximize team bonding and fundraising prior to the purchase of the tickets in January.

Financially, we believe that it is extremely important to note that the Student Experience Enhancement Fund have significantly contributed to the success of the event by easing the monetary cost of MENU from the minds of our participants, allowing them to be wholeheartedly invested in the weekend. We would like to mention that two of our participants withdrew from MENU at the last minute. While one of them managed to find another participant to take their place, we distributed the 2500\$ among 23 individuals, providing a net ticket price of 141,30\$. In the future, we will place further emphasis on the fact that the event is non-refundable, and that we strongly suggest that they check their availabilities prior to purchasing their tickets.

In summary, we are extremely grateful for the funding received in regard to our application. Our objective for the future is to allow McGill University to become an active participant in the organization of MENU. With the increase in participation, we even aspire to eventually host the event. MENU was an educative and enriching experience that was enjoyed by participants from distinct backgrounds.

With all our appreciation, MENU 2018 Team;

Alex Buccanfuso, Alyssa Martel, Ariel Comtoit, Audrey Moyen, Calila Tardif, Fiona Kao, Jade Corriveau, Jade Grenier, Joannie Richer, Jonny Leblanc, Katja Paul-Mercier, Karine Drouin, Laura Nguyen, Lauriane Germain, Merry Liu, Solene Limongi, Sophie Courtemanche Martel, Sophie Lamontagne, Stephanie Lacoste, Réanne Orsat-Parker, Valerie Bouzo, Victoria Millbrath.

