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TO: Deans, Directors, and Chairs

FROM: Morton J. Mendelson, Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning)
Albert Caponi, Assistant Vice-Principal (Financial Services)

CC Mary Jo McCullogh, Senior Manager, Student Accounts Office

DATE: April 6, 2009

SUBJECT: **Student fees associated with specific courses**

It has come to our attention that there are several courses available to students – typically, but not exclusively, field type courses - in which there is a fee associated with the course. In the past, these fees have often been collected by the unit offering the course from students when they apply or register to take it. Where the fees have been low, some units have collected cash, introducing the financial risk inherent in handling it. More importantly, students who pay fees directly to an academic unit do not obtain complete information about the eligibility of the course activity fees for income tax purposes.

In order to adhere to best practices, and also to be consistent with general recommendations of Internal Audit, course fees must be formally approved and collected through the established protocol, which protects the interests of students, ensures transparency in our fee assessment practices, and ensures coherence in the way in which students are billed. Students will also benefit from a variety of payment methods available to them through the centrally managed billing practice. Units will benefit from not having to manage the collection of fees, which will become the responsibility of the Student Accounts Office, but the collected fees will still be credited to the same funds as in prior years.

Units may be asked from time to time to report on the revenues and expenses associated with course fees. This accountability will enable the University to acknowledge the contribution that students make with respect to the cost of education.

Please review your course offerings to identify the ones that involve a course fee. A template has been developed to aid you in preparing your submission to request approval of such fees. The template is available at www.mcgill.ca/student-accounts/ under the menu option “McGill Staff Only”, which requires signing in, using a McGill ID and Minerva PIN. Feel free to consult with Mary Jo McCullogh, Senior Manager of the Student Accounts Office (mary.mccullogh@mcgill.ca), for information on how to present your courses for approval and what is required to initiate the billing process.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.