

**Present:** Isabella Anderson (Co-Chair), Martine Gauthier, Isabelle Oke, Saumeh Saeedi-Tabar, Césarée Morier-Gxoyiya, Lina Di Genova, Erin Johns (Vera Romano's delegate), Ahmer Wali, Axel Hundemer, Freddy Lee, Alyssa Wooster, Kyla Hosie (secretary)

**Regrets:** Jim Fyles, Vera Romano, Ian Simmie, John Mac Master, Dusica Maysinger, Myriam Tabrizian, Jemark Earle, JennyAnn Pura, Tamara Western, Tre Mansdoerfer

Meeting called to order 1:38 PM

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

The Committee approved the agenda. An item was added for introductions for new committee member.

### **2. Approval of Minutes from November 29, 2018 meeting**

Minutes were approved as circulated

### **3. Business Arising**

- a) L. Di Genova presented on **student benchmarking survey results**. Presentation will be in the [OneDrive](#).

L. Di Genova noted that studies of student mental health and well-being are relatively recent, hopefully in a few years there will be more data and can therefore answer more questions. The numbers are generally trending upwards, but the numbers are not statistically significant (between McGill and rest of Canada). Levels of distressed may be due to students not feeling supported or lacking the coping skills. At McGill, faculty-student interaction is lower than other campuses; difficult to get feedback from professors

Committee discussed that students might feel overwhelmed at University because the level of high school education has gone down. A. Hundemer pointed out that in the mathematics department, faculty feel the level of preparedness is lower than it was 10 or even 5 years ago and this causes distress. Professors don't expect that students know less and they are still teaching the same material. Step from high school to McGill is substantially growing. Bridging programs are important. Students from Ontario are especially not well prepared (when ON got rid of grade 13 it made a big difference). For international students, it is difficult to track but faculty feel that overall, students are less prepared.

- b) Terms of references discussion

The committee reviewed the current ToR and the proposed changes that were discussed in Winter 2017. The committee liked the preamble but noted that the style could be condensed.

A. Hundemer noted that he likes the idea of advisory committee, can provide feedback to Executive Director and can take advantage of everyone's specialization.

In discussing the timing of when reports would come to committee, L. Di Genova noted that advisory committees have been structured and are running differently so it may not make sense to have a standard time of report submission.

M. Gauthier questioned how items get brought to the table. Who decides what the topics of importance are – the Chairs? What is the mechanism for deciding what those topics are? Needs to be a mechanism for committee members to bring topics to the table. Can coincide with topics/issues that S2 are working on. Can pick a couple of topics per semester that we can work on; have themes to ensure informed discussions.

Suggestion: email to go out at the beginning of semester with topics of interest, then can decide which meetings certain topics are discussed.

A. Wali noted that the budget often comes up, innovation fund, advisory boards - these are re-occurring items that we address on a regular basis.

F. Lee noted that it is unclear what topics we should bring to the table, what is appropriate for this committee.

L. Di Genova noted that CSS is a sub committee of Senate. Student senators bring questions to the senate floor and they are not discussed at CSS. Need and want a closer connection to senate.

A. Wali and I. Anderson are representatives of Senate.

Deputy Provost presents CSS report at Senate annually – this is really CSS's only connection to Senate

*Compare CSS to other Senate sub committees (Action item)*

M. Gauthier noted that with the changes going on in DPSLL, Student Services is working on a 2 year Student Wellness Action Plan (instead of Strategic Plan). Once re-structuring of SLL is complete, then will focus on strategic plan. Action plan needs to create initiatives towards improving S2. All of our discussions should be about improving our services. How do we mobilize S2 to be more responsive?

A. Wali suggests that many ToR of Senate Sub-committees have a section that say.. "recommend/advise Senate..." CSS doesn't have a similar mandate in terms of advising Senate.

M. Gauthier noted that the committee is there to advocate for policies and change. But CSS doesn't have an advocating role at Senate - S2 needs a voice at Senate. As an example, CSS discussed academic distress - why can't we recommend to Senate that this be looked into? Not just advisory to the Executive Director, but also advisory to Senate.

Suggestion: adapt CSS ToR to reflect the Libraries ToR

A. Wooster noted that the first priority of CSS should be access to the Executive Director. CSS should have an advocacy piece at Senate but perhaps not the biggest priority.

I. Oke noted that with policies that have gone through Senate over the past couple of years, they have come through ESAAC or CESA. S2 is a pocket on campus and therefore, can see why there is difficulty in policies from CSS going to Senate. Other committees apply campus wide. It might make more sense to outline a process on how CSS can give feedback on S2 policies and procedures.

M. Gauthier responded that Student Services is not the owner of any university policies. Example: Policy for Students with Disabilities hasn't been updated in 2005 but S2 cannot update it, it is the Dean of Students responsibility. Important to remember that this committee was formed when the Dean of Students was overseeing S2. Struggling with this as S2 is now only service driven.

A. Hundemer suggested that it may not be effective to report to Senate but instead, DPSLL and Dean of Students. Can invite them to one meeting a semester to talk about issues.

As we are unsure of what SLL will look like after re-structuring, unsure of what the relationship between CSS and DPSLL will be.

#### **4. New Business**

##### a) Innovation Fund and Advisory Board Reports

The committee decided that it would be helpful to have more time to review the reports (in the OneDrive) and will discuss at a future meeting. If anyone has questions about the reports, please let the Secretary and Chairs know so they can invite the appropriate person to a future meeting.

*Deadline to submit comments: February 16 (Action item)*

#### **5. Executive Director's Report**

##### a) Deputy Provost of Student Life and Learning

- DPSLL leaving in June/July, there will be an Interim for a year, looking to hire in summer 2019.
- Provost would like structure of SLL to be reviewed; uncertainty of what SLL is; DPSLL both advocate and discipliner of students - very challenging. Position holds a lot of tension.
- Committee will be announced soon; there will be consultations done across the University; also bringing in external expertise to guide the committee
- Plan is to be released by June/July of what SLL will look like. Do not know the outcome yet, many possibilities. Units in Student Services may be impacted (International Student Services or First Peoples House).

##### b) Rossy Student Wellness Hub

- Bringing together Counselling, Psychiatric and Health Services in one area where students can access everything and be triaged appropriately.
- It was decided to lower the floor (area on third floor of Health, which is currently 2 levels) so people with mobility issues can access an examination room easier. However, this is more costly and timely. Therefore, renovations will be going into fall.
- Official opening of hub in winter 2019. Soft opening when renovations are done. Many changes will be made in terms of processes and procedures. Developing communications plan that will



be going out to students, faculty and staff shortly. Using mechanisms like Twitter and Facebook, newsletters, to update everyone.

- May end up extending hours in order to accommodate students. S2 will make sure that we are covering needs of students.
- Anything over the \$1 million donation from Rossy will be funded by S2. Have set aside part of our surplus to cover this.

## c) Embedded Wellness Access Advisors (WAA)

- Goal of WAA: enable awareness, prevention and early intervention
- Hub and spoke model; way of reaching students where they live and learn, instead of waiting for students to come to Student Services. By the time they get to S2, they are already in distress.
- Would like to start piloting a few of these positions. Targeting faculties who have the highest percentage of students who go to Counselling, Health, etc. (Faculty of Arts and Science)
- WAA not there to counsel or provide therapy - they are front line support. Will run workshops, groups, early intervention. Meet with students who are experiencing stress and triage them to appropriate care.
- Other part of role: working with faculty and staff who may be struggling with student behaviors, create cultural shift in faculties. Looking at 16 positions; a lot of money.
- Looking to McGill to support these positions as well as external funding.
- Positions will be social workers, attached to Counselling. Positions need to be attached to professional order, be involved in training in S2, be a part of collaborative care model and will report to Associate Director(s) of Counselling. Will be creating another Associate Director, Counselling position to oversee these professionals. Social workers have a more holistic view of health and wellness; rather than therapeutic approach.
- Will work in tandem with current units/initiatives (ie. Healthy McGill). Want to grow health promotion sector in S2.
- Access to WAA will probably be through drop-in, appointments, etc.
- WAA need to be embedded where faculty, students, etc. are so they are easily accessible. If faculty/staff are concerned about a student, they can do a warm transfer (introduce them to WAA personally rather than email information).
- WAA will have data so they are aware of the struggles students face. Additionally, there are different stressors in different programs so the WAA will need to get to know the culture and understand what is going on. Belong to S2 professionally but they need to get to know their faculties well.
- First part of the WAA jobs: needs assessments. L. Di Genova working on template for needs assessment, then will analyze the data.
- Part of these positions will be funded externally. Pilot positions will be funded on soft dollars, probably 2 year contracts. In negotiations with McGill. May need to go to referendum. Hopefully by next CSS meeting there will be an announcement regarding McGill reinvestment in student mental health
- If funding for positions comes from S2 and external funding, faculties will have to provide a closed office in a central location. Some of the programming funds may also come from faculty (ie. 20K a year for support groups, workshops, etc.)
- Members of ESAAC will be reviewing job description of WAA. Need to discuss concerns with processes and procedures.



# McGill

- Timeline: after ESAAC in a couple of weeks, should have finalized job description in a week or so. As soon as I get approval from Provost, I would like to go forward with piloting a couple of these positions. Hopefully starting this semester.

*WAA job description to be circulated to members (action item)*

No other business

Meeting adjourned 3:17 PM

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

Wednesday, February 28 1:30-3:30 James Admin, 301

Thursday, March 29 10:00-12:00 TBC