Sustainability Projects Fund Application

**Project Title:** Sustainability faculty learning communities (FLCs)

**Budget Requested:** $82,410

**Date Submitted:** November 18, 2013

**Project Theme:** Academics

**Project Leader:**
Marcy Slapcoff
marcy.slapcoff@mcgill.ca, (514) 398-3024
*Educational Developer, Teaching and Learning Services*

**Project Team:**
Lilith Wyatt, *Sustainability Officer, MOOS (McGill Office of Sustainability), lilith.wyatt@mcgill.ca*
Evan Henry and Victor Tran (outgoing), and May Le (incoming), *MOOS Education Intern(s), asr@mcgill.ca*

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**I. Project Overview**

**NEED:** Support for faculty who value education for sustainability is needed to help identify, connect and enhance their efforts, while also expanding the niche to those interested but not yet active. A inquiry-guided approach will support faculty to lead this expansion of education for sustainability.

**GOAL:** Transform approaches to teaching within coursework so all McGill students, upon completion of their degrees, will be able to reach the goals of *Vision 2020*, emerging as critical and engaged citizens with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives necessary to address the grand challenges of the 21st century.

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** A network of faculty learning communities (FLCs), that enable instructors to take an inquiry-guided approach to discovering how best to integrate sustainability into their courses and/or programs. (For “Factors to consider” see Appendix A)

**KEY DEFINITIONS**

*Faculty learning community:* “A *faculty learning community* (FLC) is a group of trans-disciplinary faculty, graduate students and professional staff group of size 6-15 or more (8 to 12 is the recommended size) engaging in an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, transdisciplinarity, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and community building.”


Education for sustainability: “[It] is about the kinds of education, teaching and learning that appear to be required if we are concerned about ensuring social, economic and ecological well-being, now and into the future. It carries the assumption that the quality and kinds of education, teaching and learning that we are engaged in have a direct bearing on this well-being, or quality of life, positively or negatively”.

II. Project Implementation

1) Conceptualize project and seek funding, November 2013
   a) Draft project proposal
   b) Consult with key stakeholders
   c) Submit project proposal to Sustainability Projects Fund

2) Launch of project, December 2013 (pending approval from SPF)
   a) Assemble a working group, co-chaired by MOOS and TLS. Membership is to be confirmed following receipt of funding, but potential candidates must have experience integrating sustainability into coursework and/or participating in faculty learning communities:
      • Co-chairs: Lilith Wyatt and Marcy Slapcoff (confirmed)
      • Prospective members (to be named):
        1) Project Officer
        2) Representative from the McGill School of Environment (MSE)
        3) 1-2 Student undergraduate student representatives
        4) Representative from the Faculty of Engineering (pilot faculty)
        5) Representative from the Faculty of Education (pilot faculty)

3) Development of project plan, January 2013 – May 2014
   a) Develop a draft plan that details:
      • The project goal
      • Identification of two groups with whom to work as a pilot project (Education has already agreed, and Engineering will be approached)
      • Draft plan for recruiting 6-8 faculty members for each of the two learning communities
      • Draft plan for a pilot project and goals for the next three years
      • Measures of success and an assessment plan
      • A communication plan to share the outcomes of this project and promote its long-term viability.
      \rightarrow This will be done by the working group.

   b) Conduct background research to inform the project, including:
      • Consultation process to glean lessons learned from other FLCs on campus;
      • Summary document of discipline-specific approaches to Inquiry-guided learning at McGill and elsewhere
      • Summary document of key sustainability issues of relevance to higher education – both in terms of content and instructional strategies.
      • Annotated bibliography of key resources related to education for sustainability

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http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/esd/Future_Fit_270412_1435.pdf
This will be done by graduate student assistants supervised by the project leaders

3) Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities, May 2014

a) Use information gathered in steps 1 and 2 as basis for application to attend 2014 Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities, May 13-15, 2014, Oxford College at Emory University, Oxford, GA (See Appendix B for Call for Applications). If selected, we will:
   a. Send a team of up to four members representing a variety of perspectives. The team leader must be an individual whose position represents administrative support for the project at a relevant level of the institution (e.g., department head, dean, vice provost) and carries authority to implement the reform and insure its duration for a reasonable period of time.
   b. During the Institute, the team will benefit from the resources provided and expertise shared to develop a more detailed and comprehensive plan to be presented for feedback upon return to McGill. Based on TLS experience with FLCs and Inquiry-guided learning, it will be important to consider ways to:
      - Recognize participants' expertise and identities as scholars in their own disciplines
      - Establish a common language to discuss both pedagogical and sustainability issues.
      - Support participants in developing their own approach to infusing sustainability into their courses and programs.
      - Promote the sharing of ideas, successful practices and lessons learned.
      - Include opportunities for both disciplinary and cross-disciplinary dialogue.
      - Include a range of activities for FLC members including: an off-campus retreat, workshops, presentations, celebratory events, attendance at conferences, opportunities to disseminate work.
   c. The team will return with a detailed plan for implementation to be presented for feedback.


d. Upon return from the Institute:
   a. Finalize the draft created during the institute
   b. Share the plan with the two pilot groups
   c. Develop a year-long plan with each pilot group that outlines the desired outcomes for each group, the specific steps to be taken, resources required and timeline.
   d. Implement the plan which will likely include recruitment of members for each FLC, monthly meetings with each group, individual consultations with each faculty member, occasional meetings with both groups, an annual retreat, creation of pedagogical resources and gathering of assessment data.

III. Financials

Expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expenditures ($CAD)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
</table>
### People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Hours/Week</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Graduate student ($23/hr)</td>
<td>To conduct background research, help coordinate FLCs, schedule meetings, develop pedagogical resources, gather assessment feedback to inform the scaling up of the network, analyze this data and produce reports. <em>This salary may be divided between 2 more students if need be.</em></td>
<td>[- January – May 2014: 5 hrs/wk&lt;br&gt; - June 2013-May 2014 (10 hrs/wk)]</td>
<td>15,548</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Undergraduate students ($12/hr)</td>
<td>To assist the graduate students in the above-listed tasks. <em>This salary may be divided between 2 or more students if need be.</em></td>
<td>[- January–May 2014 5 hrs/wk&lt;br&gt; - June 2013–May 2014 (10 hrs/wk)]</td>
<td>8,112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Officer (3 days/week)</td>
<td>The Project Officer serves as bridge between TLS, MOOS, and the various Faculties involved. This includes leading inquiry-guided faculty learning communities, initiating outreach with faculty members, conducting research and developing strategies for promoting education for sustainability. (See Appendix C for Job Description)</td>
<td></td>
<td>37,500 ($30K + benefits @25%, i.e., $7,500)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLS project co-leader (5 hrs/week)</td>
<td>Collaborate with co-leader to support Project Officer in all tasks related to conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluation of this project.</td>
<td></td>
<td>In-kind contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOOS project co-leader (3 hrs/week)</td>
<td>Collaborate with co-leader to support Project Officer in all tasks related to conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluation of this project</td>
<td></td>
<td>In-kind contribution</td>
<td></td>
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### Operating costs

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>printing, photocopies</td>
<td>For the development of FLC materials ($500 per FLC)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials and supplies</td>
<td>For additional supplies needed for FLC (i.e. books on inquiry-guided learning)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant funds</td>
<td>For FLC members who need additional resources for the inquiry-guided approach with students (books, travel, guest speaker fees, etc). This is based on successful model in the Law Teaching Network.</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>includes retreat, workshops and FLC meetings</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of project plan</td>
<td>Attendance at Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities (approx. $2500 for 4 team members which includes travel, registration, 4 nights’ accommodation and expenses.)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** | | **$82,410** |

### Revenue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Amount Requested</th>
<th>Confirmed?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Projects Fund</td>
<td>$82,410</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- Sustainability is already an important theme within the spheres of Operations, Research and Student Life at McGill. It has also emerged as an important force in the academic sphere, but it is generally relegated to specific programs that only reach a limited number of students with a professed interest in this area.
- “ESD is about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life of generations to come ... ESD enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future”.
- ESD is not: a separate subject or discipline; separate from and unrelated to other HE agendas such as employability, enterprise, quality and internationalisation; just about ‘the environment’; a passing fad.
- Coursework is the ideal avenue through which to reach all students at McGill.
- The means by which an understanding of sustainability can be promoted within coursework are various and will be influenced by factors such as discipline, academic level, class size, and students’ background knowledge.
- Determining how to integrate sustainability into coursework is a complex process and thus requires that instructors have the time and support necessary for designing or redesigning their courses and programs in ways that promote meaningful student learning.
- This support can take many forms, but to be most effective, it must include opportunities for dialogue and reflection within disciplinary and cross-disciplinary groups.
- Workshops for faculty, an approach used to promote sustainability at other colleges and universities, are effective for raising awareness of important issues; however, the literature on teaching and learning in higher education generally finds Faculty learning communities and networks to be more effective approaches for engaging faculty in a long-term process of pedagogical change.
- Taking an inquiry-guided approach, especially within the collaborative setting of the faculty learning community has proven to be an effective means for promoting transformation in teaching and learning.
- McGill already has two successful examples of faculty members taking an inquiry-guided approach to enhancing teaching and learning: 1) The Inquiry Network, a cross-disciplinary group of faculty who have been meeting monthly since 2008 to explore how to engage undergraduates with research as part of coursework; and 2) The Law Teaching Network, a faculty-specific initiative to promote excellent, innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices.
- Sustainability, a theme that cuts across all disciplines, provides the ideal opportunity for scaling up these inquiry-guided approaches to educational development and creating a network of FLCS that investigates how to promote sustainability within a vast range of pedagogical contexts.

4 Ibid.
6 Website: Developing Faculty and Professional Learning Communities (FLCs): Communities of Practice in Higher Education. Oct. 27, 2013, consulted www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/whatis.php
Appendix B

Call for Applications
2014 Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities
May 13-15, 2014, Oxford College at Emory University, Oxford, GA
Application Deadline: Friday, January 10, 2014.

Application Guidelines
Oxford College at Emory University invites applications from campus teams for the 2014 Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities (see the Background section below for information about the Institute).
All regionally accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities are eligible to apply. The application consists of an information section and a narrative section. The narrative may not exceed 1,200 words.
Applications are due by Friday, January 10, 2014. Please send completed applications to Jeff Galle, Director, Center for Academic Excellence, Oxford College at jgalle@emory.edu. Applicants will be notified of the selection decision by Friday, February 7, 2014.

Campus Teams
Each campus team may include up to four members representing a variety of perspectives on the proposed inquiry-guided learning reform project. The team leader should be an individual whose position represents administrative support for the project at a relevant level of the institution (e.g., department head, dean, vice provost) and carries authority to implement the reform and insure its duration for a reasonable period of time.

Registration Fee
The registration fee for the Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities is $500 per team member with up to four members per team.
The Institute will offer relevant presentations on inquiry-guided learning and the dynamics of its institutionalization, readings, structured meeting time for the teams, and individual team consultations with one of the five faculty members as well as a reception and dinner and luncheon plenary presentations with other IPLA attendees.

CONTENTS OF INSTITUTE APPLICATION
I. Information Section
Please provide the name and address of your campus; the name, title, email address and phone number of the team leader, and the names and titles of all team members. A team may include up to four members including the team leader.

II. The Narrative
Project: What specific inquiry-guided learning project on your campus do you want to work on at the Institute? Is it a new project or an ongoing one that your campus wishes to extend or improve? Where is it located institutionally, how many faculty members are involved, and how many students are served? What do you hope to achieve in the next year and in the next three years?
Rationale: Why has your campus, campus unit or program selected inquiry-guided learning as the method of reform? What process did you use to select inquiry-guided learning?
Team Composition: What is the rationale for your team’s composition? How does the team represent a diversity of views on the proposed project?
**Guidance:** What specific guidance is your team seeking from the Institute?
For more information about the Institute, please contact Virginia Lee, Director, *Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities*, at 919-493-4729 or vslee@virginiaslee.com.

**Background**
The 2014 *Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities* is a special, one-time-only feature of the annual Institute for Pedagogy in the Liberal Arts (IPLA)(see description below). The faculty for the Institute includes leading experts on inquiry-guided learning from Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States:

**Virginia S. Lee, Virginia S. Lee and Associates, USA.** The Director of the Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Higher Education, Dr. Lee led an institution-wide inquiry-guided learning initiative at North Carolina State University where she held the position of Associate Director, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning from 2000-2004. *Teaching and Learning through Inquiry: A Guidebook for Institutions and Instructors*, which Lee edited, documents the initiative with contributions from 37 NC State faculty members and staff. Since then Dr. Lee has consulted widely both nationally and internationally on inquiry-guided learning, assisting individual faculty who want to use inquiry-guided learning in their courses as well as institutions seeking more widespread reform through inquiry. She also edited the New Directions for Teaching and Learning volume, *Inquiry-guided Learning*, published in 2012, that has provided the inspiration for IPLA 2014 including the Institute for Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities.

**Phillipa Levy, Deputy Chief Executive (Academic), The Higher Education Academy, UK.** As a university teacher Dr. Levy has used inquiry-guided learning in her practice for many years, and between 2005 and 2010 was Director of a national Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning which supported the development of inquiry-guided learning in arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines across higher education in England. She has conducted research into a range of aspects of learning through inquiry and has interests in information literacy development and the use of new digital technologies in the inquiry context as well as in the related area of undergraduate research. She has designed and facilitated workshops on inquiry-guided learning nationally and internationally, and in her current role at the UK’s Higher Education Academy leads national services and support for learning and teaching enhancement at course, departmental and institutional levels including on the theme of students as partners in learning and research.

**Billy O’Steen, Senior Lecturer of Higher Education, College of Education, University of Canterbury, NZ.** For over 20 years, Dr. O’Steen’s teaching and research have focused on innovative and institutionalized curriculum design with a particular emphasis on experiential education, inquiry-guided learning, and service-learning. His work in these areas has resulted in a number of leadership roles, peer-reviewed publications, external research funding grants, consultancies, and presentations around the world. Since the devastating 2010 and 2011 earthquakes in Christchurch, he has guided colleagues and students at the University of Canterbury in responding to the disaster by connecting service experiences and academic content through inquiry.

**Rachel Spronken-Smith, Professor in Higher Education and Geography and Dean of Graduate Research, University of Otago, NZ.** Dr. Spronken-Smith has been practicing and researching teaching and learning through inquiry for 10 years, initially as a geographer and more recently as an educational developer. She led a multi-institutional team across New Zealand researching the use of learning through inquiry for undergraduate education. Her other research interests include instigating and sustaining curriculum change and graduate outcomes. She has facilitated workshops on learning through inquiry throughout New Zealand and also by invitation in the UK, Canada and Australia.

**Catherine Chiappetta-Swanson, Educational Consultant, McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and Instructor, Faculty of Social Sciences, McMaster University, Canada.** The inquiry-guided approach to learning and teaching has been Dr. Chiappetta-Swanson’s passion and the core of her teaching
practice for the past eight years. At McMaster University she has been fortunate to learn from and work with some of the early innovators and pioneers of the inquiry approach in the social sciences. As an educational consultant she supports instructors and graduate students across six colleges in developing curriculum, refining courses, and facilitating workshops on inquiry-guided learning. Her research on the undergraduate student experience focuses on enhancing student transition through inquiry-guided learning. She is currently a member of a multi-disciplinary team working to transform the first year experience institutionally through the development of a foundational blended learning course grounded in the inquiry approach.

The Institute will offer an intensive, three-day experience for teams of up to four individuals from ten colleges and universities interested in reforming undergraduate education on their campuses through inquiry-guided learning. Inquiry-guided learning refers to a suite of teaching strategies and learning experiences that promote student learning through the active, and increasingly independent, investigation of questions, problems and issues for which there is often no single answer. Some examples of target areas of reform include a first year seminar program, general education, the academic major, and a structured sequence of inquiry-guided experiences spaced throughout the undergraduate curriculum. The proposed project could be all or part of a campus’s Quality Enhancement Plan required for reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Applicants may have an inquiry program in place, but seek to strengthen or extend it, or they may want to create a new program.

The Institute will offer relevant presentations on inquiry-guided learning and the dynamics of its institutionalization, readings, structured meeting time for the teams, and individual team consultations with one of the five faculty members as well as a reception and dinner and two luncheon plenary presentations with other IPLA attendees. Teams will be asked to do some preparation before the Institute.

_The Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning in Colleges and Universities_ will take place during Oxford College’s annual Institute on Pedagogy in the Liberal Arts (IPLA). Inaugurated in 2007, IPLA has grown in size and recognition over the years with accepted faculty limited to 75 participants in 2013 representing more than 20 colleges and universities. Like past Institutes, IPLA 2014 will include two-day workshops on topics related to inquiry-guided learning as well as the three-day Institute. The program will also include two plenary presentations attended by all IPLA participants including the _Institute on Inquiry as a Way of Learning_ teams.

Oxford College is a specialized division of Emory University that offers a distinctive, liberal arts intensive educational program for the first two years of the Emory baccalaureate degree. After completing the Oxford program, students complete their majors on Emory’s research campus in Atlanta. While in Oxford College, students must complete three Ways of Inquiry courses that use inquiry-guided learning to explore the epistemological foundations of a specific discipline.

Virginia S. Lee, Ph.D.

Principal & Senior Consultant, **Virginia S. Lee & Associates, LLC**
Former President, **Professional & Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education**, 2007-2010
Editor, **Inquiry-guided Learning**, New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 129 (Jossey-Bass, 2012)
Editor, **Teaching and Learning through Inquiry: A Guidebook for Institutions and Instructors** (Stylus, 2004)

P.O. Box 51746, Durham, NC 27717-1746, (919) 493-4729, vslee@virginiaslee.com, http://www.virginiaslee.com
Appendix C

JOB DESCRIPTION: PROJECT OFFICER

Teaching and Learning for Sustainability
An inquiry-guided approach to curriculum development

Position context:

This position has dual reporting structure and will report to the Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) Academic Associate and the McGill Office of Sustainability (MOOS) Officer responsible for the Teaching and Learning for Sustainability Project. The Project Officer serves as bridge between TLS, MOOS, and the various Faculties involved. This includes leading inquiry-guided faculty learning communities, initiating outreach with faculty members, conducting research and developing strategies for promoting sustainability in the curriculum.

Key roles:
Supervise work done by student assistants to synthesize literature and develop reports for evidence based decision making. Collaborate with TLS Academic Associate and the MOOS Sustainability Officer to develop faculty learning communities. Direct an assessment project to collect and analyze data to determine how to best scale up the project for maximum impact university-wide. Administer budget including grant funds for individual instructors. Interact with a wide variety of people across the University - academics from various faculties as well as the Library, the McGill Writing Centre, the First Year Office, Student Services and student societies.

The Project Officer will be responsible for:
1. Leading the project in consultation with TLS and MOOS, which includes work with academic units and instructors, supervising students, and overseeing the budget.
2. Assembling a working group and launching Faculty Learning communities (FLCs) with at least two academic units.
3. Developing the project plan which includes outreach strategy, goals for the next three years, measures of success and an assessment plan.
4. Supervising student researchers who will collect background information to inform the project, including consulting the literature on inquiry-guided learning, faculty-learning communities (FLCs) and sustainability in the curriculum.
5. Leading the educational development process for all faculty members involved in FLCs (including monthly meetings, creation of pedagogical resources, consultations, annual retreat)
6. Developing a communication plan to share the outcomes of this project and promote its long-term viability.

Project leadership
• Assemble a working group, co-chaired by MOOS and TLS.
• Identifying two units, each whom agrees to endorse the creation of a faculty learning community devoted to sustainability in the curriculum.
• Drafting recruitment plan for faculty members to participate in each of the two learning communities (goal is 6-8 members in each FLC)
• Draft plan for a pilot project and goals for the next three years
• Develop measures of success and an assessment plan

Research and analysis
• Supervise student researchers who will collect background information to inform the project, and investigate the literature in the following three areas:
  1. Sustainability in the curriculum
  2. Inquiry-guided learning (for faculty and students)
  3. Faculty learning communities as a strategy for educational development
• Develop recommendations and rationales emerging from the literature and practice for the McGill context.

Pedagogical support
• Collaborate on the development and implementation of Faculty Learning Communities for supporting professors integrating sustainability in the curriculum
• Provide a range of opportunities for both disciplinary and cross-disciplinary dialogue between members of the FLCs including: monthly meetings, an off-campus retreat, workshops, presentations, celebratory events, attendance at conferences, opportunities to disseminate work

Administration
• Lead outreach efforts with Faculties to recruit members for each FLC
• Supervise student assistants who will perform background research, coordination of meetings and other clerical tasks.
• Oversee budget and grant process for individual faculty members.

Education and experience:
Education: Master’s degree in a related field.
Experience: 2 to 3 years of experience related to educational development.

Other Qualifying Skills and/or Abilities:
• Experience leading educational development initiatives with faculty members.
• Ability to work independently and collaboratively with people from different functional areas and levels.
• Ability to take responsibility and deliver results with a minimum of instruction and oversight.
• Demonstrated planning, administrative and organizational skills; ability to prioritize tasks
• Strong research and analysis skills with depth of understanding with regard to collecting data from multiple sources, compiling, analyzing and presenting results
• Understands the importance of teaching and learning at McGill and sustainability in the curriculum.
• Strong computing skills; excellent knowledge of Excel and other databases.
• Excellent written and oral communication skills in English are required; knowledge of French is an asset.