



SP0159 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the [SPF Staff](#) via e-mail.

Project Title: McGill Racialized Student Support

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Actual Project Start Date: 2/6/2017

Actual Project End Date: 5/4/2018

1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.

(400 characters maximum)

This project develops and implements initiatives to support racialized and ethnic students on an individual and institutional level. One of our key accomplishments so far has been developing a close working relationship with Student Services in order to help them better address the unique concerns of students of colour.

2. Your team listed the following goal in your application:

The project aims to further the University's commitment to equity and inclusivity, in particular by raising awareness about and responding to students' experiences of discrimination, by creating a Projects Manager Position.

Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

I believe we have had an immense impact with regards to furthering the University's commitment to equity and inclusivity. For example, as Community Projects Manager, I have continued to sit on the McGill Health & Wellness Strategy Advisory Committee and, in that capacity, I've been able to speak to and thus raise awareness about racialized students' experiences and concerns. These contributions have, I believed, brought an intersectional perspectives to McGill's structures and processes as well as to people's perspectives. By this I mean it has been important to look at how racialized students experience McGill differently due not only to their ethnic minority status but also to other factors that often accompany being a racialized students such as a greater likelihood that one is a first-generation student or attendant financial difficulties or simply a general lack of support from a community you identify with. I believe this broadening of perspectives is a positive transformation that will in itself help further the University's commitment to equity and inclusivity.

3. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

Key Successes

1. Creating a community of support for racialized students: very quickly we realized that one of the key factors negatively impacting students of colour on campus was their sense of isolation and a general lack of institutional or structural support. Many students, we found, were not based in Quebec - that meant their support networks were not local. In the felt absence of more formal support, some students had created effective but ultimately limited support networks among each other. What so many of these students needed was to feel that McGill "cared." And ultimately, I believe this to be the project's greatest achievement. Having me - the Community Projects Manager - as

an embodied, empathic, institutionally supported figure there to listen to, brainstorm with and help refer these students was a huge part of the puzzle. The other was the community we created both in real life - at events and support groups - and online through our Facebook group was something that seemed to be sorely lacking and was a huge achievement of the project. One I believe will continue as this community continues to thrive.

2. Another key success of this project is, I believe, our work with Student Services to help them both better understand and more effectively outreach to racialized students on campus. I have already mentioned my work with the McGill Health & Wellness Strategy Advisory Committee but I would also like to point to my participation in the Counselling Service Advisory Board and the Student Wellness Action Plan. It is here that I was able to effectively intervene on behalf of the concerns and experiences of racialized students in ways that seemed to be enlightening for members of the administration who do not come from or regularly come into contact with these communities.

3. I want to take time again to discuss the Sisters In Motion events as I did in the Progress Report. We have hosted two large events for McGill students and community members - both of which were called "Sisters in Motion." The first edition was held at the end of the Winter 2017 semester and the second was held on September 16, 2017. These events showcased the voices of women of colour at McGill through poetry, song and speech. The line-up was incredibly diverse - from Kurdish to Zimbabwean to Indian-Mexican-American to Indigenous, these young women were given the chance to share their heart and their story to an audience of about 150-200 people each time. Each event gathered a volunteer-team of about 30 who worked tirelessly promoting and setting up the event, serving food from the Midnight Kitchen to all who attend, working the door, etc. We even trained a team of students as "accessibility volunteers" who helped those with mobility needs access the event and offered active listening services to all who requested it. I am so proud not only to have organized this event and of the courage it took these young women to share their truth but also of all the students who donated their time both as volunteers and as attendees who witnessed these powerful events. This was a huge success in terms of raising awareness of and creating a place to respond to students experiences - particularly women of colour on campus.

For photos of both of these events, please see the following links:

- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=295636874251417
- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=298497083965396
- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=295286640953107
- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=266928573788914
- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=343224339492670
- https://www.facebook.com/264103954071376/photos/?tab=album&album_id=266923430456095

Key Challenges

1. One of the main challenges was that it was difficult to focus on a discreet number of goals and projects given how wide the scope of this project was and how enormous the felt needs seemed to be. In the progress report I wrote about how it was a challenge to balance work at the individual and the institutional level. In that report I wrote "it seems the more I meet with administrators, the less time I have for students and vice-versa" and that the challenge inherent to this was "to work in a way that brings together these two groups and builds bridges that extend beyond this position." I have tried to do this by created venues where students of color and the administrators charged with supporting them could speak to one another directly. One example of this was the "Depressed or Oppressed?" panel in which students of colour and members from the McGill Counselling Office were able to discuss in an open forum how their experiences of discrimination and isolation as racialized people on campus was effecting their mental health. This event was extremely well attended and it was clear that people were aching to have these sorts of

conversations and to feel heard. For an article written about this event, see:
<https://www.mcgilldaily.com/2017/10/mental-health-panel-addresses-power-structures/>

It was tough to create more events like these, however, because the structures McGill prefers are working groups and task forces where only a select few "representatives" from various groups are invited to the table to share their experiences and speak on behalf of their communities. As one of these often called upon "representatives" I often felt caught in an impossible game of 'telephone' where advocacy is limited in the course of a one-hour meeting where there are many people and interests represented beyond just me. So I was often trying to do two things at once: created avenues for expression for racialized students and then translate what came up for curious administrators invested in creating a better experience for these students. Sufficed to say, it was difficult to do both well.

2. In the progress report, I noted the length of the project as one of our key challenges and this continued to be true. At that time I wrote "as with many large institutions, McGill moves relatively slowly making it very hard to accomplish institutional change - nevermind changing long-ingrained systems and attitudes - in the space of two academic semesters, especially when they are not consecutive. Ending this project midway through the 2017-2018 therefore presents a unique challenge as we are not able to plan initiatives that can run the length of the year or provide ongoing support to students for a full academic year." Thanks to support both from SEDE, the SPF team and from Martine Gauthier, Student Services Director, we were able to secure an extension to the end of the year. The extra time has been crucial for the success of this project. That said, we still hold this project and others like it would benefit from more time. I feel that the length of this project was enough to sensitize administrative units to the unique needs of students of colour but not enough time to really work with these units to figure out what it would look like to address these needs in a sustainable, ongoing way. Should other projects like these be proposed, I strongly recommend funding for 2-3 years -- that is how long it takes when you are building an initiative "from the ground up" and working with so many different stakeholders as we were here.

4. What key points of advice or *lessons learned* would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The number one thing I would say to other teams is: do not try to go it alone! It is crucial that you spend even up to the first six months of your project really building the team of stakeholders and volunteers that will keep this project alive. Sometime I feel that, in the case where someone is hired, there is an insidious assumption made that "now that we've hired someone to take care of 'x', we can all move onto 'y'" and, of course, that is not how it works. Hiring someone is the first step in a very long process towards accomplishing the ends of that project and position. It is crucial that all of the people and resources that are marshalled to create the project and get it approved do not suddenly evaporate once it exists – this is an error, I would argue, of 'declaring victory' too soon. Instead, my advice to future SPF project teams would be to take the time you need to take to make sure you gel as a team, that you all agree on the project goals/their ranking in order of most urgent and finally that it is clear who will take on what work to see these goals come to fruition. Communication and ensuring that the team meets regularly is an easily overlooked but absolutely crucial part of the successful execution and completion of any project but especially one where so many stakeholders and so many different moving parts are involved.

5. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project's progress in coming years, if ongoing.

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

My primary recommendation for the future of this project is simple that it continue. What we have come to find is that students of colour - though they be a diverse group - have unique and distinct needs when it comes to being supported on campus. A "one size fits all" model for students does not work and so it is imperative that we continue to think through how we position ourselves to support these students and respond to their wide-spread claims of experiencing discrimination at various level of the university. In this way, it's been highly beneficial to be placed within

the Social Equity & Diversity Education Office and also work so closely with Students Services. We need to bring together both perspectives and approaches - equity and support - if we are to effectively support students of colour. That said, students are not the only people of colour that seem to need support. I heard much of the same needs expressed by both staff and faculty of colour. With that in mind, I believe there could be opportunities for complementary projects that look at the experiences of people of colour on campus more broadly.

Part of the difficulty of a project so focused on the student experience is that, even if you are successful in terms of the number of students your work with and the qualitatively positive impact you make on their experience, this success is inherently fleeting because students inevitable graduate and move on from the institution. What this means is that it's crucial to get buy-in and participation from longer-term stakeholders at the University. For this project, that has largely meant partnering with Student Service and in particular its Director Martine Gauthier. I am in the process of meeting with Director Gauthier to look at what it will look like going forward to bring a position like this onto the Student Services team to help with outreach and communication to diverse student groups. Nothing is determined as of yet but, as information is forthcoming, I will share it with the SPF team.

6. Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams? Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information. (800 characters maximum)

Yes No

7. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:

We approached the SEDE Office and the student unions to fund the awareness-raising campaigns and provide other resources. We also approached the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) in collaboration with the Student Services; who committed to assess funding possibilities after examining the position's first year impact. We also consider approaching the Social Work and Counselling Departments about providing internship possibilities for their students (which comes with funding around 1500\$/student).

Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.

(1,800 characters maximum)

We did not receive funding in terms of direct dollars in but we did receive financial support from many of these units. For example, the SEDE office provided us with a number of materials and supplies including access to a desk/computer and printing. As well, we worked with the McGill Student Counselling Office to put on a panel discussion with some counsellors to whom this office paid their honorariums for their time.

8. Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus? Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.

(1,800 characters maximum)

9. The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the “Actual” column.

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target	Actual
# of racialized students reached out to connected through new platform by May 2017	200	440
# of students contributing to the project to help it succeed (STARS indicator EN-13 Community Service).	20	72
Total hours committed by students contributing to the projects (including but not limited to the students engaged in the project)	100	143

If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.

(1,800 characters maximum)

I am deeply satisfied with that actual numbers achieved. Our Facebook group was very successful in terms of connecting and attracting students of colour and that is thanks to all of student volunteers we had and the many hours they all contributed to this project.

10. Please report on your results for the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the “Actual” column.

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	75
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	94
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	\$2500
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	20

Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

- SEDE Office including the Family Resources Coordinator, Café Collab, Community Engagement and the Equity Educators
- Office of the Dean of Students
- Student Services including: Career & Placement Services, Campus Life & Engagement, Counselling, Health Service, International Student Services, McGill Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and the Student Aid Office
- MasterCard Foundation Scholars
- Teaching & Learning Services
- Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education
- McGill Black Alumni Association
- Joint Senate-Board Equity Committee Subcommittee on Racialized & Ethnic Persons
- PGSS Equity Commissioner
- SSMU Equity Commissioners
- Student Housing and Hospitality Services
- Black Students Network

- The Black History Month Organizing Team
- The McGill Daily
- SSMU - in particular Isabelle Oke the VP University Affairs
- Social Work Student Association
- Midnight Kitchen
- Vanier College (participation in Discomfort Zones conference on negotiating tensions and cultivating belonging in diverse college classrooms in Quebec)
- McGill Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies

- The Centre for Community Organizations

If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below. (1,800 characters maximum)

N/A

11. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.

- Undergraduate
 Postgraduate
 Administrative Staff
 Academic Staff
 Alumni

12. Please rate your project team’s overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.

- Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied

13. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team’s experience with the SPF.
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

The only real piece of feedback would be ensuring clear communication regarding the start time of the project. In our case, for example, we believed the project was hired when the Community Project Manager was hired (i.e. February 6, 2017). We came to find out, however, that the "clock started ticking" on the project as of the date of the approval letter (December 20, 2016). Later we were able to negotiate a start date as of when the Terms & Conditions were signed (early January 2017). This created quite a bit of confusion and stress and so my main recommendation would be to ensure absolute clarity with Project Teams regarding project start and end dates and, where the project's main embodiment is through a post that need to be hired, that the project not begin on paper until it begins in reality - i.e. when the person is hired and begins working.

14. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.
(Unlimited characters)

N/A

15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes
 No
 Prefer Not to Share

I have experience professional growth by leaps and bounds over the course of this project. As noted below, I grew in my ability to effectively manage projects, identify and engage stakeholders, network, think in terms of broader

systems and communicate across a wide array of sectors. I am deeply grateful for the learning opportunity this project has been and the growth it has invited

16. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth?

Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

Again, my personal growth has absolutley been positively impacted by this project. I've grown to be a more effective communicator and that has started, truly, with becoming a better listener. I've discovered that the art of change is not having all the answers but working with others to discover the best and most effective questions. This has helped me to better understand myself and others and, in so doing, create spaces and partnerships that are truly beneficial for all involved.

17. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Management | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification | |

Other:

18. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability?

Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

I think we have all grown in our understanding of what it means for a project to be sustainable. At the individual level, how do we do this work in ways that don't result in burn-out for ourselves and others? Institutionally, how can we ensure our work is viable long after we are gone? The answers to these questions are numerous but one key aspect has been to make sure we are leaving archival traces of our work. This project has also served to reinforce our belief in the importance of understaking social sustainability work and we hope it will serve as model for future projects.

19. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:

Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)

(1,800 characters maximum)

Women of colour served as the majory of our voluntary team members.

Thank you for completing your Final Report!

Please e-mail your report to the [SPF Staff](#) attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.