Question

TO:	Senate
QUESTION FROM:	Senator Brunot
RESPONSE FROM:	Senator Dyens, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)
SUBJECT:	Question Regarding Universal Design for Learning, Mental Health and Neurodiversity
MEETING DATE:	April 20, 2016

PREAMBLE:

Whereas mental health ("MH") issues and unrecognized neurodiversity generate disabling situations and barriers to learning for McGill students,

Whereas the attached fact sheet (Appendix A) provides some useful background on these issues,

Whereas accommodations relative to neurodiversity (encompassing MH issues, ADHD and situations of learning disability) composed at least 55% of the service delivery of MyAccess/Office for Students with Disabilities ("OSD") in 2010-2011[1],

Whereas numbers in MH services delivery do not reflect the actual needs of the population, since only 25% of MH issues are treated, often because of stigma[2], and those who ask for help face barriers to access services and long waiting times[3],

Whereas "the traditional "accommodations" approach to disability is an ad hoc process of retrofitting, repeated each semester, for each course, for each individual student making a request"[4],

Whereas "this process in itself is a non-renewable use of resources and does not conform to McGill's objectives in terms of sustainable development (Vision 2020),[5]

Whereas Universal Design for Learning (UDL), "by focusing on modification to the environment, constitutes a sustainable approach to the management of the diverse needs of learners,"[6]

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[1] https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/policies/universal-design
[2] http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2013/11/mental-health-mcgill-tackles-a-widespread-community-issue/
[3] http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2015/10/still-on-the-waitlist-for-better-mental-health-services/
[4] https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/facultyinfo/universal-design
[5] Idem
[6] Idem

Whereas the number of users of the services offered by MyAccess/OSD has been multiplied by three in the decade 2002-2012 from the last statistics retrievable[7], and SSMU estimates it to be a seven-fold increase in the decade 2005-2015,[8]

Whereas new needs relative to MH and neurodiversity are emerging, as shows the recent initiative of McGill students on the autism spectrum to form a student club and advocate for their needs,

Whereas MyAccess/OSD was already predicting a 15% deficit in its budget a year ago due to internal budget reallocation at McGill[9], and MH Services estimated that it lacked $1,500,000 to $2,000,000 to hire the 25 new full-time staff that would be required to meet current demand,[10]

Whereas Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Ollivier Dyens conceded that "while possible, [increasing MH services funding] would create unsustainable expectations,"[11]

Whereas McGill's current model of accommodations will not be able to meet upcoming students accessibility needs without allocating substantially more resources and budget to service delivery units like OSD/MyAccess, Counselling and MH Services.

QUESTION:

1. What are the statistics:

   a. of accommodations provided to students at McGill through MyAccess/OSD (with a breakdown by faculty and a breakdown by type of accessibility barrier)?

   b. of the number of students served at
      - Counselling Services
      - Mental Health Services
      - MyAccess/OSD,

   c. by calendar year or by school year, from 2012 to 2015, for the entire student body, including a breakdown by number of services used by individual students (i.e. indicating how many students are using 1, 2 or 3 of those services) and a breakdown by faculty.

2. How is McGill making sure that OSD/MyAccess, Counselling Services and Mental Health Services have enough resources to meet the accommodation needs of students on the short and medium terms?

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[7] http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/policies/universal-design#UDL
[8] http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/12.-Motion-SSMUs-Commitment-to-Universal-Design-for-Learning-UDL.pdf
[9] http://www.mcgilltribune.com/news/office-of-students-with-disabilities-projects-deficit-of-15-per-cent/
[10] http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2015/06/post-grads-interrogate-deputy-provost-about-student-services-finances-at-council/
[11] Idem

3. What are the university objectives, timelines and assessment processes to implement UDL as an institutional approach to its teaching and learning activities?

RESPONSE:	Dear Senator Brunot,

Thank you for your question on this important topic.

The attached report (Appendix B) from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) provides a breakdown of accommodations from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. Because of privacy issues, we unfortunately cannot provide Senate with a breakdown by Faculty. Further, although it would be of interest, we are also unable, at this time, to provide a breakdown to show the number of other services used by individual students. Our health and wellness service units use different information systems for intake and scheduling (e.g., Omni-Med, AndX). As a result, the reporting outputs yield very different reports. We are in the process of compiling and comparing the outputs in an effort to standardize our reporting.

Our four health and wellness units (Health, Mental Health, Counselling Services and the Office for Students with Disabilities OSD) are working collaboratively on a number of projects to improve services for McGill students. Work is under way to align services delivered in the four units through a single intake and triage area, and to implement a common Electronic Medical Record for more effective cross unit collaboration. The Health and Wellness Steering Group will continue their work together to improve case management, early alert and crisis management systems, and to move to a more seamless, stepped care model for service delivery.

Our students, and student groups, are also working on many fronts including peer programs by students with lived experience and are a key partner with us to improve many aspects of health literacy.

Finally, we're setting in motion a health shift at McGill that will affect the whole campus. We believe that the healthier you are, the better you learn and the better you work. We are developing a Wellness Strategy that will strengthen and expand our services, but it will go further. Through reframing policy and increasing education, students, faculty, staff, and alumni will learn how to care for themselves and each other. The goal is to have interconnected supports in place that will treat both the body and mind, and be accessible when the need arises. McGill's campus will be a healthier environment, and it will feel like a more caring community.

It is recognized that the implementation of UDL has wide reaching effects for all members of the McGill community. As such, Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) and OSD are committed to actively

exploring collaborative opportunities to foster broad institutional discourse regarding UDL, and to identify and engage the appropriate stakeholders in the establishment of a shared vision and plan for its implementation across teaching and learning activities. Through an initiative funded by the Quebec Ministry of Education Chantier III, a context-specific and research-driven online toolkit regarding UDL will be launched in the Fall of 2016 as a complementary resource to the teaching community of McGill.

As far as resources are concerned, the University is working to better understand the impact on the OSD budget of recent changes to the funding provided by government, and has provided an allocation in FY17 to OSD to start bridging the gap between services and demands. Because we realize this may not be sufficient in the future, we are working strategically and collaboratively with other units in the University, as you can see above, to implement a better, proactive system.

Ollivier Dyens, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Fact Sheet
Appendix B: Report from the OSD

APPENDIX A – Fact Sheet

When looking at the question above, the Senate is invited to consider the following elements:

About UDL

- UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn[12],
- McGill's MyAccess/OSD hosted the Canadian UDL Conference in May 2015
- The expertise of McGill's OSD has been recognized by the MESRS Chantier 3 funding awarding OSD $280,000 from December 2013 to December 2016 for research into UDL implementation,

About Mental Health and Neurodiversity

- MH issues awareness and manifestation are on the rise:
- with 75% of MH problems appearing before the age of 24,[13]
- with visits to emergency rooms for MH issues having increased by nearly 150% in Montreal between 2008 and 2012[14],
- "We don't look at a calla lily and say that it has "petal deficit disorder"; we appreciate its beautiful shape. We don't say that a person with a different skin color from our own has a "pigmentation disability"; that would be racist. Similarly, we shouldn't label students as ADHD or as learning disabled, for example, just because they have different ways of paying attention or learning."[15]
- Neurodiversity is a concept where neurological differences, such as those labeled with High IQ, Autistic Spectrum, Mental Health issues, and Learning Disabilities, are to be recognized and respected as any other human variation, moving from a medicalized approach of neurological differences towards a social and human rights approach of them,
- "A neurodiversity perspective can help educators create learning environments in which all students flourish" [by suggesting that] we take the positive attitudes and beliefs that most people hold about biodiversity and cultural diversity and apply them to differences among human brains." [16]

Relevant take-aways from previous Joint-Board Senate Meetings

- Joint-Board Senate Meeting on Mental Health at McGill, November 12, 2013:
  Principal Suzanne Fortier stated that "**There is hardly a topic that deserves more attention than mental health**" [17]
- Joint-Board Senate Meeting on the "Smart Campus" concept, November 3, 2015:
  "importance of Universal Design for Learning **(UDL) as a means to incorporate student autonomy in determining learning preferences**"
- Joint-Board Senate Meeting on UDL, December 5, 2012 concluded that "McGill should increase the use of technology in the classroom, as this would provide many **Universal Design solutions**" and that "**UDL would lower stress of some students**"[18],

[12] http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl
[13] http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2013/11/mental-health-mcgill-tackles-a-widespread-community-issue/
[14] Idem
[15] ihttp://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct12/vol70/num02/First,-Discover-Their-Strengths.aspx
[16] Idem
[17] http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2013/11/mental-health-mcgill-tackles-a-widespread-community-issue/
[18] https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d12-35_joint_board-senate_report_0.pdf

McGill Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy (March 2014)

- In the Education goals, McGill defines itself as "**a truly student-centered institution** and one in which the learning of faculty staff, and community partners is also actively supported" and stated that its vision for the future of education was that "**Concepts of and strategies for sustainability are integrated into our programming, pedagogy and assessment**" [19]
- The draft action plans of June 2013[20] and October 2013[21] for McGill Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy mentioned Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a sustainable strategy in teaching delivery processes themselves,

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[19] https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/vision-2020-sustainability-strategy/education
[20] https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/action_plan.pdf
[21] https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/v2020_51_action_list_0.pdf

APPENDIX B - Report from OSD

McGill

Étudiantes et étudiants en situation de handicap en 2012-2013

		Hommes		Femmes			Total	%
Nombre total		**552**	**40%**	**759**	**55%**		**1368**	
Répartition par deficience						Tempo-raire (s)		
Hearing impairment	HI	**5**		**9**			**14**	**1%**
Organic impairment	OI	**73**		**123**		**57**	**253**	**15%**
Motor impairment	MOI	**66**		**79**			**145**	**11%**
Visual impairment	VI	**9**		**15**			**24**	**2%**
Multiple impairments	MUI	**89**		**133**			**222**	**17%**
Attention Deficit Disorder	ADD	**98**		**78**			**176**	**13%**
Learning disability	LD	**75**		**97**			**172**	**13%**
Mental health disorder	MHD	**130**		**222**			**352**	**27%**
Pervasive develop. disorder	PDD	**7**		**3**			**10**	**1%**

Étudiantes et étudiants en situation de handicap en 2013-2014

	Hommes		Femmes			Total	%
Nombre total	**568**	**41%**	**822**	**59%**		**1390**	
Répartition par déficience					**Temp-oraire(s)**		
Hearing impairment HI	7		10			17	1%
Organic impairment OI	83		157		62	240	17%
Motor impairment MOI	25		45		69	70	5%
Visual impairment VI	10		14		1	24	2%
Attention Deficit Disorder ADD	195		173		11	368	26%
Learning disability LD	99		114		12	213	15%
Mental health disorder MHD	143		305		17	448	32%
Autism spectrum disorders ASD	6		4		1	10	1%

McGill

Étudiantes et étudiants en situation de handicap en 2014-2015

	Hommes		Femmes			Total	%
Nombre total	**619**	**39%**	**985**	**61%**		**1604**	
Répartition par déficience					Tempo-raire (s)		
Déficience auditive DA	4		11		0	15	1%
Déficience organique DO	64		141		48	205	13%
Déficience motrice DMO	30		44		64	74	5%
Déficience visuelle DV	9		13		0	22	1%
Déficience multiple DMU	112		136		7	248	15%
Tr. Déficitaire de l'attention TDA	144		125		3	269	17%
Troubles d'apprentissage TA	87		103		9	190	12%
Trouble de santé mentale TSM	163		409		13	572	36%
Tr. du spectre de l'autisme TSA	6		3		0	9	1%