

# **Strategic Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Plan 2020-2025**

## **VISION**

McGill University is a world-class institution of higher education and research. Our University recognizes that excellence in teaching and scholarship requires the convergence and collaboration of individuals of diverse identities, experiences, and ideas. Equally important, McGill values respectful and inclusive learning and work environments, which seek to identify and challenge historic and systemic barriers to full participation in university life and to foster discovery, advancement, and accomplishment, all of which benefit our University and society more broadly. McGill is committed to these values in the pursuit of all aspects of its academic mission. This commitment finds expression in McGill's [Mission Statement and Principles](#):

### *MISSION*

*The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.*

### *PRINCIPLES*

*In fulfilling its mission, McGill University embraces the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness.*

Each member of the University community – whether student, faculty, or academic support staff there is much that we all share, it is crucial to acknowledge our varied levels of advantage, privilege, and opportunity. These variances can affect our ability to access all that McGill offers, and flourish in our campus settings.

Universities across Canada are presently called upon to recognize and address historical and contemporary forces that result in social inequities in postsecondary contexts. Many such forces have their roots in ideologies and practices – such as colonialism, slavery, and patriarchy. Although these ideologies and practices no longer reflect McGill's values, their harmful effects persist. As such, our institutional commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) must acknowledge and seek to address the lasting effects of historic injustices that continue to challenge equal opportunities to access, and to succeed within, the McGill community. Our EDI commitments must also be inspired by the recognition that excellence is fostered by bringing together individuals and groups of diverse experiences, identities, and ideas.

This Strategic EDI Plan for McGill seeks to act on this commitment through the articulation of specific goals, and measures for their achievement, over the next five years. Over this period, McGill will embed EDI in all core areas of the University, drawing on multiple strategic University-level documents initiated by McGill's Principal and Provost over the last decade (Appendix A).

Inspired by the transversal character and importance of EDI across the University, this Strategic EDI Plan maps its objectives onto the five priority areas that McGill's Principal & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Suzanne Fortier, has identified for our campus community:

1. [The McGill Commitment](#)
2. [Unleashing our Full Research Potential](#)
3. [Enhancing our Community Partnerships](#)
4. [My Healthy Workplace](#)
5. [Transforming our Campus](#)

This EDI Strategic Plan is thus organized according to the following five corresponding themes:

1. Student experience
2. Research and knowledge
3. Outreach
4. Workforce
5. Physical Space

For each theme, the Plan sets out goals, measures, and modes of oversight. In so doing, it references and builds on existing McGill priorities, plans, and reports that embed EDI goals. Over the life of this Plan (2020-2025), McGill commits to ongoing public reporting on our progress with respect to the measures set out herein, and to creating opportunities for feedback from our community members, through multiple formats, on EDI work at McGill.

Prior to setting out the Plan's specific aspirations and measures for assessing progress, an understanding of key terminology is in order.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Although the words “equity”, “diversity”, and “inclusion” have gained traction in recent years, their meaning is not always clear. A shared understanding of these terms will facilitate productive conversations on EDI as we move forward with this Strategic Plan. The definitions that follow are those adopted at this moment at McGill, recognizing that there are other possible meanings given to these terms within other communities and settings and that their meaning may evolve over time.

### **EQUITY**

Equity, unlike the notion of equality, is not about sameness of treatment. It denotes fairness and justice in process and in results. Equitable outcomes often require differential treatment and resource redistribution so as to achieve a level playing field among all individuals and communities. This requires recognizing and addressing barriers to opportunities for all to thrive in our University Environment.

### **DIVERSITY**

Diversity describes the presence of difference within any collection of people. In discussions of social equity, diversity addresses differences in social group membership related, for example, to race, Indigenous identity, class, gender identity or expression, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and religion.

Discussions about diversity linked to access and equity require knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary experiences of oppression and exclusion.

Diversity should be understood as uniting rather than dividing. The term calls upon us to appreciate both differences and interconnectedness, and to recognize and respond to systemic and institutionalized discrimination.

## **INCLUSION**

Inclusion refers to the notion of belonging, feeling welcome and valued, having a sense of citizenship. It also speaks to a capacity to engage and succeed in a given institution, program, or setting. Inclusion calls for recognizing, reducing, and removing barriers to participation created by social disadvantage or oppression, and can result in the reimagination of an institution, program, or setting.

The concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion are far more than rhetoric; they are central to McGill's academic mission and vision. As the various planning documents, studies, and reports listed in Appendix A show, McGill has been making steady progress to create a University culture that promotes respect for diversity and the equitable inclusion of all community members over the past decade. However, we can do even better. There is still much work to be done, as reflected in our data and in the views expressed across our campus community. This Strategic Plan aspires to unify our efforts and achieve specific EDI goals over the next five years. Moreover, the Plan aims to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion as fundamental to all areas and practices of the University.

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Many of the documents in Appendix A show that McGill has failed to meet its own targets, and have shown McGill is doing worse over the years (particularly in campus-wide employment equity, and around graduate students). It is good to acknowledge plans and progress, but to move forward, McGill must also acknowledge shortcomings in order to address the very serious issues at hand.
- McGill has not included the [2019 Biennial Report on Employment Equity](#) in Appendix A. While the report has its limitations—it does not fully address concerns relating to the underrepresentation of Indigenous, ethnic minority, transgender, or disabled people, for example—it is a very important report that ought to be included in this EDI Plan.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

### **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

[The McGill Commitment](#) is premised on a recognition of the diversity within the University's student body, resulting from its vibrant international character as well as McGill's location within a cosmopolitan centre. Core to the Commitment is bolstering and celebrating student diversity, striving to provide equitable support and access to opportunities, and promoting a respectful and inclusive learning experience for all students. Beyond the Commitment, a range of initiatives can help facilitate access to the University for students from underrepresented social groups while striving to ensure that student life and learning at McGill are characterized by openness and acceptance.

In support of these aspirations, this EDI Strategic Plan sets the following goals:

### **1. Increase the representativeness of the student body**

Measures for progress:

- Collect, analyze, and report on demographic data on students to understand the composition of student body. Draw on this data to adapt the Strategic Enrollment Plan to address identified areas of underrepresentation.
- Aim for target set for Indigenous student enrolment set in [Strategic Academic Plan \(SAP\)](#): 1000 University-wide.
- Elaborate and commit to an action plan to address McGill's responsibility to Black students, particularly from North America, with a focus on student recruitment, retention, and success, notably through:
  - increased outreach with Black communities with a view to enhanced student enrolment; and
  - attention and awareness to the particular needs of Black students with respect to student advising and support.<sup>1</sup>

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate on Enrolment and Strategic Enrolment Management. Responsibility lies with the Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning) (DP-SLL) and the Associate Provost (Equity & Academic Policies) (AP-EAP).

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- While setting targets can be helpful, the target for Indigenous enrolment should include benchmarks at different academic levels. In other words, the University should be striving toward greater Indigenous enrolment in Bachelor's programs, Law and Medicine programs, Master's and Doctoral programs. Including 1,000 Indigenous students, but all at an undergraduate level, is very different than including different levels.
- The action plan for recruiting and retaining Black students is noticeably un-elaborated on. This final version of the EDI strategic plan should give this subject the careful consideration it deserves. Part of McGill's responsibility to Black students is honesty and transparency, and this must include as much clarity as possible in regards to effort to recruit and retain Black students.
- University efforts to recruit and support Black Students must include Black students already at McGill. For example, the Black Students Network's effort to create a Black Students' Bill of Rights ought to be engaged with in any efforts to move forward.

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<sup>1</sup> This goal and measure is inspired by the [Final Report of the Working Group on Principles of Commemoration and Renaming](#) (p. 17) and the [Final Report on Understanding Diversity and Discrimination](#) (p. 13).

## **2. Promote student wellness, success, and support, especially for those from underrepresented groups**

Measures for progress:

- Track and analyze information on student retention and time to graduation using demographic data. Develop and implement plans to address differential outcomes identified through data analysis.
- Develop a survey instrument and survey cycle through which to measure student wellness and students' experiences and perspectives on respect and inclusion. As required, develop plans to address areas of concern identified through this exercise, paying particular attention to student populations who may be especially susceptible to alienation or isolation (e.g., students with disabilities, racialized students, international students).
- Build capacity of student wellness staff to address the concerns and needs of those who self-identify as members of underrepresented groups and work to enhance the representativeness of this staff.
- Meet target for increasing student aid set in SAP: 30% of total net tuition revenues.
- Create and support opportunities for students from underrepresented groups to come together in shared social and networking spaces.
- Review McGill policies that establish accommodations for students with disabilities and observing holy days to ensure, insofar as possible, equity in academic assessments.
- Increase food options on campus that promote the University's commitment to sustainability while also recognizing the diversity of McGill's student body and the religious dietary observances of some members of the University community.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate of the Committee on Student Services and the Annual Report to Senate on Scholarships and Student Aid.

Responsibility lies with the DP-SLL and AP-EAP.

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- The description of supporting particular marginalized groups in the second point above is concerning, and erases the University community's responsibility towards each other. Instead of describing students as "susceptible to alienation or isolation"—which may not be the issues students face that have a negative impact on their well-being—McGill should emphasize the importance of supporting marginalized students who may face a variety of barriers to well-being.
- This plan must address the link between these data and the academic outcomes of students at all levels and must make it a *responsibility*—not merely a priority—to ameliorate experiences of alienation, isolation, instability, and financial insecurity for graduate students. Based on McGill's own [Key Performance Indicators](#), McGill's doctoral completion rate has been below target for over a decade, and for a while was declining. In the U15, McGill is ranked eighth for masters thesis graduation after five years, and ninth for doctoral graduation after nine years (based on the 2008 cohort). It is time to talk about why.
- The target for student aid should be replaced by three measures: student aid for undergraduates, master's students, and doctoral students. Graduate students require more need-based aid without taking it from undergraduates, and this allows for a clearer picture of what the landscape for financial aid is at McGill.
- While "accommodations" is a broad category, accommodations for disabled students and accommodations for students of faith are not the same. These issues should be split into separate

categories, as they constitute very different kinds of accommodations (and very different rights invoked). Further, the issue might not be policies—it is important to fully engage with the students affected in order to gauge the effectiveness of existing structures.

- Given ongoing barriers to fully engaging with campus life faced by transgender, non-binary, and/or gender nonconforming students—as well as the unique needs that these communities—supporting students of marginalized genders must be included in efforts to assess wellness at McGill.

### ***3. Raise student awareness about discrimination, oppression, and their effects***

Measures for progress:

- Develop equity education modules delivered via multiple formats (e.g., in-person, online, podcasts) drawing, where appropriate, on existing programs in Student Services and Teaching and Learning Services.

*Reporting on progress* will occur through the Annual Report to Senate of the Committee on Student Life and Learning. Responsibility lies with the DP-SLL.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- McGill must bring back the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office (SEDE) or create a comparable office to fill its place. Equity training has become less frequent and far less accessible. In addition, the University does not even maintain websites with accurate information about what little programming it does offer in these areas. This initiative must be undertaken by a well-staffed office with fair working conditions and fair expectations placed upon the educators hired there. All too often, McGill's commitment to equity and diversity is relegated to understaffed offices, and this burden of educating the McGill community on equity issues disproportionately falls upon women of colour.

### ***4. Enhance capacity of teaching staff and Student Services to create and maintain respectful, accessible, and inclusive student life and learning settings***

Measures for progress:

- Develop and deliver modules, in consultation with student groups and associations, on topics such as equity, implicit bias, cultural safety, accessibility and universal design to support teaching and front-line Student Services staff. Undertake ongoing assessments to ensure the effectiveness of this training.
- Develop training and supports for teaching staff, particularly those who engage with difficult and sensitive topics in the classroom, on balancing our commitments to freedom of expression, academic freedom, respect and inclusion. Undertake ongoing assessments to ensure the effectiveness of these measures.
- Promote the adoption of universal design for learning practices in program structures, course materials, pedagogical approaches, and academic assessments to reduce the demand and need for accommodations and enhance the educational experience of all students.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and the Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity. Responsibility lies with the DP-SLL and AP-EAP.

**Union’s Recommendations:**

- The University has a legal obligation under Bill 151 to provide training on the prevention of sexual violence to the office-holders of unions and student associations every year. McGill should expand upon this capacity by offering additional modules such as those listed above to unions and associations. McGill should engage these groups as allies in this mission to create a safer, more equitable McGill community.
- While both [Universal Design for teaching](#) and [Universal Design for building management](#) have been promoted by McGill for over seven years, classrooms remain inaccessible for students, faculty, and staff. Instead of “promoting” Universal Design, McGill must *escalate* the implementation of UD principles which it already promotes.

**5. Ensure University policies establish prompt, effective, and confidential channels to address EDI concerns and complaints**

Measures for progress:

- Analyze reporting rates under:
  - Policy on Harassment & Discrimination Prohibited by Law; and
  - Policy against Sexual Violence.
- Obtain and analyze feedback on experiences of reporting from various sources to evaluate perceptions within the campus community of reporting processes and resources, including:
  - Senior Equity & Inclusion Advisor
  - Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education
  - Ombudsperson
  - Dean of Students and Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
  - Student associations
  - Special Investigator (Sexual Violence)
- Raise awareness about relevant University reporting channels and resources.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate on the Policy on Harassment & Discrimination Prohibited by Law and the Annual Report to Senate on the Policy against Sexual Violence. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP.

**Union’s Recommendations:**

- Countless studies have shown that many survivors of sexual violence and harassment choose not to

report. While it is important to review reporting statistics, more must be done to raise awareness about existing structures, while addressing the campus culture: prevention is best.

- Currently, the University has not informed the community about the departure of the Special Investigator (SI) last semester, and the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support, and Education (OSVRSE) still lists incorrect information about the SI on their [website](#). How are students to be surveyed when they do not have basic information about the reporting process of the Policy Against Sexual Violence? McGill must prioritise a revision of the Policy which outlines the hiring practice and contractual relationship of the SI, and this revision should occur before the Policy's next scheduled revision so that the community has adequate time to evaluate the process.

## RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE

McGill researchers are internationally renowned leaders and innovators within their respective disciplines. Our University values scholarship both for the inherent value of advancing knowledge and for the benefits yielded by its application in a range of settings. To this end, local and global partnerships, with actors in private, public, and community sectors, further McGill's priority of [Unleashing McGill's Full Research Potential](#). The importance of such partnerships is explored further under theme 3 (Outreach) of this Plan, below.

McGill's [Strategic Research Plan](#) articulates multiple commitments and aspirations connected to EDI, recognizing that the potential for discovery and ground-breaking work is heightened when scholars enjoy freedom of inquiry in inclusive research communities marked by pluralism in terms of experience, identity, and ideology. Excellence is furthered by ensuring equity of opportunity in research, notably in connection with funding, prizes, awards, mentorship, and graduate and postdoctoral training.

In light of the importance of EDI in this priority area, McGill will create the new position of Senior Research Equity Advisor (SREA). The SREA is a senior level advisor responsible for guiding and supporting the implementation of McGill's EDI initiatives in research and innovation and the broader goal of maintaining excellence in an increasingly competitive and challenging global research environment. Specific EDI objectives for McGill in connection with research include:

### ***1. Maintain recognition for diverse research ideologies and methodologies, including community-engaged, land-based,<sup>2</sup> and participatory action research<sup>3</sup>***

Measures for progress:

- Deliver training to academic leaders and members of the research community on EDI in connection with research activities.

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<sup>2</sup> "Land-based" practices facilitate Indigenous persons' and communities' reconnection with land, identity, and culture while accounting for "the needs, values, teachings, and cultures of Indigenous community members and nations." It calls for creating opportunities for work – whether teaching or research – in Indigenous communities, "with Elders, relatives, and knowledge keepers who can pass down knowledge and culture." See John Hansen, "Cree Elders' Perspectives on Land-Based Education: A Case Study" (2018) 28:1 Brock Education Journal 74. See also Jennifer Redvers, "Land-based Practice for Indigenous Health and Wellness in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut" November 2016, [http://www.ichr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Land-based-ResearchSummary\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ichr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Land-based-ResearchSummary_2016.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "Participatory action" research seeks to engage the "subject" of a study as participants in the design, conducting, and analysis of a project with a view to ensuring that the work is both democratic in its planning and execution and that it results in meaningful results that will be of particular benefit to the populations in question. See Hal A. Lawson et al, eds, *Participatory Action Research* (OUP, 2015).

- Review nominations for research prizes and awards to ensure nominations include fair representation of researchers whose work has clear connections to EDI.
- Uphold commitments articulated in McGill's CRC EDI Action Plan
- Profile diversity of research activities through McGill channels (e.g., homepage, What's New/Reporter).

Reporting on progress will occur through:

- Annual Report to Senate on Research and Innovation
- McGill Annual Report to the Tri-Council Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS)
- CRC EDI Action Plan Annual Report

Responsibility lies with the Vice-Principal (Research & Innovation) (VP-RI) and the AP-EAP.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- It is not sufficient to prioritise EDI-related projects when reviewing nominations to external funding agencies. McGill: put your *own* money where your mouth is. Create internal awards in every Faculty to recognize EDI-related research conducted by students, fellows, and faculty.
- McGill must commit support to units which produce EDI-related research. In particular, McGill should explore the option of turning institutes like the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSF) into departments with tenure-stream faculty, graduate degrees, and the resources to grow their research.
- McGill must include members of marginalized communities in Research Ethics Board (REB) reviews. While "academic freedom" is a priority for McGill, this must not come at the expense of harming marginalized communities (including [transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people](#)).
- Many McGill community members feel that McGill administrators and researchers do not properly respond to the call to engage in ethical research (i.e. [a Winter 2020 event featuring Dr. Zucker](#), which a number of Senate Subcommittee members and student groups responded to). In light of ongoing campus events and research that can create harm or the sense that responsible research is not a component of academic inquiry, McGill should create a working group pertaining to research on marginalized communities and other ways of fostering a robust research environment that includes the recognition of marginalized groups' dignity.

## **2. Strive for equitable representation of individuals from underrepresented groups among chairholders and recipients of awards**

Measures for progress:

- Review nominations for research prizes and awards to ensure nominations include fair representation of researchers from underrepresented groups.
- Meet and surpass CRC targets set for McGill by the TIPS.
- Determine, based on our demographics, what equitable representation should be among our internal awards (James McGill, William Dawson) and endowed chairs, and work to meet these targets.
- Implement measures to prefer candidates from underrepresented groups, where equivalent, in nomination and selection processes.
- Ensure diversity in membership of nomination and selection committees and panels.

- Deliver EDI training to all nomination and selection committee and panel members with a view to increasing the diversity of nominee pools for research awards.

Reporting on progress will occur through:

- Biennial Report to Senate on Employment Equity
- McGill Annual Report to the Tri-Council Institutional Programs Secretariat
- CRC EDI Action Plan

Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- McGill continues to fail to meet its own targets in regards to disabled scholars holding a CRC position. Disabled scholars must be made a priority in hiring and retention. This means such practices as immediately, actively, and openly prioritising disabled scholars, not waiting to fail to meet benchmarks for several years in a row (as is described in the current CRC EDI Action plan).
- McGill continues to fail to meet its own targets in regards to Indigenous scholars holding a CRC position. Indigenous scholars must be made a priority in hiring and retention. This means such practices as immediately, actively, and openly prioritising Indigenous scholars, not waiting to fail to meet benchmarks for several years in a row (as is described in the current CRC EDI Action plan).
- It is good to include "surpass" targets in EDI plans. Minimum targets ought to be considered as minimums, so "meeting and surpassing" a minimum goal is a good way to target fully meeting the goals of the EDI plan.
- What is "our demographics" referring to? According to McGill's own reports, many marginalized groups are underrepresented at every level at the University. Instead, McGill could consider existing demographics of McGill faculty and staff as a minimum for representation.

### ***3. Establish and maintain equitable, accessible and inclusive research environments***

Measures for progress:

- Develop and share EDI best practices for researchers, related, for example, to training, mentorship, research environment, accessibility, and accommodations.
- Provide active support for researchers to integrate strong EDI plans within research and training programs. Assess on an ongoing basis to ensure effectiveness.

Reporting on progress will occur through McGill's equity website ([www.mcgill.ca/equity](http://www.mcgill.ca/equity)) that will share best practices. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Accommodations and accessibility are not merely best practices—they are a legal obligation of the University. Researchers must be clearly informed of this obligation and be given guidelines on what accommodations and accessibility look like.
- McGill should assess *all* research supervisors on an ongoing basis to ensure EDI effectiveness, not merely those who accept the AP's collaboration on EDI plans.

#### ***4. Ensure Indigenous-Led and Indigenous-Partnered research respects and benefits Indigenous peoples and communities***

Measures for progress:

- Develop and implement procedures in keeping with OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) Principles, as outlined in the [Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#).
- Develop and implement opportunities to support Indigenous-led research strategies and initiatives by researchers.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate on Research and Innovation. Responsibility lies with the VP-RI, AP-EAP, and Special Advisor, Indigenous Initiatives.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- While it is important to develop and implement support for Indigenous-led initiatives, the development and implementation of this support should be Indigenous-led and come alongside extensive engagement with Indigenous scholars and communities.

#### ***5. Lead research initiatives to enhance knowledge of, and to address equitably, McGill's connections to slavery and colonialism***

Measures for progress:

- Fund research and supported led by qualified experts on McGill's historic connections, both direct and indirect, to transatlantic slavery and to colonialism and its impact on Indigenous communities.
- Draw on the results of this research to publicly acknowledge and address McGill's connections to slavery and colonialism, notably through initiatives that will support the presence and success of Black and Indigenous students and faculty at McGill.

Reporting on progress will occur through various modes, including but not limited to the publication of the University-supported research described here, and through the Annual Report of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity.

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- The wording of a “qualified” expert is concerning, and can be another form of gatekeeping. An inclusive strategy must be proactive and vocal about the multiplicity of qualifications which may make someone an expert and a good educator. One’s lack of a certain kind of education should not preclude them from sharing their expertise on McGill’s connections to Indigenous genocide and the legacy of Black and Indigenous slavery.
- These efforts and research must be done through the leadership of Indigenous and Black scholars and community members.
- We encourage McGill to review its commitment to reparations, both to Indigenous and Black communities.

## **OUTREACH**

Teaching and research at McGill benefit from myriad partnerships with communities in Montréal and Québec, as well as across Canada and the rest of the world. McGill’s EDI goals are strengthened by outreach and engagement with these communities and collaborations with a range of organizations in the public, private, and community sectors. Notably, through community engagement, we are able to provide our students with critical experiential learning opportunities. These engagements are also key to the pursuit of socially-engaged research and innovation that advances knowledge in relation to some of the core challenges of our time.

Finally, our partnerships and outreach efforts telegraph McGill’s openness to welcoming all current and prospective students and staff members, regardless of social group membership or identity.

### ***1. Develop effective communications about McGill EDI initiatives and to celebrate EDI***

Measures for progress:

- Create and maintain a website for McGill EDI
- Publish regular EDI features in What’s New/Reporter
- Strive to ensure accessibility of all McGill communications and virtual spaces
- Engage with external media to profile EDI initiatives
- Commemorate, in a way that engages all Faculties and units of the University, internationally-recognized dates of particular relevance to equity-seeking groups: e.g., International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (17 May), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December).

Reporting on progress will occur through regular, public communications about EDI work at McGill. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP and the Vice-Principal (Communications and External Relations) (VP-CER).

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- McGill’s communication strategy should prioritise transparency and openness, engagement and critique. This will be far more effective at achieving these goals than a communication strategy

focused on advertisement and promotion.

- Many celebrations—such as Transgender Day of Visibility (31 March) and Transgender Day of Remembrance (20 November)—are already celebrated by members of the McGill community, without institutional support. University administration should support such efforts by engaging with existing networks, and work alongside members of the McGill community.

## ***2. Develop mentoring, networking, and advancement opportunities for students and staff from underrepresented groups***

Measures for progress:

- Create alumni mentorship network for students from underrepresented groups.
- Develop opportunities for students and staff from underrepresented groups to convene, share experiences, and explore career opportunities and pathways.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and the Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP in collaboration with University Advancement and the DP-SLL.

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Mentorship can provide invaluable support, both in terms of emotional well-being and future networking opportunities. Due to the burden of unpaid labour that falls upon members of marginalized communities, those staff and faculty who are engaged in mentorship should be formally recognized for supporting members of the McGill community.

## ***3. Deepen community collaborations in connection with University commemorations and celebrations***

Measures for progress:

- Develop partnerships, co-sponsorships, and opportunities for representation and engagement of various communities in events such as Black History Month, Indigenous Awareness Weeks, Queer History Month.
- Evaluate success of collaborations by consulting with community partners, and key campus stakeholders, e.g., equity education advisors, student equity commissioners, Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity.
- Bridge connections with local communities beyond the University through: outreach, featuring members' expertise and knowledge in McGill events, and supporting local, community-based vendors.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and the Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP in collaboration with the VP-CER.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- The opportunity to collaborate with community partners should be sourced from our own community, not merely from consultations with a handful of representatives. For example, there are few institutionalized positions for disabled students. "Equity" is a broad category, with many encompassed identities, and therefore a broad range of partnerships and collaborators should be engaged with—the whole McGill community are stakeholders in McGill equity efforts.
- A fund for this collaboration should be created and maintained, taking proposals from students, staff, and faculty.

#### **4. Deepen community collaborations in connection with academic program development**

Measures for progress:

- Consult local communities, particularly those underserved by higher education institutions, to discern local needs with respect to knowledge production and capacity development.
- Continue working to design and deliver academic programs aligned with McGill's academic mission and priorities that aim to serve these communities through local capacity-building, knowledge dissemination, and skills development.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate of the Academic Policies Committee.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- A greater emphasis, and dedicated resources, should be directed toward French language instruction at all levels. Graduate-level French courses should be offered and graduate students should no longer be discouraged from learning French. McGill's student body and graduates cannot participate in capacity-building within the local community without this skill.

## **WORKFORCE**

Core to McGill's priorities is a focus on building the capacity of all staff. McGill's commitment – articulated through its [My Healthy Workplace](#) strategy – seeks to establish a working environment in which employees "collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of employees and the sustainability of the workplace." Further, McGill's [Employment Equity Policy](#) calls for the development and application of equitable practices in the hiring, promotion, and retention of all staff. As such, University commits to proactive recruitment measures for hiring efforts in relation to all staff Groups.

Moreover, all members of the McGill community are entitled to healthy, safe, and inclusive work and learning environments. Pursuant to the University's [Policy on Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law](#) and

[Policy against Sexual Violence](#) each of us has a right to learn and work in environments free from harassment, sexual violence, and prohibited-ground discrimination.

While these commitments focus on the University's workforce, it is clear that healthy, respectful, and inclusive working conditions also enhance learning environments for students, who engage actively with our staff and who are themselves often also McGill employees.

In support of these aspirations, this EDI Strategic Plan commits to the following goals:

### **1. Increase the representativeness of the workforce**

Measures for progress:

- Continue to track and analyze data through McGill's [Employment Equity Survey](#).
- Implement corrective measures to address underrepresentation.
- Train Deans, Chairs, academic staff, and administrative and support staff on employment equity principles, policies, and practices using multiple formats. Assess these training activities in an ongoing fashion to ensure their effectiveness.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Biennial Report to Senate on Employment Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP with input from Human Resources.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- The phrase "corrective measures" is vague and does not provide specific guidance. In addition, a significant part of this EDI plan could be interpreted as "corrective measures." Further, McGill must consistently strive to be proactive towards inequity, rather than a decentralized, reactive response.
- In numerous instances, McGill's data collection and survey instruments have failed to account for the fact that many students (largely graduate students) are also employees and therefore cannot be said to reflect McGill's *actual* workforce. Therefore:
  - Extend the Employment Equity Survey to all employees, including those who are part-time, casual, and/or contract.
  - Ensure that offices and committees which produce official surveys are given the proper information to ensure that staff surveys reach all student workers.
  - Present the expanded employee equity survey results annually to stakeholders at the Academic Equity sub-committee as well as at an Employee Group Meeting.

### **2. Enhance and communicate resources available to support employees with disabilities**

Measures for progress:

- Develop and maintain a resource guide aimed at decreasing barriers and increasing satisfaction and retention of staff with disabilities.
- Create a specific position tied to the promotion of accessibility for all staff.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Biennial Report to Senate on Employment Equity.

Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP with input from Human Resources.

#### Union's Recommendations:

- Currently, many workers who are also students face intense barriers to getting accommodations--which become themselves inaccessible. Support must be available to all disabled employees.
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) was created specifically to mitigate the problem of consulting multiple offices in order to secure documentation and accommodations, with an explicit acknowledgement that multiple barriers to accommodations make the accommodations themselves *inaccessible*. Yet, OSD refuses to develop accommodation plans for student workers and McGill knowingly perpetuates inaccessibility of accommodations for TAs, RAs, Invigilators, and other student workers. McGill should allocate the resources (financial, legal, and otherwise) to help OSD expand its purview and truly serve the needs of disabled students.
- McGill simply cannot decrease barriers for accessibility through the exploitation of student labour. OSD must also receive the proper resources to maintain a sufficient staff of workers assisting with accommodations, including Invigilators. And above all, OSD *must* pay note-takers and discontinue the absurd promotion of compensation by means of a CV line.
- Establish a permanent Equity Fund that departments and hiring units can access to help finance any additional expenses incurred when accommodating TAs, RAs, Invigilators, and other student workers who are underserved by the current HR benefits structure.
- Campus culture plays a significant role in inaccessibility. Instead of only communicating with disabled staff, McGill must also create and implement—in consultation with disabled students, faculty, and staff—additional outreach to non-disabled members of the McGill community, especially those in positions of authority.

### **3. Address EDI gaps among tenure-stream academic staff through active recruitment and retention strategies**

Measures for progress:

- Surpass target set by [SAP](#): 20% representation of the following federally-designated equity groups: Indigenous persons, racialized persons, and/or persons with disabilities.
- Undertake measures to promote recruitment, hiring and retention of faculty from the most underrepresented groups among tenure track academic staff (persons who are Indigenous, Black, and/or living with a disability).
- Surpass target set by [SAP](#): 25% women full professor by 2022.
- Strive to meet target set by [Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#): 35 professors over 15 years.
- As student demographic data become available, examine how teaching staff and student populations compare, understanding the importance for many students of seeing themselves reflected in McGill's community of instructors and supervisors.
- Create mentorship network for junior professors.
- Create opportunities for faculty from underrepresented groups to come together in shared social and networking spaces (e.g., welcome ceremony for new Indigenous professors).

- Explore opportunities to develop leadership fora for women and/or members of underrepresented groups to encourage and build capacity for assuming senior leadership roles at McGill.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Biennial Report to Senate on Employment Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Reporting on tenure-stream faculty must *always* be accompanied by reporting on non-tenure-stream teaching staff, notably Faculty Lecturers and Course Lecturers. Many of these professors struggle to enter the tenure track. McGill must contend with the fact that adjuncts and lecturers are a substantial component of the teaching faculty and that through rapid "adjunctification", McGill denies research opportunities, fair salaries, teaching support, and job security to *the majority of professors*.

#### **4. Recognize diverse family forms in University Policies and Procedures**

Measures for progress:

- Review, with an eye to EDI, the following University policies:
  - Regulations on Maternity Leave, Parental Leave and Extended Parental Leave for Members of Academic Staff
  - Parental leaves policy for non-unionized non-academic staff
  - Allowable expenses from University startup funding related to family care

Reporting on progress will occur through a Report to Senate on the review of these policies and on any revisions deemed appropriate.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Create *paid* parental, paternity, and maternity leave schemes for part-time, casual, and contract staff, especially for student workers. In most cases, a student worker has several forms of part-time employment at the university, such that they end up dedicating full-time equivalent service to McGill without any of the benefits of a full-time employee. Student employees have precarious financial conditions and to deny even minimal financial support to them when starting a family invalidates McGill's commitment to recognizing diverse family forms.
- Address safety concerns for pregnant and nursing students and workers in the lab. Allow students, student workers, and non-student workers to request accommodations in the lab while respecting their privacy.
  - Implement training on the University's existing guidelines for pregnant and nursing students and workers in the lab for all Principal Investigators and work supervisors in labs using materials where there are reproductive risks.
  - Review the University's guidelines on the University's existing guidelines for pregnant and nursing students and workers in the lab at the University Health and Safety Committee as well as the relevant Equity Committees every 2 years.

- Nursing students, staff, and faculty do not have many options when it comes to nursing on-campus. In consultation with nursing students, staff, and faculty, McGill should create and publicize safe and private places to nurse and/or pump.

### **5. Ensure University Policies establish prompt, effective, and confidential channels to address EDI concerns and complaints**

Measures for progress:

- Analyze reporting rates under:
  - Policy on Harassment & Discrimination Prohibited by Law; and
  - Policy against Sexual Violence
- Obtain and analyze feedback on experiences of reporting from various sources to evaluate perceptions within the campus community of reporting processes and resources, including:
  - Senior Equity & Inclusion Advisor
  - Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education
  - Human Resources Advisors
  - Employee associations and unions
  - Special Investigator (Sexual Violence)
  - Raise awareness about relevant University reporting channels and resources.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate on the Policy on Harassment & Discrimination Prohibited by Law and the Annual Report to Senate on the Policy against Sexual Violence. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP and Human Resources.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- The decentralized nature of the university and the fact that many workers are also students, researchers, or postdoctoral fellows dependent on their managers in more ways than one all add up to the fact that McGill's employees are highly vulnerable to exploitation and retaliation within their workplace, and McGill does little to stop this. McGill must convene stakeholders, including unions and student associations, to develop plans to mitigate the risks for complainants.
- Currently, McGill's labour relations infrastructure is ill-equipped to serve student workers. The decentralization of the university weakens an understanding of academic contexts within Human Resources and offices dealing with student issues are siloed to the extent that a problem which overlaps academic and employment situations *cannot* be resolved by recourse to either or both academic authorities and labour relations. McGill must appoint Human Resources and Labour Relations advisors who are specifically dedicated to these overlapping contexts and must direct academic Faculties and services under the umbrella of Student Life and Learning to work productively with HR.
- Again, reporting and satisfaction rates do not paint a full picture of the state of harassment and sexual violence on campus. The University must constantly, through venues such as OSVRSE, engage with students, staff, and faculty in order to prevent harassment and sexual violence in the first place.
- One significant issue students, staff, and faculty raise in the context of reporting are concerns around the confidentiality of outcomes, even to survivors of harassment and sexual violence. While issues of

harassment, sexual violence, and confidentiality are certainly complex, a lack of clarity as to restrictions imposed by the University can lead to ongoing and unaddressed issues faced by members of the McGill community. For example, some researchers in a lab may not be informed that a senior research has had restrictions placed upon them as to supervision due to harassment and/or sexual violence; this means that members of the McGill community may not be able to report a violation, or make the safest decision for their own well-being. McGill must address concerns of the University community on this important issue, through such means as ongoing meetings of the Policy on Sexual Violence working groups. Addressing this complicated issue could mean more faith in the reporting process, as well as a safer, more supportive University community.

- To further advance the goal of having an effective reporting process for cases of harassment and sexual violence, McGill must lobby the provincial government to revise regulations related to privacy so that universities are equipped to confront sexual violence in their communities and remove abusers. McGill has repeatedly told students and staff that it cannot respond to our calls for accountability toward abusers due to restrictive privacy laws in Québec, and the AP-EAP has suggested that the only remedy would be to change these laws. It's time for McGill to contribute to this effort publicly and to engage the community in proposals to the provincial government.

## ***6. Promote respectful, accessible, and inclusive work environments***

Measures for progress:

- Develop and deliver equity, cultural safety, and accessibility/universal design modules for staff, and assess effectiveness of this training through feedback from participants, HR Advisors, and academic leaders.
- Develop a survey instrument and survey cycle through which to measure employee experience and assessment of respect and inclusion in the workplace. As required, develop plans to address outcomes of concern that are identified through this exercise.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and the Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP in collaboration with Human Resources.

### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Student workers are the most vulnerable employees at McGill and the development of modules and survey instruments should start with student workers.
- McGill has already had modules on Universal Design and accessibility—the University must address the efficacy (or lack of) such modules, and what can be changed to foster a more accessible McGill.
- Plans to address outcomes of concern should include measures to remove line managers from the workplace when issues attributed to their management are identified, and these plans should include student workers. In other words, when survey results indicate that a professor has failed to uphold an equitable and respectful work environment for their TAs, graders, and research assistants, then their capacity to manage such employees should be reconsidered.

## PHYSICAL SPACE

Thoughtfully designed physical space is essential to the advancement of McGill's academic mission. Likewise, the University's EDI commitments cannot be achieved without considering whether and how access is facilitated, and diversity is reflected, across our campuses. More precisely, we risk alienating those who do not see themselves represented in our physical spaces, including their design or layout, or in the iconography or nomenclature assigned to them.

These themes are addressed at length in the [Final Report of the Provost's Working Group on Principles of Commemoration and Renaming](#). Space was also one of five themes taken up in the [Final Report of the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life](#). Key recommendations connected to space also appear in the [Report of the Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#). Each of these documents articulate recommendations that should guide decisions about physical space, including those that will be made as the University advances toward the implementation of its Master Plan. Building on these recommendations, this Strategic Plan sets the following EDI goals:

### ***1. Reflect diverse identities within McGill's historic and contemporary communities in campus iconography, signage, ceremonies, and naming***

Measures for progress:

- Strive to represent diverse identities as new naming opportunities arise.
- Represent diverse identities as new artwork is commissioned and showcased at the University, particularly during and following the University's Bicentennial celebrations.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and the Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP in collaboration with University Advancement and the Visual Arts Collection.

#### **Union's Recommendations:**

- Considering that many existing buildings on campus are already named for those who are now [widely-acknowledged for their racism and sexism](#), the existing names of spaces must be taken seriously. McGill should address the histories of those named in campus buildings (i.e. Currie, Leacock, Ferrier), through means such as a standing working group, or ongoing efforts to address McGill's complicated legacy.

### ***2. Enhance accessibility of buildings, pathways, and other physical spaces***

Measures for progress:

- Design, implement and maintain an Interactive Accessible Network (IAN) Map establishing wayfinding for all individuals regardless of capacities vis-à-vis physical mobility.
- Increase project activity within the Universal Access Capital Projects Working Group.

- Increase accessible entrances in campus buildings (per Campus Master Plan).
- Develop accessibility standards for built facilities.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate on Physical Development. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP and Campus Planning and Development.

#### Union's Recommendations:

- Create an easy way for inaccessible entrances (i.e. broken ramps, broken handrails, broken buttons) to be identified, and a timeline for fixing these.
- Many spaces on campus are physically inaccessible, or have “accessible entrances” blocked by things like garbage bins (i.e. Brown Building). Not only is this potentially illegal and means a space is inaccessible to a McGill community member, such ongoing issues are harmful to one’s dignity and sense of well-being. McGill should give clear guidance to building administrators, faculty, and staff as to the importance of keeping entrances and exits clear, as well as allowing for easy and confidential reporting of such obstructions.
- [Since at least 1997 \(and updated as recently as 2019\)](#), McGill has had guidance on accessibility in buildings (including accessibility standards for built facilities), yet the campus remains exceptionally inaccessible. McGill must now *escalate*, and make physical accessibility a priority—all members of the McGill community must be able to access McGill’s campuses. Physically excluding McGill students, staff, and faculty is unacceptable.
- An up-to-date report on the current physical inaccessibility of McGill’s campuses is not available. Therefore, to gauge the current state of accessibility on-campus, McGill should conduct [a survey and produce a report similar to that conducted at George Washington University](#) that notes the accessibility of every campus space. This kind of report would best help McGill make plans to address problems, and would be more proactive than waiting for disabled McGill community members to complain through complicated processes.

### **3. Create dedicated spaces for McGill community members’ spiritual, social, and wellness needs**

Measures for progress:

- Designate accessible non-denominational contemplative space for individual or group meditation, counseling, spiritual needs, and/or other activities promoting mental and emotional wellness.
- Assess whether existing spaces meet current needs through engagement and consultation with the Wellness Hub, the McGill Office for Religious and Spiritual Life, Equity Education Advisors, and student associations.

Reporting on progress will occur through the Annual Report to Senate and Board of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity. Responsibility lies with the AP-EAP and the DP-SLL.

#### Union's Recommendations:

- While emotional well-being is certainly linked to one’s spiritual needs, it is important to not confuse clinicians for other important staff (though the [Wellness Hub’s communication guidance advises otherwise](#)). McGill must consider students’ spiritual needs as important in and of themselves, not solely important due to their implication on “wellness.”
- Based on [AGSEM’s own survey data](#), the Wellness Hub does not meet student needs; 0% of respondents reported accessing the Hub with no barriers. In addition, engagement and consultation should be done with students, not just the Wellness Hub, especially given the Hub’s history of bad-faith manipulation of data in response to valid concerns (i.e. [comparing summer appointments to term-time appointments](#), and pointing out increasing hires without acknowledging the huge number of staff who have left). To this end, McGill should create an anonymous form (that therefore does not require student log-in) where students can report feedback. The feedback given in this form should be addressed through changes to McGill’s practices and procedures, and a report on how Student Services is addressing feedback should be presented at Senate.
- Given ongoing concerns about physical accessibility at McGill, these important spaces that meet students’ needs must be physically accessible.
- Due in part to the ongoing closure of the SSMU Building, Muslim students, staff, and faculty have difficulties finding space on-campus to pray. The best option for some is to pray in a stairwell. While we acknowledge that space shortages are an ongoing issue, Muslim students, staff, and faculty should have a safe and respectful place to meet their religious needs, both at the Downtown and Macdonald campuses. In consultation with Muslim students, staff, and faculty, McGill should locate and secure safe places to pray on both campuses.

#### ***4. Enhance Indigenous presence in public spaces, as well as the availability of cultural and living spaces for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff***

Measures for progress:

- Advance the general goals, orientations, and principles related to Indigenous representation embedded within the Board-approved Master Plan.
- Define a global space strategy for all Indigenous needs, including academic, communal, study, and cultural functions.

Reporting on progress will occur through reporting on Master Plan to Senate and the Board of Governors. Responsibility lies with Campus Planning and Development and the Special Advisor on Indigenous Initiatives.

#### **Union’s Recommendations:**

- Both increasing Indigenous representation and increasing the availability of cultural and living spaces for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty is very important, but these efforts must be done in constant consultation with Indigenous students, staff, and faculty. This can be done through efforts like widely-publicized online consultations, membership in working groups, and focus groups.
- Policies and strategies that directly impact Indigenous students must actively include consultation with Indigenous students. This can be done through efforts like widely-publicized online consultations,

membership in working groups, and focus groups.

## CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan provides a foundation for advancing EDI initiatives already underway at McGill, while also creating a platform for new opportunities that will deepen our understanding of, and commitment to, EDI as a campus community over the next five years. This Plan embeds EDI as a shared responsibility across multiple University offices and stakeholders, thereby communicating the centrality of EDI throughout the University. Notably, while the Plan situates EDI as a responsibility that rests primarily with the Associate Provost (Equity & Academic Policies), it identifies multiple sites of accountability for EDI outcomes. In so doing, the Plan sets clear goals and measures, transparently identifying where responsibility for results lies and what modes will be used to share information about the University's progress in this domain. Finally, McGill's EDI Strategic Plan is anchored to the five priority areas identified by McGill's Principal & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Suzanne Fortier. As such, it will guide decisions about our core activities as a University, serving to enhance McGill's EDI commitments and outcomes while simultaneously advancing excellence in the pursuit of our University's academic mission.

## APPENDIX A – University Reports Articulating EDI Commitments (Listed Chronologically)

- [2005 Policy on Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited By Law](#)
- [2005 Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [2007 Employment Equity Policy](#)
- [2008 McGill University Physical Master Plan: Planning and Design Principles](#)
- [2011 Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence, and Community Engagement](#)
- [2016 Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Systemic Discrimination](#)
- [2016 Policy against Sexual Violence](#)
- [2017 Report of the Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#)
- [2017 Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022](#)
- [2018 Report of the Principal's Task Force on Respect and Inclusion in Campus Life](#)
- [2018 Report of the Working Group on Principles of Renaming and Commemoration](#)
- [2019 McGill Strategic Research Plan](#)
- [2019 Master Plan \(Draft\)](#)
- [2019 McGill CRC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#)

