



The School of Environment welcomes the opportunity provided by the cyclical review to reflect on its role at McGill. We acknowledge the critical nature of the review report, but also view it as an occasion to initiate long-overdue discussions with the university leadership, as well as with groups across McGill interested in sustainability and the environment, about our common expectations for interdisciplinary education and research at McGill.

With joint and associate members in all Faculties, the School can be seen as an incubator where ideas from different academic cultures often collide - and sometimes

all previous review reports, and a proposal for such a program continues to face resistance from within McGill. Meanwhile, other institutions in Canada, including UofT, have created Schools of Environment or Institutes, most with competitive graduate programs where environment and sustainability are closely intertwined.

The lack of research space, failure to obtain a graduate program, and a general lack of support has led the cyclical review to conclude that the MSE does not contribute to the research of its individual faculty. Indeed, the report acknowledges a substantial challenge for MSE researchers and for McGill. It is time for McGill leadership in collaboration with the MSE to formulate a transparent plan for the future of interdisciplinary environment and sustainability research at McGill and clarify expectations about the role of the MSE and ways in which it can better support its JAF, while simultaneously being useful to McGill and to the broader environment community.

MSE Faculty are in unanimous agreement with the Review Committee's finding that, above all else, the undergraduate MSE programs are unique and invaluable contributions to McGill's offerings, and should remain intact.

The School is tremendously proud of its students and of its undergraduate programs which count over 1500 alumni. The continued success of these programs depends, like in any other unit, on the ability to retain and recruit instructors who will be committed to teaching and improving the curriculum. Recruitment has been an issue in recent years, however, as departments prefer to have full positions to joint ones, and there is little incentive for them to pair with us. Moreover, recruiting new teaching team partners from within the University requires payments of teaching buyouts to departments, with consequences on the budget. We have maintained our focus on joint positions, but this has meant giving up one of the three positions that had been granted in recent years by pairing two of our half-licenses. A hiring model that involves lengthy negotiations with Faculties and that makes it increasingly difficult to pair with units is not sustainable, and failure to recruit will eventually have serious consequences on our ability to offer competitive programs.

would be counterproductive. The Option has just been revised and these revisions are currently being processed at McGill. The revision provided an opportunity for departments offering the Option to opt out, but most chose to retain the revised version. The new courses that a revised Option proposes are very much in line with McGill's research agenda on environment and sustainability. Moreover, the Option serves a clientele (e.g., Law students) that would not register in an Environment program but wants to acquire environmental knowledge. However, there is also a clear sense that the Option must not be offered at the expense of MSE undergraduate programs and sufficient resources must be available to ensure teaching needs are covered. Because partner units are the main beneficiary (no resources come to the School for training grad students in the Option), they should be able to contribute to the teaching effort to sustain the Option.

We believe clarity about the bigger picture for interdisciplinary graduate education in environment and sustainability at McGill is needed in order to effectively address the subject of a PhD program. Due to the current opposition to MSE's efforts to propose a graduate program, direction from the University leadership is necessary.

The Review Committee suggests a binary choice of: A) a "small, niche" PhD targeting students that would not fit into traditional units, or B) remove the notion of an MSE PhD, and instead focus on new models of graduate level environmental research and training. We disagree with this dichotomy. We would welcome, even help lead, a process for re-envisioning what the report identifies as "the scope and structure of interdisciplinary environmental research and graduate education at McGill." However, such a process should not ignore the thinking already done at the MSE on these issues, particularly around a graduate program. If interdisciplinary graduate education is of interest to McGill, we note that the MSE has spent considerable time and effort in developing a PhD program that could be offered to the larger environment and sustainability community, therefore serving an important cementing role at McGill.

We make the following observations:

representatives from 6 Faculties (AES, Arts, Engineering, Law, Management, Science) and the proposal has been discussed with GPS as an interfaculty program to be as inclusive as possible. Moreover, space will become available in 2020 for graduate students with the renovation of the MSE building downtown. Thus, a PhD program would be feasible immediately, with support from the Deans.

2) The points raised in the review (see section III, "The PhD program") are actually largely supportive of the need for an alternative PhD model that trains students in a "non-traditional" way, with a problem-solving focus that does not easily fit in traditional departments. The review further points to the emerging view that these are necessary elements of an effective, high profile research program, and highlights the importance of such PhDs to stimulate interactions between advisors. A PhD program would also be important for JAF in partner units that do not have an environmental focus to enable



