

MCGILL UNIVERSITY NON-ACADEMIC STAFF ASSOCIATION
3495, rue Peel
Bureau 204
Montréal, Que.
H3A 1W7

Position Paper Concerning « Le Projet de Loi modifiant la Loi sur les établissements de niveau universitaire et la Loi sur l'Université du Québec en matière de gouvernance »
Bill 38

Presented to the Education Commission of the Quebec National Assembly

August 2009

The McGill University Non-Academic Staff Association has represented the collective interests of non-unionized professional and managerial employees at the university since 1972.

On a number of issues raised by Bill 38, we ask the members of the Commission sur l'éducation to consider the following:

At McGill, non-academic employees have guaranteed representation on two of the governing bodies, the Board of Governors and the Senate of McGill University. In the proposed legislation, while mention is made of representation of "Management", there is no mention that non-academic managers and professionals will continue to have this guarantee.

It is well recognized within all groups at the university that non-academic participation on the Board of Governors provides an important contribution to governance of the university. We fear that Bill 38 will erode this and turn our relationship with McGill into simply labour.

This would be a particularly sad turn of events because a university is not a business, nor an agency of government. It is something much different, a beacon, if you will, of our society, of civilization. It is a place of discussion and disputation, a forum for intellectual curiosity. That we can participate in its general direction and debate is something effective and precious. Something whose loss we fear.

At present, the two non-academic representatives of the McGill Board of Governors are two of the longest-serving members of the Board and two of the longest serving employees of the university. Between them, they share a knowledge of institutional history far beyond that of other members of the board. They are not ignored. They are full participants in committee work. They do not "parrot" the non-academic staff associations' party lines. They make a difference.

Bill 38 would restrict members of boards to two consecutive terms. Why? What is so inherently democratic in this? If, as at McGill, members representative of the non-academic staff are elected, why are new rules being placed on the electoral process? Is this part of a wider political vision? Is the government moving to limit the terms of city councilors, mayors and Members of the National Assembly?

We believe that the gender restrictions on the composition of the boards interfere with democratic process. Why should electors be restricted from electing a man or a woman to a board? Especially if they consider those they vote for as the best candidates?

To go one step further, why would the Board of Governors of McGill or any other university function less well if it were to be composed of a clear majority of women?

Good governance is in the best interest of the employees of a university. Even further, good governance of Quebec's universities is in the best interest of the Quebec population. This is best achieved by a vibrant and well-constituted body which engages the full diversity of the communities served by and in service to Quebec's intellectual and economic aspirations. Such diversity is not achieved by restriction, but by engagement.

We thank the Members of the Commission for taking our views into account.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Critchley
President

14 August, 2009