

# 2009-2010 Report of the Library Improvement Fund Committee

*How over \$500,000 of students' and alumni's money is spent to  
improve the libraries.*





**Preface**

The most important, most universally used resource the McGill Library offers is study space for students. By focusing on making the Library's facilities more available to students, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has prioritized what undergraduate students most often request. The Library Improvement Fund (LIF), including student fees matched by Alumni, makes this possible.

For the past fourteen years the LIF Committee (LIFC) has communicated students most important needs to Library staff. The quarter million students choose to give each year represents the ongoing commitment of McGill students to their Library spaces and services. With the support of students and Alumni, the LIFC has strongly supported extended opening hours as well as facilities improvements to support student learning. Continued funding of student employment benefits the students employed, those they serve, and the staff who rely on their contributions. Finally, the LIFC attempts to allocate funding according to need and, as much as possible, to distribute student funding across the Library's branches.

The 2009-2010 Library Improvement Fund Committee has focused on extended hours because students from all faculties have made this request more than any other. A large portion of this year's LIF went to the Blackader-Lauterman area of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library, since this area is part of the heavily-used central branch and because it had not received attention from the LIFC in many years. Funding for the Nahum Gelber branch is also intended to better serve students from many faculties who currently use the branch. Overall, this year's allocations targeted undergraduate students' highest priorities and branches that had not received LIF allocations in some time.

**The 2008-2009 Library Improvement Fund Committee consisted of:**

Rebecca Dooley, SSMU Vice-President (University Affairs)  
Alexandra Pace, SSMU Library Improvement Fund Coordinator  
Joshua Abaki, SSMU Council Representative  
Myriam Desrosiers, SSMU Council Representative  
Gloria To, Representative from the University Affairs Committee  
William Martin-Chin, Member-at-Large  
Colleen Kelly, Member-at-Large  
Diane Koen, Trenholme Director of Libraries (Acting)

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all for the focused attention, constructive work and tireless enthusiasm of the team this year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rebecca Dooley  
SSMU Vice-President (University Affairs) 2009-2010

Alexandra Pace  
SSMU LIF Coordinator



## Executive Summary

This year the combined contributions of the SSMU students and matching funds totalled **\$583,669.50**. With these funds, the Library Improvement Fund Committee asks the McGill Library to undertake the following projects:

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>I. Extended Hours</b>		<b>\$211,038</b>	4
I.1 Humanities and Social Sciences Library	\$152,862		4
I.2 Schulich Library	\$49,790		4
I.3 Nahum Gelber Law Library	\$8,386		5
<b>II. Facilities Improvements</b>		<b>\$261,631.50</b>	5
II.1 Blackader-Lauterman Refurbishment	\$186,631.50		5
II.2 Nahum Gelber Law Library Refurbishment	\$75,000		5
<b>III. Student Employment</b>		<b>\$85,000</b>	6
<b>IV. Other</b>		<b>\$26,000</b>	6
<b>Total Allocated</b>		<b>\$583,669.50</b>	

## **I. Extended Opening Hours (\$211,038)**

In 2009, students renewed the McGill Undergraduate Student Fund, including the Library Improvement Fund. One clear reason they supported the LIF was in order to preserve the existing extended opening hours funded through their contributions and matching Alumni funds. Student feedback collected by the LIFC this year consistently returned to requests for longer extended hours. For undergraduate students, the Library's most important function is to provide access to study space outside the business hours of other public places. Students do not study overnight at the Library simply because it happens to be open; they will stay up late studying *somewhere* in any case. SSMU is committed to making sure students have a safe place to do so.

In the past the LIFC has been wary of supplying the total cost of extended hours, since the committee's position is that these hours should be prioritized in the Library's regular budget. McGill should not have to depend on student contributions to keep the Library's doors open when students have demonstrated a clear need for these opening hours to support their studies.

Nevertheless, the 2009-2010 LIFC has decided to allocate the full cost of extended hours this year, and has opted to further extend the opening hours based on cost estimations provided by the Library. This decision was very carefully weighed, and received the unanimous support of the committee because of the very high importance accorded to adequate opening hours by students. The committee agreed that the current opening hours were not adequate, and that it would be in students' best interests to fund longer hours rather than ask the University to take over the cost of extended hours as part of the regular budget.

That said, the high proportion of this year's LIF accorded to extended hours is intended to be in effect only for 2010-2011. Once data is collected on use of the Library with the new extended hours proposed, the committee strongly recommends that future LIF committees negotiate with the Library to take over the cost of all opening hours. In other words, the allocations of the LIF for extended hours should not remain so high, and should decrease starting in 2011.

### **I.1 Humanities and Social Sciences Library Opening Hours Extension (\$152,862)**

#### **SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Open the Humanities and Social Sciences Library until 1:00 AM seven days a week from September 13, 2010 to October 4, 2010, from January 10, 2011 to January 31, 2011, and during Reading Week from February 18, 2011 to February 25, 2011.
- Offer 24 hour access to the Humanities and Social Sciences Library from October 4, 2010 to December 22, 2010, from January 31, 2011 to February 18, 2011 and from February 25, 2011 to April 30, 2011.

### **I.2 Schulich Library Opening Hours Extension (\$49,790)**

For the last five years, the Library Improvement Fund has funded extended hours at the Schulich Library during the exam periods. The LIFC would like to further extend opening hours in this branch.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Open the Schulich Library until 3:00 AM Monday to Thursday (inclusive), until 11:00 PM Friday, and until 12:00 PM Saturday and Sunday from September 20, 2010 until November 15, 2010, and from January 17, 2011 until March 29, 2011.
- Open the Schulich Library until 3:00 AM seven days a week from November 15, 2010 to December 22, 2010, and from March 29, 2011 until April 30, 2011.

I.3 Gelber Library Opening Hours Extension (\$8,386)

For the last five years, the Library Improvement Fund has funded extended hours at Nahum Gelber Library during the exam periods. We would like to further extend the opening hours so that the longer hours start several weeks earlier, and so that the library is open for two hours before noon on Saturdays and Sundays during the period of extended hours. The LIFC wishes to allocate this funding to extend Gelber's hours for the benefit of all McGill students, and particularly to serve all students who regularly attend classes or choose to work up the hill.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Open the Nahum Gelber Library until 2 AM seven days a week and open at 10 AM on Saturdays and Sundays from October 9, 2010 to December 22, 2010 and from March 8, 2011 to April 30, 2011.

**II. Facilities Improvements (\$261,631.50)**

II.1 Blackader-Lauterman Refurbishment (\$186,631.50)

The Blackader-Lauterman Collection and physical facilities in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library has not received funding from the LIFC in many years. The Library has decided to refurbish the Blackader-Lauterman space completely as it has been doing with sections of seating in the rest of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (with help from the LIF). This allocation is intended to assist the Library with weeding, shifting and reorganizing the Blackader-Lauterman collection, repainting the walls and re-carpeting the floor, purchasing new wired tables and purchasing new chairs. One specific purpose of the refurbishment is to make better use of the excellent sunlight in this area currently blocked by the Collection.

II.2 Nahum Gelber Law Library Refurbishment (\$75,000)

The Nahum Gelber Law Library has also received no attention from the LIFC in many years, except with respect to funding extended hours in the branch. The Library has decided to refurbish the first floor of the branch to make better use of sunlight and to expand the seating capacity of the first floor. The SSMU would like to support this project so that Gelber can accommodate more McGill students from all faculties.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Use the above allocations totalling \$261,631.50 to refurbish the Blackader-Lauterman area of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library and the Nahum Gelber Law Library.

**III. Jobs for Students (\$85,000)**

Providing employment for students benefits everyone. Students have the opportunity to build their job experience and participate in the functioning of the libraries—facilities in which they spend so much of their time. Libraries are provided with key assistance in diverse areas such as orientation for new students, technical assistance for library users throughout the year, and managing backlogs of materials awaiting cataloguing. These contributions improve the service offerings for all Library users.

SSMU's commitment to student jobs is affirmed by the LIFC in funding the Student Navigators programme. The LIFC would like to extend this funding to permit more students to be hired in 2010-2011, based on the success of the programme over the last few years. The allocation is intended to fund:

- Approximately 25 part-time positions providing ambassador services during peak periods (orientation, beginning of term, special events) and navigation assistance the rest of the semester. Responsibilities include: promoting library resources to McGill students, giving orientation tours, liaising with related academic student associations and other outreach-related tasks, and providing technical and customer service support to students in several branches.
- SSMU has been and will continue to be involved in the promotion of these positions when they are advertized, and a SSMU representative will sit on the hiring committee.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Expand the Student Navigator Programme by hiring more students using the allocated \$85,000.

**IV. Other (\$26,000)**

The 2009-2010 LIFC received several requests from the Music Undergraduates Students' Association. The LIFC decided to allocate \$26,000 for the acquisition of four video recorders with high-end audio plus accessories.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Allocate \$26,000 to purchasing four video recorders for the Marvin Duchow Music Library.

## **V. Conclusion**

This year's LIFC has prioritized longer extended hours as the one improvement most requested by undergraduate students. We would like to express gratitude to Diane Koen, Amitsu Huang, Steven Spodek, Janine Schmidt and Bruna Ceccolini for all their help working out the cost of extended hours especially, as well as for their help with working out this year's allocations more generally.

The LIFC would also like to stress, in the strongest terms, that the large allocation to extended hours this year is intended to be temporary and to demonstrate students' need for longer opening hours. Students expect, quite reasonably, that the basic cost of keeping the Library's doors open should be taken on by the University as a basic operating cost that cannot be abrogated, even in difficult economic times. It must be a top priority in McGill's budget.

Any changes that the McGill Library would like to make to the allocations detailed in this report should be requested of the SSMU Vice-President (University Affairs), who will bring these suggestions to the attention of the SSMU Executive Committee for approval. The SSMU would like to thank the Library once again for its extremely responsive and dedicated approach to student feedback and student initiatives such as the Library Improvement Fund.