

# 2011-2012 Report of the Library Improvement Fund



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## Preface

For almost two decades, the Library Improvement Fund (LIF) has been tasked with ensuring that McGill undergraduate students have access to the highest quality library facilities and resources. The fund, run by the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) works to ensure that students' most important needs are communicated to the Library staff. The fund is comprised of over a quarter of a million dollars contributed through student fees and an equal amount matched by alumni donors.

In the past, with the support of students and alumni, the LIF has supported facilities improvements to support student learning, student employment, extended study hours, and special projects. The LIFC attempts to allocate funding according to need and, as much as possible, to distribute student funding across the Library's branches. As our major project, the 2011-2012 Library Improvement Fund Committee has decided to fund a total renovation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the McLennan Library. This renovation will not only create much needed group-space in the humanities and social sciences complex, but will provide a new and exciting atmosphere to a part of the libraries that has seen reduced usage since it has not been renovated recently. In addition to this renovation, a facilities improvement project in the education library will also be funded by the LIF. The LIF has decided to continue funding student employment, as it has for the past few years, and will be funding a variety of special projects proposed to this year's committee. These projects include both special student employment projects and other special projects.

Following an intensive publicity campaign, the LIF received a record number of project proposals from the student body and library staff. The allocations this year continue to support the priority areas identified by student as well as the great work that the libraries continue to do to improve service delivery and students experience in the libraries.

The 2011-2012 Library Improvement Fund Committee consisted of:

Jonathan Lipsitz, LIF Coordinator  
Scott Myers, Member-at-Large  
Diana Kontsevaia, Member-at-Large  
Victor Lam, Member-at-Large  
Keegan Huang, Member-at-Large  
Joseph Kidney, Member-at-Large  
Murtaza Shambhoora, SSMU representative  
Jim Niu, SSMU Councillor  
Matthew Crawford, SSMU Councillor  
Emily Clare, SSMU Vice President (University Affairs)  
Diane Koen, Associate Director (Libraries), Planning and Resources

## Executive Summary

This year the combined contributions of the SSMU students and matching funds totalled **\$651,848**. With these funds, the Library Improvement Fund Committee asks the McGill Library to undertake the following projects:

<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	<b><u>Cost (\$)</u></b>
<b>I. Facilities Improvements</b>	
I.i HSSL 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	405,912
I.ii Education Library	77,250
	<hr/> 483,162
<b>II. Student Employment</b>	
II.i Student Navigators	87,000
II.ii E-Exams Project	2,550
II.iii OSD Project	8,320
	<hr/> 97,870
<b>III. Special projects</b>	
III.i Armchairs	20,000
III.ii Classic Texts	15,000
III.iii Microfilm Readers	12,566
III.iv DVD Collection	10,000
iii.v Macbooks	13,250
	<hr/> 70,816
<hr/>	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>651,484</b>

## I. Facilities Improvements

For several years, students and library staff have identified facilities as a key area for improvement within the library system. One of the most commonly voiced concerns is that there simply is not enough space to for students to work. As well, it has been identified that some of the space within the libraries is not being used to its full potential. As such, two of the major projects this year relate to improving student space within the library.

### **I.i HSSL 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Project (\$405 912)**

The major undertaking for this year's LIF is a renovation of the third floor of the humanities and social sciences complex (HSSL) in the McLennan building. While all of the other floors in the McLennan building have been renovated recently, the third floor has outdated desks, chairs, lighting, and carpets. As a result, the floor is less aesthetically pleasing, and the available study spaces are less appealing to students. The libraries had identified the third floor project to be a key step in their renovation plan for the entire HSSL complex.

The libraries proposed to the LIF to renovate the third floor of McLennan to match the fifth and sixth floors of the complex. They wanted to redo the floor to bring the facilities on the floor up to date. The LIF requested that instead of keeping the floor the same, the renovation be tailored to create a group study floor on the third floor of the HSSL complex. A number of comments from students indicated that group study space is lacking in the HSSL complex, and together with the library staff, the LIF crafted a plan for a group study floor on the third floor of the HSSL complex. This new group study floor will include a number of new desk designs in place of the single study carrels that currently occupy the floor. The floor will be opened up, and more rooms will be available for student use and booking. The new décor on the floor will be colour coded for better identification of locations within the floor, and the ambiance will be shifted to more of a talking-friendly environment. Additional facilities such as Mac desktops and whiteboards will be installed on the floor to promote the new ambiance.

The LIF financial contribution is approximately 30% of the total cost of the project. The libraries have agreed to cover the remainder of the cost. The Post-Graduate Students' Society may contribute towards this project as well.

#### **The LIF requests that the Libraries:**

- Proceed promptly with the third floor group study plan agreed upon by the LIF and the library administration
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

## **I.ii Education Library (\$77 250)**

The Education Undergraduate Society proposed a project to the LIF to provide extra space within the education library. The current setup for the library is inefficient due to large shelving units. According to lending statistics, the greatest demand from Education students is for group work space and computer access. The proposed renovations include purchasing additional compact shelving, the creation of a study room section (the addition of at least six new group rooms), soundproofing all the work rooms and work areas, purchasing more compact filing cabinets and storage for reference materials and older resources, and adding new computer workstations in the quiet room, as well as in the larger work area. After these renovations, upgrades and additions take place, the library will be able to accommodate all its visitors (which is roughly 800 students per day; half of the faculty's population) equitably and efficiently.

The current compact shelving, which is non-mechanical, was installed about 2 years ago, and is the starting point for the current project. This project proposes to replace the remainder of the shelving with compact shelving units, thereby freeing up much needed space for desks and worktables. This undertaking will be a multi-phase project, and the LIF has undertaken to contribute half of the estimated cost of the compact shelving units.

### **The LIF requests that the Libraries:**

- Purchase and install compact shelving units in the designated location in the education library
- Prepare the space created for student use by installing tables and chairs in that area
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

## II. Student Employment

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.

### **II.i Student Navigators (\$87 000)**

SSMU's commitment to student jobs is affirmed by the LIFC in funding the Student Navigators programme. The LIF has funded the student navigators program, for several years, and believes that the students employed through this program are a valuable resource to the libraries staff and the students who use the libraries. The LIF will continue to fund the Student navigators program at the level of funding of 2011-2012. The 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:**

- Continue funding the student navigators program at the level of the 2011-2012 year.

### **II.ii E-Exams Project (\$2550)**

E-exams is a resource that is under the library's jurisdiction that could potentially be a valuable resource to students but is not currently managed properly. In theory, E-exams is a repository of past final exams which students can access through their library account. In many courses, past finals are the most valuable tool for studying, yet the E-exams records are missing or outdated. The point at which E-exams ceased to be updated and kept active is unclear – professors have mentioned that they annually indicate that their final should be placed on e-exams, yet have been surprised to find that none of their finals for the past several years are present online.

The LIF will sponsor the employment of one student to work part-time over the summer under the supervision of the libraries staff to revamp the e-exams resource.

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

- Hire and train one student in McGill's new desire-to-learn (D2L) software
- Teach the student how to use the system to upload documents
- The student will contact professors and departmental secretaries to request all of the professors digital copies or their exams for uploading
- The student will either upload the documents personally or instruct the professors on uploading the document
- The student will ensure (when possible) that each course's listing on D2L includes all available past exams as well as the course syllabus

### **II.iii Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) Project (\$8320)**

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) has requested funding for student employment. The OSD would like to hire a student to create resources to aid emerging clientele access library resources. The goal of the OSD is to generate videos and podcasts that will aid students with disabilities to make better use of the library resources.

The LIF has decided to fund summer employment for one student through the sustainability internship program for this project.

**SSMU requests that McGill Libraries:**

- Work with the OSD to hire, train and prepare the student for creating the desired instructional podcasts and videos
- Maintain open communication with the OSD and the student hired for this project throughout the project



## III. Special Projects

A variety of special projects were proposed to the LIF this year. These projects represent facets of the library that the student body has identified as needing of improvement or change.

### **III.i Armchairs (\$20 000)**

Students have identified a lack of comfortable space within the libraries where students can sit and read for long periods of time. It was proposed to scatter a variety of armchairs throughout the libraries at McGill for this purpose, but the LIF has decided to incorporate this project within the Libraries' planned renovation of the first floor of the HSSL complex.

In consultation with the Libraries, the LIF has determined to purchase \$20 000 of armchairs and install them facing the outer windows in the (soon to be) renovated first floor of the HSSL complex.

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

- Purchase and install the armchairs chosen by the LIF in consultation with Ms. Diane Koen once the HSSL first floor renovation project is under way
- Ensure appropriate signage indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund

### **III.ii Classics Texts (\$15 000)**

The Classics Students' Society has indicated that the Loeb Classical Library and the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum are critical texts for Classics students, yet these texts are in very poor condition.

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

- Purchase a new set of the Loeb texts and the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum.
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

### **III.iii Microfilm Readers**

The LIF has received a proposal to purchase a n upgraded microfilm reader. There are two newer machines that are in use a lot of the time, but are also difficult to scroll through newspapers over a long period of time because one must consistently reach far over to manually control the scroll of the machine. The larger machines, which are much easier to operate and scan through newspapers, have screens that are difficult to see through. It is very difficult to see through these tinted screens, and there is no option to increase the brightness. The current solution to these problems is to turn out the lights in the room, but the two new machines do not require black out lighting, and other users would likely not appreciate sitting in the dark. A number of the machines simply need a little help as they squeak loudly when the film roles.

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

- Upgrade the current Microfilm readers
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

### **III.iv DVD Collection (\$10 000)**

Even though the usage of the DVD collections has waned in the last two years, the LIF would like to make an investment that would enable an updating of the DVD collection. This project was initially proposed several years ago, and the LIF has contributed to increasing the library's collection of DVD materials.

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

- Purchase new DVDs for the library DVD collection. Priority is to be given to DVDs that are rare and difficult for students to find through other channels
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

### **III.v Macbooks (\$13 250)**

It would be beneficial to invest a portion of the Library Improvement Fund to the purchase of more MacBook laptops and MacBook chargers for student use. Many students and several library staff members have indicated that there is a large demand for these computers. Additionally, many students forget their chargers and this would help them charge their computers for the day.

While there are more computers available at different libraries, the McLennan loans desk has one of the highest circulations.

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

- Purchase four MacBook pro laptops
- Purchase a minimum of four MacBook air laptops
- Purchase five MacBook chargers
- Provide all of this equipment for rental in the McLennan library
- Ensure appropriate labelling indicating the support from the SSMU Library Improvement Fund and relevant website and contact information.

## Conclusion

This year, the LIF has undertaken a wide range of projects including major renovations, increased student employment, and facilities and resources improvements. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Diane Koen, who has worked tirelessly with the LIF to turn the visions of the student body into reality. We appreciate that the libraries, under the leadership of Dean Colleen Cook, has prioritized student consultation in all of their activities, and hope that they continue to involve students in their projects in the future. Further, we appreciate the personalized assistance with our various projects from Bruna Ceccolini and all of the library staff who worked with us on our publicity campaigns. This year's LIF received more student feedback than ever before, which is a testament not only to our publicity efforts, but to the wealth of assistance we received from the libraries.

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.

I would like to thank the entire LIF committee for their tireless work and dedication this year. Your efforts resulted in incredible improvements to our library system.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Lipsitz  
Library Improvement Fund Coordinator 2011-2012