



April 6, 2016

Dear members of Divest McGill,

I write in response to your recent letter and my subsequent meeting with those members of Divest McGill who staged a peaceful sit-in in the administration building to express their disagreement with the March 23, 2016 decision of McGill's Board of Governors to endorse the recommendations of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) with respect to measures and actions the University should take to address climate change.

I believe that we agree on the most important issues. Climate change is a serious threat to humanity, and unless urgent action is taken we will see catastrophic effects on our planet and its peoples. The CAMSR report reiterates that climate change, linked significantly to the burning of fossil fuels, is having an "injurious impact." The McGill University community, including its Board and senior leadership, has a responsibility to use our talents, energy and expertise to work toward mitigating climate change.

CAMSR reached a different judgment, however, on how the University can most effectively meet this responsibility. In summary, the CAMSR report's recommendations, which the Board of Governors endorsed, are:

- To create "a comprehensive climate action plan" to measurably reduce McGill's own carbon footprint while expanding initiatives such as sustainability research and education, and;
- To develop concrete measures to ensure our investments comply with recognized Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles.

In a meeting with Provost Manfredi and me on March 31, members of Divest McGill expressed agreement with the recommendations, while pointing out that the proposals did not go far enough. It was clear that you are profoundly disappointed that the Board did not recommend divestment.

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Following the discussion with the Divest McGill representatives, we committed to two additional actions:

- Holding open forums in Fall 2016 to continue the community's dialogue on sustainability and the CAMSR report recommendations;
- Contacting experts consulted in the preparation of the CAMSR report, to request that they make their input public.

I have charged the Provost with the responsibility of establishing, in consultation with representatives of the community, open forums on sustainability and the CAMSR report's recommendations. The Provost will report back with a plan to do so by the end of April.

We have also contacted the experts consulted for the CAMSR report. We have been able to obtain the consent of five of the six individuals who spoke with CAMSR and they have agreed to make their names and a summary of their comments public. This may be found in a document entitled *CAMSR Consultation Overview* on the Board of Governors website. I enclose a copy here for your information.

The Board and the senior administration are committed to creating a comprehensive sustainability and climate action plan, and to putting forward the resources needed to support it. Indeed, last September it was decided to provide \$10 million over the next five years to support sustainability sciences at McGill across disciplines.

CAMSR proposed that the Board ask the Investment Committee to strengthen our commitment to socially responsible investing in our investment practices by considering a number of measures, including investing according to Environmental, Social and Governance principles and United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment.

Divest McGill and other members of the community who are leading change in this area have had a substantial impact on making climate-change mitigation a priority for McGill. We are committed to continuing this dialogue.

Sincerely,



Professor Suzanne Fortier

c.c.: Stuart Cobbett, Chair, McGill Board of Governors