Student Exchange Proposal

Proposal for Student Exchange Agreement: Vanderbilt University and McGill University (Canada)

Prepared by
Professor Robert Barsky

I. Program Overview

A. This proposal seeks an exchange agreement between the College of Arts & Science at Vanderbilt University and McGill University for a program entailing direct credit whereby A&S students can study during the Fall, Spring, Summer or full academic year and enroll in courses offered by the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science at McGill University. Vanderbilt students in the College of Arts & Science would be permitted to take courses in those two Faculties that correspond to the disciplines and departments within A&S. See Appendix 1A for a list of departments at McGill that correspond to Vanderbilt departments within the College of Arts & Science.

Vanderbilt University's relationship with McGill University would allow our students to study in Montreal, for the summer, one semester, or a full year. The quality of teaching at McGill is superb, attracting large numbers of students from throughout the world, but there has always been a strong interest in attracting (more) US students. For us, McGill offers a logical and serious network to be developed. Vanderbilt students will also have the option of taking a full load of humanities, social science and natural science courses relating to all courses of study available within the College of Arts & Science at Vanderbilt University.

McGill University is organized on an American model, with corresponding dates and requirements. The structure of the academic year for Vanderbilt University and McGill University is at Appendix 1B. A Fact Sheet about McGill University is available at Appendix 3.

B. Student exchange shall be on a one-to-one academic exchange basis with a maximum of four semester-long places or two year-long place available at each institution during each academic year. Each institution will submit to the other its students’ applications for exchange by March 1st for Fall Semester or full year exchange and by September 1st for Spring Semester exchange.
C. The Exchange Program aims for a balance in the number of students exchanged over a three-year rolling average. If either university is unable to send the maximum number of exchange students for one semester of study in any year, then that university will be eligible to send additional exchange students, equal to the deficit, in the following year. The intention is that over three years, an equal number of student-semesters will be undertaken in each direction.

When one of the institutions has difficulty in matching the incoming students from the partner institution in any particular academic year, the institutions may accrue up to two semester-long places. Once the accrual limit has been reached by either institution no further student exchanges shall take place until the parties have consulted with one another and developed a written plan to achieve the intended balance.

II. Rationale

What follows is an overview describing the logic of adding a student exchange for direct credit for the full academic year, or as a fall or spring semester alone option under the auspices of the new McGill-Vanderbilt Initiative.

We have as of this writing secured sufficient funds to advance this initiative, and we're eligible, solely from the Quebec and Canadian governments, for up to (roughly) $150,000/year if we were to have applications to all government programs. Now that we have a tie with a Canadian and Quebec institution, we are eligible for dozens of other funding opportunities, including the Fulbright Foundation grants, which already funds our visiting chair, and grants for students from the Canadian Killam Foundation. We have approached 18 departments and units at McGill and Vanderbilt (9 each) to formalize serious and longstanding links, with A&S, Law and Medicine. Other opportunities to explore in the future include Engineering and the Natural Sciences, as well as other Medical grants. Momentum has been generated through this initiative for collaborative faculty research projects, graduate student research, and sponsored visits. A student exchange agreement is a logical extension of the activity that is occurring or is planned for the future. Some of the funds that have been awarded to Vanderbilt through the Quebec and Canadian governments and the Killam Foundation are directed in support of this student exchange.

Vanderbilt has one of the oldest French programs in the country, at Aix, and has now a fully-ensconced Montreal Maymester, which has been focused more clearly towards ties to McGill in light of the new agreement.
There has also been a longstanding tie to Jeunesse Soleil / Sun Youth, as a site for the Alternative Spring Break. With this new Vandy-McGill initiative, this exchange allows us to send students for direct credit to McGill, and welcome students from there for work at Vanderbilt.

At present, there are no study abroad options at Vanderbilt for a Vanderbilt-in-Canada Program, and in light of the high quality of instruction, student services, and strong track record with International students, McGill University would offer Vanderbilt students a uniquely valuable study option. The serious advantage of working in an institution of McGill's caliber, but in Canada, is that virtually all areas of study could be improved upon because the Canadian perspective – on healthcare, education, security, education policy, drugs--are applicable to the US, but noticeably different in approach and in results. As such, any A&S student would gain not only an elite training for a semester, but also a very different take on whatever area they’re involved in. McGill has a particularly strong Jewish Studies program, Islamic Institute, Music Program, and there are many interdisciplinary programs.

III. Why McGill?

For the purposes of creating a formal institutional tie to a Canadian institution, it makes the most sense to focus on a kindred university that offers both complementary and additional resources for Vanderbilt's faculty and students. McGill was ranked 21st in the world by The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) World University Rankings, and in 2008 it was named one of the world's Top 25 universities in the world for the fifth year in a row by the prestigious THE-QS World University Rankings. McGill's 18th place in the 2009 THE-QS rankings (up from 20 in 2008) was again the highest of any Canadian university. McGill University is Canada's best-known institution of higher learning, and one of the leading research-intensive universities. With students coming to McGill from about 160 countries, the student body is the most internationally diverse of any medical-doctoral university in Canada. The oldest university in Montreal, McGill was founded in 1821 from a generous bequest by James McGill, a prominent Scottish merchant. Since that time, McGill has grown from a small college to a bustling university with two campuses, 11 faculties, some 300 programs of study, and more than 34,000 students. The University partners with four affiliated teaching hospitals to graduate over 1,000 health care professionals each year.

McGill is recognized around the world for the excellence of its teaching and research programs. Ernest Rutherford's Nobel Prize-winning research on the nature of radioactivity was conducted at McGill, part of a long tradition of innovation on their campuses which has included the invention
of the artificial blood cell and Plexiglas®. Today, their professors are performing pioneering work in epigenetics, developing alternative energy sources from crop plants and using nanotechnology to repair damaged neurons. In addition to a stellar faculty, McGill is known for attracting the brightest students from across Canada, the United States, and abroad. McGill students have the highest average entering grades in Canada, and their commitment to fostering the best has helped their students win more national and international awards on average than their peers at any other Canadian university. The prestigious Rhodes Scholarship has gone to a nation-leading 130 McGill students.

The idea of a Vanderbilt student exchange would be an add-on to our existing Vandy-McGill initiative, and it could take a range of forms depending upon the student’s interests and background.

IV. Selection & Nomination

A. Selection of students to participate in the Exchange Program will be done by the home university, subject to final approval by the host university. Each student must submit an application, in a form acceptable to the host institution, to participate in the Exchange Program. The two institutions agree that in the evaluation and admission of students for participation in the Exchange Program and in the administration of the Program, neither will discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, national origin, age, veterans/national guard/reserves status or disability.

B. Both universities will select students for the Exchange Program on the basis of merit and other non-discriminatory eligibility criteria as listed in Appendix 2A. The required supporting documents are listed in Appendix 2B.

The exchange student must meet the admission requirements of the host university and may have to fulfill other conditions, prerequisites and documentation for the host university. The exchange student will be nominated by the home university for admission as a non-degree seeking student of the host university in the following academic year.

C. Each home university should complete its selection of exchange students and nominate its exchange students for the Exchange Program in the following academic year to the host university within a mutually agreeable, reasonable time frame. The exchange student’s nomination should be accompanied by a:

1. curriculum vitae;
2. statement of academic aptitude from a member of the student’s
department; and

3. specific outline of the program of study at the host university.

The host university should evaluate the nominated exchange students and determine their acceptability for admission as exchange students by the end of April. The host university reserves the right to reject the home university’s nominated exchange students. The home university may appeal the rejection.

D. The exchange student will be registered as a full-time, non-degree seeking or non-graduating student for the duration of study at the host university.

V. Program of Study

A. The exchange students must propose a program of study at the host university. The modules or courses proposed must fulfill the exchange student’s degree requirements at his or her home university. Both universities should, therefore, provide each other with material on the details of modules or courses available in the following academic year. The material of the host university should be regularly updated and accessible to the exchange students of the home university. The material may be placed in the host university’s reference library and/or on the internet.

B. The modules or courses must be self-contained and completed within the semester or term. For courses not taught in English on a regular basis the host university will make all possible efforts to offer complementary instruction in the English language, except where proficiency of another language is a prerequisite for a module or course. Academic counseling is the responsibility of the exchange student’s faculty coordinator at the home university. An alternative module or course that will fulfill the degree requirements of the exchange student should be proposed if the original module or course is unavailable.

VI. Home Institution's Obligations

Each Home Institution shall inform its participating students that:

1. Exchange students shall pay tuition and university fees to their home institution.

2. Exchange students shall be responsible for their own financial support including international transportation, accommodation, living expenses, and insurance. While exchange students shall be responsible for
securing their own accommodation, assistance will be provided by the host institution in locating appropriate accommodation for exchange students.

3. Exchange students shall abide by the laws of the host country and the rules and regulations of the host institution. During the period of participation in the Exchange Program, all students will abide by the policies, rules, regulations and financial requirements in effect at the host institution. Consistent with the non-discrimination provisions of Section IV (A) above, the host institution will have the right to undertake disciplinary proceedings, impose disciplinary sanctions or terminate the participation of any student in the Exchange Program and in any other program, service, or benefit at any time if the student’s academic work or behavior is deemed not suitable in the judgment of the host institution. In the event disciplinary proceedings are initiated, sanctions are imposed, or termination is required, the institution taking such action(s) will promptly notify the other institution in writing of the cause and nature of the proceedings, sanctions or termination.

4. It is the responsibility of the exchange student to have obtained agreement from their home Faculty that upon successful completion of the subjects at the host institution, full credit will be granted towards the degree at their home institution.

5. Participation in an exchange under this agreement carries no expectation of subsequent transfer to the regular degree programs of the host university.

Appendix 1A McGill University Departments corresponding to disciplines within the College of Arts & Science, Vanderbilt University

McGill Departments in the Faculty of Arts
- Anthropology
- Art History and Communication Studies
- East Asian Studies
- Economics
- English
- English and French Language Centre
- French Language and Literature
- German Studies
- Hispanic Studies
- History
- Italian Studies
• Jewish Studies
• Philosophy
• Political Science
• Russian and Slavic Studies
• Sociology

McGill Departments in the Faculty of Science

• Department of Biology
• Department of Chemistry
• Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences
• Department of Geography
• Department of Mathematics and Statistics
• Department of Physics
• Department of Psychology
## APPENDIX 1B Structure of Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER/TERM</th>
<th>Vanderbilt University</th>
<th>McGill University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1:</td>
<td>August to December</td>
<td>September to December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester 2:</td>
<td>January to May</td>
<td>January to April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2A Selection Criteria

The home university must ensure that the exchange student should:

a. be registered as a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate of the home university and preferably be an eligible national (citizen or permanent resident) of the home university’s country;

b. have successfully completed at least:
   i. one semester of study at the home university upon application for the exchange program; &
   ii. two semesters of study upon admission to the host university;

c. be a student of good standing at the home university with a minimum ‘B’ average grade or ranking in the top one-third of the class; and a minimum ‘B’ grade in the current/intended discipline/major;

d. propose an appropriate program of study at the host university;

e. show the aptitude, motivation and maturity, to thrive in the environment at the host university; and

f. have sufficient funds for fees, personal and living expenses for the duration of the study abroad at the host university.
APPENDIX 2B Supporting Documents and other Prerequisites

The Exchange Program shall be open to undergraduate students of each institution who have completed at least one year of full-time undergraduate study. Additionally, for any candidate whose native language is not English, the exchange student must score at least 100 on the Internet Based TOEFL (250 computer test) or 6.5 on the IELTS; TOEFL or IELTS scores must be included with application materials.

a. Vanderbilt students applying for admission as an exchange student must submit to McGill University:
   i. Application form;
   ii. Documentary proof of nationality;
   iii. Transcript of academic record; and
   iv. Documentary proof they are nominated for the exchange by Vanderbilt.

   There are no prerequisites for Vanderbilt students applying to McGill University.

b. McGill University students applying for admission as an exchange student must submit to Vanderbilt:
   i. Application form;
   ii. Documentary proof of nationality;
   iii. Transcript of academic record; and
   iv. Documentary proof they are nominated for the exchange by McGill University

   There are no prerequisites for McGill University students applying to Vanderbilt.
APPENDIX 2C Financial Responsibility of Exchange Students

a. Tuition, academic and obligatory fees at their home university.
   Correspondingly, these fees will be waived at the host university;
b. Medical/health insurance;
c. Obligatory expenditure required in the country of the host university;
d. Journey to and from the country of the host university;
e. Personal and living expenses, including accommodation and food; and
f. Any debts/costs of damages incurred for the duration of their study abroad.
Appendix 3 Fact Sheet on McGill University

Founding date of McGill University: 1821
Degrees granted in 2006-07: 7456

Downtown campus: 845 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, Quebec
Macdonald campus: 21111 Lakeshore Road, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec

34,208 students. One of the highest average entering grades in Canada

1,650 tenured and tenure-stream faculty

11 faculties and 10 schools on two campuses

$375.75 million awarded in research funding in 2006-07 (McGill and affiliated hospitals)
Research University of the Year 2005 (Research Infosource)

147 international research and development partnerships totaling $93.4 million.
40 active spin-off companies
180 contracts worth almost $14.7 million signed between McGill and industry in 2007-08
23 licenses/options to transfer technology to industry in 2006-07.
Approximately 100 inventions disclosed annually; 118 patent applications filed and 26 patents issued in 2007-08.
Ranked 14th in the world in translating its biotech research into patents, ahead of all Canadian universities as well as Yale and UCLA.

Canada's first faculty of medicine, established in 1832; 4 teaching hospitals affiliated with McGill

Total gifts received in 2004-05: $55,450,847. Over 30,000 people donating in 2004-05

Total Operating Revenue for 2007-2008: $1,074,061,000