



McGill

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Research-Based Innovation and Intellectual Property Management at McGill

McGill University Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research's Study on Support for the Commercialization of Intellectual Property

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For the last two centuries, McGill University has occupied a prominent place in the history of Quebec and Canada, not only for the quality of its teaching and research but also for the role of its graduates in helping to shape our society. The influence of McGill extends well beyond Canada and places it among the best research-intensive public universities in the world.

Knowledge gained through academic research disseminates freely to promote collaboration and the advancement of ideas. However, this does not preclude the protection of intellectual property (IP) that results from the research, whether it is through patents, copyright, or other means. Open science at the pre-competitive stage is not at odds with IP protection and licensing. It is a complementary form of knowledge sharing and valorization. At a later stage, the possibility of monetizing an invention, for example, a new therapy, incentivizes stakeholders to invest and bring it to market for the benefit of all Canadians.

Indeed, the impact of academic research can go well beyond the creation of scientific knowledge communicated through scholarly publications. Many innovations result from clever inventions conceived by researchers and students. To maximize the societal value of applied research, commercialization and IP protection are encouraged at McGill but not mandated. An objective of the McGill Policy on Inventions and Software is to contribute to the socio-economic well-being of Quebec and Canada through the commercial development of our intellectual property. Two examples of successful translation of inventions are McGill spinoffs Carbicrete, which has developed a technology to produce carbon-negative concrete from slag, and Taiga Motors, which has commercialized the world's first electric snowmobiles and watercraft.

The process of ideation to commercialization is not straightforward. It requires funding and support from many people at various stages of an invention's development. McGill has built an ecosystem of complementary centres, initiatives, and programs offering innovation and entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and non-dilutive pre-seed funding to support the development of their inventions.

McGill's Office of Innovation and Partnerships, the Engine Centre for Technological Innovation, the Clinical Innovation Platform, the Fessenden Prize, and the Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship are the primary resources at McGill for bringing researchers, innovators, and industry partners together to accelerate their innovations. Through partnerships and appropriate funding, McGill and other Canadian academic institutions create viable routes for translating research and discoveries into valuable products, processes, and services that create jobs and wealth for all Canadians. Research-based innovation is a worthy investment

for governments.

The following is a list of opportunities for government support that would enhance the translation of research from universities into valuable innovations:

- Expand educational programs such as Lab2Market to work with more universities and technologies. Programs like this that teach researchers to understand markets and business opportunities are extremely important.
- Financially support technology transfer offices through direct funding for staff, including entrepreneurs-in-residence, and patent costs. The ability to more fully protect IP with broad coverage is necessary, but comes at a cost.
- Create new funding opportunities for university spinoffs, potentially through an expanded IRAP program.

Canada has an opportunity to better leverage the inventions developed at our universities by outstanding researchers and students. Investment from the federal government will accelerate the translation of inventions into innovation. Investment will also develop a new generation of entrepreneurs who will grow the ecosystem for universities and businesses.

Sincerely,


Martha Crago