
QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

- 1. We are witnessing, all around the world, a worrying proliferation of fake news, unsubstantiated allegations and flawed reasoning. Decision making without due consideration of empirical facts and coherent logic threatens good governance everywhere. What mechanisms does the BoG have in place to ensure that all its decisions are based on sound science and rigorous analysis, as befits an institution of higher learning?**

To fulfill its decision-making function, the Board draws on the skill-sets and specialized expertise and knowledge of its members, who provide assessments that aim to serve the best long-term interests of the University itself. The Board has a duty to keep itself informed about the matters before it, and, to that end, receives relevant and defensible recommendations that reflect analytical and evidence-based reasoning. It is assisted in its decision-making process by other bodies, including the University Senate and Board Committees. Depending on the subject matter, the Board may also consult others on particular subject areas, draw on the strengths of experts or witnesses, or commission studies or reports.

- 2. Given the divisive state of politics at the moment, to what extent can McGill remain a politically neutral institution? How does McGill define political neutrality?**

The University acknowledges the right to political association of all members of its community and the respect for the exchange of views in responsible open discourse. The University reserves stating its position on particular matters when they are directly related to its mission and principles. In such cases, the University's position is aligned with its mission and based on the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility equity and inclusiveness.

- 3. In the 2016 CAMSR Report on Divestment, CAMSR argued that fossil fuel companies cause social injury, but not grave social injury. Additionally, when members of CAMSR met with Divest McGill in May 2016, the Chair of the Board discussed how the degree social injury that an industry can commit exists on a threshold. What is the threshold at which social injury becomes grave social injury? What evidence needs to be given to prove that an industry causes grave social injury?**

Social injury is defined in the CAMSR terms of reference as follows: "social injury means the grave injurious impact which the activities of a company is found to have on consumers, employees, or other persons, or on the natural environment. Such activities include those which violate, or frustrate the enforcement of rules of domestic or international law intended to protect individuals against deprivation of health, safety, or basic freedoms, or to protect the natural environment. However, a company shall not be deemed to cause "social injury" simply because it does business with other companies which are themselves engaged in socially injurious activities."¹ Pursuant to this definition, the determination on the threshold and evidence needed to prove grave social injury would depend on the facts of each case and would include an assessment of the degree and extent of injury that would result from industry activities that would warrant a finding of grave injurious impact.

¹ <https://www.mcgill.ca/boardofgovernors/committees-0/social> (February 1, 2017)