

TO: Senate
FROM: Professor Timothy Moore
SUBJECT: Travel Warnings
MEETING DATE: November 5, 2008

PREAMBLE: On September 25, 2008, Deans, Directors and Chairs received a memo from the Deputy Provost, which included the following statements:

McGill University will no longer allow students to participate in any University related activities, be they curricular or co-curricular, in countries with a level-3 (avoid non-essential travel) or level-4 (avoid all travel) warning. In cases where such warnings are limited to specific regions in a country, the travel restriction described here applies to the regions.

In the coming months, my Office, with appropriate consultation, will develop and post guidelines, procedures, and necessary information to prepare our students for safe and successful educational experiences while they study and travel abroad.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade web site currently lists 237 countries of which 64 (or 27%) are identified with a 'Travel Warning' (a red asterisk). This includes Panama, Kenya and Uganda, each with a country 'Exercise high degree of caution' and a regional 'Avoid all travel'.

QUESTION:

1. Given that the Panama and Africa Field Studies Seminars are due to take place in January 2009, what steps have been taken in the context of the above statement?
2. What consultations with faculty, students and researchers at McGill were made prior to the above 'directive' being issued and what steps are being taken now to ensure adequate consultation with those who have deep experience with such risks?
3. Has the university considered the potential impacts of this directive on McGill's many field scientists who work in developing countries, their research programs and careers?
4. What are the legal obligations of McGill to its students, and other members of our community, working in 'insecure regions'?
5. Given the international nature of the McGill community and its long and successful commitment to the 'developing world', how does the University Administration intend to balance the dangers against the importance of conducting research and teaching in 'Travel Warning' countries?
