

MCGILL UNIVERSITY  
MONTREAL

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

March 4, 1931.

Dear Dr. Tait,-

In connection with the general overhauling and planning of improvements in the curriculum by the Principal's Special Committee, I wish to submit for consideration the following suggestions, bearing especially upon topic 5 in the memorandum of February 20, topics 4, 5, and 6 in that of December 30:-

1. When I proposed adoption of general examinations some time back, one reason for disfavor was lack of staff to take on extra duties. Since we are hoping as result of this survey to get more adequate arrangements all round, I wish to renew the recommendation, and to make it specific, will put it as a suggestion to insert on page 150 of the Calendar, after the first three short paragraphs, the following:-

One of the two continuation subjects shall be selected as the major subject. At the option of the several departments, a general examination, to be taken in the second term of the Fourth Year, may be added to the requirements for a major subject.

Satisfactory standing in the general examination will be required of all candidates. Students failing in these examinations may apply for Reexamination in not less than one year from date of failure.

Standing in the general examination will also be taken into account in the granting of degrees with distinction.

I advocate the general examination as an antidote for the policy of simply cramming up for term examinations, and treating the college course as requiring nothing but getting so many points without real learning.

2. In order to reduce the nuisance of extra work due to supplementary examinations, and also to make some reasonable concession to students of uneven capacity and interests without lowering scholastic requirements in any essential way, I suggest that we make a distinction between degrees of failure, complete and conditional. In terms of the marking system in use in applied science, etc., ranges of marks might be:-

Failed	Conditioned	Passed	Second Class	First Class
Below 35	35 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 79	80 and up.

This gives equal ranges for the several classes between the extremes, and would work best statistically. If we must continue to keep our marking standards lower than other faculties, such a distinction as that above between the degrees of failure would be just as easily established, though the resulting ranges would inevitably look awkward. I would propose that complete failure be made up by repetition of the course, if the latter is one specifically required; if not, that the failure may be offset by a first or two seconds in the same year. Conditional failure would be made up by a supplementary examination, unless offset by a first or second in the same year. The scheme could be conveniently ad-