Kingston, ON Canada

October 1st, 2011

Undergraduate Admissions Office  
Faculty of Law - McGill University  
3644 Peel Street, Room 418  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1W9

RE: Application to the B.C.L. / LL.B. program at McGill University

Dear committee,

Over the years, I kept on thinking that

* Constitutional distribution of legislative powers.
* Provide services.
* Interested in normative issues as well.

WHAT MOTIVATES ME / droit du justiciable /accès à l’information pour le contribuable / but social lié au droit dont McGill raffole. : bullshit

What interests me is to break in complex problems and work them out. Understand, find solutions. Focus on team work, multidisciplinary nature and intellectual challenge – work on complex problem that have a bearing on real life (find a way to say it).

Over the years, I kept on thinking that it was possible to live in a society in which justice and equity prevail. This guiding principle has been central in both my research and professional projects as an economist, as I mostly worked on the role of taxation. Accordingly, my career goal as a jurist will be to help governments to deter tax evasion, be it by contributing to the legislative process or by taking part in the enforcement of already existing laws and regulations, for the idea that everyone should contribute to the common welfare is one that I value dearly.

I am presently completing my last year in the doctoral program in economics at Queen’s University. The main part of my dissertation bears on the design of tax and savings policies, with a special emphasis on the normative, or redistributive, role of taxation. Although my doctoral project is quite theoretical I have tried, all along my studies, to remain a versatile practitioner in the fields of taxation, redistribution and intergovernmental transfers. When necessary, I worked on public finance issues that I thought were important, trying to write for as large a public when the circumstances commanded it.

For instance, as early as in the summer of 2006 I published a policy paper discussing the possible financial impacts for the Quebec provincial government to significantly reduce its subsidies to private schools. In 2007 published a co-authored book that both summarized and criticized the economic and fiscal policies of the recently befallen liberal federal government. As a member of the Employment Insurance Task Force at the Mowat Institute for Policy Innovation (University of Toronto) I recently published, in co-authorship with my doctoral supervisor, a paper suggesting a wide array of reforms for the Canadian Employment Insurance program. I am currently working on a book, co-authored with Professor Nicolas Marceau (UQAM) tracing the history of fiscal agreements between the provincial and federal governments since the Confederation (which manuscript is available upon request).

Working on such projects gradually led me into familiarizing myself with the legal aspects of public policies. For suggesting reforms to tax policies and regulations themselves, to employment insurance or to the equalization program, to name but a few, is an adventure riddled with legal and constitutional impediments. Then my professional duties, as I acted as the economic advisor to the opposition critic for Labor at the National Assembly of Quebec, required me to read and understand all relevant bills brought to the attention of the deputies. I worked and partly drafted a bill modifying the `Loi sur la Santé et la Sécurité du Travail’ which, *politique oblige*, never had the honor of being debated. I nonetheless drafted and pushed forward a Resolution, this time unanimously adopted by the National Assembly, pressuring the federal government to use its foreign relations prerogative to fight against tax evasion.[[1]](#footnote-1) Academically, I worked on the role of fiscal centralization and decentralization in maintaining and harming national unity, a project that having been well received at the Canadian Law and Economics Association annual meetings (2010). I was also asked to comment, in academic conferences, papers related to legal institutions, more particularly on property crimes and on the incentives countries face to invest in their arsenal of weaponry.

\* La nature du programme pédagogique de McGill en fait un qui est intéressé au rôle du droit comme ciment des relations sociales.

My interest for the study of law but also my academic capabilities makes of myself a well suited candidate to be successful at McGill. The experience and the education I have acquired as an economist, and more particularly my ability to tackle complex issues in a logical and insightful, but also constructively critic will, I am convinced, prove to be invaluable an asset. As McGill law faculty welcomes students of highly diversified backgrounds, my hope is that I can share and improve those skills while personally growing up out of my colleagues’. Having been both a teacher and a student over the last few years, I need not being convinced that the educational value of an institution is worth as much as what its members, that they be faculty or students, can bring to it. When at McGill law faculty, I want to be involved in the social and intellectual life of the faculty. My experience as a referee in a peer-review journal, which I fulfilled with responsibility and dedication, as well as my experience as a researcher and as an organizer of a reading group at Queen’s, make me believe that I will enjoy being involved with McGill Law Journal. I am well placed to know how rewarding such activities can be, and to understand how ideas and congeniality grow out of a spirit of collaboration among students.

McGill law faculty is, by far, my first choice as to where I want to pursue my law studies. In addition to being reputed as a center of high learning, the bilingual requirements and the diversity across students contribute to its uniqueness. Equally importantly, the joint degree in both common and civil law would allow me to be mobile across jurisdictions, and to master the two legal traditions that have shaped our country’s history. Special care appears to be devoted to the quality of the courses, and the transsystemic approach is, as far as I understand, much more comprehensive and integrated than what is being offered in any other university offering a bijural education. By all accounts completing the B.C.L. / L. L. B. program is a challenging project, which encourages further to undertake it.

\* McGill is especially rewarding intellectually.

Sincerely,

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*Jean-Denis Garon*

8-85 Toronto Street

Kingston ON Canada

K7L 4A5

Tel.: (613) 888-2483

Why McGill: A working knowledge of both principal legal traditions, bilingualism and diversity. Work with ease cases that are rooted in any of these traditions.

Note: civil law is private; common law is public.

Use the expression “bijural education”. Difference with McGill: integrated approach. McGill is the only one to offer transsystemic courses, which teaches both traditions in a unified way. These courses are offered in private law.

The good thing with McGill is that bijuralism expands beyond theoretical/comparative theory, and that it focuses on its application on actual cases.

“The transsystemic approach, as far as I can understand, seem to add a dynamic aspect to the study of law and to leave room for critical thought and curiosity.”

During my studies, I tackled issues which I found were important, which also led me to communicate them as widely as the circumstances commanded.

Activities were rewarding

Congenial

How I came to like law. Project I had for years. Then adviser. Topics and conferences.

The value of an educational institution, so the saying goes, is worth more than its mere academic program.

My experience, both as a student and as a teacher, has showed me that we can value an educational institution not only according to the mere quality of the academic programs, which is doubtlessly implacable at McGill, but also and foremost according to the personal involvement of the students in making it

General interest in law. Studying economics as a social science, and it relation to law, made me realize to what extent the law shapes the relationships and interactions among citizens, and how a social cement it could be.

What can I bring. (a) I always participated in the intellectual life of the departments I took part of, (b) like to be a team workers (c) as a Québécois I have naturally been called to be part of the public debate in Quebec.

What can I bring to the profession. A whole array of knowledge and of basic reflexes as an economist. My ability to communicate.

What can I bring to McGill My experience in the academic peer reviewing process makes that I am naturally interested in McGill law journal.

*Intentionally left blank*

As I split my life between Quebec and Ontario, the bijural education offered by McGill

Grounded in reality, where there are opportunity to have an influence on concrete things.

Applicants must **write an essay (two typed pages, single-spaced or double-spaced)**, in English or French. Personal statements should address

* the applicant's intellectual and personal interest in studying law
  + Why studying law?
* their particular interest in studying law at McGill and
  + Dual degree. Bilingualism. Transystemic approach.
* their potential to contribute to the life of the Faculty.
  + Why myself?

This essay enables the Admissions Committee to develop a fuller understanding of the candidate, as well as evaluate their *quality and clarity of expression.*

The personal statement assists the Admissions Committee in its appraisal of an applicant's

*Must signal:*

* social awareness and commitment,
* maturity,
* interest in and suitability for legal education at McGill, and
* potential for growth through opportunity or adversity.

Candidates are invited to discuss any information about themselves that might assist the Committee in this task. For example, applicants may wish to describe their experience as a member of a minority group, or factors which may have made access to a university education difficult.

\*\*\* Convince them that I do it because I really want to do it, and that I really want to become an attorney

\*\*\* Try to write bit less than 2 pages (1 2/3 or 1 ¾)

\*\*\* Personal goals I want to achieve/show that I have something to give

\*\*\* Tell stuff about myself: How I became interested in law (Law and economics, what I’ve read, what courses I took, what courses I tutored, How it relates to my research). Make the statement centered about Law.

\*\*\* When I say something, give examples. Don’t be vague.

\*\*\* I have always been curious and the doctoral degree has been a way to satisfy my curiosity.

\*\*\* Make them understand that McGill is the only place I wanna go.

\*\*\* Goal of the letter: what is unique and exemplary about your background

5 paragraphs in all

\*\*\* Important: link past experience to law profession, and to why I want to join the Law profession.

1. [Résolution exigeant du gouvernement fédéral qu'il ratifie les conventions fiscales bilatérales avec les juridictions qui se sont engagées auprès de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques à améliorer la transparence et à mettre en place des échanges effectifs de renseignements en matière fiscale, 2 avril 2009](http://www.saic.gouv.qc.ca/institutionnelles_constitutionnelles/20090402-fr.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)