

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,  
85 St Peter St  
MONTREAL, June 1st 1893.

My dear Sir William,

While we all deeply regret the necessity for your leaving your long life work in the University, we wish you to feel assured, that we are actuated in every way by a desire to do that which may be most in the interest of your own health, and altogether acceptable to you and Lady Dawson.

It is therefore my duty, on behalf of my Colleagues of the Board and myself, to hand you the enclosed Resolutions come to, after considering your letter of resignation of the 26th ultimo, and in doing so,

let me assure you, that you have, and shall  
always retain the warmest regard of every  
Member of the Governing Body, with whom you  
have so long co-operated, and the relations  
between whom and yourself, have throughout  
been of the most cordial nature.

With much esteem, and every good wish  
for Lady Dawson and yourself,

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

*Wm. Dawson Smithy*  
*Chancellor*

Sir William Dawson, C.M.G., L.L.D.,  
&c., &c.,

McGill College,

Montreal.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 1463
REF. 182

ROYAL HOUSE,  
88 St Peter St  
MONTREAL, June 1st 1888.

Sir  
J. M. G. G.

My dear Sir William

While we all deeply  
regret the necessity for your leaving  
your long life work in the University, we  
wish you to feel assured, that we are  
interested in every way by a desire to do  
that which may be most in the interest of  
your own health, and altogether acceptable  
to you and Lady Dawson.  
It is therefore my duty, on behalf of  
my colleagues of the Board and myself, to  
hand you the enclosed Resolutions come to  
after considering your letter of resigna-  
tion of the 28th ultimo, and in doing so,



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
1881  
Dear Sir William,

*Wm Dawson*  
*1881*

Your letter of the 2nd in acknowledgment of mine of the 1st inst. I received on Saturday, and I take note that you will at an early date, send more formal reply to the Board.

With kind regards,

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

*Wm Dawson*

Sir William Dawson, C.M.G., I.L.D.,  
McGill College,  
Montreal.

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June 7. 1893

To the Chancellor  
and Members of the Board  
of Governors,

Gentlemen, I beg to acknow-  
ledge ~~with~~ with gratitude  
for the very kind and  
liberal manner in which  
you have responded to  
my letter of enquiry  
in your resolution of May  
31st, and to express  
the hope that during such  
time as it may please  
God to prolong my life  
I may be able to  
work ~~with~~ ~~some~~



protect unflinchingly in  
the interests of education  
and <sup>the</sup> revenues which are  
as dear to me as  
ever.

I beg also to thank  
you for your kind wishes  
expressed on behalf  
of Lady Darnley.

I beg to remain  
Yours sincerely

Copy to  
Incomes  
Reply to  
New Letters

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REF.	184



Sir J. W. Dawson's resignation  
of Principalship

~~Mr. Gould.~~

MC GILL UNIVERSITY  
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CC. NO. 119/4

E.

To the Board of Governors of McGill University.

Gentlemen,

I have felt that in attending meetings of the Board of Governors and in intercourse with its members, it was not becoming to introduce matters relating to myself or my office. I have always entertained the utmost gratitude for the kindness extended to me in reference to College interests by members of the Board, and have felt very keenly any necessity to ask special attention to matters incident to College administration and which presented difficulties to me.

The time having now come when I must lay down the burden I have borne for thirty-six years, it appears proper that in this connection I should ask attention to some points which appear to me to be important with reference to my successor and to his powers and duties.

It is well known to the older members of the Board that when I entered on office in 1855, the University was in a very precarious position, more especially in reference to its financial affairs. In surveying the situation I saw clearly the danger of failure, and that the principalship must be regarded not as an office of dignity but as a missionary effort. In this spirit my wife and I entered on the work and determined to spend ourselves and such

To the Board of Governors of McGill University

Gentlemen,

I have felt that in attending meetings of the Board of Governors and in intercourse with its members, it was not becoming to introduce matters relating to myself or my office. I have always maintained the utmost gratitude for the kindness extended to me in reference to College matters of members of the Board, and have felt very happy and anxious to ask special attention to matters incident to College administration and which presented difficulties to me.

The time having now come when I must lay down the burden I have borne for thirty six years, it appears proper that in this connection I should ask attention to some points which appear to me to be important with reference to my success and to his future and duties. It is well known to the other members of the Board that when I entered an office in 1852, the University was in very precarious position, more especially in reference to its financial affairs. In surveying the situation I can clearly see the danger of failure, and that the responsibility must be regarded not as an office of dignity but as a business effort. In this spirit my wife and I entered on the work and determined to spend ourselves and our

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means as we might have in the struggle to secure success. In that spirit we have continued to act with some measure of good, but always under the depressing sense of want of means to take advantage of all the openings for usefulness presented to us.

In entering on my duties in 1855 I made no stipulations with the Board of Governors as to any privileges or powers of the office. I had the utmost confidence in the Members of the Board as gentlemen of sound judgment and right feeling, and I felt that the success of the work must depend rather on individual effort than on any official powers. Besides, I was entering on office at a time when the Departments of which the University then consisted — Arts, Medicine, Law and the High School, — small though they were, had been accustomed to act independently and without any definite bond of union. In these circumstances I felt it to be my duty to cultivate the powers of the Governors and Corporation as the best uniting elements, and to assume as little as possible of the appearance of authority for the Principalship.

The circumstances have now changed, and I think that my successor should enter on office with some of the advantages proper to the greater magnitude and complexity of the University, and should have more of the power accorded to the so called Presidents of Universities in the United States and Ontario, not to speak of similar positions in the Mother Country, and which it was obviously the intention of the Royal Charter that he

I have no objection to the Board of Examiners  
 or to any proposal or plan of the office. I  
 have the utmost confidence in the members  
 of the Board and particularly in your judgment  
 and right feeling and I feel that the course  
 of the work which you have adopted or intend  
 to adopt is in every respect correct. I would  
 have no objection to your acting as a Director  
 of the Board of which the University is made  
 up. I have no objection to your acting as  
 a member of the Board and I feel that you  
 will do all that is possible for the benefit  
 of the University. I have no objection to  
 your acting as a member of the Board and  
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should possess. Such arrangements would also in my judgment tend to secure the services of a better man, and to promote unity of action in the University.

The following appear to me to be important suggestions in this connection.

(1) The Principal should not be too heavily burdened with professorial work. He ~~should~~ <sup>ought</sup>, according to the <sup>Charter and</sup> Statutes, be a Professor in Arts, and should be a man not only familiar with University work but capable of giving instruction in some department of learning; and it would be well that he should have some teaching to keep him in touch with the students; but this should, if possible, be of a general character and accessible to students of different years and not involving much demonstration or laboratory work. The present Principal has, until in recent years relieved by the endowment provided by the liberality of Mr. J. H. R. Molson and Mr. Frothingham, been too much hampered with teaching and demonstration.

(2) The Principal should thus be in a position to exercise constant watchfulness over all parts of the University. Little errors or failures or small controversies and differences often lead to serious results, and it has been only by constant vigilance in these respects that we have hitherto escaped some of the more serious disturbances that have affected other Universities.

(3) The Principal should also be free to take his place in educational,

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The following appears to me to be  
important suggestions in this connection.

(1) The Principal should not be  
too heavily burdened with professional work.  
He should, according to the Statute, be a  
Professor in Law, and should be a man  
not only familiar with University work  
but capable of giving instruction in some  
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literary or scientific work more or less connected with that of the University, if called on to do so by the public. This is distinctly in the interest of the University, and inability fully to attend to it has caused some injury in the past.

(4) The Statutes provide that the Principal shall have a "general superintendence of all the affairs of the College and University under such regulations as may be in force for the time being." This is in appearance a somewhat wide function, but it is limited by the facts that the several Faculties have very large powers both legislative and administrative, and that the legislative power for the regulation of purely educational matters of the University rests with the Corporation, while the Governors have absolute powers of enacting statutes, making appointments and regulating expenditures. The function of the Principal is thus purely administrative, and if at all wisely exercised may be allowed its full scope without any danger.

(5) In order that the function of the Principal as thus limited should be efficient for its purpose, it is absolutely necessary that he should be in all cases the ordinary medium of communication between different portions of the University. Some of the most serious difficulties in management have arisen from the tendency of individuals or bodies, not having acquaintance with or interest in the general welfare, to deal with one another independently, or to spring upon the Corporation and Faculties projects

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powers for the regulation of purely educational  
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involving the interest of different departments, without the knowledge of the Principal. Action of this kind has often done much mischief, and the tendency of it in certain quarters is increasing. It will be essential that in the case of a new Principal it should not be encouraged. Of course it is not meant that appeal should not lie from the decisions of the Principal, but he should at least have opportunity in all cases to consider and represent the general interests of the University as opposed to crude, one-sided and partial suggestions which are sure to emanate from active-minded persons ignorant or careless of the general needs.

(6) The power of the Principal over other officers of the University consists merely in directing their attention to any regulations which they may be supposed to be contravening, or neglecting, and in arranging any differences that may arise from conflict of the duties or privileges of different departments. This has usually been a matter of little difficulty, though requiring some care and tact. If in any way the present Principal has failed in this he begs to express his sincere regret.

(7) Since the present Principal came into office, a change has been made by statute not contemplated in the original charter, by the introduction of the offices of Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor. The latter office is held by the Principal, but it is really a diminution of the chartered standing of his office, since he appears merely as a vice in proceedings in which

and the hope that nothing that he has said or done will be considered as reflecting on the character of any member of the University.



he should appear as Principal. At the time this change was made the Principal made no objection to it, as he felt that the President of the Board of Governors was entitled to all possible public recognition. Yet he cannot avoid the conclusion that in some respects the interests of the University have suffered. More especially it is desirable that the Principal should ordinarily preside at the meetings of Corporation, as being best acquainted with the business and likely to be regularly present. The Principal has practically to prepare all the business for these meetings, and should be allowed to carry it on. In the older Universities this difficulty is avoided by making it a matter of course that the Vice-Chancellor shall preside, except at great public functions. This requires no change of statute but merely the establishment of a usage. This suggestion of course refers to a new officer and in the next section I shall refer to the manner in which I have met a similar difficulty with reference to the Deans of the Faculties.

(8) The Principal is necessarily a member of the Faculty of Arts and its president. This is as it should be, since it recognizes that Faculty as the properly Academic Faculty on which the others depend. He is also entitled to preside at the meetings of the other Faculties; but as it has been impossible for him to be present at all the meetings of the Faculties of Law, Medicine and Veterinary Science, he has been in the habit of waving

The student appears to be Principal of the time  
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 generally the establishment of a new office  
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 the manner in which I have met a similar  
 difficulty with reference to the Board of Education  
 the Board of Education  
 In 1888 the Principal is necessarily a  
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 that is not to be done at the Board of Education  
 that directly as the principal is present  
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 also entitled to present at the meeting of the  
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 for him to be present at all the meetings of  
 the faculty of the Board of Education and business  
 because he has been in the habit of meeting

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this right, except when the Dean is absent, or in the case of the vacancy of the office of Dean. So far no evil has resulted from this, but if a new Principal can take time to preside at these meetings he might thereby promote the unity of the University, and should be encouraged by the Governors to take his proper place. It will be seen that the present Principal must plead guilty of having allowed some of his most important functions to be encroached on. This should be remedied when the office becomes vacant.

(9) I have not referred above to the Faculty of Applied Science. In this I have retained the presidency, because of its newness and close connection with the Faculty of Arts. My successor may therefore at once take his place as the presiding officer of this Faculty.

(10) The Vice-Principal in all cases takes the place of the Principal in his absence, except when otherwise provided, as is the case with the duty of presiding at meetings of professional faculties. When the Principal is absent on leave or through illness for a considerable time, it falls to the Board of Governors to induct the Vice-Principal in his place and to arrange for his remuneration. In the case of the absence of the present Principal for a whole session in 1883-4, this was done, and remuneration was given to the Vice-Principal out of the salary of the Principal.

(11) It is one of the functions of the Principal to deliver the Annual

this night, except when the beam is absent  
 in the case of the recovery of the office  
 of beam. So far as not had reached from this  
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 provide the unity of the community, and  
 should be encouraged by the beam and  
 take this paper place. It will be seen that  
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 of having almost none of his own important  
 functions to be exercised in this school.  
 He is situated when the office becomes vacant.  
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 the faculty of applied science. In this I  
 have retained the principal because of  
 its position and also in relation with the  
 faculty of this school. This committee was therefore  
 at one time the place of the faculty  
 office of this faculty.  
 (3) The present principal is all  
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 as in the case with the matter of providing a  
 faculty of professional studies. When  
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University lecture, which however, with consent of the Corporation, he may delegate to another member of the staff. It falls to him also to prepare all Reports and other publications of the University or to superintend their preparation and publication. This duty should remain with him, as it is not expedient in the interest of the University that any official documents should be issued without his sanction.

(12) In the more important Universities elsewhere, it is usual to have funds set apart for incidental demands on the Principal, as aiding students rendered penniless by special accidents, entertaining Academical visitors, or showing hospitality to bodies whose good-will is of importance to the University. Expenses of this kind have hitherto been borne without aid from the University, but a new Principal might find them burdensome, and injury has resulted from their being imperfectly performed. It would seem better that a special grant should be made for these purposes to be accounted for, rather than that such demands should be met by an increase of salary.

(13) In all respectable Universities it is usual to provide suitable official rooms for the Principal. This conduces to the dignity of the office and also to the proper reception of visitors and to the orderly conduct of University business and meetings. No such ~~such~~ provision has been made here owing to want of means and of a University building, but whenever possible these

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matters should be attended to.

(14) The Principal should be acquainted with all expenditures, and should have some oversight of these in so far as they belong to educational work. It is the tendency of every officer to desire to be independent in this respect and much waste results. The control of University rooms and grounds belongs to the Governors, but this should be exercised through the Principal in conference with the Faculties or bodies using the rooms or grounds. There has lately been a tendency in the Governors, Corporation and Faculties to relegate portions of the Principal's duties to Committees. This I have not objected to, but think altogether mischievous in so far as administrative work is concerned.

(15) It has been the practice of the Board of Governors to invite the Principal to attend its meetings, in which however he appears merely as a servant of the Board, and has no right to take part in its proceedings except in so far as information may be desired. The present Principal has endeavoured to adhere strictly to this understanding, and if at any time he has appeared to exceed the limits properly set, it has been inadvertently or under the influence of zeal in the interest of the University. The practice above referred to has been useful in the past as a means of strengthening the position of the Principal and of keeping the Board informed of the condition and

matters should be referred to the  
 (1) The Principal should be  
 acquainted with all expenditures and  
 should have the receipt of the  
 for all the things of substantial  
 of a the nature of every office to be  
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 position of the Principal and keeping  
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wants of the University. It should however be borne in mind that this confidential position of the Principal renders it absolutely impossible that he should introduce any matters personal to himself.

(16) The question of residence of the Principal is an important one. In 1855 the Principal was domiciled in a ruinous building destitute of all modern conveniences, and was left for years to improve his quarters as he best could at his own cost; though in more recent years some improvements have been made at the cost of the College, while on the other hand the convenience of the residence has been lessened by the erection of adjoining buildings. While there has been some inconvenience in residing in the building, much advantage has resulted to the University in its infant state from the constant presence of the Principal. There should indeed always be some responsible officer, say the Principal, or a Dean of Residence, or the Registrar, resident on the College grounds, and a suitable building should be provided for this purpose, which if for the Principal, should be sufficiently commodious to enable him to entertain students or gatherings of the members and friends of the University.

(17) In conclusion I may say that I have been perfectly aware from the first of the disadvantages above referred to, and have endeavoured as far

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 refer to and have undergone as far

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as possible to remedy them out  
of my own resources. I have  
felt their deepening influence, but  
as a pioneer clearing the way  
for others, have considered this  
as inevitable. It is however now  
my duty to urge upon the Board,  
on the one hand, the importance  
of allowing my success to enter  
upon office under more favorable  
circumstances, and on the  
other to remind it that in a  
complicated organization like  
that of this University great care  
should be exercised in intro-  
ducing changes the precise  
effects of which in relation to  
the many and diverse educa-  
tional interests involved, it  
may be difficult to foresee.

I have the honour to be  
Your obedient servant,

J. M. Dawson

June 22, 1893

McGill  
Principalship

Letter from  
Sir <sup>Wm</sup> Dawson  
on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov  
1890