



## Sub-Committee on Environment (SCE)

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**Minutes of the meeting of  
Monday, January 18, 2010, 2:30 p.m.  
Office of Sustainability, Room 216, Ferrier Building, 840 Docteur Penfield Avenue**

**Present:**

Bouchard, Christian, *Manager, Waste Management Program for University Safety (EHS)*  
Knight, Maggie, *Environmental Commissioner, representing SSMU*  
Lechowicz, Martin, *Member-at-Large, SCPD*  
Mitchell, Matthew, *PGSS representative*  
Nicell, Jim, *Associate Vice-Principal (University Services), Interim Chair*  
Pinto, Gabriela, *Associate Director – Building Service, Grounds and Special Events, University Services*  
Thompson, Carrie for Lague, Normand, *IT Services*

**Guests:**

Fortune, Dennis, *Sustainability Director, Sustainability Office – Campus and Space Planning*  
Glencross, Jonathan, *Student, Sustainable McGill Project*  
Gray-Donald, David, *Student, Gorilla Composting*  
McLaren, Nicole, *Assistant to the Environmental Officer, Sustainability Office – Campus and Space Planning*  
Ng, Kathleen, *Environmental Officer, Sustainability Office – Campus and Space Planning*

**Regrets:**

Beech, Robin, *Macdonald Campus academic staff member*  
Bennett, Elena, *McGill School of Environment academic staff member (on leave)*  
Dumoulin, Jennifer, *representing Macdonald Campus Students' Society*  
Pageau, Bill, *Contracts Administrator, Food and Dining Services*  
Roulet, Nigel, *McGill downtown campus academic staff member (on sabbatical)*

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The chair called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

**1. Introductions**

Nigel Roulet, who has been the SCE's Chair over the past year is now on a year-long sabbatical; Jim Nicell, Associate Vice-Principal (University Services) will be acting as Interim Chair pending the search for a replacement.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved with the addition of the item of "Site visits by Waste Management Project" to Announcements.

**3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Monday, October 19, 2009**

The notes from the meeting (no quorum) were approved without changes.



## BUSINESS ARISING

### 4. Rethink conference debrief (roundtable)

The draft report circulated by N. Roulet in December was discussed, with hopes that it would be helpful in identifying further opportunities for integrating sustainability in the academic life of the university.

#### Observations:

- Student demand is a very powerful deciding factor.
- Sustainability is considered an 'other' category- not a core of departmental curriculum requirements
- Responsibility for curriculum change is not the responsibility of the SCE- this should be delegated to faculty working groups.
- Ideas from individuals may not be as focused as necessary – an entire department needs to be involved to design (change) cohesive programs.
- Each faculty provides funding while departments decides on the curriculum.

#### Ideas brought forth included:

- Giving deans funding to pilot sustainability-related courses
- Providing multi-Faculty support. For example, engineers felt frustrated because they felt like they were the only ones working on this topic.
- Establishing working groups to stimulate curriculum reform.
- Rating each course for sustainability content, such as the 'Green scale' at the University of Gottenburg in Sweden. However, this may be unpopular with academics, even if it was a student-run project. It may therefore be better to rate at the program level rather than at the individual course level.
- Sampling of the University population for their sustainability knowledge. Awareness could therefore be created indirectly instead of relying on curriculum. The Sierra Youth Coalition's Sustainability Literacy Assessment could be used on students at the freshman level to post-graduate to mark changes in overall sustainability knowledge.
- Offer monetary compensation and fellowships for research and integration in curriculum, with measurable improvements/ deliverables (such as at the University of Vermont).
- Create a "Sustainability think tank" at McGill University
- Create a hub for students to come with concerns for academic curriculum, such as an academic arm of the Office of Sustainability.

As a general suggestion for future iterations, the Rethink conference could have a format where individuals would be taking ownership of specific ideas, rather than being an idea generating exercise.

### 5. Review of SCE Terms of Reference and Composition

J. Nicell requested suggestions for reviewing the SCE's terms of reference and its composition, for discussion at the next meeting: buy-in would be necessary from the larger University community to identify what should be retained and what not (e.g. with regards to the size of the



group, composition, departments represented, etc.). Nicell did indicate that he felt that the relative informality of the group should be retained.

**Action (for all):** Suggestions for changes to the SCE's terms of reference and its composition should be sent to Nicell for discussion at the next meeting.

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## STANDING REPORTS

### 6. Macdonald Campus Environment Committee

[Item not discussed in absence of R. Beech]

### 7. SSMU Environment Committee

M. Knight provided an update about undergraduate student activities, including:

- Establishment of a Student Association Roundtable on the Environment, with student representatives gathered to discuss how they could influence their respective area of campus to integrate sustainability;
- Development of a Green Events Guide;
- Progress on implementation of their 5-Year plan;
- Passing a motion for sustainable seafood in SSMU cafeterias through SSMU Council
- Phasing out polystyrene (plastic #6) use in the University Centre, with a potential pilot project with Cascades on recycling this material; and
- Holding a workshop for environmental group leaders the previous week.
- It was suggested that the 5 Year Plan framework (with each portfolio having a responsible party being accountable) is a good model to examine. Moreover, the SSMU Sustainability Ambassadors program is going well, and it was proposed that Sustainability Ambassadors could be on each of the SSMU committees, with a possibility of Sustainability Ambassadors on the faculty side (in faculty student associations). However, such a program would require that people should be charged with responsibility in the same manner.
- A yearly report of all student groups' activity (i.e. 'State of Sustainability at McGill') be prepared for posterity; and
- The website could be more of an outreach tool/social networking hub.

### 8. PGSS Environment Committee (PGSSEC)

M. Mitchell provided an update about graduate student activities:

- PGSS had designated January as Green Month, holding nine different events including a green cleaning workshop, presentations, films, and a photo contest (where submissions would be auctioned with proceeds going to fund PGSSEC).
- PGSSEC finally has a website.
- A fee referendum was upcoming.
- Anyone with ideas on how graduate students could be further involved should contact Mitchell directly.
- It was mentioned that graduate student research generates a lot of waste - something we should be aware of.



## NEW BUSINESS

### 9. Sustainability Policy

J. Nicell offered to give attendees his presentation on the draft Sustainability Policy, but many present had already seen it at various occasions. Nicell sought buy-in on part of the SCE; this would be one last chance to make major suggestions and changes. These discussions should take place before proceeding to official approval (on the agenda for a spring meeting of Senate and the Board). He reported that to-date comments were uniformly positive on the proposed policy and that it had been suggested that

- the framework be changed to focus first on the vision instead of the policy; and that
- a Town Hall be held on both campuses as a call to undergraduates and graduates to get feedback and support Nicell, with the authors of the policy also on the panel.

**Action:** M. Knight and M. Mitchell will send Nicell an invitation to present the policy to SSMU and PGSS, respectively.

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## Announcements

### 10. Site visits by Waste Management Program (WMP)

C. Bouchard announced that University Safety (Waste Management Program and Environmental Health and Safety) would be conducting site visits of hazardous waste treatment/disposal plants.

- Of a total of 9 companies (located in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec) to visit: 4 are already done, 5 are left. In February, they scheduled a visit to Moncton for a biomedical handling facility. They will visit another three companies in March, and a radioactive waste treatment facility afterwards.
- Goal of site visits: fiduciary duty, perhaps help decide which companies to use (e.g. some may be greener than others)
- Reports will be made to the CREPUQ, the University Lab Safety Committee and probably the SCE.
- Pictures from sites may be a good educational tool for those in labs to change behaviors.

D. Fortune mentioned that the WMP gives functional computers to School of Computer Science where the machines are loaded with Linux before being transported to Kenya (via carry-on luggage) for use there at the International Institute of Cytology.

Nicell mentioned that instead of individual printers, printing stations would be available for the 110 people in University Services after their move to 1010 Sherbrooke at the end of the month. Those interested in the now-redundant individual printers should contact Nicell's office.

## Pending

There were no pending items.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.