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# SUSTAINABLE LABS WORKING GROUP (SLWG)

Notes from meeting February 18, 2016 2:00-3:30 pm, 3610 McTavish, Room 430

**Present:** Christian Bouchard, Jerome Conraud, Graham Currie, Maureen Donato, Paolo Errore, Adam Finkelstein, Kathleen Ng, Jarrod Nichol, Marina Smailes, Wayne Wood (Chair)

## ITEM 1. REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM PAST MEETING

No changes were made to the proposed agenda. Kathleen made minor grammatical changes to the notes from the past meeting; the updated version would be posted online.

## ITEM 2. BUSINESS ARISING

Further to the last meeting,

- The June SLWG had been rescheduled to June 16 instead of the 23<sup>rd</sup>; changes had been sent via Outlook and updated on the website.
- The Catalyst Awards had been moved to April 14<sup>th</sup> instead of March 30<sup>th</sup>. The deadline to RSVP was now April 8<sup>th</sup>.

## PROPOSED NAME CHANGE - ULSC

As the group was considered a *de facto* working group of the University Lab Safety Committee (ULSC), all present agreed that no name change would be necessary (i.e. retaining 'Sustainable Labs Working Group').

## RECRUITING VOLUNTEER LABS FOR MICRO-PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Jarrod reiterated his offer to help areas with microprocess improvement, be it recycling solutions, space/inventory management, and so on. [He had lost touch with Thomas Di Nardo, who had initially expressed interest.]

Paolo added that they were looking for fertile ground - areas which performed repetitive work or anyone who was looking for help with their process. He was hoping to get 100 followers on their Yammer group by Spring 2016.

Suggestions proposed by the group included

- Clinical (vs. research) labs
- Soliciting interest through existing networks, such as
  - building directors to propose areas to target / seeking internal champions vs. imposing
  - the Office of Sponsored Research LISTSERV (to which researchers can subscribe)
  - the University Teaching Labs group

## ACTION:

- JARROD to draft and distribute a brief description to ALL MEMBERS to distribute to their networks, and KATHLEEN to add this to the website.

## VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE LABS AT MCGILL

Engage the University community; promote and recognize efforts to reduce material, water, and energy consumption while maximizing cost savings; improve safety and accessibility through optimizing operations, training and awareness.

Approved by the SLWG 30 January 2015

## WORKING GROUP REPORTS

### SUSTAINABLE LABS IN EHS CHECKLIST/GUIDE FOR (NEW) RESEARCHERS

Members of the group had been scheduled to test the draft checklist by accompanying EHS staff on their routine inspections. A follow-up meeting would be held to collate comments and make any changes relevant to the list. The items for the guide would follow in parallel to provide rationale for items outlined in the checklist.

### STUDENT TRAINING IN SUSTAINABLE LAB MANAGEMENT

Various student training strategies were discussed.

- **Departmental training.** Wayne reported that
  - there was a big drive under way to ensure that all departments have orientation for incoming students, and while he was involved mainly from the health and safety (H&S) perspective, people generally perked up when sustainability was mentioned. While H&S was easier to impose, sustainability generated more public interest and engagement.
  - While WHMIS was already mandatory for graduate students, there was also increasing support for graduate student orientation.

There would therefore be opportunity to dovetail training with EHS. For example, the Macdonald Faculty Safety Committee was developing a template for graduate students, and Wayne would see how sustainability issues added therein would be taken. However, the challenge remained in that only the department can tell students about localized information (ex. how they work, where items are stored, etc.)

- Since undergraduate honors students often moved onto graduate studies at McGill, Marina wondered whether they could be targeted for training as well: Wayne responded that they were already targeted for WHMIS training, but admitted that if training was not integrated into their courses, undergraduates were harder to reach.
- **Class presentations.** Christian mentioned that last year for Safety week, in lieu of tabling, they had reached out to professors with a class size of at least 100 students to use 10 minutes of class time to give a 10-slide presentation on University Safety (security, hazardous waste, EHS, fire prevention, and emergency measures), with minimum documentation (small flyers). Presentations to 6-7 classes with 400-500 people resulted in relatively large outreach.
- **Enrolment Services.** Adam suggested that
  - **MyCourses** could be used for online delivery of a course, similar to that on academic integrity. Features included tracking, analytics, connecting to video, answering questions, etc. The centrally-controlled Learning Object Repository could be used for content that could subsequently be made accessible to all courses. Teaching and Learning Services could provide assistance with getting content onto MyCourses.
  - **the McGill app** could be an opportunity to promote safety, or anything of interest/use to highlight (ex. as part of the annual scavenger hunt).

### ACTION:

- MARINA would reach out to the Science Undergraduate Society to see if departmental associations were willing to fund training as this could be considered as competence building.
- ADAM would give a presentation on MyCourses at the next meeting.

### LAB WASTE MANAGEMENT

A meeting of the Lab Waste Working group was held the previous day. The approaches to be taken:

- STEPHANIE and George Lazaris would work on establishing the current situation at McGill;
- The contract with our existing supplier of waste and recycling services would be extended until we determine what clauses would be best for the Call for Tenders (in collaboration with CHRISTIAN, GEORGE and peer universities); and
- PAOLO would provide assistance with process efficiency.

Once we have established what lab waste can/cannot be recycled, the information could be integrated into future training (by EHS and others as relevant). It would be easier to target packaging (most being sterile) than waste generated from research (where the liability factor is higher – mistakes can happen especially when more sorting is required in a limited amount of space/time).

### ITEM 3. NEW BUSINESS

#### SUSTAINABLE LABS CANADA (SLC)

Jerome indicated that SLC had been founded 3-4 years ago in Ottawa as a spinoff of the American Labs21 initiative, with the intention of improving design and building of research and teaching labs according to best practices. Membership consisted of architects, engineers, lab managers, professors, researchers, and hospital staff. The Montreal chapter was recently created; McGill was playing an active role, with Wayne to present on the revision to fume hood standards for their first event in March and on the OttoMaas retrofit that had taken place 2-3 years ago at the following event. The national association also gives webinars with different business cases, such as the retrofit of Health Canada's labs in Winnipeg. Given that Montreal has a large research lab community with its hospitals, research universities, and the remnants of the pharmaceutical industry, it would be an interesting opportunity to learn about how others are meeting the challenges of efficient labs.

#### ACTION:

- JEROME to circulate invitation to all members to distribute to their networks. ALL MEMBERS were also invited to join their LinkedIn group.

#### WATER CONTAMINATION FROM HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

In response to activity in the community re. pharmaceuticals present in waste water emitted by hospitals, the question arose as to whether this could be applicable to McGill and thus whether we should keep abreast of best practices identified. Wayne indicated that bedding and liquid waste was not sent to the sewage system, and unused drugs are sent to hazardous materials. Regular people do send pharmaceuticals to the sewage system, but this would apply to all washrooms and not only lab-specific activity.

### ITEM 4. OTHER BUSINESS

**Asset management.** It was anticipated that there would be much equipment left over from the move to the Glen site, which would require advising granting agencies of the updated locations thereof. Used furniture also continues to be a problem; while Virginie St-Pierre was the contact person, it was likely unclear even to her what the inventory was. Megan (from IT) and Stephanie were still in 'information collection' phase for the campus asset management project. In the interim, those with superfluous lab equipment can take a picture and submit a checklist of information to Graham, who would forward it to Crystal Yu to upload this to MMP under 'Used equipment'.

Graham asked Christian whether he had use for a superfluous autoclave; however, this was not a large production shredding autoclave that had been requested for the central autoclave project.

#### ACTION:

- WAYNE will send Graham a list of campus autoclaves.
- GRAHAM will forward a copy of the used lab equipment checklist.

**Sustainability Friday.** Kathleen reminded that group that the last Sustainability Friday of the year would be on the following Friday (February 26<sup>th</sup>) regarding the next iteration of Vision2020; all were encouraged to attend.