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# SUSTAINABLE LABS WORKING GROUP (SLWG)

Notes from meeting September 14, 2017 2:00-3:30 pm, 3610 McTavish, Room 430

**Present:** Christian Bouchard (Chair), Chelsea Cavanagh, Frederic Samson, Stephanie Leclerc, Teodor Mocanu, Kathleen Ng, Alex (lastname unknown) from SSMU/Biology

## 1. REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM PAST MEETING

No changes were made.

Roundtable introductions were made. The new McGill Climate Officer, Aileen (Ali) Rivers, had expressed her interest in attending this group but was unable to attend the day's meeting: the position had been added to the McGill Office of Sustainability over the summer thanks to funding from the Office of the Provost.

## 2. BUSINESS ARISING

### 2.A REVISIONS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

Having received no objections over the summer, the Terms of Reference (ToR) reviewed at the previous meeting were *de facto* adopted and updated on the SLWG website. Only listed members now receive Outlook invitations and thus on the mailing list. That said,

- Participation would still be open to all; and
- Meeting information and documents would still be publicly available for reference on the website.

#### ACTION:

- CHRISTIAN to follow up with WAYNE (currently on leave) about status of request to Anaelle Perez, Senior Project Planner, from Project Management to join the group.

### 2.B WORKING GROUP REPORTS

#### 2.B.I SUSTAINABLE LABS IN EHS CHECKLIST: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Kathleen, complemented by Teo, presented the preliminary results provided by EHS inspectors (see PowerPoint slides for details). Teo provided some insight into the inspection process:

- The inspection cycle runs from 1 to 3 years, but there are only 6 inspectors. Labs with low safety scores are reinspected.
- Due to the workload and the fact that they felt unwelcome by the labs being visited, some inspectors felt that the sustainability questions were extra work and were uninclined to implement.
- There were some questions about the consistency of the inspection data:

## 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

- Teo explained that MyLab uses 'pass/fail/not applicable' with the score being based on 'pass/fail', whereas the sustainability information only used 'info/warning/not applicable' as this was not included in the score. Some inspectors used 'pass'=info and 'fail'=warning.
- Some inspectors ask questions of lab occupants, some do not.
- Some PIs may have self-assessed using the inspection checklist.

Given the aggregate results, the group discussed some suggestions moving forward:

- Whether to ban EtBr on campus:
  - EtBr provides good and consistent results, but very toxic since it goes between the DNA bands.
  - EtBr should be treated with charcoal, but this is not always done by all.
  - There remained questions about efficacy of SYBR Safe, with the additional burden of requiring the accessory reader to be useful, but the result was drain-safe.

Christian indicated that this had been an applied student research project and had ideas for incentives.

- Whether to remove the microbead/triclosan question from the inspection checklist, given the low rate of observed instances: after discussion, the group determined this could be a possibility in a few years
- Whether to prioritize green chemistry (ex. reducing toxicity, addressing EtBr and halogenated solvents): TBD

ACTION:

- CHRISTIAN and TEO to discuss at EHS meeting re. inspectors' experiences to
  - identify potential opportunities for improvement for the remainder of the 3-year inspection cycle;
  - assess the potential for departmental reporting in MyLab for the Departmental Safety Committees; and
  - obtain feedback from PIs.
- CHRISTIAN to follow up with Adam re. potential EtBr project.
- KATHLEEN to check whether McGill had implemented any bans on microbeads/triclosan in soaps; STEPHANIE to check whether these were available in McGill MarketPlace
- KATHLEEN to follow up with Ali re. GHG-generating chemical reactions as a potential area to target

## 2.B.II LAB WASTE MANAGEMENT

The work of the Waste Reduction and Diversion Task-Force (WRDTF) is ongoing and the project is pending.

## 2.C VISION2020

### 3.C.I SUSTAINABLE LABS AWARDS

In order to have this recognition program ready for the awards ceremony in September, the next meeting of the SLWG would be dedicated to finalizing the governance, criteria and milestones for the upcoming year.

ACTION:

- KATHLEEN to add Chelsea to OneDrive.

### 3.C.II SUSTAINABLE LAB DESIGN

Christian was replacing Wayne on the working group led by Lorraine Mercier developing lab design standards; the idea for the guidelines to be completed by the end of this year. The group is currently establishing a vision/mission statement and identifying deliverables, and will be meeting weekly.

### 3.C CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Stephanie outlined some of the challenges around the long, iterative process of capital asset management: no universities have tackled this in the breadth that McGill has (beyond tracking and tagging to life cycle management of each asset category while implementing minimum standard requirements). Update on recent activities:

- Working with the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) to manage the life cycle of research assets;
- Drafting purchasing procedures and forms for vehicle acquisition and disposition;
- Pilot project with Asset Panda ongoing with MNI and soon Student Housing and Hospitality Services
  - Developing criteria re. what should be standardized across asset categories
  - Establishing roles, responsibilities, processes, procedures, access rights for different users – the idea being that assets below the mandatory thresholds could be tracked regardless on a voluntary basis for those wishing to do so.

### ITEM 3. OTHER BUSINESS

Fred indicated that the idea of installing charging stations in the McIntyre Medical Building parking was being explored.