Catalyzing Sustainability at McGill University

Faculty of Science
February 15, 2011

Lilith Wyatt
Sustainability Projects Fund Administrator
"It is nothing less than the recalibration of human intentions with the way the world works as a physical system."

David Orr, director of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College
Intersecting mandates

- Create & facilitate opportunities for students to engage with campus sustainability through course work, and actualize their efforts
  - Connect theory to McGill’s context
  - Institutional memory
  - Coordination
Applied Student Research

- e.g., McGill Food Systems Project
  - Significant provincial funding
  - SSHRC proposal on food security
  - Maxbell foundation grant
  - Internal research collaboration
  - Full time purchasing position
  - External partnerships
  - CURE network
SPF Projects

0. SPF budget
1. Apartment gardens
2. McGill feeding McGill
3. Edible Campus
4. Macdonald student-run ecological garden
5. La Cave bike collective
6. Meatless Mondays
7. Food system administrator
8. Campus crops
9. Food macerator
10. Website re-vamper
11. Electric low-speed vehicle
12. Farmers’ market
13. Sustainable eating
14. Water is Life!
15. Water collection system
16. Gault electric ATV
17. Sustainability research symposium
18. Campus composter
19. Student sustainability research position
20. Outdoor frosh
21. Bike racks
22. Transport survey
23. Hitting the benchmark
24. Fluorescent lamps disposal
25. Hazardous waste minimization
26. Energy dashboard
27. Sustainable Thompson House
28. Desautels Business Conference on Sustainability
29. Mac bottle refill station
30. Bellairs recycling program
A Partnership

WHY

- Leverage point: culture change
A Partnership

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- Best practice model for catalyzing change
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- Leverage point: culture change
- Best practice model for catalyzing change

HOW
- Students and administration build SPF
  - Fall 2009
  - Provost committed to matching student fee
  - $0.50/credit/student fee is approved by SSMU, PGSS, MCSS
A Partnership

WHY
- Leverage point: worldview, culture
- Best practice model for catalyzing change

HOW
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WHAT
- ~$800,000/year for 3 years for projects that build a culture of sustainability among the McGill campus community
Support for SPF applicants

1. Course collaboration
2. Idea phase
3. Proposal
4. Implementation
Review

- Parity committee
  - 4 students
  - 4 staff

- Chosen by commitment, experience
- Consensus feedback process
- Provide feedback on merits of applications
SPF Criteria

1. Commitment
2. Well thought out
3. Community/stakeholder engagement
4. Effective communication
5. Learning & behaviour change
6. Impact for cost
7. Institutionalization
Application summary

- 3 deadlines
- 78 applications, requesting
  $ 1.7 million
- 36 hours of meetings
- 31 approved projects
  $ 580,000 committed (of $800,000 this year)

- 25 March, next deadline
What projects look like

- Leverage culture change
- Collaborative (students, faculty, admin)
- Actualizing applied student research
- Future-oriented vision

III. PROJECTS

Prof. Nicell, Meet The Projects event
September 28, 2010
Macdonald Horticultural Centre is the largest supplier of in-season fruits and veggies to downtown residences.
Sustainability Research Symposium

- Showcase for undergraduate and graduate students research posters
- Network and share ideas through discussion
In collaboration with two professors
Exhibit on using water wisely
To rotate among McGill building lobbies
Redpath Science Outreach
Thank you

For more information

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