

Advisory Council on Sustainability
McGill University, James Building, room 302
November 28th, 2019 (9:00 AM – 11:00 AM)
Minutes

Present: Y. Beauchamp, E. Bennett, M. Bergen, B. Buraga, K. Cook, R. Couvrette, B. Harvey, C. Manfredi, F. Miller, A. Moreau, J. Nicell, S. Osiecki, A. Porlier

Guests: I. Boushey, H. McShane

Regrets: A. DeSousa, D. Dutton, C. Deny, H. Lauzon, B. Lennox, A. Luers, L. Rathmell

1. Welcome & Roundtable

Prof. Manfredi welcomes the group and invites participants to briefly introduce themselves.

2. Approval of minutes from the last meeting and today's agenda

Prof. Manfredi confirms that the minutes from the last meeting were approved and that there are no additions to today's agenda.

3. Latest news related to sustainability

F. Miller presents sustainability news items, including:

- The 10th Anniversary of the Sustainability Project Fund. Three items were announced;
 - Big Wave Funding Stream to support large innovative ideas: 100,000 – 400,000 \$
 - Call out for Spin Bikes and Grow Towers giveaway - 40 applications received.
 - Free plan giveaway event that took place on Oct. 24th - 1,500 plants were given out across 6 distribution points in less than 1 hour.
- The nomination period for the [Catalyst Awards](#) is open. The deadline to submit an application is January 10th ;
- Mac Campus was designated Fair Trade Campus on October 22nd joining the downtown campus that received the designation in 2013;
- McGill joined the University Global Impact as a founding member;
- McGill created a Carbon Offset Committee to evaluate the best available options; and
 - The committee is made of: 2 students, 2 faculty member, 3 staff
 - The committee selected 4 different options of carbon offset
- A Sustainability Survey was sent out at the beginning of November to help prioritize actions and pathways for the Climate & Sustainability Strategy
- The McGill Office of Sustainability was finalist for the *Envirolys Award* and *Les Vivats Award*.

4. STM's Sustainability Plan

A. Porlier presents the STM Sustainability Development Plan, including priorities and action pathways. With the support of a materiality analysis, the STM was able to identify top priorities for internal and external stakeholders. This analysis guided the Sustainability Development Plan and helped prioritize the most pressing issues.

The STM Sustainability Development Plan is articulated around nine priorities and highlights key metrics to be reached as well as pathways to attain these priorities. Amongst the key factors of success are:

- The broad consultation of different stakeholders;
- Presentation of the Sustainability Development Plan to the Board of Directors and Senior Management team to get their buy-in; and
- Tools to empower employees in the identification and ownership of different sustainability issues.

Members brought up that it would be interesting to:

- track passengers' avoided GHG emissions;
- Present the cost of a new project at the same time as its lifecycle analysis – to show that sustainable renovation/buildings do present significant savings.

5. Carbon sequestration potential at McGill

I. Boushey presented her masters research project on the Evaluation of Aboveground Forest Carbon Sequestration for Climate Change Mitigation Targets: A Case Study on McGill University Properties. Through her fieldwork, I. Boushey evaluated the existing carbon sequestration and potential sequestration on the following McGill properties: Gault Nature Reserve, Morgan Arboretum and the Mac Campus Farm.

Her findings revealed that the above-mentioned McGill properties sequester around 2,600 tones of Co₂ per year. Since the Morgan Arboretum is a managed forest, it sequester a higher amount of carbon whereas the Gault Nature Reserve sequesters less because it remains untouched. The potential carbon sequestration could increase by 200 T of Co₂/year if additional key species of trees were planted on previously identified sectors of these properties. The MacCampus was studied as a potential site to increase carbon sequestration. It is important to keep in mind that the carbon offset potential of McGill forests can't be fully evaluated until the contribution of the below-ground c-sequestration is determined.

Members suggested:

- Evaluating soil and urban trees carbon sequestration potential;
- Exploring options to internally offset carbon (planting trees at the arboretum + Mac campus farm);
- Evaluating the carbon sequestration potential of other McGill research stations;
- Including in the next Climate & Sustainability strategy target to further sequester carbon on McGill existing properties;

- Exploring potential partnerships with SOVERDI, Jour de la Terre, etc. for a reforestation project on McGill property.

6. McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI)

H. McShane presents the MSSI as a central hub for sustainability-related research. The MSSI helps catalyze multi-disciplinary and multi-sector research around sustainability themes with the aim of reaching across disciplines and bring researchers from social science and humanities together with scholars from natural sciences and engineering to foster a culture of collaboration and innovation in tackling sustainability issues. As well as funds for innovative research, and activities to build cross-disciplinary community, the MSSI funds a small number of major research programs. The first research themes are:

- Sustainable landscapes for the future;
- Creating sustainable materials for the future;
- Adapting urban environmental for the future;
- Sustainability transitions.

Some ideas that MSSI is working on and that the members suggested are:

- Including sectors from outside McGill (business, non-profits, government, civil society etc.) in project design to ensure research meets societal needs;
- Creating a new fund for research co-designed by McGill researchers and those in the outside community;
- Continuing to increase engagement from members of the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

7. Next Steps & Closing Remarks:

- The next meeting of the Advisory Council on Sustainability will take place on February 5th, 2020;
- The Catalyst Award on Sustainability will be held on April 6th, 2020 and;
- The Climate & Sustainability Strategy consultations will begin in January 2020.