

Advisory Council on Sustainability
McGill University, Zoom Online Meeting
February 22, 2022 (3:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

Present: F. Miller, Y. Beauchamp, D. Dutton, C. Manfredi, D. Mondou, E. Bennett, B. Harvey, J. Nicell, C. Aubrac, P. Cigana, A. Desousa, L. Rathmell, N. Volland, D. Daryanani, C. Garzon, K. Houser, B. Zsigovics

Guests: Johanne Houle, Director, Staff and Organizational Development (Human Resources), Jessica Latus, Sustainability Officer (McGill Office of Sustainability), Adam Finkelstein, Associate Director, Learning Environments (Teaching and Learning Services)

Absent with regrets: B. Lennox, K. Hogue, A. Porlier, T. Phillips

1. Welcome Remarks, Approval of Minutes from the Last Meeting and Today's Agenda

F. Miller welcomes the group to the meeting. He reminds the group that a poll was launched to determine whether the meeting should be held in person (conditions permitting) or online. The results were split, therefore moving forward Sustainability will schedule 2 in person meetings and 2 online meetings for next year. F. Miller asks for approval of the minutes from the last meeting. The Council approves. There are no additions to today's agenda.

2. Latest News Related to Sustainability & Sustainability Survey Highlights

K. Houser presents recent sustainability news, including:

- A new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) report was published that outlines McGill's involvement in each of the 17 SDGs.
- Impact200 winners were announced in December, with first place awarded for Food Map, an information-sharing platform to connect small food banks, food donors and people in need. This is the first flagship action completed in the 2020-2025 Climate & Sustainability Strategy.
- Work to improve bike infrastructure is ongoing with key targets being identified, which are: attain 2,150 bike parking spots on Downtown and Macdonald Campuses, have at least 40% of bike parking spots are covered, and have at least 1 bike repair station in every sector of campus.
- The Green Labs pilot project was awarded seed funding by the Sustainability Projects Fund. This funding will help implement the mygreenlab certification at six pilot labs across downtown and Macdonald campuses.
- 27 buildings now have compost collection across downtown campus and 9 additional bins were added at Macdonald Campus. Communications have been implemented; and new posters and floor decals will be installed in the coming weeks.
- Catalyst award nominations are open – submissions are accepted until March 6th.
- The 3rd annual sustainability survey was conducted between October and November 2021. 17,000 surveys were distributed and around 3,000 responses were received. 50% of the respondents were staff while the student population was harder to reach.

Members suggested:

- We often hear that students receive too many e-mails, but no one has yet suggested a better medium to reach them in numbers. With remote learning and working this year, it is possible that the surveys get lost in respondents' inboxes. Look into promoting future surveys through social media, if possible.

- Keep in mind that the objective of surveys is to get a representative sample to guide our efforts. We shouldn't define the success of a survey by the response rate.

3. Human Resources Initiatives for a Healthy, Sustainable Workplace

D. Dutton and J. Houle presented an overview of HR's initiatives for a healthy and sustainable workplace. In partnership with units across the university, HR has promoted sustainability through OD workshops, promoting the Sustainable Workplace Certification, as well as through the My Healthy Workplace program, among others. The presentation concluded with 2 questions for the group to discuss:

- How do you think that sustainability contributes to attracting and retaining talent?
- What emerging trends should be considered when developing a sustainable workplace?

Members suggested:

- Participants are happy to see this as a center of pillar of our work.
- It is a good idea to look at the benefits pre-covid vs. post-covid. In the current marketplace sustainability initiatives may attract some but can also put people off.
- Regarding emerging trends, we should ensure that we keep best practices that were established during the pandemic: digital signatures, less travel, less printing, and flex working spaces.
- As employees return to work, it is good to be conscious of the physical and mental health challenges they may face. We need tools that will help employees adapt to the "new normal."

4. Sustainability Module for Students

J. Latus and A. Finklestein joined the meeting to share an online Sustainability Module for students that is in development. A flagship action in the Research and Education category of the Climate & Sustainability Strategy, the module will provide foundational information about sustainability, provide a catalyst for engagement, and foster a culture of sustainability on campus. While it is currently being designed for students, some parts of the module may also be useful for onboarding faculty and staff in the future. By the end of the module students should be able to describe sustainability and its three pillars, recognize sustainability-related initiatives and opportunities at McGill and integrate their awareness of sustainability into their own practices. The presentation ended with 2 questions to the group:

- How do we best engage with students to ensure that they are aware of the module and encourage their participation?
- How would you suggest that we conclude the module to best inspire further engagement from the community?

Members suggested:

- Many Sustainability courses can leave you feeling helpless. We will need to ensure that engagement is positive in the end. There should be plenty of examples of initiatives already happening (case studies) to help find the line between negative impact and positive outcomes.
- Include how to get engaged with sustainability in Montreal as well—not just on campus.
- Ongoing consultations with focus groups that consist of students, staff and faculty will be a very important part of finishing the module. It is important to remember to create content that all students would be interested in and not just the students who are interested in sustainability. This will help achieve maximum participation.
- In regard to further engagement from the community, mentorship could be an aspect to explore, connecting students to mentors (advisors) or other resources where they could continue their engagement. The key will be empowering people.

5. Next steps & closing remarks

F. Miller mentions the next Advisory Council meeting will take place on May 17, 2022.