



Secretariat

845 Sherbrooke St. West, room 313

Montreal, QC, H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-3948 | Fax: (514) 398-4758

The following items arise from the Committee on Sustainability’s meeting of April 5, 2023. They are presented to the Board of Governors for information.

I. FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

1. STARS Gap Analysis [SC22-17]

The Sustainability Committee received, for information, a high-level gap analysis between McGill’s last STARS rating (which was submitted 2020), and the highest rated Quebec universities, namely Université de Sherbrooke and Université Laval.

Every three years McGill submits a comprehensive report to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), an organization that oversees the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS), a self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. McGill currently holds a gold STARS sustainability rating and, as outlined in the Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025, aims to attain a platinum rating by 2030. To better understand how McGill can achieve this goal, an exercise was conducted to identify where the main gaps are between McGill’s score in 2020 (76.69 points), and the highest rated Quebec Universities were, namely Université de Sherbrooke (92.73 points) and Université Laval (84.99 points). It was noted that the incorporation of sustainability learning outcomes into strategic academic plans, green building standards and LEED certifications were main areas with the largest gaps, and could be targeted point for improvement.

2. Presentation on McGill’s Biodiversity Plan [SC22-18]

The Sustainability Committee received, for information and review, a draft version of McGill’s Biodiversity Plan, an initiative that stems from the Landscapes and Ecosystems category of McGill’s Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025.

A draft plan was developed from July 2022 to March 2023 in a participatory process led by the Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with Prof. Andy Gonzalez, Liber Ero Chair in Conservation Biology and Founding Director of the Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science. Stakeholder consultations were held with staff, faculty, and students from 15 academic and administrative units, offices, and departments, workshops, one-on-one discussions, presentations, and collaborative drafting and revisions. A completed draft was circulated for review during the beginning of the Winter 2023 semester and was presented to the Senate Committee on Physical Development, the Sustainability Exchange Group, the Advisory Council on Sustainability, and McGill’s senior administration.

This draft plan complements the University's Nature Positive Pledge signed in November 2022. As part of this pledge, the University committed to start a nature positive journey by assessing its biodiversity baseline, setting smart targets for biodiversity, setting actions to achieve the smart targets, and reporting annually on progress.

3. Retreat of the Committee on Sustainability [SC22-16]

The Committee received a draft program of the Retreat of the Committee on Sustainability to be held in June 2023. The retreat will focus on McGill's current and future Sustainability goals, particularly in the context of creating the next Climate & Sustainability Strategy.

It was noted that the retreat would provide an excellent opportunity for the Committee to provide their input to the Office of Sustainability ahead of the upcoming governance year. It was also noted that it would be beneficial for the Committee to revisit the draft Biodiversity Plan at the retreat, ahead of its proposed approval in Fall 2023.

4. Other Updates and Reports

The Committee received the following reports and updates for information:

- Follow-up Items from the Sustainability Committee Meeting of February 1, 2023 [SC22-14]
- Sustainability Committee Meeting Dates – 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 [SC22-15]
- Dashboard Report on the Climate and Sustainability Strategy [SC22-19]
- Implementing McGill's Sustainability Strategy: Initiatives under the Category of Landscapes and Ecosystems [SC22-20]

END

April 2023