

# Memorandum

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**TO:** Board of Governors

**FROM:** Professor Christopher Manfredi, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

**SUBJECT:** Progress Report on Open Forum Sustainability Recommendations

**DATE:** October 5, 2017

**DOCUMENT #:** GD17-10

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

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**ISSUE & EXPECTED OUTCOME** A progress report on sustainability recommendations at McGill is provided to the Board of Governors for information.

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**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE** The Open Forum Report on the Recommendations of the 2016 CAMSR Report on Divestment [GD16-38] prepared by Professor Frédéric Bachand identified several measures to which the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) agreed to pursue in conjunction with other relevant University areas.

The attached table prepared with the collaboration of Mr. François Miller, Sustainability Director, McGill Office of Sustainability, highlights the progress to-date on the following measures:

- Work with various sectors of the University, including the Advisory Council on Sustainability, to establish and provide budgetary support for a University Climate Officer with a mandate to consolidate work on carbon neutrality, climate literacy, and climate resilience.
  - To the extent possible, given the nature of McGill's physical infrastructure, set a target date and implementation plan for McGill to become a carbon neutral institution.
  - Implement additional institution-level programs to facilitate individual and collective actions that will reduce the University's carbon footprint.
  - Develop a comprehensive plan to reduce and/or offset the effects of carbon-intensive university travel.
  - Explore development of a sustainability-focused curriculum.
  - Leverage the newly-established Advisory Council on Sustainability to improve two-way communication on the University's sustainability commitments and actions.
  - Continue to develop vehicles for broad community participation, engagement, and commitment with respect to sustainability.
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| <b>ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b>   | The measures are in alignment with the University's Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy and the Advisory Council on Sustainability, which was created through an innovative community engagement process and lays out a framework for achieving the highest possible standards of sustainability on the University's campuses. |
| <b>COMPLIANCE WITH UNIVERSITY POLICY</b>                 | The measures as outlined are in compliance with University policies. The report was presented to Senate on September 19, 2017.   |
| <b>COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION/ EXTERNAL REGULATIONS</b> | The measures and the progress report are not subject to legislation or external regulations.   |
| <b>RISK FACTORS</b>                                      | There are no risk factors associated with the progress report.   |
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>                     | The measures undertaken will be carried out according to McGill's current policies and procedures for sustainability.  |
| <b>IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS</b>                 | Appendix A outlines planned activities and actions for the coming year. The Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) will provide the Board of Governors with an update in Fall 2018.   |
| <b>MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>  | Appendix A: Progress Report on Measures Identified in the Provost's Response to the Open Forum on the Recommendation of the 2016 CAMSR Report  |

**Progress Report on Measures Identified in the Provost’s Response to the Open Forum on the Recommendation of the 2016 CAMSR Report**

| <b>Measures identified in the Provost’s Response to the Open Forum</b>   | <b>Actions as of September 2017</b>   |
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| <p>Work with various sectors of the University, including the Advisory Council on Sustainability, to establish and provide budgetary support for a University Climate Officer with a mandate to consolidate work on carbon neutrality, climate literacy, and climate resilience.</p> | <p>The Climate Officer position has been created and embedded into the McGill Office of Sustainability. It was posted on the McGill job website on April 21, 2017. The interview process closed in late June and the Climate Officer, Ali Rivers, started working at McGill on August 21st.</p> <p>In consultation with stakeholder groups and University leaderships, the Climate Officer will focus primarily on developing and implementing institution-level programs to reduce the University’s carbon footprint, especially targeting greenhouse gas emissions generated by air-travel and commuting. The CO will also engage with the academic community to enhance climate literacy throughout the McGill community, and will assess the key climate-related risks for the University and propose mitigation options in order to improve McGill’s climate resilience.</p>   |
| <p>To the extent possible, given the nature of McGill’s physical infrastructure, set a target date and implementation plan for McGill to become a carbon neutral institution.</p>  | <p>The work to identify a target date and an implementation plan for McGill to become carbon neutral is well under way, with the assistance of the Advisory Council on Sustainability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The McGill Office of Sustainability organized Community Conversations on Carbon Neutrality (March 28-29-30, 2017) and conveyed a Task Force of Academic Experts on Carbon Neutrality (March-May, 2017).</li> <li>• In order to pave the way to a carbon-neutral energy transition, Utilities &amp; Energy Management proposed a 2016-2020 iteration of McGill’s Energy Management Plan.</li> <li>• Multiple ongoing construction projects are seeking LEED certification<sup>1</sup>, improving our overall energy efficiency.</li> <li>• McGill Grounds team are replacing and planting trees, further contributing to carbon sequestration.</li> <li>• Minimum Standards Requirements are currently being developed to reduce the carbon footprint of the fleet.</li> </ul> <p>Building on these efforts, the target date and implementation plan for carbon neutrality will be integrated to the 2017-2020 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, which is scheduled to be presented to Senate on November 23, 2017 and the Board of Governors on December 12, 2017.</p> |
| <p>Implement additional institution-level programs to facilitate individual and collective actions that will reduce the</p>  | <p>A sustainable workplace certification and a sustainable events certification were developed in 2017, in order to reduce the environmental footprint of work-related activities, including</p>  |

<sup>1</sup> Green Chemistry Lab and Desautels expansion both to be certified for LEED construction. Brown, La Citadelle and Trottier to be certified for LEED operations and maintenance.

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| <p>University's carbon footprint.</p>   | <p>their carbon footprint. Additional measures will be part of the 2017-2020 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan. They will address each main carbon emission source.</p> <p>In addition, to highlight McGill's commitment lower its carbon footprint, a new sustainability key performance indicator (KPI) is being developed for the Board of Governors. It will specifically focus on our corporate greenhouse gas emissions.</p>   |
| <p>Develop a comprehensive plan to reduce and/or offset the effects of carbon-intensive university travel.</p>  | <p>McGill's Procurement Services developed a mechanism to offset a portion of future greenhouse gas emissions from air travel booked through McGill's contracted Travel Management Company, by using the rebate money generated through the BMO Airfare Virtual Card. Once set up, a significant amount of GHG emissions could be offset annually through this mechanism. In addition, the newly appointed Climate Officer will help develop other programs to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to air travel.</p>                               |
| <p>Explore development of a sustainability-focused curriculum.</p>  | <p>Sustainability Systems has been identified has a core research commitment for the University going forward. As this develops it will contribute demonstrably to new curriculum across a range of disciplines with an orientation toward sustainability.</p> <p>We highlighted the importance of a sustainability-focused curriculum in McGill's Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022, with a commitment to "promote (...) the development of sustainability-focused research and teaching."</p>   |
| <p>Leverage the newly-established Advisory Council on Sustainability to improve two-way communication on the University's sustainability commitments and actions.</p> | <p>To date, the Advisory Council on Sustainability has been effectively used as a sounding board to assess the viability and level of ambition of the University's sustainability commitments and actions. Three meetings took place between Nov. 2016 and May 2017. Four (4) additional meetings are scheduled by May 2018 to further enhance the two-way communication on the University's sustainability commitments and actions.</p>  |
| <p>Continue to develop vehicles for broad community participation, engagement, and commitment with respect to sustainability.</p>                                     | <p>There have been multiple ways to get involved in sustainability for students, faculty, and staff. For example, the consultation process around the 2017-2020 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan engaged +500 people over +20 events (Action Team meetings, outdoor open consultation &amp; web page, etc.). In collaboration with the Office of Sustainability, the Advisory Council on Sustainability and community members, we will keep involving all stakeholders to put sustainability at the centre of our operations, research, and teaching.</p> |