

SUSTAINABLE LABS WORKING GROUP (SLWG)

Notes from meeting May 12, 2016 2:00-3:30 pm, 3610 McTavish, Room 430

Present: Christian Bouchard (Acting Chair), Graham Currie, Maureen Donato, Paolo Errore, Victor Frankel, Teodor Mocanu, Kathleen Ng, Marina Smailes

ITEM 1. REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM PAST MEETING

“PGSS update” was added to Item 4 of the agenda under “Other Business”.

Kathleen thanked Francois and Christian for preparing the notes from the last meeting. No changes were made.

ITEM 2. BUSINESS ARISING

Re. MyCourses. Christian attempted using the module and found it unintuitive. However, he reminded the group of Adam’ assertion is available from TLS.

Re. autoclave. The predesign phase (Stage I) was complete and the project was now in design phase: the project was awaiting approval of design fees by Robert Couvrette (Associate Vice-Principal of Facilities Management and Ancillary Services) to proceed. It was unclear how this project would rank on the priority list of Robert’s projects given Convocation, the summer construction season, and the University’s bids for project funding recently made available by the federal government.

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

SUSTAINABLE LABS IN EHS CHECKLIST/GUIDE FOR (NEW) RESEARCHERS

Re. integrating sustainability items in checklist into MyLab. Teo indicated that

- He would be responsible for entering the checklist questions into the new MyLab inspection module; it would be easier for him to create a new section for sustainability in addition to the additional EHS safety checklist sections (General, Chemical, Biological, and Radiation).
 - DECISION: SLWG members agreed that piloting a new section in MyLab would be amenable.
- He had spoken to the vendor re. the proposed changes (i.e. additional sustainability-related items) to include in program development; however, a business needs assessment form needed to be completed for McGill IT in order to open a new project. Work was already ongoing on two large projects (inspections and biological inventory agents) therefore no resources were available to open a new project.

Christian concurred that working with the vendor was time-consuming, citing the example of his project which began in 2010 and launched only in 2013.

ACTION:

- Teo and Christian would discuss with Joseph Vincelli in EHS and distribute the checklist to the other EHS officers for comments within the next two weeks. This version would be circulated to ULSC members for review.

VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE LABS AT MCGILL

Engage the University community; promote and recognize efforts to reduce material, water, and energy consumption while maximizing cost savings; improve safety and accessibility through optimizing operations, training and awareness.

Approved by the SLWG 30 January 2015

Re. content for Guide. Formatting of the content would be required to improve ease of use by the target audience. MOOS had committed to having an intern do page layout and design once the content was finalized.

ACTION:

- Christian would attempt to distill the content into 2-4 pages. Paolo would assist with formatting. The goal would be to complete the work within the next two weeks for distribution prior to the next meeting.

Re. governance. Christian indicated that the Guide for new researchers had been distributed at the last meeting of the University Lab Safety Committee (ULSC) for review; the next meeting would only be in September.

ACTION:

- Christian would ask Dr. Shrier, ULSC Chair, regarding
 - the status of the SLWG (motion that SLWG be officially recognized at the next ULSC vs. *de facto*);
 - verifying whether the checklist (version reviewed by EHS staff) could be considered for online approval pending the next meeting

STUDENT TRAINING IN SUSTAINABLE LAB MANAGEMENT

Marina had spoken to the Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) about training, but the timing was off due to the transition to new executives and the departure of students for the summer. She has regardless mentioned this to her successor as Science senator as well as potential members who could replace her on the SLWG next year. Potential resources to fund this initiative include

- the Special Projects Fund (SPF, not to be confused with the *Sustainability* Projects Fund): applications for this must go through a department; or
- the Student Societies' Green Fund (administered by SSMU): applications are restricted to student groups for sustainability services for campus.

Marina was optimistic and hoped that she could get responses over the summer, and was considering sponsorship by one of the departments on campus as well.

While Patrick was not present, apparently he was occupied but could be submitting an application to the Sustainability Projects Fund this fall on a project.

LAB WASTE MANAGEMENT

Christian provided an update, building on an email update sent earlier by Stephanie:

- It was unlikely that there would be a single solution since different labs generated different type of waste, with different space constraints and organizational competency. It would be more feasible to target 1-2 easy waste streams.
- A baseline assessment of waste streams is under way, since it was unclear what current waste services were available or required. The current waste contract was therefore extended pending completion of the assessment.
- A follow-up meeting of the Lab waste Working Group would be scheduled after the February meeting, hopefully before the end of June. Members of the group had been tasked with identifying different waste streams that could potentially be targeted, and to propose areas for pilot projects.

- While McGill was a member of SSE, the latter was apparently reluctant to divulge information about local suppliers of lab waste collection services.

ACTION:

- Christian would follow up with Stephanie with a potential supplier for lab waste collection.

ITEM 3. NEW BUSINESS

VISION2020 DELIVERABLES

Since Wayne would be away for most of this year's SLWG meetings, Christian had reviewed each of the deliverables and reminded the group that we were four meetings away from the deadline.

- The best practice research could be considered COMPLETE given this work was done in development of the checklist and the guide.
- The initial recommendations for a sustainable lab programme could be considered COMPLETE: these would consist of the checklist, the Guide, training, and waste services (increasing the offer of available services for material, water, energy, etc.)

ITEM 4. OTHER BUSINESS

Upcoming SLWG meetings. Meetings would be scheduled for the next academic year based on the existing formula (meetings every six weeks, same date/time/location).

- Victor would be the incoming PGSS President. Amir would still be PGSS Environment co-Commissioner next year; Victor would encourage Solange to come to SLWG meetings in his place as he was concerned about overcommitting.
- Marina had SLWG added to the University Affairs portfolio of committee to ensure that a student would be sent; apparently many students were excited that work on sustainable labs was happening.

ACTION:

- Victor will send Kathleen an email connecting to Solange.
- Marina would determine whether other students would be available to attend the June meeting if she was unable to attend.

PGSS UPDATE

Victor provided an update on PGSS activities with the University administration, pursuant to the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) response to Divest McGill. Victor was confident that this could ensure that sustainability would become a priority for the senior administration and hoped that this would be the year of culture change.

- He and Amir had met with Provost Chris Manfredi to discuss the potential for McGill to become carbon neutral within the near future.
 - There would be a Joint Board and Senate meeting on sustainability this fall.
 - Manfredi had appointed Frederic Bachand from the Faculty of Law to chair open consultations – the three dates had been announced at Senate, and Victor would be contacting Bachand for more information.

- He also met with François, hoping that this would result in more resources for MOOS and the University to ramp up activities to increase emphasis on carbon neutrality in operations and infrastructure.
- He would be on Board and Senate in the next academic year, and stated his support to help move issues forward where this could be helpful.