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# SUSTAINABLE LABS WORKING GROUP (SLWG)

Notes from meeting November 26, 2015 2:00-3:30 pm, 3610 McTavish, Suite 430

**Present:** Thomas Di Nardo, Teodor Mocanu, Jérôme Conraud, Graham Currie, Stéphanie Leclerc, Jarrod Nichol, Kathleen Ng, Wayne Wood (Chair)

**Guest:** Michel Martel

## ITEM 1. REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM PAST MEETING

‘New business: Micro-process improvement’ and ‘EHS checklist’ was moved forward on the agenda to accommodate the early departure of their respective presenters.

*[N.B. The notes from the day’s meeting reflect the original order of agenda items.]*

## ITEM 2. BUSINESS ARISING

News in brief:

- The autoclave proposal was included in the budget request to Robert Couvrette (Associate Vice-Principal, Facilities Management and Ancillary Services – FMAS – formerly known as University Services); awaiting news.
- The University Safety Annual Report 2014-2015 (which includes an organizational chart of all the safety committees) was presented to the Board and now available on the EHS website.
- Stephanie, Christian and Marc Dozois (Director of Building Services, Grounds, Mail/Printing and Bookstore) would be visiting the facilities of a social economy initiative that could potentially process McGill’s residual materials.

## FOLLOW-UP FROM ULSC MEETING OCTOBER 19

François’ presentation at the University Lab Safety Committee October 19<sup>th</sup> about the Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy progress report (including activities of the SLWG) was well received: there appeared to be much interest, and the idea of this group reporting to the ULSC did not raise any objections.

Action:

- WAYNE will recommend at the next ULSC meeting that they ‘adopt’ the SLWG and propose a name change to the group to reflect their decision (ex. ULSC Subcommittee on Sustainable Labs).

## WORKING GROUP REPORTS

### SUSTAINABLE LABS IN EHS CHECKLIST

Teodor reported that the Checklist working group had compared the EHS checklist with checklists from peer institutions (Harvard, Penn, MyGreenLab) to determine additional items/areas that would be relevant to McGill. [Preliminary draft circulated to SLWG prior to meeting]

The Checklist working group had identified a few issues of concern:

## 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

- **'Sustainable item' content accuracy.** One of the new additions included 'Green Chemistry', but it was unclear which chemicals would be most appropriate for inspections to target. Teodor would identify a few most commonly seen, and it was recommended that the McGill Green Chemistry group be consulted to determine whether sustainable alternatives existed for these. Wayne mentioned that he had a colleague at the University of Montreal who specialized in solvent replacement whom we could consult.
- **Prioritization/selection of 'sustainable items' proposed.** While a number of additions have been proposed to the EHS checklist, it would be helpful for members of the working group to join the EHS inspection team on their inspections to better understand which items would best reflect the sustainable outcomes desired while balancing resource limitations to collect and analyze data and applicability to all labs.
- **Governance framework.** The items currently on the EHS checklist have a regulation/safety policy as a reference. After discussion, the SLWG felt that while existing McGill policies (Environmental and Sustainability) provided a reference framework, they did not provide adequate detail that could withstand a challenge. It would therefore be necessary to review the checklist with stakeholders (ex. approved by the ULSC) to reinforce the University's buy-in.
- **Reporting.** It was unclear whether the sustainable items should be considered part of the existing EHS inspection framework or somehow reported in a separate question. This issue was not resolved through the day's discussion but could be revisited after further refinement to the items ultimately selected for this process.

In response to a question about how complaints could be made by students regarding lab issues, Wayne clarified that the process would be to bring forward to the supervisor (through the Internal responsibilities System – IRS), ULSC (where graduate students have representation), PGSS, and EHS (who could provide guidance, but not intervention).

- Stephanie mentioned that she had recommended to Robert that an anonymous email address be set up for whistleblowers who wish to report problems with processes/suppliers, and that whistleblowing be integrated into the University's code of ethics since the existing conflict of interest policy is too broad and applies mainly to academics only.
- Wayne added that Security already had a safety reporting whistleblowing site.

Action:

- ALL SLWG MEMBERS interested in participating in an inspection should contact KATHLEEN/TEODOR.
- WAYNE would circulate the link to Security's safety reporting whistleblowing site.

#### SUSTAINABLE LABS GUIDE FOR (NEW) RESEARCHERS

After reviewing the documents of peer institutions, an outline of the content for the guide was established, and members would be responsible for populating the information therein.

- The intent was to provide an overview of McGill policies and best practices, with links to the reference documents for those requiring additional information (similar to the Administrative Handbook). This would facilitate accessibility to the reader and remove the need to make updates in multiple locations when these arise.
  - The McGill Guide to End-of-Life Materials is missing from the document and should be added, as well as distributed to Building Directors as a reminder.
- The guide would also provide the rationale behind the 'sustainable items' added to the EHS inspection checklist. It was apparent that because of this overlap with the Checklist working group, it could be more efficient for these two groups to merge and move in tandem instead of in parallel.

Action:

- KATHLEEN will schedule a follow-up meeting for the merged membership before the end of 2015 and add a link to the McGill Guide to End-of-Life Materials to the document.

### STUDENT TRAINING IN SUSTAINABLE LAB MANAGEMENT (SPF)

The SPF application deadline was January 11, and the next one in June 2016. Given the six-month lead time required for financing approval, it would be prudent to act sooner rather than later should the group wish to request seed capital for the initiative.

Thomas mentioned that the Green Chemistry group is integrating sustainability into their safety orientation for new students. Individual groups would be identifying initiatives in their areas, especially those that can be scaled up. Wayne congratulated the initiative, since from his experience, student-led sustainability programs worked the best: this initiative could be discussed at the next SLWG or with EHS for further assistance.

Action:

- JEROME would follow up with Patrick re. the status of the SPF application.

## ITEM 3. NEW BUSINESS

### MICRO-PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Jarrod and Michel spoke about the Micro-Process Improvement brown-bag lunches, allowing peer coaching through a community of practice. [See PowerPoint presentation]

- A micro-process was essentially an activity upon which the 'client' has complete control (i.e. no permission required to move forward)
- The monthly 1-hour lunches were open to all who wished to discuss their microprocess and identify improvements (ex. lab inspection process efficiency) with a Peer Coach.

Action:

- ALL MEMBERS OF THE SLWG are invited to
  - join the 'Micro-Process Improvement' group on Yammer, where McGill participants could exchange and download useful 1-pagers under "Files" – cheat sheets, tips and tricks, etc.
  - contact LEAN Michel Martel or Paolo Errore for more specific information.

## ITEM 4. OTHER BUSINESS

**Sustainability Friday.** All members of the McGill community were invited to the next Sustainability Friday event at the Faculty Club the next day (November 27), which would be focusing on Health and Wellness.

**Catalyst Awards.** The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Catalyst Awards Gala recognizing the contributions of McGill staff, students and faculty towards campus sustainability would be held on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The categories this year had been changed to reflect the Vision2020 categories (Research, Education, Connectivity, Operations, and Governance & Administration) due to the increasing overlap in the original categories seen in applications over the past few years. Work was under way to finalize the new application criteria; the application and RSVP forms should be online by December for those wishing to submit an application and/or to participate.

**Synergie Santé Environnemental (SSE).** Further to their presentation earlier this fall, the non-profit group SSE forwarded an invitation to the SLWG to attend their annual general meeting on January 12 and would be presenting at the Quebec Universities' Sustainability Network on February 11 to identify opportunities for collaboration. They had also solicited an invitation to MOOS to become a member of the network (\$300) to access their toolkits/resources, case studies and expertise (consultation service) in addition to a free membership to Global Green and Healthy Hospitals; however, this is outside of MOOS' mandate and the invitation was forwarded to other units (ex. EHS, Procurement, Building Services) for consideration.

Action:

- KATHLEEN to circulate event invitation to SSE event to all members of the SLWG.
- ALL MEMBERS OF SLWG to contact KATHLEEN if interested in becoming members of SSE.

**Paris climate conference.** Some McGill faculty and students (ex. Thomas, Amis Nosrat, Jaye Ellis, etc.) would be attending the upcoming Paris climate conference, albeit not necessarily as a McGill delegation: Thomas, for example, indicated that he had been accredited as a participant from the American Chemical Society. He would be tweeting about his experiences: it was recommended that he contact Laurie Devine in Communications to promote this initiative. Members of the SLWG recommended that the impacts of travel to the conference also be considered (ex. offset), with some commenting that sponsors like Air Canada benefiting from the business should be making a positive gesture by offsetting impacts as well.