
SUSTAINABLE LABS WORKING GROUP (SLWG)

Notes from meeting January 18, 2018 2:00-3:30 pm, 3610 McTavish, Room 430

Present: Alex Arkilanian, Christian Bouchard (Chair), Chelsea Cavanagh, Graham Currie, Jerome Conraud, Teodor Mocanu, Kathleen Ng

1. REVIEW AGENDA AND NOTES FROM PAST MEETING

There were no changes made to the agenda or notes from the past meeting.

2. SUSTAINABLE LABS AWARDS: FINALIZE

[Detailed notes regarding the content of the awards topic were integrated on the OneDrive document outlining the criteria and governance framework for the awards.] The content was subsequently approved; the next steps would be to communicate the launch of the awards and solicitation of nominees to obtain submissions by June 1, 2018.

ACTION:

- Specific SLWG members to respond to tasks as assigned in the document on OneDrive.
- EVERYONE to think about potential candidates that could be encouraged to submit nominations, for discussion at March meeting.

3. BUSINESS ARISING

The SLWG annual report was approved by the group.

ACTION:

- Christian to submit the document to the University Lab Safety Committee (ULSC).

3.A WORKING GROUP REPORTS

3.A.1 SUSTAINABLE LABS IN EHS CHECKLIST

Teodor indicated that Medicine was currently being inspected, with Macdonald campus scheduled for the summer followed by Science.

There was some discussion about revisiting the sustainability items on the EHS checklist, ex. since Environment Canada apparently deemed microbeads in soap and other products as illegal, with distributors given one year to comply. The majority of McGill users make their purchases from the McGill MarketPlace (MMP), which apparently had no microbead-containing products therein.

ACTION:

- KATHLEEN to check with STEPHANIE re. availability of triclosan (and derivatives) as to whether these were removed from MMP.

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

- CHRISTIAN/TEO to download inspection data and consult with EHS inspectors for potential changes to the checklist/guide in August, in preparation for review at the September SLWG meeting.

3.A.2 LAB WASTE MANAGEMENT

Central autoclave project. Christian reported that the Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) application had reached Stage II. In a recent development the previous week, Robert Couvrette - the Associate Vice-Principal (Facilities Management and Ancillary Services) - had agreed to cover the installation costs. The machine was expected to pay for itself in 10-11 years, similar to the vial crusher previously acquired by FMAS. Once funding was approved, next steps would involve a tendering process for the machine, then recruitment of work study students to assist with operations.

As a reminder, plasma gasification had been considered in lieu of the autoclave. While plasma gasification could potentially become the norm in a decade, the technology was currently still in the early stages, being

- a relatively new and unproven technology (potentially resulting in plant closure in some cases);
- appropriate for small scale but not large scale use;
- very expensive; and
- a heavy consumer of energy.

3.B VISION2020

3.B.1 SUSTAINABLE LAB DESIGN

Jerome reported that the vision for the group (spearheaded by Wayne, Lorraine Mercier and Francois Miller) had been established, and currently in the consultation stage with mechanical engineers. Consultations with relevant stakeholders such as professionals (architects and engineers) as well as units (Office of Sustainability, Office of Students with Disabilities, Health and Safety, etc.) would inform content for the standard. The deans had already been consulted but not on-the-ground users as yet. Robert had requested a target completion date for the end of January, but another round of consultations would be held before finalizing the document and making it available online.

ACTION:

- JEROME to
 - Consult with Lorraine about presenting on progress at the March SLWG meeting.; and
 - Consult with EHS and PIs on the ground.

3.B.2 CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Graham indicated that it would no longer possible to post pictures on MMP, nor was there a central repository for educational institutions in Quebec for redistribution of surplus lab equipment.

- Adrienne Piggott was looking at alternative means by which surplus equipment could be made more visible
- Regardless, Procurement is receiving forms for 8-15-year-old equipment that is even too old for the resellers; the probability of cannibalizing these for parts was next to nil. The success rate for posting on MMP had already be poor, given that there were almost no takers unless the equipment was being given away; delivery and professional installation costs were a barrier as this could be equivalent to the acquisition cost.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

The group was reminded that

- The Catalyst Awards deadline was fast approaching (January 31); SLWG members were encouraged to submit nominations as well as attend the event on the evening of April 3rd; and
- The deadline for applying to the SPF TinyStream (funding request under \$250) was February 1st.

Freezer project. Jerome indicated that students had conducted an inventory of freezers. Medicine had purchased a mobile freezer meant for sharing, which Graham reminded the group that could be requested by contacting the building manager who would subsequently have it delivered to them. However, due to its height and width (being placed on wheels) there were challenges to moving it to other parts of the building. As such, Biology is requesting a similar freezer.

- Jerome mentioned that there was now a Green Biology groups (consisting of three champions)
- Graham lamented the logistical challenges from the lack of clarity around who appropriate contacts should be, given the plethora of “Building Directors” appearing everywhere, causing problems with receiving as well as use of the McIntyre Building by courier companies as their own switching zone (dropping off packages that were meant for delivery elsewhere).

ACTION:

- GRAHAM to send instructions for requesting the freezer to KATHLEEN to update on the SLWG website.