



Memorandum

Office of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor

James Administration Building

845 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 506

Tel: 514-398-4180 | Fax: 514-398-4768

TO: Senate

FROM: Professor Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

SUBJECT: Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting: McGill’s Sustainability Plans and Initiatives

DATE: November 23, 2016

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ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE Presentation of the report of the joint Board-Senate meeting held on November 10, 2016.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE Section 6.3.9.1 of the Statutes of McGill University states as follows:

The Senate and Board of Governors shall hold an annual joint meeting in the fall term. At this meeting, the Principal, the Provost, the Deputy Provost, and the vice-principals, as appropriate, shall present for discussion matters they consider relevant to the University’s mission for the ensuing year.

At the joint Executive Committee/Senate Steering Committee meeting of March 22, 2016, the following topic was proposed and agreed upon for the next joint Board-Senate meeting: “McGill’s Sustainability Plans and Initiatives”. The joint Board-Senate meeting was held on November 10, 2016. The report arising from the joint meeting is attached as Appendix A.

PRIOR CONSULTATION N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS Sustainability was the central focus of the meeting

IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS The report identified steps to address sustainability challenges.

MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL N/A

APPENDICES Appendix A: Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 10, 2016
 Appendix B: Roundtable Discussions – Main Points
 Appendix C: Evaluation

Report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting of November 10, 2016

Prior to the meeting, Senators, members of the Board of Governors and guests had an opportunity to view displays organized in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability demonstrating initiatives at McGill related to the theme of sustainability. The displays included [Sustainable Procurement](#), the [ECOLE project](#), [Ag-Connect](#), the [Plate Club](#), [Sustainable Learning Community](#), [Bellairs Research Institute Greenhouse](#), [SPIN Bike Gardens](#), [LEEDing Change](#), the [Sustainability Projects Fund](#) and [Vision 2020](#).

The Chair of the Board of Governors welcomed the 74 Senators, members of the Board of Governors and guests who attended the joint meeting. He reminded participants that the annual joint meeting provides an opportunity for Senators and members of the Board of Governors to explore an important matter affecting the University's mission. The Principal then welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting's topic, "McGill's Sustainability Plans and Initiatives."

The meeting included three brief presentations touching on the meeting topic.

- Professor Graham MacDonald (Geography, Science) spoke about mapping the intricacies of evolving food systems to harness the benefits of globalization;
- Professor Andrew Gonzalez (Biology, Science) spoke about building resilient cities through restoration of fragmented urban ecosystems;
- Professor Elena Bennett (Natural Resource Science, FAES) spoke about using future visioning to effect on-the-ground sustainable change.

Following the speaker presentations, Senators and Governors engaged in roundtable discussions on the following key question, which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

What do you consider to be the top opportunities that can advance McGill in its sustainability objectives in teaching, research and operations:

- a. Immediately?
- b. In the medium term?
- c. In the long term?

The questions generated a discussion and a number of ideas. The main ideas that emerged from the discussion are included in Appendix B.

Feedback provided from Senators and members of the Board of Governors was generally positive (see Appendix C) and will be taken into account in planning future joint Board-Senate meetings.

McGill Joint Board-Senate Meeting - November 10, 2016
Roundtable Discussions – Main Points

I. What do you consider to be the top opportunities that can advance McGill in its sustainability objectives in teaching, research and operations *immediately*?

- Connect to other universities to share best practices of sustainability.
- Promote students/faculty to engage the community such as going to primary and secondary schools.
- Credit students/faculty for community outreach.
- Organize lunches for people to exchange ideas and learn what their colleagues are working on.
- Create a website with a searchable database indicating courses and existing programs on sustainability and professors who conduct research on sustainability.
- Integrate a sustainability component in all courses (cross-faculty).
- Institute paperless syllabi.
- Labs should share equipment, have an inventory of equipment, ability for equipment to be passed down to others, students can take ownership of equipment no longer needed by lab (such as computers).
- Develop a strategic communication plan at the sustainability research level (e.g. dedicated communication office for outreach, advocacy, and mentoring in/out McGill).
- Ensure research projects comply with sustainability standards (create checklist).
- Create a Sustainability Task Force.
- Utilize signage to encourage less water use, signage to add value of water to community, reporting structure for people to report areas of wasteful water use.
- Ban bottled water on campus and install more water bottle filling stations.
- Alternate days for garbage and recycling, so that recycling does not get mixed in with garbage.
- Measure input/output by conducting energy audits, waste audits, etc.

II. What do you consider to be the top opportunities that can advance McGill in its sustainability objectives in teaching, research and operations *in the medium term*?

- Increase programs that are focused on inter-faculty studies; emphasize experiential/projects based curriculums.
- Become more nimble, reduce barriers to creating courses and proposals, and get them out faster.
- Create elective but obligatory courses to sensitize students to the issues of sustainability. (May not necessarily be for credit.)
- Make sustainability courses more accessible to students from outside the program.

- Develop mechanisms so that community members can propose, chose, manage, and contribute to research; develop individual projects that are designed to evolve and change disciplinary teams as it moves along.
- Communicate the great initiatives that are happening at the downtown campus and at the Macdonald campus; connect the campuses virtually and make them more accessible to each other.
- Create an office to disseminate the great research being done to the community in a digestible manner - like the Office for Science and Society; create the bridge to the community and internally as well to our own community.
- Make the research accessible and relevant to society.
- Have more opportunities for inter-disciplinary research at the undergrad level.
- Design the RVH to be sustainable to match its vision/mission; integrate the design into its operation as well as the teaching that takes place there.
- Make use of our communities, both student and alumni (and other internal communities), to provide solutions to our challenges, leveraging the Sustainability Projects Fund, Dobson Cup, etc.
- Sustainability is interdisciplinarity at a larger scale (not new). We have an opportunity to be a testbed, a living lab integrating physical buildings, operations, administration, students, teaching, research, etc. in all aspects of ‘sustainability.’
- How is academic success of a McGill professor evaluated? Teaching, Research and Services? Community engagement? Evaluation needs to change to encourage ‘sustainability’ across campus!
- Goal is to have a community on campus that is reflective of the communities we serve. This ensures McGill hears from, reflects and influences a diverse group of constituents and helps us to understand the moving target of what a sustainable future will look like.

III. What do you consider to be the top opportunities that can advance McGill in its sustainability objectives in teaching, research and operations *in the long term?*

- Create new degree programs in sustainability.
- Have a sustainability course in every faculty.
- Build an interdisciplinary research center based around sustainability.
- Emphasize the concepts and requirements for sustainability whenever feasible in courses throughout all faculties, plus increase outreach to local schools and CEGEPs.
- Promote a university-wide network of sustainability investigators to facilitate collaboration and exchange of ideas.
- Focus on details such as waste management, lighting efficiency, timing etc.; generate financial sustainability in areas where money is lost but not realized.
- Rural versus urban dynamics: try to educate rural populations; they may not be working in socio-economic sustainable professions. How can we steer them into more sustainability initiatives?
- Better communication between laboratories and departmental offices at McGill to understand what projects are occurring to generate easier inter-disciplinary collaboration.

- Centralize faculties to buildings or increasing the ease of people transportation may better facilitate the exchange of ideas that makes up our university.
- Address existing problems about the connection between Macdonald and downtown campuses and make the campuses more accessible.
- Look at ways to attend conferences without a physical presence to reduce the emissions from travelling which is also applicable to travelling between campuses.
- Break down silos: RVH, interdisciplinary, housing research on basis of research objectives, not training.
- Increase McGill's presence internationally and locally by developing long-term, problem-solving based research and educational programs abroad and stronger collaborations focusing on sustainability in the Montreal community (business and industry).
- Set a target date to have McGill become carbon neutral and devise an action plan to get there.

**McGill Joint Board-Senate Meeting - November 10, 2016
Evaluation**

Total number of attendees = 74
Number of surveys completed = 54
Response rate = 73%

1. Level of satisfaction with:

Location: 2% were dissatisfied
14% were satisfied
83% were very satisfied

Time allotted: 15% were satisfied
85% were very satisfied

Presenters: 9% were satisfied
89% were very satisfied
(2% indicated "N/A")

**Roundtable Discussion
Format** 20% were satisfied
78% were very satisfied
(2% indicated "N/A")

2. I found the meeting topic interesting and stimulating:

2% indicated their disagreement
7% indicated their agreement
91% indicated their strong agreement

3. I found the discussion informative and engaging:

26% indicated their agreement
74% indicated their strong agreement