



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

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

SUBJECT: Progress Report on Sustainability Initiatives at McGill

DATE: October 24, 2018

DOCUMENT #: D18-07

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE A progress report on sustainability initiatives at McGill is presented for information.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE The Open Forum Report on the Recommendations of the 2016 CAMSR Report on Divestment [D16-31] prepared by Prof. Frédéric Bachand identified several measures which the Provost agreed to pursue in conjunction with other relevant University areas.

As outlined in his January 18, 2017 response to the Report of the Open Forum [D16-31 Appendix A], the Provost committed to providing Senate with a progress report.

The attached table prepared with the collaboration of 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.

PRIOR CONSULTATION	Various sectors of the University, Advisory Council on Sustainability
SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	Matters related to sustainability were the central focus of the Open Forum on the Recommendation of the 2016 CAMSR Report
IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS	Appendix A outlines planned activities and actions for the coming year. The Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) will provide Senate with an update in Fall 2019.
MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL	N/A
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Progress Report on Sustainability Initiatives – September 2018

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

Measures identified in the Provost’s Response to the Open Forum Report (January 2017)	Actions as of September 2017	Actions as of September 2018
<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. 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 Climate Officer 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>Since joining McGill, the Climate Officer has advanced climate action and literacy at McGill in a number of ways. For example, she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed a comprehensive gap analysis to achieve carbon neutrality; • Calculated McGill’s 2015, 2016 and 2017 greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories; • Initiated a climate risk assessment for McGill in collaboration with key stakeholders; • Authored McGill’s Sustainable Travel and Mobility Guide; • Expanded educational opportunities around carbon neutrality through applied student research projects; • Presented on climate mitigation and resilience at the Academic Leadership Forum, the annual MForum Conference, and the Sustainability in Higher Education Conference.
<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"> • 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). • In order to pave the way to a carbon-neutral energy transition, Utilities & Energy 	<p>McGill committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 in its Climate and Sustainability Action Plan. The 2040 target date positions McGill as a leader amongst leaders, since few peer universities committed to carbon neutrality so far, and most of those who did targeted 2050. McGill’s target date (2040) will be reassessed every three years to take into account potential changes in regulations, available technologies, carbon markets, and climate conditions. The Climate and Sustainability Action Plan identifies several key measures to gradually reduce McGill’s carbon</p>

Measures identified in the Provost’s Response to the Open Forum Report (January 2017)	Actions as of September 2017	Actions as of September 2018
	<p>Management proposed a 2016-2020 iteration of McGill’s Energy Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple ongoing construction projects are seeking LEED certification, improving our overall energy efficiency. • McGill Grounds team are replacing and planting trees, further contributing to carbon sequestration. • Minimum Standards Requirements are currently being developed to reduce the carbon footprint of the fleet. <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>footprint, such as addressing greenhouse gas emissions from air travel, commuting activities and our fleet of vehicles.</p> <p>Utilities & Energy Management also produced a Roadmap for McGill’s Energy Transition in order to de-carbonize McGill’s building energy systems.</p>
<p>Implement additional institution-level programs to facilitate individual and collective actions that will reduce the University’s carbon footprint.</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 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>Institution-level programs have been developed and promoted throughout the last 12 months. As a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine (9) McGill units received the Sustainable Workplace certification, • Forty-two (42) events have been certified sustainable <p>McGill has also committed to banning the sale of bottled water on campus by May 2019. As the production and transportation of bottled water is quite energy intensive, this can help reduce emissions.</p> <p>As planned, Sustainability Key Performance Indicators have been presented to the Board of Governors, including one on McGill’s corporate GHG emissions.</p>

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<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>The BMO Airfare Virtual Card (the Card) for purchase of airfare from the McGill contracted travel management company (Vision Travel) is in the process of being implemented. The rebate generated through the use of the Card, once available, can be used for offsetting a portion of the future greenhouse gas emissions. The value of the rebate (and thus the quantity of carbon offsets purchased) will depend on the overall usage of the Card. The rebate will become available within one year subsequent to the start date of the Card Usage.</p> <p>A Sustainable Travel & Mobility Guide was published to raise awareness of travel impacts and provide recommendations for reducing GHG emissions from traveling locally and internationally.</p> <p>McGill Procurement Services led the development of minimum standard requirements for vehicles to promote the purchase of hybrid and electric vehicles, where feasible. They also incorporated requirements for access to hybrid, electric and fuel efficient rental vehicles in the call for tenders for the Short Term Vehicle Rentals.</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>McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI) launched its first three cross-disciplinary research themes (Sustaining Landscapes for the Future; Creating Sustainable Materials for the Future; Adapting Urban Environments for the Future). These research themes fund 8 HQPs directly – and involve many more indirectly – and will contribute significantly to new sustainability related curriculum.</p> <p>The MSSI also awarded \$650,000 in Ideas and Innovation fund grants to 16 faculty-led and 3 student-led research</p>

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		projects in sustainability, each of which will involve undergraduate and/or graduate level students.
Leverage the newly-established Advisory Council on Sustainability to improve two-way communication on the University’s sustainability commitments and actions.	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.	The Advisory Council met four (4) times between September 2017 and September 2018 to further enhance the two-way communication on the University’s sustainability commitments and actions. The minutes of the Advisory Council meetings are made public. A satisfaction survey implemented in September 2017 shows that the vast majority of Council members felt they had the opportunity to contribute to discussions.
Continue to develop vehicles for broad community participation, engagement, and commitment with respect to sustainability.	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 & 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.	There are multiple ways for students, faculty, and staff to get involved in sustainability. These opportunities are described on the McGill Office of Sustainability website, under the newly improved section called “ Get involved ”. It describes how members of our community can apply to the Sustainability Projects Fund, use the University as a living lab through applied research, join a sustainability group on campus, and participate in one of several urban gardens on campus. Individuals can also commit to more sustainable behaviours by bringing their reusable bottles to campus (part of the “Refill McGill” campaign that accompanies the ban of the sale of bottled water on campus by May 2019). They can also choose to plan more sustainable events (with the help of the Sustainable Events Consultants team) and receive a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification.