
Advisory Council on Sustainability

September 10, 2018 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
McGill University, James Building, room 302

Minutes

Present: Yves Beauchamp (Co-Chair), Paul Chesser, Kakwiranó:ron Cook, Robert Couvrette, Alan DeSousa, Jayne Engle, Anja Geitmann, Hélène Lauzon, Alice Léfèbvre, Bruce Lennox, Christopher Manfredi (Co-Chair), Matthew McLaughlin, Francois Miller (Steward), Jim Nicell, Kathleen Ng, Helena Zakrzewski, Nathalie Zinger

Guests: Joyce Donohue, Stéphanie Leclerc, François Pouliot

Regrets: Robert Leckey, Amy Luers, Lauren Rathmell

1. Welcome & Roundtable

Prof. Beauchamp welcomes the participants, including the two guests from Procurement Services (Stéphanie Leclerc and François Pouliot) and the new student representatives on the Council (Alice Léfèbvre, Matthew McLaughlin and Helena Zakrzewski for MCSS, SSMU and PGSS respectively).

After inviting everyone to introduce themselves in a ‘tour de table’, Prof. Beauchamp thanks everyone for their participation.

2. Approval of minutes from the last meeting (May 17) and today’s agenda

Prof. Beauchamp confirms that participants have no changes to make to the minutes of the previous meeting nor for the day’s agenda.

3. Latest News Related to Sustainability

Mr. Miller provides a few updates related to sustainability at McGill, responding to related questions arising:

- McGill released a Sustainable Travel and Mobility Guide, outlining best practices and resources on making sustainable travel decisions to reduce emissions.
- The Canadian film Metamorphosis will be shown on the lower campus green on the evening of September 25.
- The McGill Office of Sustainability is working closely with the Bicentennial office to embed sustainability in bicentennial events.
- McGill-Concordia collaboration TeamMTL’s Deep Performance Dwelling won several accolades in the 2018 Solar Decathlon China competition.
- McGill’s inaugural Sustainable Labs Award will be presented on September 14.

- Two Unit Level Sustainability Action Plans are almost completed (McGill and Food and Dining Services and Athletics), others are in process (Redpath Museum, Student Housing and Housing Services, and the Faculty of Management, IT Communications and the Faculty of Law). Mr. Miller invites others interested in crafting their own action plan to get in touch.
- McGill co-hosted the inaugural Sustainability in Higher Education conference 2018 with Vanier College in May, bringing together for the first time the Canadian College and University Environmental Network (CCUEN) and the Canadian Alliance of College and University Sustainability Professionals (CUSP). Members of the Advisory Council involved included Amy Luers (keynote speaker) and Kathleen (incoming CUSP Chair).
- As part of the previously announced ban on the sale of bottled water, efforts were ongoing to mitigate use of bottled water at events. This included purchase of a new water dispensing cart custom-designed and built by McGill plumbers. Water meters would be installed on both to track the equivalent number of bottles that had been replaced by use of these devices.

After the presentation, the following comments were made:

- A participant commended McGill's efforts on reducing bottled water use, and recommended that the University broaden this effort beyond bottled water and explore further opportunities to avoid single-use plastics.
- A participant inquired about the number of events certified to date and whether this was a requirement for caterers and suppliers. Mr. Miller mentions that approximately fifty events (with 20,000 participants) had been certified to date.
- A participant suggests that the sustainable event certification be integrated into the events planning process to nudge event planners to consider it, without necessarily making it obligatory.

4. Feedback on the Advisory Council's annual report

Prof. Manfredi provides some background to preface the discussion.

- Per the Advisory Council's Terms of Reference, "The Co-Chairs will report to the Principal at least once per year on the main activities and achievements of the Council."
- A draft had been previously circulated, outlining major reports provided to Council members, major topics of discussions and major outcomes providing a retrospective summary of last year's activities.

Prof. Manfredi invites participants to share their feedback on the draft, including three discussion questions:

- *Does the report present an accurate picture of the discussions that took place?*
- *Are the topics of discussions and the outcomes in line with the Council's mandate?*
- *Should it include more details? (Detailed account of meetings, terms of reference, list of members, etc.)?*

Participants' feedback is generally positive. The main suggestions are to:

- Add the list of Council members, to reflect the diversity of members on the Council.
- Include the fact that biodiversity as one of the topics of discussion during the past year.

Some potential subjects are brought forward for discussion for the upcoming year:

- Consider how McGill could play a role in the reduction of plastic, especially since the Charter of Plastics was launched at this summer's G7 summit in Charlevoix;
- McGill's engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
- How the Royal Victoria Hospital site would be a beacon of sustainability for the community;
- How the Advisory Council could contribute to making McGill's sustainability research and education initiatives (such as the Solar Decathlon) more visible and scaled up in the community.

Prof. Manfredi thanks participants for their comments, and reaffirmed his commitment to report accurately to the Principal on the Advisory Council's activities.

5. Sustainable Procurement at McGill

Mr. Pouliot and Mrs. Leclerc presented McGill's sustainable procurement initiatives. They highlight that:

- McGill's Procurement Policy was presented to the Board of Governors in May.
- The origins of the sustainable procurement drive lay in the establishment of a multistakeholder group (the Sustainable Procurement Core Team) to plan a vision, identify objectives, and prioritize actions.
- Priority actions included training of McGill buyers in sustainable procurement practices and life cycle analysis. This training is now available through McGill Human Resources' Organizational Development programme.
- McGill's Supplier Code of Conduct (SCC) was co-developed with faculty members, and phased in over a couple of years to allow the community to acclimatize before it was made mandatory. Mrs. Leclerc highlighted an issue flagged by an academic member of the Sustainable Procurement Core Team resulting into animal care being integrated into the requirements and the University taking an active role to address concerns.
- McGill's 5 Year Sustainable Procurement Strategy includes three key performance indicators (KPIs) in areas of:
 - Governance (ex. number of meetings held, documents, etc.);
 - Procedure (ex. number of processes changed, number of contracts impacted, etc.); and
 - Impact (ex. reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, number of computers diverted from landfill/gone to reuse/sent for refurbishment).
- McGill is recognized as a leader in sustainable procurement initiatives. For example:
 - McGill supports other universities with expertise and experiences, as well as sustainable criteria developed. Only McGill and Sherbrooke have full-time sustainable procurement personnel.
 - Initiatives have been recognized internally as well as externally.
 - Mrs. Leclerc was approached by the Green Electronics Council – drivers of the global eco-label for computers - to join their advisory council.

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Pouliot and Mrs. Leclerc accept some of the ACS' acclaim for their work while outlining some of the implementation challenges, such as:

- The variety and complexity of the University's procurement needs;
- The lessons we could learn from extensive work in Quebec on the social/circular economy;
- The limitations of the public procurement processes;

- The difference in scale preventing more geographical/commodity-based collaboration with institutions/municipalities.

The Core Team will likely be reconvened post-2018 to develop another 5-year plan, such as to include climate and greenhouse gas emissions more explicitly.

In addition, ACS members suggested that Procurement Services work with the Canadian Standards Association to potentially develop a standards guidebook in this area.

As a result of the discussion, participants recommended that McGill explore the possibility of establishing working groups of the ACS regarding certain topics of interest, such as sustainable procurement, travel, plastics, planning initiatives, etc. The co-chairs are taking this suggestion under advisement.

6. Overview of climate and sustainability initiatives

Mr. Miller presented last year's Overview of Climate and Sustainability Initiatives, which was shared with the Board of Governors. Participants are asked:

- Based on last year's Overview, what content would you recommend for this year's edition?
- What are the accomplishments that come to mind that could be included?
- How can we best reflect social sustainability in our Overview?

Participants and some suggestions and recommendations:

- Outline how McGill intends to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, including several visuals and the main challenges.
- Highlight social, economic and environmental achievements within the titles and themes.
- Outline the communications strategies that were implemented to promote sustainability related achievements.
- Credit the diversity of stakeholders involved in sustainability (both students, staff and faculty).
- Demonstrate how McGill is taking a coherent approach to sustainability across the university as a whole.
- Accomplishments related to sustainable procurement and community engagement could be included.

Mr. Miller thanks the group for their recommendations. They will be taken into consideration in the preparation of this year's overview of climate and sustainability initiatives, scheduled to be presented to the Board of Governors at the end of 2018.

7. Next steps & closing remarks

Prof. Manfredi reminds the group that the next meeting will take place on December 10, and invites participants to save the date for the Catalyst Awards Gala, to be held the evening of April 1st, 2019. The call for submissions for the Awards will be launched in the coming weeks. Participants are encouraged to bring topics forward for discussion at upcoming meetings. Prof. Beauchamp and Prof. Manfredi thank members for their participation.