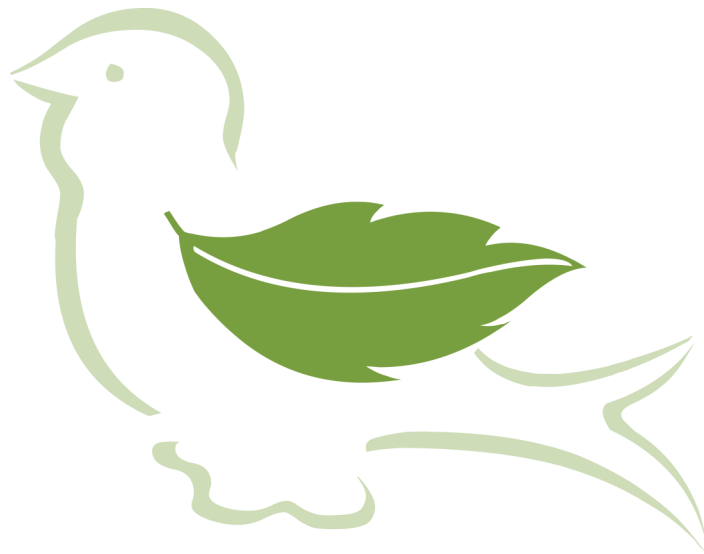


Sustainability Projects Fund ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2016



OVERVIEW



The Sustainability Projects Fund

McGill University's Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) was created to catalyze a culture of sustainability across the University's campuses. The SPF is the largest dedicated campus sustainability fund of its kind in North America, and is uniquely committed to collaboration between students and staff in its financing, decision-making, and project leadership. Since its creation in 2010, the SPF has allocated over \$5 million in funding and has approved 155 projects, which have yielded dramatic and lasting improvements to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of McGill's sustainability performance.

Evaluation Criteria

All selected projects must align with the mandate of the Sustainability Projects Fund, which is to build a culture of sustainability on McGill Campuses through the development and seed-funding of interdisciplinary projects. Projects are evaluated by a Working Group (WG) based on the following criteria.

Projects must:

- Primarily impact the McGill campuses.
- Be led by a current McGill University student or academic staff or administrative staff member.
- Contribute to advancing sustainability at McGill University by addressing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability in its planning and in its objectives, this in alignment with the McGill Sustainability Strategy.
- Influence McGill University's systems, structures, and/or processes used by McGill direct stakeholders in order to create expectedly positive and transformative change in their behavior and in McGill's institutional performance.
- Involve a variety of qualified individual and/or group partners from the McGill community for the purpose of institutionalizing the project's expected impacts during its implementation and following its completion.
- In accordance with the mission of McGill University, generate relevant and tangible learning opportunities.
- Have S.M.A.R.T. objectives and activities: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Limited.
- Demonstrate that it is financially worth the investment through comprehensive, pertinent, logical, reasonable, and realistic inputs and budget considering the projects planned goal, expected impacts, objectives, and activities, with alternative sources of funding having been identified where appropriate.
- Overall, have a rationale that is comprehensive and pertinent to the mandate of the SPF.

SPF Working Group

In the spirit of staff-student parity that drives the SPF, the Working Group consists of eight voting members: four students, two academic staff, and two administrative staff who provide decisions and feedback on projects by consensus. Additionally, non-voting SPF staff members chair and facilitate the meetings. To find more information about the Working Group and to view current members, please visit the SPF [website](#).

YEAR IN REVIEW



Fiscal Year 2016 in Review

Fiscal Year 2016¹ (FY16) was the sixth year that the SPF has served as a source of seed funding for interdisciplinary projects across the University's campuses. This year, the many improvements in processes and materials developed in 2015 were put into use. The positive reception of these tools, the successes of newly approved and ongoing projects, as well as the increased interest in the SPF made FY16 a great year overall.

A key focus of FY16 was building awareness about the SPF. This was accomplished through new strategic communication and outreach activities, which reached over 1,300 students, staff, and faculty members. These efforts have started to pay off, as the SPF has already seen a significant increase in inquiries and in applications for the June 2016 deadline. It is expected that the increased awareness and interest in the SPF will continue well into FY17 and beyond.

FY16 Key Accomplishments

- Implemented a new two-stage **SPF Application** process and forms, as well as new **application deadlines**;
- Hired an **SPF Outreach Intern** and launched the **SPF Ambassador Program** to increase awareness about the SPF throughout all 11 faculties;
- Hosted the **Sustainability Projects Showcase** on February 9, 2016 with over 100 community members attending;
- Created a **SPF Community Facebook** page to increase communication among members of project teams;



SPF Project teams and staff at the Sustainability Projects Showcase on February 9, 2016.



SPF Outreach Intern, Nandini Srivastava, and SPF Ambassadors chat with Sustainability Project Showcase attendees.

- Introduced "**SPF Tuesdays**"— office hours reserved every other Tuesday to receive one-on-one support from SPF staff;
- Offered additional support and resources to teams, including **Project Orientation Meetings**, **Progress and Final Report templates**; and
- Developed a **Monitoring & Reporting Plan**, with key performance indicators, as well as improved **data collection and reporting mechanisms**.

Overall, SPF successfully implemented many new support systems and outreach activities this year and is well-poised to make strides in FY17.

¹Fiscal Year 2016 includes activity between May 1, 2015 and April 30, 2016.

APPLICATIONS



Applications to the Sustainability Projects Fund

Given the success of application deadlines during the Fund's pilot years, the SPF transitioned from receiving applications on a rolling basis to encouraging submissions at particular deadlines this year. January 2016 was the first and only deadline during this fiscal year, but subsequent years will have three deadlines—in June, September, and January—for projects over \$5,000. Applications under \$5,000 will continue to be received on a rolling basis. The June 2016 deadline, at the start of FY17, saw a significant increase in applications, indicating that the outreach activities performed in FY16 were successful.

During FY16, the SPF received 19 applications requesting approximately \$550,000. See Figure 1 for more information regarding the applications received during this period and over the Fund's lifetime.

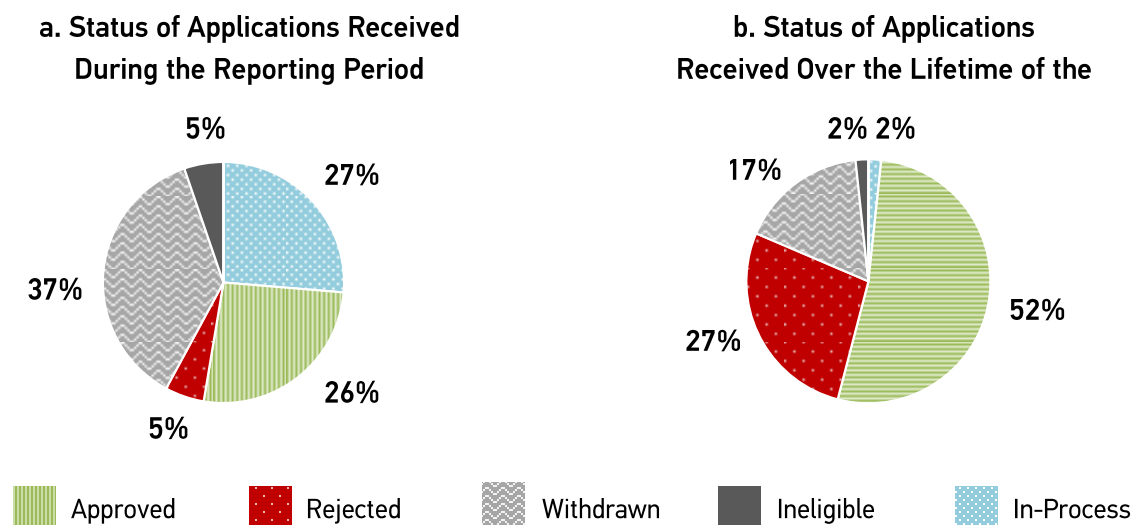


Figure 1—Application evaluation during the reporting period and over the Fund's lifetime

Since sustainability is a cross-cutting, interdisciplinary theme, the SPF receives a variety of applications with a wide range of budgets. These budgets are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1—Budgets from applications received during the reporting period and over the Fund's lifetime¹

FY16 Reporting Period						Lifetime of the Fund					
#	Smallest	Largest	Average	#<\$5K	#>\$50K	#	Smallest	Largest	Average	#<\$5K	#>\$50K
19	\$1,973	\$90,000	\$30,700	2	5	296	\$55	\$180,000	\$23,300	93	44

¹It is important to note that while project teams may ask for any budget amount, the WG may approve only a portion of the project budget. This is the case for some applications received during the reporting period, which received a smaller amount than requested with additional funding contingent on successful reports. The smallest application received during the reporting period was 16-289: Kohlrahi Collective; the largest application received during the reporting period was 16-282: Myko Social Score Platform. The smallest application received over the lifetime of the fund was 13-229: Composting in Burnside Hall.; the largest over the lifetime of the fund was 10-081: Communications Officer. This last item was listed incorrectly in the 2015 Annual Report and has been adjusted in this document.

APPROVED PROJECTS



Projects Approved by the Sustainability Projects Fund

Since 2010, the SPF has awarded 155 projects totaling approximately \$4.4 million in value¹. In FY16, 7 projects were approved (SP0149-SP0155), totaling close to \$200,000. Funding that was not allocated during this Fiscal Year will be available in upcoming fiscal years. See Table 2 for information on projects approved in FY16.

Table 2—Projects approved during the reporting period and over the Fund's lifetime²

FY16 Reporting Period						Lifetime of the Fund					
#	Smallest	Largest	Average	#<\$5K	# >\$50K	#	Smallest	Largest	Average	#<\$5K	# >\$50K
7	\$1,973	\$39,482	\$20,800	1	0	155	\$150	\$160,000	\$21,100	53	22

The SPF encourages collaborative projects that include diverse stakeholders in order to foster learning, exchange knowledge, and promote institutionalization. To date, 86% of projects approved both during the period and throughout the lifetime of the fund have had collaboration between students and staff, as seen in Figure 2.

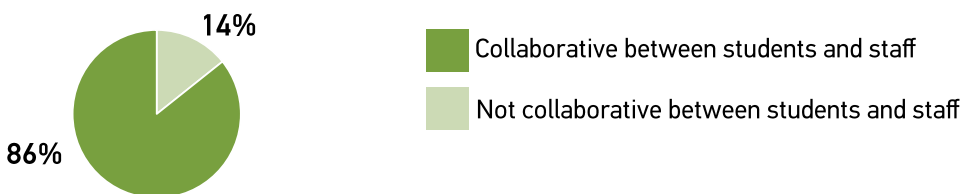
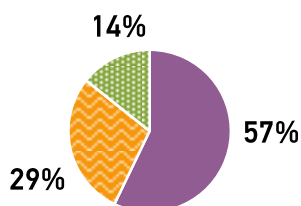


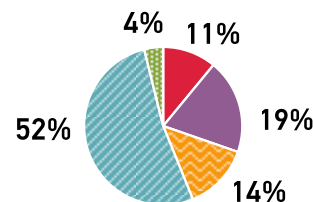
Figure 2—Collaboration in approved projects during the reporting period and over the Fund's lifetime

In order to better align with the Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy, project teams identify a dominant Vision 2020 Category in their applications³. The distribution of projects by category can be seen in Figure 3.

a. Projects by Related V2020 Category Awarded During the Reporting Period



b. Projects by Related V2020 Category Awarded Over the Lifetime of the Fund



Research Education Connectivity Operations Governance & Administration

Figure 3—Projects awarded by related Vision 2020 Category

¹ Amounts stated in this paragraph only include project support and do not include overhead expenses.

² During the reporting period, the smallest project approved was SP0154: Kohlrabi Collective; the largest was SP0149: Green Light Microscopy. Over the lifetime of the fund, the smallest approved was SP0132: ASR Video at \$150; the largest was SP0105: Sustainable Procurement Officer (approved by the WG for increased funding in 2014).

³ Past projects have been classified retrospectively according to the most related category.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The SPF proudly supports a diverse selection of projects, which address all dimensions of sustainability in their purpose, planning, and management. Here are a few projects that were either approved or operating during FY16:



SP0152: Where The Sidewalk Ends



SP0155: McGill Spin Bike Gardens



SP0147: McGill Community Wellbeing



SP0145: Bellairs Research Institute Greenhouse



SP0148: Thomson House Pollinator Plantings



SP0146: LEEDing Change

These projects only represent a small portion of the many important initiatives that the SPF has funded. To view a complete list of projects and previous SPF Annual Reports, please visit our [website](#).

FINANCES



Sustainability Projects Fund Financial Overview

The Sustainability Projects Fund has a total value of approximately \$840,000–880,000 per year. Half of the funding for the SPF comes from a student fee of approximately \$0.50 per credit, which is matched by the McGill administration. The SPF WG approves all funding, which includes project support and overhead¹. Any unallocated funding from one year is rolled over into the Fund balance of the subsequent year. Additionally, any funding allocated to but unspent by a project is refunded to the SPF upon project closure.

To date, the SPF has received approximately \$2.7 million in student fees, which, when matched by the administration, brings the Fund to a total value of approximately \$5.4 million. Since 2010, the SPF has allocated close to \$5.1 million in funding². During the reporting period, the WG allocated less than the expected revenue, but this remainder will be available in the next fiscal year. See Figure 4, below, for the cumulative funding allocation by the WG, as well as the cumulative expected revenue for the SPF. Since the Fund operates on a reimbursement basis, actual spending often lags approximately 12–18 months behind allocation. Similarly, the administrative match revenue is reimbursed at a delay based on fund expenditures.

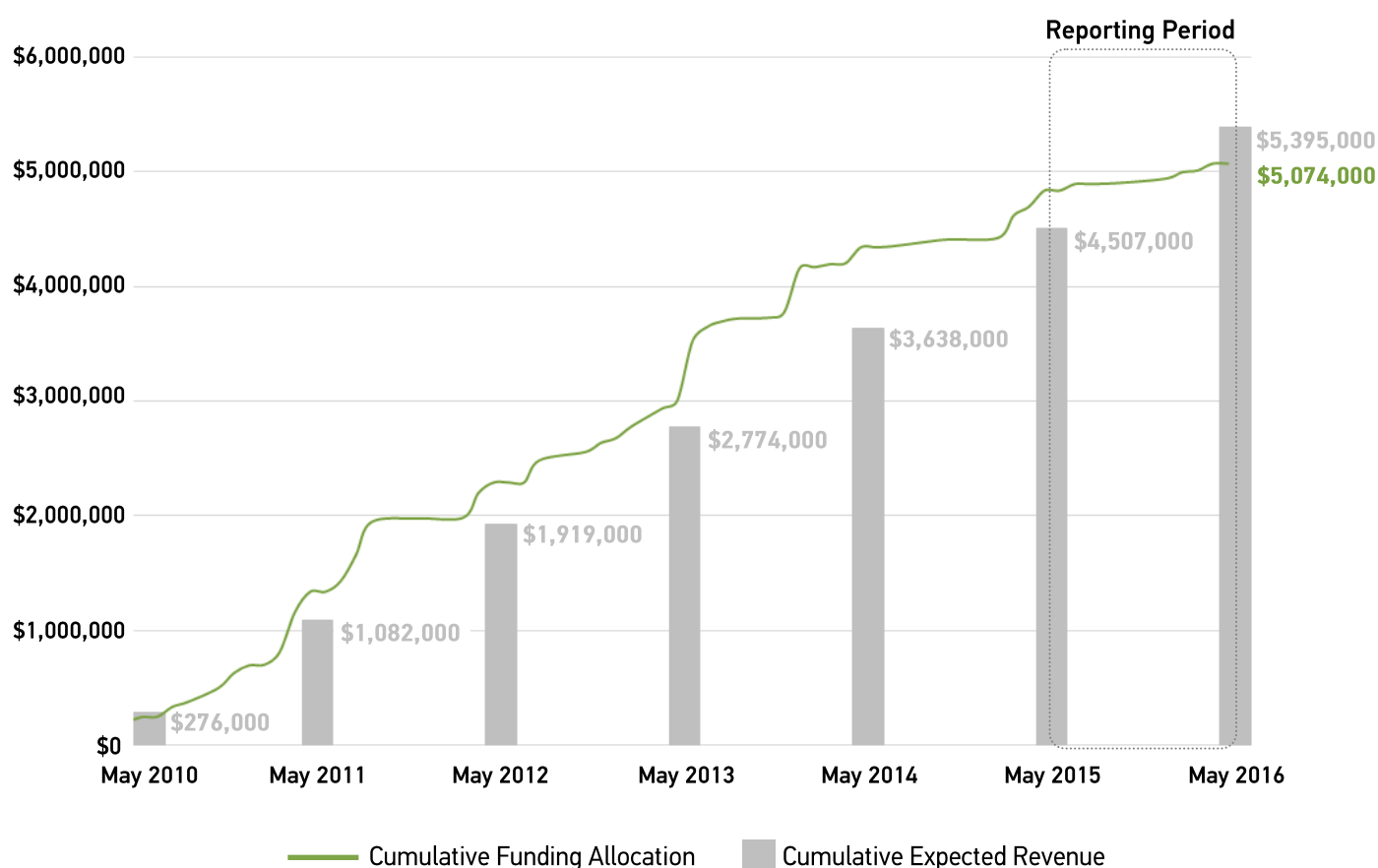


Figure 4—Cumulative allocation of funding and cumulative expected revenue

¹ Up to 16% of total annual revenue is allocated for overhead expenses.

² This includes both project support and overhead allocations.

CONCLUSION



Key Lessons Learned in FY16

The SPF learned many valuable lessons in FY16 as it implemented the many resources developed during FY15:

- **Our most successful projects are transformative.** The SPF has seen quite a few great projects over the years and the best-of-the-best seem to have the same ingredients: they have a great story, they are led by a visionary project leader, they leverage other initiatives or projects, they have dedicated institutional partners from the start, and they reach the McGill community outside of their project team and partners.
- **Communications and outreach are key to the SPF's success.** While the application process and support mechanisms were revamped in FY15, communications were less active for the SPF. Once outreach was reprioritized in FY16, there has been renewed interest in the SPF as well as an increase in the number of applications received.
- **Investing time on tools, resources, and documentation is well worth it.** Things went much more smoothly for the SPF this year, thanks to the work done in FY15. Having resources, such as new guides and application forms, has made more room for communication, thoughtful discussions on sustainability, and assisting project teams. These will continue to be reviewed and improved upon in years to come.

Looking Ahead to FY17

As the SPF draws closer to the referendum in FY18, the focus of FY17 will be on continued awareness-raising, encouraging impactful projects, and evaluating efficacy. Key initiatives for the year to come include:

- **Sustaining communications and outreach,** as awareness about the SPF is important to encourage new projects. The expansion of the **SPF Ambassador Program** will be key to these efforts. Launched in FY16, this program will be expanded to include more ambassadors and activities across the campuses. The goal is for all students, staff, and faculty to know about the SPF.
- **Finding new, impactful projects** will also be a focus, as the SPF will look to foster transformative projects that will help McGill become a leader in sustainability. As the Vision 2020: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan 2017-2020 is developed over the coming year, the SPF will be ready to help turn those great ideas into reality.
- **Launching a streamlined one-stage application** for projects under \$5,000, which will be reviewed on a rolling basis, in order to respond to time-sensitive project applications.
- **Evaluating the SPF** with a comprehensive Cyclical Review in tandem with the new monitoring and reporting mechanisms, will provide direction and recommendations for years to come.

Overall, the SPF looks forward to supporting the McGill community in its endeavour to make our campuses more sustainable.



SPF Working Group and Staff at their November 2015 meeting.