

Sustainability Project Fund Application

Applicant/Project Leader: Oliver deVolpi and MFDS

Contact Information:

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Project Title: Hiring a Sustainability / Purchasing agent (Position title: Food Systems Coordinator)

Budget Requested: Half the salary of the new position (approximately half of 42,525\$)

Project Group – Food and Dining Services

I. Project Overview

Project Summary:

The primary duty of this position is to identify McGill Food and Dining Services (MFDS) purchasing needs and support the department with those needs. They will work with the department's chefs to support their day-to-day purchasing needs and actualize the most sustainable (ecologically sound, economically responsible, and socially equitable) ways to meet those needs. In doing so, the coordinator will increase communication throughout the universities food system by developing ties with local producers and other stakeholders throughout the supply chain (farms, co-ops, suppliers/distributors, students etc), while maintaining and benchmarking these relationships. The long-term vision is for this position to work in conjunction with MFDS, McGill Office of Sustainability, students, faculty and staff to reconnect the campus community to a food system from which they can be proud to eat.

Project Eligibility:

McGill Food and Dining Services' food purchases are approximately \$2.4M a year. To hire a sustainability/purchasing agent (Food Systems Coordinator) to make all the food purchases taking into account the many different criteria that influence the real sustainability of our food system at McGill that would have direct and immediate results. We will demonstrate that sustainability is a top priority when making food purchasing decisions and in doing so does not always lead to higher final costs.

As the person who is currently in charge of purchasing for MFDS, I can only put a certain amount of time into the analysis of which choices are the best to make from a sustainability standpoint. The chefs can easily make the economical choices and maintain the necessary quality control,

but do not have the resource available or the time required to identify and make the sustainable choices.

Companies that we currently work with in food services such as Chartwells, Aramark and Sodexo have this type of department or agent working with them, but being publically traded companies, the bottom line remains the most import factor; where at MFDS we have more leeway to make certain environmental choices and to pay the extra cost, especially when the McGill community demands we do so.

MFDS believes in this position enough that we are glad to contribute half of the salary. The position will hopefully develop into a self-sustaining position in the future if purchasing choices are able to provide cost savings through direct purchases from farms, cutting distributor costs and regrouping purchases from different units. Savings can also be made if packaging is reduced by informing our different suppliers about the costs that are taken on by McGill to deal with waste management.

Timeframe:

We would like to hire the Food Systems Coordinator before the beginning of the 2010 school year to help with certain sustainability criteria during our RFP process and to begin influencing decisions about individual products that we will carry through 2010-2011 in our dining facilities. After the 2010-2011 school year, we will be able to evaluate the first year and decide how best to proceed with the position the following year.

We will measure the position's success through food choices being made, costs for more sustainable food choices, and through new partnerships with farmers, producers, distributors, suppliers, co-ops and students.

Stakeholders:

The position will fall under MFDS and under the direct supervision of the Executive Chef with support from the unit chefs at RVC and BMH. Technical support will be provided by McGill Food Systems Project and the impact of the position will be shared with them.

As stated, we are proposing that funding for this position will be equally shared between the Sustainability Projects Fund and MFDS. Other equipment costs such as computer, desk, training will be provide by MFDS as we determine necessary.

II. Project Implementation

Tasks and Responsibilities:

Please see the proposed job description in Appendix A

III. Financials

Detailed Expenses:

The expenses related to this post are the cost of the employee's salary and any related expenses. Work area set aside in one of the dining locations to be close to the supervising chef. A computer, fax and telephone line to contact suppliers, farmers, distributors, etc. Access to a computer is required to enter purchasing decisions and to keep track of invoices and analyse results.

The actual cost of the employee's salary will depend on McGill hiring process and the evaluation of the job description provided.

Employee's estimated salary:

42,000\$ a year but with a layoff of 3 months out of the year: 31,500\$ + 35% benefits =

42,525\$ estimated total cost

800.00\$ computer (covered by MFDS)

30\$ month phone line (covered by MFDS)

Detailed Revenues:

We are requesting approximately \$21,263 from the Sustainability Projects Fund, MFDS will cover \$22,423 and any other incurred expenses. There is no direct revenue foreseen from this position but we expect considerable cost savings in future years.

MFDS spends approximately \$2.4M a year on food. If the Food Systems Coordinator is able to regroup orders and more carefully compare prices from the different supplier than is currently being done there is the possibility to save as much as 2-3% on 60% of our purchases: 29,000\$-44,000\$ a year in direct cost plus removing certain duties from the day-to-day operation of the chefs.

IV. Additional Information:

I've worked in the food industry for 20 years and have had the chance to work in many different kinds of institutions. I've seen over the years that as soon as purchases rise over the \$1-1.5M dollar mark a purchasing agent becomes an essential part of any organisation. By combining this position with that of sustainability agent, we are giving real power to this employee to make change. Since information will be freely given by suppliers who want to do business with McGill, and since the employee will have the power to making purchasing decisions based on discussions with the supplier, he/she will have an immediate positive impact on MFDS and the McGill community. Without combining these two roles, fewer suppliers would take the sustainability agent seriously and would instead focus on convincing the purchasing agent of the advantages of their products or produce. The Food Systems Coordinator will also be able to evaluate if certain sustainable choices are the best ones since they will be able to compare with the price and quality of all the options.