

Advisory Council on Sustainability
McGill University, Zoom Online Meeting
September 21, 2021 (3:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

Present: F. Miller, Y. Beauchamp, D. Dutton, C. Manfredi, D. Mondou, E. Bennett, B. Harvey, B. Lennox, J. Nicell, D. Daryanani, K. Hogue, C. Aubrac, P. Cigana, A. Desousa, L. Rathmell, N. Volland, G. Cadet, K. Litwin, K. Houser.

Absent with regrets: T. Phillips, A. Porlier

1. Welcome New Members and Roundtable Introductions, Approval of Minutes from the Last Meeting and Today's Agenda

F. Miller welcomes the group to the meeting and holds roundtable introductions as there are new members attending today. He asks for approval of the minutes from the last meeting. The Council approves. There are no additions to today's agenda.

2. Latest News Related to Sustainability

K. Houser presents recent sustainability news, including:

- The McGill SDG Student Hub in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability created an undergraduate handbook on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The guide introduces the SDGs and, for each goal, it highlights related targets, courses, student groups and researchers.
- Over 475 standardized, multi-stream waste sorting stations have been installed throughout main academic buildings on the downtown campus. These significant infrastructure upgrades will help improve the University's waste diversion rate and achieve its zero-waste target.
- McGill's first Climate Change Artist-in-Residence, Milton Riaño, hosted a series of workshops during the summer and is now working on his final exposition, which includes an exhibit for the Redpath Museum.
- Rebounding after reduced operations during the pandemic, the McGill Farmers' Market is back on campus every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on McTavish Street.
- In June, a partnership between Gault Nature Reserve and the Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki was announced that recognizes the importance of the ancestral territory and cultural value of the nature reserve to the Abenaki. The agreement allows community members free access to the Reserve. This partnership grew out of the 52 Calls to Action that McGill established as part of its reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- In June, McGill presented at the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN) 2021 conference. The presentation titled "Using Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation to Guide Institutional Priorities," shared how the Climate & Sustainability Strategy was developed with a transversal theme focused on climate action.

3. Proposed approach for Green Labs

As a follow-up to the green labs presentation the Council received in May 2021, F. Miller presented additional context on the current situation at McGill, as well as a U15 green lab program benchmarking analysis, which assessed resources such as guides, use of internal and external certification programs, support staff, and peer networks. For next steps at McGill, it is proposed that a pilot of five labs participate in an external certification program offered by My Green Lab. Once the pilot is complete, lessons learned will be used to create a McGill certification program with the help of a multi-stakeholder

working group that will be put in place to develop a process, criteria, and communications for the program.

Members suggested:

- The students' presentation at the last meeting was impactful. We are glad that their initiative is being taken seriously and that things are moving forward.
- What kind of changes would be able to move the needle? It seems that both infrastructure and behaviour change interventions are important to operating green labs.
- Shutting the sash makes a huge difference in energy consumption. This was the focus of a previous campaign funded by the SPF that utilized stickers on the equipment to remind users to close the fume hoods. Sometimes the simplest solution, such as a sticker, works very well. In sum, behaviour change works and has benefits such as energy cost reductions.
- Take into consideration the timeline for re-certification as this may require training.
- It is important to have a conversation with people running the programs to get best practices and make sure we are not building on mistakes, but instead on what works.
- Remember that idle/used equipment has a huge impact on the sustainability of labs. This is a systemic issue that stems from funding policies at granting agencies mandating the purchase of new equipment.
- Lab design, infrastructure, maintenance, and circularity are all important to consider.
- Special care is being put into the lab design of facilities at the New Vic.

4. Key Sustainability Projects for McGill's Bicentennial Celebrations

G. Cadet and K. Litwin joined to share more information about the Sustainable Futures Festival, part of McGill's bicentennial celebrations. This builds on the presentation given by G. Cadet in December 2020 about embedding sustainability throughout the celebrations. The Sustainable Futures Festival is a week-long event where the McGill community will gather to express what sustainable futures and communities mean to them. There will be three key events anchoring the festival: a speaker event, community event, and career fair event, in addition to the annual MSSSI symposium and the Catalyst Awards. These events are currently being planned with the help of key committees. Additionally, they announced that Celebrate Together, a plant giveaway event will be held September 27-29, 2021.

Members suggested:

- Regarding the guest speaker event, selecting an Indigenous speaker and featuring land-based teaching were suggested. Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, and Autumn Peltier, a youth activist, were both named, in addition to a list of activists provided in Zoom chat.
- The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was also suggested given its work on planetary futures and scenarios.
- The future of sustainability at universities is a relevant topic. Utrecht University was suggested.

5. Lufa Farms – Engagement Strategy

Advisory Council member L. Rathmell shared a presentation on Lufa Farms, focusing on operations, as well as staff and community engagement. An overview of the company's operations, sustainable practices, as well as business model was given. Challenges posed by the pandemic, as well as accompanying strategic responses, were shared.

Members suggested/asked:

- This was a great presentation. The entrepreneurial aspect is inspiring.
- There were lots of challenges with the pandemic, but some good practices also arose—for example, not flying to conferences. There is a risk of losing sight of these. Is there a process to

take stock of the good things and make sure that they are embedded? How much regulation is needed vs. just trusting in individual accountability?

- When looking to keep these habits, it is interesting to think of behavioral nudges: for instance, an opt-out vs. opt-in model.
- L. Rathmell mentions that opt-out is the better model. The default is the option you want to encourage, such as a basket subscription. The opt-in model, requires communications nudges and much more effort.
- Revitalizing industrial roofs is very interesting and so is providing locally-grown food. Lufa has a lot of expertise. It could be interesting to see if there is an opportunity to have something similar at McGill, for instance with the New Vic project.

6. Next Steps and Closing Remarks

F. Miller mentions that the annual sustainability survey will be launched soon and results will be shared at an upcoming meeting. The next Advisory Council meeting will take place on November 23, 2021.